

Gold Country Living



The Land of Oz is routed onstage. The timeless *Wizard of Oz* is now playing at EDMT in Folsom. Photo by John Benton

Lions, and Tigers, and Bears, Oh My!

By John Benton

The stage of the Jill Solberg Theater at Folsom High School has once again been transformed. Starting with a quaint farmyard in Kansas, the scenes change to show the brightly colored huts of Munchkinland, the Yellow Brick Road leading to the Emerald City, and all of the amazing sights in between. Adapted from L. Frank Baum's classic original story by Frank Gabrielson, with Music and Lyrics from the MGM motion pictures score by Harold Arlen and E. Y. Harburg, the El Dorado Musical Theater is performing *The Wizard of Oz*.

You probably know the story: A young girl who runs away from her Aunt and Uncle's farm to keep her dog safe from the mean neighbor gets magically transported to a land of witches and wizards. To get back home to Kansas, young Dorothy must visit the Wizard of Oz, the only person powerful enough to send her back. Along the way, Dorothy meets some friends in unlikely places, who join her on her quest to the Wizard to acquire what they need.

In a cornfield she meets Scarecrow, who desperately wants a brain. They stumble across the Tinman, rusting in the woods. He joins them to ask the Wizard for a heart. Traveling through the Haunted Forest, the two friends are attacked by a fearsome beast. It turns out that this beast is actually the Cowardly Lion, who joins them to ask the Wizard for some courage. Chased along the way by the Wicked Witch of the West, the trio meets the Wizard to ask him for the things that they most dearly desire.

EDMT has once again put together two powerful casts. Each time I see EDMT's productions, I am blown away by the fact that no one in the cast is older than 19. The professionalism and talent of the casts is always a testament to how dedicated EDMT is to guiding young actors and performers to grow artistically and personally through their programs.

The showing viewed by

this reviewer was performed by the Ruby Cast. There is another cast of equally amazing actors performing the Wizard of Oz called the Emerald Cast. 16 year old Krista Mackin (Dorothy) from Oak Ridge High School gives an amazing performance. Her "Over the Rainbow" was powerful and moving. This is her 20th production with EDMT, and she is remembered as Gabriella Montez from *High School Musical 2*.

The Scarecrow/Hunk was played by 15 year-old Alex Levy, also of Oak Ridge High School. Alex' Scarecrow transitioned from serious to silly and back as he and Dorothy traveled along the yellow brick road and ran into joys and dangers along the way. 15 year-old Stefan Sorgea is the Tinman and Hickory. Stefan's character is strong in his quiet and caring demeanor. In a performance inspired by Bert Lahr's role in the movie, 16 year-old Joey Saffren plays Cowardly Lion perfectly.

Also playing Zeke back in Kansas, Saffren brings a light hearted, funny side to the performance, playing off the lines of the other characters. His "If I Were King Of The Forest" was very comical, as was his fearful reactions to startling moments throughout the show. An additional mention goes to 13 year-old Kyle Sanderson (Uncle Henry). His funny comments and asides drew chuckles from the audience at numerous times throughout the show.

In addition to these terrific lead roles, the Ruby Cast had scores of other amazing actors. Ranging in ages from 7-19, these talented youth put together a terrific show. Behind the scenes, Set Designer and Technical Director Stephanie Hudson and the rest of the production staff did a fantastic job transforming the stage into the various beautiful locations that Dorothy and her friends visit.

The inside of the Wicked Witch's castle was spectacular. Along with set design, the production staff put together an amazing backdrop for the actors.

Plymouth Elementary School Gardens #15

November 2009 Mr. Tarantula, The Wolf, and the Ballerina

By Michael and Little Amber Spinetta

Amber did help with this month's column because she reviewed a ballet!

