

OYP Spotlight

News from Oconee Youth Playhouse Winter 2008-09

From the directors

OYP's 2008-09 season is off to a great start! It opened with *Seussical* in August. This is the second time we've done this show.

The first time was in 2005 with an older cast of mainly high school kids, while this show featured more than 60 performers in grades 1-10—with most of the lead roles filled by kids in middle school. They were terrific!



Later in August we celebrated OYP's 10th anniversary at a gala event held at The Classic Center. See pages 2 and 4 for more about this wonderful evening. Thanks to all who worked to make this event such a success, to the performers who provided the entertainment, and to those who came out to show their support for OYP.

We quickly moved into auditions and rehearsals for *Big: the musical*. We had hoped to do *Annie*, but when a new national tour of the show was announced, the rights weren't available. We'll try again next season. But *Big* should also be a crowd pleaser. We saw it on Broadway back in 1996 and loved it. We're excited about introducing it to local audiences.

As soon as *Big* wraps, it will be on to auditions for *High School Musical*. We're honored to have been invited to be part of The Classic Center's Community Series for the second year in a row. Many cast members from our spring 2008 production of HSM at the Oconee County Civic Center will be back for this one-show-only production. If you missed it the first time, here's your chance to catch it. And if you saw it before, we hope you'll want to come out again.

Terra and Shane

Terra & Shane Hannon

Big: the musical

Nov. 7&9, 14&16, 2008
Fridays at 7 p.m., Sundays at 3 p.m.
Oconee County Civic Center
\$18 adults, \$15 students/seniors,
\$12 kids 12 and under

Oconee Youth Playhouse will present *Big: the musical*, based on the popular Tom Hanks movie, as the next production in its 10th anniversary season. The cast of more than 100 includes 1st graders through college students from more than 15 different schools in Oconee and surrounding areas, plus about a dozen adults (mainly parents of cast members) who play the parents in the show.

Seth Meeler, who plays Josh Baskin (the Tom Hanks role) is a graduate of Oconee County High School and now attends Emmanuel College. **Kelly O'Neill**, who plays Susan, is a graduate of George Walton Academy in Monroe and is now a freshman at UGA. Both are veterans of many OYP shows and were last seen as Ryan and Sharpay in *High School Musical*.

Andrew Youngerman, who plays Young Josh, is a 7th grader at Athens Academy. Playing his friend Billy Koepecke is **Adam Leed**, an 8th grader at Malcom Bridge Middle School. Both were recently seen in *Seussical* and *Bugsy Malone*.

Tickets may be purchased in advance at Oconee Youth School of Performance, 1050 Jamestown Blvd. in Watkinsville or at the Oconee County Civic Center an hour before each performance, subject to availability. For more information, call 706-769-2677 or email oconeeyouthplayhouse@gmail.com.



HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL



Jan. 24, 2009
One show only at 7 p.m.
The Classic Center Theatre
\$35 orchestra, \$30 parterre, \$10-25 loge

OYP will reprise the stage version of the wildly popular Disney movie, which was presented to enthusiastic audiences in April 2008 at the Oconee County Civic Center. This is OYP's second production in The Classic Center's Community Series, following on *Beauty & the Beast* in September 2007.

Tickets are on sale now through The Classic Center box office, which is open Monday-Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. The box office phone number is 706-357-4444 or 800-864-4160. Families of cast members will have the opportunity to purchase tickets through OYP at a discount.

Auditions for ensemble and some featured roles are open to 6th graders and up and will be held at Oconee Youth School of Performance starting Wednesday, Dec. 3. For details about audition times and how to sign up, email oconeeyouthplayhouse@gmail.com after Nov. 16.

OYP celebrates 10th anniversary in style

This year's annual fundraising Gala was a very special event as OYP supporters filled the Grand Hall of The Classic Center to celebrate OYP's past 10 seasons of musical theater productions. More than 70 current OYP cast members provided entertainment, joined by several OYP "alumni" including **Hannah Ellis, Blake English, Camille Hayes, Margot Hancock, Lucy Haskill, Kacina Lamson, Alix Little, Kelly Tucker, Katie Whipple** and **Georgie Wilkins**.



Shane and Terra served as MCs for the evening.

"We are still a relatively young organization and kids in our shows often start at a young age, so we really haven't had too many graduate and move on," notes OYP co-director **Shane Hannon**. "But there have been a few and we miss them – so this was a great opportunity to reconnect. Fortunately, many of our high school kids go on to UGA or other schools in the area, and they still come out to audition for some of our shows."

Performers who have appeared in 10 or more shows during OYP's first 10 seasons were recognized at the event. (See photo and names on page 4.) Also recognized were OYP "super volunteers"—parents and others who have made

special contributions during the past decade. Among that group were this year's Gala committee members: **Nina Lamson** (overall chair), **Diana Beckett** and **Cari Duttlinger** (silent auction co-chairs), **Kathy**

Hardman (volunteer coordinator) and **Regina Meeler** (decorations).

