

Iconic Wizard of Oz presented by Brampton Music Theatre

By Mark PavilonsEditor

The yellow brick road is winding its way to The Rose with Brampton Music Theatre's production of The Wizard of Oz! It promises to be a big hit and the nearby Rose is easily accessible by King and York residents. People of all ages can't help but be amazed by this tale, and the stage adaptation of L. Frank Baum's beloved story about Dorothy Gale and her journey over the rainbow to the magical Land of Oz also features the iconic musical score from the MGM film. Presented by Brampton On Stage, it's a must see and is sure to warm your heart as the holiday season approaches. The cast is eagerly awaiting opening night Nov. 2. Paul Barker, who plays Professor Chester Marvel and The Wizard, says it's a pure fantasy tale with messages of friendship, heart, courage and thoughtfulness. It's about good vs evil, learning as you go on your journey. It should actually be considered a documentary on how to live your life. Take chances, have courage, be loving to others. I love it because it is enduring, endearing and timeless, he says. Barker notes he doesn't intend to mimic Frank Morgan's portrayal from the movie. I want to bring my own characterization but staying true to how people remember the film. Professor Chester Marvel/The Wizard is a snake oil salesman, a carnival barker but not the best at his trade. I want to show that fumbling/bumbling aspect of him but with the gift of gab and want of being the centre of attention in the room he's in. This is a retelling of the classic tale, to preserve the illusion. Barker says you have to know your audience and since it's family friendly, children will be awestruck by this visual fantastical tale. There will also be adults, looking to remember the feeling they had when they first read the book or saw the movie or show for the first time. It appeals to all ages and everyone has that child at heart and innocence in their soul. If it puts a smile on your face or makes you hum or sing along, the show has done its job, he says. Presenting it at The Rose is a luxury, he notes, adding it boasts 825 seats and state of the art lighting and tech. With a combination of that plus the efforts of the Brampton Music Theatre members offering up their own time with costumes, set construction, props and their talent, this should be a visually stunning show. The sentiments are echoed by Emily Searle, one of the actors who portrays Dorothy. She sees the timeless tale as the idea that you can go anywhere, even to the most magical, extraordinary place and still feel lost without the people you love. I love the mystery and the unknown and the fact it's up to the audience to decide if Oz is a real place or if it was all a cyclone-induced dream. She is roughly 10 years older than the character, but Searle brings a maturity and empathy to the role that comes from those few extra years of life experience. I wanted my Dorothy to have a character arc and to grow as a person but also to act how a real life 12-year-old girl would. She's bratty, sassy, sometimes self-centred but also full of life, love and a kindness that comes from truly wanting everyone to be happy. She says they've kept The Wizard of Oz firmly in its roots, by celebrating that Golden Age sound and style rather than discarding it. It's fairytale magic for the kids; it's beautiful storytelling for the young adults, and it's wholly sentimental for the older generation. Having said that, I watched The Wizard of Oz as a small child in the early 2000s, as my parents did before me, and their parents before them so I don't think it will ever go out of style. The Rose is sure to bring the magical sights and sounds. The most important thing is the storytelling. Everyone in the cast and crew have worked so hard to make the show beautiful, from the set, lighting, special effects and backstage team to the wonderful orchestra, creative team and actors. It's going to be amazing! Beth Stockill, who also plays Dorothy, says the messages in the story are still valuable today. Courage, kindness and to be grateful for what we have. I relate to and appreciate that it is the story of a headstrong and confident teenage girl like myself, trying to speak up for what she believes in, and do what it takes to achieve her goals. When she first read the script Dorothy it resonated with her because she is written to be a strong and independent teenage girl making her way through a new, strange and frightening world on her own. Oftentimes she can be mistakenly portrayed for less than the intriguing character that she is. I would like to breathe new life into the Dorothy that I believe in and bring her to the main stage. While keeping to the famous script and story we bring a freshness to this show that will create a lively and engaging atmosphere for anyone and everyone. Whether you are a first-time watcher or a returning fan, this show is catchy, heartfelt and will bring you joy. For all the newcomers, just be ready to fall in love with another fantastic show that tells a beautiful story about perseverance, friendship and family. For all the Boomers who love the original movie, be ready to sing and dance along with your favorite show. She lauded the time and commitment from the BMT members and their families, who put in countless volunteer hours to help paint, sew and build. This beautiful rendition of the classic tale was made possible by the musical genius of Vince Gassi, amazing directorial talent of Joe Gomes and the fantastic choreo from Cassie Baird, along with the rest of the outstanding production team at BMT. This is a great opportunity to lose yourself over the rainbow. Located in downtown

Brampton, Brampton On Stage presents Wizard of Oz at The Rose Nov. 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11 and 12. Get your tickets soon, for this is sure to sell out. For more, visit <https://tickets.brampton.ca/Online/default.asp>