

Emperor's New Clothes is not for children only

By AL RANKIN

How does one explain the allure of a childhood fairy tale featuring nudity but no sex? The nudity never shown --- only implied. Appalling greed, egotistical vanity, peacock pride, arrogant pretensions, unabashed conceit, and ostentatious puffery flourish in this morality epic that never fails to capture the attention of each new generation upon first hearing. How old was I? Perhaps 7 or 8? Lost now in the mists of time, my earliest memories of Hans Christian Anderson's "Grimm" fairy tale are projected on the movie screen of my mind like some Disneyesque film of cartoon shapes, vibrant colors, and bumbling characters.

In retrospect from the distance that age grants me, I realize now that illustrations in fairy tale books of the late 1940's were decidedly European, featuring cobble stoned streets and quaintly lopsided buildings in Germanic style, or the oversized shoes and outrageously huge bluebell blossoms in Anderson's Danish tradition. But it takes no great leap of fancy to settle comfortably into Kings Mountain Little Theatre's updated and totally charming Oriental version when transported there by the imaginative sets conceived and constructed by a crew of dedicated volunteers motivated and headed by Jim Champion. The breathtaking backdrop seems both Chinese and Moorish with overtones of the Arabian Nights.

Exactly the opposite of contemporary Japanese Kabuki theatre where all female roles are played by males, KMLT's liberal use of females to play many male characters lends a delicate androgynous feel to the production. From the moment itinerant tinkers Zan and Zar -- convincingly played by Hannah Telle and Mary Weathers -- arrive on the scene, an atmosphere of mis-

chief is afoot. Like slick snake oil medicine men, the pair portray themselves as weavers of exquisite fabric visible only to the worthy. Dressed in robes as chromatically diverse as Joseph's Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat, the hucksters spout dialogue peppered with a rainbow of colors so descriptive even persons with eyes closed can visualize a kaleidoscopic spectrum of the senses.

When Zan and Zar are appointed to create the finest robes ever made for the Emperor, some on the staff of the court's Imperial Weavers are outraged while others become part of the delusion. Ling (Hillary Smith) cleverly uses experience and wisdom to influence Han (Hannah McGill), the obsequiously cunning and evil Prime Minister. Donna Tackett as Mong superbly plays the mediator who exerts a calming influence over the other weavers to such an extent that the Old Woman among them (Kaitlin Teague) not only grows to accept Zan and Zar, but also helps to protect them from the others' jealousy. Though the part of Fah requires Trevor Latta to appear stressed out as an angry weaver with attitude and one who speaks before putting his mouth in gear, he takes his role very seriously with impressive dedication and commitment.

The looms of the newly appointed Imperial Weavers are inspected from time to time by various members of the Court. With the dark and swarthy good looks of an Indian Maharaja, Brandon Anthony preens in his portrayal of an Emperor seldom caught without a mirror in which to admire his reflection. The Empress, a demure Kristin Moore, shuffles timidly around her consort while waving a fan like a sweet fluttering Madame Butterfly. Swept up into the growing conspiracy, the General, a majestic and powerful Adam Smith, fur-

ther propagates the emerging mass illusion by mimicking the weavers' constant verbal catalogue of colors to describe the Emperor's fictitious robe and train. The Emperor and his minions enter and exit with all the fanfare of "The King and I", heralded by the mallet swinging 9 year old Scott Sanders who melts your heart with sparkling and expressive eyes as big as the gong he pounds.

Tsein (Cecilia Smith), another weaver and the mother of the child who finally blows the whistle on the whole charade, lovingly shepherds, then embarrassingly scolds, makes excuses for, and protectively takes her offspring under her wings as any mother could, should, or would. Daniel Latta, as that child, unravels the conspiracy in sweetly innocent, but energetically hyper wide-eyed amazement.

Aided with props by Christy McPeak, lavish costumes by Barbara Tackett and Teresa Williams, stunning sound and lighting by Courtney Asbury and Sarah McPeak, perfection driven Director Susan Champion admirably disciplines a cast of twenty ranging in age from nine to sixteen to bring this timeless tale to life. "The Emperor's New Clothes" is this season's final production mounted by the Kings Mountain Little Theatre in its proud new home, the Joy Performance Center. Don't just send your children to see this charming play -- go with them!

"The Emperor's New Clothes" will be performed Friday and Saturday June 7th and 8th at 7:30 PM and Sunday June 9th at 3:00 PM at the Joy Performance Center in downtown Kings Mountain.

