

FRONT ROW CENTER

Williamston Theatre hits new landmark

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Williamston Theatre isn't the new kid on the block anymore.

With seven seasons under their belt, the 2013-2014 marked a new landmark for them: During their summer show, they saw their 10,000 guest in a single season come through the door.

In total, they've had 65,425 people attend regular season shows since they opened their doors in 2006.

"This is a very exciting time for us," said Williamston Theatre Executive Director John Lepard. "Our

attendance is growing every year, and our geographic reach has widened as well, with over 40 percent of our patrons coming from outside of Ingham County. It's a testament to the high production quality that we have developed a reputation for over the years."

Since their opening, they've received critical raves for the work that they put out each season with numerous award recognitions from The Lansing State Journal's The-

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Jed (Zev Steinberg) as Tokyo Rose, Jeff English and Boyd (Matthew Gwynn) as Shanghai Lil in "The Big Bang" at the Williamston Theatre.

COURTESY OF
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Theater

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pie Awards, the Lansing City Pulse's Pulsar Awards and Encore Michigan's Wilde Awards.

This past season, the season which set new attendance records for them, featured "The Woman in Black," "Over the River and Through the Woods," "The Lion in Winter," "Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune," and "The Big Bang."

"The Big Bang" closed last weekend only to open again in Ann Arbor for a two-week engagement at Performance Network Theatre.

Upcoming events include a season launch party fundraiser on Sept. 11 and then the opening of the season with the world premiere of a Joseph Zettelmayer play, "The Gravedigger: A Frankenstein Story."

Other plays slated include: "Miracle on South Division Street," "The Best Brothers," "Sirens," "Outside Mullingar," "The Art of Murder," and "Dark Nights in Billtown."

Act II: Kim Zimmer returns to the Barn

The Barn Theatre likes to welcome back the stars they once launched. And those



Frankie (Suzi Regan) and Johnny (John Lepard) in "Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune." PHOTO BY CHRIS PURCHIS

stars make a habit of returning to the big theater in the small town of Augusta.

This week, The Barn opens "Hello, Dolly!," the classic musical about a matchmaker who finds herself in love with one of her would-be matches. Playing the famous title role is Kim Zimmer, the soap opera star from Grand Rapids.

Zimmer has won four daytime Emmy Awards for her role as Reva Shayne in "Guiding Light." She also played Echo DiSavoy in "One Life to Live." Meanwhile she continues to return to the Barn Theatre during summers to perform on their stage in such roles as Dolly and Norma Desmond in "Sunset Boulevard."

"Hello, Dolly!" runs for two weeks at The Barn

Hunter, Josh Meredith, Hannah Eakin, and Melissa Cotton.

Following each show is a free cabaret in the Rehearsal Shed Lounge.

It features a full bar, snacks, wings, nachos, and an ice cream bar served by the Barn interns who also entertain.

"Hello, Dolly!"

8 p.m. today, 5 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Saturday and 5 p.m. Sunday, repeats Tuesday through Aug. 31 at Augusta Barn Theatre, M-96, west of Augusta.

Tickets are \$35. www.barntheatre.com or (269) 731-4121.

Encore!

» Riverwalk Theatre will hold auditions at 7 p.m. Sunday and Monday for "Blithe Spirit," a Noel Coward play directed by Susan Chmurnytsky that will be performed Oct. 23-26 and Oct. 30-Nov. 2.