



CNN Student News - 1/18/11

CARL AZUZ, CNN STUDENT NEWS ANCHOR: I'm Carl Azuz and this is CNN Student News! We're back from the long weekend and ready to kick off 10 minutes of commercial-free headlines. We start in the U.S. state of Arizona.

Junior Theater Festival

AZUZ: This weekend, here in Atlanta, a cast of thousands got together for the Junior Theater Festival. The event celebrates the performing arts. It takes place the same weekend as Martin Luther King Day. In recognition of his dream, students at the festival had the chance to talk about their dreams. Listen to what they had to say.

KATE HILSCHER, STUDENT: I have a dream that some day kids will have a bigger voice in their communities. I feel like kids have a lot to say, but it's often not heard by the adults around them.

QWANIKWIA HICKLEN, STUDENT: My dream is to become an endangered species specialist and help save a kind that's dying off slowly.

ELIZABETH RENEGAR, STUDENT: A few of my dreams are to adopt a child from a foreign country and give them a home, a lot better home than they could've had.

CASEY TAYLOR, STUDENT: One of my dreams is to possibly design and run lighting for large theatrical productions. Martin Luther King Jr. was a great man and inspired me and many other people for wonderful dreams.

AZUZ: Not the only way that people paid tribute to the civil rights leader this weekend. As Samantha Hayes reported yesterday, Americans all across the country took part in community service projects and honored Dr. King's legacy.
(BEGIN VIDEO)

Teen Kids News Special Segment about the Junior Theater Festival
Aired on Saturday, February 12th

The show airs on over 200 stations across the U.S.

To see an archived clip of the piece, please visit:

<http://mtiblog.mtishows.com/teen-kids-news-to-air-special-segment-on-the-2011-junior-theater-festival-21211>

This segment was secured by David Beckwith



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**Junior Theatre Festival to Honor
Jeanine Tesori; Tom Schumacher, Baayork Lee,
Kenny Leon to Participate**

By *Adam Hetrick*
12 Jan 2011



Tony Award nominee and Olivier Award-winning composer Jeanine Tesori will be honored at the 2011 Junior Theatre Festival in Atlanta, GA, during Martin Luther King Jr. weekend. The *Caroline, or Change* and *Thoroughly Modern Millie* composer will receive the Junior Theatre Festival Award for Advancement of Musical Theatre for Young People.

Founded in 2003, the Junior Theatre Festival is the largest of its kind in the world and attracts over 2,000 students from across the U.S. who gather to participate in workshops and lectures, as well as perform highlights from their respective productions. The Junior Theatre Festival runs Jan. 14-16.

Over 50 schools are represented in the festival, which is sponsored by Music Theatre International and Disney Theatrical Productions and is produced by Atlanta's Theater of the Stars and New York City based iTheatrics, which helps develop stage works for young people.

Various student groups are also honored with the "Freddie G Awards," which recognize achievements in teamwork and production excellence. The awards were named for MTI CEO Freddie Gershon.

Tony Award winner and Disney Theatrical Group president Tom Schumacher will deliver the keynote speech and Grammy-winning songwriter and producer Bryan-Michael Cox will participate in a Q&A with teachers and students.

Also on hand will be original *A Chorus Line* cast member and revival director Baayork Lee; Tony Award-nominated *Fences* director Kenny Leon; Tony Award-winning lighting designer Ken Billington (*The Scottsboro Boys*); choreographer Maddie Kelly (*Taboo*); sound designer Matt Kraus (*Liza at the Palace*); actor Stephen Eng (*Pacific Overtures*); O'Neill Theatre Center Juniors Program head Brad Simmons; SpotCo marketing director Nick Pramik; and wardrobe specialist Jay Woods.

"There have been over 50,000 separate grade school productions in the U.S.A. and the thousands of students at the Junior Theater Festivals show the world why experiential learning through musical theatre is so important," Gershon said in a statement. "The experience of being part of a show allows our young people to become valuable members of society by learning life skills like working together, problem solving, public performance and utilizing their imagination and creativity as a team. It also lets them build a life-long appreciation for one of America's unique art forms, musical theatre."

In addition to her achievements as the composer of Broadway's *Shrek*; *Caroline, or Change* and *Thoroughly Modern Millie*; Tesori has also composed music for Disney's "Mulan II," "Lilo and Stitch II" and "Emperor's New Groove II." She is also a main producer for the educational music group SBG, which brings global, classic and rock music curriculum to schools across the nation. Tesori's *Thoroughly Modern Millie* has also been adapted as part of the Broadway Jr. series.

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All The Stage Is Our World

PHOTO CALL: Highlights from the 2011 Junior Theatre Festival; Jeanine Tesori Honored

By [Matthew Blank](#)
and Krissie Fullerton
20 Jan 2011

The 2011 Junior Theatre Festival was held in Atlanta, GA, Jan. 14-16. The event, which attracted over 2,000 students from across the U.S., honored Tony Award nominee and Olivier Award-winning composer Jeanine Tesori.

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Disney's The Little Mermaid - Theatre Under The Stars - Humphreys School of Musical Theatre
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



Once on This Island Jr. - Boothbay Region YMCA
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



Once On This Island Jr. - Boothbay Region YMCA
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



Annie KIDS! Atlanta Youth Academy



Thomas Schumacher
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



*Disney's Winnie The Pooh KIDS! - Off Broadway Dance Center and
Dawson County Arts Council
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI*



*Guys and Dolls Jr. - Asheville Arts Center
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI*



Guys and Dolls Jr. - PS 124 - Yung Wing Elementary
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



The cast of *Seussical*
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



*Disney's Winnie the Pooh KIDS - Off Broadway Dance Center and
Dawson County Arts Council*
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



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Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



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Humphreys School of Musical Theatre
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI*



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*Disney's The Little Mermaid - Theatre Under The Stars -
Humphreys School of Musical Theatre
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI*



Kenny Leon
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



Disney's The Little Mermaid - Theatre Under The Stars -
Humphreys School of Musical Theatre
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



The cast of *Thoroughly Modern Millie*
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



Beauty and the Beast Jr. - Gwendolyn Brooks Middle School
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



The cast of *Captain Louie*
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



Nick Manos of Theater of the Stars
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



Jeanine Tesori sings "I Hate the Bus" from her musical *Caroline, or Change*
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



Once On This Island Jr. - Boothbay Region YMCA
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley Jr. - Durant Road Musical Theatre
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



Annie Jr. - The Social Circle Theatre
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



Annie Jr. - The Social Circle Theatre
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



Seussical Jr. - JPAS Theatre Kids!
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



Aladdin Jr. - Tampa Bay Children's Theatre Group
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI



Freddie Gershon, CEO of Music Theatre International
Photo by Marcus Woollen/MTI

Jeanine Tesori to Receive 2011 Junior Theater Festival Award for Advancement of Musical Theatre for Young People

By: **Dan Bacalzo** · Jan 11, 2011 · Georgia



Jeanine Tesori
(© Joseph Marzullo/WENN)

Four-time Tony Award nominee Jeanine Tesori will receive the 2011 Junior Theater Festival Award for Advancement of Musical Theatre for Young People, during the 2011 Junior Theater Festival, held in Atlanta, GA, January 14 -16.

Tesori was Tony-nominated for *Twelfth Night*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Caroline, or Change* and *Shrek the Musical*. She also composed the music for the recent Broadway play, *A Free Man of Color*; the New York Shakespeare Festival production of *Mother Courage and Her Children*, starring Meryl Streep; and the Off-Broadway musical *Violet*, which received the New York Drama Critics Circle Award in 1997.

In related news, Disney Theatrical Group President Thomas Schumacher will give a keynote address at the festival while Grammy Award winning songwriter and producer Bryan-Michael Cox will take part in a Q&A.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theatre festival dedicated to schools and organizations working with elementary and middle school students.

THE HUFFINGTON POST

THE INTERNET NEWSPAPER: NEWS BLOGS VIDEO COMMUNITY



Freddie Gershon

CEO of Music Theater International as well as a former entertainment attorney and music executive

Posted: January 19, 2011 05:52 PM

I Have a Dream

Did Martin Luther King, Jr. ever dream that in Atlanta at the Junior Theater Festival, on his celebratory weekend in 2011, more than 2,000 kids from around the United States, ages 7 to 15, would be gathered from 54 separate schools from across the U.S. with a make-up of white, Latin, black, Asian and Middle Eastern children, all celebrating and performing together in the most collegial, joyful, loving atmosphere!?

I hope he was watching from the beyond -- this was the dream.

Kids, teachers, colleagues, parents, all wallowing in the joy of this remarkable collaboration and perceived it for what it was, namely, viz: a microcosm of a utopian society in which there is no prejudice or discrimination, and where the collective talent of your group (identified not by your skin color or your religious beliefs but by the show you're performing or the color of the t-shirt you're wearing) ultimately determines your standing at the end of the festival and how the adjudicators perceive you. The reason for wearing t-shirts only, in color pods, is specifically so that everyone is homogenized. Behind every t-shirt on the back it said "I Have a Dream." These t-shirts leveled the playing field and when one color pod performed, the others cheered them on.

The concept of Schadenfreude does not exist in the innocent world of these kids. Individuals perform as part of something bigger than themselves as a group and not just to show off. They perform and get feed back from qualified professionals that are "pros" in the business from NY and elsewhere. They receive seminars that enhance their acting skills, their improv, their movement, their production and their projection from the stage. Simultaneously their teachers are getting seminars on music producing, music and theater, costume design, costumes "on the cheap," tips on lighting, movement and choreography. All helping to support the children, honing everyone's skills, doing hard work, all of which is designed to realize what each of their respective dreams may be.

No one talked down to these kids. No one pontificates or lectures. This is all experiential learning with involvement and participation and sharing including all the teachers having

to learn a production number and perform for the children at the end of the weekend as well (fair is fair!)

Highlights of the event included Thomas Schumacher, the president of Disney Theatricals. Dazzling the audience with the boo boos, the mistakes, the things they never saw that preceded development of Beauty and the Beast, Aida, The Lion King, Tarzan and Mary Poppins. He explained how the elements of the show are put together, the trial, the error, the willingness to confront mistakes... and start again.

He then took Q & A from the audience mostly predictable questions and answers and then suddenly, the very last question came from a young man, who was sort of a stocky version of a Justin Bieberesque young fella. The unflappable, extraordinarily sophisticated and cosmopolitan Tom, who is notoriously cool under fire, a multi-dexterous with the number of shows, he can simultaneous oversee globally, was onstage and confronted with a question from a child which resonated deeply with him. The question was, "what did you do about bullies Mr. Schumacher and what do we all do with bullies and how do we deal with them?" Tom hesitated, he swallowed, gained his composure, I think he held back a tear, (but I saw a glint in the eye) proustian memories flowing through his mind, he gave a prudent, nurturing, and sensible pragmatic explanation of bullies: "Scared people. People, who will run when you turn on them, people who will back down if you retort. You have allies because you're in theatre, you have allies because you're in a group, you need not worry about having to take on the bully alone, you have your friends, cast, buddies, all supporting you, at your back holding the bully at bay. Disregard him and disrespect him, because he isn't worthy of your time, your attention, your regard. He can't hurt you because if you don't respect him, he can't hurt you. You don't care about him." The audience cheered. Tom declared, "Don't you let anyone get in the way of your dreams, or put you down. Feel sorry for that bully, he's too scared to follow his dream. He'll never be more than he is until he has the courage to do what you're doing."

As though this weren't enough for the children, Jeanine Tesori spoke. This is a woman who was a child prodigy and was playing the piano at age 3. Was born with perfect pitch but who broke her butt working hard to learn a craft. A woman who was a musician when women were not accepted in an orchestra pit. A woman who was a musician who was not generally permitted to be given a conductor's baton. A woman who wrote Thoroughly Modern Millie, Shrek and Caroline or Change, with the great Tony Kushner. And she did it. She did it through hard work, she conducted rehearsals, she taught the orchestra, she was a school teacher and she taught music in schools, she wrote and edited music books and she also has a 13-year-old daughter so she can relate to the kids she was speaking to and how she interacts with her daughter. (Her daughter told her to be "cool.")

A woman behind me said, "I've never been so proud to be a woman, I'm so glad my daughter is here to see that this is another barrier that's been broken." I wondered if Dr. King dreamt this when he had his dream.

The other featured speaker was Bryan-Michael Cox, an African American man from Houston, TX. Loved musical theatre and music and had a dream. His dream was he wanted to be (and he said this out loud at his 5th grade graduation) "A combination of Quincy Jones and Babyface when I grow up." His teacher, (a monument to insensitivity and negativity) said, "I really wouldn't aspire to the unrealistic because you will most likely be disappointed." Bryan forged ahead.

At 16 years old, he decided opportunities in Houston were not enough. "I'm going to go to Atlanta. It's the next happening place." He took 3 jobs, but he said "I may need you mom to help me, even though I know it's tight for you." And she did and he worked at every job imaginable, multiple jobs at the same time to keep going. Apprenticing in the recording studio and working hard playing organ at a funeral parlor and doing anything he could near the field of music to learn more. He had sung "On the Street Where You Live" in his High School production of My Fair Lady, so he knew the world he was speaking to, world of young kids who love theatre. He was one of those kids. No bully got to him, no teacher stopped him, and he made it clear that nothing was going to stop him. He worked hard. Late in the studio, he learned the technique of the recording board and when New York City called and they said, "Could someone fix some material and send it back to NYC because Usher isn't happy with it," there was no one else left in the studio (they had split for the evening) Bryan-Michael Cox, became the co-composer and producer of Usher, Beyonce, Mariah Carey and Mary J. Blige. He mentored and produced a young man the children might have heard of named Justin Bieber. (Justin's name produced screams and pandemonium.) Bryan-Michael Cox has been on the Top 100 charts for 500 weeks plus! That's 10 years of being in the Top 100, out of his creativity, imagination and inventiveness. He is like Jeanine, like Tom, people who believe in themselves, who identify their limitations, people who persevere in what they excel in and good at, people who are relentless and tenacious and work hard and learn their craft. The message was loud and clear, three different sources: a white, aspiring actor from California who realized once he was on the stage, he just wasn't good enough; a woman who was told "this isn't the world for you lady," and who made it with hit shows; a black kid from Houston, whose own teacher was unsupportive about his dream, probably thinking she was saving him from pain and disappointment.

They all have in common, tenacity, the willingness to have doors slammed in their faces, the knowing that nothing comes easy, even with talent and they stood before thousands of kids and parents and teachers and they spoke of their dreams and how they made them come true. They spoke with honesty, integrity and authenticity. They were the real thing. They all have in common, fire and passion in the core of their belly, the same passion, the same kind of dream as Martin Luther King, Jr. It was a most wonderful event to witness because without a dream, where would there be an Apple, a Google, a Facebook, a Twitter. The dream is the essence of America, the dream is about possibility, and the dream is to maximize our potential against all obstacles.

Thank you Dr. King. You had your dream, we took the liberty of extending it this past weekend, your weekend, in your town, in Atlanta, but I think you'd be very proud. I was. Your legacy lives on bigger and better than ever.



Students Take Their Show on the Road to 2011 Junior Theater Festival

January 11, 2011

Imagination and teamwork will be center stage when a diverse cast of over 2,000 students and teachers representing 50 schools and educational theatre groups from 15 states and Canada join Broadway creatives in a monumental celebration of the arts at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival happening January 14 - 16, 2011, at the Cobb Galleria Centre in Atlanta, GA, it was announced today by Theater of the Stars president, Nick Manos and Timothy Allen McDonald, founding chairman of iTheatrics. Four-time Tony nominated composer Jeanine Tesori (Thoroughly Modern Millie, Shrek the Musical) will receive the Junior Theater Festival Award for Advancement of Musical Theatre for Young People, while Broadway producer and Disney Theatrical Group president Thomas Schumacher will be the festival's keynote speaker and Grammy award-winning musician, producer and songwriter Bryan-Michael Cox will participate in a Q&A session with all attendees. For the first time, in honor of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend, the festival will also feature 'Dream Video Booths' where students will record 30 second messages with their dreams for the future to be uploaded on the Internet.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theatre festival dedicated to schools and organizations working with elementary and middle school students and is sponsored by leading theatrical licensor Music Theatre International (MTI) and Disney Theatrical Productions and produced by Atlanta's Theater of the Stars and New York City based iTheatrics. The 2011 Festival is the seventh celebration to be held over Martin Luther King, JR weekend in Atlanta. The weekend offers an enthusiastic environment for students and teachers to interact with thousands of others who share their passion for musical theater.

In tribute to the leadership and dedication of MTI chairman Freddie Gershon, the festival's student awards for excellence are named 'The Freddie G's.' In 1995, Gershon created MTI Education, the first educational division in a major musical theatre licensing firm, which, over the past 15 years, has literally transformed the marketplace for age appropriate performance material for young performers. 'There have been over 50,000 separate grade school productions in the U.S.A. and the thousands of students at the Junior Theater Festivals show the world why experiential learning through musical theatre is so important. The experience of being part of a show allows our young people to become valuable members of society by learning life skills like working together, problem solving, public performance and utilizing their imagination and creativity as a team. It also lets them build a life-long appreciation for one of America's unique art forms, musical theatre,' says Gershon, chairman of Music Theatre International.

'Since 1953, Theater of the Stars has played an important role in offering young people

the opportunity to participate in professional musical theater. It is part of our mission to include local young performers in some of the family friendly musicals that we produce each year. It is our passion to introduce Atlanta's youth to the joy of musical theater with the belief that their participation will ultimately make them better students, better citizens and advocates for the arts in their adult years,' says Nick Manos, president of Atlanta's Theater of the Stars. 'We helped found the Junior Theater Festival as a wonderful way to celebrate that mission with grade school students from all over America and around the globe,' he adds. While the festival isn't about creating the stars of tomorrow, many of the stars of today play a role. This year's onstage and backstage celebrities and personalities include: Broadway director, choreographer and performer Baayork Lee, who originated the role of Connie in A Chorus Line; Atlanta's own Tony award nominated Director Kenny Leon (Fences, A Raisin in the Sun), and Tony Award winning lighting designer Ken Billington (Chicago, The Scottsboro Boys) who has worked on over 100 Broadway shows; Broadway performer and choreographer Maddie Kelly (Chita Rivera: The Dancer's Life and Taboo); Broadway Sound designer Matt Kraus (Liza at the Palace and Lone Star Love); actor Stephen Eng (The King and I and Pacific Overtures); Brad Simmons, the music director and head of the Juniors Program for The O'Neill Theatre Center; Nick Pramik, Director of the Marketing and Partnerships at the leading entertainment advertising agency SpotCo, and Broadway, film, and television wardrobe specialist Jay Woods.

Each Junior Theater Festival group performs a 15-minute selection of a musical for professional adjudication by a panel of distinguished theater professionals. In addition, both students and teachers participate in interactive workshops led by Broadway and West End professionals, gain from professional development, enjoy theatrical fellowship and attend a world-class professional production of Disney's Beauty and the Beast at the Fox Theatre. True to the Junior Theater tradition, technical theatre students work side-by-side with festival staff in running all aspects of the festival experience

'The Junior Theater Festival celebrates and inspires teachers and their students who day-in and day-out are making the world a better place through the arts. Having stars like Jeanine Tesori, Thomas Schumacher and Bryan-Michael Cox work with and applaud these students reminds the world that young people and their teachers are vitally important to the future of the arts everywhere. There's a real ah-ha moment when a kid connects performing in their school musical to producing ground breaking musicals like Tom has, creating new music like Jeanine has, or becoming a Grammy award winning record producer like Bryan-Michael' says McDonald.

An award winning composer, record producer and conductor, Jeanine Tesori has been hailed as the one of the leading voices in American musical theatre. Her most recent stage project, Shrek The Musical, earned Tesori both Tony and Drama Desk Award nominations for her music. She won the honor of being the first female composer to have two musicals running on Broadway concurrently: Caroline, or Change at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre and Thoroughly Modern Millie at the Marquis Theatre. As a composer, Tesori's musical score for Caroline, or Change with Pulitzer Prize winner Tony Kushner as librettist won the 2004 Drama Desk Award for Best Score and was nominated for a

Tony award. She also created the musical score for the 2003 Tony Award winner for Best Musical, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, which ran on Broadway for over two years. Her score for Nicholas Hytner's production of *Twelfth Night* at Lincoln Center earned her a 1999 Tony Award nomination and Drama Desk Award. With lyricist and librettist Brian Crawley, Tesori wrote the score to the Off-Broadway musical *Violet*, which garnered the 1997 Drama Critics Circle Award, the Lortel Award for Best Off-Broadway Musical, an Obie, a Richard Rodgers Production Award, an AT&T Production Award and seven Drama Desk nominations. Tesori wrote the score for Disney's *Mulan II* with lyricist Alexa Junge, and several pieces for Disney's *Lilo and Stitch II* and *Emperor's New Groove II*. Tesori is one of the main record producers for Holt Reinhart, Silver Burdett Ginn (SBG). Through SBG, she produces an educational music series used nationwide in schools comprised of 90 albums of music genres such as world music, classical and rock. Tesori has worked extensively as a Broadway arranger and conductor on shows including: *Tommy*, *The Sound of Music*, *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying*, *Dream*, *Gypsy*, *Big River*, *The Secret Garden* and *Swing*.

Named by *Billboard* magazine as a #1 music producer, Grammy award-winning Bryan-Michael Cox is the only music producer to break the Beatles' record with the most consecutive #1 hits on the *Billboard* Hot 100 Chart. This multi-instrumentalist, producer, and songwriter has co-written and co-produced hit singles for artists including Usher, Alicia Keys, Destiny's Child, Jessica Simpson, Jagged Edge, Mariah Carey, Janet Jackson, Lil Mo, Aaliyah, Monica, B2K, Ginuwine, Mary J. Blige and Fantasia. His first professional project happened while he was still a student at The Performing Arts High School in Houston, working with classmate and Grammy award-winner Beyonce on what would turn out to be a demo for the now Multi-Platinum Group Destiny's Child. Today, Cox has over 280 consecutive hits on the *Billboard* Hot 100 Chart. He founded his production company Blackbaby, Inc., and is working on an unprecedented venture deal with Warner Chappell Music, which will award up and coming writers with low-risk publishing deals. Cox is developing his own imprint with partner Chris Hicks called the BEAT FACTORY and is currently collaborating with Whitney Houston, JOE, Mary J. Blige and the Isley Brothers. He has been inducted into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame, earned four Grammy awards and has been honored five-times as SESAC's Songwriter of the year.

Since 1988, Thomas Schumacher has worked with The Walt Disney Company setting new standards of excellence in film, television and theatre. Currently, he serves as President of Disney Theatrical Group where he oversees the development, creation and execution of all Disney live entertainment around the globe including Broadway, touring and licensed productions, as well as Disney on Ice and Disney Live! shows produced in partnership with Feld Entertainment. His Broadway, West End, touring and international production credits include *Beauty and the Beast*, *King David*, *The Lion King*, *Der Glockner von Notre Dame*, Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida*, *On the Record*, *High School Musical*, *TARZAN*, *Mary Poppins* and *The Little Mermaid* along with several new projects currently in development. Disney Theatrical Group has an unprecedented global reach with over 25 Disney produced and licensed productions performing daily around the world. Intensely passionate about theatre from an early age, Schumacher recognized

the impact that theatre has on the lives of young people and developed a licensing program with Music Theatre International to make select Disney theatrical titles available for performance in schools and amateur theatres throughout the world. Schumacher's career at Disney began in Walt Disney Feature Animation producing the animated classic *The Rescuers Down Under*. He was ultimately named President and oversaw some 21 animated features including *The Lion King*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Pocahontas*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Mulan*, *Tarzan*, and *Lilo & Stitch*, as well as working closely with Pixar on their first five films. Prior to joining Disney, he was associate director of the 1987 Los Angeles Festival of Arts, presenting the American premiere of *Cirque du Soleil* and the English-language premiere of Peter Brook's *The Mahabharata*. Previously, he spent five years on staff at the Mark Taper Forum, served as a line producer on the 1984 Olympic Arts Festival, and served as assistant general manager of the Los Angeles Ballet. Mr. Schumacher is the author of the book 'How Does the Show Go On? An Introduction to the Theater' as well as a member of the Board of Trustees for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, the Tony Administration Committee and the Advisory Committee of the American Theatre Wing. He is mentor for the TDF Open Doors program and serves as an adjunct professor at Columbia University.

