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Photos: Acting Up's 'Mulan Jr.' features Loveland children

BY: CHUCK GIBSON • CONTRIBUTOR • APRIL 8, 2010

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Several talented Loveland area kids make up a large core of the cast for Acting Up's stage adaptation of Disney's "Mulan Jr." Acting Up is the community theater group for young performers based in Mason.



Photos: Loveland residents in "Mulan, Jr."

They'll stage four performances at the Mason High School Theater April 16, April 17 and April 18.

Kirsten Johnson is one of 19 Loveland kids in a cast of about 80. The 18-year-old describes her role as Lotzi, the ancestor representing honor, as challenging and fun. She shared the background of how there are five ancestors who represent strength, loyalty, honor, destiny and love. In Chinese culture, it is believed the dead watch over the living.

"I think the ancestors will be really fun to watch," said Johnson. "They're kind of with the audience; watching as things unfold for the Fa family. I think the audience might connect with the ancestors."

Her connection with theater comes naturally. She remembers being around it while her mother was active when she was young; she played her first part at age 11 and has performed in every one of Acting Up's shows since they started with the "Wizard of Oz" five years ago. She was awarded an Orchid for her performance of Miss Hannigan in Annie a year ago. Her favorite was "Footloose," but she thinks Mulan is a great story.

"It's a really empowering story. Mulan is so strong," she said. "Mulan is a really great role model for people. The music is great, too. It's just going to be a really great show."

The lead role of Mulan is played by Abby Docherty of Loveland and her father, Fa Zhou is played by Loveland High School freshman, Drew Kovacs. He describes his character as "really strong; looking out for his daughter" despite being challenged with a limp from a war injury.

"He's known throughout China as a great warrior," said Kovacs. "When the Huns invade, he can't do it again. He's always there for Mulan as she runs away to join in his place."

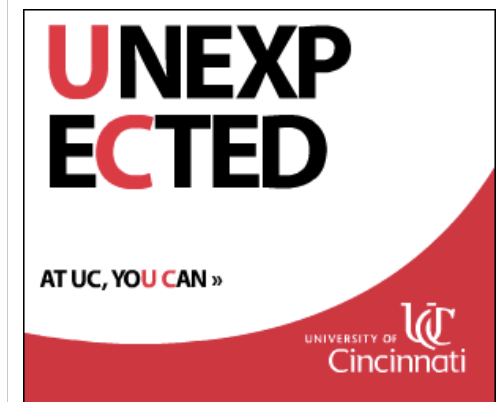
Kovacs' favorite part of the whole show is the song "I'll make a man out of you" when Mulan is in the army camp. Developing the limp for the character was a big challenge for him, but he likes playing the role because he gets to be the inspiration for Mulan. He thinks the defining moment in

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