

Summer Lyric readies for golden season grand finale

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With Elizabeth Argus starring as Mama Rose, 'Gypsy' will premiere on Thursday, Aug. 3, at 8 p.m. in Dixon Hall. (Photo by Michael Palumbo)

Premiering at Dixon Hall on Thursday, Aug. 3, at 8 p.m., Gypsy will captivate audiences as the grand finale for [Summer Lyric Theatre](#)'s golden anniversary season at Tulane University.

The 1959 musical is inspired by the life of burlesque legend Gypsy Rose Lee. Chronicling Gypsy's rise to stardom, the narrative follows the efforts of her mother, Mama Rose, to raise Louise (later known as Gypsy) and her sister, June, with ambitions of getting ahead in the vaudevillian world of show business.

“Many consider this to be one of the greatest musicals ever written. It has an outstanding book written by Arthur Laurents, who also wrote the book for *West Side Story*,” said Michael McKelvey, artistic director of Summer Lyric Theatre.

With lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and music by composer Jule Styne, “the show has this incredibly familiar score and songs in it that have weathered the test of time,” said McKelvey, who will direct the show.

The musical’s showstopping standards include “Everything’s Coming Up Roses,” “Some People,” “Let Me Entertain You” and “Rose’s Turn,” which McKelvey notes is the final song of the show and a tour de force moment for the character of Mama Rose.

“Mama Rose is one of musical theater’s most iconic characters,” he said.

Veteran Summer Lyric performer Elizabeth Argus will take on the pivotal role of the archetypal stage mother.

“Musical theater actresses strive their whole lives to play this role, and I felt that Liz was ready to tackle this one. Its scope as a character is comparable to Shakespeare’s *King Lear*. It has that sort of gravitas and mystique about it,” said McKelvey.

Gypsy will also feature local actress Meredith Owens as striptease starlet Gypsy Rose Lee, Bob Edes Jr. as the talent agent Herbie and Tatum Ludlum as Dainty June.

The cast also includes Ellie Bono as Baby June and Camille Burkey, daughter of Summer Lyric alumna Leslie Castay, as Baby Louise.

Tickets are available [online](#).

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