

## PERFORMING ARTS

## Willie Nelson &amp; Family come to Texas A&amp;M Nov. 17

After a short period of coy teasing, OPAS (Opera and Performing Arts Society) of Texas A&M University announced that it has booked Willie Nelson & Family Live in Concert for its re-a-l-l-y big mystery show Nov. 17.

It's in Rudder Auditorium at Texas A&M University in College Station.

Although season ticket holders got first opportunity to purchase tickets, their deadline has passed, and single tickets now are available to the public.

"Great seats remain for the November concert," said Anne Black, OPAS Executive Director.

Prices range from \$30 to \$150 and can be purchased at [www.MSCOPAS.org](http://www.MSCOPAS.org) or by calling 979-845-1234. (MSC stands for Memorial Student Center.)

Willie Nelson's name is recognized around the world, and his music bears the same distinction. Nelson is highly visible for his classics "Crazy," "Red



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Headed Stranger," "Stardust," and a slew of others. He is also known as an actor, writer and activist.

His escapades reap lots of ink but a forgiving public has rarely — if ever — been scandalized. Willie is — Willie.

His April 2013 album was "Face the Music and Dance." That October it was "All the Girls..." featuring duets with 18 top female singers that include Dolly Parton, Sheryl Crow, Loretta Lynn and 15 others of that notoriety. Nelson's career has spanned six decades and 200 albums,

including autobiography "Roll Me up and Smoke Me when I Die."

Whether it's comedy at the Crighton or music at the Owen, varied tastes in entertainment can be indulged for the next couple of weekends.

On Friday Stage Right opened "The Dixie Swim Club," in downtown Conroe's Crighton Theatre. This comedy from Jones, Hope and Wooten seems close to flawless. It contains the inimitable humor of television's "The Golden Girls," but with additional depth. It's a fantastic combination from this team of playwrights, one of whom, Jamie Wooten, was involved with that TV show. Even though it's been in reruns for years, "The Golden Girls" popularity continues.

Not often does an amalgamation of perfect casting and skilled direction come together like this. The set is sophisticated, and costuming by Marieda Kilgore

is inspired. Wigs by Sara Preisler-Kent perfectly illustrate the lives of five aging women, who were swim stars on their college team and have maintained friendships through an annual weekend in North Carolina, free of family encumbrances, spanning 33 years.

Play director Amber Babcock exhibits skill in the casting of Leona Hoegsberg, Jennifer Marshall, Melody Montez, Amy Sowers and Carolyn Corsano Wong. Melody, who plays Lexie, a self-centered floozy going from one husband to the next over the years, wears all the color, jewels and flamboyance you'd expect from such a woman, including hair color, but she discovers finally that an element is missing from her life.

Poor Vernadette (Jennifer Marshall) whose children have tragically affected her life, always appears with a cast, splint or brace, but even her situation

hauls out lots of laughs.

Perfectly groomed petite lawyer Dinah (Carolyn Wong) eventually realizes that her life is void of personal closeness; cheerless, yet full of wisecracking humor with Wong's perfect timing. (The beautiful red suit she wears in scene one came straight from the wardrobe of costumer Kilgore.)

Sherree (Amy Sowers) encourages timely scheduling and healthful eating, but none of the others can tolerate her seaweed appetizers, so they find (im) proper disposal when her back is turned.

Then there's disgraced, ostracized nun Jeri Neal (Leona Hoegsberg). Although she's appeared in other SR shows, this is Leona's best to date, as she discovers that there's life outside the convent.

Look for subtle hints of the changing years and seasons on the chic set that Don Hampton designed, and that Master Carpenter

Dennis O'Connor constructed. In the final scene as the friends leave their beach house for the last time, you'll notice the crowning detail of discoloration where paintings once hung.

But even greater, is the pang of sorrow to see it end.

After a remarkable evening of hearty laughs, tinged with a touch of melancholy, you'll be recommending "The Dixie Swim Club" to friends.

The hilarity runs on weekends through Sept. 21. Reserve at 936-441-7469 or [www.stage-right.org](http://www.stage-right.org).