



NEWS RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Elisa Hale at (860) 873-8664, ext. 323
Elisa.Hale@goodspeed.org
Dan McMahon at (860) 873-8664, ext. 324
Dan.McMahon@goodspeed.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 21, 2008

First Annual Christmas at Goodspeed!

- WORLD PREMIERE MUSICAL -

- *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas* to debut at the Goodspeed Opera House-

EAST HADDAM, CONN., JULY 21, 2008: Goodspeed Musicals, the only two time Tony Award winning theatre in the country, is proud to announce the world premiere production of Jim Henson's classic holiday favorite *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas*, adapted for the stage. Families across Connecticut are invited to celebrate and create a new holiday tradition complimented by the beauty of the Goodspeed Opera House bedecked for the season. "The magic of Christmastime in this idyllic holiday setting is the perfect backdrop for such a timeless tale," Michael Price, Executive Director commented, "Emmet and Ma's story of giving is one we are excited to share with audiences. The wonderful music, charming characters and exceptional performers will make for a festive celebration for all ages. Looking to the future we hope Christmas at the Goodspeed Opera House will be an enduring holiday tradition." *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas* will run December 7, 2008 through January 4, 2009, at the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, Connecticut.

As Christmas approaches the world of Frogtown Hollow, Emmet Otter and his Ma can only dream of buying each other gifts. So when a Christmas Eve talent contest is announced, both secretly enter hoping to win the prize money. In a heartwarming twist on The Gift of the Magi, Emmet and Ma risk all they have and end up with the greatest grand prize of all. Featuring a lovable mix of actors, puppet characters from The Jim Henson Company and a toe-tapping score, it's a classic holiday musical for all ages!

This world premiere musical is based on the book "Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas" by Russell and Lillian Hoban, and the groundbreaking all-puppet HBO special of the same name by Jim Henson. This production is a unique collaboration between Goodspeed Musicals, co-book writers Tim McDonald of iTheatrics and Christopher Gattelli, Paul Williams who contributed the music and lyrics, and The Jim Henson Company.

"'Emmet Otter' is a beloved story that has remained a favorite with fans around the world," said Jim Henson Company Co-CEO, Brian Henson, "It is a pleasure to work with Goodspeed's imaginative and creative artisans. No organization is better suited to transform talented actors into the beloved Henson characters of Frogtown Hollow and the Goodspeed Opera House is the ideal setting to bring Emmet Otter and his friends to life.

- more -

Tim McDonald (Book) is a respected educator and playwright (Roald Dahl's *Willy Wonka*, *The Musical*; *Adventures of Flat Stanley*.) He is the founding Chairman of the New York based educational musical theatre consulting firm iTheatrics which partnered with The Jim Henson Company for the initial development of the musical stage version of *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas*.

Christopher Gattelli (Book/Director/Choreographer) recently choreographed Goodspeed Musicals' *13* at The Norma Terris Theater and *Me and My Girl* at The Goodspeed Opera House. Gattelli was recently nominated for a 2008 Tony Award for Best Choreography for Rodgers & Hammerstein's *South Pacific*.

Paul Williams, who wrote the music for numerous Henson projects including the songs for the award-winning original HBO special as well as "The Muppet Movie" featuring the cherished ballad "Rainbow Connection," will provide the score. Williams returns to Goodspeed Musicals where he recently created the music for the theatrical sensation *Happy Days: A New Musical*. Oscar, Grammy and Golden Globe winning songwriter, Paul Williams, is recognized as one of the America's most prolific and gifted lyricists and composers. A 'Hall of Fame' songwriter and recipient of the National Music Publishers President's Award, Williams' standards have been recorded by such diverse musical icons as Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, Barbra Streisand, Ella Fitzgerald, Ray Charles, David Bowie, Tony Bennett, Sarah Vaughn, Johnny Mathis, The Carpenters, Luther Vandross, REM, Mel Torme and Diana Ross.

Emmy and Grammy award-winner John McDaniel will serve as Music Supervisor. McDaniel returns to Goodspeed where he was Music Supervisor for the 2006 hit *Pirates of Penzance* and both The Norma Terris and Goodspeed Opera House productions of *Happy Days: A New Musical*. In addition to his work as Music Producer of "The Rosie O'Donnell Show", McDaniel has worked extensively both on Broadway and regionally.

"This show holds a beautiful lesson about how much we gain when we make a sacrifice for those we love," said McDonald, "It is a wonderful message for fans new and old to experience during the holidays."

Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas is produced for Goodspeed Musicals by Michael P. Price. *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas* will run December 7, 2008 through January 4, 2009 [Official Press Opening December 17, 2008]. Curtain times are Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., with special performances on Christmas Eve at 2:00 p.m. and New Years Eve at 2:00 p.m.; Thursdays at 7:00 p.m.; Fridays at 7:00 p.m., with matinees at 2:00 p.m. on December 26 and January 2; Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.; and Sundays at 2:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Tickets start at \$39 for children under 12 and \$49 for adults. A limited number of \$26 Second Row Side Mezzanine (restricted view) seats available for each performance.

children Tickets on sale now to Goodspeed members and will go on sale to the general public on September 5. For more information call the Box Office at 860.873.8668 or online at www.goodspeed.org.

Dedicated to the preservation and advancement of musical theatre, Goodspeed Musicals produces three musicals each season at the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, Conn., and additional

musicals at The Norma Terris Theatre in Chester, Conn., which was opened in 1984 for the development of new musicals. The only regional theatre to receive two Tony Awards (for outstanding achievement), Goodspeed also maintains The Scherer Library of Musical Theatre and The Max Showalter Center for Education in the Musical Theater. Goodspeed gratefully acknowledges the support of American Airlines, official airline of Goodspeed Musicals; additional support from Blum Shapiro; Hoffman Lexus; Mohegan Sun; Henkel Adhesives Technologies; Urdike, Kelly & Spellacy P.C.; National Endowment for the Arts; and the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism.

###