

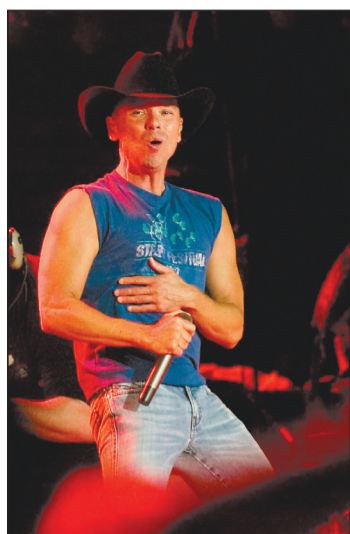
The Columbian Life

Section D

Today's weather picture by **Adrienne Badolato**, 9, Ridgfield, Union Ridge Elementary School



THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 2008



ZACHARY KAUFMAN/The Columbian
Kenny Chesney dazzles fans Tuesday at The Amphitheater at Clark County with a 22-song set.

Chesney connects with fans

By **GREG JAYNE**
Columbian staff writer

OK, I get it. I understand why Kenny Chesney has been named Entertainer of the Year five times by the Country Music Association. Sure, the voice is rich but limited. Yes, the songs are catchy yet often trite.

But while the music can be formulaic and contrived, alternating between the kind of down-home sentimentality that Garth Brooks perfected and the party-boy persona mastered by Jimmy Buffett, Chesney's connection with his audience is authentic. So there he was Tuesday, playing to a nearly full crowd at The Amphitheater at Clark County.

The lawn was covered with revelers. The pit was packed with everybody who could work their way down there. The atmosphere was electric and worshipful. And as Chesney wrapped up a 22-song, 106-minute set, the guess is that most of those in attendance will be back the next time he comes this way. The guess is that 8-year-old Ben Holt of Vancouver will be among them, considering that he was pulled up on stage at the end of the show to receive an autographed guitar and a series of high-fives from the star.

Therein lies the brilliance of Chesney. He has parlayed an average-Joe persona and a decent voice and an ability to turn a phrase into one of the biggest careers in country music these days. He has had 13 songs reach No. 1 on the country charts. He has had 10 others peak at No. 2. And it's easy to see that his live show is the foundation of that success. There's not a lot here that's original. Chesney received a degree in marketing from East Tennessee State University, and he has been putting those lessons to good use in the field of live entertainment.

There's an 11-piece band, including a four-piece horn section. There's a dazzling light show, ranging from strobes to neons. There's the trademark black cowboy hat, topping off the everyman ensemble of sleeveless blue T-shirt and requisite blue jeans. Most of all, there's a 1,000-watt smile and a personality that is in complete command of the proceedings. Chesney knows why some 11,000

Review **First online**
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REVIEW, Page D5

By **BRETT OPPEGAARD**
for The Columbian

Parents were warned: If your child is cast as one of the main characters in Christian Youth Theater Vancouver East's "Peter Pan," those kids will be hoisted off the ground during the performance, and, for liability reasons, you will be the one flying them around.

When Kelly Huddleston learned that her 15-year-old son, Jacob, had been chosen for the title role, she began wondering what exactly that meant for her. "I was willing to support him, in whatever he wanted to do," she said. "But I definitely didn't ask enough questions beforehand."

Then came the installation of the extensive pulley system above the Washburn Performing Arts Center stage at Washougal High School. The harnesses. The wires and ropes. The

ladders. The trainer brought to town to teach the intricate set of techniques, cues and choreography. The hours of rehearsal, from right after school to bedtime. All in a rush, just a few days before the opening this Friday night.

The shock extended into the first session last week with the trainer from ZFX, the same company that handled Cathy Rigby's "Peter Pan" stunts, which have set the show's gold standard.

Getting off the ground

Annette Martin, whose 8-year-old son, Henry, plays the youngest of the Darlings, Michael, was the first to try out the pulley system. She pulled the rope and went down on her knees with it, lifting the child about a foot or so off the ground. Next she was supposed to take one hand off the rope and ease the child back to the floor, but she was straining so hard to hold the rope steady she couldn't manage the maneuver.

