

Monterey County  
**The Herald**

## MPC Theatre offers magical production before renovation

By LILY DAYTON  
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Some events in life do indeed come full circle. Forty-one years ago, Carey Crocket was sitting in the audience of the first production presented by the Monterey Peninsula College's new Studio Theatre.

Today, Crocket is directing the final production to be offered in the old black-box theater before the entire Theatre Arts building is shut down for an 18-month renovation.

"There were no curtains, no grids — they did it on a bare stage with lighting trees," Crocket recalled from that first performance, a comical farce that was presented on the new stage prior to the first official production, which was "West Side Story."

Crocket was a 17-year-old student at the time. "I saw that first show and it's ironic that this is the last show."

Friday night, MPC Storybook Theatre, in association with Unicorn Theatre, will present a magical finale to four decades of productions in the Studio Theatre with the opening of "Pixies, Kings and Magical Things." There will be an advance preview showing tonight (Thursday). This collection of four short Hans Christian Andersen tales, adapted to the stage by Ric Averill, includes the children's stories "The Ugly Duckling," "The Emperor's New Clothes," "The Swineherd" and "The Pixie and the Grocer."

The cast includes Bob Colter, Sam Fife, Tatum Tollner, John Affinito, Oliver Branham, April Deuschle, Adriane Oglietti and Sadie White. In addition to directing the production, Crocket is also the scenic designer.

Musical direction is provided by Joan Swartz.

When asked how he feels about the fact that this will be the last production in the old Studio Theatre,

Crocket simply replied, "I can remember being a little depressed after every show when it closed."

But he added that this is a perfect final show because the stories have a great sense of optimism about them. "It's something that's needed right now. Growth and change are always part of (these stories)."

Though Hans Christian Andersen tales do tend to have a moral at the ending, Crocket appreciates that they are not so much preachy as they are sympathetic.

"As a person, (Hans Christian Andersen) felt most like the ugly duckling — ostracized and very self-conscious," said Crocket. "Things didn't always work out for him in his life, though he was extremely successful ultimately. Much of what he writes (includes) lessons in tolerance."

Crocket, who has directed, written and/or designed well over 500 productions in his career, said that the key to successful children's theater lies in entertaining adults, but not losing kids in the process. And that was his goal with this production. The classic childhood tales contain creative plot-twists, such as when the emperor is counseled by his ill-advised ministers, or the duckling who goes through an identity crisis as she searches for her true self among turkeys, geese, a dog and even a human child.

"These stories are not meant to be profound — but in certain simple ways they definitely are. And they're very entertaining."



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**THEATER OPENING**

- What:** MPC Storybook Theatre presents "Pixies, Kings and Magical Things"
- Where:** MPC Studio Theatre, Monterey Peninsula College, 980 Fremont St., Monterey
- When:** Previews at 7 p.m. Thursday, May 5; opens at 7p.m. Friday, May 6; continues at 7p.m. Fri-Sat with 3p.m. Sat-Sun matinees through May 22
- Tickets:** \$9-\$15, at MPC Box Office (646-4213) 3-7 p.m Wed-Fri. or at [www.TicketGuys.com](http://www.TicketGuys.com).
- Information:** 646-4213



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