

KeizerCommunity

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Coffee Shop concerts offer different taste of Celtic musicality

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Ready to see a different side of the McNary High School choir? Then the Coffee Shop Concert series might be right up your alley.

"We have a lot of contemporary music instead of the classical. It's a chance to see the other side of what we do and hear music that is more relatable than some of the other stuff they might hear us sing," said Ariana Pippert.

For the past few years, the series, which doubles as a fundraiser for choral programs at the school, has given the spotlight to some of McNary's singer/songwriters and a capella groups that otherwise are only part of the burgeoning choir program at MHS. The next Coffee Shop Concert is slated at 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 5, in the McNary choir room. Admission is \$5.

Students not only perform covers of current and classic pop hits, but also try to put their own spin on the tunes.

Lainie Zamudio works with several of the performers.

"I take song requests from the other performers and take parts out and write spoken word and raps to fill in those spaces," said Zamudio.

On the a capella front, there are both boys and girls groups.

"We do a lot of individual and a capella small group songs, sometimes we even come together and do big group numbers," said Mari Martin.

Currently, the girls are working on pieces by Uncle Cracker and Colbie Caillat, while the boys are working on some older hits.

"We have two major songs, *I'm a Believer* by the Monkees and we're also doing *The Longest Time* by Billy Joel," said Casey Potesmil.

When not performing in the concert series, members of the performance troupe are taking the show on the road.

"We just finished gathering our a capella groups together and we went to Keizer Elementary to sing for the students there. Then the singer/songwriters went the following week," said Jessica Grimmer.

"If they start loving music in elementary school, they'll be able to do so much more by the time they get to McNary," added Marissa Rogers. "Basically, we want to inspire them to want to pursue music and stick with it until they get here."



Crafting a tale as old as time



Dorothy Woolford, Ashley Rodriguez, Kailey Rendo and Alayna Sykosky dress up a merchant's cart to be used McNary's upcoming production of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*.

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When a hauling trailer arrived at McNary High School packed with the dresses and vests and even wolf heads for the upcoming production of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, costumers Beth Murphy and Lexie Simpson spent the next few hours reveling in their work.

"The costumes are just crazy in their detail. We spent hours just going through and matching the pieces. The whole time we were asking each other if we had seen some new piece that had just been unwrapped," said Murphy.

Then the girls had to set to work.

"Everything has to be hand-stitched and it has to be able to come out. Sometimes it's just pinning things up or repairing rips, but we've had to take in the shoulders and waistlines for a lot of the main characters," said Simpson.

Performances begin Thursday, Nov. 12, and,

for the first time, tickets are being sold online. Visit mcnarytheatre.weebly.com for show dates, times and tickets.

While the costumes arrived in bulk from Westview High School, the McNary theatre tech students have spent weeks building everything else. That's meant creating or repurposing set pieces and painting fly panels to recreate the feel of a proper Disney animated movie.

"It feels a lot like we've been living in a fairy tale the whole time we've been working," Simpson said.

Student Taylor Long designed the chair for the villainous Gaston.

"We had a medieval chair and I picked out pieces that I liked and reformed the rest of it," Long said.

It's taken her about 12 hours, but she designed and cut an addition to the chair back that looks like racks of antlers. That piece alone is six

feet across.

"We had originally done it as four feet, but it looked too small. When it's finished, it will have fake fur on the armrests and bright red satin cushions with gold cinches," she said.

Zena Greenawald, Madison Munro and Katherine Gray are handling most of the art design for the set pieces.

"The hardest, and most fun, part is trying to make it seem like reality while having it also be outrageous," said Gray.

While some of the design includes taking input from others, Greenawald said the team is taking inspiration from other sources.

"We've looked up a lot of photos of old French villages and we're trying to mix those with the cartoon style," she said.

Munro said it's really become a team effort because not only are they creating the set for the play itself, they

are creating a separate backdrop for tea parties that will be held with the members of the cast each Saturday of the performance.

"I've enjoyed being included in the whole design process and working as part of a team is a good time," Munro said.

Stage managers Serena Dufour, Sarah Hays and Jaida Watson are overseeing the organized chaos of preparation for the opening night.

Given all the moving parts, literally and figuratively, Hays said she's been most surprised at the response from members of the cast.

"It's been good just seeing how the cast and crew responds when you try to assert some authority and try to be respectable," she said.

Watson said watching it all come together, even when it's stressful, has been worth the hard work it's taken to get to this point.

"Seeing the cast smile to themselves after they hit a big dance number is really cool. Watching it come to life makes you feel warm and fuzzy inside," Watson said.

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