

Features Theater Weekend Happenings
Tuesday, March 29th, 2011 | Posted by [Noel Stack](#)

'The Frog Princess' teaches important lessons



RICK WILSON, El Dorado Musical Theater director, helps Vanessa (Elizabeth Meggs, 9, of El Dorado Hills), rehearse her lines for the upcoming production of "The Frog Princess." Democrat photo by She Thorene

What: "The Frog Princess"

Who: El Dorado Musical Theater

Where: Pleasant Grove Middle School, 2540 Green Valley Road, in Rescue

When: Thursday, March 31, at 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; Friday, April 1, at 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, April 2, at 11 a.m., 1, 3, 5:30 and 7:30 p.m.

Cost: \$8 for adults, \$6 for children

Information: edmt.info.

It's not easy being green.

Just ask Vanessa, the main character in El Dorado Musical Theater's training show "The Frog Princess." Director Rick Wilson penned the musical's story and lyrics with music by Lynne Cimorelli.

This modern spin on "The Frog Prince" takes audiences through a tale of selfishness, smartphones and extreme makeovers, inside and out.

Vanessa, "Daddy's little princess," finds herself craving flies and croaking after her "it's all about me" attitude catches up with her thanks to a malicious app downloaded on her new smartphone.

With the help of friends, she must discover her unselfish side in order to transform back into a girl.

At a rehearsal Saturday Wilson demonstrated that it's also not easy being a director.

Wilson oversees three casts — the bullfrogs, tree frogs and leap frogs — that amount to 106 children ages 5 to 9, and he has to get everyone excited about the nine performances scheduled over three days.

As the bullfrogs sang and danced at EDMT's studio in the El Dorado Hills Business Park Wilson coached. "I'd like to hear your big voice, OK?"

The children sang louder. He took the time to instruct performers one-on-one, positioning them so they'll face the audience and reading lines to those who forgot.

"If they know you genuinely like them they're more likely to follow direction," he confided.

And it's clear Wilson cares. He smiles as much as the kids and has no problem singing along.

"The Frog Princess" is an homage to EDMT's very first performance, "The Frog Prince," 10 years ago. "We thought it would be fun to do a little tip of the hat," Wilson explained.

These training productions not only give younger performers a chance to experience theater, they also give EDMT pros a chance to work behind the scenes, Wilson said.

EDMT veteran Spencer Borup serves as Wilson's assistant director. Savannah Argyle is the production's vocal director; Asher Dubin choreographs the dance numbers with assistant choreographer Anjie Rose Wilson's help.

All this expertise adds to the show's caliber.

"We'd like (the audience) to be pleasantly surprised," Wilson said.

"The Frog Princess" opens at Pleasant Grove Middle School, 2540 Green Valley Road, on Thursday, March 31, with performances at 5:30 p.m. (bullfrogs) and 7:30 p.m. (leap frogs). Friday, April 1, performances are scheduled at 5:30 p.m. (tree frogs) and 7:30 p.m. (bullfrogs) and Saturday, April 2, performances are planned at 11 a.m. (leap frogs), 1 p.m. (tree frogs), 3 p.m. (bullfrogs), 5:30 p.m. (leap frogs) and 7:30 p.m. (tree frogs).

Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$6 for children. For tickets and more information visit edmt.info.

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