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MUCH BALLYHOOED PRODUCTION

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Author: Robyn Bradley Litchfield

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MUCH BALLYHOOED PRODUCTION

Southern Jewish

family focus of

Tony-winning play

Hitler invades Poland, Franklin D. Roosevelt continues to lead the United States, "Gone With the Wind" premieres on the big screen and the German-Jewish community of Atlanta is all abuzz with Ballyhoo 1939.

Who really has time to worry about what's going on around the world? Ballyhoo is the social event of the season as far as the Freitag family is concerned. There are dates to be found especially on the last night of Ballyhoo, debutante-style ball for young Jewish elite singles from across the Southeast.

The Alabama Shakespeare Festival brings the Freitags and their problems to the stage in the appropriately titled play "The Last Night of Ballyhoo," which previews Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and then opens for its five-week run Saturday.

"I have been around the play a lot, but this is my first time to direct 'Ballyhoo,'" said Bruce Sevy, who also directed ASF's "Always, Patsy Cline."

The play, which won a Tony Award in 1997, was written by in Alfred Uhry, whose other works include "Driving Miss Daisy," which won him a 1988 Pulitzer Award, and "Parade," which won him a 1999 Tony for best book for a musical.

"It has been interesting to work on it, and the play is richer than I initially thought," Sevy said.

Each of the roles has a nice depth to it, said Sevy, who is associate artistic director/new play development at the Denver Center Theatre Company.

And it is an excellent story and very funny, said Rabbi David Baylinson of Montgomery. Baylinson will be at the ASF on Dec. 4 to lead a free Theatre in the Mind pre-show lecture on being Jewish in the South. He has read the play and looks forward to seeing it performed.

"'Ballyhoo' really happened. I grew up in the North and don't remember anything like it," he said. "Basically, these were opportunities for young Jewish men and women who were scattered throughout the South to meet each other and make friends."

Play 6H

WANT TO GO?

What: "The Last Night of Ballyhoo"

When: Previews at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday and 8 p.m. Friday; opens at 8 p.m. Saturday and runs through Dec. 31 except Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. There is a 2 p.m. matinee only Dec. 24. Regular showtimes are 7:30 p.m. Sunday and Tuesday through Thursday, 8 p.m. Friday, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday.

Where: Alabama Shake speare Festival, in the Blount Cultural Park off Woodmere Boulevard

Admission: \$20-\$30, based on date

Additional events: There are two Theatre in the Mind pre-show lectures with the production. "Being Jewish in the South" by Rabbi David Baylinson, at noon Dec. 4; "Design Talk: Seeing the Light-Tricks of the Trade in Stage Illumination" by Mike Post, at noon Dec. 11. Both are free, but reservations required.

Information: 271-5353.

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Abstract (Document Summary)

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