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On the Road! To Oz

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Koste, V. Glasgow. *On the Road! To Oz*. The Dramatic Publishing Co., 1990. ISBN 0871291324. 61 pp.

Reviewer: Rebecca K. Connerley

Reading Level: Intermediate; Young adult;

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Plays; Fantasy Plays;

Subject: Musicals--Juvenile drama; Drama--Reviews; Baum, L. Frank (Lyman Frank), 1856-1919--Juvenile drama; Oz (Imaginary place)--Juvenile drama;

Theme: "Life is a journey, not a destination." Dr. Jonas Saek

Production Requirements: This play requires very little set. Props and costumes are the main production elements utilized in the play. Large, roll-on and off pieces could add weight and color to the set but are not necessary to action. Costume changes are done on the set and all production elements are exaggerated in style. Brightly colored lighting and other effects could be used to heighten the over dramatized feeling that the show requires.

Acts: 2

Run Time: 90 min.

Characters: 6

Cast: 3 female, 3 male

Time Period: Contemporary

The play begins with a spotlight on an obviously inspired playwright typing away furiously. In the rhythm of the typewriter he finds music and dance. Eventually he conjures up the characters of his story (an adaptation play from the Oz books by L. Frank Baum). The characters come alive as actors enter the stage of his mind and help create the Oz saga. Dorothy enters from the audience where she has been watching Yotty (the playwright). Right before act two, Yotty attempts to take control of the creation process and subsequently loses his "actors" and inspiration for a time. As the second act gets into swing everyone is involved again. They escape from Mombi, build the gump, travel across the deadly desert, and attend a party for Osma. The play ends as Yotty discovers the secrets of Oz and has the opportunity to talk to L. Frank Baum.

This is quite a unique piece in that the audience watches a play being written and constructed right before them. Even Dorothy, the main character, is plucked from among them. It is an extremely lively and interactive play with lots of action and possible levels. The players and supporting actors take on many different characters from the Oz books, which would be a great learning experience in characterization for any young actor. The story line can be very complicated or even difficult to understand for anyone unfamiliar with the Oz series. The language is fun and fast-paced. Various pop-culture references and tunes are sure to make any audience chuckle. Production would be relatively simple, as props and costumes constitute a majority of the set. The Land of Oz is a fairytale land that we are seeing through the imagination of the playwright Yotty as he types away, so any production elements would be large, over exaggerated and deliberate. The audience can and should be shown scene, costume, and makeup changes. This is a lovely, fun play.