The girl used for the test was

PETER PAN, Page D4

Christian Youth Theater's production takes parental involvement to a new level

Jacob Huddleston, 15, takes flight while rehearsing for the lead role in "Peter Pan" at Washougal High School.

Flying high for a 'Peter Pan' production



Photos by **ZACHARY KAUFMAN/The Columbian**
Kelly and Darren Huddleston help their son Jacob take flight while Christopher Daniel, a brother of one of the actors, holds a ladder during a rehearsal of "Peter Pan." Christian Youth Theater Vancouver East will perform the play at Washougal High School.

If you go

■ **What:** Christian Youth Theater Vancouver East presents "Peter Pan," complete with an elaborate pulley system for flying performers around the stage.

■ **When:** Friday through June 15, with performances at 7 p.m. Fridays, 3 and 7 p.m. Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays as well as 6 p.m. June 8.

■ **Where:** The Washburn Performing Arts Center, inside Washougal High School, 1201 39th St., Washougal.

■ **Cost:** \$11; \$8 for children 15 and younger and senior citizens.

■ **Information:** 360-750-8550 or cylvancouver.com.

ON THE WEB

Watch actors prepare for Christian Youth Theater Vancouver East's production of "Peter Pan" www.columbian.com/multimedia

Choosing right tie for dad

Classic patterns, modern shapes are sure winners

By **DIONNE WALKER**
Associated Press writer

Almost as predictable as getting a tie for Father's Day is getting at least one destined for the back of the closet. But choosing a good tie doesn't have to be an exercise in luck.

The answer lies in mixing a bit of the old with the new, combining classic patterns to appeal to dad's safer side in slimmer, modern shapes that nudge his fashion forward.

Perennial favorites like polka dots and stripes get a punch of freshness when sized down. (Think pinhead sized for dots, or pencil-width for stripes.) Club ties, those featuring very small repeated icons, harken to collegiate neckwear and inject a little youth into any man's wardrobe. Floral and even vine patterns are in for the season, while bursts of pinks and berries compliment the grays popular in men's suiting right now.

But the biggest trend, fashion insiders agree, involves size. "Thin is in," explains Jerry Balest, vice president of men's fashion for Macy's Merchandising Group.

Macy's recently resized its men's ties; now a tie that had traditionally been 4 inches at its widest will shrink to 3½ inches. "It's all about younger attitudes," says Balest, who sees the trend in brands like Calvin Klein. "People are more fit, they are working out and they really do want to get credit for all the work and effort they're putting into taking care of themselves."

And the shift comes as the icon of men's fashion — the tie — makes a comeback. "There was a time 10 years ago when the tie wasn't cool," explains Moore, who credits the casual Fridays mentality of the dot-com era. When the market shifted, Moore says men returned to a more formal office look. "The smartest guy in the room was wearing a tie," says Moore, adding that now the right neckpiece, like a well-tailored suit, conveys "you're gonna close the deal perfectly."

Unlike their wider

TIES, Page D5

More on fashion /D3



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your Guide:



Fashion: How Yves Saint Laurent changed the way women dress /D3

Television: "Swingtown" mixes it up with sex, drugs and the suburbs /D7

Coming Friday: Finding work that fits your personality /D1

Costa, Ford, Burch honored with fashion design awards

By SAMANTHA CRITCHELL
Associated Press writer

NEW YORK — Francisco Costa, Tom Ford and Tory Burch were the big winners at Monday night's Council of Fashion Designer of America awards, the industry's top honor.

Costa, designer for Calvin Klein, was beckoned to the podium by actress Eva Mendes, who had presented the prize alongside Victoria Beckham and Maggie Gyllenhaal. Each of them seemed to be a cheerleader for their favorite designer — Mendes in a sleek white gown for Costa, Beckham in a short, pouffy minidress for Marc Jacobs and Gyllenhaal in a green-and-black checkerboard tunic for Proenza Schouler.

"I sincerely appreciate all your help," a humble Costa told the editors, stylists and retailers who for the second time voted him the best womenswear designer.

