

# UNCC Theatre Ensemble To Enrich The Holiday Season

Enriching the holiday season this year is the University of North Carolina at Charlotte Theatre Ensemble's production of Kenneth Graham's classic children's tale, "The Wind in the Willows." The staging is quite simple and delightfully different.

Director Constance Welsh is using both the book by Grahame and the play by Grahame and the play by Joseph Baldwin as script sources. In fact, what first attracted her to the play was its literary value.

Another quality of the play that sparked her interest was the three-dimensionality of the characters; this is a rarity among children's plays, especially when all the characters are animals. Thus, this production is quite special indeed, with multiple staging of action dominating the use of this interpretation. If there is any message to be conveyed from this world-renowned tale of Mr. Toad of Toad Hall, it is simply that, in Ms. Welsh's words, "animals and humans are very similar: living as the ones we encounter in our own."

UNCC Students Dale Nally (costume designer) and Nelly (costume designer) have collaborated with Ms. Welsh's vision to create a simplistic yet highly convincing atmosphere.

The audience is transported into these animal's world with full animal costumes for the actors and a simple yet thoroughly believable set representing the Wild Wood and Toad Hall. At the same time, the designers are capturing the flavor of the Edwardian period in which the story is set.

## Santa's Bag

The annual "Santa's Bag" gift shop sponsored by Act I, the fund raising auxiliary of the Charlotte Children's Theatre, will be held this year on December 3-5 from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on December 6 from 1-6 p.m. The mini-shopping center for children under 12 will be located at the Children's Theatre, 1017 East Morehead St.

"Santa's Bag" is held to raise funds for the operation of the Children's Theatre and offers children the opportunity to purchase inexpensive gifts handmade by members of Act I. The prices of the gifts range from 25 cents to \$3 and they come wrapped and ready for the Christmas tree.

Parents may shop a "Mother's Boutique" while Act I members dressed as elves to help the children in choosing their gifts.

Groups will be allowed special consideration on Thursdays and Friday mornings. At all other times, individuals will be taken on a first-come, first-serve basis.

There is no admission charge for "Santa's Bag." For more information, contact Phyllis Herring at 333-7414.

## Bake Sale

The Afro-American Cultural Center will be sponsoring a bake sale on Saturday, November 21, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Tryon Mall on North Tryon Street.

All proceeds will be contributed to the Children's Art Program.

For more information, call 374-1565.

They are also counting on the audience's "leap of imagination" to accept and believe the fantastical world of "The Wind in the Willows."

Student Bob Hofmann of Winston-Salem portrays the famous English country gentleman Mr. Toad Hall, who car-crashes his

way through a variety of comic adventures. Reporting the assorted mishaps to the audience is the shy and gentle Mole PLAYED BY Denise Haslins of Shelby. The beloved Ratty is portrayed by Amelia Jester.

The actors admit that playing animals "isn't all that easy," but

they keep in mind the similarities between men and beasts.

"The Wind in the Willows" will certainly add a touch of holiday class to this theatrical season. It is a show for children of all ages and a fantasy for all times.

Performance dates are November 20-21, December 4-5 and 11-12

at 8 p.m. and November 22, December 6 and 13 at 3 p.m. at the Rowe Studio Theatre at UNCC.

Tickets are \$3.50 for general admission and \$1.50 for students.

For reservations call 597-2478 from 1 to 6:30 p.m. weekdays. Seating is limited to 80 per performance.



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