

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

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The show will go on

MSC OPAS celebrates changes it has undergone during the past 30 years

By Emily Vincent
THE BATTALION

"It was my freshman year of high school, five minutes before the curtain went up for my first musical performance ever. My heart was pounding and I couldn't feel my feet but I felt I had found my niche," said Haley Montgomery, a junior marketing major.

For 30 years, students such as Montgomery have continued their love of theater and performing arts through Memorial Student Center's Opera and Performing Arts Society (OPAS).

Montgomery knew from that moment on she loved theater and the arts. OPAS, a non-profit organization that brings musicals, plays, operas, ballets and many other performances to Rudder Theater, celebrates its 30th anniversary this year.

In honor of the anniversary, OPAS has several special events planned, including a food drive, a reunion for approximately 400 members who graduated, different events to thank sponsors and a toy drive through OPAS Junior.

Montgomery said theater was a welcome outlet since she wasn't involved in athletics, and gave her an activity "I could put all of myself into." Theater is something children can benefit from as well, she said.

"It's important for kids to have some way to express their creativity. Not all kids are athletes," Montgomery said. "Art is another way to inspire confidence in children, the people who usually need it most."

Clark Church, Class of 2001 and board member on the OPAS Anniversary Committee, said members are setting up an endowment fund in conjunction with the anniversary. Church said the fund will allow for higher quality performances and cheaper tickets.

"The fund has two purposes: student access and performance enhance-

ment. We do not receive funds through the University, so with an endowment fund, ticket prices can be kept as low as possible. We will also be able to get artists and shows that might have been too expensive in the past. Contrary to popular belief, students do not perform in the shows. We try to get names that are popular at the time."

Members of OPAS do not perform in the shows, but do play a significant part in production. Members act as ushers and hand out programs at performances. This student involvement, said Dr. Bill Perry, President of OPAS' Board of Directors, is one thing that has remained dependable during the history of OPAS.

"Since the beginning of OPAS, student participation has greatly increased," Perry said. "More and more opportunities are available for students to be active in the productions."

According to surveys conducted by OPAS, the most popular shows in the College Station area are usually musicals and guitar music, but it has not always been this way.

OPAS began as a subsidiary of MSC Townhall and brought classical, chamber music and symphonies to campus. Once OPAS became its own branch, its popularity and horizons broadened. Broadway shows and dance were added to the playbills.

"Now we've got everything. Dance performances have gone from just ballet to including very popular shows such as Lord of the Dance and Stomp," Perry said. "Broad programming exposes students to the wide array of performing arts that do exist."

The recent past has included some exciting new firsts for OPAS. In 1995, the Bolshoi Ballet made its first stop in its United States tour at A&M.

"People flew in from all over the country. It was a really big deal," Church said.

Intimate Gatherings, a new series with smaller concert settings, allows audience members to feel closer to the performers. At the end of the show, the performers stay and answer questions posed to them by the audience members.

The recent addition OPAS Junior brings performances which target children and family audiences.

Recently OPAS became one of only 73 members inducted into the Kennedy Center Partnership, an institution established to combat the effects of decreased art funding in schools. Members are partnered with school districts to help teachers find ways to incorporate art into their lessons.

Church said this type of introduction to art at an early age is important.

"We have already seen examples in OPAS of the reduced art education funding in schools and we made a commitment to combat it," Church said. "For example, six years ago we started transporting school classes in from areas with lower funding and giving special performances for them."

Adeena Neves, a sophomore telecommunications major, was musically inclined in high school. She said art is important for college students, not just children.

Neves spent time in high school studying music and learning how to read written music. She said the payoffs were worth her time and more people could benefit from similar artistic endeavors.

Neves said, "As college students, we need to broaden our horizons now, when we have the opportunity to do it."



RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION

4.0 & GO

The week of October 27 - October 31

Acct 209	Test Review Mon Oct 28 8pm-12am			You can now buy tickets online at our website and avoid standing in ticket lines
Acct 209	Billy's Video Sun Oct 27 6pm-Finish	Billy's Video Wed Oct 30 8pm-Finish		
Acct 229 Cassidy & Joiner	Part 1 of 3 Sun Oct 27 3pm-6pm	Part 2 of 3 Mon Oct 28 6pm-9pm	Part 3 of 3 Tue Oct 29 7pm-10pm	
Acct 230	Part 1 of 3 Sun Oct 27 1pm-4pm	Part 2 of 3 Mon Oct 28 3pm-6pm	Part 3 of 3 Tue Oct 29 4pm-7pm	
Bich 410	Part 2 of 3 Thu Oct 24 8pm-11pm	Part 3 of 3 Sun Oct 27 9pm-12am		Check out our web page at www.4.0andGo.com
Chem 107 Mawk	CAPA Sun Oct 27 12am-1am			
Econ 202 Allen	Part 1 of 2 Tue Oct 29 10pm-1am	Part 2 of 2 Wed Oct 30 5pm-8pm		
Math 131	Part 1 of 3 Tue Oct 29 9pm-12am	Part 2 of 3 Wed Oct 30 9pm-12am	Part 3 of 3 Thu Oct 31 10pm-1am	
Math 151	Part 1 of 3 Thu Oct 24 7pm-10pm	Part 2 of 3 Sun Oct 27 10pm-1am	Part 3 of 3 Mon Oct 28 9pm-12am	
Math 152	Part 1 of 3 Thu Oct 24 10pm-1am	Part 2 of 3 Sun Oct 27 7pm-10pm	Part 3 of 3 Mon Oct 28 6pm-9pm	
Math 251	Part 1 of 3 Tue Oct 29 6pm-9pm	Part 2 of 3 Wed Oct 30 6pm-9pm	Part 3 of 3 Thu Oct 31 7pm-10pm	
Mgmt 209 Swim	Part 1 of 2 Mon Oct 28 8pm-11pm	Part 2 of 2 Wed Oct 30 7pm-10pm		
Mgmt 211 Swim	Test Review Wed Oct 30 10pm-1am			
Phys 201	Part 1 of 3 Tue Oct 29 8pm-11pm	Part 2 of 3 Wed Oct 30 8pm-11pm	Part 3 of 3 Thu Oct 31 7pm-10pm	

Tickets go on sale Sunday at 11:30am. 4.0 & Go is located on the corner of SW Pkwy and Tx Ave, behind KFC next to Lack's.
Check our web page at <http://www.4.0andGo.com> or call 696-8886(TUTOR)

When you buy tickets at 4.0 and Go, you will receive a 4.0 stamped card for a free Chick-fil-a Chargrill Deluxe Chicken Sandwich at Post Oak Mall.
(Chick-fil-a closed on Sunday).

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Commandant's Office (Military Sciences Building)
Student Programs Office (2nd floor MSC)
Student Activities Office (125 Koldus Building)
Sterling C. Evans Library
Office of Graduate Studies (302 Administration)
Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (10th floor Rudder)
Office of the Dean of each College

Completed applications should contain an application form and one (8.5x11") activities page in 10 pt. font or above with one-inch margins.
The deadline has been extended. Applications are due to the Office of Graduate Studies or the Department of Student Activities no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, October 25, 2002. Applications may be personally delivered or sent through US Mail or Campus Mail to either:
Dept. of Student Activities
Office of Graduate Studies
ATTN: Who's Who
1236 TAMU
125 John J. Koldus Building
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