

In Search of Fun

SNARKY ADVENTURES TO LOCATE THE MYSTERIOUS
SNARKABING? THIS STAGE SHOW IS MAKING A SCIENCE OUT
OF TEACHING PRESCHOOLERS.

BY MICHAEL CANDELARIA

The careers of Trish Sie and Christin Knorr have been anything but whimsical. Until now.

Sie has a degree in music theory and composition plus degrees in ballroom and Latin American dancing. She has performed professionally for more than 15 years and competed in national and international ballroom dance championships. She is also an accomplished choreographer, including work on television commercials, music videos, musical theater and modern dance.

Knorr has danced since she was 3, with training in a variety of forms, from African and ballroom dancing to Broad-

way-style shows. She also has worked with children since age 15, with formal training in early child development, and has been a nanny. For good measure, she has been a dance studio manager, a professional gourmet cake designer, and an artistic candlemaker.

These days, however, the duo is more apt to carry magnifying glasses and wear colorful costumes in a quest for laughs and learning. Sie plays the kooky "Dr. 4", while Knorr is the goofy "Professor Cheddar" in *Snark-a-Snoops*, a delightfully

entertaining — and educating — stage show for preschoolers. The show, which runs 30 to 45 minutes, is performed at several locations around town, including Barnes & Noble (East Colonial Drive), the Downtown Branch of the Orlando Public Library (Main Stage), Orlando Science Center and the Zebra Room (near Michigan Street and Bumby Avenue). Admission costs range from free to \$4. Additionally, *Snark-a-Snoops* is performed at private functions.

"The intent is fun," says Sie. "Anyone who has been to our shows will absolutely testify that there's nothing serious about it. The science that we do is real; we give some real information. And we're serious about the production quality being good. But we want to have the best time with it. We ad-lib most of our shows and take kids' suggestions."

In the show, from their Snark Lab, deep in the heart of the Castle Tassel, the two mad scientists hatch one zany scheme after another in an ongoing search for an elusive creature, named "Snarkabing". Working feverishly and surrounded by a bevy of strange characters, they decipher clues about Snark-



***Snark-a-Snoops'* "Dr. 4"** (Trish Sie, left) and "Professor Cheddar" (Christin Knorr) are on hand to educate preschoolers through their entertaining show July 2 at the Downtown Orlando Public Library, 11 a.m.; July 4 at the Orlando Science Center, 3 p.m.; and July 15 at the Barnes & Noble on Colonial Avenue & Bumby Street, 8 p.m.

abing's whereabouts, perform experiments, and celebrate the science of common occurrences such as wind and the formation of rocks and snow. Among the other characters are Ethan (the dancing robot), Kulashi Bug (the exotic beetle) and a flying Snarky Train. The interactive format of their Snark-a-Snoopin' encourages everyone to get up and join in the fun. The action is complemented by a CD of original sing-along songs created by Sie and Knorr.

Appropriately, the idea for the show also came in oddball fashion — last summer while changing the diapers of Sie's son. Sie and Knorr found that singing crack-brained tunes and dancing around like lunatics worked wonders with a restless toddler.

The word is spreading. *Snark-a-Snoops* even has its own fan club and Web site (www.snarkasnoops.com).

"The costumes and characters are so colorful and the performers are so full of



The Snark-a-Snoops team can also be seen in conjunction with the Orlando Museum of Art's recent *Curious George* exhibition July 9 at 12:30 & 1:30 p.m.

energy that they immediately win you over," says Jeff Stanford, director of public relations for the Orlando Science Center. "The songs are about robots and math, but the lyrics are very simple and catchy. I've seen 3-year-olds start dancing within the first few lines and parents singing

along by the end of the show."

"There are many educational elements — they sing and dance, introduce new words, do simple science experiments, talk about the importance of brain exercise and libraries," says Vera Gubnitskaia, youth services manager for the Orange County Library System. "It's done in a very light tone, appropriate for young kids. It's very entertaining, allowing kids to move around, yell, jump and talk to performers. It gives kids as much education as they can handle without getting bored and distracted."

Knorr contends that parents and kids alike are in for a surprise.

"It is very educational," she says, "but kids really wouldn't realize they're learning." **oam**

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