

oconee youth playhouse

Oconee Youth Playhouse presents “Children of Eden”

Oconee Youth Playhouse will present “Children of Eden” – with music and lyrics by popular Broadway composer Stephen Schwartz – April 16-18 at the Oconee County Civic Center.

The show is based on the Book of Genesis. Act I tells the stories of Adam, Eve, Cain and Abel, while Act II deals with Noah and the Flood. The focus is on the relationships between the characters, particularly parents and children, with universal themes of family, love and faith.

“We first presented this show in spring 2003 and many people still tell us it’s one of their favorite OYP productions,” says Shane Hannon, who serves as OYP’s artistic co-director with his wife Terra. “We are excited to have Amy Coenen, who played Eve in 2003 when she was a senior at Athens Academy, handling director’s duties this time around. She has been doing a fantastic job working with the cast and musical director Rachel Townes.”

Close to 100 local young people, ranging in age from first graders through college students, are in the cast. Several University of Georgia students have key roles, including Joseph Hitchcock as Adam, Margot Hancock as Eve, Joe McAnulty as Abel, Abbey Hufstetler as Mama Noah, Kelli Bull as Afra and Philip Peavy as one of the lead storytellers. Another UGA student, Lucy Haskill, will serve as stage manager.

Bryan Shaw, who played Father in the 2003 production, will reprise his role. Other community theater veterans in the show include Daniel Fowler as Cain and Sam Hopkins as Noah. Collier Cobb, a sophomore at North Oconee High School, has a featured role as Yonah, while NOHS students Tyler Beckett and Mitch Davis will be seen as two of Noah’s sons. Athens Academy student Rachel Bonet plays Aysha, Shem’s wife.

Rachel Wolfe, an 8th grader at Oconee County Middle School, and Anna Cail, an 8th grader who is home-schooled, are among the featured soloists.

Younger cast members will perform in several numbers, including “Let There Be” (where God creates the world) and “The Naming” (where they will portray animals – from aardvark to zebra).

“Playing Eve back in 2003 was an all-time highlight of my experience as a performer,” says Coenen. “But I have to say that working as director with the awesome cast and crew on this truly special show has been equally wonderful. ‘Children of Eden’ is the kind of musical that sticks with you, and I feel lucky to be a part of telling this beautiful story again.”

“Children of Eden” will be presented Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m., with a 3 p.m. matinee on Sunday. Tickets are \$16 for adults, \$14 for students and senior citizens, and \$12 for children 12 and under. They will be on sale April 12-15 from 4-7 p.m. at Oconee Youth School of Performance in Watkinsville and also in the lobby of the Oconee County Civic Center starting one hour before each show.

For more information, call 706-769-2677 or visit www.oypoysp.com.