



TLHLIFE

'GOLDEN' OPPORTUNITY

Tyler Wold reconnects with theater at Monticello Opera House

Amanda Sieradzki Council on Culture & Arts

Actor Tyler Wold feels lucky to be stepping out onto the Monticello Opera House's stage this month for their production of "On Golden Pond," and it's not just because he was once the voice of The Florida Lottery. Wold placed his acting career on hold for 13 years while serving as an announcer for the state's lottery drawings, but it wasn't long before the theater bug bit him again.

In 2010, he got back onstage at Theatre Tallahassee in "Witness for the Prosecution" and "Cabaret." During the day, Wold works in the radio business as the Key Account Manager at Cumulus Media. His last show, pre-COVID, was playing the Stage Manager in the Opera House's production of "Our Town."

Now that live theater is returning, he is soaking in every moment with his castmates while preparing for his new role in "On Golden Pond," as the lead, Norman Thayer.

"Theater has been the center of my social and personal life outside of work," says Wold. "I missed all of the people and the connection that you can have with your audiences. It's very satisfying to turn in a good performance and do something that people enjoy and put their hard-earned money out there to see. It's very rewarding in that way."

Wold moved to Tallahassee in 1978 to work as a radio disc jockey. He quickly plugged into the theater scene, debuting in a production of "The Sound of Music." Currently, he serves as a board member at large for Theatre Tallahassee, and has enjoyed working with theater groups in the Big Bend area.

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If you go

What: On Golden Pond

When: Aug. 20-29

Where: Monticello Opera House, 185 West Washington St

Cost: General admission \$22, discounts available

Contact: For more information, call 850-997-4242 or visit monticellooperahouse.org.

Tyler Wold will be stepping onto the Monticello Opera House's stage this fall for its production of "On Golden Pond." TYLER WOLD



Tyler Wold in "Antigone" pictured with Zakiya Jas and Louise Ritchie. PROVIDED

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Wold

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Some of his favorite roles have been Canon Penefather in "Murder on the Nile," General Waverly in "White Christmas," Herr Schultz in "Cabaret" and Juror 4 in "12 Angry Men."

He is fearless when it comes to new roles, and will step out of his comfort zone to try on characters that are nothing like himself. Working with his voice his whole career has helped while on-stage, but mostly he attributes his growth as an actor to working with top-notch directors and colleagues.

"We have so much talent in this town," says Wold. "Collectively my castmates and directors have had an impact on me. They all come to the project with the same end goal in mind, which is to do good quality work, and I've really enjoyed working with all of them."

"On Golden Pond" is a play written by Ernest Thompson which was adapted into the 1981 film starring Katharine Hepburn, Jane Fonda and Henry Fonda. The story follows Norman and his wife Ethel as they care for his estranged daughter's stepson, Billy.

Wold begins detailed research on his characters before stepping into a new role in order to fully understand their nuances. For "On Golden Pond," he has avoided watching the Hollywood award-winning film so as to not take on Fonda's mannerisms.

"We're familiar with the play, and it's been around a long time, but we want to bring it to people fresh so it's something they've never seen before," explains Wold.

"We want to do the characters the way the author intended them to be done. I'm not trying to be Henry Fonda's Norman because there was only one of him, and will never be another one."

In the play, Norman enjoys playing the board game Parcheesi with his wife, so Wold spent some time learning the rules of the game to have a better understanding of it. In another scene, his soon to be step-grandson makes a joke about author Alexandre Dumas, so Wold took time learning how to correctly pronounce the French name.

The rehearsal process, which began at the start of July, has been easeful in

spite of fluctuating COVID-19 numbers in the state.

Wold is grateful to be able to hold rehearsals in his home given the cast's intimate numbers.

He remodeled his garage a few years ago and has enjoyed holding rehearsals in it over the years. Wold says his dog joins in on the action from time to time as well.

"He's been in theater too, and played Sandy in 'Annie' a few years ago," laughs Wold. "Luckily we have been able to rehearse in person. We're all together and doing something we love doing, and we try to do it the very best we can. We've got a cast that has experienced enough life to bring these roles to life"

Wold says the heart of the play is its portrayal of relationships.

The strained relationship between Norman and his daughter Chelsea brings up themes of the power of forgiveness. The second big relationship is Norman's 50-year strong marriage and how his wife keeps him afloat as he becomes preoccupied with dying and losing his memory.

"It's a play about things we're all going to go through eventually," says Wold. "There's something for everyone to connect to regardless of their age. We plan to make it two hours well spent with a lot of laughs and sentimental moments."

"On Golden Pond" runs from Aug. 20-29 at the Monticello Opera House. Monticello Opera House's official COVID-19 statement encourages all patrons and staff to get vaccinated or wear a mask and provides hand sanitizing stations throughout the building.

Wold is hopeful the show will bring audiences the opportunity to get lost in the story, while safely re-connecting with one another and the actors in a live theater setting.

"Theater tells very important stories," says Wold. "Sometimes it's funny, sometimes it's sad, sometimes it informs an important issue. People can come and suspend disbelief for a little bit and see their lives in a different light. Theater can do all those things and do it in an intimate way."

Amanda Sieradzki is the feature writer for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the capital area's umbrella agency for arts and culture (www.tallahasseearts.org).