



Curly and the cast of *Oklahoma!* in a production that's coming to the NPAC during the 2010-11 season.

Kenny G, Charlie D. NPAC headliners Amy Grant, *Oklahoma!*, *Swan Lake* also part of 2010-11 season

By **DAVE MOSIER**

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Big names, big shows: the 2010-2011 season at the Niswonger Performing Arts Center of Northwest Ohio has something for everyone – and a lot of bang for the buck, when it comes to entertainment value. In fact, the hardest decision this year for area residents will be which concerts NOT to attend!

“I think we have some pretty big name people here,” said NPAC Executive Director Paul Hoverman during a press conference held Tuesday to announce the 2010-2011 season. He noted that the Grand Series would again feature 13 shows, while the Community Concert Series would add another four shows for a total of 17 shows this coming season.

One of the biggest names will kick off the upcoming NPAC season on September 18 as the Charlie Daniels Band brings its classic Southern Country sound to Van Wert, led by legendary fiddler Charlie Daniels himself. The group, known for such hits as “The Devil Went Down to Georgia,” will have the Saltzgaber Music Hall echoing with the sounds of one of Country’s biggest bands.

As big a name as Charlie Daniels is in Country music, Kenny G matches that in the smooth jazz genre. The famed sax player will bring his signature sound to the NPAC for a holiday concert on December 9. The highest-selling instrumental musician in history, with more than 75 million albums sold worldwide, Kenny G will play his classics, such as “Songbird” and “Silhouette,” as well as some beautiful Christmas music.

Other big names this year include Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Amy Grant on October 17 and impressionist Rich Little on October 30.



Kenny G



Charlie Daniels

Grant, who has earned six Grammys, numerous Dove awards and a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, will perform an array of her music, including crossover hits such as “Baby, Baby” and “Every Heartbeat,” as well as her Christian award-winning songs, such as “El Shaddai,” and “Better than a Hallelujah,” a release from her new album, *Somewhere Down the Road*.

Little, whose career spans five decades and includes some of the most memorable impressions in history (remember his Dick Nixon?), will perform a tribute to James Stewart on the NPAC stage as the leadoff show in the Community Concert Series.

A big name in the making, piano prodigy Ethan Bortnick will perform on the NPAC stage on October 5. Bortnick, a young Mozart who has been playing piano since the age of 3 and composing since he was 5 years old, will provide a great night of music and humor, with a show that likely will feature material from a PBS special he is launching this summer.

Along with the big names are some big shows, starting with the famed Rogers & Hammerstein musical *Oklahoma!* on November 1.

The musical, the first collaboration between the two giants of Broadway and considered one of the greatest shows ever produced, is a story of romance between cowboy Curly and Laurey, the daughter of a rancher, set in the rough-and-tumble territory of Oklahoma, with the despicable Judd Fry a threat to put a tragic end to the young lovers’ story. Called “The Great American Musical” by *The New York Times*, *Oklahoma!* includes some of Broadway’s most memorable music, including the title tune, as well as “Surrey with the Fringe on Top,” “Many a New Day,” “I Cain’t Say No,” “Pore Judd is Daid,” “Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin’” and “People Will Say



Swan Lake

We’re in Love,” as well as some great choreography by dance legend Agnes de Mille.

In addition to Kenny G, the Christmas holiday will include a holiday classic, Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*, the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, clerk Bob Cratchit and Cratchit’s crippled son, Tiny Tim – and the triumph of the Christmas spirit over a miser’s grasping nature – to be performed on December 17.

Perhaps as famous in the world of ballet as *Oklahoma!* is on the Broadway stage, Tchaikovsky’s beautiful ballet *Swan Lake* will be performed by the Moscow State Ballet troupe – the same group that brought *Cinderella* to the NPAC stage – on February 1, 2011.

Music comedy will also be well represented by Gilbert & Sullivan’s tuneful and hilarious *Pirates of Penzance*, which features the delightfully dotty “model of a modern major general” and his bumbling troops, while pirates and maidens romp along the coast of British Cornwall. The musical will be performed by the New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players on March 25, 2011.



Amy Grant

Area concertgoers who have enjoyed past cirque performances at the NPAC, should get a jolt out of Cirque Shanghai Bai Xi, which provides an Oriental twist to the traditional cirque format.

The NPAC is also offering something new this year with a lecture by children's book author and illustrator Steven Kellogg. Kellogg will provide an entertaining, educational evening that will include live illustrations, on September 20.

The Toledo Symphony Orchestra will be at the NPAC on October 23 to provide a Halloween special entitled "Harry Potter meets the Toledo Symphony," featuring music from the Harry Potter movies, as well as other Halloween-themed selections.

Another holiday special will be Jim Brickman's Valentine Show on Sunday, February 13, 2011. Brickman, known for his romantic piano playing and compositions, will provide the perfect evening for lovers of all ages.

He's been on "The Tonight Show," "Letterman," "America's Got Talent" and performs currently on the Vegas strip at the Planet Hollywood Hotel and Casino. On January 30, 2011, Gregory Popovich will bring his Comedy Pet Theatre to the stage of the NPAC – and it may not be the same afterwards.



Pirates of Penzance



A Christmas Carol

Popovich, who trains animals he rescues from shelters, will provide a show that not only features astounding animal tricks, but also comedy, juggling, acrobatics and balancing skills. His performing pets include cats, dogs, geese, ferrets and mice.

Contemporary jazz and R&B star Boney James will bring the season to an exciting finish on April 30, 2011, with his soulful sax renditions. One of today's most respected and best-selling instrumental artists and performers, *The Philadelphia Tribune* calls James: "An unbelievable technician who knows how to work a crowd ... A tough act to follow!"

In addition to the 13 Grand Series concerts, the Community Concert Series also includes three other concerts in addition to Rich Little. They include the American Spiritual Ensemble, Five By Design's "club swing," and the amazing fiddling Depue Brothers Band.

Tickets for individual concerts generally go on sale approximately 90 days prior to the performance, while area residents can also purchase the entire 13-concert Grand Series or pick and choose an individualized group of concerts by means of the Select Series

option. The NPAC box office is located in the Grand Lobby at 10700 Ohio 118 on the south edge of Van Wert. Hours are Monday through Friday, from noon-4 p.m. Tickets can also be purchased using a major credit card by calling 419.238.6722 or online at the NPAC website: www.npacvw.org.

More information on performances and ticket sale dates can be obtained on Facebook (www.facebook.com). DVDs will also be sent out to NPAC members and Grand Series subscribers promoting the new season.



Dragons are just one part of the colorful and entertaining Cirque Shanghai Bai Xi.

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