

# The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

By Sylvia Levine Starship special

Some plays are so much fun to stage that they are hard to forget once the final curtain is down. Everyone who was in a recent production of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* feels like that and they hope to see their original musical version of the C. S. Lewis story come to life again.

The junior production class of the Leah Poslun Theatre School, Kofler Centre, was the group that did the play. Their teacher-director Judy Silver wrote the script for their version of the children's science fiction play and Jeff King wrote the music and played the piano during the production. Now Silver and King are hoping to expand their work to include more songs, harmony parts for the songs already written, and plan to write two more plays from the Lewis series.

*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is about a group of children who enter a wardrobe, (a kind of closet), while playing hide and seek and find themselves transported to another world — the planet Narnia. Narnia is inhabited by an evil white witch, a good and kind lion, a lot of hags, and some nice beavers.

Peter Copeland, 11, who played one of the children, was also the group's expert on the whole series of Narnia stories. "I've read them all," he said.

"Each one starts in a different place, but they all end up on Narnia. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is the second in the series of seven." Peter explained that they had something to do with the forces of good and the forces of evil and that in the end the world that we all think is real is revealed as a shadow world. "It's pretty complicated," he said.

In the Leah Poslun's production, the white witch tricks one of the children into becoming her accomplice by offering him power and all the caramel that he could possibly want. "But what happens is that he is never satisfied," explained Debbie Fein, 12, who plays the witch. "It's magic caramel. The



SHARON GODFREY/TORONTO STAR

**Ted Pearson, the lion, offers his life to the witch, played by Debbie Fein, 12, in place of Edmund — Peter Waisberg — who's on the floor.**

more you eat, the more you want." Debbie found that she could get into her character — being mean and nasty — by thinking of some of the arguments that she and her brother have at home.

Debbie's character is so powerful and strong that the actress who plays her faithful servant the dwarf found that she could develop her own part just by reacting to the witch character.

Gloria Figura, 13, who played the dwarf, said, "It's a funny character. I get battered and beaten by the white witch and still I idolize her. Finally, when I'm the last one of her supporters alive and I'm fleeing for my life, I switch to the other side."

The sets in the play were kept to

a minimum. Instead of elaborate constructions, some of the actors carried dowels from which large pieces of cloth hung. They moved these dowels and their cloths around to signify changes in scenes, to make different moods, and as part of the general movement of the play. "It made it all seem very magical," said Reesa Rubenstein, 12, who held one of the dowels and also played one of the witch's hags. "At first they were hard to move around," she said. "It took a lot of experimenting. But it really helped and made the audience use their imagination, too."

The forces of good in the play were helped along by beavers who were messengers to the lion. Lawrence Axmith, 12, played Mr. Bea-

ver. "In the play I also have a silly wife who drives me crazy because she's constantly cleaning our house. I spend a lot of time trying to get her to stop cleaning," he said. Lawrence developed his character along the lines of Beaver in the television show *Leave It to Beaver*.

Although most of the children in the workshop hope to be able to put on the play again next year, Arlene Phillips, 11, won't be able to be in it. She has been accepted by the Spring Garden School for the Performing Arts in North York and will be too busy to be in the workshop. Arlene played one of the four children in the production and had some solo singing parts.