World traveler and published author Al Rankin spends his retirement years as Photo Lab Manager at the Kings Mountain



EMPEROR IN NEW CLOTHES - Imperial/Weavers Zan and Zar show the emperor in his new clothes in rehearsal for Kings Mountain Little Theatre production which begins Friday at Joy Performance Center. Left to right are Cecilia Smith, Tammy Jolly, Mary Weathers, Hannah Telle, Hannah McGill, Adam Smith, and Brandon Anthony.

The Emperor's New Clothes ends 2001-02 KMLT season

By AL RANKIN
Special to The Herald

After years of playing musical chairs in various venues and beginning its 2001-2002 season with the play "Drop Dead" at the local Women's Club last August, the Kings Mountain Little Theatre ends the season this week firmly settled into its permanent new home, the Joy Performance Center. The season's final offering is an unusual version of "The Emperor's New Clothes."

Along the way, KMLT's Board of Directors chose a reprise of the popular "Forever Plaid" as its premier performance for the grand opening last fall and continued with the offbeat Neil Simon comedy "Rumors" in the spring.

An innovative feature for this year's seasonal memberships program was a collaboration with the Greater Shelby Community Theatre that permitted season ticket holders of both groups to have their tickets honored for admission to all plays scheduled by the other group.

Directed by Susan Champion, "The Emperor's

New Clothes" will open Friday June 7 at 7:30 p.m. with additional performances Saturday night June 8 at 7:30 and Sunday, June 9 at 3:00 p.m.

With Brandon Anthony as the Emperor, Kristin Moore as the Empress, Adam Smith as the General, and Hannah McGill as the Prime Minister, the cast also includes Daniel Latta, Trevor Latta, Scott Sanders, Cecilia Smith, Hillary Smith, Donna Tackett, Kaitlin Teague, Hannah Telle, and Mary Weathers.

Tickets are \$8 for adults, \$6 for students, children, and senior citizens, and are available at the door by check or cash. It's recommended that both season pass holders and all others call the Joy Performance

Center box office at 704 730-9408 for reservations.

Kings Mountain Little Theatre is a funded affiliate of the Cleveland County Arts Council. This project is funded in part by a Grassroots Grant from the North Carolina Arts Council.

Genealogical group to meet on Sunday

The Broad River Genealogical Society will hold its monthly meeting Sunday, June 9 at 3 p.m. at the Senior Center, 1266 Fallston Road, Shelby.

Mike Becknell will speak about Union, SC.

For more information call Vickie Rudasill at 538-3292.

CHURCH BRIEFS

Singing to help transplant patient

There will be a benefit singing for 2-year-old Dalton Johnson Thursday, June 13 at 7 p.m. at Midview Baptist Church, 703 Margrace Road, Kings Mountain.

Dalton has been diagnosed with Hurler Syndrome, a disease characterized by an enlarged liver and spleen, persistent rhinitis, coarse facial features, corneal clouding, claw hands and coronary artery stenosis, bone deformities, hydrocephalus and progressive retardation.

Most children with the disease die by the age of 10.

Dalton recently underwent a second bone marrow transplant at Duke University Medical Center in Durham. His medical bills are "tremendous," according to his physician in Durham, Mahmoud Mustafa, MD.

Persons attending the singing will be asked to give a love offering. Persons who cannot attend the singing but would like to donate may do so at any First Union National Bank.

Featured singers include The Rogers Trio, Cross Reference, and Praise Masters.

For more information,

contact Pastor Bob Hope at 739-1290 or Tony King at 739-7051.

Musical Sunday at Oak View Baptist

The King's Kids Choir will present the musical "Hallelujah heart" Sunday, June 9 at 7 p.m. at Oak View Baptist Church, 1517 York Road, Kings Mountain.

For more information call 739-7831.

Bible School slated at Chestnut Ridge

Vacation Bible School will be held June 9-14 from 6-8:30 p.m. at Chestnut Ridge Baptist Church, Kings Mountain.

There will be a Bible class for adults.

For more information, call 629-1174.

Bible School slated at Macedonia Baptist

Vacation Bible School will be held June 17-21 from 6-9 p.m. at Macedonia Baptist Church.

There will be classes for ages three years through 12th grade.

For times and other information call the church at 739-6811.

