That’s how you train a Chinese lion to dance.

Dancing lions were just the beginning: there was a lot happening at school today: 162 Elementary students (plus an army of parent volunteers, Post Oak faculty and staff, and opera professionals) working on *The Moon Maiden*; 50 prospective parents touring the school; eight teachers and administrators visiting from Montessori schools in Mexico City and Evergreen, Colorado; and 28 middle school students visiting the Museum District and the Post Oak High School campus.

**THE MOON MAIDEN**

Cue the song: the neurons in the music center of the brain start to fire: step “1,” step “2,” (moving and speaking at the same time, to record the activity in the step center of the brain and the language center of the brain simultaneously along with the music),

*continued on page 2*
“1, 2, 3, 4, 5, kick, kick…”  
by John Long continued from page 1

Multiple modalities are in play at once to build memory and automatic performance: counting + language + music + movement = two dancing lions. Now bring on the papier-mâché heads. Do it all once again while balancing the oversized heads. Master one sequence, then add the next level of difficulty. First four lion girls and a ribbon dancer; then three acrobats enter, and then the fairy quartet. Layer upon layer, the opera is built. Groups assemble, work together, then evaporate. In the common room and the multipurpose room, ensembles are practicing, while in the gym, the larger cast is at work.

Eighty children sit in clusters around the perimeter of the gym, waiting and watching as the four huntsmen and the master archer step forward to practice their moves. Bill Bokhout plays the piano to accompany their dance. Hollis Bokhout stands cross-court from the five boys, directing their movements like an orchestra conductor would. And when they finish one, two, three repetitions, with a tweak here and a tweak there, the assembled cast begins its song. The Post Oak gym reverberates like a cathedral; and the children truly become angels.

I know from previous years that tonight’s performance will be a wonder for both the audience and the performers. I also know that all the work, concentration, repetition, self-control, collaboration, refinement, expert coaching, commitment to practice, willingness to be vulnerable (which is the handmaiden of performing), and commitment to a community effort—all of this which is the foundation and the texture of the days this week, and also of the weeks leading up to this one—this is in fact as spectacular as it is invisible when it comes to the performance. This is the children’s experience of the event, every bit as much as the bright lights on the stage. In fact, this is where curiosity can become interest, and where interest leads to the development of talent.

I asked children today during dismissal how they felt after the day’s opera practice. They said, “Great!” and “Exhausted” almost simultaneously. Everyone has been working hard and that is good.

HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS
Middle School students are lunch today at the Museum of Fine Arts and then visited the high school campus. Wearing white hard hats, and dressed in long pants and closed-toed shoes as the contractor stipulated, they toured the new high school building which has been gutted in preparation for interior renovations. Their visit coincided with the demolition of the brick house at Autrey and Montrose, which is being razed to make way for parking and green space. The new facility will be ready in May. Student said, “It’s going to be really good.”

50 PROSPECTIVE PARENTS
I’m sure you remember your admission tour when you first came to Post Oak. It must have been a small group, maybe even one-on-one. That’s how we design admission tours. This year, after all the calendar slots for tours were booked, prospective parents kept calling. And calling. We told them we would schedule a group tour and encouraged them to attend the Prospective Parent Classes. By the time the tour date came around Wednesday, we had 50 prospective parents signed up. Division directors Mirani Smith, Jeff Schneider, Shekkola Gray, and James Moudry joined Vivian Blum as guides. We’re, of course, pleased by the surge of interest in admission to Post Oak. We also anticipate tweaking our tour scheduling next year, so we can continue to meet with prospective parents in smaller groups.

VISITING EDUCATORS
Because of its international reputation, The Post Oak School regularly attracts professional visitors. Since Houston is the site of this year’s Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS) teacher conference, we received requests from two attending schools, Collegio Peterson in Mexico City, and the Montessori School of Evergreen (CO), for their academic leadership teams to visit and meet with staff here at Post Oak. They came in the afternoon and helped us close out an extraordinarily rich and busy day.

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© John Long and The Post Oak School

from John’s blog, Education by Design

Ambiga Dhiraj, Head of Talent Management for Chicago-based Mu Sigma, a decision science and analytics services firm, wrote this week for the Harvard Business Review blog network: “Develop Leaders the Montessori Way.”

This reminds me of Jeremy Allaire’s statement, that he learned the basics of his corporate leadership style in Montessori school as a child. [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/23/business/23corner.html]
The POST OAK SCHOOL presents

THE MOON MAIDEN

TONIGHT

A production by the students of The Post Oak School
HBU’s Dunham Theater 7:00 pm
A children’s opera in two acts

WRITTEN BY SANFORD & JUDY JONES
DIRECTED BY WILLIAM & HOLLIS BOKHOUT
Opera Night Information

ARRIVAL TIMES
5:45  Performers (including 1st grade chorus) in costume and makeup
5:45  Crew helping with ushering and program distribution, in crew shirt
6:45  Crew, in crew shirt (no need to arrive earlier)

LOCATION
HBU’s Morris Cultural Arts Center,
Dunham Theater at 7502 Fondren,
Houston, TX. Use entrance #3 off Beechnut or entrance #2 off Fondren.

