

A Passion for Theatre

Koren Hill

Warroad Summer Theatre is preparing for its 31st year, and will be opening with *Gilligan's Island: The Musical*. Directing this production will be none other than the beloved Jenée Provance.

Jenée is no stranger to WST. She's been involved with it in one way or another since the very first season. She can act, she can direct, she can build sets - she does it all. And man, can she sing!

The Sound of Music marked Jenée's debut to WST. Originally scheduled to travel in Europe with The Sound of America Choir, she opted to play Leisl instead. It was not an easy decision and she sought out advice from others. Jenée says, "I remember Bev Gustafson telling me, 'You'll have plenty of chances to go to Europe in your lifetime, but probably only this one chance to be Leisl.'" The musical was a huge hit, but Jenée still has not been to Europe - but that's okay. That was also the summer she met her future husband, Jim, and Jenée concludes, "So it was, after all, a life-changing decision!"

The most recent "hat" Jenée wears is as artistic director. She loves this new challenge even though it brings on what



Jenée Provance

she calls "a nervous paranoia". Jenée explains, "Once the curtain goes up on that first performance, you have shifted ALL control to your actors... It is a helpless feeling, but the rewards have been tremendous!"

Directing is not an easy task. Mutual respect between the actors and the director is needed. And in accomplishing that, a great performance is the outcome. "Without the reciprocal respect, a director loses control well before the production reaches the stage," added Jenée.

It's not just the seasoned actors that allow a show to be great; there's a lot of behind-the-scenes people that enable Jenée to be a successful director - everything from lighting to sets to music. She explains, "Being an artistic director comes with weighty responsibility. I have

been so fortunate to have incredible people working by my side, helping me pull chaos to creativity, drawing the very best out of all cast members. Without them, audiences would be watching performances that would most likely be entertaining but, when teamed up with my 'production partners', those audiences better hang on because they are going to see something incredible! I am consistently amazed at the raw talent our small corner of the world produces."

Getting a performance up and running is definitely a team effort. The entire cast works closely together for many hours. By the end of a run of a play, they have become like family and lifetime friendships are formed. Jenée agrees wholeheartedly and says, "Some of my best friends I have met through WST. For someone with very few family members living in this area, they *have* become my family. My world would be a dismal place without them."

Auditions for *Gilligan's Island: The Musical* will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, February 8 and 9, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the Warroad Lower Elementary music room. Please enter through the back parking lot. Also be sure to bring music to sing (accompanist provided).