

METROPOLITAN



Joyce Harris, Black Education Center; James DePriest, Oregon Symphony conductor; Kay and John Toran, find time to chat during wine and cheese party for BEC at the Toran home. DePriest joined the Torans to host the benefit. (Photo: Richard Brown)

Jefferson High presents 'The Wiz'

When the Broadway musical *The Wiz* opens December 2 for a five-night run December 2-3-4 and 10-11, the magic of Broadway will turn Jefferson High School's stage into the Emerald City ruled over by the famous Wizard of Oz.

A 275-pound actor who disappears five feet from the audience, a hot air balloon rising out of sight, explosive special effects, and the splendor of over 100 costumes are just part of the show's magic.

"Dorothy's adventures in the Land of Oz have been set to music in a lively, dazzling mixture of rock, gospel and soul," explains Carolyn Gratten, the show's director. All of the disciplines of Jefferson's acclaimed performing arts program are necessary to put the show together. "I sometimes feel like a traffic director," sighs the busy Ms. Gratten. There are dancers, singers, musicians, actors, tech crews, costumers, lighting designers, and a special effects staff to coordinate.

The exhaustive rehearsal schedule demonstrates how complex this musical is to produce. Anytime from 7:30 in the morning until 9 at night, one might find rehearsals of some kind in progress. While Ms. Gratten is working on stage with actors, there might be a vocal or instrumental music rehearsal in progress in another part of the building.

Morning stage craft classes of Brian Biggs are busy with set construction. Throughout the day, Mary Richman, costumer for the show, works with her crew designing and assembling over 100 costumes. After school each day, choreographers work with dancers. Nightly, all the elements are pulled together in general rehearsals which begin at 5 o'clock and continue until 9 o'clock some nights.

Over 100 Jefferson students auditioned for Jefferson's first all-school musical, and rehearsals began September 30. Shawn Price, a senior, is Dorothy, and her three

friends in search of the Wizard are Randy Davis, a junior, as the Scarecrow; Jeff Fritch, a staff member, the Lion; John Frazier, a junior, as the Tinman.

Donald Taylor, a senior, is the Wizard, and according to Mary Folberg, a JHS dance instructor and one of the two choreographers for the show, Martell Irons, a junior, may well steal the show as Evillene, the wicked witch. Other key roles include Queenetta Perkins as Aunt Em; John Frazier, Uncle Henry; Alex Harvey as Addaperle; and Queenetta Perkins as Glinda.

In a long selection process which started last spring, the entire Performing Arts Department began suggesting titles and reviewing scripts as possibilities for a fall musical production to involve the whole department. "We were looking for a musical which would demand the strengths of each component in the program—vocal, instrumental, dance, and theater," explains Ms. Gratten.

"For example, we wanted a show which displays all that we offer in dance. *Oklahoma*, for instance, is strong in ballet, but ignores jazz and tap, two of our program's strongest styles," she continued. *The Wiz* demands dance in all styles. "It's a wonderful opportunity for the choreographers to go with the strengths of our students," she said.

"We also wanted to do a show which wouldn't scare kids away. There's keen interest in the production. There are places for all kinds of students," she said. Some cast members have little or no theatre experience, while others are advanced students in Jefferson's comprehensive performing arts classes. Another reason this show was chosen is that many of the characters are without age and may be played by either males or females. "It really gave us a lot of options for casting to the strengths of our students," explained Ms. Gratten.

Besides the pageantry of wildly costumed production numbers, the toe tapping musical score, the surprise created by the special effects, the magic of *The Wiz* is the story.

"It's a new kind of fantasy—a fantasy for today, mysterious, opulent and fanciful—a dream dreamed by a space age child," says Ms. Gratten. It is based on the familiar children's story, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, by Frank Baum. The book, *The Wiz*, is by William F. Brown, the music and lyrics by Charlie Smalls.

The Wiz is a multicultural production with elements of voodoo and magic. Tickets are available at the school after November 15 from 2:30 to 4:30 Monday through Friday. Reserved seat tickets are \$4 for adults and \$2 for students and senior citizens. For more information, call 287-1398.

Street Beat

by Lanita Duke and Richard Brown

Now that the election is over we wondered how people felt about staying the Republican course? We asked, "Do you plan to stay the course?"



William McJustice
School Bus Driver Trainer

No. During the time that Reagan's been in office he changed his story so many times you just can't believe him. He's not proven, honest or truthful.



Laurin Washington
Student

That is not the question. We have to regardless. I guess you can wage your own private battles, but what good would that do. I don't have any other alternatives.



Ann Perry
Housewife

No. People need food. Things are at a point where you can't buy necessities. His plan for "the course" helps the rich but not the poor.



Eddie Alexander
Unemployed

No. I'm a construction worker and I can't get a job. There are no jobs around and taxes keep going up. Things might get better but who will be around. I was coming when Hoover was around and if you remember that then Reagan would never have got in.



Barbara Kropp
Secretary

No; the economy is the reason why. I don't know what else to do but a change is necessary. At this point a change won't hurt.



Jim Heffner
Musician

No. People need jobs more than we need to fight inflation. With the increase in unemployment crime goes up. Life is unsafe now. So, if I had a choice I wouldn't want to stay.

Businessmen address class

Over 40 representatives of business, services, education, artistic and conventional professions will have their say at Portland Community College's Cascade Campus through mid-November as they tell career development students there how their interests and aptitudes led them to the jobs they are now doing.

Included in the line-up of persons talking about their occupations are people from each theme including Bill Perry, owner/operator of Hamburger Patti's on Fremont; Sanford Maddox, Nerco's personnel manager; Bill Dobson, a director of theatrical productions at Portland Civic Theater; and James Hopps, attorney at law. Other presentations will be made by data processors, real estate brokers, counselors, writers, economists, custodians and representatives of many other fields.

"We're trying something new this term," Gilpin explains. "Getting this many speakers involves a tremendous amount of work."

As a resident of northeast Port-



BILL PERRY

land, Gilpin tries to find people from the north/northeast area as panelists believing that through this interchange the college and its surrounding neighborhoods will become more a part of each other.

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