The first Junior Theater Festival was held in January of 2003 and featured the premieres of new MTI Education Broadway Junior titles *Honk! JR.*, *Dear Edwina JR.* and *Godspell JR.* The 2005 festival featured the world premiere of the Disney Collection of Musicals and a talk-back with television and Broadway actress Christy Carlson Romano (Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, *Avenue Q*). In 2007 the festival went international, and highlights included guest appearances by Zac Efron and American Idol's Michael Orland, plus the world stage premiere of Disney's *High School Musical*. In 2009, the festival included appearances by Broadway stars Henry Hodges, Jenifer Foote and Jenn Colella. In 2010, the festival became an annual event and 1,700 students from across the nation had the opportunity to meet Stephen Schwartz (*Wicked*, *Godspell*) and work with Playbill columnist and Talkin' Broadway radio host Seth Rudetsky, and Broadway actor Rashad Naylor (*Hairspray*, Chicago Company of *Jersey Boys*).

Highlights of the Junior Theater Festival include:

Adjudication in Elementary, Middle and Academy Categories: In the spirit of celebration rather than competition, groups perform 15-minute selections from their Broadway Junior or KIDS Collection productions for a panel of leaders in theatre and education. The panel evaluates each group's music, acting, dance and overall performance. Each cast receives valuable feedback about its creativity, engagement in the performance, understanding of the material and connection to the lyrics and movement. The most joyful and student-driven performances are celebrated with awards, and a select few groups are invited to perform during the closing awards ceremony for their peers.

Technical Theatre All-Stars: Each group attending the festival may nominate two students who take a hands-on role in helping to run the festival's many theatrical events. The young technical artists take part in workshops designed to help develop their talents and work side-by-side with seasoned professionals, and serve on the technical crew for

the awards ceremony.

Professional Educators' Workshops (for teachers attending the festival with students): The Junior Theater Festival workshops empower teachers and professionals to present musicals in their communities and offers educators the knowledge, skills and tools necessary to grow their program in every possible way. The workshops focus on different aspects of putting on a show, including the 'how to's' of starting a drama club, choreographing musical numbers and creating great-looking sets and costumes on any budget. These workshops also serve as a professional exchange for teachers.

Disney Musicals New Works Showcase: Disney Musicals will sponsor a special performance of musicals for all Junior Theater Festival attendees. Selected performance groups are among the first in the country to present a new title in their community and receive an in-school residency with iTheatrics' teaching artists.

Professional Development (for teachers who attend the festival without students): Teachers who attend the Junior Theater Festival without performers take part in the iTheatrics Teaching Intensive Professional Development track with master teacher Cindy Ripley (named to the 2005 USA Today All-Star Teaching Team). This series of intensive professional development courses has been created in association with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, is sanctioned by the New York City Department of Education, and has been presented at top performing arts centers all over the country. Grounded in the belief that one can't create a musical sitting at a school desk, the iTheatrics Teaching Intensive is designed to be a full-immersion, hands-on experience addressing all elements of musical theatre production. It gives educators the tools to create self-sustaining arts programs in their communities. Furthermore, the series offers teachers a safe atmosphere to candidly discuss their own obstacles and solutions with each other and the iTheatrics staff.

Student Workshops: The festival's workshops and master classes inspire students to build skills that will have a positive impact on productions for years to come. Topics include: auditions, movement and making the most out of rehearsals.

Choreography Video Casting: The Broadway Junior scouts will be on the lookout for outstanding students who will be invited to audition for iTheatrics resident choreographer Steven G. Kennedy for future Broadway Junior DVD shoots. These videos will be used in thousands of schools across the country. This past summer, 20 students selected from the 2010 Junior Theater Festival worked with Kennedy to film 'how-to' choreography DVDs for the musicals Fame JR. in New York City. **Professional Production:** In the spirit of inspiring young people to perform, all festival attendees will attend a professional production of Disney's Beauty and the Beast at Atlanta's Fox Theatre, presented by Theater of the Stars.

FESTIVAL CO-HOST and CO-PRODUCER: One of the oldest regional theaters in America, Atlanta's Theater of the Stars (TOTS) has produced and presented more than 750 productions in Atlanta, across the country and around the world. Founded in 1953,

TOTS mounts lavish productions of new and classic musicals at affordable prices with the goal of expanding traditional audiences, enhancing the availability of quality family entertainment, and exposing new audiences to the magic of live theater. TOTS is an active participant in the national theater community and is a founding member of the National Alliance for Musical Theater, the Independent Presenters Network and the Broadway League. In 2009, TOTS celebrated the 50th year of leadership from its producer, Chris Manos.

FESTIVAL CO-HOST and CO-PRODUCER: iTheatrics uses the transformative power of the arts to make the world a better place. The company adapts existing Broadway and West End musicals for students at all age levels--including elementary, middle, and high school--to perform. iTheatrics also creates a teacher's tool chest of resources which provides educators with enhancements such as choreography DVDs, accompaniment CDs, director's guides and curriculum connections. iTheatrics' clients include Music Theatre International, Disney Theatrical Group and McMillan/McGraw-Hill. iTheatrics also develops new musicals for family audiences such as *The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley*, *The Phantom Tollbooth* and Roald Dahl's *James and the Giant Peach*. iTheatrics' Junior Teaching Intensives provide professional development for teachers in the area of musical theater and its Junior Theater Academy provides young artists with an innovative outlet for developing their skills as performers and artists.

PRESENTING SPONSOR: Music Theatre International (MTI), www.mtishows.com, is the leading theatrical licensing agency in the world, representing the performance rights to over 350 musicals. MTI is particularly dedicated to the idea of theatre as education and has created special collections for younger audiences including *The Broadway Junior Collection*, which features 70-minute adaptations of major musicals designed for middle school children to perform, and the *MTI KIDS Collection*, which provides 30-minute musicals for performance by elementary school children. MTI launched *MTI ShowSpace*, www.mtishowspace.com, a free online community giving thespians and fans a space to connect with anyone and everyone involved in the theatrical process.

SHOWCASE SPONSOR: Disney Theatrical Productions, a division of The Walt Disney Studios, was formed in 1994. Operating under the direction of Thomas Schumacher, it is currently producing or co-producing 14 productions around the globe. The company produced *Beauty and the Beast*, its inaugural Broadway production, in 1994. In November 1997, Disney opened *The Lion King*, which received six 1998 Tony Awards including Best Musical and continues in its 13th smash year, having welcomed over 50 million visitors worldwide. Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida* opened on Broadway next, followed by *Mary Poppins*, a co-production by Disney and Cameron Mackintosh, which opened in London in 2004 and has established itself as one of the biggest stage musical successes to emerge in recent years. *Tarzan* opened on Broadway in 2006, and in 2008, *The Little Mermaid* opened on Broadway, becoming the #1-selling new musical of that year. In addition to producing musicals, DTP licenses stage performance rights to more than a dozen Disney musicals in *The Disney Collection* around the world through Music Theatre International. The recently launched DisneyMusicals.com is an online HUB where kids, parents, educators and theatre professionals can find more information on

titles in The Disney Collection, see photos and watch videos from school and community-theatre productions, and link to MTI's website to download applications for licenses.



Tesori, Cox, et al. Set for Junior Theatre Festival, 1/14-16

Monday, January 10, 2011; Posted: 09:01 PM - by [BWW News Desk](#)



Imagination and teamwork will be center stage when a diverse cast of over 2,000 students and teachers representing 50+ schools and educational theatre groups from 15 states and Canada join Broadway creatives in a monumental celebration of the arts at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival happening January 14 - 16, 2011, at the Cobb Galleria Centre in Atlanta, GA, it was announced today by Theater of the Stars president, [Nick Manos](#) and [Timothy Allen](#) McDonald, founding chairman of iTheatrics. Four-time Tony nominated composer [Jeanine Tesori](#)

(Thoroughly Modern Millie, Shrek the Musical) will receive the Junior Theater Festival Award for Advancement of Musical Theatre for Young People, while Broadway producer and Disney Theatrical Group president [Thomas Schumacher](#) will be the festival's keynote speaker and Grammy award-winning musician, producer and songwriter Bryan-Michael Cox will participate in a Q&A session with all attendees. For the first time, in honor of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend, the festival will also feature "Dream Boxes" where students will record 30 second messages with their dreams for the future to be uploaded on the Internet.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theatre festival dedicated to schools and organizations working with elementary and middle school students and is sponsored by leading theatrical licensor [Music Theatre International](#) (MTI) and [Disney Theatrical Productions](#) and produced by Atlanta's Theater of the Stars and New York City based iTheatrics. The 2011 Festival is the seventh celebration to be held over Martin Luther King, JR weekend in Atlanta. The weekend offers an enthusiastic environment for students and

teachers to interact with thousands of others who share their passion for musical theater.

In tribute to the leadership and dedication of MTI chairman [Freddie Gershon](#), the festival's student awards for excellence are named "The Freddie G's." In 1995, Gershon created MTI Education, the first educational division in a major musical theatre licensing firm, which, over the past 15 years, has literally transformed the marketplace for age appropriate performance material for young performers.

"There have been over 50,000 separate grade school productions in the U.S.A. and the thousands of students at the Junior Theater Festivals show the world why experiential learning through musical theatre is so important. The experience of being part of a show allows our young people to become valuable members of society by learning life skills like working together, problem solving, public performance and utilizing their imagination and creativity as a team. It also lets them build a life-long appreciation for one of America's unique art forms, musical theatre," says Gershon, chairman of [Music Theatre International](#).

"Since 1953, Theater of the Stars has played an important role in offering young people the opportunity to participate in professional musical theater. It is part of our mission to include local young performers in some of the family friendly musicals that we produce each year. It is our passion to introduce Atlanta's youth to the joy of musical theater with the belief that their participation will ultimately make them better students, better citizens and advocates for the arts in their adult years," says [Nick Manos](#), president of Atlanta's Theater of the Stars. "We helped found the Junior Theater Festival as a wonderful way to celebrate that mission with grade school students from all over America and around the globe," he adds.

While the festival isn't about creating the stars of tomorrow, many of the stars of today play a role. This year's onstage and backstage celebrities and personalities include: Broadway director, choreographer and performer [Baayork Lee](#), who originated the role of Connie in A Chorus Line; Atlanta's own Tony award nominated Director [Kenny Leon](#) (Fences, A Raisin in the Sun), and Tony Award winning lighting designer [Ken Billington](#) (Chicago, The Scottsboro Boys) who has worked on over 100 Broadway shows; Broadway performer and choreographer Maddie Kelly ([Chita Rivera](#): The Dancer's Life and Taboo); Broadway Sound designer [Matt Kraus](#) (Liza at the Palace and [Lone Star Love](#)); actor Stephen Eng (The King and I and Pacific

Overtures); [Brad Simmons](#), the music director and head of the Juniors Program for The O'Neill Theatre Center; [Nick Pramik](#), Director of the Marketing and Partnerships at the leading entertainment advertising agency SpotCo, and Broadway, film, and television wardrobe specialist [Jay Woods](#).

Each Junior Theater Festival group performs a 15-minute selection of a musical for professional adjudication by a panel of distinguished theater professionals. In addition, both students and teachers participate in interactive workshops led by Broadway and West End professionals, gain from professional development, enjoy theatrical fellowship and attend a world-class professional production of Disney's Beauty and the Beast at the Fox Theatre. True to the Junior Theater tradition, technical theatre students work side-by-side with festival staff in running all aspects of the festival experience

"The Junior Theater Festival celebrates and inspires teachers and their students who day-in and day-out are making the world a better place through the arts. Having stars like [Jeanine Tesori](#), [Thomas Schumacher](#) and Bryan-Michael Cox work with and applaud these students reminds the world that young people and their teachers are vitally important to the future of the arts everywhere. There's a real ah-ha moment when a kid connects performing in their school musical to producing ground breaking musicals like Tom has, creating new music like Jeanine has, or becoming a Grammy award winning record producer like Bryan-Michael" says McDonald.

An award winning composer, record producer and conductor, [Jeanine Tesori](#) has been hailed as the one of the leading voices in American musical theatre. Her most recent stage project, Shrek The Musical, earned Tesori both Tony and Drama Desk Award nominations for her music. She won the honor of being the first female composer to have two musicals running on Broadway concurrently: Caroline, or Change at the [Eugene O'Neill](#) Theatre and Thoroughly Modern Millie at the Marquis Theatre. As a composer, Tesori's musical score for Caroline, or Change with Pulitzer Prize winner [Tony Kushner](#) as librettist won the 2004 Drama Desk Award for Best Score and was nominated for a Tony award. She also created the musical score for the 2003 Tony Award winner for Best Musical, Thoroughly Modern Millie, which ran on Broadway for over two years. Her score for [Nicholas Hytner](#)'s production of Twelfth Night at Lincoln Center earned her a 1999 Tony Award nomination and Drama Desk Award. With lyricist and librettist [Brian Crawley](#), Tesori wrote the score to the Off-Broadway musical

Violet, which garnered the 1997 Drama Critics Circle Award, the Lortel Award for Best Off-Broadway Musical, an Obie, a [Richard Rodgers](#) Production Award, an AT&T Production Award and seven Drama Desk nominations. Tesori wrote the score for Disney's Mulan II with lyricist [Alexa Junge](#), and several pieces for Disney's Lilo and Stitch II and Emperor's New Groove II. Tesori is one of the main record producers for Holt Reinhart, Silver Burdett Ginn (SBG). Through SBG, she produces an educational music series used nationwide in schools comprised of 90 albums of music genres such as world music, classical and rock. Tesori has worked extensively as a Broadway arranger and conductor on shows including: Tommy, The Sound of Music, How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying, Dream, Gypsy, Big River, The Secret Garden and Swing.

Named by Billboard magazine as a #1 music producer, Grammy award-winning Bryan-Michael Cox is the only music producer to break the Beatles' record with the most consecutive #1 hits on the Billboard Hot 100 Chart. This multi-instrumentalist, producer, and songwriter has co-written and co-produced hit singles for artists including Usher, [Alicia Keys](#), Destiny's Child, [Jessica Simpson](#), Jagged Edge, [Mariah Carey](#), [Janet Jackson](#), Lil Mo, Aaliyah, Monica, B2K, Ginuwine, [Mary J. Blige](#) and Fantasia. His first professional project happened while he was still a student at The Performing Arts High School in Houston, working with classmate and Grammy award-winner Beyonce on what would turn out to be a demo for the now Multi-Platinum Group Destiny's Child. Today, Cox has over 280 consecutive hits on the Billboard Hot 100 Chart. He founded his [Production Company](#) Blackbaby, Inc., and is working on an unprecedented venture deal with Warner Chappell Music, which will award up and coming writers with low-risk publishing deals. Cox is developing his own imprint with partner Chris Hicks called the BEAT FACTORY and is currently collaborating with [Whitney Houston](#), JOE, [Mary J. Blige](#) and the Isley Brothers. He has been inducted into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame, earned four Grammy awards and has been honored five-times as SESAC's Songwriter of the year.

Since 1988, [Thomas Schumacher](#) has worked with The [Walt Disney](#) Company setting new standards of excellence in film, television and theatre. Currently, he serves as President of Disney Theatrical Group where he oversees the development, creation and execution of all Disney live entertainment around the globe including Broadway, touring and licensed productions, as well as Disney on Ice and Disney Live! shows produced in partnership with Feld Entertainment. His Broadway, West End, touring and international production credits

include Beauty and the Beast, King David, The Lion King, Der Glockner von Notre Dame, [Elton John](#) and [Tim Rice](#)'s Aida, On the Record, High School Musical, TARZAN(r), Mary Poppins and The Little Mermaid along with several new projects currently in development. Disney Theatrical Group has an unprecedented global reach with over 25 Disney produced and licensed productions performing daily around the world. Intensely passionate about theatre from an early age, Schumacher recognized the impact that theatre has on the lives of young people and developed a licensing program with [Music Theatre International](#) to make select Disney theatrical titles available for performance in schools and amateur theatres throughout the world. Schumacher's career at Disney began in [Walt Disney](#) Feature Animation producing the animated classic The Rescuers Down Under. He was ultimately named President and oversaw some 21 animated features including The Lion King, The Nightmare Before Christmas, Pocahontas, The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Mulan, Tarzan, and Lilo & Stitch, as well as working closely with Pixar on their first five films. Prior to joining Disney, he was associate director of the 1987 Los Angeles Festival of Arts, presenting the American premiere of [Cirque du Soleil](#) and the English-language premiere of [Peter Brook](#)'s The Mahabharata. Previously, he spent five years on staff at the [Mark Taper Forum](#), served as a line producer on the 1984 Olympic Arts Festival, and served as assistant general manager of the Los Angeles Ballet. Mr. Schumacher is the author of the book "How Does the Show Go On? An Introduction to the Theater" as well as a member of the Board of Trustees for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, the Tony(r) Administration Committee and the Advisory Committee of the [American Theatre Wing](#). He is mentor for the TDF Open Doors program and serves as an adjunct professor at Columbia University.

The first Junior Theater Festival was held in January of 2003 and featured the premieres of new MTI Education Broadway Junior titles Honk! JR., Dear Edwina JR. and Godspell JR. The 2005 festival featured the world premiere of the Disney Collection of Musicals and a talk-back with television and Broadway actress [Christy Carlson Romano](#) (Disney's Beauty and the Beast, Avenue Q). In 2007 the festival went international, and highlights included guest appearances by [Zac Efron](#) and American Idol's [Michael Orland](#), plus the world stage premiere of Disney's High School Musical. In 2009, the festival included appearances by Broadway stars [Henry Hodges](#), [Jenifer Foote](#) and [Jenn Colella](#). In 2010, the festival became an annual event and 1,700+ students from across the nation had the opportunity to meet [Stephen Schwartz](#) (Wicked, Godspell) and work with Playbill columnist

and Talkin' Broadway radio host [Seth Rudetsky](#), and Broadway actor [Rashad Naylor](#) (Hairspray, Chicago Company of Jersey Boys).

Highlights of the Junior Theater Festival include:

Adjudication in Elementary, Middle and Academy Categories: In the spirit of celebration rather than competition, groups perform 15-minute selections from their Broadway Junior or KIDS Collection productions for a panel of leaders in theatre and education. The panel evaluates each group's music, acting, dance and overall performance. Each cast receives valuable feedback about its creativity, engagement in the performance, understanding of the material and connection to the lyrics and movement. The most joyful and student-driven performances are celebrated with awards, and a select few groups are invited to perform during the closing awards ceremony for their peers.

Technical Theatre All-Stars: Each group attending the festival [Val May](#) nominate two students who take a hands-on role in helping to run the festival's many theatrical events. The young technical artists take part in workshops designed to help develop their talents and work side-by-side with seasoned professionals, and serve on the technical crew for the awards ceremony.

Professional Educators' Workshops (for teachers attending the festival with students): The Junior Theater Festival workshops empower teachers and professionals to present musicals in their communities and offers educators the knowledge, skills and tools necessary to grow their program in every possible way. The workshops focus on different aspects of putting on a show, including the "how to's" of starting a drama club, choreographing musical numbers and creating great-looking sets and costumes on any budget. These workshops also serve as a professional exchange for teachers.

Disney Musicals New Works Showcase: Disney Musicals will sponsor a special performance of musicals for all Junior Theater Festival attendees. Selected performance groups are among the first in the country to present a new title in their community and receive an in-school residency with iTheatrics' teaching artists.

Photo Credit: Walter McBride/WM Photos



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News



Jeanine Tesori to Receive 2011 Junior Theater Festival Award

Attendees at the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta will compete for awards in excellence

NEW YORK and ATLANTA—More than 2,000 students and teachers representing 50+ schools and educational theatre groups from 15 states and Canada will join Broadway creatives in a monumental celebration of the arts at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival happening January 14 – 16, 2011, at the Cobb Galleria Centre in Atlanta. At the Festival, four-time Tony nominated composer Jeanine Tesori (*Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Shrek the Musical*) will receive the Junior Theater Festival Award for Advancement of Musical Theatre for Young People, while Broadway producer and Disney Theatrical Group president Thomas Schumacher will be the festival's keynote speaker and Grammy award-winning musician, producer and songwriter Bryan-Michael Cox will participate in a Q&A session with all attendees. For the first time, in honor of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend, the festival will also feature "Dream Video Booths" where students will record 30 second messages with their dreams for the future to be uploaded on the Internet.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theatre festival dedicated to schools and organizations working with elementary and middle school students and is sponsored by leading theatrical licensor Music Theatre International (MTI) and Disney Theatrical Productions and produced by Atlanta's Theater of the Stars and New York City based iTheatrics. The 2011 Festival is the seventh celebration to be held over Martin Luther King, JR weekend in Atlanta.

In tribute to the leadership and dedication of MTI chairman Freddie Gershon, the festival's student awards for excellence are named "The Freddie G's." In 1995, Gershon created MTI Education, the first educational division in a major musical theatre licensing firm.

"There have been over 50,000 separate grade school productions in the U.S.A. and the thousands of students at the Junior Theater Festivals show the world why experiential learning through musical theatre is so important," said Gershon, chairman of Music Theatre International. "The experience of being part of a show allows our young people to become valuable members of society by learning life skills like working together, problem solving, public performance and utilizing their imagination and creativity as a team. It also lets them build a life-long appreciation for one of America's unique art forms, musical theatre."

“Since 1953, Theater of the Stars has played an important role in offering young people the opportunity to participate in professional musical theatre,” added Nick Manos, president of Atlanta’s Theater of the Stars. “It is part of our mission to include local young performers in some of the family friendly musicals that we produce each year. It is our passion to introduce Atlanta’s youth to the joy of musical theatre with the belief that their participation will ultimately make them better students, better citizens and advocates for the arts in their adult years.

While the festival isn’t about creating the stars of tomorrow, many of the stars of today play a role. This year’s onstage and backstage celebrities and personalities include: Broadway director, choreographer and performer Baayork Lee, who originated the role of Connie in *A Chorus Line*; Atlanta’s own Tony award nominated Director Kenny Leon (*Fences*, *A Raisin in the Sun*) and Tony Award winning lighting designer Ken Billington (*Chicago*, *The Scottsboro Boys*) who has worked on over 100 Broadway shows; Broadway performer and choreographer Maddie Kelly (*Chita Rivera: The Dancer’s Life* and *Taboo*); Broadway Sound designer Matt Kraus (*Liza at the Palace* and *Lone Star Love*); actor Stephen Eng (*The King and I* and *Pacific Overtures*); Brad Simmons, the music director and head of the Juniors Program for The O’Neill Theatre Center; Nick Pramik, Director of the Marketing and Partnerships at the leading entertainment advertising agency SpotCo and Broadway, film and television wardrobe specialist Jay Woods.

Each Junior Theater Festival group performs a 15-minute selection of a musical for professional adjudication by a panel of distinguished theatre professionals. In addition, both students and teachers participate in interactive workshops led by Broadway and West End professionals, gain from professional development, enjoy theatrical fellowship and attend a world-class professional production of *Disney’s Beauty and the Beast* at the Fox Theatre. True to the Junior Theater tradition, technical theatre students work side-by-side with festival staff in running all aspects of the festival experience

“The Junior Theater Festival celebrates and inspires teachers and their students who day-in and day-out are making the world a better place through the arts. Having stars like Jeanine Tesori, Thomas Schumacher and Bryan-Michael Cox work with and applaud these students reminds the world that young people and their teachers are vitally important to the future of the arts everywhere. There’s a real ‘a-ha’ moment when a kid connects performing in their school musical to producing ground breaking musicals like Tom has, creating new music like Jeanine has, or becoming a Grammy award winning record producer like Bryan-Michael” said McDonald.

For more info about the Junior Theater Festival, please visit
www.theaterofthestars.com/outreach.htm or www.itheatrics.com
(http://www.itheatrics.com/?page_id=9)

SUN HERALD

Saturday, Jan. 15, 2011

WINGS group will compete at festival



SUBMITTED WINGS members in 'Annie Jr.' are, front row seated from left: Claire Richardson, Tea' Pappas, Sarah Aninos, Erin Cranston, Emily Edwards, Caroline Lovelace, Cayla Derbigny, Grace Newton, Claire Simpson, Avery Norwood, Jayne Grey Edwards, Ashley Fountain and Julia Richardson, orphans; second row kneeling from left: Shelby Martin as 'Sandy,' Denzel Walker as 'Sound's Effect man' and Noah Hill as 'Man in the Window'; third row standing from left: Reagan Norwood, as 'Lilly,' Mollye Ladner as 'Miss Hannigan,' Emily Grammar, Ceci Hammons, Marie Page, Hannah Johnson, Jasmine Lindsley, Lindsey Campbell servants, Aubry Benefield as 'Daddy Warbucks,' Rachel Storey as 'Annie,' Lauren Benefield as 'Grace Farrell,' Ethan Worch as 'Drake,' Jacob Williams and Benjamin Benigno as 'President Roosevelt'; fourth row standing from left, Alex Teets as 'Rooster' and Margaret Ridge, a tech.

Twenty-six members of the WINGS Performing Arts Program of Lynn Meadows Discovery Center in Gulfport will compete this weekend in the invitation-only 2011 Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta.

