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## Puttin' on the Ritz ~ Mountain Community Theater Presents Mel Brooks' Young Frankenstein

Mountain Community Theater "Young Frankenstein" 

## Current Issue

### Volume 5: Issue 3



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March 11, 2016

by Julie Horner

“What knockers!” I wanted to burst out, but the creaking double doors to Park Hall’s hallowed downtown Ben Lomond performing arts theater parted freely with a humorously haunting ‘scree’ without my having to rattle any hardware...jokes about ogling impressive accoutrement or rolling in the hay aside.

Rehearsal for Mountain Community Theater’s current production, Young Frankenstein, was underway so I took a seat unobtrusively near the entrance. The voices of a dozen or so actors filled the space – I’d stumbled upon the scene when the villagers have just discovered that the monster, newly sentient with an “Abby Normal” brain, has broken free from Frankenstein’s laboratory and has gone missing among the misty streets of the nearby village.

Based on the book by Mel Brooks and Thomas Meehan with music and lyrics by Mel Brooks – he of the infamously funny movie, which I can say is probably my favorite of all time – MCT is pulling out the stops and putting on the Ritz with this dramatic romp with meticulous nod to detail.

“He’s loose, he’s loose, he’s loose!” the villagers sang, imaginary implements, rakes, torches, and broomsticks thrusting into the air to punctuate the urgency. With a few words from Director Daria E. Troxell, Igor (pronounced “eye-gore”), played by Galen James-Heskett, swept from near where I watched toward the stage. “Where are you, you big ugly brute!” he exclaimed, and disappeared with a mournful cry as the villagers rushed from all quarters to their places on stage.

Galen’s older sister, Whitney James-Heskett, stepped in then to choreograph the next scene while Daria took a quick meal break to chat with me about MCT’s latest offering.

This is Diana’s 3rd show with MCT as director. She told me there are 18 actors in Young Frankenstein ranging in age from 16 to 60-plus. While many actors are regulars, she says, some drop in occasionally when life allows and some are new. “I hope there’s at least one new person with each production.” SLV resident, Jennifer Hennig, who grew up in theater, joins the chorus, returning to the stage after a long hiatus. She finds the experience “fun and exciting.” Benjamin Canant, who takes on the role of Dr. Frederick Frankenstein – played in the movie by Gene Wilder – calls his appearance “a triumphant return” from his last stage role when he was 15.

Canant says, “It’s a gigantic role with a lot of singing.” He said, “Daria likes to stay close to the movie – a lot of the same scenes, a lot of people’s favorite jokes. Most of us have seen the movie and we’re all on board to bring the movie to life.” He was invited to audition for part. “Obviously, I’m a fan – I love Gene Wilder’s work. This was something I had a shot at and

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seemed like a fun thing to do.”

Galen said that he auditioned specifically for the role of Igor. It's his first show with MCT but he worked with Daria in Santa Cruz County's Little People's Repertory Theater (LPRT) when he was younger. “Daria is trying to stay true to the original,” he said, accents and all.

Karen Solomon has been with MCT since the beginning and now plays the role of Frau Blücher. “Certain parts I get magnetized to, the Wicked Witch, Mame. I love Cloris Leachman. She was a debutante from Chicago – she was gorgeous – I knew I wanted to play her.” Karen was at the theater that night to be measured for her costume.

Designer Alaina Boys says proudly that she's starting to become known for her costumes. “My costuming gets good reviews!” She continued, “This show will be a bit tricky – but ingenious thrift store finds help.” She's done several shows with MCT. “It's my fifth time costuming in some form or another since 2012 – I do at least one show a year.”

Back on stage the search for the Frankenstein monster continued. Inspector Kemp is played by David Halper. “I think it's time we pay a visit to this young Frankenstein!” he proclaims in a perfect Germanically Transylvanian accent, “Do some ‘schooping!’” From the house Daria counts in a clutch of agitated villagers: “Five, six, seven, eight!” They exchange their lines then bustle off, pitchforks bristling, to continue the hunt. At the same time a bewildered looking monster lurches off the opposite way. A near miss.

The human behind the monster is Scott Kravitz. He told me, “I've been acting for a while and was looking for a part that suited my eyebrows.” He described the challenge of the role: “Even though I don't have a lot of lines to hide behind, I have to express the emotional impact of being alive again – trying to fit in and failing miserably.”

Scott has been acting in the valley since 2003 after moving here from New York in 2002. “I love working with MCT – I've been actively involved for 10 years. It's a great group, a lot of really nice theater. It's quality at the community level.” And there's always room for more actors, he says, and stage hands, prop builders, costume designers. “I think that everyone at some point of their lives should be involved in theater, to be part of something so much greater than themselves. Theater is an ancient and sacred tradition – every character I've played has something to teach me.”

Tickets for MCT's Young Frankenstein are available at

**Brown Paper Tickets:** <http://frankie.brownpapertickets.com>

**Website:** <http://mctshows.org>

**Box office:** (831) 336-4777

Mountain Community Theater  
9400 Mill St. Ben Lomond, CA 95005

*Julie Horner is an Irish folk musician and writer living in the Santa Cruz*

## Upcoming Events

### SLVHS ~ Miss Representation, Film & Panel

April 26 @ 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm

### Candidates Forum & Info on Measure Q & S

April 26 @ 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

### SLV Caregiver Support Group

April 28 @ 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm

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### Joe's Bar ~ Funkronomicon

April 29 @ 9:00 pm

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Tuesday

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0%



Tuesday Night

Mostly Cloudy

High 65° Low 46°

20%



Wednesday