March 25, 2014

**Gypsy steps onto the Sac State stage**

Mama Rose is determined that one of her two young daughters is going to be a vaudeville star, and she’ll stop at nothing to make that happen. But is she doing it for them or herself?

That’s the launching point for *Gypsy*, the classic American musical with music and lyrics by Jule Styne and Stephen Sondheim. Theatre and Dance Department Professor Ed Brazo directs Sacramento State’s production at the University Theatre. Performances are at 8 p.m. April 9-12 and 18-19; 2 p.m. April 13 and 20; and 6:30 p.m. April 16 and 17.

The story is based on the memoirs of one of Mama Rose’s daughters, Louise, who went on to become celebrated burlesque queen Gypsy Rose Lee. Notable songs include “Everything’s Coming up Roses,” and “Let Me Entertain You.”

Despite its placement firmly in the vaudeville life of the 1930s, *Gypsy* continues to be an audience favorite, with several revivals on Broadway, and stagings throughout the country. Brazo says that’s because there are deeper themes. “It’s about relationships,” he says. “It’s about being driven. It’s about children being pushed into maybe something they don’t want to do, and then ending up liking it.”

In the Sac State production, Natalie Jones plays Mama Rose and Taylor Grossman is Louise.

“Louise is a small-town girl, a tomboy, who becomes this larger-than-life person – Gypsy Rose Lee,” Grossman says. “It’s quite a transformation.”

For Jones, getting to play older, weathered Mama Rose is a rare chance for an actor. “I never imagined I would get the part,” Jones says. “There’s no reason that, at 22, I should get to play such an iconic role, and I fully recognize the opportunity this is.”
While there are serious themes and moments in *Gypsy*, the play is a raucous, colorful musical.

“We are so lucky to be here in a semester when they are doing such a dynamic show,” Grossman says.

“It has everything you want,” Jones says. “It’s hilarious. It’s heartbreaking. The music is wonderful. It’s breathtaking. You will enjoy yourself beyond belief.”

For Brazo, directing *Gypsy* has special meaning. “It’s one of my favorites, probably because it was my first show as a professional actor.” He was in the 1976 national tour that featured Angela Lansbury as Mama Rose. “It was a great time in my life and here I am doing the show 38 years later.”

Tickets for the 6:30 p.m. performances are $10 general admission and $7 for children. All other performances are $15 general, $12 students and seniors, and $10 for children. Tickets are available at the University Ticket Office, (916) 278-4323 or [www.csus.edu/hornettickets](http://www.csus.edu/hornettickets).

*Gypsy* is part of the arts experience at Sacramento State. For more information on the Theatre and Dance Department, visit [www.csus.edu/dram](http://www.csus.edu/dram) or call (916) 278-6368. For media assistance, call the University’s Public Affairs office at (916) 278-6156.

– Craig Koscho

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