



October 25, 2011

Contact: Al Schnupp

805-756-2930; aschnupp@calpoly.edu

Eight Unique Folk Stories to Come to Life Nov. 10-12, Nov. 17-19 at Cal Poly

SAN LUIS OBISPO – A collection of eight unique folk stories from around the world will come to life on the Cal Poly stage Thursday through Sunday, Nov. 10-12 and Nov. 17-19. Curtain time for all shows is 7 p.m. in the Spanos Theatre on campus.

“The MerryWinkle International Troupe of Vagabonds Performs a Delicious Potpourri of Fantastical Fairy Tales and Astonishing Folk Legends” was compiled and adapted by Theatre and Dance Professor Al Schnupp, who is also designing and directing the production.

The setting is an elaborate pageant wagon, crowned with a series of miniature medieval towers and spires that give an international flavor to the festivities, according to Schnupp. The wagon contains a small forestage, resting on wine barrels, and an inner, proscenium stage. Curtains with painted scenes and quilted borders have been designed for each story.

The company of vagabonds is comprised of nine performers, a puppeteer and a music and sound effects artist. The performers portray a large range of characters, including giants, crones and robbers. They often employ accents to distinguish their roles. The production includes physical comedy, low-brow antics and high drama. The show also contains magic effects, shadow puppets and marionettes.

Well-known Central Coast mentalist and magician Rich Ferguson was a consultant to the company and coached the actors in performing magic tricks. Judy Roberto, a renowned puppeteer from San Jose, also consulted and coached the company. Roberto spent three days on campus, providing training and attending rehearsals.

The rich, colorful costumes, designed by Thomas John Bernard, are comprised of complex patterns. They are a tribute to peasant outfits and the regional attire of central Europe. Tim Dugan is the lighting designer, and Howard Gee is technical director.

The MerryWinkle is the Theatre and Dance Department’s fall production. General admission is \$15. Admission for students, senior citizens and children is \$12. For reservations, call 756-2787.

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