

# There is ‘magic in the air’

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features editor and writer

When “Mary Poppins” opens here, three dreams will come true.

Director of the performing arts and theatre department Wayne Canady, for one, can check one more thing off his bucket list.

“‘Mary Poppins’ has been on my bucket list of shows to do ever since I first saw it come out when Cameron Mackintosh and Disney collaborated to do the show in New York after it had opened in London,” he said. “‘Mary Poppins’ is a beloved story for all generations and we are excited to bring the magic to our school.”

Senior Kayla Adcock, who has been cast as Mary Poppins, shares Canady’s excitement.

“When I first heard the musical was going to be ‘Mary Poppins,’ I was very excited,” she said. “[I’ve] wanted to be in it since I was a little girl.

“It’s kind’a like I’ve worked all the years here to get to have this part. I see myself in Mary Poppins in a lot of different ways. It’s very exciting and rewarding.”

And then there’s junior Chip Hawver, who has the other major role in the musical.

“It is a huge honor [to be in this play] and I’m very thankful for Mr. Canady for allowing me to play this role,” he said. “It has honestly been a dream of mine. Already in rehearsals it’s so much fun to do.”

One of the slogans for the play is “there is magic in the air” and that’s just what the cast and crew hope will happen. And part of that magic will be accomplished through the help of Zfx, who has assisted in past performances such as “Phantom of the Opera” and the “Drowsy Chaperone.” Zfx will install rigging on the ceiling over where the audience is located and then over the stage for Bert’s Proscenium dance where he scales the walls and walks upside down.

Stage flying has drastically changed since “Peter Pan” was performed here in 2003. That show required five cast members to fly and the stage had nothing to aid in that process, according to Becky Bannon, who was the middle school drama teacher then and who volunteers now in high school productions.

“Although the process is similar for ‘Mary Poppins,’

it’s much more polished today,” she said. “We could only fly across the stage. Mary will be flying over the audience, much the same as the chandelier was flown in ‘Phantom of the Opera.’

“The equipment is smaller and more functional. Unfortunately, it is still very expensive to fly a show, but what would ‘Peter Pan’ and ‘Mary Poppins’ be without it?”

Both Adcock and Hawver will wear harnesses around their waists in order to be lifted above the crowd. The characters will be attached to a machine that will pull them up the walls and on the ceiling.

“I’m so excited,” Adcock said. “The first question I asked was ‘Can I do backflips?’ But I can’t do that.”

Yet contrary to what some would assume, flying is not the biggest struggle for those working on the play.

Besides the challenges of the technical aspects, Canady worries about the set and timing the most. The five backdrops won’t get here until three weeks prior to the opening of the show and that makes it hard to rehearse, along with projections and animations that will be used for the first time ever here.

“[It’s a struggle] making the magic happen in this show and everything being cued and perfectly on time,” Canady said.

The play was cast right before winter break and rehearsals began immediately following first semester exams.

Adcock said she has been working on her performance and attitude the most for this show.

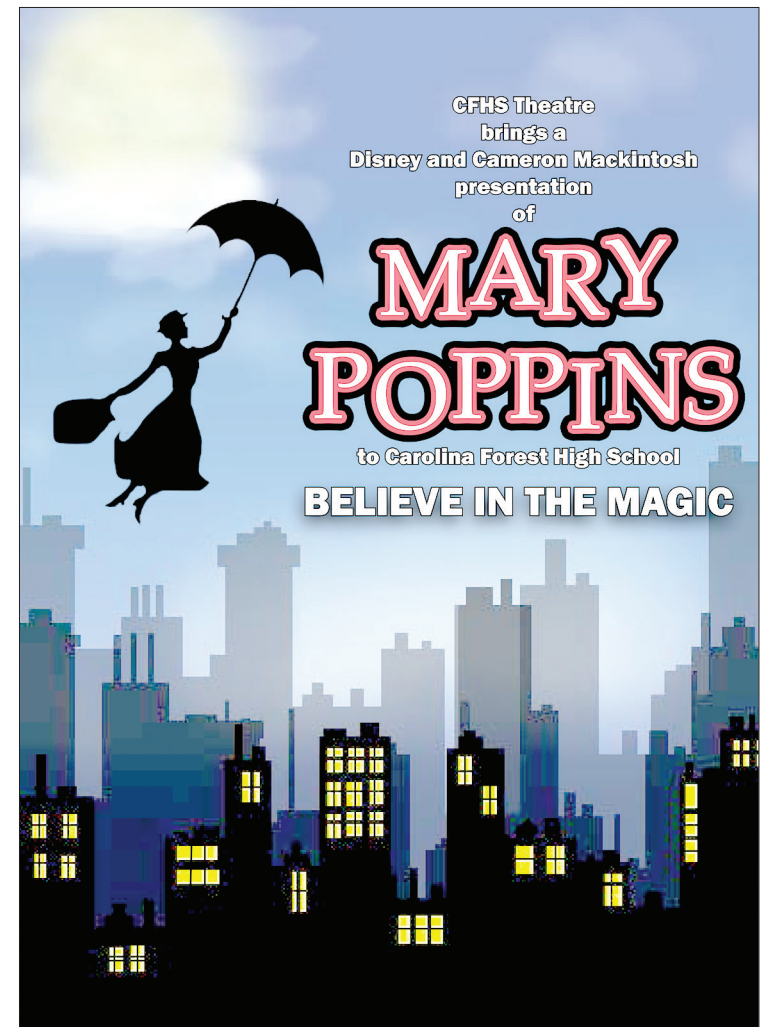
“For me growing up as a singer, I’ve just been more interested in pop and Mary Poppins is very stern and precise so making sure that I come across on the spot is one of the most difficult things,” she said. “Mary Poppins can’t sing like she doesn’t know. She has to sing practically perfect.”

But Adcock feels her hard work will pay off.

“My favorite part about the role is that I’m magical and everyone in the show who ends up having magic is

the film.

- “A Spoonful of Sugar” was inspired by the polio vaccine.
- Disney was sued over “Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.”
- The success of “Mary Poppins” helped Walt Disney purchase the land for Walt Disney World.
- The soundtrack spent 14 weeks



because of Mary Poppins,” she said. “With my character it brings excitement and it brings the magic to life.”

Hawver also faces a few challenges.

“Keeping the cockney accent going and singing with it is really hard on [my] vocal cords,” he said.

Canady hopes the audience will love the play as much as he does.

“It’s really two stories in one,” he said. “It’s a children’s story, but it’s also an adult story.

“And a lot of people forget [that]. The adults need to pay close attention to the story that’s in it for them as well.

“My favorite part of the play is probably the spirit of believing that anything can happen. It’s truly a heartfelt story. It’s a family piece that is wonderful for all ages to enjoy together.”

## fast || facts

- It took Walt Disney more than 20 years to secure rights to “Mary Poppins.”
- The author of the book, “Mary Poppins,” P.L. Travers, hated the movie with a passion.
- The production of “Mary Poppins” was so big that all four sound stages on the Disney studio lot were used for

at number one on the Billboard charts in 1965, outselling The Beatles.

- The Library of Congress selected “Mary Poppins” for preservation in the National Film Registry; it is the only live action Disney film to be selected.

• Source: [broadway.com](http://broadway.com), [mentalfloss.com](http://mentalfloss.com)

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