This year's silent auction netted \$6,463 to support OYP's current season. Thanks to the following individuals and businesses for their donations to the auction: Athens Country Club, Athens Downtown Development Authority, Jessica Boozer, Tituss Burgess, Classic Center Cultural Foundation, Wingate Downs, Emma Laura, the Englishes, Ferrandos, Carol Fox, Frameworks, Gnat's Landing, Karen Gorman, Goshen Plantation/Spike Kelly, JWR Jewelers, the Lamsons, Maison Bleu, Sybil Manley, the Millers, Mirkos, Oconee Youth Playhouse, Heidi Quinter/Bonnie & Clyde's, Merle Norman, Kisa Raye, Sonny Seiler & Kent Hannon, Southern Waterbeds & Futons, Town & Gown, Vaughn Taylor, UGA Performing Arts Center, Julie Walters, the Wolfes and Zim's.

"As usual, the silent auction committee did a wonderful job getting everything together and handling that part of the evening very smoothly," said Gala Committee Chair **Nina Lamson**. "Many others helped with the auction and the decorations and the million other big and small tasks that made the evening such a success. We want to thank them as well as everyone who bought a ticket to the Gala for their generous support of OYP."



The audience got a preview of *High School Musical*.



OYP alumni joined current performers on stage.

OYP's first 10 seasons

- 1998-1999 How to Eat Like a Child, Into the Woods Jr.
- 1999-2000 The Wizard of Oz, Don't Count Your Chickens, Fiddler on the Roof
- 2000-2001 Annie, A Little Princess, Bye Bye Birdie
- 2001-2002 Honk!, Footloose
- 2002-2003 Crazy for You, Pocahontas, Children of Eden
- 2003-2004 Grease, Into the Woods, Oliver!
- 2004-2005 West Side Story, Seussical, The Country Bunny
- 2005-2006 The Wizard of Oz, Aida
- 2006-2007 Honk!, You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown, Thoroughly Modern Millie, Cinderella, A Little Princess
- 2007-2008 Beauty & the Beast, Little Shop of Horrors, Bugsy Malone, High School Musical

Oconee Youth Playhouse by the numbers

OYP was founded in 1998 to present musical theater productions featuring casts of local youth. Our mission then and now is to provide high-quality family entertainment while exposing young people to the joys and benefits of the performing arts. Here's what we've accomplished in the past decade:

- ☆ 30 shows produced from December 1998 through the end of the 2007-08 season
- ☆ More than 700 young performers have appeared in at least one OYP show
- ☆ More than 100 have appeared in 5 or more OYP shows
- ☆ 4 venues have been used for OYP shows:
 - ☆ 1 show at Athens Academy (*How to Eat Like a Child* 1998)
 - ☆ 2 at the Morton Theater (*Into the Woods Jr.* 1999 and *Fiddler on the Roof* 2000)
 - ☆ 26 at the Oconee County Civic Center (1999-2008)
 - ☆ 1 at the Classic Center (*Beauty & the Beast* 2007)
- ☆ 8 shows have had 100 or more performers in the cast (largest cast was 149 in the 2005 production of *Wizard of Oz*)
- ☆ Audiences have grown through the years as well and it's not unusual to have 1,000 or more people see a show—and twice that many for shows that extend over two weekends. Close to 3,000 people, including 1,000 children who attended a special school show, saw *Beauty & the Beast* at The Classic Center Theater last September.

But like all community-based performing arts organizations, raising enough money to finance each upcoming season is always a challenge. Tickets sales do not begin to cover costs of each show that include: purchasing rights to the show, theater rental, orchestra, costumes, sets, props, backdrops, advertising and more. That's why OYP depends on the support of individuals and local businesses to keep the shows coming. Please consider making a donation today!

Thanks to recent OYP donors

We appreciate the following individuals who made financial contributions between August and October 2008 in support of OYP's 2008-09 season.

- Norma and Jack Chastain
- Sally and Dan Coenen
- Charlotte and Ted Crowe
- Peggy Drerup
- Marilyn Farmer
- Ralph and Carol Hamner
- Kent and Sharron Hannon
- Jim and Stacey Hasler
- Clementi Holder
- Deena and Sid Kushner
- Tom and Nancy Lee
- Nancy McDuff and David Harvey
- Martha Nan Meyer
- Monica Mueller
- Kelli and Lane Nash
- Gordhan and Jinx Patel
- Tommy and Kisa Raye
- Molly and Marion Rice
- Virginia Rittmueller
- Bob Saveland
- Dr. and Mrs. Karl Sennowitz
- Louise Shearon
- Jerry and Dorinda Thompson
- Becky Vaughn
- Mark and Jan Wheeler
- David and Michelle Woodard

I want to help support Oconee Youth Playhouse. Enclosed is my check for:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| ___ \$25-49 Friend | ___ \$500-999 Gold Benefactor
(includes two season tickets) |
| ___ \$50-99 Donor | ___ \$1000-1999 Platinum Benefactor
(includes four season tickets) |
| ___ \$100-249 Patron | ___ \$2000-up Grand Benefactor
(includes eight season tickets) |
| ___ \$250-499 Silver Benefactor | |

Name (as you wish it to appear in playbill) _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____
 E-mail address for notices of upcoming shows (optional) _____

Note: Checks should be made payable to Oconee Youth Playhouse, which is a non-profit organization, and mailed to the address below. Contributions are tax deductible, less the value of the tickets.

