

Theatre enrollment triples

By LACI GROSSER
Staff Reporter

This year, the AC Theatre Department has their hands full with several new majors. There's been a large growth in the numbers this year compared to previous years.

According to AC's Theatre Instructor and Technical Director, Monty Downs, enrollment in the department has pretty much tripled. "I want to say that at the end of last year, we had 12 majors and we've got around 35 this semester," Downs said. "It's the most we've had in a long time," he said.

These new majors open up new avenues and opportunities for different shows that require a higher number of actors and actresses.

Theatre major, Kyle Roberson, is happy to see such a large group of incoming freshmen. "Of course I'm looking forward to working with new students, it's a wonderful thing to have more people," he said. "I



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TheatreAC's fall production of "The Mad Ones" is set for Oct. 5-8 in the Experimental Theatre.

think having more students makes theatre more exciting for those of us who have been here longer, it allows us to work with new people with new ideas."

One theory behind the spike in enrollment may be the addition of the new Musical Theater track, but Downs said it's more than

that. "We have a few people that are in the track so I know that has helped some," he said. "I don't think that is the only thing, I'm not sure what else it is. I think probably our relationship with The Kody Hodge Foundation has something to do with it."

AC Theatre has had

close ties with the KHF since its creation in the memory of Kody Hodge, a former AC thespian who passed away in December 2017.

The KHF is dedicated to offering scholarships and opportunities for young actors and actresses to thrive. "It is my

sincere hope that we are encouraging students to pursue the stage after high school," Ryan Hodge, the Executive Director of The Kody Hodge Foundation, said. "I do believe they keep students interested and engaged. We try very hard to let students know that, whether it is teaching, community theatre, or professional, their involvement does not have to end after school," he said.

AC's connection with the KHF has influenced a permanent seat on the board to be gifted to AC staff. Currently, the position is filled by Associate Professor, Ray Newburg.

Hodge has an idea as to why numbers in the AC Theatre Department have gone up. "The AC faculty is incredible, if enrollment is up then it is because of them," he said. "If KHF has helped bring a small bit of awareness to Theatre AC that is great but truly it is the faculty that makes that program great."



'Barbie's' Kenergy beats out nuclear energy

REVIEW

By JORDAN NUNER
AND LANCE HOOPER

Entertainment critics

Believing in yourself has never been more complicated, but that's OK because 'Barbie' is more than just wishful thinking, imagination and forever optimism. It's an idea that continues to evolve with the momentum of growing into who you know you want to be.

The 'Barbie' movie is everything you thought you wanted, but when you walk away, you are liberated knowing it was so much more than that and you leave with a better understanding of the human experience.

This movie not only shows the reverse side of feminism, but it also brings to light the evolution of feminism. Where Gloria Steinem brought attention to the feminist movement, Ruth Handler, the creator of 'Barbie,' took the ideology of being a mother and

playing with baby dolls and threw it out the window.

'Barbie' was released on July 21, 2023. It has made over \$1.3 billion at the box office and has grossed \$575 million and \$1.3 billion internationally, making it the highest-grossing film of the year so far.

The movie was fantastic. It does an amazing job of capturing what having a real-life Barbie doll would be like. Having Barbie stand on her tippy toes, use plastic utensils and eat toy food and. Everything she does is reminiscent of a child's imagination.

Everything about the movie was great including its music choice, its original songs, the choreography of the dancing, the acting, the writing, the filmography and how well they captured the essence of a 'Barbie' doll. The layers of this film are eloquently delivered in a strategic way that really makes an impact. I highly recommend watching it.

Keeping up with the Kenergy in this film is kinetic. Supporting actor, Ryan Gosling, is an unexpected surprise. Like every aspect of this film, 'Ken' has layers, and every layer is revealed at just the right time to electrify the metaphor and theme of the movie.

The movie puts 'Ken' safely in a box as 'Barbie's' friend. The boyfriend without being a boyfriend, the expectation of what might be to come. We have all been told, or sold, where there is Barbie, there will be 'Ken,' pulling up in a pink Corvette to the dream house to spend time with 'Barbie' in Malibu.

By the end of the movie 'Barbie' and her 'Ken' are able to realize that they are more than just 'Barbie' and 'Ken,' but they are just 'Barbie' and Just 'Ken.' They are allowed to go down their different paths of self-discovery. Being themselves is Kenough.



Summer movies worth watching

REVIEW

By JORDAN NUNER

Entertainment Critic

Several movies that came out this summer and bombed at the box office are still worth watching.

Spiderman has always been one of my favorite superheroes and it was a long time waiting for the second spider-verse movie to come out. Fair warning though, "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse" ends on a cliffhanger, but it sets up well for an amazing trilogy to come.

Not only is "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse" worth watching if you've seen the first movie, it is also one of the best animated movies of the year and will most likely, like its predecessor, win animated movie of the year. It is available for purchase on Amazon and at other retailers and will most likely be available to rent in the next year.

"Elemental" bombed at the box office during the first few weeks, but once you've seen it you'll wonder why. Disney Pixar has

fallen off in the past few years, especially when it comes to releasing in theatres. Their movies are still good, but they are no longer as innovative as they were when "Toy Story" came out.

Now don't get me wrong, "Elemental" was not a perfect movie and it has its faults but it was still an enjoyable experience. The movie focused on the relationship between a water person and fire person and relates heavily to interracial relationships and the prejudice experienced by people coming to the United States from Asia. It is available to watch on Disney+ right now.

Another Disney movie that came out this summer was a reboot. You can still catch "Haunted Mansion" at the movies. I enjoyed it, but it will never be as good as the original. It had its good moments and it had its bad moments but overall, I think it was worth watching. If you don't want to watch it in theaters, it should be out on Disney+ by the end of the year.