The students, ages 11-15, will present "Annie Jr." for adjudication. They come from schools across South Mississippi and are among more than 2,100 performers from 50 schools and educational theater groups across the United States and Canada.

In the spirit of celebration rather than competition, theater groups perform 15-minute selections from their Broadway Junior or KIDS Collection productions for a panel of leaders in theater and education.

WINGS will present “Annie Jr.” in its entirety Jan.25 in Biloxi. The group designed its set in all black and white to represent a comic strip theme.

Based on the comic strip, “Little Orphan Annie,” “Annie Jr.” tells of a spunky Depression-era orphan determined to find her parents, who abandoned her years ago on the doorstep of a New York City Orphanage run by cruel Miss Hannigan.

WINGS attended the Junior Theater Festival for the first time in January 2010, when they performed Disney’s “The Jungle Book KIDS” and WINGS student Sarah Grammar was awarded a “Freddie G Outstanding Student Direction and Choreography” individual award.

The students this year attend Bayou View Elementary School, Bayou View Middle School, Biloxi Junior High School, Central Middle School, Christian Collegiate School, D’Iberville Middle School, North Woolmarket Middle School, Ocean Springs Middle School, Pass Christian Middle School, St. James Catholic Elementary School, St. Patrick Catholic High School, St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School, Westminster Academy and five are home schooled.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world’s largest musical theater festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students. It is sponsored by Music Theatre International and Disney Musicals and is produced by iTheatrics and Atlanta’s Theater of the Stars.

WINGS Performing Arts was chosen to receive the nationally prestigious Coming Up Taller Award, presented by former first lady Laura Bush, and the Governor’s Award for Excellence in Arts and Education in Mississippi.

Students going to the festival

1. Allison Daneault, Biloxi, 8th grade, St. Patrick Catholic High School
2. Ashley Fountain, Biloxi, 8th grade, Biloxi Junior High School
3. Emily Grammar, Biloxi, , 8th grade, Biloxi Junior High School
4. Mollye Ladner, Biloxi, 8th grade, North Woolmarket Middle School
5. Isabella Tancredi, Biloxi, 5th grade St. James Catholic Elementary School
6. Alex Teets, Biloxi, 6th grade, Biloxi Junior High School
7. Erin Cranston, Ocean Springs, 6th grade, Ocean Springs Middle School
8. Emily Edwards, Ocean Springs, 7th grade, Home schooled
9. Jayne Edwards, Ocean Springs, grade, Home schooled
10. CeCi Hammonds, Ocean Springs, 6th grade, Ocean Springs Middle School
11. Rachel Storey, Ocean Springs, 7th grade, Ocean Springs Middle School
12. Ethan Worch, Ocean Springs, 6th grade, Ocean Springs Middle School
13. Sarah Aninos, Gulfport, 6th grade, Christian Collegiate School
14. Aubrey Benefield, Gulfport, 7th grade, Bayou View Middle School
15. Lauren Benefield, Gulfport, 6th grade, Bayou View Middle School
16. Caroline Lovelace, Gulfport, 6th grade, Westminster Academy

17. Grace Newton, Gulfport, 6th grade, Home school
18. Marie Page, Gulfport, 6th grade, Bayou View Middle School
19. Tea' Pappas, Gulfport, 6th grade, Bayou View Middle School
20. Claire Richardson, Gulfport, 6th grade, Bayou View Middle School
21. Julia Richardson, Gulfport, 4th grade, Bayou View Elementary School
22. Claire Simpson, Gulfport, 5th grade, Bayou View Elementary School
23. Benjamin Benigno, Pass Christian, 6th grade St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School
24. Lindsey Campbell, Pass Christian, 6th grade, Pass Christian Middle School
25. Jacob Williams, Biloxi, 7th grade, D'Iberville Middle School
26. Denzel Walker, Gulfport, 8th grade, Central Middle School

Herald Times Reporter



Sebastian Palmer, center, a student from Manitowoc's Dare to Dream Theatre, received a Freddie G Outstanding Individual Male Performance award at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta in mid-January. With him are Shay Rogers, left, manager of education for Theatre Under the Stars in Houston, and Michael J. Bobbit, the producing artistic director of Adventure Theatre in Washington, D.C., and president of the League of Washington Theatres.

Dare to Dream Theatre wins awards at national festival

Herald Times Reporter

MANITOWOC — Dare to Dream Theatre received one of five Freddie G Outstanding Achievement in

Technical Theater awards at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival, which was held in Atlanta on Jan. 14-16. In addition, Dare to Dream student Sebastian Palmer

earned one of seven Freddie G Outstanding Individual Male Performance awards.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theater festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students and is presented by New York's iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars and sponsored by Music Theatre International and Disney Musicals.

The 15 festival participants from Dare to Dream Theatre performed a selection from Disney's "Beauty and the Beast Jr." for Brad Simmons, a performer, composer and musical director and head of the Juniors Program for The O'Neill Theatre Center; Kennedy Center director Deirdre Kelly Lavrakas, who also directed two musical theater reviews for a State Department tour of South Asia; and Lisa



Emily Schaller, a student from Manitowoc's Dare to Dream Theatre, accepts the group's Freddie G Outstanding Achievement in Technical Theater award from Broadway sound designer Matt Kraus, left, and Jay Woods, star and principal dresser for Broadway, TV and film, at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival. **Submitted photos**

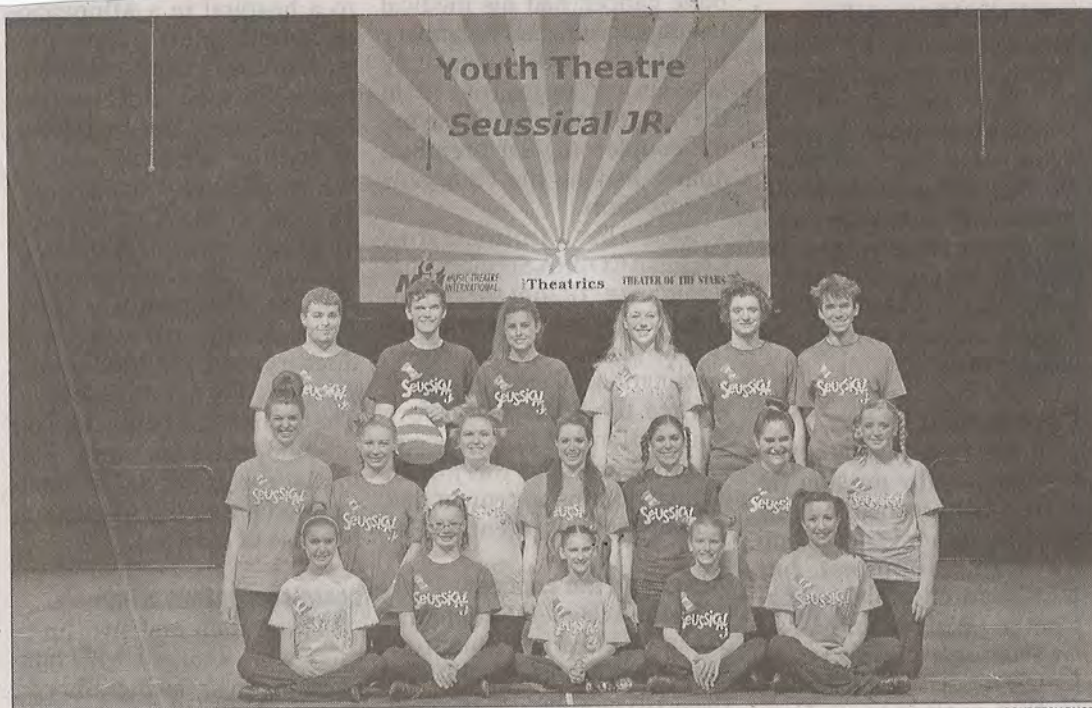
Mitchell, education & outreach specialist with the Disney Theatrical Group.

"This performance was just fun to watch. You could tell the cast was having fun," Lavrakas said. "All of the movement was very well thought out, efficient and told a story. We admired that student Brooke Miller choreographed the show and that student Sebastian Palmer was the music director's assistant."

"Their fight choreography was amazing," Simmons said. "It was so clean and precise."

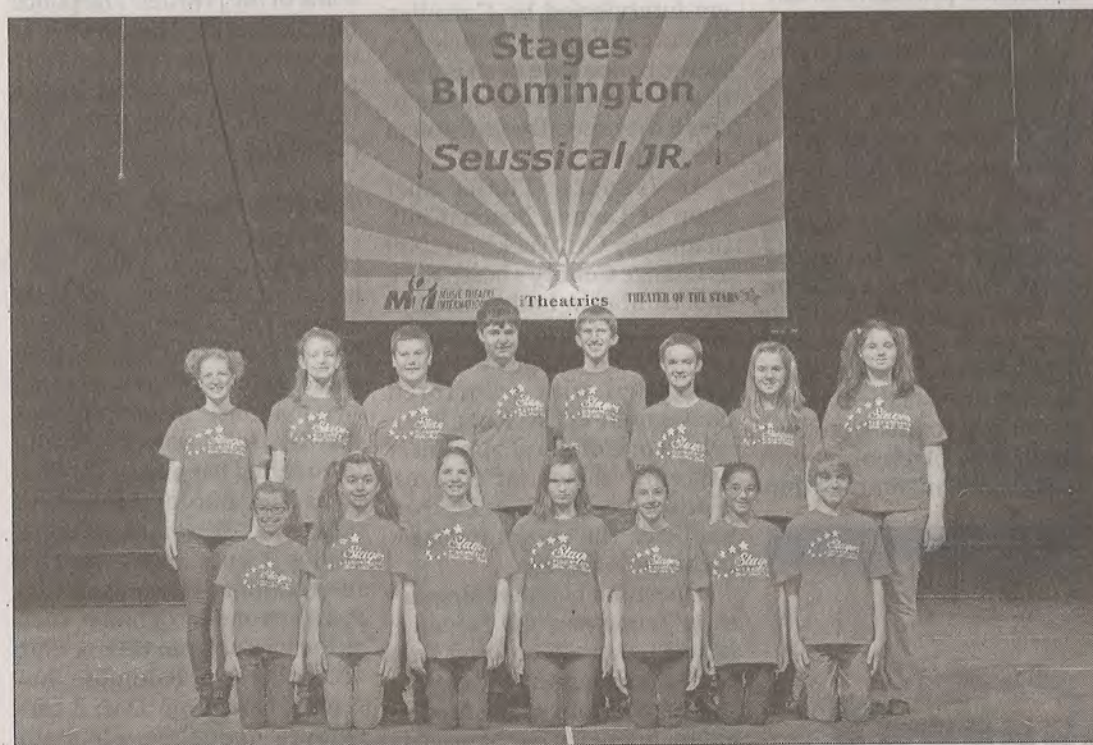
Dare to Dream students Brogan Jindra and Sebastian Palmer were named to the Junior Theater All-Stars, made up of two outstanding students from each group at the festival. The all-star students performed the song, "Play My Music," from "Camp Rock: the Musical" at the closing ceremonies.

Student groups travel to Atlanta for theater festival



COURTESY PHOTO

The Youth Theatre students, ages 9-19, presented selections from "Seussical Junior" for the Junior Theater Festival, Jan. 14 -16, in Atlanta, Ga. Back row: Jesse Hamilton, Ian Simoneaux, Maureen Mitchell, Alex Goodman, John Bristow, Chandler Waggoner; middle row: Callie Rekas, Kate-lyn Edwards, Rian Capsheew, Courtney Mitzel, Jen Moulden, Caitlin Diekhoff, Olivia Warnick; front row: Maclaine Capsheew, Kendra Kasper-Roesel, Bianca Booher, Noelle-Kate Simoneaux, Alaina Martinez.



COURTESY PHOTO

The Stages Bloomington cast represented students from 5th to 10th grade at the Junior Theater Festival, Jan. 14- 16, in Atlanta, Ga. Back row: Audrey Deinlein, Sophia Hoffman, Matthew Weidenbener, Tony Ponella, Lucas Adams, Josiah Goodmon, Sarah O'Hanlon and Victoria Ponella; front row: Lauren Bauman, Catie May, Julia Ponella, Brantley Goodrich, Lydia Quinn, Kaleena Abraham and John Bannec.



COURTESY PHOTO

One Step Above students, ages 9-16, presented selections from "Dear Edwina Junior" at the Junior Theater Festival, Jan. 14 -16, in Atlanta, Ga. Front row: Hadley Abram, Madeline Graf, Maeve Randall, Britney Slaven, Briley Fleetwood, Kara Herthel and Livia Hillenburg; back row: Brittany Underwood, Nicole Pepper, Carlie Easton, Amanda Claffey, Tiara Guthie, Amanda Redman, Mary Burt and Audrey Bannec.



COURTESY PHOTO

From left, director, choreographer, producer and Butler University professor Kenny Shepard; One Step Above student Tiara Guthie; and Broadway choreographer Maddie Kelly are seen at the Junior Theater Festival, Jan. 14 -16, in Atlanta, Ga. Guthie, who studies at the Bloomington dance school, accepts her group's Freddie G Outstanding Achievement in Dance Award.

Special to the H-T

Three student performing groups from Bloomington — One Step Above, Stages Bloomington and Youth Theatre — competed in the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta, Ga., over the Martin Luther King Jr. Day weekend.

The three groups earned five national awards at the festival, among them: Stages Bloomington student Tony Ponella won a Freddie G Hardest Working Male award, the only one of its kind for a boy at the festival.

Youth Theatre student Jesse Hamilton was awarded the first-ever Freddie G Broadway Junior Inspiration award.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theater festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students, according to the organization.

It is presented by New York's iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars, and sponsored by Music Theatre International and Disney Musicals.

See www.itheatrics.com/junior_festival.html for more.

MIDTOWN RALEIGH NEWS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2011

Durant Road theatre group takes home top honor in Atlanta

BY DAVID BENNETT
CORRESPONDENT

As Hollywood prepares to honor its best and conclude this year's awards season, a Raleigh theater group has already taken home its big prize.

The Durant Road Musical Theatre group recently won Best Overall Production at the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta for its production of "The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley, Jr."

The festival, which began in 2003 and this year consisted of 56 groups and 2,200 people from around the country, is an annual event run by the New York-based group iTheatrics.

"The kids from Durant Road Musical Theatre really shined in terms of their spirit," said Lindsay Weiner, music supervisor and education and administrative associate for iTheatrics. "You can tell that they just enjoyed what they were doing so much."

Tasia Whicker, 15, said her experience at the Junior Theater Festival was a lot of fun, but the moments leading up to the announcement of Best



Durant Road Musical Theatre students perform during the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta, where the group won Best Overall Production.

Overall Production were a little stressful.

"It was so suspenseful," Whicker said with a smile. "When our name went up

there, everybody just stood up and cheered and started hugging each other. It was just an insanely high moment."

Debbie Rollins, one of the

directors of the Durant Road group, said one reason programs such as hers are so important is because they teach kids the basics of interpersonal

communication.

"Getting back to dealing with people, face-to-face and one-on-one and interacting face-to-face is so important, and I think that live theater offers that," Rollins said.

Rollins, along with husband Dean, started the theatre in the couple's kitchen in 2001.

They started handing out fliers around Raleigh beginning in September of that year. A week later came the terrorist attacks 9/11.

"We thought, 'Well, nobody's going to care. They're going to be preoccupied,'" Rollins said. "The exact opposite happened. People responded really well. We got tons of phone calls and within six months we were out of my kitchen and into an actual brick and mortar space."

The theatre, which offers everything from performance-based classes and workshops to piano lessons, is "a gift," to parent Karen Miller, whose daughters Julianna and Emily are in the group. Miller said she has noticed a marked difference in her children since they joined.

"I've just watched them blossom. They really have an amazing ability now to get up in front of others and lead," she said. "It's just amazing."

Juliet Whicker, Tasia's mother, said being part of the group has helped her daughter by challenging her to learn new things.

"Tasia is a pretty serious, straight-A, focused type individual," she said. "This has been so good for her because it gets her out of her comfort zone and gets her doing something that she doesn't normally do."

Julianna Miller, 10, is one of the youngest members of the group that ranges from 7- to 18-year-olds. She said the best thing about the group is that you get to be yourself.

"It's fun to be on the stage," she said.

"You can be as loud as you want and no one will care because you are supposed to be loud."

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PHOTO COURTESY OF JUNIOR THEATER FESTIVAL



Buckhead acting schools earn awards

2/3/11

By staff reports

Young aspiring actors from two Buckhead performing arts schools recently received honors at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival in Midtown held Jan. 14 through 16.

Olivia Salberg, a student at Applause for Kids in Buckhead, earned a Freddie G Outstanding Broadway Junior Slam award. The junior slam is a theatrical challenge in which two students who do not know each other must perform a song from a musical in one hour.

An ensemble of students from Applause For Kids also performed selections from the musical "Godspell Jr."

Broadway musical director Derek Bowley was one of the school's judges.

"'Godspell' is a show that requires high energy and great ensemble work. The actors must constantly engage the audience. Applause for Kids succeeded in both these areas," Bowley said of the kids' work, in a statement. "They were working together to share the story of the show, and we got to see how much they care about each other by watching their dynamic performance."

Applause for Kids is part of the Atlanta School of the Performing Arts and is in its eighth year serving the children of Atlanta through the performing arts.

Students from the Buckhead-based MZ Stageworks also took home honors from the competition.

Ellen Demko won a Freddie G Outstanding Broadway Junior Slam Award and the entire ensemble earned a Freddie G Outstanding Achievement in Dance Award for their musical presentation of Disney's "Beauty and the Beast."

Nick Pramik, director of marketing and partnerships division at Broadway entertainment advertising agency SpotCo, served as one of the students' judges.

"The enthusiasm from this cast was infectious," he said in a statement. "They are an extremely talented group of students and make a wonderful ensemble."

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theatre festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students and is presented by New York's iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars and sponsored by Music Theatre International and Disney Musicals.

P&P

PEOPLE AND PLACES

FEBRUARY 13, 2011

N&R SUNDAY

February 13, 2011

Greensboro, North Carolina

FOR MORE NEWS AND CALENDAR LISTINGS, VISIT NEWS-RECORD.COM

THEATER

Continued from Page G4

iTheatrics' resident choreographer.

"I have seen countless productions of 'Annie Jr.' and this group's character development was so sophisticated that they gave me a completely new interpretation of 'Annie,' Kennedy said of the Greensboro group's performance. "It was a joy to watch."

Community Theatre of Greensboro students Blaine Bentsen and Gracey Falk were named to the Broadway Junior All-Stars, made up of two outstanding students from each group at the festival. The All-Star students performed the song "Play My Music" from "Camp Rock: The Musical" at the closing ceremonies.

The Junior Theater Festival brought together more than 2,200 students and teachers from 54 schools and

educational theater groups from across the United States and Canada.

Each group performed a 15-minute selection of a musical for professional adjudication by a panel of distinguished theater professionals.

Students and teachers participated in interactive workshops led by Broadway and West End professionals and attended a world-class professional production of Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" at the Fox Theatre.

Student techies worked side-by-side with festival staff in running all aspects of the festival experience.

Beginning in 2010, the festival has paid tribute to the leadership and dedication of Music Theatre International Chairman Freddie Gershon by renaming its student awards for excellence in theater "The Freddie G's."

G10 February 13, 2011 GUILFORD RECORD



COURTESY OF COMMUNITY THEATRE OF GREENSBORO

The Community Theatre of Greensboro's Centerstage Youth Performing Group attended the iTheatrics Junior Theatre Festival on Jan. 14-17 in Atlanta, Ga.



Music Theatre International CEO Freddie Gershon presents the Freddie G Experience award to Rozalynn Fulton, director, Community Theatre of Greensboro.

Theater students win award

Community Theatre of Greensboro students won a Freddie G Outstanding Achievement in Acting award for their presentation of "Annie Jr." at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta, Ga., in January.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theater festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students and is presented by New York's iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars and sponsored by Music

Theatre International and Disney Musicals.

Community Theatre of Greensboro director Rozalynn Fulton was one of eight educators from across the country selected for the Freddie G Experience award.

The Freddie G Theater Experience is a fully-funded weekend for educators in New York City, complete with performances, celebrations and workshops. Teachers from across the country applied for the experience and eight were selected.

The weekend included master classes with award-winning Broadway professionals, including songwriters Marc Shaiman and Scott Whitman, director and choreographer Baayork Lee, director and choreographer Jeff Calhoun and lighting designer Ken Billington.

They also attended Broadway's "Mary Poppins," a pilot workshop of "Singin' in the Rain Jr.," and toured Music Theatre International, iTheatrics and the New Amsterdam Theater.

The Community Theatre of Greensboro students, ages 10 to 16, presented "Annie Jr." for adjudication by Broadway director, choreographer and performer Baayork Lee, who originated the role of Connie in "A Chorus Line;" music director Bill Newberry ("Les Misérables," "Sound of Music" and "Annie"), the music/artistic director for Camp Broadway and Fox Theatre's Rising Stars; and Steven Kennedy.

SEE THEATER, PAGE G10



Jeter Backyard Theater makes big splash on national stage

by Bethany Hofstetter Staff Writer
February 3, 2011



Photo Courtesy of the Junior Theater Festival

It may be a small, local theater group, but Jeter Backyard Theater is making a big impression in the national musical theater world.

Last month, 16 students from Jeter Backyard Theater traveled to Atlanta to participate in the 2011 Junior Theater Festival and compete against 54 theater groups from across the United States and Canada.

After earning the Freddie G Broadway Junior Spirit Honorable Mention award for their performance of "Dear Edwina Jr." at last year's festival, the students celebrated this year's homecoming with one of seven Freddie G Outstanding Production awards for their 15-minute performance from "Captain Louie Jr."

Jeter Backyard Theater caught the attention of the judges because of their "strong focus" and "commitment to the [story](#)" says Marty Johnson, [director](#) of education at iTheatrics which hosts the festival.

"They had all that great energy that you want them to have while still maintaining that focus," Johnson says, adding that it also is one of the things the judges look for when awarding the Outstanding Production award.

"It has to be a team that understands telling a good story (through) music, acting and dance. Just because someone can do 40 pirouettes in a row, if it doesn't have a purpose, it doesn't tell a story to the audience.

"They (Jeter Backyard Theater students) were able to convey all those emotions through their vocal and song and acting."

The Jeter Backyard Theater performed "Captain Louie Jr.," a newly-released musical in the Broadway Junior series, in October at the Kean Theatre. The musical follows the story of Louie who feels alone and without friends in his new neighborhood.

Many of the leads from the fall performance were not able to travel to Atlanta because of high school musical commitments, so Christie Jeter, director of Jeter Backyard Theater, re-auditioned the students and gave title roles to many of the former chorus members.

"We worked really hard, so it was nice to get recognition for our hard work," says Cormac Bohan, an eighth-grader at Pine-Richland, who played Louie. "It was really an honor to get picked by the judges."

In addition to the Outstanding Production award, Bohan and Maren Dennison, seventh-graders at Pine-Richland, also were named Broadway Jr. All-Stars, a group of top performers who presented a song from "Camp Rock: the Musical" at the closing ceremonies.

Alena Zappa was one of 68 out of 2,100 students who made a final call-back for the Music Theatre International choreography DVDs. A cast of 20 students will be selected this spring to tape the How-to choreography guides in New York this summer.

Jeter says all of the accolades earned by the students and the theater group are a recognition of the time and energy put in by everyone at Jeter Backyard Theater.

"Our name, while it's cute and quirky, some people think we're a backwoods theater and we have no credibility," Jeter says.

"(Now) people say, 'oh, ok, they are a theater, they're not just a bunch of people up in Gibsonia putting on a show in the driveway.'"

The name comes from Jeter's own childhood experiences of putting on shows with her cousins in her backyard and wanting to capture the same fun with the theater group.

Jeter says she pushed the students to "reach for the heights," because when you do, you achieve more than if you don't reach at all.

For Maren Dennison, she learned what it means to chase your dreams.

"If you call it a dream, it's never going to happen, you have to call it your goal and find ways to get there," she says, "and that's what the festival was."

CENTRAL SPEAKS.com

Central's DAILY NEWS Source

Two Central Community Theatre Groups Headed to Junior Theater Festival

Posted on 27 December 2010.

Two groups of students from Central Community Theater (CCT) here in Central will be traveling to the invitation-only 2011 Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta in January.

The CCT Elite Jr. group will be performing selections from *Disney's Alice in Wonderland, Jr.*, and will be presenting the show in its entirety on March 27, 2011 at 2:00pm at the Independence Park Theatre in Baton Rouge, LA. They rehearse on Mondays from 7:30-9:00pm.

