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**THE MAGIC OF *CHITTYFLIES* INTO TOWN!**

*Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* wraps up national tour at Starlight Theatre on July 28 - August 2

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – The national tour of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* soars into Starlight Theatre on July 28-August 2 for six adventurous evening performances. In consideration of the many children expected to attend, Starlight has moved up its show time to 8 p.m. each night.

The stage production of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, adapted from the beloved 1968 film starring Dick Van Dyke, opened in London in 2002 and continues to tour in the United Kingdom. The show opened on Broadway in April 2005 and received five Tony Award® nominations. The current North American tour began in November 2008 and will conclude its 26-city route at Starlight.

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Based on Ian Fleming's timeless novel and adapted for the stage by director Ray Roderick, the production remains faithful to the film's story line. It features the original music and lyrics of the Sherman brothers, whose credits include nine Oscar nominations (one for the title song of this show), two Oscars for *Mary Poppins*, three Grammys and 24 gold or platinum albums.

The star of the show is, of course, the vintage car that sprouts wings and flies (and sails, too!). The original film team – screenplay author Roald Dahl and producer Albert R. “Cubby” Broccoli – always intended to move the story from the big screen to the stage, but it wasn't until recently that newly developed stage technology turned their dreams to reality. Today's high-tech modern machinery equips Chitty to fly effortlessly across the stage, although the show's creators prefer to keep the engineering details under wraps.

“Each summer Starlight provides at least one musical production that is completely appropriate – and entertaining – for all ages,” said Denton Yockey, Starlight president and executive producer. “*Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* is definitely this summer's ‘must see’ for Kansas City families.”

The show's cast of principals is led by several Broadway veterans, including Steve Wilson in the lead role of eccentric inventor Caractacus Potts. Wilson's Broadway credits include *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Lestat*, *The Frogs* and *By Jeeves*.

Also featured in the show are eight youngsters from the Kansas City metropolitan area. Cast as orphans, the local children auditioned at Starlight earlier this year. They will rehearse with the national tour's cast members upon their arrival in Kansas City and perform on stage each night. The aspiring local stars who will shine in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* are Luke Boyce, Carter Gonzales, Diana Hunter, Grant Karpin, Faith Kopecky and Emily Levinson, as well as alternates Aurora Kuhn and Avery Mullaly. Throughout its nine-month tour, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* has involved local children at each stop.

Also cast in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* are 13 rescue-dogs-turned-show dogs who travel with the production. The dogs' owner and trainer, Joanne Wilson of Wilson Productions, transports the canine stars in a custom-made tour bus. Samantha, a sheepdog mix, stars as Edison, the Potts' family

pet. Most of the other dogs star in the show's Scrumptious Sweet Factory scene.

The story of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* spans generations. Ian Fleming, who is best known for authoring 14 James Bond books, published this story for his son, Caspar, in 1964. While a children's book, it included the key things – cars, bombs and spies – that fascinated Fleming.

Tickets for *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* are on sale now at Starlight Theatre, 4600 Starlight Road. Ticket prices range from \$9 to \$79 and are available at the Starlight Theatre box office, at [www.kcstarlight.com](http://www.kcstarlight.com) or by calling 816.363.STAR (7827).

Discount prices for groups of 15 or more are available by contacting Bob Potemski at 816.997.1137 or [bob.potemski@kcstarlight.com](mailto:bob.potemski@kcstarlight.com).

All performances of ***Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*** begin at 8 p.m.

For more information about the touring production, visit [www.chittyontour.com](http://www.chittyontour.com).

### **Starlight Theatre**

Presenting Broadway entertainment since 1951, the non-profit Starlight Theatre Association is Kansas City's oldest and largest performing arts organization. The Association operates, programs and maintains the largest stage in the United States, as well as the 16-acre Starlight Theatre complex. While assuming all annual operating costs for the complex, the Association also raises funds for capital improvements and a variety of programs, including national Broadway musical performances, concerts, community outreach and education. Since 2000, the Association has contributed more than \$25 million of privately funded improvements to the Kansas City, Mo.-owned Starlight Theatre. Each Broadway season, Starlight donates more than 11,000 tickets to its performances to regional non-profit organizations serving the disadvantaged.

In 2008, Starlight Theatre was selected as the "Favorite Performing Arts Venue or Organization" in the Kansas City Convention & Visitors Association's Visitors' Choice Awards program. Starlight also received a Gold Award for "Best Performing Arts Venue" and a bronze award for "Best Theatre" in *Ingram's* 2008 Best of Business Kansas City Awards. The theatre seats approximately 8,000 and is located in Swope Park.

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