COSTUMES
Information about costumes is provided on the instruction sheet stapled inside the costume bag. Costumes are to be returned in the bag provided on Monday, February 6. Please do NOT wash the costumes.

TICKETS
You must have a physical paper ticket to enter the theater. If you ordered online, you can pick up your tickets at the Will Call window. Tickets purchased at the door are $20.

AT THE THEATER
The performance is being professionally recorded and we ask that you avoid flash photography, and also take fidgety children to the lobby. Because this is a community effort, we request that no flowers be given to children performing at HBU – we ask that you celebrate with your child privately. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

For more information, please visit our homepage and click on OPERA INFO in the left hand menu.
No bones about it: open house at HMNS a hit

“I’m totally bullish on the Post Oak High School,” says Curator of Paleontology David Temple. At last week’s high school open house at the Houston Museum of Natural Science, Dr. Temple brought life to the hall of skeletal dinosaurs. We’ve been talking with Dr. Temple and Education Director Nicole Temple for several months to define what the student experiences will look like over the next few years. David and Nicole have already facilitated a connection with scientists in São Paolo, Brazil for possible student connections. David and Nicole have been enchanted with the idea of the Post Oak High School connecting with HMNS: “We’re very excited to be involved with this project.”

Have you been to a high school open house yet? About 60 people came out after the rain last Wednesday to talk high school in the Paleontology Hall. A couple of families were repeat attendees: “We were tired and weren’t going to come,” said one mother. “But [my son] said, ‘Mom, it’s at the Science Museum! We have to go!’” It was a great group and the program was informational, entertaining, and a perfect chance to let loose your deep questions about the new high school program. Questions from the audience included, “How will this program prepare my child for college,” and “How does the International Baccalaureate program fit in?”

It’s not too late to join the conversation! Our next open house will be Tuesday, March 27; the time and location are to be determined. If you’ve got a question that just can’t wait, drop us a note at hs@postoakschool.org. The conversation is open 24 hours a day at the high school blog: thepostoakhighschool.blogspot.com!

—James Moudry, High School Director
2012–13 Important Calendar Dates

Watch The Weekly Post and our website for more information about next year’s academic calendar.

Here are a few dates we have already determined:

- Aug. 20–24: First week for Elementary, Middle School and High School
- Aug. 27–31: First week for Infant Community and Primary
- Sept. 3: Labor Day (school closed)
- Oct. 8: Columbus Day (school closed)
- Nov. 21–23: Thanksgiving Break (school closed)
- Dec. 24–Jan. 7: Winter Break (school closed)
- Jan. 21: Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday (school closed)
- Feb. 18: Presidents Day holiday (school closed)
- Mar. 11–15: Spring Break – only students with expanded-year contracts attend
- Mar. 29: Good Friday (school closed)
- May 27: Memorial Day (school closed)
- May 31: Last day of school

THE 2012 POST OAK FUND

Parent participation remains at 98% and we have reached $248,000. We are now $2000 away from realizing our goal of $250,000 for the Post Oak Fund.

Coffee with the Elementary Director

February 8, 2012
9:00–10:00 am
Topic: Lesson Presentation
NOTICE BOARD

Appearance by Sir Ken Robinson

Houston’s Progressive Forum, a civic speaker organization, will present Sir Ken Robinson, author of Out of our Minds: Learning to Be Creative, Tuesday, March 20, 7:30 pm, at Wortham Center, Cullen Theater. Known for his TED talks, seen by more than 200 million people in over 150 countries, he was a featured speaker at the AMI conference and was appointed by the British government to lead a national commission on creativity, culture, and education. Tickets start at $14. For more info or to purchase tickets: http://progressiveforumhouston.org/index.htm or 832-251-0706.

Key found

If you lost a car key a few weeks ago, please check with the front office to see if it’s yours.

Bearkats Basketball

Feb. 8 vs. St. Stephen’s @ Post Oak
Feb. 9 vs. School of the Woods @ Woods, 5:00 pm
Feb. 13 vs. Memorial Lutheran @ Memorial, tbd
Feb. 21 vs. St. Stephen’s @ Post Oak
Feb. 28 vs. St. Stephen’s @ Post Oak

Games at Post Oak begin at 4:15 pm in the gym.

ABOUT THE WEEKLY POST

The Weekly Post appears on most Fridays of the regular school year. You can receive a printed copy from your oldest child, or a PDF version online.

Submit letters, articles, or photos in electronic form by 5:00 pm on the Tuesday before publication to Communications Coordinator Elaine Schweizer (elaineschweizer@postoakschool.org). If publication is on a Thursday due to school closure on Friday, then the deadline is 5:00 pm on the preceding Monday.

All photos in The Weekly Post are by Elaine Schweizer unless otherwise noted.

The Post Oak School was founded in 1963 and accredited by both the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS)

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