



Belladina Starr, as Frankie, takes the audience on adventures inspired by toys found in Frankie's toy box. EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

## EXPLORE THE FANTASY

'Frankie's' takes audience through imagination of a child

By Emily Mentzer  
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Journey back to a time when the whole world was an oyster — and found deep within a toy box — at Western Oregon University's spring play, "Frankie's Flights of Fancy."

"Kids come up with the craziest, fun things," said Belladina Starr, who plays Frankie in the devised play. "Putting myself in the shoes of a child like that, it's like, 'I can do whatever; I'm a little kid,' it's really fun."

The play was created by Western students, from the conception, writing of the script, making props, casting and production.

Andrew Thornton was part of the process from the beginning. Now, he works with Edgar Lopez to bring a two-man puppet to life.

"We wanted to do a childhood fantasy," he said. "We

thought it would be fun to get inside a child's mind."

Puppets were inspired by traditional Japanese bunraku theater.

In the play, Frankie takes the audience on six adventures, inspired by various things found inside her giant toy box. Actors wear masks and use puppets to illustrate the parts — no lines are spoken by the actors. Instead, recordings and music help tell the story.

"No one says anything," said Natalie Piper, assistant director and Western senior. "No one makes vocal sounds."

It made the audition tricky because actors were judged on how well they could express a situation physically, Piper said. Students were cast based on how clear their movements were to understand what they were doing.

For Starr, playing a

masked child has been a challenge for a number of reasons, not the least of which is restricted vision.

"It's super crazy and weird because I've got this much vision," she said, making circles with her thumb and fingers and holding them up to her eyes. "And it's very physical, and so much different than anything I've ever done."

The other big challenge was playing and moving like an 8-year-old child, Starr said.

"Frankie's" is a family friendly play, and on purpose. Starr and Thornton agree writing a play the whole family could enjoy was part of the goals from the beginning.

"It's not a children's show," Piper said. "But everyone, all ages should enjoy it. There are things that I still think are funny."

Because it's a devised

piece, the actors and director Michael Phelps are still working things out together, Thornton said.

"Phelps is good at finding the little things that make people laugh, because they make us laugh, and we want to share that joy," he said.

### Childhood Dreamland

**What:** Frankie's Flights of Fancy, produced by Western Oregon University's Department of Theatre and Dance.

**Where:** Western Oregon University's Rice Auditorium.

**When:** Curtain is at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday (today) through Saturday, with a 2 p.m. matinee showing on Saturday.

**Admission:** \$12 general; \$7 students; \$10 seniors.

**For more information:** 503-838-8461.

## ACADEMIC HONORS

### Local students to graduate from OSU

CORVALLIS — Oregon State University will hold its 146th commencement on June 13 in Reser Stadium. Here are the local members of the OSU Class of 2015:

Dallas: Niccolle L. Breeden, Bachelor of Science, botany; Crystal L. Chrisman, Bachelor of Science, accountancy; Corey J. Crook, Bachelor of Science, psychology; Christopher R. DeMara, Bachelor of Science, finance, Bachelor of Science, accountancy; Natalie N. Eriksen, Bachelor of Science, psychology; Thomas W. Guffey, Bachelor of Science, civil engineering; Erica L. Kreiley, Bachelor of Science, exercise and sport science; Kevin B. Locke, Bachelor of Science, recreation resource management; Sidney E. Mulder, Bachelor of Science, natural resources; Glen D. Nicol, Bachelor of Science, Magna Cum Laude, computer science; Andrew J. Pfau, Bachelor of Science, Magna Cum Laude, chemical engineering; Mitchell J. Senger, Bachelor of Science, Cum Laude, physics.

Grand Ronde: Elyssa S. Akers, Bachelor of Science, merchandising management.

Independence: Pedro Bajuelos, Master of Arts in interdisciplinary studies, ethnic studies, ethnic studies (not sure why this is repeated three times); Gene T. Biggs, Bachelor of Science, public health; Eduardo Campos, Bachelor of Arts, digital communication arts; Meranda D. Caulfield, Bachelor of Science, management; Alisha R. Jones, Master of Public Policy, public policy; Miranda L. King, Bachelor of Science, human development and family sciences; Terra D. LaGere, Bachelor of Science, anthropology; Kaitlyn E. Mason, Bachelor of Science, exercise and sport science; Kaitlyn N. Muller, Master of Public Health, public health; Michaela A. Nichols, Bachelor of Science, public health; Jessica A. Schwarz, Bachelor of Science, human development and family sciences; Samuel A. Sprague, Bachelor of Science, economics; Andrew M. Tanner, Master of Science, public policy; Cody J. White, Master of Business Administration, business administration; Olivia M. Zuercher, Bachelor of Arts, English.

Monmouth: Merrie-Chris S. Agag, Bachelor of Science, human development and family sciences; Michael L. Brewster, Bachelor of Science, computer science; Derek A. Burbank, Bachelor of Science, agricultural sciences, Master of Science, agricultural education; Keri R. Clarkson, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, veterinary medicine - DVM; James M. Dolciamore, Master of Natural Resources, natural resources; Kate M. Fitzgerald, Bachelor of Science, natural resources; Natalie J. Gordon, Bachelor of Arts, sociology; Ralph Kaman, Bachelor of Science, economics; Katherine A. Keunke, Bachelor of Science, interior design; Ivan E. Kuletz, Master of Public Policy, public policy; Margaret F. Malloy, Doctor of Philosophy, public health; Christine H. McDowell, Bachelor of Science, microbiology; Curtis J. Minks, Bachelor of Science, digital communication arts; Trenton A. Nettles, Master of Science, college student services administration; Matthew J. Osborn, Bachelor of Science, civil engineering; Nicholas A. Silva, Honors Bachelor of Science, Cum Laude, chemical engineering, Honors Bachelor of Science, Cum Laude, sustainability; Peter J. Teague, Bachelor of Science, Magna Cum Laude, civil engineering; Samuel T. Thompson, Bachelor of Science, psychology; Emily J. Uhrig, Doctor of Philosophy, zoology; Hawkeye C. Von Hoffman, Bachelor of Arts, history; Ryan F. Wruck, Bachelor of Science, liberal studies; Logan M. Yliniemi, Doctor of Philosophy, mechanical engineering.

Rickreall: Angela J. Porter, Bachelor of Arts, Cum Laude, education, Bachelor of Arts, Cum Laude, liberal Sstudies; Audrey R. Regan, Bachelor of Arts, English.

### Roberson graduates from MIT

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Daniel Roberson, a graduate of Dallas High School's Class of 2003, is graduating from MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) on June 4, with two degrees, Master of Science in aeronautics and astronautics and Master of business administration.

After graduation, Roberson will return to work as an engineer with Boeing.



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