



Christopher Adrian Rodriguez, Callista Zoppi and Jesse Harrington declare their intentions, in song, as new students at Harvard University Law School.



The sisters of Delta Nu hold vigil for Elle Woods after a planned engagement goes awry.

Ohmigod, you guys!

SHOWTIMES

Friday, January 23, at 7:00 pm
 Saturday, January 24 at 1:30 pm & 7:00 pm
 Thursday, January 29, at 7:00 pm
 Friday, January 30, at 7:00 pm
 Saturday, January 31 at 1:30 pm & 7:00 pm

Legally Blonde opens at McNary

By **ERIC A. HOWALD**
Of the Keizertimes

A young woman and her dog follow the former's ex-fiance to Harvard University Law School in hope of reclaiming his heart, only to discover that she might be a victim of others' expectations.

Add in a little song, a lot of dance, stir and you've got *Legally Blonde: The Musical*, which premiered Thursday, Jan. 22, at McNary High School. The play's run continues with performances Jan. 23 and 24, and Jan. 30 through 31. Matinees are slated for 1:30 p.m. each Saturday of the run. Admission is \$10 and \$7 for seniors and children under 12.

"The biggest thing is just the fun of the play. The songs are uptempo with awesome dance numbers. The choreographer has really been pushing us in the dancing," said Julia Fegles, a McNary senior who plays the starring role of Elle Woods. "My challenge is trying to take an iconic role and still add in something of myself."

While the plot of the play mostly follows the the movie — starring Reese Witherspoon — of the same name, the expanded version allows for more fully-realized characters, Fegles said.

"The relationship between Emmett and Elle is much more developed and you get to see much more of Paulette, who gets a little more depth," she said.

Elle's two love interests in the story are brought to life by a pair of McNary sophomores, Ryan Cowan and Ashton Thomas.

Cowan plays Warner Huntington III, Elle's ex-fiance and the stereotypical Ivy League frat guy.

"I feel like it's a way to express yourself from a different point of view and Warner is pretty much a tool and super-conceited," said Cowan. Thomas' role, do-gooder law student

Emmett, is also a departure from his roles as a freshman at McNary, a megalomaniac in *Urinetown* and a sprite in *The Tempest*.

"Emmett is so normal, and I think that he's been the harder role to play," Thomas said.

Both Cowan and Thomas come from musical, more than acting, backgrounds and said the falling back on those skills helped them through preparation.

"The singing part comes more naturally and, whenever those moments hit I know exactly what I'm doing and the vocal inflection and the facial gestures to go along with them," Thomas said. He added that working with the play's music director Kent Wilson has been helpful.

Cowan said most of his feedback from director Dallas Myers and castmates boiled down to two words: be meaner.

"Mr. Myers has really helped by holding my hand through the acting parts," Cowan said.

The play includes two canine cast members. A Yorkie plays Elle's dog Bruiser. Emma Blanco's french bulldog, Bilbo, takes on the mantle of Rufus, the dog of a hairdresser who befriends Elle.

Blanco plays Elle's archnemesis, and Warner's rekindled flame, Vivienne, but Bilbo was big on the internet long before making his stage debut.

"I would post pictures of him on Instagram. The minute you do and add the hashtag 'dog,' you get like 20 likes from other dogs with their own accounts," Blanco said.

Among the human members of the cast, many talked about how exhausting the roles are given how they play into stereotypes.

"After the end of the first act, I'm exhausted," said Keilah Hernandez, who plays Margo one of the three main sorority girls.

She said inhabiting the expectations that come with the roles proved more difficult

"My challenge is trying to take an iconic role and still add in something of myself."

— Julia Fegles, Elle Woods

than anyone expected.

"Everyone thinks that teenage girls are good at dancing, but there are a lot of suggestive dances in this play," Hernandez said. "When it came to those parts, the choreographer wanted us to be sexier, but we had to go backstage and figure it out. It took us forever to get it, but it's so much fun to bring out that part of ourselves."



Above: Morgan Raymond (right) tutors Julia Fegles' Elle Woods through her law school entry exam. Above right: Emma Blanco is less-than-impressed with her new classmate at Harvard. Lower left: Ryan Cowan, as Warner Huntington III, declares his lack of interest in engagement to Elle. Lower right: John Bryant, as a law professor, sings to his students about needing to be cutthroat in their chosen field.



All photos by Eric A. Howald of the Keizertimes