

Frankenstein show features fun, not frights



The Frankie's Lab exhibit recreates a scene from Mary Shelley's classic tale *Frankenstein*. PHOTO BY MICHELLE WILLIAMS

BY LAUREN VAUGHN
THE GAMECOCK

Frankenstein has entered the Columbia area. Beware or believe? Staff and visitors of the South Carolina State Museum would suggest people believe, especially because his bride has accompanied him this year to the exhibit of Frankie's Lab at the S.C. State Museum.

"There are several reasons we bring this exhibit back each year, and the first one is for fun," said Nancy Higgins, S.C. State Museum public information consultant. "People of all ages enjoy Halloween, children, adults and even college students. It is a good opportunity to show some of these things from our collection."

Inspired by laboratory equipment previously used on the USC campus, this exhibit recreates an imaginative setting from Mary Shelley's classic tale *Frankenstein*. Written in 1818, Shelley's novel emerged at a time when the study of electricity had provoked attention throughout the world of science.

Before the end of the 18th century, Benjamin Franklin had experimented with a kite and discovered that lightning and electrical sparks were synonymous; Friedrich Anton Mesmer had used electrical hypnosis for curing patients; Luigi Galvani had discovered the electrical basis of nerve

impulses; and Alessandro Volta discovered the connection between chemical energy and electricity.

The exhibit consists of scientific equipment, much of which was donated by the USC's physics and astronomy department. Students and teachers in laboratories in the mid- and late 1800s used these aged items.

"Some people just have old stuff and give it to us to add to our collection, they give it to the people of South Carolina," Higgins said.

Visitors of the exhibit will see life-size, three-dimensional representations of Frankenstein and his bride, modeled from Shelley's books and the famous movies. The lab scene around them includes a picture of Mary Shelley, a brain in a jar, test tubes, a mortal and pestle, a clock, a gargyle, spiders, graduated cylinders, a measuring scale and a number of pieces of electrical equipment.

The layout of the display has changed over the course of its four years at the museum.

This year's inclusion of a permanent wave machine, used for curling hair, sparked the idea for incorporating Frankenstein's bride into the exhibit. The machine was used in a beauty salon on State Street in West Columbia, formerly Brookline, in the 1920s and 1930s.

Displaying historical equipment is not the only purpose of



The Frankenstein exhibit at the S.C. State Museum will be open until Nov. 11. USC's physics and astronomy department donated scientific equipment to be used in the display. PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Frankie's Lab. The exhibit also concerns the ethical issue of the role science plays in society and asks the question 'can science go too far?'

Shelley's novel portrayed Frankenstein's monster as trying to be a good person, but the people around him still rejected him. Still, the issue exists as to what extent scientific endeavors should continue to develop and unfold. Despite the light-hearted, festive nature of the exhibit, such ethical issues are still raised.

"A major reason, possibly too

hopeful, for bringing the exhibit back to the museum is because back when Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*, there were questions about the role of science in society," Higgins said. "We would hope the exhibit, in a humorous way, would encourage people to think about the place of science in society - science is doing so much and is capable of so much."

Answers to questions such as these are hard to grasp, but still Frankenstein and his bride will be on display at the museum until Nov. 11.

ALBUM REVIEW

Rapper brings raw hip-hop



HOLD THIS DOWN

By Mr. Complex
★★★ out of ★★★★★

BY JUSTIN BAJAN

THE GAMECOCK

Mr. Complex, while basking in the newly revitalized hip-hop underground, is by no means a new jack. Mr. Complex has been involved in music since the

emergence of the underground sub-culture in 1995.

He released a series of singles on different labels, and even found himself in a group. The Polyrhythm Addicts was a collection of solo artists: Shabaam Sahdeeq, Apani B Fly Emcee and Complex combined with super producer DJ Spinna.

Though times and gimmicks have

♦ COMPLEX, SEE PAGE 11

Laramie

Play takes on more meaning in context of Sept. 11 attacks

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

says. "I think she's small, so I try to play her small. Small, but she wants to be seen. So, she wears a scarf and she sticks her boobs out. Even though I'm six feet, I want to give her that feeling."

Kresken says her biggest stretch is to play an old woman who feels sympathy for the men who beat Matthew Shepard.

"She's a far cry from me," Kresken says. "It is difficult for me to try to forgive, to be compassionate in the show, because I don't know if I could be."

Laramie raises emotions on many levels.

Smith says, "I don't think there's a person in any community who could come and see this show and wouldn't hear a voice that would echo their sentiment."

Stage manager Parker Morrison, a fourth-year theater major at USC, says, "I really like doing social commentary. And that's what this show is giving me. Theater has an obligation to do that."

Smith thinks the production's timing is appropriate, and sees it in the context of Sept. 11.

"At this point in the history of America more so than at any other time, all Americans can relate to the townspeople, the story — obviously, on a much smaller scale, the residents of Laramie sitting back and going, 'Goddamn it, we can't allow this crime to define us.'"

"The question that resounds in the script is, how can something like this happen in our town?" Smith says. "And the answer is, it happens everywhere. It's still happening everywhere."

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