The CFDA awards, marking their 26th year, have come to be an intersection of celebrities and fashion insiders, causing a major traffic jam outside the landmark New York Public Library where the ceremony is held. Eva Longoria Parker, Tony Parker, Kim Cattrall, Mandy Moore, Lauren Hutton, Tina Fey, Amy Poehler and Hilary Duff were among those mingling with the likes of Ralph Lauren, Donna Karan, Vera Wang and Carolina Herrera.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg attended — but not as a guest. He received his own award from the CFDA Board of Directors for his commitment to keeping the city's garment industry thriving.

He mused about receiving

AND THE WINNERS ARE ...

The Council of Fashion Designers of America presented its annual awards for the most influential style insiders at an awards ceremony Monday. The event at the New York Public Library attracted the industry's brightest stars — Ralph Lauren, Diane von Furstenberg and Marc Jacobs, among them — in addition to bonafide Hollywood stars including Kim Cattrall, Eva Longoria Parker, Eva Mendes, Victoria Beckham and Maggie Gyllenhaal.

The winners, chosen by 500 designers, stylists, editors and retailers:

- Francisco Costa for Calvin Klein, womenswear designer of the year.
- Tom Ford, menswear.
- Tory Burch, accessories.
- Kate and Laura Mulleavy for Rodarte, Swarovski award for up-and-coming womenswear designer.
- Scott Sternberg for Band of Outsiders, up-and-coming menswear designer.
- Philip Crangi, up-and-coming accessories designer.
- Carolina Herrera, lifetime achievement award.
- Candy Pratts Price, fashion journalist.
- Dries van Noten, international award.
- Mayor Michael Bloomberg, board of directors special tribute.

an honor that in previous years has gone to Ford, Oleg Cassini and Bono. "Who would've thunk it?" he asked the crowd that had risen for a standing ovation.

Bloomberg, in a lilac-colored bow tie, also joked that he would have worn something more stylish, but "my skinny jeans are at the cleaners and my gladiator sandals are being resoled."

He then proudly reported that 800 fashion companies are based in New York, double that of Paris.

Parisian designer Yves Saint Laurent, who died Sunday of brain cancer at age 71, was on the mind of many in the fashion community. CFDA president Diane von Furstenberg, wearing a vintage YSL tuxedo-style pantsuit, opened the ceremony with a tribute. "Yves was an artist who

always surprised us," she said of her old friend. "He used to say he wanted to be Matisse, but I think Matisse would have wanted to be him."

The emcee of night, humorist Fran Lebowitz, wore a cream-colored tuxedo jacket made by her favorite tailors in London. She often wears menswear-style jackets but never ties, she said.

"I believe a woman, when she gets dressed for the evening, she should leave at least one thing to the imagination," she deadpanned.

When Ford accepted his award as menswear designer of the year, he said that despite the other accolades he received during his tenure at Gucci, he couldn't feel jaded toward an award bestowed upon him by his peers, particularly for his relatively new namesake collection.



ZACHARY KAUFMAN/The Columbian

Brian Dillon, 12, left, Henry Martin, 8, and Emma Thompson, 14, take flight while rehearsing for their roles in "Peter Pan" as John, Michael and Wendy Darling.

Peter Pan:

From Page D1

not as heavy as some of the kids in the show, a bad omen for the other mothers expecting to help.

"I was using all of my body weight, and I could barely get her off of the ground," Martin said. "My arms have been sore since."

Vicky Dillon, whose 12-year-old son, Brian, plays John Darling, tried to lift her 100 pounder and could barely move him. "I thought the system would hold more of the weight," she said, learning that there is no mechanical gain on most of the pulleys, which focus more on precision of movement. She ended up assigned to hold the backstage ladders.

Kelly Huddleston, too, tried and couldn't get her Peter Pan son in the air, so she had to enlist husband Darren to do the heavy lifting while she took over the back-and-forth controls.

While various versions of this show have been performed in Clark County before, Christian Youth Theater is the first to include the high-tech equipment to make the actors airborne.