The CCT Elite Sr. group will perform selections from *Disney's Aladdin, Jr.* They will be presenting the show in its entirety on March 26, 2011 at 7:00 PM at Independence Park Theatre in Baton Rouge, LA. They rehearse on Tuesdays from 7:00-9:00 PM. CCT's two productions are entirely choreographed by student choreographers Addie Dean and Alex Burns. For more information please visit www.CentralCommunityTheatre.org.

Central Community Theatre students have also enjoyed success at past festivals. At the 2010 Junior Theater Festival, Central Community Theatre Junior Elite students presented selections from *Annie Junior* for adjudication by iTheatrics Chief choreographer Steven Kennedy and Deirdre Lavarkas, Kennedy Center teaching artist and the Central Community Theatre Senior Elite students presented selections from *Disney's High School Musical Jr.* for Ken Cerniglia, dramaturg and literary manager for Disney Theatrical Productions, iTheatrics master teacher Cindy Ripley and Pat Briggs, the retired director of the Palo Alto Children's Theater.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theatre festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students and is presented by Music Theatre International and produced by iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars. The 2011 Festival will be held at the Cobb Galleria Centre in Atlanta, GA and will bring together more than 1,800 students, teachers, and Broadway professionals to raise their voices in celebration of on-stage and backstage excellence in musical theater.

Drawing over 1,800 attendees from 50 schools and educational theater groups from across the U.S. and Canada, the Festival offers an enthusiastic environment for students and teachers to interact with thousands of others who share their passion for musical theater. Each group performs a 15-minute selection of a musical for professional

adjudication by a panel of distinguished theater professionals. In addition, both students and teachers participate in interactive workshops led by Broadway and West End professionals, gain from professional development, enjoy theatrical fellowship and attend a world-class professional production of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* at the fabulous Fox Theatre. In true Junior Theater Festival form, student techies work side-by-side with festival staff in all aspects of the festival experience.

The first Junior Theater Festival was held in January of 2003 and featured premieres of new MTI Education Broadway Junior titles *Honk JR.*, *Dear Edwina JR.* and *Godspell JR.* Starting in 2010, the festival has been an annual event.

2 Responses to "Two Central Community Theatre Groups Headed to Junior Theater Festival"

1.  Debbie says:

December 28, 2010 at 3:30 pm

I have experienced first hand, many times, the talent the Central Community Theatre group consistently delivers with each production. I wish our wonderful group of Central young folks much luck in their venture and congratulate the troupe, directors and staff on this well deserved honor!

Trackbacks/Pingbacks

1. *Countdown to JTF 2011: Central, Louisiana's Community Theatre Gets Well-Deserved Recognition - Musical Theater News, Production Tips, New Musicals and More on The MTI Marquee Blog* says:

December 28, 2010 at 11:58 am

[...] in an article on CentralSpeaks.com. You can read the full text of the article by clicking [here](#). You can also learn more about the Central Community Theatre by visiting their website [...]

Dare to Dream Theatre students to compete in festival in Atlanta

Youth to work with teachers, Broadway professionals

Herald Times Reporter

MANITOWOC — For the second consecutive year, students from the Dare to Dream Theatre have been accepted into the Junior Theater Festival. The 2011 festival will be held Friday through Sunday at the Cobb Galleria Centre in Atlanta, Ga.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theater festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students and is presented and sponsored by leading theatrical licensor Music Theatre International and produced by iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars.

The Dare to Dream Theatre students will perform a 15-minute selection from Disney's "Beauty and the Beast Jr." for professional adjudication at the festival.

They will present their full production of "Beauty and the Beast Jr." March 3-6 at the J.E. Hamilton Community House, 1520 17th St., Two Rivers. Those attending the March 5 performance can join Belle and her friends for a three-course dinner before the show.

The Dare to Dream group also has led free theater workshops themed around the show at Jefferson Elementary School, Manitowoc Public Library and other locations. Dare to Dream is open to groups that would like to schedule a workshop.

The 2011 Junior Theater Festival will bring together more than 1,800 students, teachers and Broadway professionals. Attendees will come from 50



Abbie Mleziva, 14, of Manitowoc sings a solo while Robert Irion of Green Bay and Lauren Mihalakakos of Manitowoc dance during a rehearsal of "Beauty and the Beast Jr." A group of students from the Dare to Dream Theatre in Manitowoc will be in Atlanta on Friday through Sunday to present a 15-minute selection from the musical at the Junior Theater Festival. **Doug Sundin/HTR**

schools and educational theater groups from across the United States and Canada.

In addition to the performances on which the students are judged, the festival offers interactive workshops for students and teachers. Participants also will attend a world-class professional production of Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" at the Fox Theatre.

Participants from the Dare to Dream Theatre are: Robert Irion, Green Bay; Sebastian Palmer, Sheboygan; Brooke Miller,

Two Rivers; Abbie Mleziva, Manitowoc; Lauren Mihalakakos, Manitowoc; Angel Her, Manitowoc; Brogan Jindra, Manitowoc; Mariah Giesler, Two Rivers; Smith Huber, Sheboygan; Julie Rohrer, Manitowoc; Claudine Muchin, Manitowoc; Grace Kortens, Manitowoc; Ashleigh Pratt, Manitowoc; Emily Schaller, Manitowoc; and Emily Kortens, Manitowoc.

Rachel Thuermer, executive and artistic director of Dare to Dream Theatre, is directing the show. Jen

Kasten, a professional opera singer from Two Rivers, is the music director. Student Brooke Miller is choreographing the show. Sandie Palmer, a musician from Sheboygan, is helping to prepare the students musically.

Anyone wanting to contribute to the cost of the trip, which is \$650 per student, may donate online at www.daretodreamtheatre.com or may send donations to Dare to Dream Theatre, 630 N. 10th St., Manitowoc, WI 54220, with "JTF" written in the memo line.

Serving Manitowoc County / 50 cents / Check for updates online at www.htrnews.com

Monday, January 10, 2011

Herald Times Reporter



Drama students, teachers 'tread the boards' at Junior Theater Fest

Groups from Dawson arts council, Holly Theatre to take part in Cobb event

From staff reports

POSTED: January 13, 2011 12:30 a.m.

Students and teachers who plan to put on school musicals in their communities can get a little professional advice at the Junior Theater Festival on Friday through Sunday at the Cobb Galleria.

The event is billed as the world's largest musical theater festival for young people, and will include more than 2,000 drama students and teachers from more than 50 schools around the U.S. and Canada.

Among the instructors planning to attend are Atlanta Grammy-winning record producer and musician Bryan-Michael Cox, Disney Theatrical Group President Thomas Schumacher and Thoroughly Modern Millie composer Jeanine Tesori.

Tesori will receive the 2011 Junior Theater Festival Award for Advancement of Musical Theatre for Young People

Two area student performing arts groups, Dawson County Arts Council in Dawsonville and Holly Theatre in Dahlonega, will take part.

The Dawson County Arts Council students will perform selections from the musical "Guys and Dolls" for adjudication, while the Holly Theatre students will present parts of "Once on this Island."

Each Junior Theater Festival group performs a 15-minute selection of a musical for professional adjudication by a panel of distinguished theater professionals. The panel evaluates each groups music, acting, dance and overall performance. Each cast receives valuable feedback about its creativity, engagement in the performance, understanding of the material and connection to the lyrics and movement.

In addition, both students and teachers participate in interactive workshops led by Broadway and West End professionals, gain from professional development, enjoy theatrical fellowship and attend a world-class professional production of Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" at the Fox Theatre.

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr., the students will record their dreams for the future in video booths and upload them to the Internet.

Boothbay Register.

Volume 135, Issue 3
Boothbay Harbor, Maine 04538

Serving the Communities of Boothbay, Boothbay Harbor, Southport & Edgecomb since 1876

22 Pages • Published Weekly
50 cents • January 20, 2011



THE BOOTHBAY REGION YMCA Y-ARTS STUDENTS are all smiles at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta, Georgia.

Submitted by Allison Ravenscroft

A three-peat!

YMCA students earn Freddie G Outstanding Production award at 2011 Junior Theater Festival

Submitted Article

Students from the Boothbay Region YMCA earned a "Freddie G Outstanding Production" award for their production of "Once on This Island JR." at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta, Georgia this weekend, January 14, 15 and 16. The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theatre festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students and is presented by New York's iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars and sponsored by Music Theatre International and Disney Musicals.

As one of seven "Freddie G Outstanding Production" winners, the 12 students, ages 7-17, performed a song from the musical at the closing ceremonies for all 2,200 attendees.

**A community celebration
for the Y-Arts' group
will be held Sunday,
Jan. 30 at 5 p.m. in the
YMCA gymnasium.**

The students presented "Once on This Island JR." for adjudication by Brad Simmons, a performer (Camp), composer and musical director ("Mr. & Mrs. Fitch" starring John Lithgow) who serves as the head of the Juniors Program for The O'Neill Theatre Center; Kennedy Center director Deirdre Kelly Lavrakas ("Walking in the Winds: American Tales" and "Walking in the Winds: Arabian Tales" - a co-production with the Performing Arts Center of Amman, Jordan), who also directed two musical theatre reviews for a State Department tour of South Asia; and Disney Theatrical Group creative Lisa Mitchell.

Said Simmons about the group, "The Boothbay Region YMCA had such stage presence that they were almost lit up from within. Everyone had the right focus."

Added Lavrakas, "They were an ensemble through and through."

The students attend Boothbay Region Elementary School, Boothbay Region High School, Edgecomb Eddy School, Southport Central School, Great Salt Bay Elementary, Bath Middle School, Nobleboro Middle School and Lincoln Academy.

"Once on This Island JR." is an adaptation of the popular Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale "The Little Mermaid." Set in the Caribbean, the story follows Ti Moune, a peasant girl who rescues and falls in love with Daniel, a young man from a wealthy family. When Daniel is returned to his land, the gods who rule the island guide Ti Moune on a quest to test the strength of her love against the powerful forces of prejudice, hatred and death.

Boothbay Region YMCA performed the full production of "Once on This Island JR." in the summer of 2009 at the Boothbay Playhouse. To prepare for the production, the students studied and incorporated actual African-inspired dance sequences.

Understanding that community support is important to their success as performers, the students have taken the initiative to give back to the Boothbay community. The Boothbay Region YMCA performed a Christmas concert with 100 percent of the proceeds going to the local low-income Home Heating Assistance Program.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theatre festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students and is sponsored by Music Theatre International and produced by iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars. The 2011 Festival was held at the Cobb Galleria Centre in Atlanta, GA and brought together more than 2,100 students, teachers, and Broadway professionals to raise their voices in celebration of on-stage and backstage excellence in musical theater.

Boothbay students Nate Friant and Noelle Timberlake were named to the Broadway JR. All-Stars, a group of stellar performers representing each of the 54 student groups from across the country at the festival. The students performed the song "Play My Music," from Camp Rock: The Musical at the closing ceremonies.

Boothbay student Rick Hilscher was one of 68 students out of 2,200 attendees invited to a final audition for the MTI choreography DVDs, led by iTheatrics choreographer Steven Kennedy. A cast of 20 students will be selected to tape the How-to choreography guides in New York this summer. These guides will be used in thousands of schools across the country. Last year's Junior The-

ater Festival cast taped a choreography video for Fame! JR.

Boothbay has enjoyed tremendous success at the festival in the past. At the 2010 Boothbay Region YMCA group won a "Freddie G Outstanding Production" award for its presentation of "Seussical JR." The students were also selected to be one of four educational theatre groups from across the country to perform in the "DisneyMusicals.com New Works Showcase," presenting Disney's Aladdin KIDS. Four Boothbay students -- Nate Friant, Kate Friant, Rick Hilscher and Sophia Thayer -- were cast in the national choreography DVD for Fame JR.!, which will be seen by thousands of students and teachers across the country when the show is released.

Boothbay Region YMCA attended the Junior Theater Festival for the first time in January 2009. The 2009 group consisted of 35 students representing seven different mid-coast schools, who performed selections from "Godspell JR." for professional adjudication. The students earned two major awards at the 2009 Junior Theater Festival: an Outstanding Production award and also an Outstanding Individual: Male award for student Roosevelt Bishop.

Drawing over 2,200 attendees from 54 schools and educational theater groups from across the United States and Canada, the Junior Theater Festival offered an enthusiastic environment for students and teachers to interact with thousands of others who share their passion for musical theater. Each group performed a 15-minute selection of a musical for professional adjudication by a panel of distinguished theater professionals. In addition, both students and teachers participated in interactive workshops led by Broadway and West End professionals, gained from professional development, enjoyed theatrical fellowship and attended a world-class professional production of Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" at the fabulous Fox Theatre. In true Junior Theater Festival form, student techies worked side-by-side with festival staff in running all aspects of the festival experience.

While the festival wasn't about creating the stars of tomorrow, many of the stars of today played a role. This year festival's special

guests included four-time Tony nominated composer Jeanine Tesori ("Thoroughly Modern Millie," "Shrek the Musical"); Broadway producer and Disney Theatrical Group President Thomas Schumacher; Grammy award-winning musician producer and songwriter Bryan-Michael Cox; Broadway director, choreographer and performer Baayork Lee who originated the role of Connie ("A Chorus Line"); Broadway director Kenny Leon ("Fences," "Raisin in the Sun"); Tony Award-winning lighting designer Ken Billington ("Chicago," "The Scottsboro Boys"), who has worked on over 90 Broadway shows; Broadway performer and choreographer Maddi Kelly ("Chita Rivera: The Dancer's Life" and "Taboo"); actor Stephen Eng ("The King and I" and "Pacific Overtures"); Brad Simmons the music director and head of the Juniors Program for The O'Neill Theatre Center; Nick Pramik, Director of the Marketing and Partnership at leading entertainment advertising agency SpotCo; and Broadway, film and television wardrobe specialist Jan Woods.

Last year's festival attendees included Stephen Schwartz ("Wicked," "Godspell"), Playbill columnist and Talkin' Broadway radio host Seth Rudetsky, and Broadway actor Rashad Nayle ("Hairspray," in the Chicago Company of "Jersey Boys"), who in former years celebrity attendees have included Zac Efron and Broadway actors Henry Hodges ("Mary Poppins"), Jenn Colella ("High Fidelity," "Urban Cowboy"), Jenifer Foote ("A Chorus Line," "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels"), Christy Carlson Romano ("Kim Possible," Disney's "Beauty and the Beast," and "Avenue Q") and American Idol's musical director Michael Orland.

Beginning in 2010, the festival has paid tribute to the leadership and dedication of Music Theatre International (MTI) Chairman Freddie Gershon by renaming its student awards for excellence in theater "The Freddie G's." In 1995, Gershon created MTI Education, the first educational division in major musical theater licensing firms which over the past 15 years has literally transformed the marketplace for age-appropriate performance material for young performers.

The Daily Star

HAMMOND, LA | WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2011

Drama students win honors

By **BRIDGETTE BONNER**
Daily Star Staff Writer

Holy Ghost drama students recently returned home from the Junior Theater Festival, a national competition in Atlanta, with an Outstanding Achievement in Acting award.

Thirty-eight of the 84 cast members, ranging from fifth- to eighth-grade, made the trip, said Drama Director Sue Gautier. She said 50 schools competed and six won for each award category.

More than 2,000 students competed, 108 of whom were all-stars.

Camille Bechac and Vinnie Rusciano represented Holy Ghost as all-stars.

The all-stars performed "Play my Music" from "Camp Rock" in front of a crowd of more than 2,500 people.

Bechac has been acting since kindergarten and was an extra in two movies. She was involved in young theater groups and the Octavians before joining



Photo by Bridgette Bonner

'CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY' — Holy Ghost Drama Director Sue Gautier guides students during rehearsals for their upcoming production Thursday.

Holy Ghost's drama club. "I tried ballet and soccer, but I liked theater the best," she said. "I just like getting

out there. I get a little nervous, but I burst open on stage."

Rusciano, a seventh-

grader who plays the part of Charlie in the club's upcoming production of "Charlie and the Chocolate

Factory," has also been acting since kindergarten. He joined Holy Ghost's drama club last year and played Chip in "Beauty and the Beast."

Rusciano said he's careful not to let his parents hear him practicing at home. Instead, he recites lines to his sister and her friends.

Seventh-grader Connor Scott will play Willy Wonka. Scott started acting in the fifth-grade but said he was not a fan of singing back then because his voice was cracking. He has taken singing lessons since then, though, and says he continues to improve.

"I'm glad to get up and do it," he said. "It's what I'm passionate about. I want to have a career in theater and study it in school."

He also would like to get involved in volunteering with children in theater when he gets a little older.

Scott took home the award for Hardest Working Male in Atlanta this year,

See **DRAMA**, 5A

which also earned him a congratulatory letter from state Rep. Stave Scalise.

"I thought that was very thoughtful of him," Scott said.

Veruca, also known as seventh-grader Alexis Theriot, dreamed of being on stage since kindergarten.

"I love how you can just become a different person on stage," she said. "It used to make me nervous, but now I just let it all out."

Theriot played Belle in last year's "Beauty and the Beast" production, and said she took

naturally to the part.

One of her favorite parts of the Atlanta trip was getting the chance to see "Beauty and the Beast" at the Fox Theatre.

"It was fun to see how their Belle played the part," she said.

Gautier said the group presented 15 minutes of their "Willy Wonka" play at the festival, which included "Pure Imagination," "Candy Man," and "I Eat More."

The group will perform the full-length presentation Feb. 10 and 11 at 7 p.m. at the Columbia Theatre.



Photos by
Bridgette
Bonner

Award winners

Holy Ghost Catholic School drama students rehearse for their upcoming production of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" Thursday. In the lower photo, Connor Scott, who will play Willy Wonka in the production next month, belts out "Candy Man" during rehearsals Thursday. The drama students recently competed in the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta and won an Outstanding Achievement in Acting award.

Boothbay Register.



Y-Arts company prepares to take a celebratory bow for their win in Atlanta

Y-ARTS kids will present their award-winning 15-minute presentation of "Once On This Island" performed at the Junior Theater Festival January 14 – 16 in Atlanta at the YMCA on Sunday, January 30 at 5 p.m.

By LISA KRISTOFF
Staff Reporter

"For out of what we live and we believe, our lives become the stories that we weave." This line, from the song "Why We Tell the Story" in "Once On This Island Jr" speaks truth to all who hear it.

On January 15, the region's 42-member Y-Arts group performed 15 minutes of musical theater at the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta and won the Freddie G. Outstanding Production Award for the third consecutive year.

When Y-Arts director Emily Moore sat down to consider productions for the annual Junior Theater Festival held January 14-16, "Once On This Island Jr.," immediately came to mind. Performed at the Boothbay Playhouse in 2009, Moore thought it would be a perfect blend of acting and song for a competition piece. But, she would have to wait and see who would turn up for the audition.

"It's easier to decide on a show once you know what voices you'll have, who can do the acting," Moore said. "I liked this one because it was a good showcase for the older kids in the group. It's also a piece that would require them to act, and it was different from our usual feel-good, high-energy shows."

Also weighing in on Moore's decision, was the fact that "Island Jr" wasn't one of the more popular iTheatrics Jr. productions; which made it probable that Y-Arts would have the only 15-minute interpretation.

This year, 50-54 schools, represented by 2,000 performers, overall, participated in the festival. Not one of the others presented "Island Jr." Moore's strategy paid off.

The performers in the Y-Arts group are kids from the Boothbay Region Schools, Edgecomb Eddy School, Southport Central School,

Great Salt Bay, Bath Middle School, Nobleboro Middle School and Lincoln Academy. Last year, there were other groups doing "Seussical Jr." and the year before that, other schools doing "Godspell."

But before their win was announced on January 16, and right out of the starting gate, the group had one hurdle: getting to Atlanta — thanks to the snowstorm of the 12th and 13th. There were still 10-12 kids missing from the group's rehearsal on Friday, but by that evening all but two had finally arrived at the Renaissance Waverly Marriott Hotel — and to the performance venue at the Cobb Center Galleria.

Despite cancelled and rescheduled flights, by Saturday, the gang was all there.

As if waiting for all of her performers to arrive wasn't stressful enough, Moore learned the "pod," Academy B, that included Y-Arts was first on the schedule, and of the eight schools in the pod, Y-Arts was first up.

"This meant we had to arrive at 8 a.m. for rehearsal and be ready to perform at 9 a.m.," said Moore. "I

was concerned that the kids' voices wouldn't be warmed up. So, we got up at 6 a.m. and warmed up doing yoga with Donna Griffin and vocal exercises ... We joked a lot about our very own traveling yoga instructor."

This Y-Arts director admitted another concern: that the judges wouldn't remember the Boothbay-based group after four hours of performances.

"The kids were nervous, in part because I had told them that going first is the hardest. I always try

to prepare them — in case we don't win," said Moore.

The three judges were composer and musical director Brad Simmons (credits include the movie, "Camp"), director Deirdre Lavrakas and Lisa Mitchell of Disney Theatrics. The judges scored school groups in the areas of music, acting, dance and overall performance. They also provided constructive criticism and feedback, working with each group to improve their skills in key areas.

The primary singers in the production of "Once On This Island Jr" were: Nelly Kelly, Sophia Thayer, Noelle Timberlake, Rick Hilscher, Courtney Chaney, Ellie Hilscher, Nick Friant, and Devon Domeyer.

"One of the other really cool things about this show is the dance," said Moore. "I researched YouTube looking for African dance moves, which I fit to our music, and incor-

porated it into our production. The kids did an awesome job. There are so many moving scenes in the show, but I think the end, where Ellie Hilscher is portraying the little girl reciting this long story and the kids all kneeling around her in this triangle ... well, that in itself was pretty impressive!"

The winners of each pod are invited to perform during the Broadway Junior Slam by the judges. The past two years, Moore has been able to select the song for her group. This year, the judges made a special request for Courtney Chaney's song, "Mother Will Provide" sung as Asaka, Mother of Earth, as the song for the Y-Arts group.

Junior Theater Festival Activities

Over the weekend the theater students participated in various workshops including: the all-stars rehearsal workshop and a technical workshop for the young thespians who worked together with the festival's technical theater crew. Selected students from this workshop went on to assist the tech crew for the Disney-Musicals.com New Works Showcase and assist during the awards ceremony on Sunday, January 16.

The professional development workshop topics included: innovative ideas for scenic design, fund-

raising and budgeting sensations, reeruiting boys and building better talent, a director's tool chest and extreme theater games. A performance workshop round-robin was held with exercises called: be the character, ACT the song, awesome auditions and extreme theater games.

Each year a few students are selected by Broadway Junior scouts to audition for a spot on an upcoming theatrics choreography DVD. This year Rick Hilscher, Nicholas Morley and Ellie Hilscher were selected. In an interview with Moore on Monday, January 24, Rick had gone on to the finals.

In addition to providing an amaz-

ing performance and learning experience for students, Moore said the Junior Theater Festival "...shows them that there are people from all over who love what they love, and it's very cool for them to see that."

In the future, look for a Y-Arts production of "Winnie-the-Pooh Jr" – the favorite performed by one of the competing schools this year at the festival.

Become part of the stories that our Y-Arts kids weave at the Sunday, January 30 performance of their award-winning 15-minute piece at 5 p.m. in the gymnasium. Moore said footage from this year's competition and the previous two years will also be presented.

Refreshments will be served including special cakes bearing images of the Y-Arts group - compliments of Patsy West.



St. Mary's 'Fiddler' cast inspired by Atlanta festival

GILLIAN SLADE

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Winning an award and mixing with the elite in theatre has inspired students at St. Mary's School to set higher goals and reach for the top.

The cast of "Fiddler on the Roof" returned this week from the Junior Theatre Festival in Atlanta. They were flush with excitement and energy and brought home an award for Outstanding Achievement in Music.

At the festival, they presented a 15-minute segment of "Fiddler on the Roof" for adjudication.

"The adjudicators expressed appreciation for the layers of harmonies," said Jim Schmid, producer of the play.

"For our students to be in an atmosphere with thousands of like-minded students was the best," said choral director Helen Snortland.

The students marvelled at the range of talent and expression they were mixing with.

"It was such an inspiring atmosphere," said Shayla Bennett, who is also a finalist (one of the top three per cent) in the choreography/dance competition.



NEWS PHOTO GILLIAN SLADE

St. Mary's School cast from the "Fiddler on the Roof" musical, performed at the Esplanade last year, have just returned from the Junior Theatre Festival in Atlanta and are buzzing with excitement and enthusiasm. They were awarded an Outstanding Achievement In Music award and one of the students, Shayla Bennett, is still in the running for a choreography/dance competition.

She still has a chance of being selected to participate in creating a show kit DVD this summer in New York.

"I'll know by the end of March if I'll be going back," said

Bennett.

Saxon Kagume, who played Tevye, was impressed by the lofty goals many of the attendees had.

"Some were considering Broadway as a career," said

Kagume. "It inspired me. Dreams can come true."

