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Loveland kids help Acting Up celebrate 5 years with OZ

BY CHUCK GIBSON • LOVELAND@COMMUNITYPRESS.COM • SEPTEMBER 15, 2010

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Loveland kids are helping the Young Performers of Mason celebrate five years of Acting Up in the production of "The Wizard of Oz" Sept. 24-26.

Ben Hoffman, a Loveland High School senior, leads the way as the Tin Man. The 18-year-old Hoffman was in Acting Up's production of "Mulan" last spring. He's enjoying bringing a hint of sarcasm in his role as the Tin Man.

"It's fun," Hoffman said. "The character is a bit more sarcastic than usual. I like it. We wanted to give him more of a dynamic."

He says it's still "The Wizard of Oz." He likes the witch-melting scene. Drew Kovacs saw the first Acting Up production five years ago. He was hooked. Kovacs, a Loveland High School sophomore, is part of the ensemble cast for his eighth Acting Up production.

Michelle Brown is a Loveland High School freshman and a member of the ensemble cast in her second Acting Up appearance.

"I'm a jitterbug and a glow-person," Brown said, describing her role in the show. "The stage goes all black and we glow. It's really cool."

Acting Up is made up of young performers from all around the area. Brown says: "It's like a really big family."

Sam Hoffman, Tessa DeBra, Molly Hansen, John Ross and Tyler Austin make up the rest of the Loveland family joining Brown in the Acting Up family. Tyler Austin has been in five shows and hopes to pursue acting professionally.

"It's a great experience," Austin said. "You make a lot of new friends. We have phenomenal actors. We are a very talented family. We support each other in all we do."

How does it compare to the classic "Wizard of Oz" with Judy Garland as Dorothy we all know so well?

"It is about as close to the movie script as you can get," said Brent Peebles, one of the directors. "It does add a number called the jitterbug which was cut from the movie. It's a really fun song and dance number. If you know the movie, you'll recognize every scene."

You'll be sure to recognize Dorothy, the Scarecrow, Tin Man and Cowardly Lion on the yellow brick road in search of the all powerful Oz! The audience will delight in the classic music and songs like: "Over the Rainbow," "Ding Dong the Witch is Dead," and "If I Only Had a Brain." Thrills



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CHUCK GIBSON/CONTRIBUTOR "Wizard of Oz" cast members from Loveoand include, from left: bottom row, Munchkins Tessa DeBra and Molly Hansen; top row, Drew Kovacs, Ben Hoffman and Aaron Marshall. Not pictured, Sam Hoffman, John Ross, Tyler Austin and Michelle Brown.



Zoom

PROVIDED Several cast members practice "Over the Rainbow" during a recent rehearsal of Acting Up's "The Wizard of Oz."



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PROVIDED Following the yellow brick road, they're off to see the wizard. Dorothy Gale is played by Leah Hall, Scarecrow is played by Max Jansen, Tin Man is played by Ben Hoffman and Cowardly Lion is played by Kase Corstanje.

About the show

and chills of all the familiar characters will entertain the whole family.

"It's a hundred kids, it's a very big show," Peebles said. "This show is an opportunity to see kids ranging in age from 6 -18. The energy they bring and the talent we were able to draw is more than any local production you're going to find from just a single school."

This production features a cast of approximately 100 talented youngsters ages 6 to 18, hailing from all over the Cincinnati area. There will be four performances of "The Wizard of Oz" at the Mason High School Theater, 6100 Mason Montgomery Road.

"It's full of laughter, it's funny," Michelle Brown said. "The music is awesome and the acting is amazing. The munchkin part is so cute. The little kids are adorable."

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Performances of "The Wizard of Oz" will be held:

Friday, Sept. 24, 7 p.m.;

Saturday, Sept. 25, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Sunday, Sept. 26, 2 p.m. (sign language interpreter provided) at the Mason High School Theater, 6100 Mason Montgomery Road, Mason, OH 45040.

Tickets are \$10 each (\$8 seniors) and are available online at www.ActingUp.com or at the box office starting one hour before the show.

For more information call 513-494-6062 or e-mail ActingUp@ActingUp.com.

"The Wizard of Oz" is directed by Becca DeBra, Brent Peebles and Brahm Corstanje and choreographed by Megan Kelley. Vocal directors are Joey Schnell and Amy Hall. Dorothy Gale is played by Leah Hall, Scarecrow is played by Max Jansen, Tin Man is played by Ben Hoffman, and Cowardly Lion is played by Kase Corstanje. Mitra Jouhari plays the Wicked Witch and Kalya Corstanje plays Glinda.

More at: www.ActingUp.com

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