

New Bedford High School Drama Club presents The Match Girl's Gift: A Christmas Story

By Jamie Roballo, Senior Drama Club Member

"Without our dreams, we are without hope." No matter how dark the world may seem, there will always be light in the darkness, warmth in the bleakness, and hope in times of despair. Our world may change, but one thing will always stay the same— every single one of us has hope and light inside of us, and as long as we continue hoping, there will never be true darkness. In their reimagined staging of *The Match Girl's Gift: A Christmas Story*, a play by Laurie Brooks, the New Bedford High School Drama Club strives to prove exactly that.

The play, a retelling of the Hans Christian Andersen tale 'The Little Match Girl', centers on Lizzie, a young girl selling matchsticks on a snowy Christmas Eve in turn-of-the-century New York City. As she watches the world around her, shivering in the cold, she uses the light of her matches to dream of a better life, assisted by her grandmother's voice and a chorus of other children. We watch as she lives out the dreams she builds, shares her kindness with others, and reminds us all that there is always hope to be found, if we continue dreaming.

The students of New Bedford High School, along with guidance from a brilliant team of educators and directors, have been able to adapt this script into a radio play format, which will be recorded and available for streaming as a performance. Not only will there be acting talent, but also special features for the drama club's skilled crew— radio plays require Foley

artists, or members of the crew who create real-time sound effects to accompany an audio performance, making it seem as though actors are really moving and interacting with an unseen space. As rules and regulations for safety change, performance and art change too, and NBHS is switching up the way they perform to create an entirely new experience for cast, crew, and audience alike.

Says Sarah Cadieux Pacheco, the show's co-director and one of the drama teachers at NBHS, "I feel like this story of love and giving is more poignant this year than ever, so I was thrilled when we received permission to adapt our performance to achieve social-distancing requirements and perform it as a radio play." She continues, "Students auditioned remotely, submitted self-recorded audition tapes. Once cast, students had the option of attending rehearsal in person, in a socially distanced space, or they could participate virtually from home. For the recording, the auditorium at NBHS was transformed into a socially distant recording studio, with students placed as far apart as possible with their own dedicated microphone and materials. Putting on this show was a creative challenge and we're so excited to finally share it with our audience." Cadieux Pacheco is joined by Co-Director Stephanie Donnelly, who is making her NBHS directorial debut as the newest theatre teacher at the school. They are joined by Assistant Director, Ricardo Aguiar, and Technical Director, Teresa L'Heureux.

The New Bedford High School Drama Club is performing *The Match Girl's Gift: A Christmas Story* by Laurie Brooks for one night only, on December 23, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. streamed directly to you in the comfort of your own home! The performance is being presented as an old-fashioned radio play.

Tickets are \$5 per streaming device and can be purchased online **here**. Each ticket purchase generates a unique link to be used the night of the show.

The performance is produced by special arrangement with THE
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