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Violet stands tall for OAT's second summer show

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Ozark Actor's Theatre (OAT) opened the second show of their season this past weekend, bringing Violet to Rolla. The musical chronicles the pilgrimage of it's titular character as she travels across the country to heal the scar left on her face from a childhood incident. The show continues this week and serves as an excellent addition to OAT's summer season.

Hollyn Gayle, who is becoming an OAT regular, plays Violet and thus is the focus of the audience's attention for the entire show, with the exception of only a few scenes. Gayle steps into this demanding role and rises to the occasion, using her splending singing voice to not only bring Violet to life, but to make sure the audience is hanging on her every word.

Gayle is joined by Danny Bertaux and Omega Jones, who play the characters of Monty and Flick, who journey alongside Violet. The pair compliments each other well, and join Gayle to make a well balanced trio. Jones in particular boasts his own powerhouse vocals, and Bertaux skillfully brings out several aspects of Monty's character, blending the likeable and not-so-likeable to make a well-rounded performance.

The remainder of the cast is a roster of familiar faces as well, such as Dan Fenaughty from last

year's production of "I Do! I Do!", Nicholas Reese from "Footloose," and local faces like Kely Brown from Rolla High School. The cast rotates through several different characters, leaving as one person and entering as another, while providing well-tuned vocal harmonies throughout the show. Dan Fenaughty in particular does a great job of switching characters, to the point where you might have to check your program to make sure they're the same person.

The show, taking place in an older time period, features some language that might make audience members uncomfortable at first, specifically dealing with race. However, this is done tastefully and serves the plot of the story. So while it might make you perk up your ears, don't let it distract you from the soulful journey OAT is displaying at the Cedar Street Playhouse this week.

Violet runs Thursday through Sunday of this week, with showings at 7:30 p.m. every night except for Sunday, which is at 2:00 p.m. Tickets can be obtained at the box office or at ozarkactorstheatre.org.

Hollyn Gayle, who plays the show's titular lead, sings alongside her younger counterpart and other members of the cast. PHOTO PROVIDED BY OZARK ACTORS THEATRE

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