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Actor finds a good match in Tevye

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Mark Thornburg found his match with “Fiddler on the Roof.”

Three years after playing main character Tevye in the Papillion-La Vista Community Theatre's 2007 production of the play, Thornburg will again play the singing milkman, husband and father of five daughters at the Omaha Community Playhouse.

“I love the musical,” Thornburg said. “It's one of my, if not my, favorites.”

Set at the beginning of the 20th century in an impoverished Jewish village in Czarist Russia, “Fiddler on the Roof” is the story of family, tradition and faith in the midst of social upheaval.

Thornburg's wife, Barb, was the one who encouraged him to try out for the role, telling him that she had never seen him happier than when he played Tevye, his first time onstage in 12 years.

Now, he has an even stronger sense of Tevye's struggle than he did three years ago, Thornburg said.

“I have learned a little bit more about having to watch a child leave home and a little bit more about changes in life,” he said, adding that he has gained more of an appreciation for the character.

Although Thornburg said it is one of his favorites, “Fiddler on the Roof” can also be a difficult production.

“It's kind of painful, actually, to portray (Tevye). It's not exactly the happiest story,” he said. “But that's part of the beauty of it; life doesn't always have a happy ending.”

As Thornburg has his first year onstage at the Playhouse, it will also be his first time to not be onstage during P-LV Community Theatre's summer production at the Sumtur Amphitheater, which is in its fourth year. Regardless, he said he is excited to see his fellow actors in “The Sound of Music.”

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