

Making History with Bravo Company

By: Amy Sowers



Reflecting on the 80th birthday of the stunning Crighton Theatre, one has to appreciate the vision and creativity of the man that provided our community with this gem. Known as the "Crown Jewel of Montgomery County", it is one of the last remaining Vaudeville theaters in the country. Harry Crighton was the mayor of Conroe and wanted to build a theater similar to the beautiful theaters he had attended in Houston. In 1934, the doors of the Crighton Theatre opened and the legacy began. When I step on the stage of the Crighton, I think of the performers and crew members who have trod the boards there, actors, musicians, dancers, costumers, set builders and technicians, amateurs and professionals alike. It is a wonder to think you are performing on the stage where Clint Black, Debbie Reynolds, Judy Collins and Marvin Hamlisch along with many other stellar celebrities once performed. The young performers of Bravo Company have the same opportunity to grace the stage at the historic Crighton Theatre and perhaps one day will be the community members who continue to preserve our heritage.

Bravo Company holds acting classes at the Crighton Theatre. If you have ever considered drama instruction for your children, here are some things to consider: Why an acting class? What can my child learn? Will it assist my child in the future even if he/she doesn't become an actor?

Dramatic explorations can provide a student with an outlet for emotions, thoughts and dreams that they might not otherwise have means to express. A student can, if only for a few moments, become another, explore a new role, try out and experiment with various personal choices and solutions to very real problems in a safe atmosphere. Actions and consequences can be examined and discussed. Perhaps most important, the core of drama is communication. In this world where communication is chiefly relegated to text messages and email, the ability to share your ideas face to face is still a most important asset. Whether you decide to be a teacher, lawyer, preacher, banker or salesperson, the skills you learn in acting class can be put to good use. Being at ease with public speaking, making persuasive points, empathizing and be-

ing able to “put yourself in another’s shoes”, collaboration and teamwork are taught in acting classes.

Bravo company students will learn basic theatre, vocabulary, voice projection and auditioning techniques. Characterization, structured improvisation and scene studies are included as well. Game type activities are utilized to teach these skills in a creative and entertaining manner. Bravo Company instructors are Amy Sowers and Melody Montez.

Melody Montez studied theater at Sam Houston University. She was last seen as Lexie in *The Dixie Swim Club* at the Crighton Theater. She created the role of Savannah in Stage Right’s world premiere production of *Mama Won’t Fly*, and performed as Mrs. Paroo in *The Music Man* and Rhonda Lynn in *Christmas Belles* as well as many other roles. Melody has directed plays including *The Red Velvet Cake War* and *A Christmas Story*. She has studied Shakespeare extensively and has directed *Macbeth* and *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Amy Sowers, founder, director and instructor of Bravo Company, the educational wing of Stage Right, is a speech pathologist and holds an MA in Communication Disorders from the University of Houston. She has worked with children for more than 20 years and has been acting for 18 years. She last performed as Sheree in *The Dixie Swim Club*. Favorite roles include Honey Raye in *Christmas Belles*, Diana in *Lend Me a Tenor*, and Elaine in *The Miss Firecracker Contest*. She last directed *The Rockin’ Tale of Snow White*, last spring’s Bravo Company production. She serves on the board of directors of Stage Right and the Crighton Theatre Foundation.

Bravo Company students perform at least twice a year onstage at the Crighton Theatre. Tuition is \$50.00 per month for the first child and \$35.00 for additional siblings. Class times are Tuesdays from 5:00-6:30 for those ages 5-10 and Wednesdays from 5:30-7:00 for ages 11-18. For more information or to register for class, call Amy Sowers at (936)520-7525 or email amybsowers@msn.com. For more information on Stage Right productions, visit our website, www.stage-right.org

In appreciation of your foresight, Mayor Crighton, we continue to make magic in your theatre. When I see all the bright faces of Bravo Company students shining on that stage, I know we will preserve this “Crown Jewel” for another 80 years. Come make history with Bravo Company! ♦

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