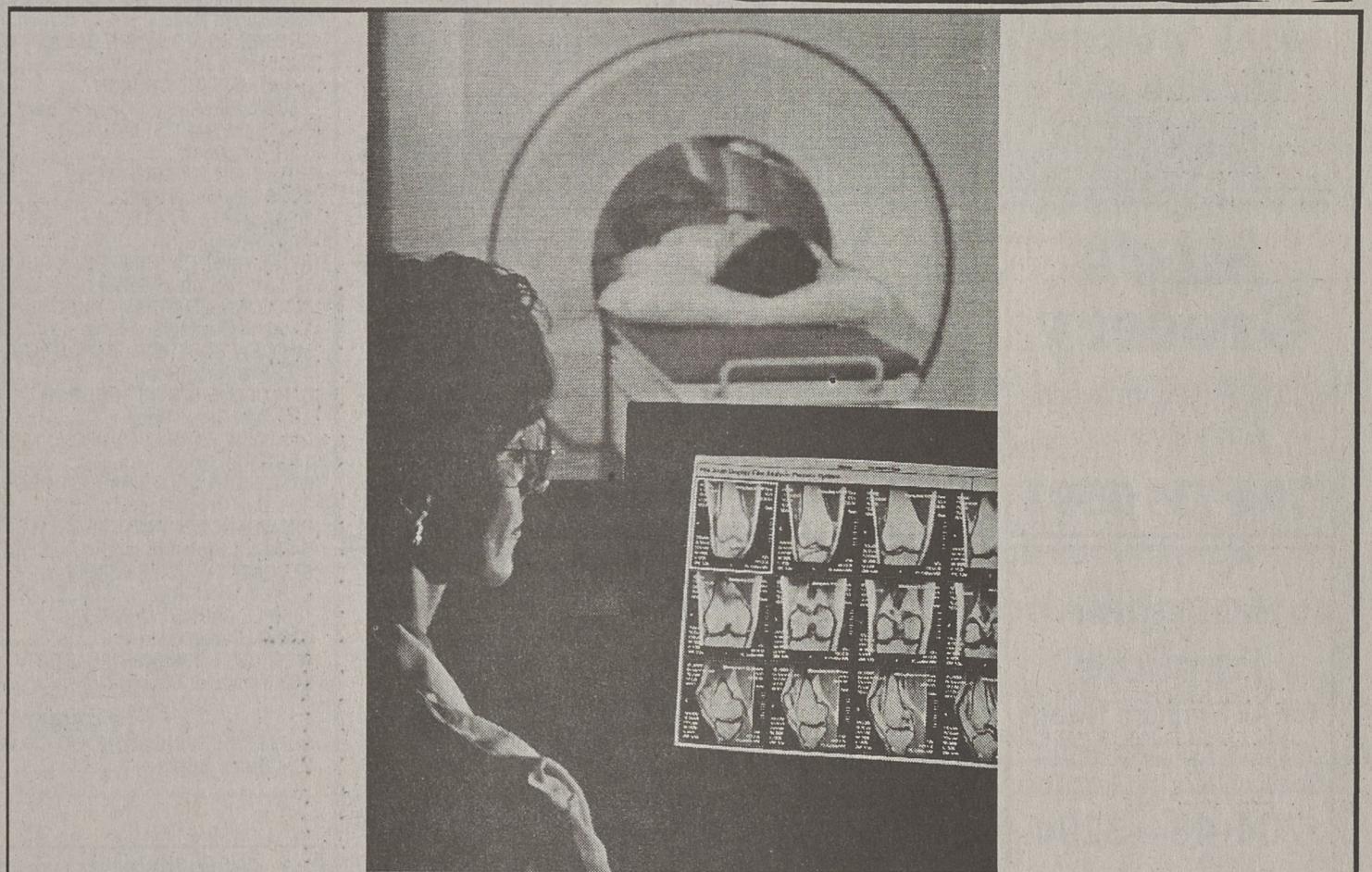
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You're Invited To Get A Clearer Image Of Our Latest Technology.

Diagnostic imaging is the basis of all treatment. That's why Kings Mountain Hospital is now offering mobile Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) on Sundays starting in June.

MRI is a sophisticated diagnostic tool that allows physicians to pinpoint disease and injury throughout the body. This safe and painless procedure uses a magnetic

**MOBILE MRI OPEN HOUSE
SUNDAY, JUNE 9
2 - 4 P.M.
REFRESHMENTS SERVED
KINGS MOUNTAIN
HOSPITAL**

field to produce clear images of the body so physicians can detect conditions in the early stages when treatment is most effective.

On Sunday, June 9, from 2 to 4 p.m., you're invited to see this sophisticated technology up close and learn more about the benefits of MRI as an important diagnostic procedure during a special Open House.



Kings Mountain Hospital

Carolinas HealthCare System

www.carolinashealthcare.org

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