

Tony Award-Winning Musical Comedy and Fractured Fairy Tale “Once Upon a Mattress” to close out SCERA’s Encore Season

(Orem, Utah) -- All is not well in a fictional medieval kingdom where devious Queen Aggravain rules and her husband, King Sextimus the Silent, suffers from a curse that makes him mute.

Their son Prince Dauntless the Drab is of marriageable age but the queen concocts conniving plans that eliminate any interested princesses. Because no one is allowed to marry, that becomes a dilemma for Sir Harry and his girlfriend, Lady Larken, who have a rather compelling reason to reach the bridal altar post haste. Harry really needs the prince to wed—and thinks he has found a bride for the prince in the form of Princess Fred (Winnifred the Woebegone) from the marshlands.

Madness, mayhem and side-splitting shenanigans ensue on a raucous and rollicking road to happily ever after that forms the basis of the Tony Award-winning musical comedy “Once Upon a Mattress,” which is a charming retelling of the fairy tale “The Princess and Pea.” It will play on Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from April 23-May 8 at 7:30pm at the SCERA Center for the Arts in Orem. Reserved-seat tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for children (age 3-11), students (w/ID) and seniors (age 65+) and are available from 10am-6pm weekdays and 12Noon-6pm Saturdays at the SCERA’s main office (745 South State, Orem), by calling (801) 225-ARTS, online at www.scera.org or at the door 30 minutes prior to the show.

SCERA President & CEO says, “Don’t let the fact that this show is based on a fairy tale make you think it’s only for kids. While kids will love the nutty characters and bright costumes, adults will love the wit, humour and cleverness of the script and lyrics.”

Also planned to complement the production is a “Once Upon a Tea Party” event for little princesses five to nine years old on Saturdays, May 1 and 8 from 6-7pm. The hour-long party includes games, prizes, activities, take-home crafts, a light dinner and a chance to meet and take photos with costumed characters from the cast. Reservations are required, and details can be found at www.scera.org.

Directing “Once Upon a Mattress” is especially delightful for Robinne Booth, who in her veteran acting career once played the role of Princess Fred. “I love the story and know it well,” she says. “That was no challenge. What really challenged me, however, is that we had more than 110 people audition for parts, and they were all really, really good. It was difficult to pick 30 people for the show.”

However, as she watches the players in rehearsals, she says, “I picked the right people. As they develop their roles, they own them. I have a dastardly queen, a conniving wizard, a mute king who does a hysterical pantomime, a quirky princess, and a lovely shy prince. I cannot believe how lucky I am to have them play the parts in the way I had them pictured.”

Her actors include Anne Gordon as Winnifred; Matthew Johnson as Dauntless; Diane Dabczynski as the queen; Jerry Elison as her husband; Elizabeth Bean as Lady Larken, and Spencer Bean as her would-be husband Sir Harry. The wizard is Jim Murphy, Rick Rea is the jester, and Rob Holcombe is the minstrel, who tells the story in song.

Assisting Booth are Sunny Watts, choreographer (whose high energy “Spanish Panic” number will surely be a show highlight); Martha Glissmeyer, music director, Brandon Moss, light designer; Deborah Bowman, costume designer, and Sarah Hainsworth, set designer. Melissa Gerber is the stage manager.

“This is a great play to attend and forget about your worries for a couple of hours, Booth says. “It is lively and fun and crazy and a little bit irreverent—and makes you laugh.”