

Theater Focus: Stage Center

Local theater performs out of love

By RUDY CORDOVA JR.
Keeping the theater alive is an important goal for the people at Stage Center. They have survived the hardships that theaters all over the world have had to endure, from lack of funds to lack of support.

But this is a special group of people that have joined efforts to provide the community with quality productions. They come from all walks of life, but they all have a common goal—theater.

For 26 years, Stage Center has produced comedies, dramas, and musicals for the Bryan-College Station community. The non-profit, community theater devotes itself to enriching the culture of its patrons by providing them with live performances.

It is the undying pursuit and love for theater that has driven these volunteers to the success they are enjoying. They all have lives that stretch beyond the stage, though.

Their professions range from teaching to environmental consulting. "We even have a radio personality," Marketing Director Sandy Siddall said. "If anyone else is bored with life, get on over here," she says.

Stage Center productions have been seen all over the community from The Palace Theatre in Bryan to the A&M Consolidated Auditorium in College Station.

Presently they are located on East 29th St. in Bryan in the Town & Country Shopping Center. Siddall said that one of their long-term goals is "to try and find a home of our own." They are currently leasing the space in this small, strip center where they have been located for almost a year and a half.

Stage Center has a history of ups and downs since the collapse of their permanent home in The Palace Theatre in Bryan. Since then, they have kept the spirit alive by performing in the community itself.



For many years they performed in the Old Country Club at the Bryan Golf Course, but they were forced to move when the building was condemned. They have produced plays in area churches and at the Tumbleweed restaurant.

"The reason we have lasted so long is sheer guts and determination," Donnie Wilson, director of Stage Center's first production of the season, said.

The theater is governed by its voting members which currently numbers 125. Each member has contributed to Stage Center either through a small fee which entitles them to participate in all productions or through a tax-deductible contribution. "It's a great

way to meet people from all over the community," Wilson said.

Stage Center, which also receives grants from the Brazos Valley Arts Council, has both a creative and business side to it. The Board of Producers makes the artistic decisions while the Board of Governors makes the business decisions.

The business decisions also reach into the community for help. For a class project last spring, A&M marketing students created a public relations campaign for Stage Center. They gave the company ideas and recommendations to improve their standing with the community and to increase awareness of the area's culture.

Stage Center has a fabulous season in store for the community. They open this weekend with their production of "Driving Miss Daisy." Auditions for their next play "Monique" are September 10 and 11 between 7:00 and 9:00 p.m. at the theater.

They continue their season with "Visit to a Small Planet," "All's Well That Ends Well," "The Nerd," "The Chalk Garden" and "Seven Keys to Baldpate." For more information call Charles Pitman at 846-2469 or Stage Center at 846-0287.

Rudy Cordova Jr. is a senior theater arts major and a reviewer for Lifestyles.

Company opens fall season with *Driving Miss Daisy*

Get ready for the ride of your life. Stage Center in Bryan opens their 26th season with the award-winning play "Driving Miss Daisy."

Written by Alfred Uhry, "Driving Miss Daisy" won critical acclaim off Broadway and the 1988 Pulitzer prize before winning four Academy awards in February, including Best Picture and Best Actress, as a motion picture.

"Driving Miss Daisy" is play about a wealthy, Jewish woman named Daisy Werthan and her black chauffeur, Hoke Coleman. The play spans from 1948 to 1973 in Atlanta, Georgia and dramatizes the growing respect that Daisy and Hoke have for each other. Rooted in the Deep South amidst racial prejudices, "Driving Miss Daisy" is a play for all to see.

The Stage Center production of "Driving Miss Daisy" is directed by Donnie Wilson starring Harold Presley, Dave Kelton and Wanda Daisa, one of the founding members of Stage Center.

The production is underwritten by Professional Car Services.

Performances are Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 8:00 p.m. and Sunday at 2:30. The show continues through Sept. 13, 14, and 15 at 8:00 p.m.

Tickets start at \$3.50 and can be purchased at the box office Monday through Wednesday between 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. and one hour before curtain time during performance nights. For more information, call Stage Center at 846-0287. Stage Center has been producing plays and musicals since its initial season in 1966. The theater is kept alive by its members and contributors, and by an eager company of volunteers that actually work on the shows.



Symphony orchestrates fundraiser Saturday

By JOHN MABRY
A mile of money in the mall for music — that may be hard to say, but not hard to find this weekend.

On Saturday, the Friends Association of the Symphony Orchestra in conjunction with Post Oak Mall will attach a mile of double-stick tape to the mall floor, on which visitors can attach donations to the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra.

If the mile is filled, they will have raised \$10,000, FASO president Ruth Clearfield said.

"The orchestra is a volunteer organization, so they need money for things such as renting rehearsal halls, renting concert halls, printing tickets, hiring the conductor, or sometimes they may need to hire additional musicians," Virginia Smith, information coordinator for the project, said.

"Although one goal of the event is to raise money, another goal is to bring awareness of the BVSO to a larger percentage of people," Clearfield said.

"In the past, fundraising events haven't been the type that embraces the whole community. This one is."

Prizes will be given away throughout the day as donors attach their money to the tape. These prizes include everything from Hershey candy bars to jewelry to film processing, Clearfield said.

