



## **Saint Viator High School Goes Green—as in the Emerald City**



Tinman (Ryan Fasano), Dorothy (Katie Deger), Scarecrow (Jeremy Vivit) and Lion (Nick Antoniou) encounter the guard (Matt Filstead) on their way into Emerald City.

The Merry Old Land of Oz and its Emerald City vividly come to life this weekend as Saint Viator High School mounts the classic musical, “The Wizard of Oz.”

Shows take place at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 29, 30, Feb. 5 and 6; and 1 p.m. Jan. 31 and Feb. 7. Tickets are \$10 each and may be reserved by calling 847-392-4050, ext. 349.

With more than 120 students in the cast and another 30 “munchkins” portrayed by area school children, the stage lights up with youthful energy and color. Add in another 36 working behind

the scenes and 24 in the pit, and it approaches a small city, much like Oz.

“That’s more than 10 percent of our students involved in the musical,” says JoAnne Francis, student activities director. “How many other schools can say that?”

Director Kate Costello typically casts around 100 students, before dividing them up into separate casts. It’s better to involve more students, she says, and immerse them in a theater experience.

Principals include: Katie Deger of Rolling Meadows; Maddy Kelly, Joe Giovannetti, Tim Hogaboom, Max Jansons and Steven Patzke all of Arlington Heights; Tori Botsford, Alex Majewski and Nick Antoniou of Barrington; Jack Nuelle, Kelli Wosick, Jeremy Vivit and Ciara Collins of Mount Prospect; Trisha Tucker of Itasca; Colleen Kenyon and Alex Nowakowski of Palatine; Ryan Fasano of Algonquin; and Andy Gusmano of Cary.

Ironically, after mounting musicals for 44 years, the school had never tackled the Wizard of Oz.

“After last year’s more serious show, ‘West Side Story,’ I wanted something fun and upbeat for students to perform,” Costello says. “But it was the students themselves who selected it, in a landslide vote.”

Senior Colleen Kenyon of Palatine gets to stretch her acting skills, going from playing the streetwise Anita in last year’s show to the sweet and comforting Glinda, the Good Witch of the North.

“She’s very mothering and nurturing,” Kenyon says. “My favorite scene is Munchkinland. All of the munchkins are so excited to be on stage — some for the first time --- and I get to be a part of that.”

Her classmates added that the feel-good nature of the show takes them back to their childhood.

“This show never gets old,” says junior Brian Hansen of Arlington Heights, who

plays the guard at the gate to Oz. “We never get tired of singing these songs.”

Senior Ryan Fasano of Algonquin, one of the Tinmen, points to all of the singing and dancing in the play, which didn't make the film version.

“My favorite is the Jitterbug scene,” Fasano says. “It's pretty much the whole cast up there, so it's lots of fun.”

Costello says that beyond the familiar music and characters, many of the elements from the play still ring true today.

“It was written during an economically depressed time, and it celebrates concepts such as getting through hard times with the help of other people,” Costello says, “of realizing your own inner strengths, and of learning that there's no place like home.”