Kids, comedy, music keep Crighton Theatre sparkling

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By Peggie Miller / performing arts columnist

Conroe's downtown theater district gets busier every week.

Pretty soon the Crighton Theatre may have to book more events on weeknights or weekend afternoons, oh — but wait — it's already doing that.

In the impending mix is a classic children's show "The Secret Garden," with local youngsters filling all the roles, and iconic MISSOULA CHILDREN'S THEATRE taking the lead. That performance is at 7 p.m. Oct. 1, with open auditions for youngsters on Sept. 26 followed by after school rehearsals.

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PERFORMING ARTS SOCIETY brings "The Secret Garden" to the Crighton, and may be contacted at www.MCPAS.org or at 936-760-2787.

Of course, the Crighton's star attraction on weekends between Sept. 9-25 is comedy "MAMA WON'T FLY" from internationally known trio JONES, HOPE and WOOTEN. The playwrights chose STAGE RIGHT to present this world premiere.

On Oct. 8 comes "An Evening with Mark Twain," with a 3 p.m. matinee, plus an evening show at 7. It's going to be diverse entertainment as KURT H. SUTTON pays tribute to the American legend in a one man show, pulling together yarns, witticisms, even Twain's penchant for music, incorporating harmonica, guitar and banjo.

Sutton, a native of Germany, grew up in Georgia, and is a graduate of the UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA. He appeared in movies and on stage, and for 30 years has brought the beloved American writer back to life for a few golden hours. Drama students receive discounted tickets for the afternoon performance.

DONNY EDWARDS, who sells out the Crighton every time he comes to Conroe from Las Vegas, makes a return engagement on Oct. 9 at 3 p.m. Audiences just can't get enough of this Elvis Presley tribute artist who is said to capture "the king's" appearance and sound in an almost eerie fashion. Audience members drive from miles around when they discover that Edwards is appearing in Conroe.

"The Music of ABBA" comes Oct. 21, at 7:30 p.m., courtesy of THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PERFORMIMG ARTS SOCIETY, of which SHARON SHAW is president, with MARY WAGERS SMITH waiting in the wings to take that position next year.

Not to be missed is the year-in-the-planning, CLINT BLACK concert in the Crighton Oct. 23 at 7 p.m. Black's show highlights a weekend of fund raising that DAVE CLEMENTS spearheads for Rett Syndrome. That effort involves fishing in Galveston, strolling through downtown Conroe with live music, and golfing on the following Monday.

BUDDY JEWELL comes to the Crighton Oct. 29 at 7:30 p.m. LARRY MARTIN ENTERTAINMENT brings Jewell here. Martin is known for successful tribute shows like Paul Salos as Frank Sinatra, and most recently, three performers as The Highwaymen.

Martin carves yet another notch on his entertainment belt with Jewell, winner of the first ever USA Network's "Nashville Star" Award in 2003. Jewell's self titled debut album was released through Columbia Records and became certified gold. He achieved multiple nominations for ACM, CMA and CMT Awards.

Also on the horizon are acting classes for the young ones offered by Stage Right's Bravo Company at the Crighton on Tuesdays and Thursdays for three age levels.

Beginning Sept. 13, youngsters ages 5-7 take the stage from 5-6 p.m. Classes for ages 8-11 are the same evening from 5-6:30.

Thursday classes for ages 12-18 begin Sept. 15.

Information about all Crighton programs is available at the box office, 234 N. Main, or call 936-441-7469. You may also learn more and reserve at www.crightontheatre.org.