

OMT doubles up again, with two shows this month

By Constance Scrafield

For the second straight year, Orangeville Music Theatre (OMT) is putting out a double header this month by producing two shows. Aladdin Jr with the youngsters ran over the weekend.

All Shook Up, featuring the adult actors, will rock and roll those old boards over the two weekends of June 16 to 18 and June 23 to 25.

That the theatre group has managed to finesse producing two shows at once certainly says a great deal about the dedication of everyone involved from pretty young to I-don't-know-how-old.

We popped into the school to catch all the action. As we came into the hall, a group of people were working with their choreographer, learning the ropes of getting it together ? all together. It was great.

Not wanting to interrupt, we went into the auditorium where Aladdin had made the first of his three wishes and was currently ?Prince Ali.?

Here too, there was a group dance ensemble; this was already well-disciplined and coordinated. The cast was 46 children and young people. Not wanting to interrupt here either, we simply sat and enjoyed the show: the silly dialogue of the cynical parrot, Iago, the terrible villainy of the high ranking Jafar, along with the syrupy Aladdin himself ? terrific stuff.

In brief, based on Arabian Nights, Aladdin is a street urchin in the exotic Eastern city of Agrabah who meets the Princess Jasmine, falling in love with her. Through a labyrinth of plot, he comes across a lamp with a genie who has three wishes for him. The ensuing story, songs and dance follow the path of evil and good to a well-loved conclusion.

Even from the little we saw, the kids really paid attention to their parts ? theatre arts are so good for kids ? and the whole thing was clearly coming along extremely well. It is full of surprises, as are most shows that engage child actors.

The opera house hall was now empty, as all the actors had gone into the auditorium for more rehearsal, where we did have the chance to chat to some of them and see a routine.

It was an interesting crowd but, first, we offer an attempt at a synopsis.

Small town USA, mid 1950s: very square and restrictive sort of place ? typical, really, but stretched by a mayoral decree against loud music, kissing in public and tight jeans.

So, borrowing from Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, including the lady disguised as a man to get closer to another man ? while trying not to be exposed by her kin ? in and out, very entertaining. The whole fun begins when a motorcycle-riding, tight jeans, rock and roll guy, Chad, drives into town and stirs thing up. Miscommunications and muddled emotions, just keep it straight ? along with may of the wonderful songs by which we affectionately remember Elvis, and you begin to get the idea.

Back to the cast. Having never sung more than with a choir, Troy auditioned to be in the musical after a friend sent him the link.

Much to his surprise, he was cast as Chad, the lead role.

Troy told us that he loves doing the show and will be very sad when it is over.

Others talked about their affection for the show ? what tremendous fun it is; one actor came in late during rehearsals to fill a gap? he has directed the show twice and it is his favourite ? no problem about knowing the lines!

As an ensemble, they gave us the opportunity to see them do one of their routines ? it was lovely, really nice. After all, this is, ultimately, a veritable collection of love stories.

For information and tickets, call the Opera House box office 519-942-3423; visit the box office, 87 Broadway, or go online to www.orangevillemusictheatre.com