

# Stage Right offers more from Fayro, Texas in April

This week you can reach out for entertainment that emphasizes talented youngsters, hopefuls with stars in their eyes and those who just want to be spectators.

CLASS ACT, the esteemed Woodlands acting school for youth, put the gilt on the curtain at its opening last evening of musical "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat." It runs tonight through Sunday at the Nancy Bock Center, 3800 South Panther Creek Drive in The Woodlands.

"This show is a cornucopia of musical styles," said publicist KATHY STARR. "There's country western and calypso, bubble gum, even rock and roll."

The story from the Old Testament is about 12 jealous brothers who sell Joseph, the youngest brother and their father's favorite, into slavery. They dip his coat into a sheep's blood and tell their father that Joseph was slain by a wild animal. Years later Joseph becomes their rescuer in a time of famine when he has risen to a prominent government position. The popularity of this beloved Bible story stems from rooting for the little guy, Joseph to admiration of his faith and the undeserved forgiveness he extends to his brothers.



**Peggie Miller**

Performing Arts Columnist

The unflappable KEITH BRUMFIELD, Class Act founder, directs with TINA KRAFT assisting. Both possess credentials that would fill this page, and are no strangers to talent development. They also are known for the unerring quality of their productions.

Some 70 students from Montgomery County public and private schools won parts. In tonight's performance only two especially familiar faces join the cast as JOE MCKINNEY portrays Jacob, and ANDREW MCKINNEY depicts the Egyptian Pharaoh. In real life, Joe is minister of creative arts at Stonebridge Church and operates a private voice studio. Andrew McKinney has appeared in multiple Class Act roles, and won numerous music honors while attending THE WOODLANDS HIGH SCHOOL and THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS. He and his band, "Darcy," have released two albums. His first was self-titled and the second, "The Brighter Side," was a September band debut disk. Andrew runs a vocal studio

with 25 students and works with churches in Dallas in Houston.

In keeping with this zany version of unconventional Bible interpretation, the Pharaoh is modeled loosely after a quasi-contemporary "Elvis."

Other lead roles are portrayed by AARON BOUDREAUX and Joseph; ABBY MOSS, MORGAN STARR, narrators; TYLER LEWIS as Jacob; CALLEN MYERS and JOHN WATKINS, respectively, as Pharaoh and Potiphar, whose wife attempted an unsuccessful seduction of Joseph while he was enslaved.

Noting that Joseph did indeed own a beautiful coat but that many people have no coats at all, Class Act is placing a box near its ticket tables where donors who wish to may leave gently worn outer wear that will be distributed to need individuals. Performances are nightly at 7:30 p.m. through Sunday and there is one matinee at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday.

Tickets cost \$20; \$17 for groups of 10 or more. Call (936) 273-3395 for more information.

You can bet that Walden resident BETTY RUFFER will be in the audience. She'll be there to watch her grandson,

JACK RUFFER, 10, of The Woodlands, in his Class Act debut.

Meanwhile, inside Conroe's Crighton Theatre, 234 North Main Street, newest performing group STAGE RIGHT, auditioned its third show, "Southern Hospitality." A sequel to their first show "Christmas Belles" last December, this one continues the riotous lives of Fayro, Texas, residents, said CAROLYN WONG, who is currently directing "Love Letters" for Stage Right.

"Audiences need comedy and laughter to escape some of the depression they feel in these uncertain times," Carolyn said. "Our first show was a big comedy hit, and audiences wanted some more like that one."

In "Southern Hospitality," Fayro suffers a steep economic downturn and citizens flee because the meat rendering plant and Super Smart Mart have closed. The resourceful Futrelle sisters decide to entice a salsa manufacturer to relocate in their depressed town. They will do this through a reenactment of a Civil War battle; a beauty pageant and pet costume parade. However, the untimely death of a prominent visitor and the persistent pursuit that one sister initiates to get the reluctant sheriff to marry bring unanticipated snags.

The cast of six men and seven women was chosen through cold readings of the script last weekend. The show runs weekends April 17 through May 2. Visit [www.stage-right.org](http://www.stage-right.org) or call the Crighton at (936) 441-7469, ext. 201. Small cash stipends are paid to some cast and crew members.

Meanwhile Stage Right concludes its run of two-character "Love Letters" this weekend. When the show opened Feb. 13, the longest married couple in the crowd won a lovely bouquet from FLOWERS TEXAS STYLE as tribute to their long commitment. Winners, with 53 years of blissful togetherness, were DON and PAT EARNEST of Walden, who were childhood sweethearts.

Stage Right currently presents "Love Letters" in an innovative style, with a lovely set and pop music of old standards adding a nostalgic touch, Carolyn noted. It is not recommended for youth. The two-person cast chronicles a friendship between a man and a woman borne out through written correspondence between the two over a lifetime, and does contain some light moments. Stage Right chose it as a bow to the romanticism of Valentine's Day earlier this month. Tickets cost \$17 at the door or with reservations at (936) 441-7469. Couples mar-

ried 25 years or longer are admitted for \$30. Items for the local food bank are being collected at the door. Although crowds have been fairly sparse, viewers have provided enthusiastic recommendations.

Of course, the CRIGHTON PLAYERS open serious literary masterpiece "The Crucible" tonight at Conroe's Owen Theatre. It is Arthur Miller's scathing examination of the Salem, Mass. witch hunt of the early 1600s.

Some have likened this historical era to the Joseph McCarthy Un-American Activities hearings in the early 1950s where mostly entertainment figures (including Miller who was later excused) were suspected of being communists. The drama is totally absorbing in its study of betrayal, guilt, remorse and redemption, not to be missed by high school and college students.

The curtain rises at 8 p.m. weekends, including tonight and Feb. 28, March 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21 and three Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. March 8, 15 and 22. Tickets cost \$17 with reservations at (936) 539-4090. Lower group rates also apply. CP promises to return all messages left on voice mail.

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