

Jungle Book swings into MPC Theater

Joe Truskot, The Salinas Californian 2:02 p.m. PDT March 18, 2015



(Photo: Provided photo by Gary Bolen)

“The Jungle Book” was originally a series of short stories written by English author Rudyard Kipling, published in magazines, and collected in book form in 1894. Kipling spent his early childhood in India. The stories were written while he was residing just outside of Brattleboro, Vermont. It is believed they were written for his daughter Josephine, who died in 1899 at the age of six. Rudyard Kipling was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1907.

What most modern audiences recognize as “The Jungle Book” are the first 3 stories in the original collection, featuring Mowgli, the boy raised as a wolf, and his various adventures with animal friends and enemies. While original in its approach, Monica Flory’s adaptation — used in this production — remains faithful to Kipling’s stories.

This combination of faithfulness to the original work, seen through modern sensibilities that keep the tales relevant to contemporary viewers has been the goal of MPC Storybook Theater for young audiences ever since its inception. “When young people experience live theater at an early age,” says Director Gary Bolen, “they’re more likely to develop a lifelong appreciation for the performing arts.” In addition, Bolen explains that, “Plays bring alive other cultures and time periods that children may have only experienced through reading stories. It’s a whole new world for them to see it come alive with characters, costumes and settings.

While being a fully staged, main stage production, “The Jungle Book” takes the same spirit and goals of the fondly remembered MPC Storybook Theater program for young people.

Gary Bolen, Chairman of the Theater Arts Department at MPC, holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in Theater from Cal State University Fullerton and an M.F.A. in Acting from UCLA.

“The Jungle Book” runs from March 19 to 29. It plays Friday and Saturday nights at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday afternoons at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$25 Adults, \$22 Seniors; \$15 Young Adults (16-21) & Military, and \$10 Children 15 & under. Adults & Seniors can also purchase discount tickets 24-hours in advance for \$20.00 each. Group discounts are also available for parties of 15 or more.

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