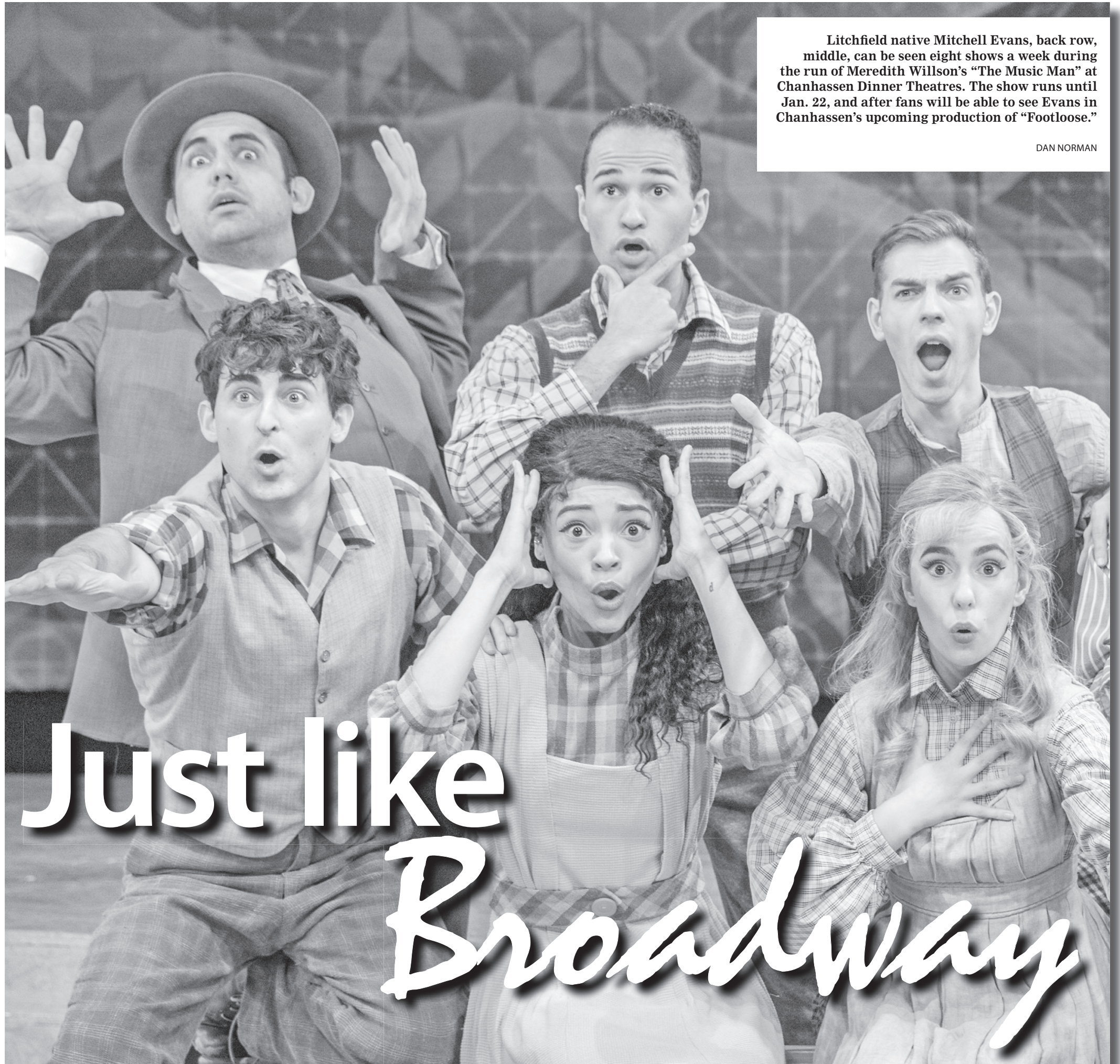


EXTRA!

FAITH/B2 TRIBUTES/B4 CLASSIFIEDS/B6



Litchfield native Mitchell Evans, back row, middle, can be seen eight shows a week during the run of Meredith Willson's "The Music Man" at Chanhassen Dinner Theatres. The show runs until Jan. 22, and after fans will be able to see Evans in Chanhassen's upcoming production of "Footloose."

