

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 20, 2009

Pope John XXIII High school Presents Musical – “The Wiz”

Everett, MA -- On Friday April 3, 2009, Pope John XXIII High School will present its first performance of *The Wiz*, this year's Spring Musical.

"Everyone works so hard on our theatre productions," said award-winning director Nancy Higgins, faculty member and drama director at Pope John. "Our choreographer, Kim Misci, along with our dancers, have been nominated twice in a row for the North Shore Music Theatre Spotlight Awards."

"This year we've added a new full-time music teacher at Pope John, Megan Bergeron, who is also working as our Music Director," Higgins said. "I know the whole cast feels really lucky to have such talented people to work with."

The Wiz is an adaptation of the Tony-Award winning Broadway show and 1978 film musical of the same name. Starring Diana Ross and Michael Jackson, the film received critical acclaim, including four Academy Award nominations. This dramatization was originally based on L. Frank Baum's novel, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, first published in 1900.

Though the original story is more than a one hundred years old, cast member Olivia Woods, '11, feels this year's musical brings new life to the work. "The Wiz is a different spin on the familiar Wizard of Oz movie," the junior performer said. It's been updated to a whole new style of music, dance, and design that is so much fun to work on!"

All the members of the production have been hard at work, both onstage and behind the scenes. New this year is a class in Theatre Production and Design, whose students have been hard at work since September designing and adapting the scenery for this production and for Pope John's Drama Festival entry.

The show has more than 20 featured roles. Krista Ippolito of Malden plays Dorothy; Johnny Alexis also of Malden, is featured in the role of the Scarecrow; A.J. Kennedy of Revere plays the Lion; Chris McNeill of Malden is the Tin Man, and Elena Marten of Malden is featured as the Wicked Witch of the West. Johnny Alexis and Chris McNeill are fresh from their All-Star Actor award-winning performances in Pope John's Drama Festival entry in February.

In this production, The Pope John High School Step Team makes a special appearance as the Funky Monkeys, while Spanish Teacher Dominec Casselle plays The Wiz.

"This is so much harder than I thought it would be!" exclaimed Casselle after a recent rehearsal, who in addition to teaching languages is a trained violinist. "This is my first time actually performing on a stage. It's a real challenge putting the whole thing together, with the singing, dancing, and acting. But these kids make it look easy, and I know the audience is going to have a great time watching them perform."

"I am so proud of every one of these students and teachers for their commitment to putting on such a professional production," Higgins said. "We are all looking forward to the show on the first weekend in April, and I hope everyone will come out to see a fantastic performance!"

**Pope John XXIII High School Drama Club
Presents The Wiz (The New Musical Version of the Wizard of Oz)**

**Friday, April 3, 2009 at 7PM
Sunday, April 5, 2009 at 2PM**

At Pope John XXIII High School Auditorium
\$8.00 Adults
\$6.00 Students and Senior Citizen (Tickets available at the door)
For ticket Info Contact: Maria Maser @ 617-389-0240 ext. 16

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