

The Alexanders bringing Oz to LSHS stage

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It all started about three years ago, when Kim and Howard put on the high school's first ever musical, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*.

Last year's *Oliver!* was a considerably larger production, and *Oz*'s cast of 47 is about twice as big as *Oliver!*

"This year I haven't had nearly as much time to teach when I'm directing," says Kim. "It's been more of watch me do it, and then copy. With 50 people, there isn't very much time for individual direction."

In addition to an enlarged cast, *Oz* also involves elaborate special effects, including flash-pots, magic snow, an eighty pound cauldron and a scrim, which is a prop that allows the witches to appear and disappear.

"People don't realize that it

takes a whole bunch of calls to find out what a scrim is, what my options are when buying (the re-usable) scrim, how do you finish the top, how do you finish the bottom, how do you cut it And there's about 70 details like that."

What you really need, she says, is two or three directors.

"But you can't do that, because not everyone sees things the way I do, and you end up with a whole new set of problems."

"(Oz) just has so many great characters," says Howard, when asked why they chose the

play. "It's just a marvellous fantasy. But next year, I think we're going to do something a little smaller, a little simpler."

"To see (the student actors) glowing when they come offstage, with everybody applauding their efforts—I know they'll remember that kind of success for a long long time."

A big factor in choosing each year's musical is how many singers and actors are graduating.

"This year, we'll be losing all of our leads except one," he says.

"You look at who's going to be here next year, and then you pick a musical around the people you're going to have," says Kim.

This year's production costs are also up—from \$4,700 last year to about \$7,000 this

year—but they still expect a small profit.

"The onus is on us to make sure that the show doesn't lose money," Kim says.

"The show's entirely self-sufficient, thanks to donations of labour and materials," says Howard. "And someday, I hope to have our own lighting panel."

Their plan is to keep saving the \$1,000-2,000 profits the shows make until there's money to put toward purchasing a lighting panel.

There are some differences between the movie version of *Oz* and the original L. Frank Baum version of 1902, which is what this weekend's performance is based on.

"The movie has the scene with the attacking apple trees," says Kim. "They're not in the stage version for obvious reasons—it would be far too

expensive."

"There's one scene (in this version) with three witches having a conversation in the castle", says Howard.

"I think the differences make the stage version a bit more interesting."

And so, after more than three months and 200 hours of rehearsals, phone calls, and other assorted duties, the question begs to be asked: why do they put themselves through it?

"The rewards at the end are worth it," says Kim. "To see (the student actors) glowing when they come offstage, with everybody applauding their efforts—I know they'll remember that kind of success for a long long time."

"It's an outlet some of these kids live for," says Howard. "And to provide the venue is worth it."

Kim Alexander



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Applications must be received by Thursday, March 5, 1992.

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