DAN NORMAN

Just like Broadway

Litchfield grad Mitchell Douglas Evans is a song-and-dance man in 'The Music Man' at Chanhassen Dinner Theatres

BY KAY JOHNSON
johnson@hutchinsonleader.com

When it comes to favorite scenes from Broadway musicals, it's hard to beat the iconic "76 Trombones" and "Marian the Li-

brarian" from "Meredith Willson's "The Music Man."

These two song-and-dance numbers are also favorites of Mitchell Douglas Evans, a 2015 Litchfield High School graduate. The difference between him and us is that he's actually on stage performing these scenes for eight shows a

week as a member of the musical's ensemble cast at Chanhassen Dinner Theatres.

Evans, who goes by the stage name Mitchell Douglas, joined the cast Aug. 17. He is part of what the cast calls "Music Man 2.0," which is the reopened 2021 show. The original production, which

began its Main Stage run March 6, 2020, is known as "Music Man 1.0." Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was shut down March 13, seven days after it debuted. It kicked off its second run during the 2021 Fourth of July weekend and will run through Jan. 22.



Evans replaced a company member who had graduated from high school and was pursuing his theater education. As of mid-November, Evans had performed his 90th show.

When it comes to favorite scenes, Evans said he favors Chanhassen's "76 Trombones" because the cast can play around and joke while on stage.

Evans to B3 >

Micka's killers confess their deed

Two of the farmer's hired men suspected of his killing

Editor's note: This is Part III in a series about the murder of Frank Micka.

Albert Tupa lived on and worked at the Micka farm north of Hutchinson. On Oct. 13, 1925, the farm's owner, Frank Micka, was brutally murdered in cold blood and his possessions stolen.

With few clues and no leads, what happened that night turned into a mystery. It seemed that the murderer (or murderers) were going to get away. One of the last people to ever see Micka alive was Tupa, who explained to authorities that on that day, Micka left the farm and headed into Hutchinson.

The case remained unsolved for nearly a decade until a confession was made by one of the Micka farmhands, John Johnson, who was being held in jail for another brutal crime. As it turned out, however, Johnson did not act alone.



Brian HAINES

MCLEOD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Johnson and his accomplice knew their victim well. Micka was a respected businessman and always carried a lot of cash. A plan was hatched to murder Micka, steal his possessions, and then hide the evidence. They believed the plan was foolproof. After all, who would expect the two men employed by Micka, especially since one of them was Tupa.

Following Johnson's confession, authorities immediately arrested Tupa and brought him to McLeod County Jail. There, Tupa confessed to his part in the crime, his story

John Johnson, Albert Tupa Confess to Clear Up Micka Slaying Nine Years Ago

LEADER ARCHIVES

This bold headline in the Oct. 5, 1934, issue of the Hutchinson Leader proclaimed the murder of Frank Micka nine years earlier solved.

matching that of Johnson. Both men admitted the murder was deliberately planned.

On Oct. 13, the three men worked together in a cornfield. Tupa went home at 6 p.m., but Johnson remained hidden in the cornfield. When Micka left the cornfield at dusk, Johnson snuck up behind him and shot him with a double-barreled shotgun.

Earlier that day, a crew of carpenters were on the farm erecting a hog shed. Tupa and Johnson assumed Micka would have a large sum of cash on him to pay the carpenters. Johnson

confessed that he was disgusted to only find \$15 in Micka's wallet.

Johnson headed back to Tupa and reported what had happened. The two headed out to the scene of the crime to clean up. They first loaded Micka's body into a car and drove to Lake Hook, where they threw the body in a ditch and did their best to cover it with brush. They then returned to the crime scene with a large quantity of kerosene. They poured the fuel on the ground over the blood and set fire to it. They then took a plow and turned over the earth in that spot to obliterate any evidence left.

Both men faced life in prison for their deed. On Oct. 4, 1934, Tupa attempted suicide by hanging himself in his cell and nearly succeeded if not for the gurgling sounds that alerted his jailers. While Tupa awaited his trial, Johnson was given a life sentence.

The trial of Tupa was slated for November 1934. Though he initially confessed to the crime, he entered a plea of not guilty. Johnson was one of the first to testify in the case. He recounted the plan he and Tupa

Micka to B3 >