



## NEWS RELEASE

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# 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," Executive Director Michael Price commented, "Emmet and Ma's story of giving is one we are excited to share with audiences. The wonderful music, charming characters, and a cast of nineteen 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 ground-breaking all-puppet HBO special of the same name produced by Jim Henson. This production is a unique collaboration among 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.

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, which is bound for Broadway this fall, and *Me and My Girl* at The Goodspeed Opera House. Gattelli choreographed the Broadway revival of *Sunday in the Park with George*, and was recently nominated for a 2008 Tony Award for Best Choreography for Rodgers & Hammerstein's *South Pacific*.

- more -

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The new stage version of *Emmet Otter's Jug-band Christmas* is produced in association with The Jim Henson Company, with Co-CEO Brian Henson spearheading the project on the Company's behalf. The Jim Henson Company has been an established leader in family entertainment for over 50 years, known for such productions as "The Muppet Show," "Fraggle Rock," "Labyrinth," and "The Dark Crystal."

Paul Williams, who has written 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 Tim 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.**, **New Year's Eve and New Year's Day 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 are available for each performance.

Tickets are 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 visit [www.goodspeed.org](http://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; Updike, Kelly & Spellacy P.C.; National Endowment for the Arts; and the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism.

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### **About The Jim Henson Company**

The Jim Henson Company has remained an established leader in family entertainment for over 50 years and is recognized worldwide as an innovator in puppetry, animatronics and computer graphics. Best known as creators of the world famous Muppets (the rights to which are now owned by The Walt Disney Company), Henson is the recipient of over 50 Emmy Awards and nine Grammy Awards. Credits include the Saturn Award-winning "Farscape" and the features "MirrorMask," "Five Children and It", "Good Boy!" and the recently released direct to DVD feature "Unstable Fables: 3 Pigs and a Baby". With additional locations in New York and London, The Jim Henson Company is headquartered in Los Angeles on the historic Charlie Chaplin lot complete with soundstage and post-production facilities. Independently owned and operated by the five adult children of founder Jim Henson, the Company is also home to Jim Henson's Creature Shop™, a pre-eminent character-building and visual effects group with international film, television and advertising clients, as well as Henson Recording Studios, one of the music industry's top recording facilities known for its world-class blend of state of the art and vintage equipment. The Company is currently in production on 40 episodes of "Sid the Science Kid," a new science readiness animated series for preschoolers scheduled to debut on PBS in September 2008, and recently launched "Puppet Up! - Uncensored," a live puppet improvisational show that has played to sold out crowds around the world and premiered as a special on TBS. The Company has also announced the creation of Jim Henson Designs, a merchandise collection inspired by Jim Henson's earliest sketches.

<http://www.henson.com>