Many music events are planned during the day to maintain interest in the Money Mile. These include performances by BVSO musicians, local high school bands, and members of the Brazos Valley Youth Orchestra.

Representatives of the BVSO, including Franz Krager, the conductor, will also be on hand to discuss their roles in the community.

"Supporting the orchestra is important in that it improves the quality of life in our community," Smith said.

"It is there for everyone, not just a certain segment of society. I think people tend to say 'Oh, the symphony,' and think it's only for the elite, but this just isn't true."

Smith said she highly encourages students to support the BVSO.

"The orchestra is a cultural enrichment, just like libraries or theatre groups. It gives students a quality of life here versus just a geographical location," Clearfield said.

If you are interested in volunteering to help with the fundraiser, call the BVSO office at 776-2877.

John Mabry is a senior theater arts/journalism double major and a reviewer for Lifestyles.

'Exorcist III: Legion' horrifies with script, not gore

By CAROL GLENN
William Peter Blatty, writer and director of "The Exorcist III: Legion" succeeds in producing a fantastic horror film truly unique to this era of overly-done blood bath flicks.

Too many horror films produced today mistake horror for gore, which ultimately makes the audience sick instead of scaring them.

Horror directors should stop for a minute and examine the true horror classics such as "Psycho," "The Howling," and "The Shining," and see what real horror is meant to be.

The original "Exorcist," written by Blatty and directed by William Friedkin, focuses on a young girl named Regan (Linda Blair) who is possessed by a demonic force.

Father Damien Karras (Jason Miller) and Father Merrin, a Jesuit exorcist (Max von Sydow), attempt to exorcise the evil force from her.

The sequel, "The Exorcist II: The Heretic," written by William Goodhart and directed by John Boorman, picks up four years later on the frightening saga. This time Regan (Blair recreates the role) is haunted by nightmares and is under psychiatric care.

Believing that she is possessed by the demon Pazuzu, Father Philip Lamont (Richard Burton) goes to Africa where the late Father Merrin

first encountered the evil force. Father Lamont searches for a boy named Kokumo who has control over the demon.

This brings us to "The Exorcist III: Legion" which takes place in Georgetown, Washington D.C. But, instead of focusing on Regan, the story concentrates on the possession of Father Damien.

Fifteen years earlier, when Father Damien died in the original "Exorcist," so did a serial killer known as "The Gemini."

Father Damien's soul rose to heaven, and the soul of the Gemini took over his body which the devil brought back to life to continue killing.

George C. Scott (known, among others, for his role in "Patton") portrays police Lt. Kinderman in "Legion" searching for the person responsible for the murders of several local priests.

After doing some detective work, Kinderman comes to the conclusion that these murders are the work of the Gemini killer who he believes is dead.

While researching the murder of Father Dyer (Ed Flanders) at the local hospital, Kinderman discovers Father Damien's possessed body in the mental ward.

Kinderman learns that this time,

though, the Gemini killer can cast out brainwaves to other mental patients ("friends" as the killer calls them) instructing them to do the killing for him.

This is truly a fantastic horror film of the 90's.

You know that people are dying, but you don't see the gory details of each murder.

The suspense is overwhelming, and the eerie feeling is intense.

Blatty knows what he is doing with this film, and is able to successfully combine his writing and directing skills to produce the ultimate horror movie.

The director of photography, Gerry Fisher, also does an outstanding job. He uses his superb cinematographer skills to inject terror into many of the scenes.

Fisher and Blatty have worked well in the past with "The Ninth Configuration," and this proves to be a fruitful relationship in "The Exorcist III: Legion."

The actors (especially Scott and Flanders) produce thoroughly believable characters that fit precisely into the plot.

Horror-movie lovers won't be disappointed with this suspense-filled masterpiece.

Carol Glenn is a senior journalism major and a feature writer for Lifestyles.



Weekend Highlights

Ten Hands funks it at Front Porch tonight

Ten Hands returns tonight to Bryan-College Station and the Front Porch Cafe.

The Dallas pop-funk group first appeared locally last fall, and was instantly contagious with the B-CS natives. The group's diame-trical flip between moody ballads and wacky, spastic dance beats creates a musical schism that moves even the most fickle of music fans.

Hilton hosts comedy benefit for KANM

The College Station Hilton, in conjunction with the Showtime Network, TCA Cable TV and Aggie 96 FM, is presenting five nationwide comedians tonight in a benefit for KANM, Texas A&M's non-profit, student-run cable radio station.

The comedic lineup, part of the Hilton's weekly Comedy Club, will take place in the Hilton's Bluebonnet Grand Ballroom. The performers, who have been featured nationwide in clubs and on television, include Jeff Schilling, Bill Silva, David La-

Mont, Michael O'Rourke and Scott Kennedy.

In addition to the professional performances, there will be video-taped presentations of Texas A&M students telling their favorite Aggie jokes.

Tickets for tonight's show are \$4 in advance and \$5 at the door. Advance tickets are available at the College Station Hilton in the executive office and at Aggie 96 FM studios.

For more information, contact the College Station Hilton at 693-7500, or KANM at 845-5923.

