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Traveling Show performing for fifth year at Mount Mahogany

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In its fifth year, the annual Traveling Show is ready to entertain audiences at Mount Mahogany Elementary School today for three shows at 9:45 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

"Yesterday Once More" is a musical review of the past from the 1930s to the 1980s with songs featured from such stars as Fred Astaire and Judy Garland, Glen Miller, Bill Hailey and The Comets, the

Beach Boys, Jefferson Starship and more.

Part of the fifth-grade American Studies program, more than 100 students are the real stars of the school's show. Teachers Joan Jensen, Rudy Domingez and Laila Parry and a lot of parents have helped organize the production. Fred Spenser's fourth-grade class is participating by invitation.

"A lot of parents are helping us with choreography and props," said Sherl Miner, fifth-grade teacher. "A Pleasant Grove High School senior, Chanel Smith, choreographed and taught it to the students for the show as part of her senior project."

The real fire behind the Traveling Show begins with Spenser and Miner.

"We've done this for over 25 years together," Miner said. "I'm sometimes sync man." And although Spenser denied it, Miner called him the grandfather of the Traveling Show. Spenser retorted and said, "He wrote and directed it."

"They're both just good guys and they both have a lot of talent," said Janet Bushman, school secretary. "They work together really well."

Spenser have been teaching for approximately 30 years. The two friends met at Barratt Elementary School in American Fork. The Traveling Show is the brainchild of Spenser. Miner has collaborated with him for as many years.

"He is very talented in music ... he wanted to enrich the lives of his kids," Miner said.

The Traveling Show used to travel, but with tight school budgets and rising travel costs, the Traveling Show invites others to visit their school and enjoy the program.

"It makes the kids aware of past generations. Makes them aware of what other people have done, and their styles of music," Miner said. "It's become, hopefully, a unifying thing for the school."

The show includes eight dance ensembles, skits, duets and music from each decade including the theme song "Yesterday Once More," "Easter Parade," "Greased Lightning" and "Be True to Your School."

Miner said students spend most of the week before the performance on the stage blocking and setting things up. The show will include lights and lasers and some film on DVD. A couple of sixth-grade students, former Traveling Show "aficionados," are also assisting with the program.

"We were hoping to build school traditions with this show," Spenser said.

Miner and Spenser work well together and have provided the impetus for the Mount Mahogany tradition. Mount Mahogany is a fairly young school, also in its fifth year.

"Mr. Spenser is extremely talented in music and Mr. Miner is the most patient thing we have in the whole building," said Max Thomas, assistant principal. "I've seen his feathers ruffled once in the five years."

The production preparations begin at the beginning of the school year in August when Miner begins writing the Traveling Show script.

"It's fun because the children really pulled together," Parry said. "Some of them didn't realize they had talent."

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