

STAGE RIGHT

VAUDEVILLE (FINALLY) COMES TO THE CRIGHTON!

"My daddy told me I'm in a Vaudeville show at the Crighton"

"Can't be. Vaudeville's never played at the Crighton"

"Vaudeville? What's Vaudeville?"



By: Carolyn Corsano Wong

From September 11th to the 27th, STAGE RIGHT invites the public to step back in time as Vaudeville (Finally) Comes to the Crighton! The Vaudeville show marks the opening of our 2009-2010 season and is also the start of a year-long celebration for the 75th birthday of the historic Crighton Theatre. Originally built as both a vaudeville and movie house in 1934, by the time the theatre opened in 1935 vaudeville was waning and never came to the Crighton. STAGE RIGHT will finally bring vaudeville to the Crighton in the form of a family friendly show to include dancing, singing, comedy skits, magic acts, and even a fan dance! So what is Vaudeville?

Vaudeville is essentially a variety show format made popular after the Civil War. The development of vaudeville marked the beginning of popular entertainment as big business. Increased leisure time for the middle class led to the development of vaudeville. Businessmen found ways to create and to control vast networks of theatre circuits standardizing and professionalizing American popular entertainment. Many famous comedians and singers got their start on the vaudeville circuit. Abbott & Costello, Burns & Allen, Phil Silvers, and the Marx Brothers are just a few of the vaudevillians that made the transition to radio, then movies and some to motion pictures.

An abundance of local talent has been

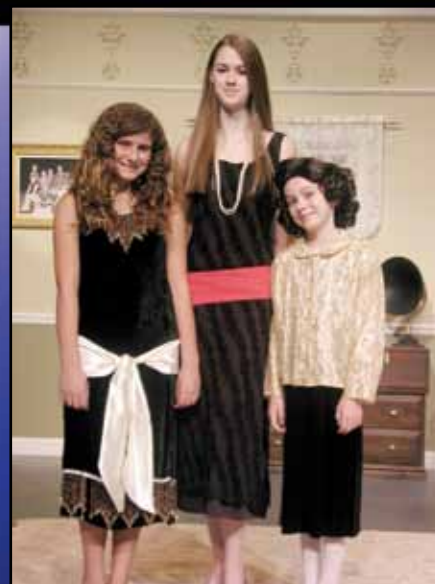
assembled to present the vaudeville show. We can never hope to replace the original stars however, we can honor their memory by assembling a talented cast from around the greater Houston area and have them sing, dance, and make you laugh in authentic Vaudevillian style. Like the stars of yesteryear, the Vaudeville cast has their own stories that shine through their performances.

Sally Rand

If you asked someone if they knew who Sally Rand was, they probably give you a quizzical look. But if you asked them about fan dancing they likely would understand even if they never have seen a live fan dance. While fan dancing is associated more with burlesque than Vaudeville, we have adapted the dance so that all ages can experience this lost art. Of course, to pull off this illusion requires no one less than Lorraine Counts, a tall, statuesque stewardess with Southwest Airlines. She was a Dallas Cowboy cheerleader chronicled in 60 Minutes for her ability to close overhead lockers through high kicks. It is an act of grace and dazzling beauty.

The Gumm Sisters

Judy Garland started out life as Frances



Mary Robbins, Kaitlyn Lyon & Kaylie King sing songs of the Gumm Sisters.

'Baby' Gumm. She used to say, "Certainly my first sort of large, blurry memory is of music, music all the time, all over the house." It's no surprise that Judy would join her sisters – the Gumm sisters at age two and a half. Our "Gumm Sisters" - Kaitlyn Lyon, Mary Robbins and Kaylie King have made theatre a family affair just as the Gumms did many years ago.

"Read the article
and find out!"



The entire King family are in the Vaudeville show. Kaylie, portraying the famous youngest Gumm, has been singing, dancing, and acting on stage since age 6 with her most recent roles in "Annie Jr." with CYT and STAGE RIGHT'S recent production of "Cheaper by the Dozen". Kaitlyn Lyon is likely the more prototypical actor. While she does singing, dancing, acting, and modeling now, she started out life as a shy child. Her time spent on training for theatre has changed her stage presence on and off stage. Her favorite part was playing Belle, Scrooge's girlfriend in the Crighton Players production of "A Christmas Carol - Scrooge and Marley". Mary Robbins is making her Crighton debut as the middle Gumm sister. She performed with friend Kaylie in "Annie Jr." Zing will go the strings of your heart when you hear these young ladies perform.