The James Barrie story begins in the Darling family's nursery, where Peter Pan, eager to hear fairy tales, befriends the children and teaches them to fly, with the help of a bit of pixie dust. He then takes them back to his magical home of Neverland. He wants the eldest, Wendy, to tell more stories to him and his tribe of Lost Boys, and, in his mind, to be their mother. Meanwhile, Pan must deal with his nemesis, Captain Hook.

The now-defunct Portland Civic Theatre offered an elaborate version of the piece during the holiday season each year from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s. A troupe dubbed Pixie Dust Productions spent \$350,000 on staging the show in 2003, one of the largest theatrical endeavors in the metropolitan area's history, and Rigby finally brought her iconic tour through Portland in 2006. But in Clark County, the Peter Pans have been limited by gravity until now.

Christian Youth Theater

Did you know?

■ Women originated the role of "Peter Pan" on stage in the early 1900s, partially because of technological limitations. At first, the harnesses available for flying around the theater would have been unbearably uncomfortable for any man, given they hoisted from the groin area. New systems, such as the one being used by Christian Youth Theater Vancouver East, don't have that drawback.

will spend about \$25,000 on the production, its most expensive show yet, which includes \$7,500 for rental of the flying equipment and the training. That number doesn't include the massive amounts of volunteer hours involved, though, topped by costumer Nancy Robe and set designer Jen Daniel, who both have spent more than 300 hours on the project. As part of participation, all of the 64 kids in the cast are required to have a parent volunteer on one of the many committees needed to make the show happen.

The performers, in turn, have been at work for 10 weeks, spending 80 hours in formal rehearsal, plus their usual acting classes with the company. The Huddlestons are commuting from La Center to the Washougal theater, about 40 miles each way, and spending their evenings there, to give Jacob this opportunity to play Peter Pan, while their younger kids, Jared, 13, and Corey, 9, take on Lost Boys roles.

Landing with a thud

Darren has the job of jumping from the third or fourth rung of a backstage ladder while pulling down the rope that vaults his son into the air. Several times during the recent rehearsal he falls to the ground in the process, legs splayed. Beads of sweat cover his forehead. On a good jump, he lands with a thud and bangs his knees on the floor. He wore rubberized garden gloves at first to help with grip. But the rope tore those up, so he switched to the kind typically worn by football receivers.

While Darren handles the up and down, Kelly simultaneously deals with two ropes marked with patterns of red and white stripes that position Peter Pan in different places and take him back and forth. When their son is flying from the ground to the fireplace mantle, for example, Darren has to pull him up in the air at the same time Kelly is moving him from left to right at just the appropriate speed. It's not as easy as it looks. Peter Pan didn't make it to the mantle on the first three tries, helplessly swinging in the air, as if suddenly short on pixie dust.

"We're just parents. Amateurs, doing this for our kids," Kelly laments. "This is crazy."

Once that maneuver is corrected, there are many more marks to hit.

Jacob, who played the title role in the troupe's rendition of "Oliver!" as well as Jojo in "Seussical," is trying in the meantime to get used to the bulky harness, which looks like a backpack with additional leg straps. Those devices have to be tight to be safe, an awkward addition that makes him hunch and walk like he just spent the day riding horses.

Jacob said he's concerned about posture and that he won't be able to do some of the acrobatic tricks that he's been practicing, because of the added weight and restricted movement. But he has no worries about being in the air.

"I thought I'd be really scared," he said. "But I'm not at all. I completely trust the flyers." He added that he appreciates his parents doing this, and it's been fun to work on the project together, despite the inevitable goofs made by novices.

Most of the moves at last week's final rehearsal with ZFX trainer Jason Schumacher went smoothly. Yet Jacob still slammed the mantle hard enough to shake it one time, banged his face on a dresser mirror frame and was dropped too quickly on a couple of occasions, which had him rubbing his knees by the end of the night.

Kelly said, "It's been overwhelming to learn how much would be involved in this. The timing, the concentration, the coordination, the strength, how everything is so delicately balanced. I didn't know what I was getting into."

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