



Heidi Cline McKerley—Director of “The Wizard of Oz”

What do you consider to be the production’s biggest challenge?

Lots and lots of cool technical elements. We have people flying, special effects, two revolves...there are many moving parts to manage.

What about this production are you most excited for?

The collaborative process has been terrific from the designers all the way to the student actors - everyone has been gracious, positive, and a complete joy to work with.

What do you hope audiences will take away from this show?

I hope they will examine what they perceive to be their life's missing piece. Everyone in the show is looking for something they feel will complete them. Maybe they actually have what they are looking for. I also hope that audiences will connect to the idea of embracing your blood family and your chosen or found family - both of vital to a balanced life.

How much, if at all, were you influenced by the 1939 film?

I am heavily influenced by it-- I think we all are! It is near and dear to many people. I was Dorothy in the 6th grade. My music teacher, Mrs. Nudo, audio taped the movie and transcribed it so we could do a version at our school. Highly illegal! But bless her for all that effort because she wanted to tell the story so much. When Jim hired me he said that he hoped I would help to tell the story in a way that didn't make it a museum piece. So I believe we are embracing the classic, but we are also finding ways to pull 2018 into the story. We are focused on what people want, what the stakes are, and what will happen if those wants and needs are not met. We have also had a great time creating our version of Oz; this group of designers has done exceptional work. The students have been incredible too. They are one of the most positive casts I have ever had the pleasure of working with. I think you will see that on stage and in our telling of the story.

Is this production more tailored towards children? And, if so, why should adults come to see it?

I have tried to direct it for everyone, like really good Disney, the kids will enjoy it, but I think the adults will have an equally good time.