

MERIDIAN COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

artsy facts

MLT Announces Big Year

Meridian Little Theatre kicks off its 2010-11 season with *The Music Man*, October 7 - 13. This classic flag-waving, feel good, musical comedy is based on the hit Broadway show and features "76 Trombones." The season includes a December comedy, "I Love You You're Perfect, Now Change," Dec. 2 - 8, and "The Hallelujah Girls," set for February 24-March 2, 2011. Capping the season is the hit Broadway musical "Hairspray," May 12-18, 2011. For tickets, go to www.meridianlittletheatre.com.



Youth Division Plans Two Hits

The MLT Youth Division will bring two well-known hits to the stage, starting with *Les Misérables*, set for August 13 - 15. Broadway's legendary musical has been specially adapted to meet the needs of young performers, while carefully maintaining the integrity of one of the greatest musicals ever written. The second offering will be "Aladdin," January 15-16, 2011. Filled with magic, mayhem, and flying carpet rides, audiences' spirits will soar with excitement. Youth Division tickets are not included in a season membership, but if you are interested in tickets, please contact the MLT Box Office at (601) 482-6371.

MCA Welcomes New President

The MCA welcomes Melinda Perry as its new president. A teacher at Clarkdale Elementary School, Melinda holds a B.S. and a Masters Degree in elementary education from Mississippi State University. Melinda is beginning her 24th year as a teacher and she is a National Board Certified Teacher. She served as the co-project director for the Whole Schools Initiative at Clarkdale, has been on the board of the Meridian Council for the Arts for the past five years and also serves on the board of Meridian Little Theater, where she has been stage manager for the past 18 years. A member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Melinda is married to Eugene Perry and the couple have two children, Nick (13) and Reid (10).

MAC Awards Grants

The Mississippi Arts Commission has awarded \$1.64 million in grants funding for fiscal 2011, with the arts in Meridian/Lauderdale County receiving \$105,000. The Meridian Council for the Arts received \$10,166 for general operating support, and other grants included: Clarkdale Elementary School, \$7,125 for the Whole Schools Initiative; Meridian Little Theatre and Meridian Symphony Orchestra, each \$20,750 for general operating support; Mississippi Alliance for Arts Education, \$13,050 for general operating support; Mississippi Writers guild, \$4,000 to support the 4th Annual Writers Conference; Northeast Elementary School, \$1,000 to present Puppet Arts Theatre; Poplar Springs Elementary, \$7,125 for Whole School grant; and Terrence Roberts, \$500 to attend a National Storytellers Festival. "It has been the agency's strategic goal to steadily increase grant funds to better serve the non-profit arts sector, individual artists, arts education initiatives and the creative workforce in Mississippi," said Malcolm White, executive director of MAC.

Funding provided by: National Endowment for the Arts & the Mississippi Arts Commission

Museum Site Chosen

The Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Center board member Clay Holladay and board president Tommy Dulaney announced recently that the Montana's restaurant property on Front Street has been purchased and will become the site of the museum along with the adjoining Meridian Hotel property. The hotel was donated to MAEC by its owners, Manny and Melanie Mitchell. Melanie Mitchell is a member of the MAEC board and is on its building committee. The Montana's property was purchased for \$300,000. The project is partly funded by \$4 million granted by the state. The Legislature approved the project in 2001. Dulaney said in an interview Monday that any other money needed for the project will have to come through fundraising. The expected price tag is about \$18 million. Dulaney said Governor Haley Barbour made the suggestion that the museum be located downtown, both because of ongoing downtown revitalization efforts in Meridian and because constructing the museum downtown was deemed less expensive. Now that there is a definite location for the MAEC museum, Holladay said the next step is to advertise for and hire an architect. He said the architect will decide whether to use either of the existing buildings on the property or demolish them to build the museum. Holladay said it is still not certain exactly what will be in the museum, but he said part of it will be the Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Hall of Fame. Dulaney said the goal of MAEC is to make the museum interesting and interactive. Dulaney added that it's possible the Jimmie Rodgers museum, currently located at Highland Park, will be moved to the MAEC museum site, along with the locomotive that sits outside the Jimmie Rodgers museum. Putting the museum downtown is beneficial not only for downtown revitalization, Holladay said, but for the museum itself because it will be easy to find and will be within walking distance from the MSU Riley Center and the Temple Theater, which are the most prominent entertainment venues in Meridian. For more information on the Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Center, visit the Web site at www.msarts.org.

CFEM Presents Grants, Names New ED

The Community Foundation of East Mississippi recently awarded its Arts Mini-Grant Initiative awards. President Barbaree Heaster awarded grants to the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Boys & Girls clubs. The Arts Mini-Grants Initiative offers quick response, small-scale grants of up to \$500 to organizations working to engage youth in hands-on artistic programming during the summer months. M'Lea Davis has been named the new Executive Director of the Community Foundation of East Mississippi. Born and raised in Tallahassee, Fla., Davis is no stranger to Meridian. Through the years she grew up visiting Meridian while spending time with her aunt and uncle. A graduate of the University of Alabama, she has spent the last 20 years working with non-profit organizations. The Community Foundation of East Mississippi was established in 1984 and handles many community donations for the arts and other public charities. www.cfem.org

First "Art Crawl" Big Success

In conjunction with the Mississippi Arts Commission's Whole School Initiatives Conference in Meridian recently, the Meridian Council for the Arts sponsored a downtown "Art Crawl" at 14 businesses. Those participants who visited at least six of the shops were eligible to win prizes at a gala reception held at the Meridian Museum of Art, with the top prize being a painting by artist Greg Cartmell. "The response was great," said organizer Kris Gianakos. "The businesses who took part in the event reported increased traffic and sales, and we had nearly 150 people who were eligible for prizes." Co-sponsors of Art Crawl included Meridian Main Street and the MAC.

French Wins "People's Choice" at MMA
An oil painting, titled "Dupont Circle" by Meridian, Mississippi artist Cooper Michael French, was voted the Best of Show in the Meridian Museum of Art's 2010 People's Choice Art Competition.

This was the 19th Annual staging of the People's Choice, an exhibit that gives Museum visitors the chance to vote for the award winners in a variety of media categories, as well as Best in Show. For more information about the People's Choice or other Museum programs, go to www.meridianmuseum.org or call 601-693-1501.

Still Time to See "Sparkle & Twang"

The Sparkle & Twang Exhibit at the MSU Riley Center will run through September 18. You'll enjoy seeing collectibles ranging from performance costumes, handwritten lyrics, personal letters and musical instruments of such legends as Patsy Cline, Hank Williams, Porter Wagoner, Johnny Cash and Bob Dylan. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for all students. Exhibit hours are Tuesday - Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday, noon - 4 p.m. www.msurileycenter.com