

# Arts & Entertainment

## There's Still Time to Fill Those Stockings

By Lorraine Boyd  
The Daily Record

Still looking for something special to tuck into that Someone Special's Christmas stocking? Procrastinators rejoice! Tickets to the Broadway musical, *The Full Monty*, coming to the Orpheum Theater January 7-9, can provide that extra-special surprise, as well as a lot of laughs. What better way to start the year?

We talked to Joe Coots, a.k.a. Dave (portrayed in the movie version by Mark Addy (now the star of TV's *Still Standing*), the weight-challenged member of the cast), recently by phone, where he was with the cast in Syracuse, N.Y.

Coots has an impossibly eclectic background for a musical theater performer. After attending Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa, the Rockford, Ill., native transferred to Benedictine University in the Chicago area and graduated with a degree in criminal justice. He coached football for a year, then entered the field of sports marketing. While appearing in the play, *Rebels*, in Rockford, the authors of the play encouraged him to go to New York to audition for *Rebels* and other shows. *The Full Monty* was the result.

At least he gets to use his criminal justice background, as his character has secured a job as a security guard after losing his job at the plant. The play has been relocated from a working class neighborhood in England, to a working class neighborhood in Buffalo, N.Y. That necessitated a couple of name changes,

but Dave stayed Dave. A vaudeville pianist named Jeanette, who shows up "with piano and all," was added to the cast.

The musical tells the story of a group of unemployed and underemployed blue-collar workers who devise a way to make a substantial amount of money quickly by forming a male stripper act, ala the Chippendales with a couple of notable differences. One, they can't sing or dance, and two, they plan to take it all off in their one and only performance, hence "the full monty."

"Everybody can relate to it," Coots said. "It's about self-esteem and day dreams. It's a wonderful story about relationships and struggles," Coots said. "What I like about it so much is that everyone can relate to it. Everyone has been out of work at some point; everyone's self-esteem has been low at certain points. ...Six very different guys have one common problem - they all need money - and are willing to do anything to remedy it," even embarrassing themselves and opening themselves up to be the - if you'll pardon the expression - butt of their friends' jokes. "They also don't want to lose their manhood. It's a great story."

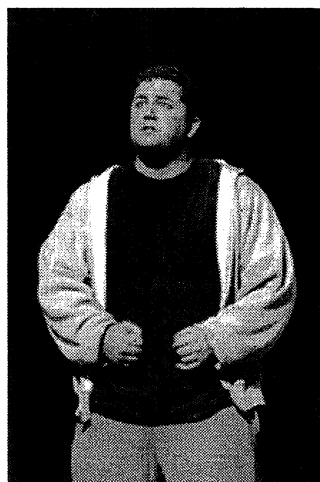
His character used to have a good job at the steel mill until it closed, then he got a job as a security guard at Wal-Mart. Although it originated in England, "now it has a strong American theme.

"The best thing about the show is that fans of musical theater love it, and so do non-fans," Coots said. "The music by David Yazbek [is terrific] and the musicians in the pit are some of the best you'll ever hear."

Coots said that although he is called upon to sing and dance in the show, he isn't formally trained in either. "It was pretty wild during rehearsals with the choreographer trying to teach us the dance moves," he laughed.

Oh, and about that ending. He said you'll just have to come to the show to see if - like the movie - it ends with the "full monty."

Tickets are available for the



Joe Coots as *The Full Monty's* Dave Bukatinsky.

five performances on January 7 through 9 at Ticket Omaha at the Orpheum and by phone at 345-0606, or through Ticketmaster.

### Legal Holiday

Here's another last-minute suggestion for that special lawyer someone's stocking (although you may have to tuck in an IOU at this point). Lawrence Savell, Esq., has issued his second CD, this one entitled *Legal Holiday*, with words and music "allegedly humorous."

Contents include such song titles as "North Pole Bar Exam," and "Surfin' For An Expert Late on Christmas Eve." The attorney-turned-singer/songwriter renders the tunes in a folk song style, accompanied by guitar and other instruments as well as

occasional backup singers (the rest is "all me"). The jacket is a parody of a traditional law school hornbook treatise.

You can visit Savell's website (and order a copy) at LawTunes.com. As he says, "Like much of what I do, it is dedicated to the proposition that zealous representation of clients and furtherance of public good can be only enhanced by a healthy willingness to poke fun at ourselves appropriately on occasion."

### Family Festival

The Holiday Lights Family Festival will reign supreme Sunday, Dec. 26, in downtown Omaha. Featured is the ConAgra Foods Ice Sculpture Display and Demonstration, at 10<sup>th</sup> and Harney, is scheduled from 1 to 5 p.m. during which ice carvers will demonstrate their skills while visitors enjoy complimentary hot chocolate and whipped cream. A large Lewis & Clark-themed sculpture constructed of 100 blocks of ice will be unveiled. While this week's weather should prove friendly for ice-carving (i.e., cold), this weekend's temperatures may speed up the melting process.

Visitors may also engage in activities throughout the downtown area, from the Durham Western Heritage Museum on 10<sup>th</sup> Street to Joslyn Art Museum on 24<sup>th</sup> Street. All activities are free. Complimentary trolley service connecting all the seven activity sites will be provided.