



A talented cast of young performers will take on the well-loved musical *Bye Bye Birdie* (YPE) under the masterful direction of Michelle McElroy at the Hilton Head Christian Academy (HHCA) Performing Arts Center.

The Fall theatre production delivers sing-along, musical favorites including *Telephone Hour*, *Put On A Happy Face*, *A Lot of Livin' To Do* and *One Boy*

. The stage show, based on a book by Michael Stewart and with music by Lee Adams came to Broadway in 1960. It is 1958 and rock-n-roll idol Conrad Birdie has been drafted into the army. His agent Albert and his secretary Rosie concoct a plan for a farewell performance on the Ed Sullivan Show which they hope to sell Birdie's new song,

One Last Kiss,

and ultimately save the failing record label. Birdie is directed to end the performance with a kiss to Kim MacAfee, a member of the Conrad Birdie Fan Club from Sweet Apple, Ohio. Albert and Rosie head to Ohio for Birdie's arrival and everything begins to unravel. Kim's father is star struck about appearing on Ed Sullivan, Kim's steady, Hugo gets jealous at the thought of her kissing Conrad on TV.

The nostalgic, animated characters have been thoughtfully cast, beginning with gregarious sophomore Ben Pyrlik (Conrad Birdie, above), the smooth-belting 8th grader Olivia Shamlou (Kim MacAfee), talented freshman Caden Becker (Albert Peterson) and dynamic sophomore Emma Stewart (Rosie Alvarez). Supporting cast members include: sophomore Avery White (Harry MacAfee, Junior Reedy Newton (Doris MacAfee), 7th grader Gracen Denton (Mae Peterson) and 8th grader Warner Hahn (Hugo Peabody) The cast is comprised of 34 6th-12th grade students with a full ensemble of singers/dancers led by choreographer, Jamal Edwards and vocal coaching by Sonya Jacobs.

What does the cast like most about playing their characters? "I like how straight-forward Kim is... I like how serious their love interest is, but they are only 15!!" remarked Shamlou. Pyrlik chuckled, "Conrad is a lot like me. I like his egotistic attitude. He's chill and funny and doesn't really care about a lot." Stewart pointed to Rosie's serious but sassy nature that attracted her most to the role while Becker agreed the dual nature of his character, Albert - sometimes really happy and sometimes stressed - was a welcome challenge. The cast is certain that audiences will enjoy the high-energy show. They admitted the music gets stuck in your head very easily. "It is going to be great because Michelle McElroy is directing it," remarked Pyrlik. "The leads are really strong and the choreography is great," added Becker. According to Stewart and Shamlou, Edwards is really professional and very encouraging. The choreography is a large component of the show with big ensemble numbers like *Telephone Hour* and *A Lot of Livin' to Do*.

The showtimes are Thursday, November 2 at 7pm., Friday, November 3rd at 5pm. and Saturday, November 4th at 7pm. Tickets can be purchased at hhcadrama.eventbrite.com