



Ty Lewis, as Persephone, front left, and Cierra Meyer, as Pandora, are two of the leads in a cast of 60 dancers in Western Oregon's University Triangle Alliance's annual Drag Show. This year, the theme is "Out of Pandora's Box," a retelling of the Greek tale of the first woman. Now in its 19th year, the show has become a beloved tradition on campus. Tickets for the show sold out in three days, but those still wanting to see it can go to Wednesday's open dress rehearsal. Tickets are available at the door for the 7 p.m. show.

JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

# THIS SHOW'S A DRAG

*WOU's drag production a successful campus outreach effort*

By **Jolene Guzman**  
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — The contents of Pandora's Box have always been trouble. Tell the classic tale in the context of Western Oregon University's Triangle Alliance's annual Drag Show, and the chaos released is red hot trouble.

Now in its 19th year, the racy, campy display that is the Drag Show will be producing "Out of Pandora's Box," a retelling of the Greek story of the first woman, Pandora, on Wednesday (tonight) and Thursday.

Combining elements of a traditional musical — the show has six choreographers and 60 dancers — and the risqué personality of a drag show (this is definitely PG-13 material), the show is nothing if not entertaining.

Some even classify it as the "biggest show that happens on campus every year." Tickets sales seem to back that up, with seats to Thursday's show selling out in three days. Those still wanting to see the show will have to arrive early for Wednesday's dress rehearsal, where tickets will be sold at the door for the 7 p.m. show.

Triangle Alliance is WOU's gay-straight alliance, and the show is a form of outreach on campus, which has



Ty Lewis, left, leads a dance during a scene from "Out of Pandora's Box," Triangle Alliance's popular annual drag show. Lewis has been involved in the show for three years.

JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

proved successful. In the years since it began, the gender-bending spectacle has grown into something students look forward to each year.

"It's a WOU tradition that's been supported by the faculty and staff," said Drag Show advisor Joe Hahn.

Hahn, director Yumi Kom and stage director Gabbi Boyle, make up the "Tri-

force," the leaders behind the show. And it is a full-scale production, taking nearly a year to stage. Hahn said just weeks after "Out of Pandora's Box" ends, work will begin on next year's extravaganza.

Choreographers have been working the dances in the current show — set to pop music — since August. Auditions took place in Jan-

uary, and the cast has been in hours upon hours of rehearsal over the last two months.

Kristen Case, a sophomore and "newbie" to the show, says it's all worth it.

"It's more of a production ... (drag shows) are usually just about the queens, and they are just lip syncing and it's all about their personality," Case said. "Here we have

a story and a lot of dancing. It's really unique. I've never really experienced anything like it."

Case said she was inspired to join the show after seeing last year's production as a freshman and getting involved with the Triangle Alliance this year.

"I decided to try something new. Everybody really encouraged me to do it," she said. "I haven't done anything like it before. I thought it was a really good chance to stretch myself and grow and challenge myself."

Case was cast in the chorus, but doesn't mind taking on the smaller role.

"I don't honestly think I'm very good at the dancing, but it's just so much fun," she said. "I've gotten a lot better than when I first started. It's fun to dance around on stage and have everybody scream at you."

In the midst of all the dancing and screaming, the show retells the story of Pandora and her infamous box of chaos. Hades — the god of the underworld played by Marika Hatos — is scheming to use that power to destroy the Earth and sends his wife, Persephone, to kill Pandora. But events don't go according to Hades' plan once Persephone meets Pandora.

Ty Lewis, who plays Persephone, said the popu-

larity and fun-loving nature of the show makes it a perfect form of outreach.

"This is probably the biggest show that happens on campus every year because it happens for one night only," he said. "It's such a big campus event. It's such a good opportunity to educate people about the LGBTQ community."

This is Lewis's third year involved in the show and second year as a performer. Last year he took a break from dancing, but just couldn't say away from the stage when this year's show kicked off.

"After last year, I missed it so much I decided I had to come back and try out for a lead," Tyler said.

Likewise, the audience can't seem to get enough. Case understands why.

"Because it's racy — and because it's so much fun," Case said. "I remember when I went, it was like sensory overload. There was this music that I knew, so I could sing along, and there were people screaming all around me and there were beautiful people on stage. I was like 'Is that a man or a woman? What's happening?' Everybody is dancing. It's like an experience."

