

ENTERTAINMENT

THE BATTALION

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Just so giving

OPAS Jr. to host musical version of "Just So Stories" along with book drive

By Robert Saucedo
THE BATTALION

This weekend, Rudder Theater will be taken over by lions, crocodiles and other creatures from the dark jungles of the world. These animals won't be in College Station to eat the young, though; instead they're aiming to educate them.

On Saturday, April 3, the Memorial Student Center for Opera and Performing Arts Society Jr. will host a presentation of "Just So Stories," a musical adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's turn-of-the-century book that details the stories behind some of nature's wildest animals. With singing and dancing animals such as a camel with no hump and leopard without stripes, the musical promises to be a less-than-ordinary way of introducing children to the lives of animals. In conjunction with the play, OPAS will also host a book drive that will collect children's books for donation to the Boy's and Girl's Club and the Half Priced library.

Lizzie Stubbs, a senior accounting major and chair of OPAS, describes "Just So Stories" as a collection of different folk stories.

"Just So Stories" describes, as many folk stories do, how things came to be today. It tells, among other things, how the elephant got its trunk and how the leopard got its stripes," Stubbs said.

Elisa Aguirre, a senior psychology major, is director of children's programming for OPAS. Along with 25 other volunteers, Aguirre said OPAS Jr. brings four programs to the local community targeted at youth. She said this year, the organization has hosted performances such as "The Emperor's New Clothes," "Circo Comedia" and "The Fred Garbo Inflatable Theater Company."

"OPAS Jr. is a special series of programming for children," Aguirre said. "We have a board of directors who choose the programming."

Aguirre said the organization chose "Just So Stories" due to its strong production and possession of OPAS Jr. qualities.

"It's important for young people to be exposed to the arts," Aguirre said. "This is a children's program, so we primarily advertise to local schools, but we're also hoping to get some of the (other parts of the community) to come as well."

Caleb Stroman, a freshman biomedical sciences major, is an OPAS Jr. volunteer who will work to make sure "Just So Stories" runs smoothly. Stroman said he believes college students can enjoy "Just So Stories" as much as the children who the play is targeted toward.

"I joined the children's programming side of it because I like working with children," Stroman said. "(But) I think anyone who likes fairy tales and comedy will enjoy the play."

Stroman often works performances ushering and seating patrons,



PHOTO COURTESY OF • OPAS JR.

The musical adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's "Just So Stories," featuring humorous and unconventional animals aims to educate children about the

animal kingdom. The play will be performed at Rudder Auditorium Saturday and will include a book drive benefiting the boy's and girl's club.

but he said he doesn't mind. Stroman said he believes theatre is an important part of development.

"Children should be exposed to theater because it's so much different from TV or movies," Stroman said. "Every night's performance is different. People put so much energy into it, and most of them aren't even in it for the money."

Aguirre said the "Just So Stories" production is different from the other OPAS Jr. productions because of the book drive aimed at collecting books for donation.

"We're asking people to bring children's books to the show," Aguirre said. "We will donate them to the (charitable organization). We did it last year, and it went really well."

Stubbs said community outreach is an important part of OPAS.

"The book drive is one of our outreach programs," Stubbs said. "We try to do different types of programs. In the past we've done canned food drives, family art days and other ways to get the community involved in the arts. By bringing a book it helps benefit the local community, and they also get to see a good play."

Aguirre said new and used books are desired as part of the book drive.

"It's one of our missions for OPAS to enlighten the community," Aguirre said. "Seeing how the musical is based on a book, it's only fitting to collect books during the production."

All tickets for "Just So Stories" will cost \$7.50. There will be two showings on April 3 at 2 and 4 p.m. More information can be obtained by calling the MSC Box Office at 845-1234.

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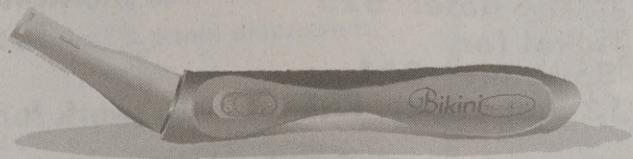


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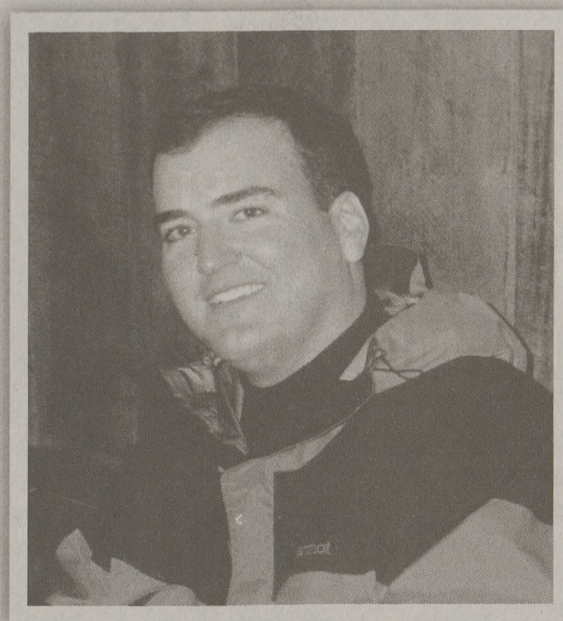
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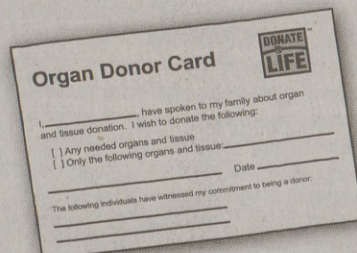
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