

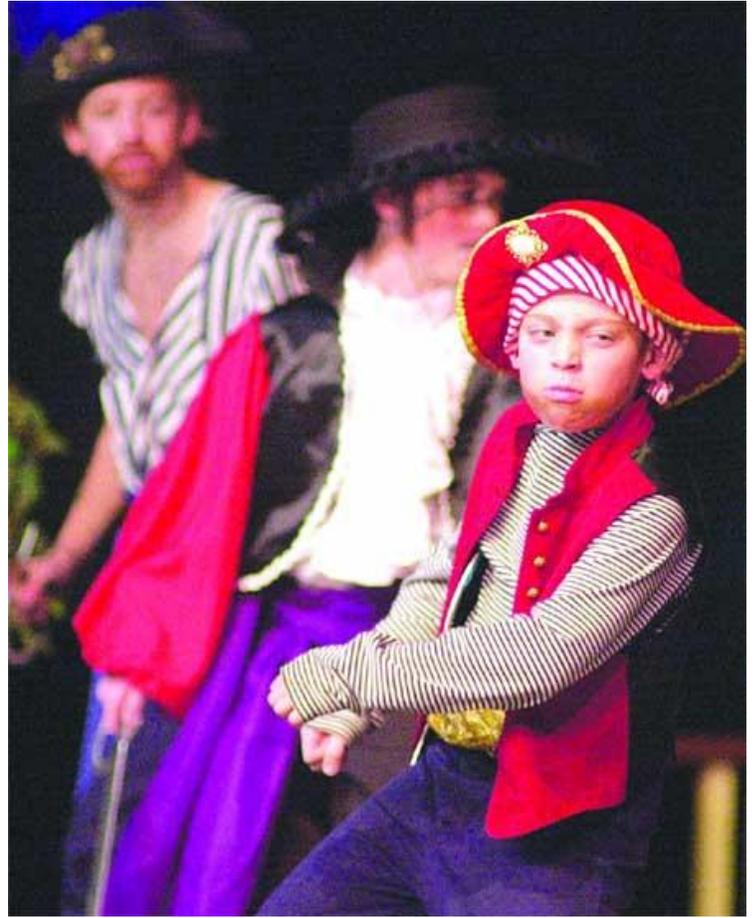
'Peter Pan' flies into Morgan Hill Playhouse

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by Dave Steffenson



Captain Hook played by Mitch Magnisi tells Mr. Smee played by Zac Rzesniowieki how he wishes all children were born with a hook.



Matt Alpert plays Alf Mason as he and other pirates look for Indians during dress rehearsals for the SVCT production of 'Peter Pan.'

In Neverland, all it takes is some magic dust and a happy thought to make someone lift right off the ground and take to the skies.

Unfortunately, this isn't Neverland.

It is, however, South Valley Civic Theatre, and where there's a will, there's a way. And that's why when Peter Pan breaks into his song "I'm Flying" during the theater's teen show at the Morgan Hill Playhouse, he really will be.

"It makes it really special," Producer Stephanie Hamik said about the flying apparatus brought in from Los Angeles for the theater's production of "Peter Pan." "It adds a depth to the play. I'm anxious to see the little kids in the audience be mesmerized by this."

Thanks to a donation by the Rotary Club of Gilroy and help from the Forest Park Inn, the theater was able to bring in ZFX, Inc., to install a wiring system to fly actors back and forth across the stage.

“We did get someone to make a donation to help with the cost,” Hamik said. “It’s expensive for a community theater.”

The show, which features 47 area kids from ages 8 to 14, runs at 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and at 2 p.m. Sundays through Feb. 14.

And while nearly all of those kids were lining up to have a chance to give flying a try, it’s left up to Peter, Mary, John and Michael’s characters in the show.

“It’s really fun, but it’s uncomfortable,” said Daniel Byshenk, who plays Peter Pan in the show. “You have to arch your back or it will dig in.”