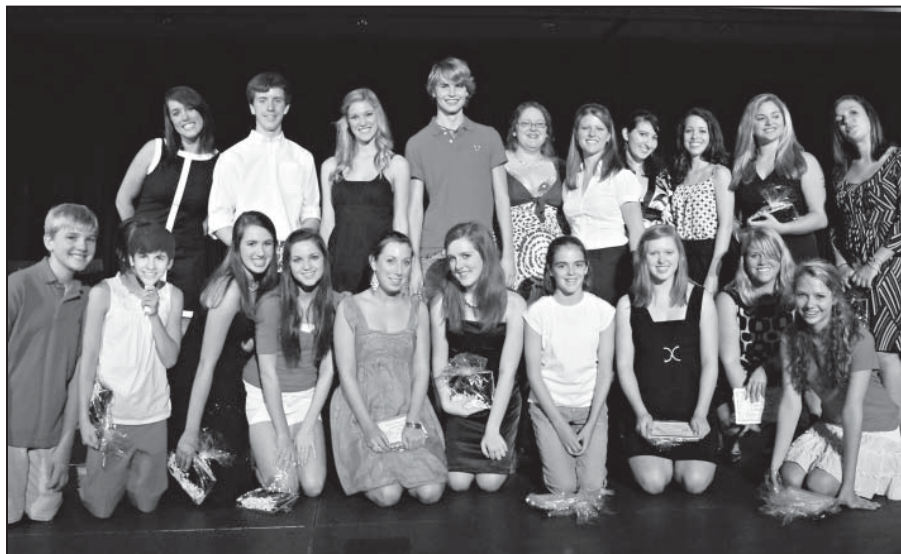
Oconee Youth Playhouse • 1050 Jamestown Blvd • Watkinsville, GA 30677 • (706) 769-2677

OYP veteran performers recognized

Performers who appeared in 10 or more shows during Oconee Youth Playhouse's first 10 seasons were recognized at the 10th anniversary Gala in August.

The performers (with the number of shows they have appeared in during this time) are: Morgan Arnold (10), Tyler Beckett (17), Terese Berger (10), Chase Brantley (11), TC Carter (10), Collier Cobb (13), Kelsey Duttlinger (18), Megan Duttlinger (14), Mitch Davis (10), Hannah Ellis (12), Blake English (12), Emmaline Hale (12), Margot Hancock (14), Wendy Hanna (11), Kalyn Hardman (11), Caroline Harris (12), Lucy Haskill (12), Camille Hayes (11), Bekah Johnson (14), Kacina Lamson (17).

Also Alix Little (11), Mary Katherine Malone (11), Jordan Meeler (12), Seth Meeler (13), Kelly O'Neill (11), Maggie Parsons (21), Rebecca Parsons (13), Mandy Riley (19), Christine Shaw (11), McCall Stiles (15), Emma Templeman (10), Kelly Tucker (12), Carter Vaughn (11), William Vaughn (17), Katie Whipple (10) and Laura Slade Wiggins (11).



Nineteen of the 36 performers who have appeared in 10 or more OYP shows attended the Gala. Megan Beckett (second from left in the first row) stood in for her brother, Tyler.

Oconee Youth Playhouse
1050 Jamestown Blvd.
Watkinsville, GA 30677

Do you know someone who would like to be on OYP's mailing list to receive notices about our upcoming shows? Please send name, mailing address and/or email address to Oconee Youth Playhouse, 1050 Jamestown Blvd., Watkinsville, GA 30677 or email oconeeyouthplayhouse@gmail.com. Thanks to Burman Printing for their continued assistance in producing this newsletter.

OYP dates to remember

Nov. 7&9, 14&16, 2008

big: the musical

Oconee County Civic Center
The popular Tom Hanks movie comes to life on stage.

Dec. 21, 2008

10th Anniversary Reunion

OYP/OYSP studio
Former cast members, crews and families are invited. Details to come.

Jan. 24, 2009

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL

The Classic Center Theatre
Encore performance of the wildly popular Disney show.

Mar. 20-22, 27-28, 2009

RAZY FOR YOU

Oconee County Civic Center
Who could ask for anything more than Gershwin?

New web site coming

We're still working on a new OYP web site and hope to launch before the end of 2008. To access the site, go to www.oypoysp.com and enter through the OYP side. Keep checking!