

# Alton Middle School to Premiere "Seussical Jr." in Renovated Auditorium

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter  
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ALTON - Next week, the Alton Middle School theater department will share their production of "Seussical Jr." in the renovated AMS auditorium.

The show will premiere at 7 p.m. on April 18, 19 and 20, 2024. Eddie Hitchcock, the show's director, noted that the students are excited to perform the show but also eager to be back in the AMS auditorium after three years of renovations. Hitchcock said the newly renovated auditorium has a bigger stage, new lights, a new sound system and more for both the theater department and audience to enjoy.

“The renovations have really made the production enhanced a lot more,” Hitchcock said. “We felt like orphans for a while. We were going from different place to different place. We just didn’t have our home, and now that we have our theater home, it’s just wonderful.”

He explained that the theater department has not been in the auditorium since 2020. They have performed shows at Bridge Church, Upper Alton Baptist Church, and The Lovejoy, but they are excited to return to AMS and put on their production in the auditorium.

“Seussical Jr.” tells the story of many favorite Dr. Seuss characters, including Horton the elephant. But Hitchcock said the musical has a bigger message about acceptance and being who you are, and the students are excited to share this with community members.

“The kids are excited to put on Seussical Jr. with Horton, the elephant sitting on the egg, all those beautiful funny stories that you’ve seen,” he explained. “It’s a great musical. The heart of the musical is that everybody wants to be accepted in a way, even though they may not have the best looks or anything like that. It’s more about just our hearts. And you see that in Horton. He has a really tender heart in the musical.”

This is a powerful message for the middle schoolers, many of whom are learning about theater for the first time through this production. Hitchcock noted that the Alton Community Unit School District #11 has strong choral, band, orchestra and theater programs. The middle school theater department is many students’ introduction to the theater world, and Hitchcock is proud to be a part of that.

“Alton does have a good arts community, which I really appreciate,” he added. “The middle school, it’s just the beginning. They’re learning what it means to be onstage, what it means to hold a prop, what it means to stay in character. They’re learning so many of the basic foundations of theater. And as they move on, they’ll keep that passion.”

“Seussical Jr.” will open at 7 p.m. on April 18, 19 and 20, 2024, at the Alton Middle School auditorium. Tickets cost \$10 for adults and \$5 for students and children ages 12 and under.

