

Orangeville Music Theatre presenting Shrek the Musical

By Constance Scrafield

Leading the pack in Ontario, Orangeville Music Theatre (OMT) is one of the first to stage Shrek the Musical, the rights to which have only recently been released for community theatre production.

The costumes are great, Lucinda Silva, the show's director, said in a telephone interview last week. They're amazing just like the costumes on the Broadway show. It's a lot of fun bringing a cartoon to life.

With the emphasis on bringing children into performances, which has been one of the main ambitions of the group, this production fulfills that with 80 per cent of the cast of 43 being youngsters, 10 of whom are under the age of 10. Of the cast, there are familiar faces and many newcomers.

There are tons of kids. The youngest is four years old, Silva said. The kids love it they want to be there; the little ones are going to steal the show in many places.

A musical, it has plenty of singing with many solos, some also being performed by the younger members of the cast.

The parents are begging for us to do more shows, she said.

In answer to this appeal, the Christmas show OMT is planning this year really involves the kids, on the design end of the show, too. In Shrek, Silva said, All the characters are played by people some of them were puppets in the Broadway production. They're all amazing.

Craig Marshall, who starred in the Rocky Horror Show, plays the part of Shrek. Silva said that it is a dream part for him.

Generally, the OMT audition for their shows and people respond from all over the area. Marshall comes from Brampton, but others have come from Mississauga, travelling every week for rehearsals, along with amateur actors coming from Orangeville itself.

The story line is based on the first Shrek movie, featuring several characters from several fairy tales. It is a story with messages.

There is Lord Farquaad, played by Adriano Bertuzzo, who wants to control everyone. He creates lots of problems for everyone else with his hostility and authoritarian ways. No doubt, he will be defeated or mollified!

There is the Princess Fiona, played by Raeburn Ferguson, whom a witch turns into an ogre and who must learn that it is alright to be different or even odd; that beauty is appreciated in many different ways.

Silva was very enthusiastic about the musical.

Shrek is really a fun story, she declared. Everyone is jelling and getting along so well. When the cast has chemistry, it's magic.

It's so much fun to watch, she added. We've had messages from people in Brampton and Mississauga wanting to see the show. We should have really good audiences.

It's such a funny show, she said. There's so much pop culture as part of it but the adults will get those jokes while there lots of jokes the kids will get too.

We're super excited about it, and her voice reflected her own eagerness as she added, and I can hardly wait.

The show opens tomorrow this Saturday (June 8) at the Orangeville Opera House, at 8 p.m. Whether you know the story or not, no doubt this will be terrific treat for the youngsters in the family.

The production dates are June 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 21 and 22. Tickets are available at the Opera House box office, phone 519-942- 3423 or check for information and tickets at www.orangevillemusictheatre.com