



Ivoryton Playhouse

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Press Release

March 3, 2009

“Godspell” at the Ivoryton Playhouse

Book by John Michael Tebelak, Music & Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz

Ivoryton, CT: *Godspell*, which kicks off the Ivoryton 2009 season on March 18, has been immensely popular since its opening in 1971 off-Broadway where it ran for 2,214 performances. After transferring to Broadway in 1976, *Godspell* continued its run for an additional 527 performances and became a popular movie in 1973. The musical began as John Michael Tebelak’s master’s thesis project at Carnegie-Mellon University. The original lyrics were all from the Episcopal hymnal. Stephen Schwartz, also from Carnegie Mellon, was hired to write a new score, adding original songs to the modernized hymns.

Loosely based on the Gospel of St. Matthew, *Godspell* is a delightful romp, full of dancing and singing, with several classics (“Day by Day” was actually a Billboard hit in 1972). This upbeat retelling of biblical parables is punctuated and amplified by a simple, melodic score by Stephen Schwartz. Director Larry Thelen said, “It is one of the most significant off- Broadway musicals written by one of the most significant writers of musical theatre today. The themes are timeless and the piece is as relevant, if not more relevant today as it was 38 years ago.” Playhouse Artistic Director Jacqui Hubbard said “We chose this play to open our 2009 season because of its energy and broad appeal. It crosses generational lines and children both young and old love the music and the story. It is a big part of the Playhouse mission to be a theatre for all people and *Godspell* helps spread the word”

The cast includes Joshua Isaacs* as Jesus and Chris Glein* as John the Baptist/Judas with Tiana Checcia*, Patrick H. Dunn*, Brent Wellington Barker III, Elisabeth Cernadas, Hillary Ekwall, Nicole Heriot, Jorie Janeway and Robert Wayne Schultz Jr.

The play will be directed by Larry Thelen, musical directed by John DeNicola, choreographed by Lisa Niedermeyer, set design by Dan Nischan, costumes by Pam Puente and lighting design by Doug Harry.

Godspell opens on March 18 and runs thru April 5 for 3 weeks, Performance times are Wednesday and Sunday matinees at 2pm. Evening performances are Wednesday and Thursday at 7:30pm, Friday and Saturday at 8pm. Tickets are \$35 for adults, \$30 for seniors, \$20 for students and \$15 for children and are available by calling the Playhouse box office at 860-767-7318 or by visiting our website at www.ivorytonplayhouse.org .(Group rates are available by calling the box office for information.) The Playhouse is located at 103 Main Street in Ivoryton.

**Members of Actors Equity*

Members of the press are welcome at any performance.

Please call ahead for tickets.