

Child actors, crew to put on 'Small' show in big venue

By Kathleen Loughran
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Cassie Paley gets eaten — twice.

In The State Theatre Drama Academy's "Theatre for a Small Planet," Paley, 9, plays the dragon's keeper and the rooster.

"I don't really like either of them because I get eaten twice," Paley said.

"Theatre for a Small Planet" will show at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. on July 24 and at 1 p.m. on July 25 at The State Theatre, 130 W. College Ave. Tickets for the show are \$6.

Carol Falke, development director for The State Theatre, said the performance is made up of three different folktales of different cultural origin.

"A lot of the focus this year is that they're learning all the components... all the different aspects of the cultures," Falke said. "They had people come in from the community who helped them learn it."

Though Amanda Bird, who plays the pig, said eating the rooster is "interesting," her favorite part is the Chinese dance.

"It's a lot of fun to do," Bird, 13, said. "It's the most upbeat part."

If you go

What: "Theatre for a Small Planet"

Where: The State Theatre, 130 W. College Ave.

When: 1 and 7 p.m. July 24 and 1 p.m. July 25

Details: Tickets are \$6.

Toby Chencharick, 11, who is the set crew "thingamabobber," said his favorite part is "jumping around in the background."

But Malik Patterson, 12, said his favorite part about the performances is that he is able to wear the various costumes.

Falke said the 22 children who are a part of the program helped to decorate the costumes and make the sets.

"The kids had to draw out what they wanted to do first and then decorate them," she said. "Try to do it with recycled materials...it's all about planning. We want kids to be creative."

Larissa Burka decided to come back for

the academy's second year in session because she enjoyed last year.

"I think the overall experience and learning and expanding my acting is fun," Burka, 13, said.

Joie Knouse decided to participate in the four-week program after hearing about it from her friends.

"I like to act, and I heard from a lot of people that it was a really fun camp," Knouse, age 10, said.

Falke said the academy was partly-made

possible through the help of donors and sponsors, in addition to local restaurants that donated free lunches for the children.

"It's a show not to be missed," Falke said. "After all the energy and hard work these kids have put into it... all the heart and creativity. It's celebrating what kids can be a part of in this community."

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Photo by Steph Witt / Collegian

Child actors rehearse a part of "Theatre for a Small Planet" Wednesday at the State Theatre.

Venue hosts 'Streetcar'

By Anita Modi
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

An iconic Tennessee Williams play is making a stop at The State College Community Theatre's Boal Barn Playhouse with the help of State College residents and Penn State students and staff.

The State College Community Theatre will host a production of "A Streetcar Named Desire" at 8 p.m. every night between July 20 and July 24, and then again from July 27 to July 31.

Blanche, the protagonist of the show, seeks refuge at her younger sister's home in New Orleans after being exiled from her own hometown of Laurel, Mich. for seducing one of her 17-year-old English students. Though the audience knows the reason for her "surprise" visit to New Orleans, Blanche's sister Sheila and brother-in-law Stanley are left to develop suspicions about Blanche's past and future plans.

Set just after the end of World War II, "A Streetcar Named Desire" features another war — between Stanley and Blanche — with Sheila in the middle, torn between them.

Charles Dumas, a theater professor at Penn State, is the production's director. His cast and crew include two current Penn

State students and three alumni.

Rob Arnold, box office manager and secretary of the board of directors at the State College Community Theatre, said he expects many Penn State students to come out for the show, something he attributes in part to the number of Penn Staters involved in its production.

The theatre troupe's stage manager David Charles is one such link.

Charles (senior-theater) said he is excited to share the story of "A Streetcar Named Desire" with audiences after weeks of preparations.

While the cast was busy reading through scripts, Charles focused on managing the technical equipment and props.

"We're very blessed to have such a talented cast and crew," Charles said. "I can't wait to get the show running and see the reactions of the audience."

Arnold said while it was too early to predict the success of "A Streetcar Named Desire," the summer season has been successful thus far.

"We've seen ticket sales trail off during the recession," Arnold said. "But this is the busiest season we've had in a few years."

Tickets are available at 814-234-7728 and at the door.

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