

Arts & Entertainment

Summer in the mountains – Dance troops to perform at fest

Joanne Brannon Aldridge
Special to THE CHRONICLE

"An Appalachian Summer Festival" in Boone is bringing in big winners to its month-long celebration of all of the arts from Broadway Tony Award-winning musical stars to winners of international competitions to a much honored poet laureate. In its 14th season, "An Appalachian Summer Festival" has arts programs and arts activities to appeal to all ages.

Garth Fagan Dance, the internationally acclaimed dance company in its 26th season, performs on July 10. Garth Fagan has recently won a Tony, among other awards, for his choreography of "The Lion King." Fagan says he worked on the choreography first with his own dances, trying everything out with his own company first. His principal dancers include

Fagan, McDonald is a multi-award-winning performer. She will perform "An Evening of Song" on July 13 at the Tradewinds Coffeehouse at the Plemmons Student Union on the campus of Appalachian State University.

Other festival highlights include seven performances by the Broyhill Chamber Ensemble, a group of international prize-winning musicians, that concertizes all over the world and performs regularly on NPR. Gil Morgenstern, violinist with the Ensemble, is also artistic director of "An Appalachian Summer." The North Carolina Symphony takes residence in the high country the month of July. The Symphony will formally open the festival with a pops concert in Farthing Auditorium July 5. Classical concerts follow on July 22 and July 29 and a Young People's con-



Broadway performer, Audra McDonald will star as "Sarah" in "Ragtime: The Musical." The show is part of Appalachian State University's annual summer festival. Other performers include Garth Fagan Dance and The Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra.



a 1987 graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts, who in 1986 held a Nancy Reynolds Fellowship. She joined the Fagan Dance Company in 1988. She will perform in Boone on July 10 in Farthing Auditorium.

Also, straight from the Broadway stage, is Audra McDonald, who has recently won her third Tony as "Best Featured Actress" in "Ragtime: The Musical." Like

cert on July 25.

The New Orleans Preservation Hall Band will come marching in for a jazz concert, as well. On July 11, the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra will celebrate "the sweet swing" of the big band era.

The Smithsonian Associates, led by Dwight Bowers, will present a two-part program on American music: "The America Popular Song: Eight Extraordinary Voices"

and "Another Opinion, Another Show." In "The American Popular Song: Eight Extraordinary Voices," Bowers will focus on eight American singers who have influenced the performance of the American popular song: Fred Astaire, Tony Bennett, Judy Garland, Ella Fitzgerald, Lena Horne, Nat "King" Cole, Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra., drawing from research for Smithsonian recording collections. In "Another Opinion, Another Show," Bowers explores American musical theater. Based on his research for the book and exhibition "Red, Hot and Blue: A Salute to American Musicals" and the recording collections "American Musical Theater" and "Star-Spangled Rhythm," this presentation explores the American 20th century musical as a special art form focusing on six 20th century musicals from Kern and Hammerstein's "Showboat" to Sondheim's "Sweeney Todd."

The drama component will be represented by two staged readings at "An Appalachian Summer." The festival in association with the Unterberg Poetry Center of 92nd Street will present staged readings of "The Inferno of Dante" accompanied by music and translated and adapted by U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky. The festival will also present a staged reading of "A Night at the Algonquin" an imaginary encounter between F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway by North Carolina playwright John Justice a winner of the North Carolina Arts Council's Playwright's Award and author of the popular "Raney" and Walking Across Egypt," both adaptations of Clyde Edgerton novels.

For more information call 1-800-841-ARTS between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Singer Bobby Brown arrested for alleged sexual battery misdemeanor

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — Singer Bobby Brown was arrested on Father's Day for investigation of misdemeanor sexual battery.

Brown, husband of actress-singer Whitney Houston, was at the Beverly Hills Hotel when he was placed under citizen's arrest at about 4:15 p.m., Lt. Joe Lombardi said.

Police took him into custody when they arrived and booked him at Beverly Hills jail, Lombardi said. Brown was released at about 8 p.m. on \$2,778 bail. He was scheduled to appear in court on July 17.

"I wouldn't hurt nobody. I wouldn't touch nobody," Brown told reporters after being released from jail.

