



Photos by Ernest A. Brown

Woonsocket High sophomore Adison Ellis, as the Beast, and senior Claudia Desrosiers, as Belle, perform a dance scene in Woonsocket High School's presentation of Disney's Beauty and the Beast during a full dress rehearsal at the school's auditorium Tuesday evening. The musical will be performed on Friday and Saturday evening in the school's auditorium at 7 p.m.

# WHS theater does Disney with 'Beauty and the Beast'

By STELLA LORENCE  
slorence@woonsocketcall.com

WOONSOCKET – It may be a tale as old as time, but not for Jennifer Maiello, who after years of swearing off any Disney production, is ready to open "Beauty and the Beast" at Woonsocket High School.

"I always said I would never do Disney," she said. "The kids really wanted to do it."

Even though she didn't think she'd enjoy staging a Disney princess production, she said she's "had a ball" – literally. She's added several dance numbers to the original production, including a more contemporary-style number in act two that she said puts the "booty in 'Beauty.'"

For senior Claudia Desrosiers, Belle is a dream role, especially in

See BEAUTY, page A3



Woonsocket High students perform a scene in Act II of Disney's Beauty and the Beast during a full dress rehearsal in the school's auditorium Tuesday evening. The show is presented this Friday and Saturday evenings at 7 p.m.

C  
a  
o  
  
yo  
of  
ga  
na:  
the  
  
Tu  
ab:  
sup  
an:  
Pa  
sis  
tio  
to  
to  
for  
M:  
  
ga  
ma  
art  
in  
ass  
El:  
de:  
pro  
lat  
res  
Pa  
  
inc  
to,  
hit  
—  
V  
C  
  
Wo  
ne  
an:  
ha:  
on  
  
she  
of  
wh  
Hu  
op  
the  
Ch  
an

# Beauty

Continued from page A1

her last-ever production at Woonsocket High School. Part of the allure is getting to wear Belle's iconic yellow ball gown, designed and hand-sewn in this case by Kristine Szrom from Rhode Island Youth Theater, who created the bulk of the costumes for Woonsocket's production.

"I really wanted to be part of something magical," she said. "It's just a dream come true. I wouldn't change anything."

Desrosiers has over 20 shows' worth of experience since starting at Sta-

dium Theater in elementary school, and last year she starred in "Hairspray" as Tracy Chapman.

Playing opposite Desrosiers as Beast is sophomore Adison Ellis, who debuted as Seaweed in "Hairspray" last year. Jumping from a supporting character to a lead role was "a big step," he said, and one he was "really, really nervous" about until just a few rehearsals before opening night. The key, he said, was putting his role in perspective with the rest of the cast and making sure his performance enabled everyone else to hit their marks too.

"I just knew that I was putting on a show," he ex-

plained. "It's less about me caring about how I looked."

Acting alongside a veteran performer like Desrosiers doesn't hurt, either.

"I'm genuinely so in awe of Claudia," he said.

As in shows past, Maiello called on her network of alumni to help on the crew side of things, including Adam Brunetti, who production manages the entire show and oversees a tech crew of experienced alumni.

"I don't treat it like a high school show," he said.

Maiello also brought back pianist E. Justin Simone as musical director to supplement the musical tracks and work with the

students. Simone said Maiello tapped him for "The Addams Family" two years ago when she was getting her program back up and running after covid, but he wasn't available to help out with "Hairspray" last year.

This year, he's been working with the cast since they started rehearsals in the fall, and even though most of the students already knew some of the music, performing it is different than singing along to the Disney movie.

"They've really grown with the music," he said.

From the glitz and glimmer at one of the last dress rehearsals before opening night, it would be hard to

tell that this production got started about two months behind schedule because of renovations in the auditorium.

"Everybody did their parts," Maiello said. "They stepped up. They're so dedicated."

"Beauty and the Beast" runs Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are available for \$15 at the door or before 4:00 p.m. at the WHS main office.

Follow Stella Lorence on Twitter @sllorence3.

BLACKSTONE VALLEY'S

# CALL & TIMES

75 Main St., Woonsocket, RI 02895  
 www.woonsocketcall.com | www.pawtuckettimes.com  
 Newsroom fax: (401) 765-2834  
 e-mail: notices@woonsocketcall.com  
 sports@woonsocketcall.com

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES

CIRCULATION: Per copy - \$1.50 Monday - Friday; \$3.00 Saturday