It was also interesting to see how many boys were involved in theatre, said Calei Ghseitz. Jason English thinks that's a really

good idea and hopes it will encourage more boys to participate in arts programs generally.

"It was different to be among all those guys," said Stephen Myers, who says he definitely plans to pursue a career in acting and dance.

Choreography featured prominently throughout the three-day festival, which attracted about 1,600 students from across North America. It was the choreography that some found the most memorable in a performance they attended of "Beauty and the Beast."

"They (the cast) were so in sync," said Madison Holyk. "They looked happy and were smiling all the time and it looked as though they were having lots of fun."

Schmid says choreography is one area in which they want to raise their current level.

"We've always approached the music first and then worked on the choreography," said Schmid. "Otherwise we're right on track."

The cast is already well into auditions for its upcoming production, "The Pirates of Penzance," to be performed at the Esplanade April 5 and 6.



Vickie Oliver-Lawson

Baltimore Arts Education Examiner

Baltimore youth take home Atlanta national theater awards

Vickie Oliver-Lawson, Baltimore Arts Education Examiner

Posted: 01/22/2011 10:49 AM



Fifty-four educational musical theater groups, representing fifteen states and Canada recently traveled to Atlanta to compete in the national junior theater festival.

Students from the Children's Playhouse in Maryland, however, represented the Baltimore area very well. Forty-five students, ranging in ages from 6-16, performed Thoroughly Modern Millie Jr. last weekend, January 14th - 16th and walked away with four of the coveted awards.

The students won a Freddie G Junior Theater Festival Outstanding Achievement in Technical Theater award, a Freddie G Outstanding Achievement in Dance award and student Kelsey Lake won a Freddie G Outstanding Female Performance award for their performance of Thoroughly Modern Millie, JR.,

According to Allison Ravenscroft, the group's public relations representative, the Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theater festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students and is presented by New York's iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars and sponsored by Music Theatre International and Disney Musicals.

The 2011 Junior Theater Festival was held at the Cobb Galleria Centre in Atlanta, GA and brought together more than 2,200 students and teachers from 54 schools and educational theater groups from across the United States and Canada, and Broadway professionals, to raise their voices in celebration of on-stage and backstage excellence in musical theater.

The Children's Playhouse of Maryland Junior Theater Festival cast consisted of: Nicole Arrison, Carrienne Cicero, Denise Cicero, Marion Comi-Morog, Allison Comotto, Jamie Watson, Matthew Demetrides, Zoe Feldman, Tiffany Flaharty, Thomas Gardner, Emily Jester, Katelyn Zacharko, Philip Merrick, Sheridan Merrick, Zach Miller, Rachel Miller, Brad Bowers, James Ruth, Zoe Hammel, Ana Pieszala, Ali Radomsky, Nick Logue, Erin Sullivan, Emil Sueck, Autumn Simpson, Gino Cardoni, Joey Bird, Ale Lucas, Tyrell Stanley, Peter Pferdeort, Tony Steiner, Nicole Smith, Kelsey Lake, Meghan Cain, Collette Simpkins, Jennifer Kneebone, Ashley Scott, Caroline Halligan, Peggy Smith, Kristen Kreiner, Connor Moore, Valerie Stein, Victoria Caldwell, Olivia Aubele and Emily Ricci. They all live in the Baltimore Metropolitan area.



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Saturday, September 25, 2010—THE MEDICINE HAT NEWS

'Fiddler on the Roof' cast taking their show on the road

GILLIAN SLADE

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There were rave reviews for the cast of "Fiddler on the Roof" after their performance at the Esplanade in April and now they will be attending the Junior Theatre Festival in Atlanta, Georgia.

It's the chance of a lifetime for students from St. Mary's School Fine Arts Academy who are holding the first of three fundraising concerts for the trip on Oct. 3.

Students will have an opportunity to perform a scene from the play and attend professional workshops at the festival.

"It's a chance to be judged by professionals and gain exposure to another league," said Jim

Schmid, teacher and producer of the play. "This will be a whole different experience."

Exclusively dedicated to young people who have an active interest in performing musical theatre the Junior Theatre Festival will attract about 1,600 students for the three-day event in January 2011.

Grade 8 student Keira Schlenker, who played Chava in "Fiddler on the Roof," is looking forward to the learning experience.

"It's a good chance to see how others perform," said Schlenker smiling.

Others cast members are already considering a career in acting.

"I'm planning to attend acting



NEWS FILE PHOTO

Students from St. Mary's School perform "Fiddler on the Roof" at the Esplanade in April.

school and hope this experience will teach me how to exaggerate in theatre performances," said Miranda Worrell, Grade 8. "I'm looking forward to the feedback on my performance."

One of the adjudicators is Broadway legend Baayork Lee, who conceived the role of Connie Wong in "A Chorus Line."

"Members of the group will have an opportunity to choreo-

graph a scene and song and there is the possibility of being chosen to be taped in New York," said Schmid.

The wedding scene in "Fiddler on the Roof" had the Esplanade audience in awe of the skilled dancers. The bottle dance in particular displayed some fantastic dance moves. This might be the scene the group will perform in Atlanta.

"It's a scene with the most people on stage," explained Trinity Bridgen, Grade 8.

The first of several fundraising concerts 'Hairum-Scarum,' takes place on Oct. 3, at 7:30 p.m. at St. Mary's School. Tickets are available at the door for \$10 each. For more information call St. Mary's School at 403-527-7616.

The Daily Star



HAMMOND, LA | WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2010

Drama club invited to Atlanta

Students from Holy Ghost Drama Club have been accepted into the invitation-only Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta, at the Cobb Galleria Centre.

Holy Ghost plans to bring 85 students to Atlanta, school officials said.

Students will perform selections from Roald Dahl's *Willy Wonka Jr.* at the festival. They will perform the full musical on Feb. 10 and 11 at 7 p.m., at the Columbia Theatre for the Performing Arts in Hammond. They will also perform two shows for area schools at a much reduced rate.

At the 2010 Junior Theater Festival, Holy Ghost student Connor Scott won the "Freddie G. Hardest-Working Male" award.

At the 2009 festival, Holy Ghost students performed a selection from Disney's *Alice in Wonderland*.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theatre festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students and is presented by Music Theatre International and produced by iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars.



Louie Louie: Crescent City Lights Youth Theater takes home two awards from Atlanta festival

Published: Wednesday, January 19, 2011, 7:43 PM Updated: Wednesday, January 19, 2011, 7:57 PM



By **Andrew Adler**

A tunelessly savvy connection between the Crescent City Lights Youth Theater and composer/lyricist Stephen Schwartz earned the New Orleans troupe a pair of significant out-of-town prizes earlier this month.

Fourteen actors, ages 9 to 15, performed an excerpt from Schwartz's "Captain Louie" at the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta. Described as "the world's largest musical theater festival dedicated to groups working with elementary through high school students," the event involved upwards of 2,000 students, teachers and theater pros.

So what did the CCLYT come away with? "Outstanding achievement in Music," for one; and Best Actor – the latter going to 11-year-old Tucker Godbold for his portrayal of Louie.

"Captain Louie" (sometimes called "Captain Louie, Jr.") is a bit of an odd bird. Schwartz wrote the slender musical in the mid-1980s as more of an exercise than a full-blown stage piece, crafting a boy-lost-in-a-new-neighborhood tale based on Ezra Jack Keats' "The Trip." It was a decidedly tamer piece than works like "Godspell" and "Pippin," which earlier had established Schwartz's reputation – not to mention "Wicked," his 2003 Broadway behemoth.

Still, there's always a healthy market for "family-friendly" musicals, and on that score, particularly after its 2005 revision that almost doubled its length to around an hour, "Captain Louie" has enjoyed a fair measure of success.

You can catch Crescent City Lights' production Jan. 21 through Jan. 30 performances are Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 1 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m.

All performances are given at the NORD Ty Tracy Theatre on the first floor of Gallier Hall, located at 545 St. Charles Ave. Tickets are \$15. You can buy them online at www.crescentcitylights.org, and if you need to know anything else, call the CCLYT at (504) 598-3800.

CASPER JOURNAL

Casper Children's Theatre wins two national awards



Courtesy photo The Casper Children's Theatre receives a Freddie G Outstanding Achievement in Technical Theater award at the Junior Theatre Festival in Atlanta, Ga., in January.



Courtesy photo The Casper Children's Theatre performed selections from "Seussical Jr." and lead the closing song, "Zip A Dee Do Dah," from Disney's "Alice in Wonderland Jr." at final award ceremonies at the Junior Theater Festival Jan. 14-16 in Atlanta, Ga. The group received two national awards and several other distinctions.

Tuesday, February 22, 2011 5:00 pm

The Casper Children's Theatre won a Freddie G Outstanding Achievement in Technical Theater award, and teacher Steven Spicher was one of eight educators from across the country selected for the Freddie G Experience award, at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta, Ga., Jan. 14-16. The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theater festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students and is presented by New York's iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars and sponsored by Music Theatre International and Disney Musicals.

The Freddie G Theater Experience is a fully-funded weekend for educators in New York City, complete with performances, celebrations and workshops. Teachers from across the country applied for the experience and, based on their applications, eight were selected. In 2010, eight teachers took part in the weekend, which included master classes with award-winning Broadway professionals including songwriters Marc Shaiman and Scott Whitman, director and choreographer Baayork Lee, director and choreographer Jeff Calhoun, and lighting designer Ken Billington. They also attended Broadway's "Mary Poppins," a pilot workshop of "Singin' in the Rain, Jr." and toured Music Theatre International, iTheatrics and the New Amsterdam Theater.

Casper Children's Theatre was also invited to lead the closing song, "Zip A Dee Do Dah," from Disney's "Alice in Wonderland Jr." at final award ceremonies. Casper students Cailin Hodgson and Jonathan Gallardo were named to the Technical Theatre All-Stars and worked side-by-side with technical theater professionals to run the Disney Musicals New Works Showcase and the Junior Theater Festival final award ceremonies.

"I was impressed by Cailin's personality. She's outgoing, she isn't afraid to ask questions and she has a thirst for knowledge. She was really excited about learning about the different aspects of theater," said Jay Woods, star and principle dresser for Broadway, TV and film (Kristin Chenoweth's personal dresser; Season 3 of Ugly Betty) who had the opportunity to work one-on-one with Cailin.

The 24 Casper Children's Theatre students, ages 12-17, presented selections from Seussical Jr. for adjudication by Broadway choreographer Maddie Kxelly (Chita Rivera: The Dancer's Life, Taboo) and musical director Derek Bowley (Kennedy Center tour and premiere of The Phantom Tollbooth, world premiere of The Trumpet of the Swan at the Kennedy Center).

Said Bowley of Casper Children's Theatre's performance, "The student choreography was excellent and brought this crazy jungle of Seuss characters to life. I also admired how they created that special relationship between Horton and Jojo, which is so central to the show. They gave us different levels of emotions in their characters from the sassy Sour Kangaroo to the crazy Cat in the Hat."

The young people took part in several fundraisers to help pay for their trip to Atlanta. They offered "Grinch Grams" for the holiday season, and a traveling Hobo band that was

paid to set up and play in someone's front yard until they were paid to go elsewhere. They also sold various products such as Thanksgiving pies and pizza cards.

Casper students Jocelyn Morris and Mark Schenfish were named to the Broadway Junior All-Stars, made up of two outstanding students from each group at the festival. The All Star students performed the song "Play My Music" from Camp Rock: The Musical at the closing ceremonies. Casper student Dylan Doherty was one of 68 students out of 2,100 who made a final call-back for the MTI choreography DVDs, choreographed by iTheatrics choreographer Steven Kennedy. A cast of 20 students will be selected this spring to tape the How-to choreography guides in New York this summer. These guides will be used in thousands of schools across the country. Last summer, a cast of 16 Junior Theater Festival students recorded a national choreography video for the soon-to-be-released musical "Fame Jr."

Casper Children's Theatre has been to the 2009 and 2010 festivals. At the 2010 Junior Theater Festival, the students earned "Excellence in Technical Achievement" and "Outstanding Achievement in Dance" awards. The cast presented selections from the Disney musical "Mulan Jr." for adjudication by Ken Cerniglia, dramaturg and literary manager for Disney Theatrical Productions, iTheatrics master teacher Cindy Ripley and Pat Briggs, the retired director of the Palo Alto Children's Theater. Adjudicator Ripley said that their choreography really helped tell the story of Disney's Mulan Jr. Ripley had seen the group perform at the 2009 festival and complimented the students, saying they had brought their performance to another level. Furthermore, Casper students Gabe Miller and Kegan Wells were selected to perform as part of the Broadway Junior All-Stars, a group made up of two students from each group who took part in an intensive theater workshop with Broadway performer and Talkin' Broadway host Seth Rudetsky. These "All-Stars" performed "Freak Flag" from Shrek! The Musical at the awards ceremony for all 1,700 attendees. Rudetsky was a festival guest of honor who also led a music master class for all festival attendees.

Casper Children's Theatre's philosophy has always been to get the students involved in every aspect of the production from designing and painting the sets, to running the lights and sound, to creating the costumes and props and even choreographing some numbers. With the group's production of Seussical Jr., which opened in October in Casper, the organization decided to take this idea to the next level and assigned students to production teams based on their areas of interest.

The entire show was choreographed by a team of students working with new instructor Jordan Nelson. The prop crew worked with Renee Naquin to design and construct all the props and organize them backstage for the run. A student costume crew helped a parent with designs and construction of the costumes. The set design crew worked with other cast members to realize their vision on the stage while still giving the director what he needed to tell the story. One of the group's soon to be graduating students, Mark Schenfish, served as an assistant musical director and played Horton the Elephant in the production.

The 2011 Junior Theater Festival was held at the Cobb Galleria Centre in Atlanta, Ga., and brought together more than 2,200 students and teachers from 54 schools and educational theater groups from across the United States and Canada, and Broadway professionals, to raise their voices in celebration of on-stage and backstage excellence in musical theater.

Casper Children's Theatre Cast List

Cat in the Hat - Jed Hatten, Natrona County High School

Jojo - Dylan Doherty, St. Anthony's School

Horton - Mark Schenfisch, Natrona County High School

Gertrude - Caitlin Kumpula, Glenrock High School

Sour Kangaroo - Cara Weaver, Natrona County High School

Mayzie - Jocelyn Morris, Kelly Walsh High School

Bird Girls - Shayna Sheare, Poison Spider School; Anna Schenfisch, Natrona County High School; Payton Sanders, CY Junior High

Wickershams - Hannah Morris, Kelly Walsh High School; Cailin Hodgson, Park Elementary School; Bailey Patterson, St. Anthony's School; Jacob Narotzky, Woods Learning Center

Yertle the Turtle - Jenea Pope, Poison Spider School

Vlad Vladikoff - Dallas Smith, CY Junior High

Jungle Citizens - Shannon O'Briant, Casper Classical Academy; Shay Richards, Dean Morgan Junior High; Hope Yates, Dean Morgan Junior High

Mr. Mayor - Isaac Riley, Centennial Junior High

Mrs. Mayor - Emily Krmpotich, St. Anthony's School

Whos - Desa Smith, CY Junior High; Shayha Obert, homeschooled; Drew Bjorksten, St. Anthony's School; Oriana Reed, Dean Morgan Jr. High; Jonathan ????, Dean Morgan Jr. High

Production Teams

Dance - Hannah, Bailey, Peyton, Shannon, Jocelyn, Caitlin

Marketing - Jed, Dylan, Jonathan

Costuming - Emily, Shayna, Shae, Cailin, Shayha

Props - Jacob, Desa, Dallas, Drew, Hope, Anna

Sets - Oriana, Jenea, Isaac, Cara

Music - Mark

Contact Elysia Conner at 266-0509 or by e-mail at elysia.conner@casperjournal.com.

From the Article: [Casper Children's Theatre wins two national awards](#)

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Vickie Oliver-Lawson
Baltimore Arts Education Examiner

Baltimore youth actors headed to Atlanta for national festival

January 8th, 2011 8:47 pm ET



Forty-seven students from the Children's Playhouse of Maryland (CPM) are on their way to Atlanta to perform in the National Junior Theater Festival, January 14 – 17, 2011. CPM will be performing four songs and two acting scenes in adjudication as well as participate in student workshops.

CPM has been in existence since 2001 and was originally called The Young People's Players, part of the operation of F. Scott Black's Towson Dinner Theater. The dinner theater eventually closed and Diane Smith, the artistic director, recognizing a good thing, wanted to keep the students together. The group's name was changed to Children's Playhouse of Maryland and it became a non-profit organization, which then operated from the Conference Center on the grounds of Sheppard Pratt. In 2004, CPM was offered

and accepted a residency at the Community College of Baltimore County-Essex, where it resides today.

The organization services school-aged children under the age of 18 and as young as 4. According to Smith, there are many benefits for the students' involvement in this aspect of the arts. Students' gain confidence, a sense of accomplishment, and become overall well- rounded individuals. Smith acknowledges that while all of them won't become Broadway stars, they will have more confidence and self-esteem for whatever career paths they choose.

CPM produces four shows each year. This past year they have already performed Joseph...Dreamcoat and Thoroughly Modern Millie, Jr. and have upcoming performances of Disney's Mulan, Jr. and The Sound of Music in the works.

How did CPM get to participate in Atlanta's National Junior Theatre Festival? In 2007, Smith received a letter inviting them to participate in the bi-annual festival. She collaborated with Liz Boyer Hunnicutt, CPM's resident Director and they decided to move forward. The group performed a segment of Schoolhouse Rock Live, Jr. and won the award for Outstanding Music Presentation.

In 2009 CPM again was invited and attended the festival performing Seussical, Jr. for which they were awarded Outstanding Performance. CPM also received awards for Outstanding Technical Showcase and two Outstanding Actors.

Although the festival is now held every year, Smith admits that the reality is they are unable to participate each year, since much fundraising is necessary to help offset the cost of the students travel.

Several of the students in Children's Playhouse of Maryland have gone on to perform in other projects including television series (Law and Order, Homicide), Broadway shows and other larger theatrical ventures. Locally, Baltimoreans have seen some of the students' talents at the Mobtown Players and Center Stage.

Smith says being a part of CPM gives students experience and training to move on and participate in other local and professional productions. Professionals in local theatre organizations often compliment her by saying they can always tell when they have CPM students in their productions.

It seems Baltimore truly is where stars are born.

For more information, visit www.cpmarts.org



Catholic Schools Week

Young local Catholics perform at national theater festival

By Mike Dyer

ST. LAWRENCE DEANERY — The opportunity to perform in front of a national theater audience and Broadway professionals had 18 students from our Lady of Victory School filled with anticipation as they traveled to Atlanta the weekend of Jan. 14-16.

The group enjoyed the chance to showcase their talents among a total of 2,200 attendees and 54 schools from across the United States and Canada at the 2011 national Junior Theater Festival at the Cobb Galleria Centre in Atlanta.

The young actors, in grades five through eight, received an invitation for their appearance at the festival. They won four national awards after performing selections from "Seussical," a production based on Dr. Seuss stories.

"What I loved about Our Lady of Victory's performance was that these students gave me some fresh, new interpretations of the show," said Butler University professor Kenny Shepard, who was one of the judges at the festival. "Their performance was clever and concise. To me, they embodied the spirit of musical theater because they told the story through every aspect of their performance, from vocals and staging, to acting and movement."

The students earned Freddie G awards for outstanding achievement in technical theater and dance, and student Sammi DiTullio earned an Outstanding Female



Members of the student theater group at Our Lady of Victory pose for a photo. Pictured from left in the front row are Jordan Licata, Ryan Smith, Kalie Kaimann, Sammi DiTullio, Lizzy Puttmann and Jay Quitter. In the middle row are Michael Ashley, Abby Zureick, Karly Hofmann, Erin Morgan, J.C. Burg and Christina Diersing. In the back row are Julie Deye, Alisson Seissiger, Savannah Boeppler, Kelsey Finn, Angie Lobono and Dana Wink.

Catholic Schools Week

Actress Award. The Freddie G awards are named in honor of Music Theatre International chairman Freddie Gershon for his work with youngsters.

John Jung and his wife, Kristie, are co-directors of the Our Lady of Victory's Grade School Players, the group which includes about 100 students overall in the school's theater program.

Jung was one of eight educators from across the country selected for the Freddie G Experience Award, a fully funded weekend experience in New York City where he will be able to take in performances, celebrations and workshops.

Before the group left for Atlanta, Jung said the students were "bouncing off the walls" and were "ecstatic" about the opportunity.

Kalie Kaimann, an eighth grader at Our Lady of Victory, said it was a "blessing" to have the opportunity to perform in front of such a distinguished audience.

"It's overwhelming," she said before the trip.

In Atlanta, Kaimann earned an opportunity to be considered for an upcoming DVD taping later this year.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theater festival and it works with elementary and middle schools students. Each group performed a 15-minute selection of a musical for evaluation by a panel of theater professionals.

The festival, established in 2003, featured special guests that included a four-time Tony nominated composer, a Grammy award-winning musician, a Tony Award-winning lighting designer, television wardrobe specialist, actors and entertainment executives.

Our Lady of Victory students also had the opportunity to participate in interactive workshops led by Broadway professionals and attended a production at the famous Fox Theatre.

"It was a lot of fun," Jung said. "We

had a great time."

Valerie Kaimann, a parishioner at Our Lady of Victory, was one of eight parents that chaperoned the trip. She said before the trip that her daughter, Kalie, who had a lead role in the performance and has been involved with the group since the fifth grade, was really looking forward to the experience.

Kaimann credited the co-directors with having the ability to lead the group in a very effective way in the theater program.

"They are very good (with) working with children and placing them where they can shine and showcase their own individual talents," she said.

Jung said he and wife enjoy every minute they have with the students in the school program. They have been involved with the group for the past nine years and are working on their seventh show.

"For six months, it totally engulfs my life and I love it," said Jung, who is a member of St. Joseph Parish in North Bend.

Kathy Kane, who has been principal at Our Lady of Victory for the past four years, said the Jungs "really can bring the best out of the students with the level of performances and the ability to give students a sense of identity.

"I think this is a ministry for John and Kristie," Kane said, adding that they have led by Christian example with instructing the students on how to use their God-given talent in a beneficial way.

The theater program encourages students to put their creativity to work through the process of helping with the entire production process. Students also assist with choreography, staging and other elements of shows.

"The two directors, John and Kristie, are absolutely fantastic," Kalie Kaimann said. "They are so supportive."

The group has also received significant support from the community.

"We have several wonderful people that help with the drama program here at OLV, including teachers, parents, alumni, alumni parents and sometimes commu-

nity members with big hearts," Jung said. "They help with anything, including costumes, makeup, set construction, concessions and backstage tech."

The group constantly tries to embody God's kindness in every way.

Jung said the school's theater program has always focused on finding performances that align with Catholic values. The group performed "The Wizard of Oz" a few years ago, emphasizing the faith-filled theme of "no place like home" to find true happiness.

"Seussical," which was originally performed in April of 2008 by the students, emphasizes human dignity, Jung said, a value important to teaching students that God regards every human with respect. It also strives to teach that Jesus loves everyone in all walks of life.

On Jan. 2 the group put their faith into practice when they took time to cook dinner and perform "Seussical" for residents

See THEATER, page 15

THEATER

Continued from page 14

at the Ronald McDonald House in Clifton.

"Our students are very blessed and wish to be a blessing to others," Jung said.

Not only was it a time to help residents, but it gave the group a good practice run for the festival. "The kids loved it and had a great time," he said.

Kalie Kaimann said she was glad the students could share their theatrical talents while also helping others.

"It was so sweet to give people food and give them entertainment," she said.

The next step for the young actors will be a springtime performance of Disney's "High School Musical 2" April 13-16 at Our Lady of Victory.

They have already begun practice for that performance.

"I'm very excited about it," Kaimann said. "I think the cast will be wonderful."



Good For You, Indian River County, Jan. 30

TCPalm

Posted January 30, 2011 at 11:10 a.m.

St. Ed's students attend festival

St. Edward's junior Austin Carroll and freshman Jacqs Carroll represented St. Edward's at the prestigious Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta. Twenty-five cast members of "Suessical, Jr.," which opens on the Riverside Children's Theater stage in February, joined 2,500 actors from across North America for three days of adjudicated competitions, workshops and lectures taught by Tony-, Grammy- and Oscar-winning artists. Founded in 2003, the Junior Theater Festival is the largest gathering of musical theater students in the world. More than 50 theater companies and performing arts high schools were represented in the three-day festival, which is sponsored by Disney Theatrical Productions and New York City based iTheatrics, which helps develop Broadway stage works rewritten for students.

Young Walnut Creek thespians honored at National Youth Theater Competition

By Deborah Burstyn
Correspondent

Posted: 02/04/2011 12:17:29 PM PST
Updated: 02/04/2011 12:17:29 PM PST

They came. They performed. They ruled.

