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ENTERTAINMENT NEWS

# Mason youth acting group performs 'Once on This Island'

By Richard O Jones Staff Writer

Friday, May 11, 2007

Acting Up, a youth theater program based in Mason, puts on its fourth production on the boards this weekend with the Caribbean flavored musical, "Once on This Island."

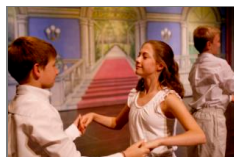
"The performers basically come from all over the place," Producer Laura Peebles said. "We try to incorporate as many kids as we can and we have students from Springboro, Oxford and downtown Cincinnati. They're coming from as far away as Northern Kentucky and Loveland."



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Columbia Elementary 6th-grader Zack Middleton and Loveland Intermediate student Megan Kiley rehearse at Mason High School for the Acting Up presentation of the musical 'Once on this Island.' It is based on Rosa Guy's 'My Love, My Love' and inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's 'The Little Mermaid.' [Click to enlarge](#)

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There are, she said, about 60 young performers in the production from 34 different schools.

Based on the story "My Love, My Love" by Rosa Guy, which was in turn inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid," "Once on This Island" is the story of "the haves and the have-nots," Peebles said.

Ti Moune, a peasant girl, falls in love above her class — with the son of the people who own the hotel on their island. Her story is told to a young child on a dark, stormy night by a group of Caribbean peasants as they wait out the terrible storm.

Ti Moune's journey is one of unrequited love and comes to prove the power of love is so strong that it can withstand the storm and survive even in the face of death, Peebles said.

The play, which opened to rave reviews in 1989, was nominated for eight Tony Awards, including Best Musical, Best Score and Best Book. It won the 1995 Olivier Award for Best Musical. The Tony Award-winning team of Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty (composers of "Ragtime,"

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"Suessical" and the animated film "Anastasia") wrote the score.

"It has a nice Caribbean feel that we thought would be good for springtime," Peebles said.

Acting Up's mission is to give youngsters an educational experience in all aspects of the theater, from performing to costume design and stage management to stage crew

positions.

Previous Acting Up productions have included "The Wizard of Oz," "Honk!" and a family-friendly version of "Grease."

how to go

WHAT: "Once on This Island."

WHERE: Mason High School, 6100 S. Mason-Montgomery Road, Mason.

WHEN: 7 p.m. May 11; 1 and 7 p.m. May 12; 1 p.m. May 13.

COST: \$8.

MORE INFO: (513) 588-0988; actingup.com.

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