



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 2, 2009

Music Society & Theatre Guild present:

- What:** *Ragtime the Musical*
Based on the novel by E.L. Doctorow; Book by Terrence McNally; Music by Stephen Flaherty; Lyrics by Lynn Ahrens
Direction by Bill Anderson Jr. (*Urinetown*)
Music direction by Jim Hohmeyer
Choreography by Kelli Jolly
- When:** **October 17 & 24 – 8:00 p.m.; October 18 – 3:00 p.m.**
- Where:** **Midland Center for the Arts**
1801 W. St. Andrews Rd., Midland, MI 48640
- Cost:** **Adults: \$26 & \$18.72; Students \$16 & \$11.52**
- Information:** Call Ticket Office at (989) 631-8250 or (800) 523-7649 or www.mcfta.org

MIDLAND – Celebrate the triumph of the American spirit with this multi-Tony Award-winning musical homage to our society’s “melting pot” on stage at Midland Center for the Arts, 1801 W. St. Andrews Rd., Midland. Through diverse and energizing music and dance, *Ragtime the Musical* paints a nostalgic and powerful portrait of life at the turn of the twentieth century that retains its relevance even today. Produced by Music Society and Theatre Guild, and featuring a cast of 52 actors, singers and dancers from across the state of Michigan, three distinct stories poignantly illustrate history’s timeless contradictions of wealth and poverty, freedom and prejudice, hope and despair, and love and hate. Music Director Jim Hohmeyer notes, “The unique use of a central musical ragtime theme throughout unifies the entire production unlike any other recent Broadway musical. It is a wonderful musical experience for the cast and audience alike!” The regional and diverse cast includes 7 individuals from **Saginaw**, 5 from **Bay City**, a student at **Wayne State University in Detroit**, as well as talent from **Auburn, Freeland, Vassar, Clare** and **Midland**. Tickets cost \$26 and \$18.72 adults; \$16 and \$11.52 students, and show times are 8 pm October 17 and 24; 3 pm October 18. Call Ticket Office at (989) 631-8250 or (800) 523-7649 or www.mcfta.org. Sponsored by RE/MAX of Midland – Wayne and Karen Crosby, and Feeny Chrysler Dodge of Midland.

This production is directed by Bill Anderson Jr. (*Urinetown*) of **Midland**, with musical direction by Jim Hohmeyer, and choreography by Kelli Jolly. “It is my true pleasure to bring a show of such

beauty and strength to the audiences of Midland Center for the Arts," says Anderson. "*Ragtime* is a stunning piece of musical theatre filled with beautiful melodies, rich dramatic elements and huge production numbers that engulf the stage – definitely my type of show. I believe our audience will certainly relate to the themes of this production: optimism, excitement, fear, anticipation and change. These motifs along with a wonderful score and well-written book will keep *Ragtime* with you long after you've left the theatre."

"Public reaction to this production has been enthusiastic and Theatre Guild is honored to participate in outreach to diverse regional leadership groups including Great Lakes Bay Region Ambassadors, Dow Diversity Network and Tri-City Links," reports Amy Behrens, Business and Operations Manager for Theatre and Choral. "Additionally, *Ragtime* Music Director Jim Hohmeyer and cast member Emily Anderson will visit Midland High School and Dow High School Humanities classes to conduct a dialogue with the students about the time period and issues presented in the play. We are also offering a special student discount ticket to students in the MPS Humanities classes."

Erin Brooks of **Midland** plays Mother; Taurean Hogan of **Wayne State University in Detroit** plays Coalhouse Walker, Jr.; Dagan Stephenson of **Midland** plays Sarah; and Dominic Zoeller of **Midland** plays Tateh.

The remainder of the cast is comprised of Adam Gardner of **Auburn**; David King of **Freeland**; Lavel Jackson, Jessie Merrill, Wendell Parker, Saira Shariff, Lauralean Sims, Olivia Thompson and Mona Wilson of **Saginaw**; Paul Viele of **Vassar**; Parker Bradford, Madeline Lynch, Joel Mindykowski, Anna Urband and Kelsey Woods of **Bay City**; Andrew Southwell of **Clare** and these **Midland** residents: Emily Anderson, Victor Atiemo-Obeng, Diana Ball, Alexis Bearinger, Keyton Bearinger, Marla Bearinger, Nancy Anne Berdasco, Jennifer Breneman, David Clayton, Hypatia Creger, Hannah Dressen, Abby Drumright, Josh Finch, Laurene Franjione, Christina Griggs, Steve Johnson, Luca Jolly, Kevin Kendrick, Monica Kozakiewicz, Evan Mills, Nikita Murry, Gezelle Myers, Valerie Padgett, Susie Polito, Zach Prout, Alex Rapanos, David Ritter, Sonja Roden, Amy Sabourin, Emily Sweeney, Dan Tempas and Paul Yakuber.

Music Society of the Midland Center for the Arts is a premier, volunteer musical arts organization serving mid-Michigan. It provides volunteers and audiences with exciting, quality musical events, utilizing professionals to educate and develop its talented, community-based participants.

Theatre Guild is one of the most successful and exciting community theatre companies in the Midwest. Established in 1929, Midland's oldest and most innovative theatre organization presents plays, children's theatre and a continuing program of community service, school residencies, theatre classes and workshops.

Midland Center for the Arts, Inc. is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation formed under the laws of the State of Michigan incorporating six groups: Alden B. Dow Museum of Science and Art, MATRIX:MIDLAND, Midland

County Historical Society, Midland Symphony Orchestra, Music Society and Theatre Guild. Activities at Midland Center for the Arts are supported in part by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. For the latest Center news, visit our web site at www.mcfta.org.

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