At a major youth theater festival held in Atlanta in January, five members of Walnut Creek Civic Arts Junior Theater, and their producer Rachel Pergamit, were singled out for honors from a field of 2,200 participating students and teachers.

All five student honorees live in Walnut Creek.

Isaac Edejer, 10, and Nina Hartley, 10, each earned a Freddie G Outstanding Broadway Junior Slam award. The Broadway Junior Slam challenges students to perform an assigned musical theater number with only an hour to prepare.

Youth Theatre Company's producer Pergamit won the Freddie G Broadway Junior Service award, named for Freddie Gershon, the founder of Musical Theater International, a nonprofit educational theater organization that creates adaptations of Broadway musicals and training materials for young performers.

Junior Theater student Joel Herman, 12, was one of 68 students at the festival selected for a final callback audition for a role in MTI choreography DVDs. Junior Theater students Justine Leinen, 9, and Evan Bowman, 11, were named to the Junior Theater Festival All-Stars, who performed as a group for the festival's closing ceremonies.

The Walnut Creek group performed "Honk," a musical version of the Hans Christian Andersen tale "The Ugly Duckling." They were limited to performing a 15-minute segment at the Atlanta competition, but will perform the complete 70-minute show at Walnut Creek's Leshner Center May 20-21.

"Youth Theater Company endeavors to create amazing theater and the next generation of theater lovers while allowing students to work together as an ensemble," Pergamit said. "We strive to offer programs for children of all ages in hopes of imparting to students a lifelong appreciation for theater."

As reported in mid-January, this was the Civic Arts Junior Theater's fourth appearance at the invitation-only Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta. The Walnut Creek group attends the festival every other year.

This year, Junior Theater membership is at an all-time high, with 43 students, including 12 boys. Pergamit attributes the uptick in part to the popularity of "Glee," a television show about singing and dancing teenagers at a public high school.



Locals shine in the spotlight

WEDNESDAY, 22 DECEMBER 2010 19:00 CHRIS BROWN

Chris Brown

cbrown@medicinehatnews.com

The rich artistic and cultural history of Medicine Hat added a few more chapters in 2010. Here are some of the most noteworthy entertainment stories from the local scene.

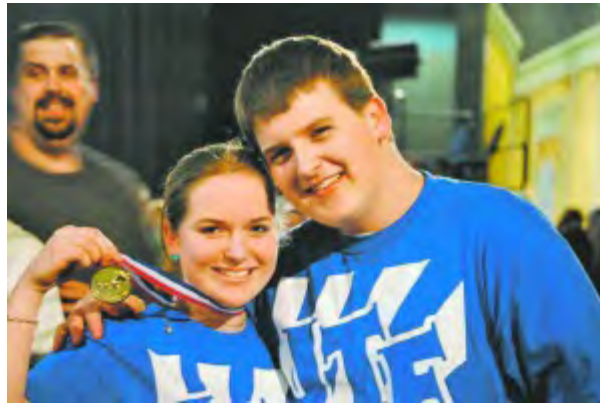
First-class "Fiddler"

Fine Arts Academy students from St. Mary's School did the school proud when they tackled the challenging "Fiddler on the Roof" April 27 and 28. So many students auditioned for roles in the Broadway Junior version of the classic that there were two full casts. The audience was thrilled by the performers' superb grasp of the characters, the delightful singing and the awe-inspiring dance numbers. In September it was announced some cast members will be part of the Junior Theatre Festival in Atlanta, Ga., in January. They will perform one scene at the three-day festival which attracts about 1,600 students each year.

word on the westside

OLV student actors win national awards

January 27th, 2011 by memral



Sammi DiTullio gets a hug from Our Lady of Victory classmate Jay Quitter while showing off her Outstanding Individual Female Performer medal earned at the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta. The school sent 18 of its talented students to compete in the invitation-only musical theater festival. In all, the school brought home additional honors including outstanding dance, technical showcase and the director's award and lots of memories. Provided

Our Lady of Victory School in Delhi Township won national awards at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta in January.

The students earned a Freddie G Outstanding Achievement in Technical Theatre award, a Freddie G Outstanding Achievement in Dance award, student Sammi DiTullio earned a Freddie G Outstanding Female award and teacher John Jung was one of eight educators from across the country selected for the Freddie G Experience award.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theater festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students and is presented by New York's iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars and sponsored by Music Theatre International and Disney Musicals.

The Freddie G Theater Experience is a fully-funded weekend for educators in New York City complete with performances, celebrations and workshops.

The 18 Our Lady of Victory students, ages 11 to 13, presented selections from "Seussical Jr." for adjudication.

Our Lady of Victory student Lizzy Puttmann was named to the Broadway Jr. All-Stars, made up of two outstanding students from each group at the festival. The All Star students performed the song "Play My Music" from Camp Rock: the musical at the closing ceremonies.

Our Lady of Victory student Kalie Kaimann was one of 68 students out of 2,100 who made a final call-back for the MTI choreography DVDs, choreographed by iTheatrics choreographer Steven Kennedy. A cast of 20 students will be selected this spring to tape the how-to choreography guides in New York this summer. These guides will be used in thousands of schools across the country. Last summer, a cast of 16 Junior Theater Festival students recorded a national choreography video for the soon-to-be-released musical Fame JR.

Students from Our Lady of Victory originally performed a full "Seussical Jr." production in April 2008. The Junior Theater Festival cast presented its festival presentation of "Seussical Jr." at the Ronald McDonald House. Director John Jung said of the Ronald McDonald House performance "Our students are very blessed and wish to be a blessing to others."

The Our Lady of Victory theater program encourages students to put their creativity to work through the process of helping with the entire production process. Student input is incorporated into choreography, staging, and other elements of shows. The theater program also cooperates with other programs in the area to help build great opportunities for all children.

The cast has received tremendous support from the community.

"We have several wonderful people that help with the drama program here at OLV including teachers, parents, alumni, alumni parents, and sometimes community members with big hearts," Jung said. "They help with anything including costumes, make-up, set-construction, concessions, and back-stage tech."

Our Lady of Victory cast list

JC Burg
Ryan Smith
Jay Quitter
Jordan Licata
Sammi DiTullio
Kalie Kaimann
Lizzy Puttman
Savannah Boeppler
Abby Zureick
Erin Morgan
Julie Deye
Dana Wink
Angie Lobono
Christina Diersing
Allison Seissiger
Karly Hofmann
Kelsey Finn



COURTESY OF RAVENSCROFT PUBLIC RELATIONS

Junior theatre actors pose at the end of the performance.

Young actors receive national honor

RALEIGH — Students from Durant Road Musical Theatre won a "Freddie G Outstanding Production" award for their production of *The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley JR.* at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta, Ga., Jan. 14-16.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theatre festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students and is presented by New York's iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars and sponsored by Music Theatre International and Disney Musicals.

The students were one of seven groups from across the country to earn the honor, and performed a song from the musical for all 2,200 festival attendees at the closing ceremony.

The students presented the show for adjudication by Broadway choreographer Mad-die Kelly and musical director Derek Bowley.

Bowley said about the group's performance, "This group did a super job of utilizing the special talents of various individuals, but not exploiting them. Anything in their

show that was a special skill fit the story, song or character. They are the kind of performers you can watch all day long. Their energy was infectious. They were invested in the show and invested in each other."

The cast included Christopher Rollins, Morgan Frutiger, Caitlyn Montgomery, Rachel Pottern and Trey Fitts from Wake Forest and

Tasia Whicker, Dana Grossman, Jackie Grossman, Emily Miller and Julianna Miller from Wakefield.

Y O U R C O M M U N I T Y M A T T E R S

THE WAKE FOREST WEEKLY

THE CATHOLIC COMMENTATOR

January 12, 2011 Vol. 48 No. 24

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January 12, 2011

The Catholic Commentator 11

Holy Ghost School drama club competes nationally

By Barbara Chenevert
Staff Writer

"Come with me and you'll be in a world of pure imagination."

Cinema fans and kids alike will recognize those lyrics from the movie, *Willie Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*, but for 84 students of Holy Ghost School in Hammond, the world of imagination exists in the old church, where rehearsals are underway for their most recent production.

The students are performing the play *"Willie Wonka Jr."*, an adaptation of the movie script that is filled with music, comical scenes and valuable themes.

At rehearsals, students applaud, coach each other and in general just enjoy the time.

"We have fun during practice. It's about getting everything done and having a blast," said Jennifer Dettwiller, an eighth-grade student who plays Violet Beauregarde in the play.

"I like the experience of being on stage and being a different character and performing for your friends," echoed eighth-grader Caroline Wagner, who has the role of Alice Slugworth.

The school's drama club will put on public performances of the play on Feb.



Vinnie Rusciano, front center, who plays the part of Charlie in Holy Ghost School's production of *"Willie Wonka Jr."*, leads the cast in a song. The school's drama club has been invited to put on a segment of the play at the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta. Photo by Barbara Chenevert | The Catholic Commentator

10 and 11 at the Colombia Theatre for Performing Arts. The performance has also garnered the club a return trip to the National Junior Theater Festival, held in Atlanta Jan. 14-16, the fourth time the school has been invited to the festival.

Play director Suzanne Gautier said she selected the play for the school because it is "suited to children, for children" and told "a really great story."

"The music is wonderful. The themes are acceptance, being humble, only asking for what you need," she said. She then turned to the 84 students who make up the play's cast and asked them the theme of the play.

"Telling the truth," "thinking positive," "following your dreams," "never give up," "loyalty," "respect," "faith," "determination," the kids responded.

The students auditioned for play parts in September and have been practicing two days a week after school ever since. "It's amazing, the commitment of these kids to be here after school," said assistant director Terri Morrison, a kindergarten teacher at the school.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theater festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students. Sponsored by Music Theatre International and produced by iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars, the festival draws more than 1,800 participants from 50 schools and theater groups from across the United States and Canada.

Last year Holy Ghost performed a segment from its production of *"Beauty and the Beast"*. At that festival Holy Ghost student Connor Scott won the Freddie G. Hardest Working Male individual award. Scott is cast as Willie Wonka in this year's play and is active in assisting the younger students during rehearsal. At the 2009 festival, the drama club performed a selection from Disney's *"Alice in Wonderland Jr."*

Tickets for the Hammond performance of the play are available through the Colombia Theatre, 985-543-4371.

word on the westside

Our Lady of Victory students heading to Atlanta competition

2:31 pm, Jan 6, 2011 | Written by hfallon

By Heidi Fallon • hfallon@communitypress.com



Heidi Fallon/Staff Surrounding their music, drama and theater teacher Kristie Beasley-Jung are, from left, Kalie Kaimann, Angie Lobono and Michael Ashley. The Our Lady of Victory eighth-graders are among a group of 18 students invited to compete in a national theater program in Atlanta this month.

A group of 18 talented Our Lady of Victory students are on their way to Atlanta Jan. 14.

They have been invited to participate in the Junior Theater Festival, billed as the world's largest musical theater festival dedicated to elementary and middle school students.

It is presented by Music Theatre International and produced by iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars.

The 2011 Festival will bring together more than 1,800 students, teachers, and Broadway professionals to raise their voices in celebration of on-stage and backstage excellence in musical theater.

"We're so excited," said Kristie Beasley-Jung, music, drama and theater teacher at OLV.

She's preparing the students in grades 6-8 for the 15-minute scene they'll be performing from "Seussical the Musical."

"I'm confident we'll be able to showcase the talents and abilities of the students," Beasley-Jung said. "They are a truly talented group."

Kalie Kaimann, an eighth-grader, shares her teacher's optimism.

"I really don't get nervous on stage," she said.

"You have to have that confidence and, once you're in front of an audience, you really try to focus on entertaining them.

"It's easy to forget about being nervous when you're performing."

Along with Kaimann, the group of OLV performers are:

Michael Ashley,

J.C. Burg,

Ryan Smith,

Jay Quitter,

Jordan Licata,

Sammi DiTullio,

Lizzy Puttman,

Savannah Boeppler,

Abby Zureick,

Erin Morgan,

Julie Deye,

Dana Wink,

Angie Lobono,

Christina Diersing,

Allison Seissiger,

Karly Hofmann and

Kelsey Finn.

Once they leave the Atlanta stage, the students will be heading back to continue rehearsals for their spring musical production of "High School Musical 2."



Walnut Creek's Junior Theater sends 43 kids to festival

By Deborah Burstyn
Correspondent

Posted: 01/11/2011 09:44:37 AM PST

Updated: 01/12/2011 12:19:48 PM PST



Deborah Burstyn Caption: Members of Walnut Creek Civic Arts Junior Theater ensemble practiced Jan. 6 for their performance at the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta this weekend. This marks junior theatre's fourth trip to the national festival in Atlanta.

This week when Walnut Creek's Civic Arts Junior Theater ensemble returns to the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta for a fourth time, ensemble producer Rachel Pergamit and director Nina Meehan will not attend the workshop on how to get more boys to sign up for a theater program.

That's because this is the first year since the award-winning local group of advanced performing kids has been competing at the national

invitation-only festival in Atlanta that more than a third of the kids going are boys.

"We were blown away that we had that many," said Pergamit, who wonders whether the popularity of the television show "Glee" may be responsible. "Boys typically want to participate in sports, not musical theater. But 'Glee' may have helped some of them see that they can do both." (A running motif in "Glee" is the high school football players who gotta dance -- and sing.)

Right now, all 43 kids in the Junior Theater, including 14 boys, are rehearsing their moves along with their energetic choreographer, Nicole McGann.

"Here we go, bumpity bump and bump," she shouts moving with the kids. There's clapping, waving and quick moves in formation. The students' voices blend in a tuneful rousing harmony to the live piano accompaniment provided by Kevin Weinert.

These clearly are kids who are not shy or new to stagecraft. In fact, they all had to audition to get into the Civic Arts Junior Theater. For many, it was a move up from the Kids Theater program for 7- to 12-year-olds. Junior Theater is geared to kids ages 9 to 14; teen theater offers the next level up.

Although the show they're rehearsing, "Honk" (a musical version of the Hans Christian Andersen tale "The Ugly Duckling") is 70 minutes long, they're only permitted to perform a 15-minute segment at the Atlanta competition. No sets or costumes allowed, either -- just matching ensemble T-shirts. They'll perform the full show with all the trimmings in Walnut Creek in May.

Pergamit observed the happy singing and dancing troupe of young performers as they ran through the segment yet again in the mirrored studio in the Civic Arts' Shadelands facility.

"This is an outstanding group of kids," she said. "They're one of the strongest groups we've ever had."

That's quite a statement, because in 2009, 2007 and 2005 the group took home awards from the Atlanta competition. The Walnut Creek ensemble enters the Atlanta Festival competition only every other year.

Sophia Blake, an 11-year-old Foothill Middle School student, is returning with the group for her second time at the Atlanta Festival.

"It's such a good experience," she said. "Just the feeling of being on that big stage with all the judges there is really amazing."

The \$1,200 cost to attend the festival is paid by each student. The group held fundraisers to help cover the cost for Pergamit and Meehan to attend. In addition, five parents are going along as chaperones.

"The Junior Theater Festival is a wonderful experience for these kids," said Pergamit. "They come back with a wealth of information. They learn how to get along as a traveling ensemble. They get valuable feedback from the judges who are all Broadway professionals. They get to take workshops in things like voice and improv. And they are together with over 2,000 theater kids from all over the country and even other parts of the world."

The Junior Theater Festival, the world's largest musical theater festival dedicated to elementary and middle school students, will be held at Atlanta's Cobb Galleria Center Jan. 14-16. With Disney as one of the sponsors, the kids will get to attend a Disney dance party one night and a professional production in Atlanta of Disney's Broadway musical adaptation of its own popular animated film, "Beauty and the Beast."

But will there be any "Glee"-esque spying on the other groups or attempts to psyche out rival performing groups? No, Pergamit, assures with a laugh. Life won't imitate art with hypercompetitive showdowns.

"Everyone at the festival stays very positive and very supportive of each other and the other groups," she said "No one will be getting a Slushy thrown in their face."



A community site dedicated to serving your community

Students celebrate MLK day at festival

From staff reports editor@dawsonnews.com

POSTED: January 19, 2011 4:00 a.m.

Students from Dawson County who took part in the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta over the weekend also visited the "I Have a Dream" booth at the event in remembrance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s contributions to history.

"Dreambooths" were created so that students could record and share their dreams and aspirations with the rest of the festival's attendees.

Those who attended locally were art groups from the Dawson County Arts Council, as well as students from the Holly Theatre in Lumpkin County.

The Dawson County Arts Council students performed selections from the musical "Guys and Dolls Jr."

They also performed selections from Disney's "Winnie the Pooh Kids" for all those in attendance.

Theater & Dance

Curtain Calls

By Sally Hogarty
Columnist

Posted: 01/06/2011 12:00:00 AM PST

Good luck to the 43 young thespians of Youth Theatre Company's Junior Theatre. The group is preparing to go to Atlanta to compete in the International Jr. Theatre Festival on Jan. 14. The performers, ages 9 to 14, will perform scenes from "Honk, Jr." as well as attend workshops from theatrical pros. At past festivals, the group has captured awards for Best Choreography, Best Ensemble Performance, and Best Female Performer.



A community site dedicated to serving your community

Local thespians honored

From staff reports editor@dawsonnews.com

POSTED: February 9, 2011 4:00 a.m.

Theater students from the Dawson County Arts Council were honored during the 2011 Junior Theater Festival on Jan. 14-16 in Atlanta.

Kealy Ford was awarded the Freddie G Outstanding Broadway Junior Slam award in a theatrical challenge in which students had to stage and perform a musical piece in one hour.

Arts council student Sean Newman was one of eight students named to the Junior Theater Festival Technical Theatre All-Stars. He worked side-by-side with technical theatre professionals during the festival.

Parker Davenport and Hanna Slaughter were named to the Junior Theater Festival All-Stars, made up of two outstanding students from each group at the festival.

The Dawson County Arts Council performed selections from the musical "Guys and Dolls Jr."

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theatre festival dedicated to groups working elementary and middle school students.

The logo for Ask Asheville is set within a purple rectangular frame. The word "Ask" is in yellow and "Asheville" is in white. Below the main text, the words "Asheville, NC" are written in a smaller, purple, cursive-style font.

Ask Asheville

Asheville, NC

Friday, January 21, 2011

**ASHEVILLE ARTS CENTER ACADEMY TO PERFORM
WINNING COMPETITION PIECES AT THE HOP!**

Asheville Arts Center's Academy students won big in the 2011 National Junior Theatre Festival again this year! In celebration of their victories, THE HOP: 640 Merrimon Avenue #103, Asheville, NC 28804, has invited the national award-winning ACADEMY students to perform their pieces for the public, this coming **THURSDAY, JANUARY 27TH AT 6:00PM.**

Asheville Art Center's ACADEMY will perform three, 15-minute selections from PIRATES OF PENZANCE JR, INTO THE WOODS JR, and GUYS AND DOLLS Jr. The shows are full of acting, singing, and dancing fun that is completely family-friendly. In addition, our new dancer, Lindsey Kelley, will be doing dance demonstrations to mark the beginning of our new dance program!

Asheville Arts Center's Academy is an after-school conservatory program for young artists ages 7 to 18. Students take a dance class, a voice class, and an acting class weekly, in a prestigious curriculum, which touches on most major forms of acting, dance, and voice technique. Students also rehearse 4 hours each week for the Academy theatrical productions.

The ACADEMY is made up of 47 kids from ages 7 to 18, from Buncombe, Madison, and Haywood counties.

On the heels of this competition, Music Theatre International has asked the Asheville Arts Center's Academy students to perform the WORLD PREMIERE of FINIAN'S RAINBOW, Jr. They begin rehearsals for the production this week, and will perform it in May. Representatives from Music Theatre International, who are working Broadway professionals, will fly down from New York City to work with the cast midway through the rehearsal process, and will attend the premiere.

For questions or more information, please contact Ann Mahoney Kadar, Drama Department Director, at ann@ashevilleartscenter.com, 828-253-4000.



THE BAY AREA CITIZEN

50 years serving the Bay Area

50 CENTS

Page 2B, Bay Area Citizen, Thursday, January 6, 2011

EDUCATION

Theatre students invited to compete at national festival next week

Students from Bay Area Theatre and Voice Academy (BATAVA) have yet again earned a national honor. Not only have they been accepted into the invitation-only 2011 Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta, Ga., Jan. 14-16, but they have also been selected to perform a song (yet to be announced) at the 1,800-plus festival attendees.

The 26 students, ages 11-18, will present selections from *Fiddler on the Roof Jr.* at the festival. The students presented the full show in the Bay Area in November. In preparation for the show, the cast explored the Jewish religion and

its traditions as well as Tsarist Russia, in order to present an accurate picture of a Jewish community in the early 1900s in Russia. The cast also took part in in-depth discussions about the Jewish faith and its traditions so that they would have a complete understanding of their characters.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theatre festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students and is presented by Music Theatre International and produced by iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars. The 2011 Festival will be held at the

Cobb Galleria Centre in Atlanta and will bring together more than 1,800 students, teachers, and Broadway professionals to raise their voices in celebration of on-stage and backstage excellence in musical theater.

BATAVA students also attended the 2010 Junior Theater Festival. At the 2010 festival, the students won a "Freddie G Outstanding Production award" and Bay Area Theatre and Vocal Academy student Brandon Mayville also earned an "Freddie G Outstanding Individual Achievement: Male" award for their performance of Disney's Alice

in *Wonderland Jr.*

In January, the Bay Area Theatre & Voice Academy will be entering its fourth year. BATAVA offers private voice and piano lessons as well as musical theatre workshop productions, and classes on acting techniques, musical theatre dance, and Introduction to musical theatre for ages 6-18. The website is www.batava.org.

BATAVA works with students of all ages and levels, including All State choir members, students who compete in national competitions.

The BATAVA Junior Theater Festival Team includes Ja-

son Broussard, 17, of Clear Springs High, Hunter Burke, 13, of Westbrook Intermediate, Ashley Devereux, 16, of Clear Springs, Andrew Fleming, 11, of Seabrook Intermediate, Sarah Fleming, 13, of Victory Lakes Intermediate, Emily Flynt, 12, of Clear Creek Intermediate, Kayla Fore, 16, of Clear Lake High, Bailey Glenn, 13, of Westbrook Intermediate, Gillian Glenn, 11, of Westbrook, Matthew Hailey, 12, of Creekside Intermediate, Bobby Hewitt, 15, of Clear Creek High, Emily Lewis, 13, of Victory Lakes Intermediate, Brandon Mayville, 12, of Creekside In-

termediate, Max Morgan, 12, of Space Center Intermediate, Katie Sharp, 11, of Friendswood Junior High, Jessie Sieling, 12, of Victory Lakes Intermediate, Ryan Sieling, 14, of Clear Creek, Taylor Seiling, 16, of Clear Creek, Laurel Smalley, 16, of Clear Springs, Zachary Smith, 17, of Santa Fe High, Eden Thiess, 12, of Clear Creek Intermediate, Cecile Wahl, 13, of Clear Creek Intermediate, Andie White, 13, of League City Intermediate, Devin Whitten, 18, of Clear Springs High, Anna Young, 14, of Clear Falls High and David Young, 12, of Westbrook Intermediate.

The Bay Area Citizen

Bay Area students win national awards at theatre festival

Posted: Friday, January 28, 2011 12:41 pm

Students from Bay Area Theatre and Voice Academy (BATAVA) in League City and The Academy at Theatre Under the Stars (TUTS) in Houston earned national awards at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta Jan. 14-16.

BATAVA students earned a "Freddie G Outstanding Production" award for their presentation of selections from Fiddler on the Roof JR.

The 26 BATAVA students, ages 11 –18, presented selections from Fiddler on the Roof JR.

As a result of winning the "Outstanding Production" award, the students performed a song from the musical for all 2,200 attendees at the closing ceremonies.

For more information about BATAVA, visit www.batava.org.

The Evangel Times Evangel Christian Academy Shreveport, LA

At-a-glance

DRAMATIC Results

Tuesday, February 01, 2011 By Claudia Feliciano

On January 15-16, the Academy of Children's Theatre (ACT) participated at the Junior Theatre Festival in Atlanta, Georgia. This musical competition consisted of 54 drama companies across the United States including some Evangel students- Brooke Reedy, Candace Gandy, Kyra Mosley, Trevor Van Eaton, and Bailey Fielder. Accompanying them were Evangel's drama teacher Cynthia Whitaker and anatomy teacher Jan Reedy. Their assistance not only helped students focus on their tasks, but also helped encourage and motivate them.

