

She's Bringin' A Lil Vegas

By Karen Cotton | kcotton@wyoingnews.com

Reporter:Karen Cotton

Gayle Dawn Hill moved to Cheyenne in August from Las Vegas where she worked as a professional actress. Now she's Cheryl in the musical, "A Taffeta Christmas," the Cheyenne Little Theatre's Christmas production.

Hill's husband is in the military and was transferred from Las Vegas to Cheyenne. Her first role with the Cheyenne Little Theatre Players was Mrs. Corney in "Oliver." "The day I came out here, I auditioned for 'Oliver,'" Hill said. "I wasn't going to do (A Taffeta Christmas). I had just moved here and wanted to be settled into my life. But, I went to the auditions and liked the music and I tried out."

"A Taffeta Christmas" features 1950s hits and Christmas songs.

It's about the four Taffetas sisters who are performing in their hometown after returning from New York City where they've become TV stars.

Hill said she is a trained opera singer and performed as a strolling opera singer in Las Vegas.

"I performed for a lot of stars, Garth Brooks was one," she said.

Hill was also part of the improv show, "Tony and Tina's Italian Wedding."

"The last thing that I did was celebrity host at an NBA All-Star game," Hill said. "I like my new life. It's real good, calm and mellow. I was ready for it."

Patty Walkley plays Hill's sister, Kaye, in the production and also helps Hill transform from her natural raven hair to Marilyn Monroe blond in the Mary Godfrey Playhouse's green room.

To begin, Walkley slowly braids Hill's thick, curly hair into a crown braid, eliciting the occasional wince from Hill.

Hill then pulls a stocking cap over her hair and places the blonde wig on top to complete her character's look.

"This Marilyn Monroe part is a big stretch for me," Hill said, looking at herself in the mirror. "It's extremely challenging and has a lot of music in it."

See Hill, page D3

Continued from D1

The Taffeta foursome is rounded out with Darcy Guille as Peggy and Martie Oestman as Donna. Brenda Lyttle is the director of the production.

"Gayle goes through the biggest transformation - the blond wig - and then you'll see her in her dress and va, va voom," Lyttle said. "I pictured a Marilyn Monroe type of a character for her and the script says a blond.

"She was very excited about being a blond. Her personality changes when she gets her wig on and becomes her character, Cheryl."

"A Taffeta Christmas" has a live band on stage during the production, a drummer, pianist and a bass player.

The announcer, Tom Rumpke, is a new actor, but isn't new to the Cheyenne Little Theatre Players. He's a former board member of the theater's board of directors.

"We needed someone with the look and voice of a TV announcer and he's around the same height as the Taffetas," she said.

The men and women had to be the same height on TV.
"Tom Rumpke had the right look, voice and he fit all of those things," Lyttle said.



Above - Actress Gayle Dawn Hill styles her blonde wig before rehearsal for the play "A Taffeta Christmas" at the Mary Godfrey Playhouse Nov. 25. Below - Darcey Guille, Martie Oestman, Gayle Dawn Hill and Patty Walkley pose for a picture before rehearsal for the play "A Taffeta Christmas" at the Mary Godfrey Playhouse Nov. 25. Photos by Michael Smith/staff

