



Into the Woods

— For generations, elementary-aged children world-wide have enjoyed Brothers Grimm bedtime stories. Whether it's "Hansel and Gretel," "Sleeping Beauty," "Snow White" or "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," these timeless fairy tales have remained individual folk lore favorites. But what would happen if a few of these fairy tales were all joined together with musically talented high school students? It would come out as "Into the Woods!"

Claremore High School Choir Director, Linda Pollock, is the director for the musical to be presented April 26-29 at the Robson Performing Arts Center. Sherrell Daniel, C.U.E. Band teacher, is co-director. "Into the Woods" is an award-winning Broadway musical which debuted in 1987. It has been produced many times nationally and on television.

"I chose this musical because it's one of my all-time favorites, and I have always wanted to do it here. It demands very talented singers and actors, and I feel our two casts are both excellent and handle the difficult music wonderfully," Pollock said. "This show is very interesting, extremely clever, hysterically funny, and has a wonderful, Tony Award winning score. Many people have never heard of this show — and I am hoping that is exactly why they want to come see it! They will be very entertained — we promise!"

There were four sessions of auditions in two days, and it took the judges, Rhonda Williams, Carol Shorridge, Pollock, and Daniel hours to decide the casts. The production consists of two separate casts, performing at different times. They all practice at least twice a week, some up to six days a week.

"It definitely keeps you occupied," Joe Hart, red cast Baker, said, "but these productions always do." "I'm sleepier now, but it's all worth it," Miranda McCool, white cast Witch said.

Many of the students are learning lessons in prioritizing and organizing time. Red cast Cinderella, Bailey Robinson said, "I was already a busy girl. Now, I have to stay extremely organized."

The two casts have much experience among them.

Kelly Crawford has participated in six productions with five leading roles. "My favorite thing about performing is the adrenaline rush, but I hate when it's over. You don't know what to do with yourself after putting so much effort into it and being around the same people for so long," she said.

Hart has participated in nine productions with three lead roles. "I've been introduced to a lot of people I wouldn't have met otherwise," he said.

McCool, who has been in over 15 productions with over eight leading roles, also said that she's learned how to manage her time. "I have become better able to speak in front of people," she said.

As for the characters and casts, Mitch West, white cast baker said, "Both casts are great and really strong. I'm surrounded by incredible people. I didn't even plan on auditioning, so I don't know how my getting a lead role worked out."

Amy Wheeler, red cast baker's wife, said that her role is easy to relate to. "The baker's wife is a good, strong woman who goes after what she wants."

The play doesn't necessarily stick to the fairy tale's portrayal of the characters. "This Cinderella isn't the typical princess, and she realizes that the typical fairy-tale life isn't as great as everyone thinks," Robinson said.

Kyle Elliot, red cast, and David Billings, white cast, both agreed that although their character Jack (of beanstalk fame) is a rather childish character who doesn't think things through, but he remains motivated and driven to better his situation even though that causes him trouble.

"Into the Woods" contains two acts and seven scenes aside from the many songs that have multiple conversations or ideas running in them at the same time," Hart said.

Both casts are confident that everything will come together by production time and that the audience won't be disappointed with this comedic musical.

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Photos



Amy Wheeler, red cast Baker's Wife, and Randy Cargill, white cast Wolf.