For their competition entry, ACT performed a piece from the set of *Beauty and the Beast* and impressed the judges with their hard work and dedication. Awards such as most outstanding acting, most outstanding female performer, most hardworking female (Candace Gandy), Junior Slam Actor (Trevor Van Eaton), and overall best acting performance were presented to Shreveport's very own ACT team. This also resulted in exclusive awards and opportunities for students, like the chance to audition for a promotional DVD in New York.

It doesn't take talent alone for young drama students to inspire anyone with eyes to see. It takes passion and commitment. That's exactly what the Academy of Children's Theatre brought to the table in Atlanta, and the Evangel family is exceedingly proud of their drama students.

Mountain Xpress

Asheville Arts Center's Academy wins big in Junior Theatre Festival

Posted by [Mackensy Lunsford](#) in [News](#) | 20 hours, 48 minutes ago

19February 19, 2011

From an AACA press release:

"Asheville Arts Center's Academy students won big in the 2011 National Junior Theatre Festival again this year! Their production of Pirates of Penzance took home the award for best overall acting and 14 year-old Connor Dalton took the best overall actor award. Their production of Into the Woods won the award for best overall music direction, and 13 year-old Lincoln Belford took the best overall actor award.

The students competed against two thousand others from around the United States and Canada.

Pirates of Penzance Jr. director and choreographer, Ann Mahoney Kadar says, "The greatest compliment we received throughout the weekend was actually unrelated to our kids' talent. The festival's team remarked on numerous occasions that the humility and team spirit the Asheville Arts Center's Academy displayed was exemplary. They have the talent but also the heart. I could not be more proud of them!"

Asheville Arts Center's Academy is an afterschool conservatory program for young artists ages 7 to 18. Students take a dance class, a voice class and an acting class weekly in a curriculum that touches on most major forms of acting, dance and voice technique. Students also rehearse 4 hours each week for the Academy theatrical productions."

For more, click on the link below:

The Friendswood Journal

Junior theater and voice students shine in the national spotlight



The Bay Area Theatre and Voice Academy (BATAVA) in League City earned two national awards at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival earlier this month in Atlanta.

Posted: Tuesday, February 8, 2011 1:39 pm

By JEFF NEWPHER | 0 comments

Students from The Bay Area Theatre and Voice Academy (BATAVA) in League City earned two national awards at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival earlier this month in Atlanta.

BATAVA earned a "Freddie G Outstanding Production" award for its presentation of selections from "Fiddler on the Roof JR".

Friendswood Junior High sixth grader Katie Sharp played the "Fiddler".

Sharp said instant reviews included, "We were fabulous as a group, they liked our vocals and harmonies and our lead actor."

BATAVA student Zach Smith earned a "Freddie G Outstanding Male Performance" award at the festival.

Sharp is 11 years old and wants to continue her career in drama and dance. "I've been doing it since I was five and I just love it. It is really fun. Going to the Junior Theater Festival is a fun experience."

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theatre festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students and is presented by New York's iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars.

It is sponsored by Music Theatre International and Disney Musicals.

As winners, the 26 BATAVA students, ages 11 to 18, performed a song from Fiddler on the Roof JR. at the Festival closing ceremonies for all 2,200 attendees.

Steven Kennedy, iTheatrics' Resident Choreographer said about BATAVA, "This cast is wonderfully talented and treat their craft and each other with tremendous respect. Their performance was so precise, while remaining spontaneous. They were a joy to watch."

BATAVA students Devin Whitten and Zachary Smith were named to the Broadway JR. All-Stars, a group of stellar performers representing each of the 54 student groups from across the country at the festival.

The students performed the song "Play My Music" from Camp Rock: the Musical at the closing ceremonies.

BATAVA students Sarah Fleming and Brandon Mayville were 2 of the attendees invited to a final call-back audition for the MTI choreography DVDs, led by Kennedy.

A cast of 20 students will be selected to tape the How-to choreography DVD guides in New York this summer. These guides will be used in thousands of schools across the country.

Bay Area Theatre & Voice Academy is now in its' 4th year. BATAVA offers private voice and piano lessons as well as musical theatre workshop productions, and classes on acting techniques, musical theatre dance, and introduction to musical theatre for ages 6-18.

Their website is www.batava.org

Mountain XPress

Asheville Arts Center students head to the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta

Posted by [Aiyanna Sezak-Blatt](#) in [Entertainment](#) | 3 days, 22 hours ago

Young actors and musicians with the Asheville Arts Center will be attending the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta, held this Friday, Jan. 14 through Sunday, Jan. 16. The "three days of musical theater madness," will include theater workshops for kids, professional development classes, a technical theater track program, awards and a "Radio Disney Dance Party," as stated on the Junior Theater Festival's brochure. This will be the second year that AAC students will be participating. As Allison Ravenscroft, the publicist for the Junior Theater Festival, writes, "Not only have the students, ages 7-17, been accepted into the invitation only 2011 Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta, but the group has been hand-picked to perform a selection from 'Guys and Dolls JR.' for all 2,100 festival attendees at the Disney Musicals New Works Showcase."

AAC students excelled at the 2010 Junior Theater Festival and claimed a number of honors and awards, including the Freddie G Broadway Junior Spirit Award and Freddie G Excellence in Choreography and Student Direction Award. For details see "Asheville Arts Center and MusicWorks! students claim prestigious awards," at http://www.mountainx.com/ae/2010/asheville_arts_center_and_musicworks_students_claim_prestigious_awards.

Academy Students Head to National Festival

The Academy Jr. group, consisting of 21 students, ages 7-13 will present Into the Woods JR. for adjudication at the festival, while the Academy Sr. group of 28 students, ages 7 - 18 will present Pirates of Penzance JR. The Asheville Arts Academy students traveling to the festival attend the following schools: T.C. Roberson High, Asheville Middle, Asheville High, Asheville Catholic, Odyssey School, Hanger Hall for Girls, AC Reynolds Middle, AC Reynolds High, Isaac Dickson Elementary, Claxton Elementary, Jones Elementary, Cane Creek Middle, Haw Creek Elementary and New Classical Academy.

The groups presented full productions of Into the Woods JR. and Pirates of Penzance JR. in December 2010 at the Asheville Arts Center.

The students in The Academy also performed at a November Donor Dinner fundraiser that benefits The Academy Scholarship Fund for the 20% of students on full scholarship at the Academy.

Both groups have worked very hard to create the world of their musical. Each cast member of the Into the Woods JR. cast, directed by Heather Taft, has created elaborate back stories for his or her character, in order to make more specific choices on stage.

The members of The Pirates of Penzance JR. cast are required to speak in dialect the moment that they step into the rehearsal hall. Furthermore, The Pirates of Penzance JR. director Ann Mahoney Kadar has her cast doing "double character work," in that each student is also pretending to be a member of the "D'Oyly Carte Theatre Company," a theatre company in the late 1800s which produced Gilbert and Sullivan works exclusively. So each student is creating his or her own D'Oyly Carte Theatre Company member character as well as his or her Pirates of Penzance JR. character. The exercise has given the cast the opportunity to explore Victorian Society, as well as its customs and values.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theatre festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students and is presented by Music Theatre International and produced by iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars. The 2011 Festival will be held at the Cobb Galleria Centre in Atlanta, GA and will bring together more than 2,100 students, teachers, and Broadway professionals to raise their voices in celebration of on-stage and backstage excellence in musical theater.

The Asheville Arts Center Academy students attended the Junior Theater Festival in January 2010 for the first time and enjoyed much success there. At the 2010 Festival, the students won the "Freddie G Broadway Junior Spirit Award," the top award, as well as a "Freddie G Achievement in Acting Award" for its presentation of Disney's Alice in Wonderland JR. and student Asheville Center Acting Academy student Mary Katherine O'Donnel won an "Freddie G Outstanding Individual: Female award."

Drawing over 2,100 attendees from 50 schools and educational theater groups from across the United States and Canada, the Junior Theater Festival offers an enthusiastic environment for students and teachers to interact with thousands of others who share their passion for musical theater. Each group performs a 15-minute selection of a musical for professional adjudication by a panel of distinguished theater professionals. In addition, both students and teachers participate in interactive workshops led by Broadway and West End professionals, gain from professional development, enjoy theatrical fellowship and attend a world-class professional production of Disney's Beauty and the Beast at the fabulous Fox Theatre. In true Junior Theater Festival form, student techies work side-by-side with festival staff in running all aspects of the festival experience.

While the festival isn't about creating the stars of tomorrow, many of the stars of today play a role. This year festival's special guests include four-time Tony nominated composer Jeanine Tesori (Thoroughly Modern Millie, Shrek the Musical); Broadway producer and Disney Theatricals President Thomas Schumacher; Grammy award-winning musician, producer and songwriter Bryan-Michael Cox; Broadway director, choreographer and performer Baayork Lee, who originated the role of Connie in A Chorus Line; Tony Award winning lighting designer Ken Billington (Chicago, The Scottsboro Boys) who has worked on over 90 Broadway shows; Broadway performer and choreographer Maddie Kelly (Chita Rivera: The Dancer's Life and Taboo);

Broadway Sound designer Matt Kraus (Liza at the Palace and Lone Star Love); actor Stephen Eng (The King and I and Pacific Overtures); Brad Simmons, the music director and head of the Juniors Program for The O'Neill Theatre Center; Nick Pramik, Director of the Marketing and Partnerships at SpotCo, leading entertainment advertising agency and Broadway, film, and television wardrobe specialist Jay Woods. Last year's festival attendees included Stephen Schwartz (Wicked, Godspell), Playbill columnist and Talkin' Broadway radio host Seth Rudetsky, and Broadway actor Rashad Naylor (Hairspray, in the Chicago Company of Jersey Boys); while in former years celebrity attendees have included Zac Efron, Disney Theatrical President and Broadway producer Thomas Schumacher, and Broadway actors Henry Hodges (Mary Poppins), Jenn Colella (High Fidelity, Urban Cowboy), Jenifer Foote (A Chorus Line, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels), Christy Carlson Romano (Kim Possible, Disney's Beauty and the Beast, Avenue Q) and American Idol's musical director Michael Orland.

Beginning in 2010, the festival has paid tribute to the leadership and dedication of Music Theatre International (MTI) Chairman Freddie Gershon by renaming its student awards for excellence in theater "The Freddie G's." In 1995, Gershon created MTI Education, the first educational division in a major musical theater licensing firm, which over the past 15 years has literally transformed the marketplace for age appropriate performance material for young performers.

The first Junior Theater Festival was held in January of 2003 and featured the premieres of new MTI Education Broadway Junior titles Honk JR., Dear Edwina JR. and Godspell JR. The 2005 festival featured celebrity guest Christy Carlson Romano and the world premiere of the Disney Collection of Musicals. In 2007 the festival went international, and festival highlights included guest appearances by Zac Efron and American Idol's Michael Orland, plus the world stage premiere of Disney's High School Musical. In 2009, Disney Theatrical Group President Thomas Schumacher was the keynote speaker with appearances by Broadway stars Henry Hodges, Jenifer Foote and Jenn Colella. Starting in 2010, the festival will become an annual event.

iTheatrics' Junior Teaching Intensives provide professional development for teachers in the area of musical theater and its Junior Theater Academy provides young artists with an innovative outlet for developing their skills as performers and artists.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Bay Area Theatre and Voice Academy students were invited to the 2011 Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta.

Theater group takes their show on the road

By JEFF NEWPHER

jnewpher@hcnonline.com

Students from Bay Area Theatre and Voice Academy (BATAVA) are going on the road again, this time to Atlanta.

They have been invited to perform at the Junior Theater Festival in mid-January.

The 26 students making the trip, ages 11 to 18, will present selections from "Fiddler on the Roof".

Katie Sharp was "The Fiddler" in the local production.

She said she has been performing musical theater "for a long time".

Sharp is 11 and a student at Friendswood Junior High School.

She went to the Festival with BATAVA before.

"Last year out of 50 groups, we were one of the six that won. It's a really big honor," she said.

BATAVA won a "Freddie G Outstanding Production" award.

Student Brandon Mayville earned an "Freddie G Outstanding Individual Achievement: Male" award.

The Festival involves more than 1,800 students, teachers and Broadway professionals.

One of the highlights is meeting people who make a living in theater, Sharp said.

"This year I think we're going to meet Alan Menken. He wrote the music for "Tangled" and a lot of other Disney movies."

BATAVA Junior Theater Festival Team members are: Jason Broussard, Hunter

Burke, Ashley Devereux, Andrew Fleming, Sarah Fleming, Emily Flynt, Kayla Fore, Bailey Glenn, Gillian Glenn, Matthew Hailey, Bobby Hewitt, Emily Lewis, Brandon Mayville, Max Morgan, Katie Sharp, Jessi Sieling, Ryan Sieling, Taylor Sieling, Laurel Smalley, Zachary Smith, Eden Thiess, Cecilie Wahl, Andie White, Devin Whitten, Anna Young and David Young.

BATAVA is about to turn four years old.

They offer private voice and piano lessons and musical theatre workshop productions.

They also have classes for acting, musical theatre dance, and Introduction to musical theatre for ages 6-18.

Their website is www.batava.org

OAK PARK OAK LEAVES

JANUARY 27, 2011



BRAVO cast performed "Beauty and the Beast Jr." in Atlanta.

BRAVO takes top honors at festival

For the second straight year, Oak Park students in the fine and performing arts program of BRAVO did exceedingly well at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta on Jan. 15-16.

Forty students from Brooks Middle School were among 2,200 who participated in the event.

Brooks students earned the festival's top honor of Outstanding Production for its production of "Beauty and the Beast," besting 54 schools from across the country for the award.

In addition, student Brando Crawford earned the



The BRAVO cast won Outstanding Production at a festival in Atlanta.

award for Outstanding Male Performer.

Beyond capturing these two prestigious awards, BRAVO was one of four

groups invited to perform during the Disney Theatrical New Works Showcase, which was attended by all festival attendees.

January 19, 2011

Vol. 31, No. 30

ONE DOLLAR

W E D N E S D A Y JOURNAL

of Oak Park and River Forest

DISTRICT 97: WHO MAKES THE CUT?



File 2010/J. Geil

EN GARDE: Students from Percy Julian Middle School in Oak Park rehearse their production of *Peter Pan* at the school's theater last November.

'The integration of the arts, sciences and languages is key'

By **TERRY DEAN**
Staff Reporter

If Dist. 97's April 5 referendum fails, officials say drastic cuts will have to be made to fill its budget deficit. In the upcoming weeks leading up to the vote, Wednesday Journal will look at some of the programs on the reduction list. In this issue, BRAVO and CAST.

Bill McGlynn has created a lot of memories through Oak Park District 97's CAST performing arts program.

He's been director of the Julian Middle School program since 1997 but was also a student performer when he was kid growing up in Oak Park.

It was in the 1985-1986 school year when McGlynn was a student at Hawthorne School — now Julian, 416 S. Ridgeland — and participated in a class play. CAST, as a full-fledged district program, didn't exist yet. Some parents and teachers helped put on the play. The two parents ended up founding what

would become CAST, which is celebrating its 25th year in the district this year. BRAVO at Brooks Middle School, 325 S. Kenilworth, was created in 1995 at then-Emerson School.

Both programs have grown to involve more than 200 kids as stage performers, set designers and stage hands, among other activities at each school, putting on productions throughout the school year. The program also invites professionals to instruct and even perform in stage productions.

With a degree in middle school education and theater arts, McGlynn said it was his involvement onstage that sparked his interest in performing arts, becoming an actor and writer before moving into education.

CAST and BRAVO are being celebrated in the district by those with and without kids in the schools. So many were undoubtedly concerned when both programs appeared on the list of reductions the board of

■ **Proposed savings**
\$277,400

education approved last week for elimination in case voters reject the April 5 referendum.

McGlynn shares the view held by others about these various programs — that all are important to the district. But McGlynn and supporters of CAST and BRAVO insist that both programs are central to the overall curriculum, not just performing arts add-ons. That was the intention as both programs grew over the years, he recalled. When he returned to Oak Park to take over as program director in '97, CAST was fully entrenched in the curriculum and has remained so.

He and other CAST staff regularly meet with core subject teachers. Though some productions are planned well in advance, some plays come out of those teacher discussions. McGlynn recalled a discussion about the Lorraine Hansberry play *A Raisin in the Sun* that students were reading in class. CAST ended up performing

the play. The classroom impact also extends to such courses as math and science.

The set designers, McGlynn explained, often use what they learned in math class to figure out dimensions in set pieces.

"These connections are made across the curriculum," he said. "That's really part of the middle-school approach in Oak Park. The integration of the arts, sciences and languages is key. It requires a strong relationship between teachers and co-curriculars."

District administration has tentatively talked about how each program can survive, perhaps with volunteers. Officials, though, have admitted it wouldn't be the exact same programs.

McGlynn and other art program supporters argue that the programs are self-sustaining. The district provides some funds for support staff but the shows themselves, along with parent-led fundraisers, pay for the program. Both have parent advisory boards — the CAST Council at Julian and Parent Advisory Board at Brooks.

Parents from both schools spoke on behalf of their programs at the Jan. 11 Dist. 97 school board meeting. The board at that meeting approved the \$5.7 million in cuts. They echoed many of the points McGlynn made in speaking with Wednesday Journal

late last week.

"It would be a tremendous loss," he said.

As for outsourcing for volunteers, McGlynn doubts how successful that would be. Though McGlynn didn't want to speak for that BRAVO, he believes that to maintain both programs, some kind of corporate

sponsor might be needed. Parents could be asked to try and raise money to pay for a director or permanent staff person, but McGlynn said that's really outside the bounds of the middle schools. Shifting expenses to other taxing bodies might also be problematic, given the financial strain on those budgets, he added.

Then there are the summer camps that both programs run and what would happen to those?

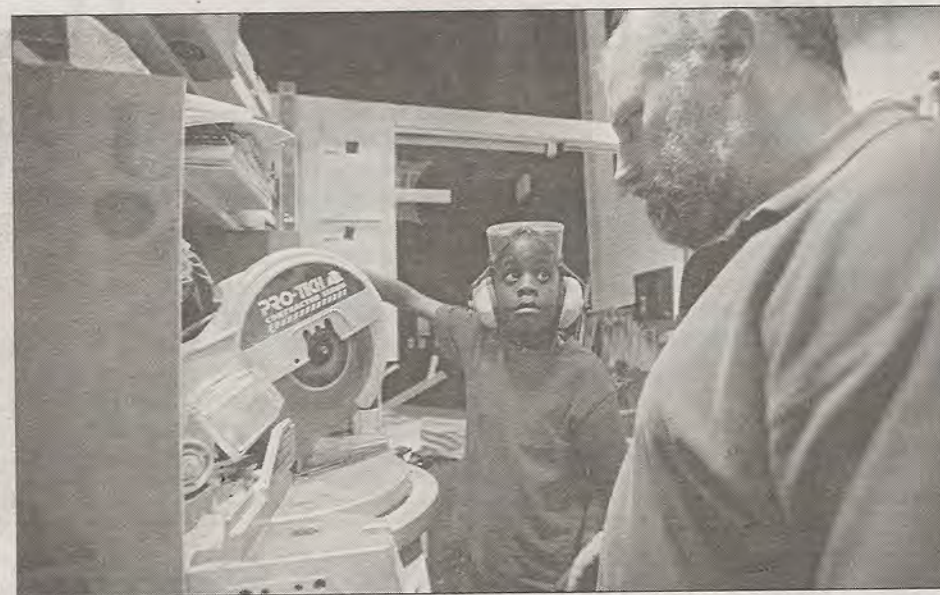
McGlynn said he's not thinking about what will happen if the referendum fails — he'll deal with whatever happens at that time. Instead, he and other supporters will work to make sure it does pass. That, he insisted, will involve convincing other voters to support it.

"It feels like a duty of ours to keep it," he said. "Our intention is to use our energy to make the argument that we need to keep it here, and not thinking about anything else."

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**"These connections
are made across
the curriculum.
That's really part of
the middle-school
approach in Oak Park."**

BILL MCGLYNN
Director of CAST



File 2010/J. Geil

BEHIND THE SCENES: Jordan Towe, 10, learned about set construction last June during the production of *Cinderella* at Brooks Middle School.

BRAVO tops again at Atlanta Theater Fest

BRAVO received the Outstanding Production Award over the weekend for their production of *Beauty and the Beast* at the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta, Ga. Competing against 54 schools nationwide, this is the second consecutive year

BRAVO has earned the top honor. Also this weekend, student performer Brando Crawford was recognized with the Outstanding Male Performer Award at the festival.

—Terry Dean

Asheville Citizen-Times

Asheville-area school kudos

4:42 PM, Feb. 4, 2011

Arts center academy students earn honors

ASHEVILLE – Asheville Arts Center's Academy students won big in the 2011 National Junior Theatre Festival again this year. Their production of “Pirates of Penzance Jr.” took best overall acting, and student Connor Dalton took the best overall actor award.

Their production of “Into the Woods Jr.” took best overall music direction, and Lincoln Belford won best overall actor.

Cast members Ruby Neu, Tim Bates, Julia Williams and Kevin Foster were nominated for the all-stars group; and Belford is a finalist in the competition to be a featured dancer on the next choreography DVD to be filmed in New York.

Music Theatre International has asked the academy students to perform the world premiere of “Finian's Rainbow Jr.” The performance is in May.

Neu is a student at Odyssey School. Bates attends Asheville Catholic, Williams is home-schooled, and Dalton attends Roberson High School.



Algiers boy wins top honors at theater festival in Atlanta

Published: Thursday, February 10, 2011, 1:01 AM Updated: Thursday, February 10, 2011, 8:37 AM



By **Melinda Morris, The Times-Picayune**



Aaron Richert of Algiers, who recently won top honors at a theater competition in Atlanta, portrayed Ralphie in the JPAS production of 'A Christmas Story' at the Westwego Performing Arts Theatre recently.

Aaron Richert, an 11-year-old from Algiers, was named an "All-Star" for his outstanding individual performance at the 2011 iTheatrics Junior Theatre Festival in Atlanta in January.

Also, Aaron and the other members of the Jefferson Performing Arts Society's Theatre Kids! competition team, under the direction of Lynne L. Bordelon and Tammy Mansfield with Justine Anderson, won first place "Outstanding Performance" in their division for their performance of selections from "Seussical, the Musical Jr."

They competed with 2,200 young performers from 54 theater groups throughout the nation.

Bordelon was awarded the Freddie G. Teaching Experience for her work with the JPAS Theatre Kids! competition team. Bordelon will have the opportunity to study in New York City with musical theater industry leaders in July.

Aaron attends Lusher Charter School and was last seen on the JPAS stage as Ralphie in "A Christmas Story" at the Westwego Performing Arts Theatre. He appeared as Winthrop in the Tulane Summer Lyric production of "The Music Man" last summer and won a Big Easy award for Best Performance by a Child for his role of Oliver in the Summer Lyric production of "Oliver" in 2009.

Aaron studies dance at Metropolitan Dance Theatre and sings in the St. Louis Cathedral Boychoir.

Other West Bank members of the JPAS competition team are: Serguis Centanni and Brandon Wilkie, both of Marrero; Coldin Grundmeyer, of Belle Chasse; and Gabriella Trentecoste, of Gretna.

Schools [More Schools >](#)

From the community

BRAVO Program Earns Top Awards During Junior Theater Festival



By [Chris Jasculca](#) Jan. 18 at 9:35 p.m.



Members of the BRAVO cast who performed during the 2011 Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta

Approximately 40 students from Gwendolyn Brooks Middle School's BRAVO program were among the 2200 who recently traveled to Atlanta for the 2011 Junior Theater Festival. For the second straight year, BRAVO earned the festival's top honor of Outstanding Production for its production of *Beauty and the Beast* – besting 54 schools from across the country for the award. In addition, student Brando Crawford earned the award for Outstanding Male Performer.

Beyond capturing these two prestigious awards, BRAVO was one of four groups invited to perform during the Disney Theatrical New Works Showcase, which was attended by all festival attendees.

Additional information about the BRAVO program can be accessed by visiting <http://sites.google.com/site/brooksbravo/Home>.



Louie Louie: Crescent City Lights Youth Theater takes home two awards from Atlanta festival

Published: Wednesday, January 19, 2011, 7:43 PM Updated: Wednesday, January 19, 2011, 7:57 PM



By **Andrew Adler**

A tunelessly savvy connection between the Crescent City Lights Youth Theater and composer/lyricist Stephen Schwartz earned the New Orleans troupe a pair of significant out-of-town prizes earlier this month.

Fourteen actors, ages 9 to 15, performed an excerpt from Schwartz's "Captain Louie" at the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta. Described as "the world's largest musical theater festival dedicated to groups working with elementary through high school students," the event involved upwards of 2,000 students, teachers and theater pros.

So what did the CCLYT come way with? "Outstanding achievement in Music," for one; and Best Actor – the latter going to 11-year-old Tucker Godbold for his portrayal of Louie.

