

OPAS:

Children of a Lesser God

The story of the problems, frustrations and joys of two people living in different worlds comes to the stage tonight when MSC Opera and Performing Arts Society presents "Children of a Lesser God."

The leading characters have a difficult hurdle to overcome — Sarah is deaf and her husband James, who also was her speech therapist, can hear. Through them and a cast which includes several deaf or hearing-impaired actors and actresses, the play addresses problems faced by the deaf community in gaining understanding and acceptance from others.

Sarah, who has been deaf since birth, was put in a school when she was five. As an adult, she goes to work for that same school. Her independence and disdain for speech challenge and charm James, an enthusiastic young speech therapist.

Sarah has not learned to speak or read lips, although several attempts have been made to teach her. She instead insists that others learn to communicate as she does, through sign language. She says this is because she wishes to preserve her world and sees no need to communicate with people who can hear.

The first act of the play revolves around James and Sarah's teacher-student relationship, which develops into romance and eventually marriage.

Act II focuses on their marriage, which is filled with more than the usual strain. She still refuses to learn to talk or read lips; he must translate for her. They both want children; she wants them to be deaf. He feels guilty about enjoying music, which she can only sense through vibrations. He is pursued by a student, which makes



The need for human contact and the world of the deaf will be explored in tonight's performance of "Children of a Lesser God." From left, Freda

Norman (Sarah); Philip Reeves (James); and Herbert Duval. The play, which runs tonight only, is sponsored by MSC OPAS.

her jealous. She plays bridge with his boss, who also is a crusader for the rights of the deaf.

Sarah becomes in a movement to file a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission charging the school with refusal to hire deaf instructors. She ends up in an emotional tug-of-war between her love for Jim and concern for the plight of the deaf.

Most of the scenes are conversations, with Sarah's lines in

sign language. James translates these for the audience, while using sign language in conjunction with his lines.

Playing the role of a Sarah with understanding and compassion should be no problem for Freda Norman, a deaf actress who also played the role of Sarah in the national production of the play. Norman was a leading member of the National Theatre of the Deaf for almost a

decade, and toured throughout the world with the company. She also formed Frederico Productions, a deaf theatre in Oakland California and is a frequent guest lecturer on sign language and other aspects of deaf life.

Philip Reeves, who plays James, is a graduate of Earlham College, and had earned credits at the P.A.F. Playhouse in New York.

Tickets for the play are \$5.25

and \$6.25 for students and \$6.50 and \$7.75 for nonstudents.

What: *Children of a Lesser God*
 When: Tonight, 8 p.m.
 Where: Rudder Auditorium
 Tickets: \$5.25 and \$6.25 for students; \$6.50 and \$7.75 for nonstudents.

Century Singers show features original piece

An original work by a former student highlights the Century Singers' Spring Concert April 30.

"Psalm 145," by David Stevens, was commissioned by the Century Singers with funding from Meet the Composer — Texas/National Endowment for the Arts and Texas A&M University. The assignment was to write a celebratory work for the choir.

Stevens attended Texas A&M and completed a degree in music at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene.

The choir will perform music ranging from classical to popular.

"Psalm 145" is scored for soprano, choir and instrumental ensemble. The soprano solos will be sung by Ellen Lang, a soprano from New York who has sung extensively on the East Coast and in Europe.

Lang has appeared in master classes with Beverly Sills on PBS and won the 1981 Concert Artists Guild Award.

She will be at Texas A&M next week and will give a recital in Rudder Forum Wednesday.

Tickets for the Century Singers concert on April 30 are \$2.50, and \$2 for students. They are available at the MSC Box Office.

WHAT: *Century Singers spring concert*
 WHEN: Friday, April 30 at 7:30 p.m. (not today!)
 WHERE: Rudder Auditorium
 TICKETS: \$2 for students, \$2.50 for others, available at the MSC Box Office.

Sun shines on in StageCenter play

Little Mary Sunshine and her hero, forest ranger Captain of the Colorado, will battle injustice and live happily ever after at StageCenter theater Saturday and Sunday night.

The play "Little Mary Sunshine" starts at 8 p.m. at 204 W. Villa Maria Road.

Choreographer Wanda Daisa said the best way to describe this play is "an operetta about an old musical." Based on the old Jeanette McDonald and Nelson Eddy melodramas, "Little Mary Sunshine" is a satire suitable for the whole family, she said.

The play is set in the early 1900s and revolves around the Kadota Indian tribe, which only has two members left. The Kadota's land is about to be

taken by the U.S. government, so Little Mary Sunshine persuades her father, the chief of the tribe, to go to Washington D.C. and take the government to court.

Daisa wouldn't say what exactly what happens, only that boy gets girl, everyone lives happily ever after and the show is a lot of fun.

"The music is really beautiful, but the words are so crazy, it's hysterical," Daisa said.

Tickets for the show, which also will be presented April 29 and 30 and May 1 and 2, are \$3 for adults and \$1.50 for children under 12. Reservations can be made by calling the theater at 822-5511.