

BY SHIREEN MOHYI

The Lansing Symphony Orchestra has had their fair share of classical music performances, but their upcoming show, Broadway Rocks!, has the Orchestra preparing in a completely different way.



"We haven't rehearsed yet, we haven't met the people on stage and things like that," said musician Gretchen Morse, who plays the English Horn and Oboe. "People in the orchestra are at a high enough level that they can [do that]. We pick up the music ahead of time and learn it on our own and we're able to put it together pretty quickly."

Conductor Timothy Muffitt said that though the 70-person orchestra has done shows similar to Broadway Rocks! and has worked with many of the same singers, the upcoming production is a brand new program for the Orchestra. One of the most important aspects of the show is the presentation of some young local talent performing on a larger stage alongside Broadway and Lansing Symphony professionals. With 100 high school choir students, the Lansing Symphony, plus 10 additional musicians and three guest vocalists, it's surely not your typical performance.


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"This is a really great show," Muffitt said. "We have worked previously with this company and some of the singers and they really deliver a great concert. We are also pleased to be presenting the Michigan State University Youth Chorale as well."

The audience can expect a night full of professional singing, immense talent and some of the most popular Broadway hits from the past 30 years from musicals such as The Lion King, Mamma Mia, Rent and Hairspray. Both Muffitt and Morse agree that the most exciting part of the show, which is taking place at the Wharton Center in Cobb Great Hall on Feb. 20 at 8 p.m., is getting a little bit of the Broadway experience right in East Lansing.

"We kind of get to dance [with] our feet a little bit and get excited about some upbeat tunes and singing," Morse shared. "Many of us have played in the [orchestral] pit for national touring productions of Broadway shows, so it's a chance to kind of remember those kinds of times and support the singers again."

Muffitt said that the Lansing Symphony loves doing shows outside of their usual routine, because it gives the Orchestra a chance to connect with a new audience.

"We have done Broadway shows in the past, but I imagine the repertoire for this to be different; some new offerings, some things people haven't heard in a while, or things they haven't heard on this stage and some familiar things they can sing along with," said Morse. "We like the break from the classical programming and look forward to doing something that is more upbeat and fun and theatrical." 



*Shireen Mohyi is a senior graduating from Michigan State University this spring with a major in editorial journalism and a minor in public relations. Along with her editorial internship with M3, she is a Style Guru intern for CollegeFashionista and the Social Media Director of Michigan State's only student-run fashion, beauty and lifestyle magazine, VM Magazine. Her favorite things are Instagram, celebrity gossip, and a great place to brunch.*