Details on the alleged battery were not available.

Calls to the hotel were referred to a spokeswoman who did not return a phone message.

Brown, who lives in Mendham, N.J., is best known for his 1988 album "Don't Be Cruel" and the hit single "My Prerogative."

In January, Brown was convicted in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., of drunken driving and ordered to spend five days in jail and undergo drug and alcohol treatment.

In 1995, he was arrested after a nightclub brawl at Walt Disney World and accused of beating a patron after an argument over a woman. Charges were dropped when the patron agreed to a settlement.

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A kinder, gentler Eddie? Murphy puts urban, family spin on Lofting's tale

By BOB THOMAS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

NEW YORK — In 1967, Twentieth Century Fox released an over-produced version of "Dr. Dolittle," complete with Rex Harrison talk-singing highly forgettable songs (except for "Talk to the Animals," an Oscar winner). Even little children didn't like the movie.

Now Fox is offering another "Dr. Dolittle," which bears even less resemblance to the charming Hugh Lofting stories parents have read to their children for generations. The film was obviously tailored to the extraordinary comedic talent of Eddie Murphy, who gives one of his less manic performances.

Dr. John Dolittle (Murphy) enjoys a busy practice as a physician, has a loving wife (Kristin Wilson) and two young daughters. He and his partners are on the verge of consummating a big-money deal to be taken over by a giant HMO. His money-mad fellow physician (Oliver Pratt) is pushing hard to finalize the contract.

Then something peculiar happens.

Daydreaming, Dolittle hits something while driving. He looks back and to his horror sees a dog lying in the street. The dog rises and saunters away, remarking, "Why don't you look where you're going, you bonehead?"

That's not all. Dolittle gets into a dialogue with his daughter's guinea pig. A couple of rats in a trash barrel toss sarcastic comments toward him. Cats, pigs, goats, even an ailing carnival tiger converse with him.



Eddie Murphy is talking to the animals as the new Dr. Dolittle.

When his family and associates notice him speaking to animals, they are perplexed, then alarmed. The good doctor is shipped off to the funny farm. Pratt is panicked that his partner's weird behavior will spoil the HMO deal.

Thanks to special effects, the animals talk convincingly, and they are amusingly voiced by such actors as Albert Brooks, Chris Rock, Julie Kavner, Garry Shandling, Ellen DeGeneres, Norm MacDonald and John Leguizamo. Too bad the script (by Nat Mauldin and Larry Levin) doesn't match their talents.

If your notion of comedy runs to bodily odors and toilet jokes, then "Dr. Dolittle" is the movie for you. But it seems unfortunate that the gentle fantasy of Lofting's stories has been junked in favor of

nasty little jokes that kids snigger about in kindergarten.

Murphy employs all the right moves to respond to the various predicaments, and the reliable Platt has his moments. Also, Jeffrey Tambor, the obnoxious sidekick on "The Larry Sanders Show," does a funny stint as an overbearing veterinarian. But Ossie Davis and Kristen Wilson are wasted as Murphy's father and wife.

Betty Thomas directed the film with a big assist from Jim Henson's Creature Shop and its puppeteers. Incidentally, Hollywood seems to have found a new villain: the HMO.

"Dr. Dolittle" was produced by John Davis, Joseph M. Singer and David T. Friendly. Running time: 95 minutes.

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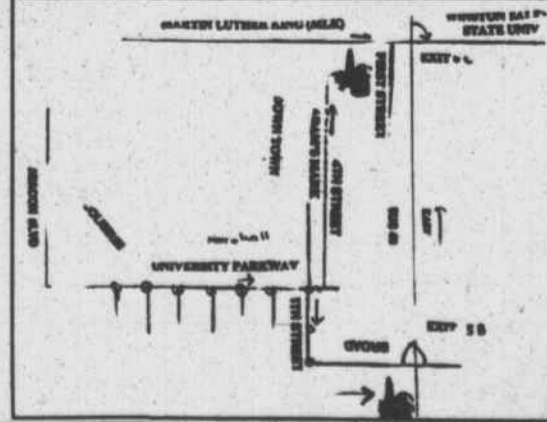
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