

THE HESSTON COLLEGE THEATRE DEPARTMENT PRESENTS



FOREVER PLAID

Produced by special arrangement with Music Theatre International.

Friday, November 20 • 7 p.m. ✦ **Saturday, November 21 • 7 p.m.**
Friday, November 27 • 7 p.m. ✦ **Saturday, November 28 • 7 p.m.**

Performances in the Studio Theatre in Northlawn on the Hesston College Campus.

Written and originally directed and choreographed by Stuart Ross
Music continuity supervision and arrangements by James Raitt
Produced by special arrangement with Music Theatre International

Hesston
College

START HERE, GO EVERYWHERE

Director and Choreographer Rachel Jantzi
Music Director Ken Rodgers
Technical Director Doug Peters

Cast

Frankie..... Nate Snyder
Sparky..... John Murray
Jinx..... Solomon Rudy
Smudge..... Sam Kauffman

Musicians

Piano..... Ken Rodgers
Bass..... Landon Bartel

Production Crew

Stage Manager..... Naomi Nussbaum
Set and Costume Design Rachel Jantzi
Light Board Operator..... Curtis Denlinger
Costume Construction..... Linda Janzen, Sharon Miller

Special Thanks

Linda Janzen and Sharon Miller, Steve Miller and Hesston High School, Dave and Laurie Uhler, Hesston True Value Hardware, Roberta at Walmart, Wendy Nugent at The Kansan and our friends and families.

The play will be performed without an intermission

For the safety and consideration of our cast and audience, photographic and recording devices are strictly prohibited. Turn off all cell phones and pagers. Please recycle programs in the box provided outside of the theater.

From the Director

I dedicate this show back to the four actors who put their heart and soul into it and to my mother, Judy Hebison. May she recall some “magic moments” from her youth. Peace and enjoy the show! —Rachel Jantzi

Dedication

Forever Plaid is dedicated to the “good guys”
To the guys who carried an extra handkerchief
To the guys who saved their allowances to give their parents an
extra special night on the town for their anniversary
To the guys who wheeled the projector carts for the driver education films
To the guys who didn’t go beyond first base, and if, by some miracle, they
did, they didn’t tell anyone.
We salute you!

Author’s Note

When most of us think of the 1950s, we think of rock’n’roll, greaser, hot rods, Elvis, Annette, Fabian, D.A., haircuts, and teenage rebellion. But there was a flip side to this era – the side of harmony, innocence, and the sincerity of dreams. It is the side that’s been lost in the shuffle of progress. It was a time when most parents and kids listened and danced to the same music and when families partook of the ritual of gathering in front of the TV to watch their favorite variety shows, like the Ed Sullivan Show or the Perry Como Show. It was a time when every family worked to fulfill the American Dream.

It was a period when four-part guy groups harmonized their way across the airwaves, jukeboxes, and hi-fis of the country. Throughout the land they would stand at a quartet of microphones, crooning a multitude of chaperoned prom-goers into dreamy romance.

They wore dinner jackets and bow ties (or perhaps cardigans and white bucks). Each move was drilled to precision. Each vocal arrangement soared to stratospheric heights of harmony. This sound crested right before rock’n’roll stole the heartbeat of music across the globe.

During this time, guys across the country banded together to sing in the basement for fun. If things worked out they might be hired to sing at weddings, conventions, proms, and country club socials. Inspired by the success of the recording stars, they made plans to zoom into careers of fame and fortune. But the musical taste of the U.S.A. was changing, and the country would not stop to listen to their dreams

This is the story of such a group—FOREVER PLAID.

Once upon a time, there were four guys (Sparky, Smudge, Jinx, and Frankie) who loved to sing. They met in high school, when they joined audiovisual club (1956). Discovering they shared affection for music and entertaining, they got together and dreamed of becoming like their idols—

The Four Aces, The Four Lads, The Four Freshmen, The Hi-Los, and The Crew Cuts. They rehearsed in the basement of Smudge's family's plumbing supply company. It was here they became Forever Plaid—a name that connects the continuation of traditional values of family, home, and harmony. Although rock'n'roll was racing down the fast lane like a candy apple "vette," they believed in their music. As their sound developed, they sang at family gatherings, fund-raisers, and eventually graduated to supermarket openings and proms. They had little time for romance or leisure for they supported their fantasy by holding down day jobs. Frankie was in dental supplies. Smudge was in bathroom fixtures. Sparky was in better dresses. They devoted themselves to singing at nights and on weekends. Then, finally, they landed their first big gig at the Airport Hilton cocktail bar—The Fusel Lounge.

February 9, 1964

En route to pick up their custom made plaid vests, they were slammed broadside by a school bus filled with eager Catholic teens. The teens were on their way to witness the Beatles make their U.S. television debut on the Ed Sullivan Show and miraculously escaped uninjured. The members of Forever Plaid were killed instantly. It is at that moment, when their careers and lives ended, that the story of *FOREVER PLAID* begins.

Through the Power of Harmony and the Expanded Holes in the Ozone Layer, in conjunction with the positions of the planets and all the astrotechnical stuff, they are allowed to come back to perform the show they never got to do in life.

And having completed the Mission of Harmony, our men in plaid must return to the cosmos. Although they may be gone, through this production their dreams live on forever.