"Captain Louie" (sometimes called "Captain Louie, Jr.") is a bit of an odd bird. Schwartz wrote the slender musical in the mid-1980s as more of an exercise than a full-blown stage piece, crafting a boy-lost-in-a-new-neighborhood tale based on Ezra Jack Keats' "The Trip." It was a decidedly tamer piece than works like "Godspell" and "Pippin," which earlier had established Schwartz's reputation – not to mention "Wicked," his 2003 Broadway behemoth.

Still, there's always a healthy market for "family-friendly" musicals, and on that score, particularly after its 2005 revision that almost doubled its length to around an hour, "Captain Louie" has enjoyed a fair measure of success.

You can catch Crescent City Lights' production Jan. 21 through Jan. 30 performances are Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 1 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m.

All performances are given at the NORD Ty Tracy Theatre on the first floor of Gallier Hall, located at 545 St. Charles Ave. Tickets are \$15. You can buy them online at www.crescentcitylights.org, and if you need to know anything else, call the CCLYT at (504) 598-3800.



Theatre Kids! performers take first in festival

Published: Thursday, February 10, 2011, 1:00 AM Updated: Thursday, February 10, 2011, 8:39 AM



By **Eva Jacob Barkoff, The Times-Picayune**

By Eva Jacob Barkoff, East Jefferson bureau



The members of the Jefferson Performing Arts Society's Theatre Kids! pose with their trophy for outstanding performance in their division at the iTheatrics Junior Theatre Fest in Atlanta Jan. 14-16.

The Jefferson Performing Arts Society's (JPAS) Theatre Kids! recently earned top honors at the 2011 iTheatrics Junior Theatre Festival, which was held in Atlanta.

The youngsters won first place in their division for their performance of selections from "Seussical the Musical Jr."

The JPAS Theatre Kids! competed among 2,200 young performers from 54 theater groups throughout the nation.

Also, Aaron Richert and Madison Smither were named all-stars for outstanding individual performances at the festival.

And Theatre Kids! director Lynne Bordelon was awarded the Freddie G. Teaching Experience for her work with the JPAS Theatre Kids! competition team. She will now

have the opportunity to study in New York City with musical theater industry leaders in July.

Members of the Theatre Kids! competition team are Bailey Bourgeois, of Harahan; Serguis Centanni and Brandon Wilkie, of Marrero; Jordan Cruse, Michelle Giacontiere, Meghan Lovelace and Jorden Majeau, of Metairie; Rebecca D'Antonio, Lauren Hatfield, Julia Lemann, Madison Smither and Olivia K. Worley, of New Orleans; Ross Quinn, Camille Rozas and Ellie Rozas, of River Ridge; Elizabeth Donner, of Kenner; Coldin Grundmeyer, of Belle Chasse; Aaron Richert, of Algiers; Gabriella Trentecoste, of Gretna; and Riley Tafaro, of St. Rose.

The JPAS Theatre Kids! competition team is program that focuses on musical performance and teamwork. It is open to youngsters ages 7 to 12. Members study and prepare an abridged version of a musical and compete against other youth theater groups from across the country.

This was the first year JPAS Theatre Kids! competed in the festival.

The program gives children opportunities to participate in theater, experience the process of putting on a show and learn basic acting techniques and skills.

JPAS will hold auditions for it's new Theatre Kids! 2012 competition team in this spring.

For more information about the program, call the JPAS office in Metairie at 504.885.2000.

E-mail Eva Barkoff at ebarkoff@timespicayune.com

Edgecomb Neighbors

Jo Cameron's Edgecomb Column

January 27, 2011

Congratulations once again to The Boothbay Region Y-ARTS group, recently returned from Atlanta, where they earned the Freddie G Outstanding Production Award at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival. Edgecomb students who participated in this festival were Cameron Crocker, Hunter Crocker, Erin Densmore, Nicholas Morley and Draco Peaslee.

Draco's grandmother, Eleanor Peaslee, says it was his first time away from home. Upon his return, he announced to his family that "I have learned I'm a country boy, not a city boy."



BRAVO tops again at Atlanta Theater Fest

Tuesday, January 18th, 2011 10:00 PM

BRAVO received the Outstanding Production Award over the weekend for their production of Beauty and the Beast at the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta, Ga. Competing against 54 schools nationwide, this is the second consecutive year BRAVO has earned the top honor.

Also this weekend, student performer Brando Crawford was recognized with the Outstanding Male Performer Award at the festival.



JPAS Theatre Kids! Garner Top Honors at The 2011 iTheatrics Jr Theatre Fest

Recently, the JPAS Theatre Kids! garnered top honors at the 2011 iTheatrics Junior Theatre Festival in Atlanta, GA January 14-16, 2011. Under the direction of Lynne L. Bordelon and Tammy Mansfield with Justine Anderson, the JPAS Theatre Kids Competition Team won first place "Outstanding Performance" in their division for their performance of selections from SEUSSICAL, THE MUSICAL, JR. The JPAS Theatre Kids competed among 2200 young performers from 54 theatre groups throughout the nation. Each member of the JPAS Theatre Kids! Competition Team of 20 young actors ages 10-12 years old was also invited to the Musical Theatre International (MTI) Choreography DVD audition where they had a chance to wow the judges for an opportunity to perform in a nationally distributed MTI Choreography Instructional DVD. In addition, JPAS Theatre Kids! [Aaron Richert](#) and [Madison Smither](#) were named "All-Stars" for outstanding individual performances at the festival!. Finally, Director Lynne L. Bordelon was awarded the Freddie G. Teaching Experience for her work with the JPAS Theatre Kids! Competition Team. Bordelon will have the opportunity to study in New York City with musical theatre industry leaders this upcoming July 2011! Jefferson Performing Arts Society wishes to congratulate these amazing young performers and their families!

The 2011 JPAS Theatre Kids! Competition Team is: Bailey Bourgeois, Serguis Centanni, Jordan Cruse, Rebecca D'Antonio, Elizabeth Donner, Michelle Giacontiere, Coldin Grundmeyer, Lauren Hatfield, [Julia Lemann](#), Meghan Lovelace, Jorden Majeau, Ross Quinn, [AaRon Richert](#), Camille Rozas, Ellie Rozas, [Madison Smith](#), Riley Tafaro, Gabriella Trentacoste, Brandon Wilkie, Olivia Worley.

The JPAS Theatre Kids! Competition Team is an intensive program that focuses on performance in a musical and teamwork. It prepares young actors to compete as a team at the annual iTheatrics Junior Theatre Festival. Members of the team study and prepare an abridged version of an MTI Jr. Musical and compete against other youth theatre groups from all over the nation. This was the first year JPAS Theatre Kids! Competed in the festival and JPAS is looking forward to participating again annually! JPAS will hold auditions for it's new Theatre Kids! 2012 Competition Team in Spring of 2011. *Please note, there are fees associated with this program including some travel expenses associated with the festival competition.
More About JPAS Theatre Kids!

JPAS Theatre Kids! proudly presents theatre and musicals for kids, performed by all-kid casts! Theatre Kids! welcomes kids ages 7-12 who want to learn more about the theatre and dramatic arts. Productions chosen for this program are based on educational experiences for the kids and of course, fun!

2010-2011 JPAS Theatre Kids Productions at the Westwego Performing Arts Theatre
How To Eat Like A Child November 12-21, 2010
Disney's Aristocats Kids April 1-10, 2011

The JPAS THEATRE KIDS! program began in Fall 2008. This program gives kids year-round opportunities to participate in theatre, experience the process of putting on a show as well as learning basic acting techniques and skills. There is no enrollment fee to participate and auditions for Theatre Kid! productions are held two months prior to performances. JPAS believes kids' enthusiasm and energy really invigorate the arts. Theatre Kids! activities give young people a chance to have fun with theatre, thus nurturing a life-long love of the arts.

More About the Jefferson Performing Arts Society (JPAS)
Founded in 1978 by Dennis G. Assaf and Hannah Cunningham, Jefferson Performing Arts Society is a non-profit professional arts organization whose mission is to promote arts performance, training and outreach by providing a diverse range of quality programs that entertain, educate and enrich the cultural and economic vitality of Jefferson Parish, Greater New Orleans and the Gulf South.

JPAS focuses on three main elements:
PERFORMANCE JPAS annually provides a wide range of theatrical performances that appeal to many interests and age groups. Most seasons include a selection of grand opera, musical theater, dance and

music. JPAS strives to network and partner with national and [International Artists](#) and companies to bring new and diverse programming to the Southern Region.

TRAINING JPAS provides performance and technical based training in the arts for all ages with a particular focus on young people.

OUTREACH JPAS provides arts education programming in local area schools, as well as access to professional theatrical experiences that align to classroom curricula and Louisiana Content Standards, including Arts Adventure Series, Cultural Crossroads and Stage Without A Theatre. JPAS provides performers, musicians, artistic experiences and expertise to select area events and organizations to enrich the community.



Jeter Backyard Theater students headed to invitational

January 13, 2011

This month, 16 performers from the Jeter Backyard Theater group have been accepted into the invitation-only 2011 Junior theater Festival, in Atlanta, Jan. 14 to 16.

The young actors, ages 8 to 15, will join 1,800 students at the musical theater festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students. Jeter Backyard Theater, in Gibsonia, will present "Captain Louie Jr." for adjudication.

The group attended the Junior Theater Festival for the first time in January, 2010, and earned a "Freddie G Broadway Junior Spirit Honorable Mention" award for its performance of Dear Edwina Jr.

The cast includes students from Richland Elementary School, Mars Elementary School, Mars High School, Marshall Middle School, Pine-Richland Middle School and Pine-Richland High School.

The students traveling to Atlanta are: Sadie Jeter, Gabrielle Natale, Megan Mallin, Annabelle Rectenwald, John Neurohr, Cormac Bohan, Maren Dennison, Jack Jeter, Carley McCaffrey, Sarah Krause, Molly Lienesch, Izzy Salpietro, Paige Suvick, Alena Zappa, Rachel Rectenwald and Kendyl Suvick.

The students are directed by Christie Jeter.

Casper Star Tribune

Casper Children's Theatre presents 'Seussification of Romeo and Juliet'

By [MARGARET MATRAY](#) - [Star-Tribune staff writer](#) trib.com |

Posted: Friday, December 10, 2010 12:00 am |



Renee Naquin, director of 'The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet' hands out T-shirts that will be worn during the play to actors Makenzie Rothfuss, left, and Mikayla Shaurs before rehearsal last Saturday. (Kerry Huller/Star-Tribune)



Identical twins, Lia Kopp, left, plays Thing 2, and Ali Kopp plays Thing 1 in 'The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet' put on by the Casper Children's Theatre. (Kerry Huller/Star-Tribune)



Micki Wallace rehearses a scene as Juliet during a rehearsal of the Casper Children's Theatre production of 'The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet.' (Kerry Huller/Star-Tribune)



Jonah Spicher, playing Romeo, gives a thumbs up to Cole Grey as Lord Monotone, center, and Mackenzie Naquin as Lady Monotone during a rehearsal of 'The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet' last Saturday. (Kerry Huller/Star-Tribune)

Most of the actors, ages 8 to 12, knew the basic story before signing up to perform. As they explain it, this is what you need to know: Two teens named Romeo and Juliet, feuding families, they couldn't be together, so they die.

Other characters – Paris, Mercutio, Benvolio – who were they?

“I didn't know there was a Tybalt,” said Tess Bjorksten, 9, who plays ... Tybalt.

Shakespeare's story is so sad, the actors explained. The version they perform this weekend, “The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet,” is much better.

“I like it 'cause it's so funny,” said actor Skyleigh Armstrong, 9. “No matter what character you are, it's always going to be fun.”

The basic story the actors will explain to you is still there. Well, most of it.

Narrators Thing 1 and Thing 2, played by identical twins Lia and Ali Kopp, begin the play with its premise: “The play is just perfect. Nothing is wrong. Except that it's almost two hours too long.”

The Casper Children's Theatre Not Ready for Bedtime Players' version wraps up in 30 to 45 minutes, and in the end, no one dies. Instead of a sword fight, Mercutio and Tybalt battle with “bumballoons.” Instead of “Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou, Romeo,” 11-year-old Micki Wallace as Juliet proclaims, “Romeo baby-o, baby-o, buff! Wherefore art thou, I just can't get enough.”

Kindell Santistevan, 12, performed as the nurse in Dean Morgan Junior High's production of “Romeo and Juliet” last year. She prefers the humorous, matter-of-fact lines in this version to the lyrical ones she read before. As the prince, she gets to yell on stage, and instead of reciting a poetic line about being woken from her slumber, she says, “Knock it off, you jerks, I'm trying to sleep.”

“It's all Seuss-ical and all fun,” Santistevan said. “I love it.”

Rhyming phrases made memorizing lines easy, the actors said, and performing Seuss allows them to act goofy on purpose. Nine-year-old Maddi Leclair gets to slow-motion fight, “The Matrix” theme music in the background.

“When we're fighting we get to act sassy,” she said. “If we did that at school, we'd get in trouble.”

This cast of 22 actors has rehearsed since October and includes some students who have either just graduated from the younger acting group, Kinderdrama, or never acted before. Director Renee Naquin had to teach a handful of performers how to use their stage voices, stay focused backstage and memorize lines for the first time, she said.

With a four-year age difference between the oldest and youngest actors, Naquin found a challenge in trying to pair up couples that were the same size. It all became part of the

Seuss gag, Lord and Lady Monotone, two of the smallest performers, playing opposite Lord and Lady Capitulate, two of the tallest.

In the Seuss version of things, all is in plain fun.

And this is surely the only place you'll hear Romeo say of Juliet: "Ei-hotchee-mama, growl, whoo! Hubba-hubba! That girl is a babe or my name is dumb bubba."

Reach features reporter Margaret Matray at 307-266-0535 or margaret.matray@trib.com.

If you go ...

* What: Casper Children's Theatre Not Ready for Bedtime Players present "The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet"

* When: 7 p.m. TONIGHT and SATURDAY; 2 p.m. SUNDAY

* Where: Casper Children's Theatre, suite 6 in the Commissary Mall, 138 S. Kimball.

* Tickets: \$5 adults, \$3 youth, available at Papa Murphy's Pizza or at the door.

* Info: www.casperchildrenstheatre.com

Atlanta bound

For the third time, Casper Children's Theatre has been invited to attend the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta, the world's largest musical theater festival for elementary- and middle-school-aged acting troupes.

Twenty-three actors will travel from Casper Jan. 14-16 to attend workshops with Broadway professionals and compete with more than 1,800 attendees, performing a 15-minute excerpt from their fall production of "Seussical Junior" for adjudication. Casper Children's Theatre was the first Wyoming group ever to perform at the festival when they went for the first time in 2009.

This year, the performers were asked to lead the finale at the awards ceremony, an honor for the young actors, said director and founder Becky Morris.

Casper Children's Theatre's goal has always been to teach life skills through stage skills, allowing all participants the chance to be on stage if they choose, said director and founder Renee Naquin. Actors learn to work together, problem solve, be creative and responsible. The trip to Atlanta is an extension of that.

"There are lots of obstacles that they have to do," Naquin said. "All of that is what you face in real life."

Each student must raise his or her own money to get to the festival – about \$1,200 per person. They've been selling Schwan's ice cream and Papa Murphy's gift cards,

collecting pop cans, used DVDs and video games, and raffling a doll house. The cast will perform holiday tunes called Grinch-grams Dec. 20-23 throughout Casper for donations of \$10. To send one to a person of your choice, contact Jocelyn Morris at 307-251-5614 or jocelyn.morris@gmail.com.

Other contributions can be made by calling the theater at 473-8470 or searching for its cause page on Facebook.

Wanted: New Theatre Space

Directors of the Casper Children's Theatre said they hope to find and move into a new space within the next three to five years.

When the theater moved into its current location in the Commissary Mall in 2001, it had half the number of performers it has now and a couple boxes of costumes. Today, about 200 students participate in 10 to 12 shows annually, and the costume room is stuffed. Even the area underneath the theater's seating is packed with bags of costumes.

"Although we've been very happy here, we've just exploded and we're out of space," said director and co-founder Renee Naquin.

The directors have been actively looking for a new location for their nonprofit for the past four years. They need a space that's safe and appropriate for children, with a big parking lot and ceilings high enough for a stage. They'd like more bathrooms and dressing room space. Girls currently squeeze into a 6-by-10-foot dressing room, and all students share one bathroom and one sink.

At 5,800 square feet, the current theater seats 80 people. Ideally, Naquin would like a space twice or three times as large, enough for two separate performing spaces: a smaller one for the younger kids' shows and a larger one to seat 300 for bigger productions that tend to sell out. Two stages would also give students more rehearsal space, she said.

Naquin knows space is hard to come by, and as a nonprofit, capital construction funding can be difficult to acquire, she said.

Directors will apply for grants and are trying to raise money for a new space. To contribute to the building fund or suggest a space, contact the theater at 473-8470 or cct@casperchildrenstheatre.com.



Lakeshore Update

DECEMBER 7, 2010

Breakfast with Santa is Saturday

MANITOWOC — A flapjack Breakfast with Santa will be held from 8 to 10 a.m. Saturday at Applebee's, 4435 Calumet Ave. Cost is \$5 a plate. Proceeds go to help the Dare to Dream Theatre group cover costs of participating in the Junior Theatre Festival in Atlanta, Ga., Jan. 14-17.

Raffle tickets and photos with Santa will be available. Tickets must be reserved in advance and can be done so by calling (920) 682-2104, e-mailing [daretodream theatre@msn.com](mailto:daretodreamtheatre@msn.com) or by visiting www.daretodreamtheatre.com.

Hub Performing Arts School students impress in Atlanta

Posted: February 12, 2011 - 12:09am

Students with the Hub Performing Arts School in Lubbock earned two national awards at the competitive 2011 Junior Theater Festival, held at the Cobb Galleria Centre in Atlanta over Martin Luther King Jr. weekend.

The entire ensemble won a Freddie G Outstanding Achievement acting award.

Student Kendra Dukatnik, 15, a Ropes High School student, won the Freddie G Outstanding Individual Female award.

In addition, teacher Paula Chanda is one of eight educators from the entire country to earn the Freddie G Experience Award.

The Hub Performing Arts School's 25-member Advanced Performance Team, all between the ages 9 and 16, had presented selections from Disney's "Alice in Wonderland Jr." for adjudication by Broadway choreographer Maddie Kelly and musical director Derek Bowley.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theater festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students.

Chanda's Freddie G Experience Award includes a fully funded weekend in New York City, complete with performances, celebrations and workshops.

Hub Performing Arts School students Dukatnik and Treston Johnson, 14, who is also a Lubbock High School student, also were named to the Broadway Junior All-Stars. Two students from each group at the festival are chosen.

More than 2,200 students and teachers from 54 schools and educational theater groups in the United States and Canada participated.

This is the third year that Hub Performing Arts School has participated in the Junior Theater Festival.

Local students raised their own travel expenses for this year's trip by selling team posters, selling ads in programs and organizing truckload drink sales.



2 theater students invited to festival

DECEMBER 29, 2010

Two Sheboygan teens, Smith Huber, 13, and Sebastian Palmer, 16, are among 15 Dare to Dream Theatre students who have been accepted into the invitation-only 2011 Junior Theater Festival to be held in Atlanta Jan. 14-16.

The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theater festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students.

TheRecordHerald.com

Did You Hear: Friday, Dec. 31 — Includes items on Teresa Bryson,

Junior Theater Festival and Civitan Club

By Nancy Mace

The Record Herald

Posted Dec 31, 2010 @ 02:02 PM

Junior Theater Festival

Thirty students from Springfield Middle School in Williamsport, Md., have been accepted into the invitation only 2011 Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta, Ga., Jan. 14, 15 and 16.

The students, ages 11 to 14, will present Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" for adjudication. The Junior Theater Festival is the world's largest musical theater festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students and is presented by Music Theatre International and produced by iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars. The 2011 festival at the Cobb Galleria Centre will bring together more than 1,800 students, teachers and Broadway professionals to raise their voices in celebration of on-stage and backstage excellence in musical theater.

Springfield Middle School will present the full production of "Beauty and the Beast," with a cast and crew of 75 students, in Williamsport in the spring.

The members of the Springfield Middle School drama class have received wonderful support from teachers, parents and community members. In addition to attending preview shows, the community has shown its enthusiasm for the students' efforts by participating in numerous cookie dough and candle sales. Volunteers also helped the young performers design and decorate a float that was entered in the Alsatia's Club Mummer's Day Parade. It was the school's first time entering the competition — competing with high schools, colleges and adults — and their float received third place for Best School Float and third place for Organized Body.

The Springfield Middle School drama class attended the 2010 Junior Theater Festival and won a national "Freddie G Outstanding Students Direction and Choreography" award for student directors Hailey Bricker and Hope Wolford for the group's performance of selections from Disney's "High School Musical."

Springfield Middle School's drama class is the only middle school in Washington County with a program that supports a hands-on theatre experience. Students make up the cast and crew for shows and help design everything from props and costumes to the Playbill style program.

The Herald-Mail

Monday, January 24, 2011 • 184th Year, No. 24

Hagerstown, Md. • www.herald-mail.com • 50¢

Local theater group sparkles at festival

WILLIAMSPORT — Springfield Middle School's theater group recently performed at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta, the school group's second visit to the festival.

The event is the largest middle school musical theater festival, this year featuring more than 2,200 student performers.

Springfield's group performed "Gaston" and "Be Our Guest" from Disney's "Beauty and the Beast Jr."

Individual credits were given to Justin Bertrand, Saavon Brown and Ayse Yilmaz, who were selected to perform with the Junior Theater Festival All-Stars, who presented a song from the newly released "Camp Rock" musical.

Bertrand and Tiffany Ross were selected to participate in the Junior Theater Festival slam, having only one hour to rehearse for a performance in front of the rest of the group.

Miranda Embly and Yilmaz performed for professional choreographer Kenny Shepherd. Yilmaz won an award for Outstanding Actress.

Springfield's group was comprised of Bertrand, Brown, Payne Burkner, Jessica Coffman, Katlynn Cole, Brianna Dieter, Embly, Emily Fitzgerald, Lexi Guthrie, Lauren Hubbard, Malory Hull, Emily Jordan, Alexis Keller, Sarah Kiley, Peyton Lavin, Amber Leisinger, Tobi Morris, Meena Richards, Sierra Robbins, Carley Robinson, Ross, Lexi Smith, Julia Smoot, Chesney Sydnor, Mikayla Weese, Morgan Welch and Yilmaz.

Stephanie Stull is the music department chair and theater director at Springfield Middle School.

To qualify and be selected, a group must have previously produced a Broadway Jr. show. No students can be older than ninth grade. The group must perform a 15-minute segment of a Broadway Jr. show. The group's performance of Disney's "High School Musical Jr." at the 2010 festival, where it was honored with best student director and choreography, earned it an invitation to this year's festival.

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OVER THE MOUNTAIN JOURNAL

SCHOOLS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 2011

MBJH Students Head to Theater Festival

Mountain Brook Junior High Choir students ages 12-15 have been invited to the 2011 Junior Theater Festival at the Cobb Galleria Centre in Atlanta Jan. 14-16.

The invitation-only event is the world's largest musical theater

festival dedicated to groups working with elementary and middle school students. It is presented and sponsored by Music Theatre International and produced by iTheatrics and Atlanta's Theater of the Stars.

This will be the Mountain Brook students' first year to participate.

The festival will have more

than 1,800 attendees from 50 schools and educational theater groups from the U.S. and Canada.

Each group performs a 15-minute selection of a musical for professional adjudication by a panel of distinguished theater professionals. The Mountain Brook Junior High Choir students will perform a 15-minute selection from Meredith Willson's "The

Music Man Jr."

Students and teachers will participate in interactive workshops led by Broadway and West End professionals and attend a professional production of "Disney's Beauty and the Beast" at the Fox Theatre.

If you don't want it printed, Don't let it happen!

THE

Jan. 28, 2011— Feb. 3, 2011

Volume 13, Issue 43

INQUISITOR



Shreveport-Bossier City's Most Trusted News Source!

Local theater students win national awards at festival

Students from the Academy of Children's Theater in Shreveport-Bossier earned national awards at the 2011 Junior Theater Festival over the Martin Luther King Jr. weekend in Atlanta, Ga.

The students earned a Freddie G Out-

standing Achievement in Acting for the group's presentation of Disney's "Beauty and the Beast Jr."

Performer Elizabeth Ross earned a Freddie G Outstanding Individual Performance: Female award, student Candace Grady earned a Freddie

G Hardest Working Female award, and student Lucia Boyd received a Freddie G Outstanding Junior Slam award.

The slams are an event in which students have one hour to prepare and perform a selection from a musical.