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'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' coming to Huntington

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Augustus Gloop, played by Nic Mains, is seen onstage with Mrs. Gloop during the touring production of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory." The show makes a stop in Huntington on Monday as part of the Marshall Artists Series.

Submitted photo

HUNTINGTON — Everybody knows about Charlie Bucket, the poor, honest boy who found a golden ticket that granted him admittance into the secretive Willy Wonka's chocolate factory, but what about Violet Beauregarde? What about Veruca Salt or Mike Teavee?

What about Augustus Gloop?

In the touring production of “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory,” which closes out the 85th Marshall Artists Series on Monday night at the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center, the audience gets a better look at Violet, Veruca, Mike and Augustus.

Speaking over the phone, Nic Mains, who portrays the gluttonous Germanic golden ticket winner, Augustus, said the musical would be both familiar but also new to most audiences.

“There’s a lot of what you expect,” he said. “But there are different versions of the story.”

Roald Dahl’s “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” has been a favorite for generations, first appearing as a children’s book in the mid-1960s before being adapted into two separate films — “Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory” with Gene Wilder as Wonka in 1971 and “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” with Johnny Depp playing Wonka in 2005.

The Wonkas are each a little different, but Mains said Augustus Gloop is always the fat kid. He’s always destined to be the first to find a golden ticket and the first to wash out at the factory.

“But with the musical, you get to know a little more about what drives the kids,” Mains said. “You get a better idea of their character and what sort of chaos they’re going to bring to the factory.”

There’s more to Augustus, Violet, Veruca and Mike. There’s at least one more song for each of them to let people know who they are, which may or may not be a surprise.

Mains said he and Augustus weren’t that much alike. Augustus is 12 years old and not really all that self-aware. He’s much more confident being a fat kid than Mains was at the same age.

"I don't think it was as easy for me as it was for him," he said. "He had zero qualms about his size. No one ever shamed him."

Mains saw Augustus as having a kind of strength because of that.

"That's something I'd like to take with me and really focus on," the actor said.

What Mains thought he gave Augustus was the confidence he had now.

He said Augustus was fun to play, not as easy as it might seem, and may be something of a surprise for the audience.

"It's always a challenge to play a child as an adult that feels relatable and believable," Mains said.

The audience is bound to notice something is up, perhaps more so because the actor who plays Charlie in the musical is a child.

Mains said he's the first of the golden ticket winners to come out in front of the audience.

"For a second, there's this moment where I feel like the audience is like, what ... ?" he said.

But it only lasts for a second. Then the crowd gets a good look at him. Maybe they notice the strand of sausages slung around his character's neck, the sweater and short pants outfit or the bowl haircut.

They get pulled in by the level of commitment to the energy of the character, he said.

"And then people realize, 'Oh, we're in for a really wild tour tonight,'" Mains said.

"Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," he said, has been a great tour for him, and it's been a great show for people to come back to the theater for.

"It's familiar. It's fun. It's not heavy, though there's a little bit of dark in there," he said. "It's gone over well."

The tour has done pretty good. Mains said they've managed to avoid a lot of trouble with the pandemic and have only had to cancel one show because of the virus.

“We’ve got a really good COVID officer named Frank who keeps us safe,” the actor said.

Mains is looking forward to sharing Augustus Gloop and “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” with many more audiences before the tour wraps up at the end of June.

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Want to go?

WANT TO GO?

The Marshall Artists Series presents “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory”

WHEN: 7:30 p.m. Monday

WHERE: Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center

TICKETS: \$64.42, \$71, \$81.97 and \$98.42

INFO: Visit the Marshall Artists Series box office, call 304-696-6656 or Ticketmaster

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Be Nice. No racism, sexism or any sort of -ism that is degrading to another person.

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