U of O Campus to be site of new film 'Let's Do It'

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

The Feature Film, 'Let's Do It,' Inspired by Original Student Movie Made 80 Years Ago

EUGENE, Ore. -- Student films seem to be as old as the movies. Well, not quite. There was, in fact, the first full-length student movie, filmed on the University of Oregon campus 80 years ago. The behind-the-scenes antics of that movie, "Ed's Co-Ed," were entertaining enough to inspire its own movie.

The University of Oregon has reached an agreement with Talking Ed Productions to film a new movie inspired by the story of the first student film. Filming of "Let's Do It" is expected to start within the next year and some or all of it will be shot on campus and in Eugene.

"With our agreement with the UO complete, we are free to get our final 'ducks-in-a-row,'" said Producer Bryce Zabel. "We have a great story to tell and have assembled an experienced team to tell it to the widest possible audience." The screenplay for â€œLetâ€™s Do Itâ€• has already been written by UO alum Zabel and his wife Jackie, winners of the 2008 Writers Guild of America award for their Hallmark miniseries, â€œPandemic.â€•

The original "Ed's Co-Ed" was masterminded by UO students Nelson Carvel and James Raley as a full-length feature film that spoofed college life. Realizing they needed professional help, the two contacted top Hollywood director Cecil B. DeMille, who sent his cameraman James F. McBride and a state-of-the art Bell & Howell 35-mm camera to Eugene for filming. The film premiered in November of 1929, just weeks after the stock market crashed, at the newly opened McDonald Theatre in Eugene. It was one of the last silent films made before "talkies" took over.

"Letâ€™s Do It" is a comedic re-imagining of how those events took place and not a re-make of â€œEdâ€™s Co-Ed.â€• In the new film, McBride is a cynical Hollywood-veteran sent to Eugene to stay out of sight until an incident back home cools down. While among the students, he re-discovers his original love of filmmaking. Meanwhile, the students find their own lives reflected in the romantic comedy theyâ€™re making.

"Filming a comedy based on this real-life experience of UO students will be a great opportunity to showcase the University of Oregon and to tell an inspirational story about the creativity of its students in the days just

before our Great Depression," said Zabel. "It's noteworthy that this historic film was made 80 years ago, and that we hope to start production in this, the 150th anniversary of Oregon statehood."

"We are pleased to have worked out an agreement to film 'Let's Do It' on the University of Oregon campus. Many of the locations featured in 'Ed's Co-Ed' still exist and the university is happy to be part of a project that pays homage to the student film genre while creating a professional production," said Matt Dyste, UO director of Marketing and Brand Management. "The UO supports the Governor's Office of Film & Television to bring movie production to the state. We work to allow filming activities on campus, as long as it does not unduly disrupt students."

Besides Zabel, the production team includes many with UO ties, including executive producer Bill Swindells, former UO Foundation chair, and co-executive producer Duncan McDonald, former dean of the UO School of Journalism and Communication. Also serving as co-producers are alums Jordan Yospe and Robert J. King. Others are: Cary Glieberman, line producer; Jackie Zabel, co-producer; Tracy Lilienfield, casting director; Nancy Tokos, graphic designer; and Don Moss, attorney. Bryce and Jackie Zabel produced the UO launch event for the successful Transforming Lives campaign in 2005, â€œLights, Camera, Oregon.â€•

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