

Big brass bands are on their way to Conroe

It's almost summer — time for watermelon feasts, old fashioned homemade ice cream, town picnics, softball in vacant lots, brass band concerts in the gazebo.

No, wait — those are mostly remnants of the past, except for the brass band part. Brass bands are sure enough on their way to Conroe.

ANN LEE, Music Director at Conroe's First United Methodist Church, informs that the HOUSTON BRASS BAND is coming there Friday, June 17, at 7 p.m.

"On one of my tours of England I had the privilege to attend a brass band concert," Ann said. "The band played everything from marches to show tunes, and even pop tunes. It was entertaining and impressive."

The Houston Brass Band is the oldest traditional British style brass band in Southeast Texas. Conroe is its first stop on a short summer state tour.

The June 17 concert is without charge, but freewill offerings will be accepted. Sponsors are First Church &



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Performing Arts Columnist

Friends and ExxonMobile.

A nursery will be available at the church building, 4308 West Davis. Additional information may be had at 936-756-3395 or www.houston-brassband.org.

Unfortunately, because of budgetary constraints, the HOUSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA will not present "Sounds Like Fun" in Conroe this summer, Ann said.

A long time in the making is another brass band event, "The Music Man" that STAGE RIGHT presents in Conroe's Crighton Theatre on weekends July 15-31.

Nothing shouts Brass! quite like "76 Trombones," when Professor Harold Hill leads

River City's ragtag youngsters into becoming what he tells them they are, a wonderfully accomplished real brass band.

The transformation takes place right before your misty eyes, leading audiences to cheer in most cases.

"The Music Man" holds forth in Conroe weekends July 15-31 at 8 p.m., with a couple of 2 p.m. Sunday matinees. Tickets cost \$15 to \$20, and the Montgomery County Food Bank benefits from playgoers' contributions of canned foods.

Stage Right's 2011-2012 season, beginning in September, offers a list of universal favorites, and includes "Mama Won't Fly," a world premier comedy, coming to the Crighton Theatre Sept. 9-25; "A Christmas Story" about Ralphie, his coveted BB gun, and long suffering father Dec. 2-18; Neil Simon's "Barefoot in the Park," a classic story of newly weds that showcased Robert Redford and Jane Fonda in a movie version, Stage Right's is Feb. 17 through

March 4; followed by "The Carol Burnett Show" April 20 through May 6.

Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Cinderella," every little girl's fantasy, ends SR's forthcoming season July 13-29, 2012. All shows are on weekends only.

Season tickets cost \$75 each, with single performances going for \$12 to \$22. Visit www.stage-right.org or call the Crighton Theatre box office at 936-441-7469.

A bit farther from home, TEXAS REPERTORY THEATRE COMPANY continues "The Foreigner," at 14243 Stuebner Airline Road, Houston 77069, in Northwoods Plaza, after its opening on May 12.

The Larry Shue comedy about a small fishing camp and a "foreigner" whose English skills are thought to be nil by the locals, takes comedic twists and turns when the truth emerges.

The Tex Rep cast includes JEFF LANE, ALAN HALL, LAUREN DOLK, DAVID WALKER, RACHEL MAT-

TOX and STEVE FENLEY, Tex Rep artistic director. Guest artist WALTER BAKER directs.

"The Foreigner" runs Thursdays at 7:30 p. m.; Friday and Saturday eves at 8, and Sundays at 3 p.m., until June 5.

Regular admission is \$35, with discounts existing for students and the elderly. Call 281-583-7573 or visit www.texptheatre.org.

However, you could just wait for the CRIGHTON PLAYERS' version that JOE VISER directs Sept. 23 through Oct. 9 at Conroe's Owen Theatre.

Tex Rep's 2011-2012 seventh season incorporates comedy "Sylvia," about a stray canine's influence on one New York family, sure to please dog lovers everywhere Aug. 18 through Sept. 11; scary "Wait Until Dark," Oct. 6-30 about a blind woman and drug dealers; "heart tugger" "It's a Wonderful Life" Nov. 17 through Dec. 23; "Shadowlands," Jan. 26 through Feb. 19, 2012, based on author C. S.

Lewis' personal life; laugh fest "Greater Tuna" that jabs small town Texas deep in its heart next March 15 through April 7; and Tony winning comedy "Art" May 3-27, 2012.

A summer add-on is musical variety "Smokey Joe's Cafe" June 30 through July 24 this summer.

This rock and roll, rhythm and blues classic is also part of the Crighton Players' upcoming season, running at the Owen Theatre May 11 through June 2, 2012.

Tex Rep's 2012 summer add-on is 60s musical "Beehive," that runs June 28 through July 22, 2012.

Many good wishes for a safe and enjoyable Memorial Day as we honor those who gave themselves for the American way, and those who continue that vigilance for us all.

Somewhere a brass band is playing, maybe at some flag bedecked pergola in your hometown.

Send news to Peggie at the email of pegmillr@juno.com or call her at 936-448-6455.