

Beauty and the Beast: Beyond the Mask



Rehearsing for a play while wearing masks — This is the next level of hard work and commitment Erin Pinsky, the producer of *Beauty and the Beast*, wanted to make clear: “The mask doesn’t define you.”

There is so much more to wearing a mask than just being difficult. The mask is one small part of what you as a cast member is trying to do. The way you say the line can still create that same sort of laughter despite wearing the mask. The way that you speak it, the way that you move it can still create that reaction from the audience.

The actors strive to elicit the same empathy and love from the audience. “They rose to that challenge, and they were so resilient in the face of it,” Ms. Pinsky said. We all know the struggle of wearing masks during school.

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Joel Barlow High School
Redding, CT



Joel Barlow High School, 100 Black Rock Turnpike, Redding, presents Disney's Beauty and the Beast on Friday evening Nov. 19 and Saturday, Nov. 20, with matinee and evening performances. You can see show times and ticket information below and by clicking on this link on the Joel Barlow High School website.

Now seeing that they have to wear these masks during the performance, the cast members have found a way to make it a little more fun and creative. They have color coded the masks to their specific characters and costumes.

Belle has her classic blue mask on and Morris, her father, has the same color to emphasize the family bond they have with each other. The cast and crew have actually taken the masks as an opportunity to invoke more artistic abilities to the production.

Naila Carter, who is playing the Wardrobe, believes that wearing the masks help the actors pay attention to the subtlety of their emotions and not rely on their facial expressions.

“We are able to learn each other’s different styles of acting,” Naila said. The process of acting in masks has helped the cast to learn different ways to read each other’s reactions. “You would think it would be hard to read each other’s emotions with the mask on, but at this point it has been pretty easy,” said Naila.

For the last two months the cast and crew has worked on this production. The actors’ efforts are really about diligence towards their performance. The student production is about “creating a world for the audience,” said Ms. Pinsky.

The cast and crew have been so invested in their craft, that they care so much about wanting to put on the best production they can. “Despite the circumstances, we’re putting on a big show,” Ms. Pinsky said.

It’s a fact that Beauty and the Beast is a big show. With all the big costumes and big sets, it’s a huge deal to just be able to put on this type of show despite the masks.

Belle has overcome the gender normalities in her town by believing in herself. This just tells us that “We all can do hard things” said Ms. Pinsky.

Go support your fellow classmates and Easton and Redding students. And as all performers say, “Sit back, relax, and enjoy the show.”

Tickets are Still Available

Please “Be Our Guest!” Performances run:

- Friday, Nov. 19 at 7 p.m.
- Saturday, Nov. 20 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for students and senior citizens.

Please use the following link to purchase your tickets: <http://jbhs.booktix.com/>

You can email Producer Erin Pinsky with any questions at epinsky@er9.org.

*Photo at top: Beauty and the Beast comes to the Joel Barlow High School stage. —
Meghan Cormier Photography*