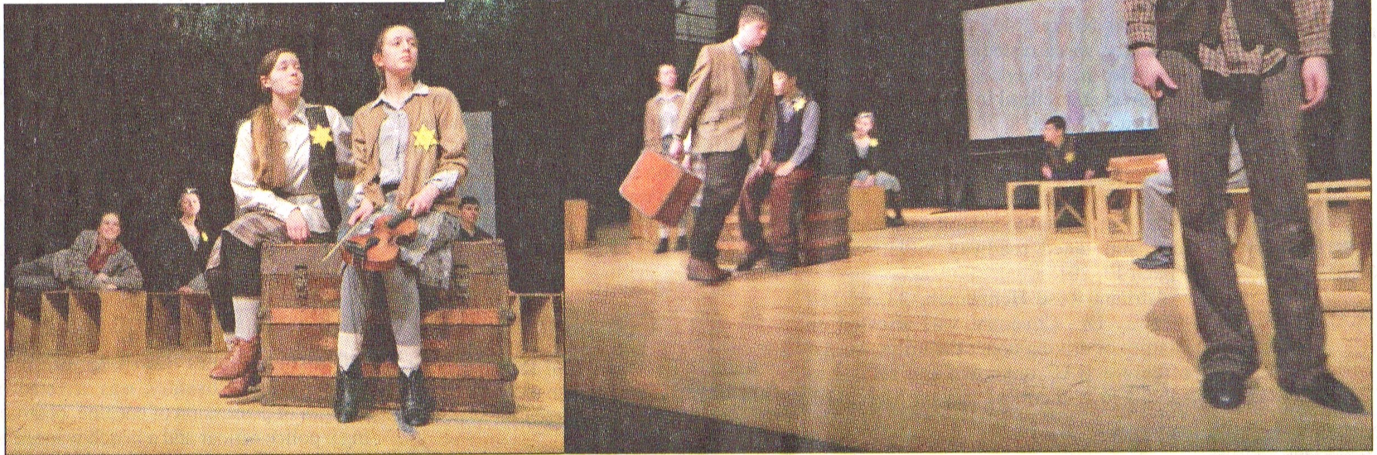


Remembering a dark epoch



Anita E. Baffoni • Daily Times

Members of Coventry High School's Drama Club are in character at a dress rehearsal earlier this week for "And a Child Shall Lead." The play opens tomorrow at CHS.

Coventry HS production takes audience back to Holocaust

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COVENTRY—Coventry High School's Drama Club is putting on their spring production of "And a Child Shall Lead" which is based on the true story of children coming of age in a Jewish ghetto in Terezin, Czech Republic during the Holocaust. The more dramatic play is a new style for the CHS actors and will be debuting March 26-28 in the school's auditorium.

Nazis established the Jewish city near Prague for artistic children and adults as a way of prop-

aganda that German dictator Adolf Hitler used, the Drama Program Director and Teacher Michael Wilkinson explained. Roughly 15,000 people were kept at the camp and were facing execution but used their creativity to channel hope, he explained. Less than 100 survived.

This is the 30th production for Wilkinson with the CHS drama club and with the freshman class studying the Holocaust, he thought it was a perfect production for them to attend. There will be a special showing of the play for the ninth graders as an in-school field trip on Friday.

Many newcomers and experienced students

made the cast for this production, with several freshmen who have never acted before. Wilkinson said that there were more than the usual number of students with little experience and the cast made up of mostly freshman.

"It took time to have to teach the students how to act," he said. "It is like a master class in acting."

Real writings and poems from the children who survived Terezin are used in the script and shine light on actual events that many students

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Holocaust remembrance opens tomorrow at CHS

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did not know about. Andrew Lee, a 14-year-old freshman cast as Pavel Hoffman, said it touched on specifics during the Holocaust and felt he was living in it in some way.

"I knew the basics but being in the play helped me understand what the children went through" Lee said. "I learned a

lot about the lifestyle and am glad I decided to audition."

Another freshman who made the cast, Delaney Ryan, 15, who plays Eva Hellerova, has acted in past productions, including the play at CHS in the fall.

"I love acting and found out about the opportunity to star in a play about the Holocaust and since it is more dramatic, it was intriguing to me," Ryan said. "I

thought it was interesting in how to do a play about the Holocaust without being sad and we were able to do that."

The simplistic set is based on the Terezin barracks where the children slept. Wilkinson said he wanted to use suggestive set items to enhance the monologues or "spotlight moments," as he likes to call it. The fast-paced drama is able to capture

the children's lives in 90 minutes, half the time of a typical play.

Coventry is the only school in the state putting on "And a Child Shall Lead" which is a newly-written script, Wilkinson said.

Tickets are available at the door for \$10 each, beginning at 6 p.m. with the play starting at 7 p.m.. The show will run from Thursday to Saturday.