

NEWS



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2009 BROADWAY SEASON LINEUP TO FEATURE 4 NATIONAL TOURS & LOCALLY PRODUCED 'ANYTHING GOES'

Season includes top 3 shows requested in Starlight's 2008 audience survey

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – When Starlight Theatre audiences speak, Starlight management listens! With its Broadway season lineup confirmed for summer 2009, Starlight is pleased to announce that the Top 3 vote-getters in its 2008 audience survey are included.

The 2008 survey was conducted online last August and drew 4,328 responses. When asked to select the five Broadway shows they would most like to see at Starlight, the favorite of respondents (and dancing queens everywhere) – ***Mamma Mia!*** – won by a landslide, racking up fully 57 percent of the vote total. Tallying approximately 37 percent of votes each were the No. 2 and 3 audience choices, ***Legally Blonde The Musical*** and ***Chicago***.

In response, nationally touring productions of all three were secured for the Starlight stage in 2009. Another new national tour, ***Chitty Chitty Bang Bang***, also is heading to Starlight this summer, and the theatre will round out its blockbuster season lineup with its own production of ***Anything Goes***, a classic musical comedy with a lively Cole Porter score. Also, in response to requests from audience members, this season Starlight has announced an earlier 8 p.m. start for three of its five shows.

“Apparently good fortune is shining on me and Starlight audiences as I get to formally announce this blockbuster Broadway season lineup for 2009,” said Denton Yockey, who was newly installed as Starlight’s president and executive producer in September 2008. “My predecessor Bob Rohlf and I listened closely and worked diligently to be able to put together what I believe is an amazingly entertaining schedule. I especially encourage those who haven’t been to Starlight in a few years to put at least a couple of these shows on their calendars for next summer. They won’t disappoint! Of course, as always, the best option is to subscribe to the Starlight season and see all five!”

Opening the 2009 Broadway season at Starlight is the first national tour of Tony Award® nominee, ***Legally Blonde The Musical***. The June 30-July 5 run in Kansas City is one stop on a new 33-city tour that began in September and continues through next summer. The touring stage rendition of the hit MGM movie stars Becky Gulsvig in the lead role of Elle Woods, who dons her pink pumps and sets out to go where no Delta Nu has gone before: Harvard Law School! Gulsvig is a veteran of the show, having performed in the ensemble for one year of *Legally Blonde’s* successful run on Broadway.

Next up will be Starlight’s own production of Cole Porter’s ***Anything Goes***, a classic musical comedy set on the high seas. The passengers aboard the S.S. American sailing from New York to England are an unusual lot, and their madcap antics, love triangles and mistaken identities are sure to delight young and old during the show’s July 13-19 run. Starlight held auditions earlier this year for Equity and non-Equity actors for principal and ensemble roles. A community chorus of local teens will also be included in the production.

A new national stage tour that’s sure to be the season’s family favorite arrives next. When it flies into town July 28-Aug. 2, ***Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*** will stir nostalgia in parents and grandparents as it sparks the imaginations of children of all ages. Based on the timeless novel by Ian Fleming (of James Bond fame), this stage adaptation of the beloved 1968 movie played on Broadway and received five Tony Award nominations before launching a new national tour in November. By the time you leave Starlight next summer, you, too, will believe a car can fly!

Heating up the Starlight stage in mid-August is the steamy hit musical set in the Roaring '20s, ***Chicago***. The winner of six Tony Awards®, including Best Musical Revival, is back in town Aug. 11-16. A perennial frontrunner in Starlight's annual audience survey, *Chicago* was again a Top 3 pick among 2008 voters. Next August, get set for knockout dancing, a scintillating story of sin and corruption and one razzle-dazzle showstopper after another!

And, perhaps the only way to follow a showstopper like *Chicago* is with the world's favorite musical tale of a mother, a daughter and three possible dads...together for a wedding on a Greek island paradise. More than 30 million dancing queens and regular people have fallen in love with the characters, story and music of ***Mamma Mia!*** Audiences will settle in for a feel-good night full of ABBA's timeless songs Sept. 8-13 at Starlight.

Start times for *Legally Blonde The Musical* and *Anything Goes* will be 8:30 p.m., while *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, *Chicago* and *Mamma Mia!* will each feature the earlier 8 p.m. start.

Starlight 2009 season tickets are on sale now. Three-show packages and single tickets will be available in May. Broadway musical fans can order tickets online at www.kcstarlight.com, by calling 816.363.STAR (7827) or at the Starlight box office, 4600 Starlight Road, Kansas City, MO 64132. Following up on the popularity of a new offer last year, season tickets are again being sold in the theatre's Side Terrace seating sections for just \$50 each.

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 Bronze Award for "Best Theater" 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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