

Dr. Dolittle brings music and fun for Shuler weekend

By **TIM KELLER**
The Chronicle-News

Three-dozen Raton children and teens this weekend join Dr. Dolittle, played by professional actor Ian McCabe, when the Kaleidoscope Players close their summer repertory season in conjunction with Raton Youth Theater to present "The Adventures of Dr. Dolittle, the Musical" at the Shuler Theater.

The venerable children's story goes back 90 years to a book by Hugh Lofting which was so popular that it spawned sequel after sequel, one of which won the prestigious Newbery Medal for children's literature. The story has since been adapted a dozen times – into radio shows, TV shows, cartoons, movies, and various stage musicals.

The homegrown Raton production brings singing and dancing to the local stage, a special treat when performed by the town's own youth. Under the able stage direction of Gail Dixon-Willden and music direction of Bill Crary, the kids have a field day acting out the story of the English doctor who favors animals over people, even learning to speak their languages. Adventures ensue, but nothing too serious to prevent the entire cast from breaking into song, propelled by pianist Carol Simmons, who is actually hidden under the stage.

Leading characters include Beki Henson as Polynesia, a parrot; Jacob Sanchez and Lijah Medina as Jip and Yip, a pair of dogs; Toby Henson as Albert the crocodile; and Clair Willden and Savannah Trujillo as Too-Too and Coo-Coo, who are owls.

Kristina Jansen, Holli Wood, Laura Robertson, and



Photos by Tim Keller

Music director Bill Crary directs most of the Dr. Dolittle cast in song during a partial-dress rehearsal Monday.



The musical Dr. Dolittle enters Africa, re-emerging at the coast only to find...pirates.

horse, a two-headed gazelle, a swallow, a lion, a lioness, and a female crocodile, with Nathaly Torres, Estrella Vargas, Savannah and Kaylee Bethany, Kate Little, Ila Medina, Johnny Gentry, and Asia Gentry joining the other young actors playing animals.

Stormy Murray, Victoria Apodaca, Jeff Redlick, and Mariah Fleming play humans. African cannibals are played by Spenser Willden, Zoe Gomez, Lucas Jansen, Steven Eisold, Breana Brown, Ryan Hull, Rachyl Hull, Ivy Lark, Mariah Encinias, Natausha Ortega, and Madison Poteste.

There are also 13 pirates, all played by actors doubling up from other roles in the play. If that



Ian McCabe and Dr. Dolittle, the character McCabe plays, both enjoy a great rapport with children and animals.



In Africa, Dolittle and his traveling companions are taken captive.

Taylor Hull play monkeys with names like Chee-Chee, Chu-Chu, and Cha-Cha. (McCabe, as Dolittle, has to remember and use all these characters' names!)

There's a pig named Gub Gub, a duck named Dab Dab, a

sounds like fun, imagine being a kid and doing it all on stage. Adults will enjoy this production as much as the children. The joy flew off the stage in the form of frequent laughter in morning rehearsals this week. Ursula Garcia, Misty Gomez, and Dixon-Willden were still adding costume touches and McCabe was still trying to remember the differences between Too-Too, Chu-Chu, and Gub Gub. Cian Hazen, Mallorie Salazar, and Tessa Fleming worked on cues from the lighting booth above the balcony.



Bill Crary simultaneously conducts the music onstage while cueing hidden pianist Carol Simmons, barely visible at her piano below the stage.

It all comes together for opening night this weekend when the curtain rises at 7:30 p.m. Friday at the Shuler. There's a Saturday night performance at the same time, and a pair of matinees Saturday and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$8 seniors, and \$4 students. Any season tickets remaining

from the summer's earlier shows may be used for admission to this weekend's "The Adventures of Dr. Dolittle, the Musical." Additional information is available at the Shuler Theater; (575) 445-4746, www.shulertheater.com.

CD release party at Lucky Monkey

The Theode Scott Band, a Christian rock band from Colorado, is hosting a CD release part Saturday night at the Lucky Monkey, 137 W. Cedar, from 7 until whenever. There is no cover charge and there will be door prizes, including CDs, T-shirts, hats and other items. The band's CD will be played over the P.A. system throughout the evening as guests can meet the band members, including drummer Mark Dickerhoof, who lives out near Weston. Theode Scott is based out of Canon City. The band is celebrating the recent release of its new box CD, The Best of Theode Scott, before going out on a national tour. The band currently is in the running in an Internet voting competition among other bands to open a San Antonio, Texas, concert for the rock 'n' roll band, KISS, in September.



Photo courtesy of John Cogan

Professional artist, John Cogan, of Farmington, New Mexico has executed a remarkable mural on the outside wall of Aztec Hardware Store in Aztec, NM. This mural is an incredible 15x40 feet. It took the artist approximately four weeks to complete this work. This mural is based on a historical event which occurred in 1926 when buffalo were driven down Main Street to a ranch that had them shipped through the railroad. This work was accomplished in larger than life size in which the buffalo look as though they are stepping out of the mural. It has now become a part of Aztec history and is a valued contribution to the community. For additional information contact johncogan@yahoo.com or 505 327-3602.

'PINOCCHIO II' family musical takes SCRT children to the stage

By **ARTHUR ESPINOZA**, Executive Director
Special to The Chronicle-News

Southern Colorado Repertory Theatre's new Children's Theatre Company (CTW) will premiere a new family musical production titled "PINOCCHIO II," which was written by Michael Lance and will be directed CTW director Melissa Graves. "PINOCCHIO II" is a family oriented production that takes off from the classic story.

The scene starts in a modern-day toyshop and, like the storybook character he is named after, Pinocchio wants to be a real boy. His wish is granted by a sarcastic, cigar-puffing member of the Good Fairies Local #192 and together they embark on an adventure that takes Pinocchio to an orphan's home, the crazy world of TV commercials, and finally to becoming the owner of a rundown toy factory. Ten dynamite musical numbers highlight this fast moving, fun-filled fantasy. Audiences of all ages love this show. It's a story of friendship, music, dance and inspiration.

The production showcases young performers from the

CTW workshop program, a summer theatre-training program for youth interested in theatre.

There will be two performances of "PINOCCHIO II" at the Trinidad Middle School Auditorium:

- *Sunday, August 8 at 7 p.m.
- *Monday, August 9, at 7 p.m.

General Admission tickets are on sale now at \$9.50 for adults, and \$5 for ages 5 to 18. Children age 5 and under may enter at no charge, but must be ticketed in advance. Tickets can be purchased online at www.SCRTTheatre.org, through the SCRT Ticketing and Administration office at 132 East Main Street in Trinidad, or by calling (719) 846-4675. Office hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays. Avoid the rush and order your tickets early.

For more information contact the Southern Colorado Repertory Theatre at (719) 846-4765, email: info@scrttheatre.com or visiting the SCRT office at 132 East Main Street in Trinidad.