

Adaptation of hit film Big brings success second time around to Rudder Auditorium

BY BOBBIE EFTEKHAR
The Battalion

In 1988, Tom Hanks made it unforgettable, and since September of 1997, Broadway has been trying to do the same.

Continuing its 31-week tour through more than 100 cities, "Big" is stopping in College Station tonight and tomorrow night at 8 p.m.

The Broadway musical mirrors the movie with the addition of singing and dancing. The musical begins with 12-year-old Josh Baskin who is frustrated with life as a child. He wishes to be big and overnight, gets more than he bargained for.

Although on the outside he is 30, on the inside Josh is still a kid. He gets a job with a toy company, every 12-year-old's dream, while he waits to be young again.

Greg Mills, the actor playing the older Josh, began his theatrical career at 16. After high school Mills went onto Florida State University, earning his bachelor's degree in music and music theater.

"In high school I took a drama class and liked it so much," Mills said. "I performed in my first musical."

"I knew what I wanted to do by the time I was 17 or 18."

Mills moved to New York in April 1998 and has performed in other musicals such as "Phantom," "Forever Plaid," "Brigadoon," "Sweeney Todd" and "The Little Foxes."

"It is a busy life with a lot of traveling, excitement and fun," he said. "Sometimes it's hard because you live together with the cast and become a family, then when it is over it is weird to just go home."

Mills said life as an actor gets busy and difficult, but so far everything has worked out well for him. He finished a performance in Connecticut and another in Long Island with a two week break before beginning "Big."

Tom Hanks' performance in the movie was memorable, and Mills said some aspects of the character turn out to be the same, but he does not try to copy Hanks' performance or purposely do the opposite. The musical follows the same story line as the movie; there is just an addition of song and dance, which Mills said fits in real well.

"Big" is a great show for the whole family and deals with a great subject," he said. "Everyone tries to hold to their childhood and stay a kid. We have a little kid in all of us."

This is not the first attempt for "Big" to go Broadway. Seven years after the 1998 hit movie, which grossed over \$115 million in the U.S., "Big" the musical was developed for Broadway. The movie's suc-

cess did not help the musical.

After six months the show closed, and with \$10 million in earnings, it was Broadway's biggest money loser.

In 1997, Broadway successfully tried it again. Beginning in September, the musical began a 32-city tour. This year marks the second tour of "Big," lasting 31 weeks and playing more than 100 cities.

Blake Sidney Galler, who plays young Josh, and Russell Aaron Fischer, who plays Billy, Josh's best friend, are planning to provide local talented kids an opportunity to learn more about "show business."

MSC OPAS and The Brazos Valley Children's Museum are hosting the question and answer session, scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 11, at the Brazos Valley Children's Museum. The young actors will discuss and answer questions from children about their experiences of playing leading roles in a national touring musical.

Anne Black, MSC OPAS executive director, said when "Big" was booked, everyone associated with the production, knew they wanted to do some exciting things with it.

"Big" is one of those very few shows that is truly perfect for both kids and parents," Black said. "And, when we booked it, we knew we wanted to do some fun things — like this Q&A session with the Children's Museum."

Nellwyn Barnett, executive director of the Children's Museum, said there is excitement about the opportunity being offered to children.

"We are so happy to be working with OPAS because providing extraordinary learning experiences is why the museum was established," Barnett said.

The selection of shows is a complicated process and is the job of the Program Advisory committee.

Kim Dooley, committee director and assistant Professor in the Department of Agriculture Education, said the selection of a show depends on four factors.

"When the Program Advisory committee selects shows it depends on what's touring, availability of dates in Texas or the Southwest, pricing, and choosing a variety of quality programs," she said.

"With all that in the mix, sometimes we are able to get deals when we select several programs with the same booking group. 'Big' fits into that category."

Dooley said some members of the Program Advisory/OPAS staff saw the Dallas performance last summer.

"They loved it!" she said. "It's a fun show with great music."

The decision was based on members' enthusiasm and a video the committee watched.

BIG BIG



Online, nobody cares if you ... Golf Naked!

On GameStorm, you can play **Jack Nicklaus® Online Golf Tour** and lots of other outrageously cool games like **Aliens™ Online**, **Starship Troopers™**, **Multiplayer BattleTech®**, **Air Warrior® III** and **Casino Poker™**. With our **FREEVIEW Channel**, you can check it out without doing any damage to your wallet.

And a full membership is only \$9.95/month. Real adventures.

Real battles. Real people. Take the real test. Only at

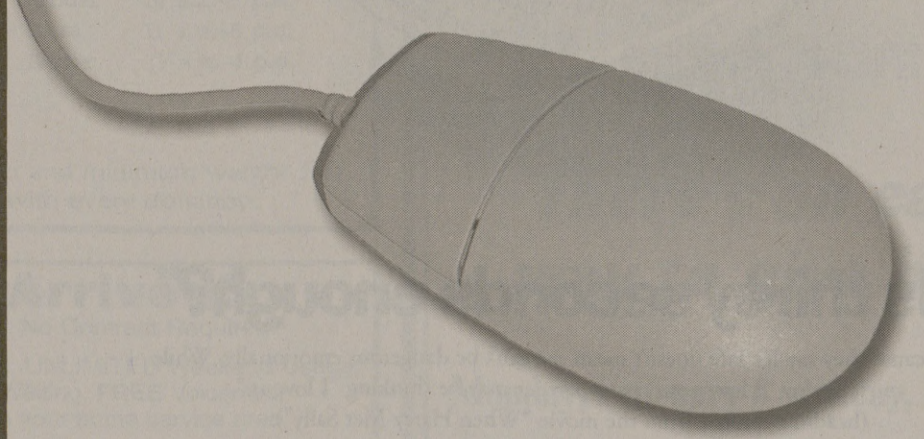
www.gamestorm.com/STUDYBREAK



BattleTech is a registered trademark of FASA Corporation. All other trademarks or registrations are properties of their respective holders.

Hullabaloo Connect! Connect!

www.first-american-bank.com



Your favorite Aggield bank
is now only a click away.



260-4333