

MSC OPAS brings performing arts to A&M

BY NONI SRIDHARA
The Battalion

The MSC Opera and Performing Arts Society began at Texas A&M University originally as part of MSC Town Hall, which brought in a variety of classical music performances to the campus.

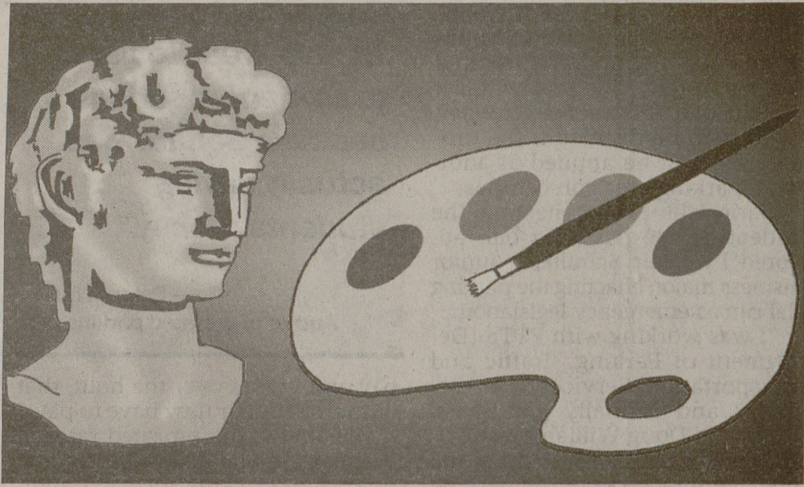
Rhandi Selde, director of audience education and development for OPAS and a senior biomedical engineering major, said OPAS expanded when Rudder Auditorium was built and is currently the largest organization that brings performing arts to the Brazos Valley.

Selde said OPAS tries to help make up for the lack of a fine arts school at Texas A&M through OPAS programming.

"Our mission at OPAS is to enlighten, entertain and inspire people about the fine arts," she said.

Selde said OPAS usually hosts 10 to 13 big performances during the year. Selde said the process of selecting performances starts with the OPAS board.

"OPAS is run largely by a joint effort of the students and the community," Selde said. "The board, which is made up of community members and student executives, spends all year sifting through materials from various



agencies to decide what is most appropriate and cost-effective for performances for the upcoming year."

Selde said there are approximately 160 students who are members of OPAS and are the life-blood of the organization.

"Students help out in the most conspicuous ways," Selde said. "On the night of the performance they literally run everything from ushering the performances to handling backstage and even helping to control the parking garages."

The MSC OPAS Guild is an organization that was founded in

1973 as an auxiliary organization to MSC OPAS.

Mary Shutes, president of OPAS Guild and assistant director of admissions and records, said the mission "is to support and enhance the efforts of the students of MSC OPAS." She said the guild hosts a variety of functions throughout the year, but have two main events.

"Our first was a Holiday Kaleidoscope and luncheon that we had last week," Shutes said. "We also have a very big fund-raising gala where we have brought in big headliners such as Little Richard,"

she said.

Shutes said the majority of the money goes toward helping keep the ticket prices low for OPAS Junior.

Selde said that some of the other services OPAS offers are an annual youth arts day and Aggie Encores. Selde said the youth day serves to educate the young community of the Brazos Valley about the importance of fine arts. She said Aggie Encores is a new service of OPAS that brings music performances of different genres that are not normally seen on campus, such as a Latin-jazz swing band.

OPAS is presenting a variety of performance art both on and off campus this week. One of the features of this week is the "Always...Patsy Cline" concert. This Friday, the University Symphonic Band, University Concert Band and Dance Arts Society will perform in the MSC Flagroom from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. OPAS will conclude its presentations for Arts Awareness Week this Sunday night with a concert by Nigel Kennedy at Rudder Auditorium.

"We want to give people the opportunity to express themselves and show what they have to offer," Selde said. "Having this at the MSC will bring together a good cross-section of students and also help bring arts awareness into the eyes of the students."

Fair provides advice for selecting majors

BY JENNIFER JONES
The Battalion

The Career Center will host the Academic Major Career Fair today in the MSC Flagroom from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. to help students identify majors that will aid them in their prospective careers.

Pat Alexander, associate director of career education at the Career Center, said the Career Center is working in conjunction with several University departments to inform students about major and career opportunities.

"The Career Center, Center for Academic Enhancement, General Academic Programs and Student Counseling Service are co-programming with academic departments to serve as a career-information program for students who are freshmen, are changing majors or who are transfer students," she said.

Alexander said the main focus of the career fair is academic course offerings, but it also includes information about what students can do with the acad-

emics. She said representatives will be available at the fair to discuss shadowing, summer job, internship and cooperative education opportunities.

Alexander said professors and advisers from the College of Science, College of Liberal Arts, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and College of Engineering will be among those available to discuss questions about career options.

"This way students can talk more extensively about career opportunities," she said.

Alexander said students can also speak with advisers about the job outlook for their major and how to gain marketable job skills.

At the fair, copies of the book *Major in Success* by Patrick Combs will be given away as door prizes.

Alexander said the fair will allow students to more effectively decide what major they want to pursue.

"The fair is an opportunity for self-exploration [of careers and majors] by the students," she said.

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