Puttin' on the Ritz



Fred and Adele Astaire (brother and sister) danced in Vaudeville from 1905 to 1917. Fred went on to dance with other famous partners – most notably Ginger Rogers. In Fred and Ginger style Angela Graves and her partner Fred Perry will be

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Angela & Fred Puttin on the Ritz.

choreographers for the entire show.

stepping out to display ballroom dancing. Angela is no stranger to dance having led and choreographed the Walden Follies for many years. Angela and Chere Baldwin serve as the choreographers for the entire show.

George and Gracie

Surprisingly, George Burns floundered in Vaudeville until he met Gracie Allen in 1922. Their straight man / Dumb Dora routine would entertain thousands for over 4 decades. In typical George and Gracie style we present Gerald Livingston and Patti Barnes. Neither are strangers to the stage with countless musicals and straight plays under their belt.

Fannie Brice

Fannie Brice was an American comedienne, singer, theatre and film actress at the turn of the twentieth century. The musical Funny Girl is based on the life of Fannie Brice. Her modern day equivalent is ever lovable Carol Burnett. In typical Fanny Brice/Carol Burnett style we will present a comedy sketch made famous by Ms. Brice called "The Sweepstakes Ticket" with Carol and Company (Carolyn Corsano-Wong, Tommy Hunter, Gerald Livingston, and Douglas Burns). Winning means nothing without the ticket...

Magic!

We are fortunate enough to have two local magicians share their talents in the show. Young Matthew Elston will wow and delight audiences with his magic and juggling act. Mathew will alternate performances with



Patti Barnes & Gerald Livingston perform in the style of Burns & Allen.

"Bloodstone the Magnificent" portrayed by Shan Griffith. "Bloodstone" specializes in 'old school' magic acts and presentation including participation of the audience in tricks and levitation. Both magicians will also be in the lobby pre-show performing card and smaller scale tricks. Come be part of the magic at the Crighton!



Bloodstone the Magnificent

On With the Show

You will see many more familiar faces in the acts. The Statesmen Chorus is famous for their barbershop style. Each performance will be different as different barbershop quartets take the stage each night. Michel Stevens and Cindy Tippens – comedienne/directors primarily in the FM1960 area – have always loved the history and grandeur of the Crighton and return as singers for the 75th birthday party with songs of George Gershwin and Cole Porter. Catherine Anderson

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– last seen as the tragic Melissa in STAGE RIGHT'S Love Letters – comes back to sing an Irving Berlin medley and duet. Many more Crighton stars from years past – recent and not so recent, will make this birthday celebration a homecoming.

Some of the new faces to grace the Crighton stage include Yvonne Nelson who has been studying music and dance since age 3. Yvonne will perform one of Sophie Tuckers famous renditions of "One of These Days." Rebekah King, Kaylie's younger sister, performs as Baby Rose Marie. Patti Adams - a professional singer who started out in country music and worked her way to songs in many languages –performs as Helen Kane (the voice of Betty Boop), a popular turn of the century singer. If you have not been to the Crighton Theatre in a while, come back and see faces both fresh and familiar.

Before the show and during intermission you will have time to read about the history and some of the incredible memories of the Crighton over the last 75 years. The Crighton History Project – an ongoing research project to save the living memories of the Crighton Theatre – will be on display in the lobby. See the website at www.crighton-theatre.com to view original documents about the Crighton and on-going progress. Feel free to share your stories, pictures, and memories with us online.

Don't miss this incredible 75th birthday bash for the historic Crighton Theatre in



Jane Micklitz, Angela Graves, and Patti Adams take a break from rehearsal.



Yvonne Nelson sings songs of Sophie Tucker.



Gerald Livingston, Doug Burns & Carolyn Wong in The Sweepstake Ticket.

downtown Conroe's Theatre District. Call the Crighton Box Office at 936-441-7469 (SHOW) for tickets now! Season tickets are also on sale. See our website for a full brochure: www.stage-right.org.

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