

Theater 308's La Belle et la Bête

308 Pulls off a Magical Performance of this Disney Classic BY KAT MCKAY

The last weekend of March Theatre 308 put on its production of *Beauty and the Beast*. The show was spectacular- every aspect of the production was charming and entertaining. Ms. Herman, the director, and the wonderful cast succeeded yet again in pulling off a magical spring musical.

Beauty and the Beast wowed fans of every age. "Audiences came out in record numbers and I've heard nothing but raves. What could be better?" said Ms. Herman. Some audience members were even moved to tears! "This school is so talented," said junior Susan Biggart after the Friday night production, "and it was made clear tonight." Junior Charlie Baird called the show "fantastic." Ms. Herman said, "*Beauty and the Beast* was a success on every front. It was a beautiful, magical production full of color and laughter and silliness and romance."

One of the premier reasons the show was so phenomenal was because of the two title roles. Junior Emily Elliot played a sweet and charming Belle. She shone in every single scene she was in, particularly the song and dance numbers. Senior Alex Rankine, who played Beast, matched his on-stage love interest in success. His character's costume, mannerisms, and makeup combined to create an effect that made ten-year-old Ox Ridge student Julia Carruthers say, "the Beast is kind of scary." His voice wowed audience members as well. Both actors should be extremely proud of the excellent performances.

The other leads were undeniably entertaining as well. People in the audience loved senior Jordan Washer's Gaston. Freshman Mira Venkat said, "I love Gaston. He's the funniest person

ever." Senior Andrew Robert Genuario, from Fairfield Prep, went even further in his praise. "Jordan Washer is and will be the next Leonardo DiCaprio, I guarantee it. If not this year, than in the next five years," he said. Junior Nina Preston said that senior Elizabeth Leimkuhler, who played Mrs. Potts, was

always great."

Another captivating and unique part of the show was the opening dance. Performed by junior Caroline Schau and senior Collin Shay, it mesmerized the audience and set the stage for the enchanting show to come. The wolves, featured dancing in two scenes, added

La Rock, junior McKinley Stauffer, and junior Mary Elliot were eye-catching and funny. Senior Misha Kushnir did a great job as Monsieur D'Arque. Maurice, played by sophomore Reed Morgan, was just as well played. The entire cast did an outstanding job, from the leads down to the charismatic chorus

Ms. Herman wrote in her note, he has "left us with a legacy that will serve us for years to come."

Although most of the drama happened on stage, Thursday's opening night performance ended with a real life fiasco. During the final scene in which the Beast is transformed



The cast of *Beauty and the Beast* come together for an epic ending to a spectacular show.

back into a prince, a smoke machine used for special effects set off the fire alarm. The cast, crew, and audience had to evacuate the building. No one was harmed, but the event did interrupt the flow of the play. "It was definitely a shock, but the cast and crew were able to use the energy and come back and finish the show, which turned out really well. Even though it was a surprise, it didn't

"classy and glamorous." Junior Aastha Narula added that, "I loved the way she moved her feet, her hair, outfit, and posture. All the little details made it perfect." People fell in love with two characters in particular: senior Collin Shay's Cogsworth and senior Max Hanau's Lumiere. "They were hilarious," said sophomore Izzy Lee.

Audience members loved all aspects of the show. Every scene was captivating and well executed. "I liked 'Be Our Guest'," said freshman Jackie Nicoletti. Sophomore Drew Martzolf commended the running crew, adding, "the set changes were really well done." The pit, filled with DHS's own musically inclined band and orchestra students, provided perfect accompaniment to the action going on onstage. Mr. Grauer conducted the group. First violin and sophomore pit member Ryo Usami said, "the pit was great. It's

an element of mystery and art to very emotionally heavy parts of the play. Their dancing and costumes contributed to the impressive effect. "My favorite part was the dancing," said junior Veronika Kelemen.

The rest of the cast was majestic looking and wonderfully played. The Enchanted Objects especially had elaborate costumes, including senior Marin Amyotte who did an excellent job as Wardrobe. Junior Abby Leinroth was a phenomenally sassy (and sparkly clad!) Babette.

Freshman Alex Burke was adorable as Chip, who spent the show within the confines of Mrs. Potts' crafty cart. Senior Robbie Florian did a hilarious job portraying LeFou: he was incredibly light on his feet and really rather comical in his nimbleness, especially after repeated blows from Gaston. The three Silly Girls, played by senior Paris

members.

How did the cast feel about the production? Emily Elliot called the experience "fun, fun, fun!" Misha Kushnir said that the shows "went well". Junior Laura Powis, a member of the ensemble, said that the cast and crew were able to "pull it together at the end." Ms. Herman said that she is "terribly proud of all of the performers, the crew, the orchestra, and the techies, for the tremendous creativity and professionalism they demonstrated." Ms. Herman also mentioned in her Director's Note the retirement of Theatre 308 Business Manager Michael O'Brien. Mr. O'Brien worked as the business manager for eleven years, and in that time "transformed and elevated many key aspects of the organization" as Ms. Herman put it.

His departure is sure to have its impact on the 308 community, but, as

have a negative impact on the performance at all!" said sophomore cast member Kaylyn Buckley.

Even as word spread about what had happened, people continued to flock to the next three performances. "I'm excited," said senior John Conley before Friday night's show, "I hope the fire alarm doesn't go off tonight." Sophomore usher Elsa Case echoed this sentiment. "We're looking forward to no fire alarm mishaps tonight!" she said.

Luckily, the fire alarm never did go off again. *Beauty and the Beast* was a beautiful show, filled with a talented cast, a skilled director, elaborate costumes, artful scenery, and classic Theatre 308 charm. Certainly even many springs from now DHS students will remember this magical production of *Beauty and the Beast*. **N**

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