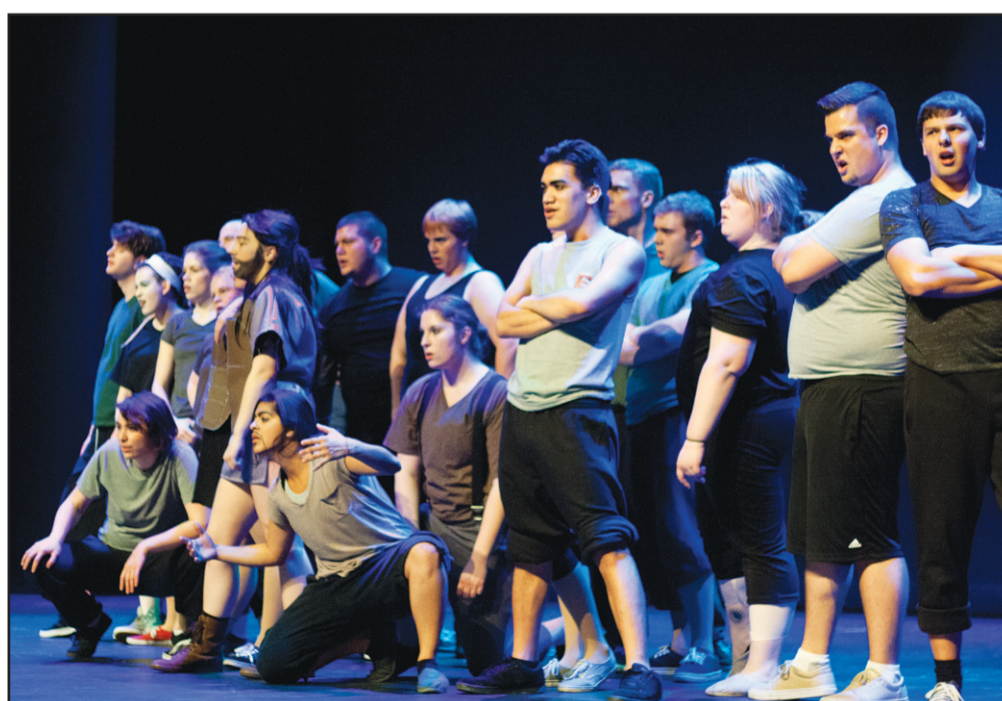
"That's why I think people go to it, because it's so memorable."



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer  
Marika Hatos as Hades, Persephone's husband, schemes to destroy the world in "Out of Pandora's Box."

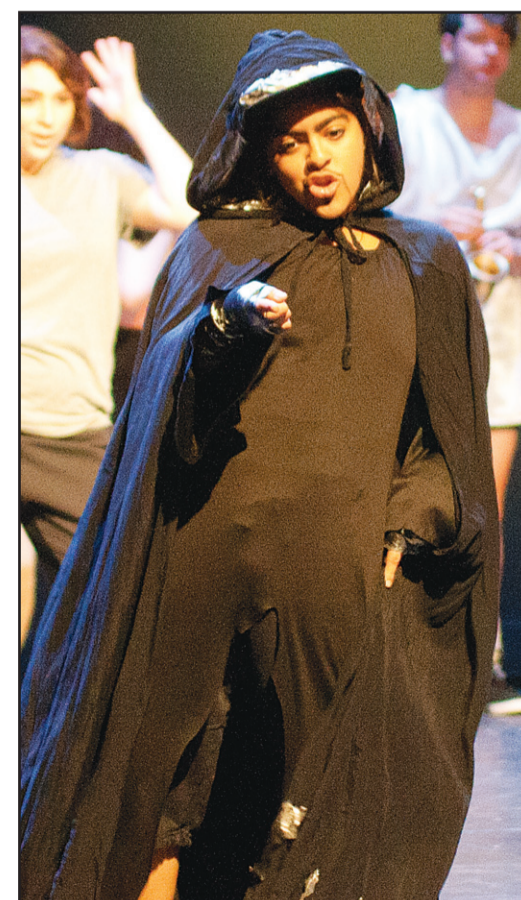
## (Drag) Showtime!

• Tickets to Wednesday's (tonight's) dress rehearsal at 7 will be on sale at the door at Western Oregon University's Rice Auditorium for \$3. Go early if you want to get a seat.



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The Drag Show has a cast of 60 dancers who audition for parts in January. The show is a year-long effort, beginning each spring after the one- or two-night run is over.



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Evelyn Garcia, as ferryman to the underworld, Charon dances during a scene, which uses pop music to tell the story.