

TAISM Elementary School Students Present Musical Drama

Over fifty Elementary School students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 at The American International School of Muscat (TAISM) recently presented "The Emperor's New Clothes," a musical adaptation of the famous fairy tale by Danish author, Hans Christian Andersen. This musical, with words and music by Dave and Jean Perry, enjoyed a sell-out audience for its two performances at the Saud Bahwan Performance Hall at the school's Ghala campus.

Andersen's famous tale revolves around a fictional royal family in a fairy tale kingdom, where everything seems perfectly ordinary and proper. Narrators Nora Jackson and Benedicte Kristensen related the story of the vain King (Imad Abdulkadir) who is preoccupied with appearances and does not spend enough time with his family. The Queen (Maria Chalhoub), the Prince (Tollef Bjelland) and Princess (Danni Luff) try to help the King attend to his duties but no one can curb the King's interest in fine clothing. Consequently, two cunning swindlers posing as tailors (Yoo Jun Heo and Joel Walker) are able to convince the King and all his subjects that they can create special invisible clothing for the King that only the wisest in the kingdom can see. The story ends on a humorous note, as the King is finally revealed to be clad in nothing but his underclothes.

Director and accompanist, Ms. Gwen Willson, commented, "It was great fun to create the fantasy on stage. Since our school tries to guide our students in becoming culturally aware and creative, this musical presented a perfect opportunity for this to happen. The students gained great self-confidence and self-esteem while performing in front of hundreds of audience members."

Ms. Willson went on to explain that this production was a collaborative effort between many TAISM staff members. Ms. Nadia Abougoush, Grade 4 teacher, was the production director, and had a team of 12 students who designed the posters, programs and tickets. Ms. Maura Phelan, English Language Learning teacher, adapted the script and co-directed the drama, while Ms. Kris Hovland, Drama Teacher, oversaw the lighting and make-up.

Parents and students found the performances very enjoyable on many levels. Renee Spiteri, Grade 9 student, said, "It was cute - the actors knew their lines and worked well together. The costumes were perfect for the period, in different beautiful colors, and in great variety for the Royals, the ministers, and all the townspeople." Grade 7 student, Sean Wakatake, added, "The musical was really funny, in particular the King in his acting and in his new clothes." TAISM mother Leise Kristensen concluded, "The singing and acting was so good, so funny. I had a good time laughing all through the performance.

In conclusion, Ms. Willson commented, "We all had so many laughs and merriment in producing this musical. Besides having great fun in rehearsals with the students, I was so proud of their high level of singing and acting in the final performances."

The American International School of Muscat (TAISM) provides an extensive music, art and drama education for students in Kindergarten to grade 12 with programs in general music, instrumental and choral music, visual arts and drama. All students participate in the fine arts while enrolled in the school, and are supported by seven highly qualified teachers as well as staff and parent volunteers.