

STAGE RIGHT Brings Family Stories to the Crighton Theatre - On and Off - Stage

By: Carolyn Corsano Wong



Melody and Ian Montez

At the end of this month STAGE RIGHT will present the heartwarming family comedy *CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN* at the historic Crighton Theatre in downtown Conroe. It seems appropriate that many families have come together to bring this lovely fact based tale to the stage of the Crighton. For years, the words family and Crighton Theatre have been synonymous. Now, a new generation of families will be playing together on the stage and behind the scenes.

One such family to grace the stage is the Montez family. Playing Jackie, one of the youngest members of the Gilbreth clan is 6 year old Ian Montez. His mother, Melody, plays the role of Mrs. Fitzgerald, the Gilbreth's long suffering yet good humored housekeeper. Melody is no stranger to

the Crighton stage. She is an accomplished actress having last appeared in STAGE RIGHT'S premiere production, *CHRISTMAS BELLES*. No one that saw the show can forget her character's perky personality and gold lame pants! Melody has also directed shows at the Crighton, most notably *MACBETH*.

Young Ian is no stranger to the limelight yet this is his first turn on the Crighton stage. Melody explained that she was expecting Ian when she appeared in *BEST LITTLE WHOREHOUSE IN TEXAS* and when he was only 5 months old Ian appeared with Melody as baby Pippin at Conroe High School. At 6 months he was already typecast: Ian played a baby in the

musical by the same name.

What does Ian want to be when he grows up? An actor, of course! Since before he could talk, Ian has been performing. He loves attending theatre (favorite shows include *The Lion King* and *The Wizard of Oz*) and then recite his favorite scenes. His favorite actors include Steve Martin, Bill Murray and his all time favorite: Christopher Walken. He and younger brother Robben dress up in costumes to re-create scenes in movies and plays for their parents. This habit of dressing for the part came in handy. After the first night of auditions Ian thought the director didn't notice him (with over 50 kids at the audition that was entirely possible). So Ian came the following night dressed in a costume complete with a dapper hat and tie. With a voice loud enough to hit the back wall of the Crighton he turned on the charm. Ian got the director's attention as well as that of everyone in attendance. He won the part and is thrilled to be able to perform with his mom on the Crighton stage.

On stage is not the only place to find family in *CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN*. The Johnson family has been both on stage and behind the scenes in multiple STAGE RIGHT productions. Mom Tania and children Charlie, Mac and Sally appeared as the family frightened by a Santa Claus plagued



The Gilbreth women



Sally, Mac and Charlie Johnson backstage.

with kidney stones in CHRISTMAS BELLES. The capable Sally was also on the running crew for that show as well as for SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY. Despite the challenges of multiple fast scene changes, 10 year old Sally never forgot to put the right prop in the right place at the right time. In the current show, Sally is again on the running crew and brother Mac portrays the dog loving Dan Gilbreth. Mac caught the acting bug when he appeared in CHRISTMAS BELLES. He came off stage and told his mom; "In the next one, I'm getting a speaking part!" The Johnson family has stepped up to help with whatever needed doing on all of STAGE RIGHT'S productions; whether on stage, backstage, ushering or selling concessions.

The STAGE RIGHT family is truly just that: a collection of families brought together with the common goal of being an arts community for everyone. We strive to present shows the entire family can enjoy together and encourage the participation of families in our shows. The Crighton Theatre is a special place. It has a long tradition of hosting multiple generations of families. There's plenty of room for the involvement of many families behind the scenes, as audience members, and as performers. We hope you and your family can become part of the tradition. Bring your kids to see a show at the Crighton. You never know, you all may be up on the stage one day. CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN runs July 31 - Aug. 16, Friday and Saturday nights at 8 pm with two Sunday matinees on Aug. 9 and 16 at 2 pm. Call the Crighton Theatre box office for tickets: 936-441-SHOW (7469). Check out our websites for further information about us and the Crighton Theatre including our exciting upcoming 2009-2010 season: www.stage-right.org, www.crighton-theatre.com and <http://resources.stage-right.org>. We look forward to seeing you and your family at the Crighton! ♦



The Gilbreth family in their Pierce Arrow.

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