Arboretum All-Stars

That wind thrashed a half dozen AA-S plants. The iris is winterizing, the "Texan" narrowly escaped death, the soapwort is blooming again, the deergrass is crazy, and the penstemon is beautiful ground cover. During the great winds, I was chopping back, staking, and tying up every butterfly bush in the garden as they all blew over. We're also dealing with line-of-sight for security, so that will affect some things.

Mr. Tarantula

I spotted a tarantula crossing the road and brought him to the Extended Learning Program. Amber named it Mister Tarantula - it has hooks on its fore-legs. At soccer practice after school, one of the mom's had a pet tarantula. It likes to be warm, have mixed vermiculite/peat/potting soil for burrowing, and needs a smaller terrarium, since bad falls can kill it.

It likes to have a rock or stick to hide under, and feasts on store-bought crickets. Tarantulas have urticating hairs (they make you itch) on their abdomens, and they do bite, so respect them as any other wild animal, and maybe let the native ones back into the wild, one day. A good book on local wildlife is *The Laws Field Guide to the Sierra Nevada* by John Muir Laws, available at my family's wildlife art gallery in Shenandoah Valley. The book shows plants and animals coordinated by color, not necessarily by relation; check it out.

Pollinator Ponderable

From a discussion with a student. Basically, a bee and a butterfly do the same job. The

Glinda, Dorothy, the Wicked Witch, and her simian friends all had a chance to leap, twist, and fly through the air, bringing the experience to a whole new level for the audience. El Dorado Musical Theater is well known in the Sacramento Area for its fantastic shows and magnificent actors. In addition to their stage performances, the High Voltage Tour Group brings electrified music and dance performances to local events, joining their 32 performers together from the Senior and Junior Companies. This amazing group of young performers has lit the stage at places such as the California State Fair and on *Carnival Cruise Lines*.

The Wizard of Oz, at the Jill Solberg Theater until Nov 22. Margaret Pellegrini, an original munchkin, at performances on Nov 19-22. For more info, visit online at www.edmt.info.



Sweet Amber Spinetta (L) with some of the Sacramento Ballet's *Peter and the Wolf* performers: Bird - Nicole Haskins, Duck - Heidi Zolker and Wolf - Christopher Nachtrab.

Photo by Adevia Mackes

bee gets saluted for honey and the butterfly gets praised for beauty. Is it best to be known for how one looks doing a job, or to be feared but known for a job well done? If honey tasted bad, would we admonish the bee for stinging us and making sticky messes? If butterflies were all dull and camouflaged, would they be as loved? Hmmm...

Peter and the Wolf

Amber has seen or heard at least a dozen different versions of Sergei Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, including: Disney's *Make Mine Music*; Suzie Templeton's animation; David Bowie's narration; a live puppet/orchestral show, and the Sunnyvale Public Library performance online.

We have toys that correspond to each of the characters with one vital difference - the stuffed wolf (from her dentist, Susan) is mute. When the Sacramento Ballet performed at the Crest Theatre on October 24, she was in heaven. Right before the ballet, Amber asked me if this duck would live or die. We scrutinized the events on stage: the duck made the sign of the

cross (the prey prayed), got eaten whole, the wolf spit out feathers, the duck returned with a halo on its head - but we listened closely, and still heard it in the wolf's stomach. Conclusion: she died.

Amber's Review: "When the Wolf was playing with Peter, they were playing jump rope with the lasso with the kitty cat, that was really silly. And when the hunters were dancing. My favorite person was all of them. I think the bird [Nicole Haskins] was dressed the prettiest and she danced the nicest. It was really silly when the Wolf ate the Duck alive. I liked when he [Jeffrey Callison] talked about the bird."

After Peter, other short bits were performed. "When the kids danced, I liked Clara." About Kirsten Bloom's Sugar Plum Fairy dance, "I don't know." Amber talks about the Sugar Plum Fairy all the time. As for Jump Jive, "They wore bloomies!"

Dad's Review: Children's games like jump rope, patty cake, and rochambeau were used in the

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