Byshenk has the whole flying thing down because this is his second time playing the role of Peter using the flying effects. He recently played the role for his church theater in San Jose.

“Collen and James (Chipman, the director and music directors) saw me in the play and asked me to be in it here,” Byshenk said.

Byshenk, who is acting in his sixth show, said this production of “Peter Pan” has been much more fun than the last one.

“Colleen is a very good director,” the 12-year-old said. “All the stupid lines got left out and the good one were left in.”

While the flying effects have been all of the talk surrounding the show, there are many other features and talents displayed in the play. For one, Captain Hook, played by Mitch Magnisi, one of only two adults in the play, will be using the exact same sword that was used in the show when it ran on Broadway.

But, most of all, the kids are the ones who steal the stage. The costuming, done by parents and by Cathy Tom, Tom-Chipman’s mother and a board member of the theater, is colorful, and some of the Valley’s talented voices sing throughout the show.

Josh Harvey, 14, and Lauren Colwill, 13, also make the show special through a drum solo when the lost boys and Indians make peace.

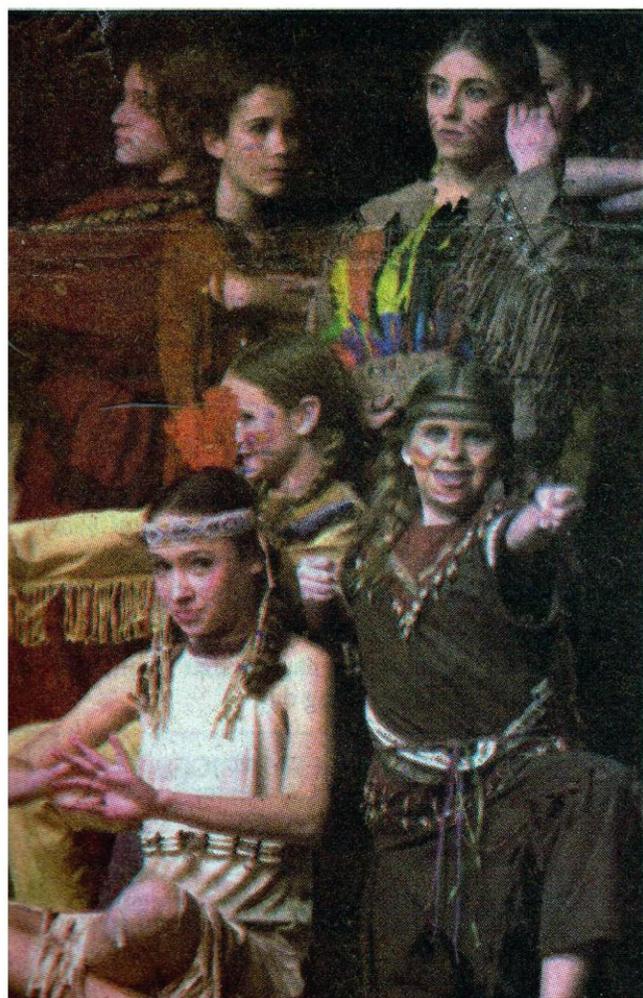
“This is my favorite show,” Tom-Chipman said. “The story is great.”

The director said there was no doubt about her favorite part of the show.

“For me, it’s working with the kids,” she said. “Having local talent to work with is wonderful.”

South Valley Civic Theatre’s production of Peter Pan runs at 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and at 2 p.m. Sundays through Feb. 14 at the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse at Monterey and Fifth streets in Morgan Hill. Tickets are available at the Morgan Hill Community Center, BookSmart, California Music and on the Web at www.svct.org

THEY CAN FLY



CHRIS RILEY/Staff Photographer

John, Michael and Wendy Darling, played by Jonathan Borgia, Austin Corini and Christiana Bray, top, use a flying apparatus to soar through the air during dress rehearsals of *Peter Pan* Wednesday night. Above left, Tiger Lily, played by Deanna McGill and her Indians look for the Lost Boys and, above right, Peter