



# Moorestown Theater Company

*Celebrating Our Second Decade: 2003 - 2014*

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## MTC ONLY THEATER TO WIN 3 ACTING AWARDS AT NATIONAL JUNIOR THEATER FESTIVAL



**ATLANTA, GA** (February 21, 2014) – The non-profit **Moorestown Theater Company (MTC)** had a great time at the **2014 Junior Theater Festival (JTF)**, the world's largest musical theater festival for children, which took place January 17 - 19 in Atlanta! Not only did the 24 students, who were cheered on by 34 staff and family members, get to perform 15 minutes of *Willy Wonka, Jr.* in front of theater professionals, but **MTC** was the only theater company out of 93 participating theater groups to earn national awards in all three acting categories.

Produced by New York City's **iTheatrics**, the **JTF** celebrates young people and the “transformative power of musical theater”. This year's festival brought together 4,000 students and teachers from 26 states and the District of Columbia. **MTC**, which received one acting award in 2013, was attending the **JTF** for the second time. The Junior Theater Festival was founded in 2003 and became an annual event in 2010.

**MTC's** award winners were as follows: **Aren Duffy** (Age 11 from Marlton, NJ), who won one of 12 “Excellent Individual Performance By A Male” Awards for his portrayal of “Charlie Bucket” and **Jordan Budney** (Age 10 from Cherry Hill, NJ) won one of 12 “Excellent Individual Performance By A Female” Awards for her portrayal of “Veruca Salt”. **MTC** Producing Artistic Director and *Willy Wonka, Jr.* Director **Mark Morgan** accepted one of eight “Excellence In Acting” Awards for the entire cast for their 15-minute performance.

“Just attending the Junior Theater Festival is a wonderful experience for our students, even if we didn't win any awards”, Morgan said. “But to win three awards, and to be the only theater company out of 93 attending the festival to win an award in all three acting categories, well, that is just amazing, and it truly shows the caliber of actors that perform with the **Moorestown Theater Company!**”

These other **MTC** performers were also recognized for their efforts by the Festival Adjudicators:

**Broadway Jr. All-Stars** (two were selected from each Cast): **Jack Morgan** (Age 17, Moorestown, NJ, “Willy Wonka”) and **Kylee Miller** (Age 14, Moorestown, “Mrs. Gloop”). The two All-Stars from each participating company were split into two groups that each had to learn and perform a song from a musical at the Awards Ceremony at the Festival's final day with just 60 minutes of rehearsal.

**Broadway Jr. Choreography DVD Auditionees** (two to four selected from each Cast): **Jordan Budney**, **Aren Duffy**, **Rocco Ruccolo** (Age 11, Moorestown, “Augustus Gloop”), and **Samantha Spirt** (Age 13, Voorhees, NJ, “Phineas Trout”); Duffy and Ruccolo were invited to a ‘Call-Back’ in NYC this summer.

**Broadway Slam Nominees** (up to eight nominated by each Cast's Directing Team, with two chosen by the JTF Staff): **Roman Daniel** (Age 14, Riverton, NJ) and **Natalie DeRosa** (14, Moorestown) were chosen, with **Marirose Aleardi** (15, Moorestown), **Ryan Coggan** (13, Hainesport, NJ), **Ben Gromacki** (15, Moorestown), **Juliet Morgan** (11, Moorestown), **Rehana Wells** (11, Moorestown), and **Nick Williams** (12, Moorestown). The Broadway Junior Slam is another challenge where students must stage and perform a musical theater song in just one hour.

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Proud Member Of American Association Of Community Theatre (AACT), New Jersey Association Of Community Theaters (NJACT), South Jersey Cultural Alliance (SJCA), Burlington County Chamber Of Commerce (BCCOC), & Moorestown Business Association (MBA)



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**MTC's** 24 students, ages 10 to 17, performed a condensed version of *Willy Wonka, Jr.* during their 15 minutes for adjudicators **Tim Federle** (a former Broadway performer and author of two novels about Broadway kids, *Better Nate Than Never* and *Five, Six, Seven, Nate!*) and **Kristen Singer** (a former New York City Costume Designer and current theater arts teacher in Kenosha, WI). **MTC** was the only group of the eight in its 'pod' to condense a show to 15 minutes (as opposed to just performing various songs from a show), which according to Morgan was done to highlight as many cast members as possible instead of just a few lead performers.

The **Moorestown Theater Company**, which just ended its 11<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season in 2013, is an award-winning, year-round, non-profit community theater. The 24 **MTC** students who traveled to JTF '14 were:

- <sup>2</sup> **Marirose Aleardi** ("Ms. Teavee"), Moorestown Friends School, Grade 10, Age 14, who lives in Moorestown
- Julianna Banfe** (Ensemble), Westfield Friends School, Grade 3, Age 9, Moorestown
- Jordan Budney** ("Veruca Salt"), Joyce Kilmer Elementary School, Grade 5, Age 10, Cherry Hill
- Ryan Coggan** ("Candy Man"), Hainesport School, Grade 8, Age 13, Hainesport
- Roman Daniel** ("Grandpa George"), Moorestown Friends School, Grade 8, Age 14, Riverton
- <sup>2</sup> **Natalie De Rosa** ("Mrs. Bucket"), Moorestown High School, Grade 9, Age 14, Moorestown
- <sup>2</sup> **Aren Duffy** ("Charlie Bucket"), Van Zant Elementary School, Grade 5, Age 11, Marlton
- Indi Ebo** ("Grandma Georgie"), Lumberton Middle School, Grade 7, Age 12, Lumberton
- Ben Gromacki** ("Mr. Salt"), Moorestown High School, Grade 10, Age 15, Moorestown
- <sup>2</sup> **Kylee Miller** ("Mrs. Gloop"), Moorestown High School, Grade 9, Age 14, Moorestown
- <sup>2</sup> **Jack Morgan** ("Willy Wonka"), Moorestown High School, Grade 12, Age 17, Moorestown
- <sup>2</sup> **Juliet Morgan** ("Violet Beauregarde"), Moorestown Upper Elementary School, Grade 5, Age 11, Moorestown
- Sydney Parker** (Ensemble), Bobby's Run Elementary School, Grade 5, Age 10, Lumberton
- Nico Ruccolo** (Ensemble), Moorestown Upper Elementary School, Grade 5, Age 11, Moorestown
- Rocco Ruccolo** ("Augustus Gloop"), Moorestown Upper Elementary School, Grade 5, Age 11, Moorestown
- Olivia Schriber** ("Mrs. Beauregarde"), Wm. Allen Middle School, Grade 7, Age 12, Moorestown
- <sup>2</sup> **Alexia Shepherd** (Ensemble), Ridgeway Middle School, Grade 7, Age 12, Edgewater Park
- Sam Spirt** ("Phineous Trout"), Voorhees Middle School, Grade 7, Age 13, Voorhees
- Chris Streibich** ("Grandpa Joe"), Doane Academy, Grade 9, Age 15, Moorestown
- Jenna Vanston** (Ensemble), Moorestown Friends School, Grade 5, Age 10, Moorestown
- <sup>2</sup> **Rehana Wells** (Ensemble), Moorestown Upper Elementary School, Age 10, Moorestown
- <sup>2</sup> **Nicholas Williams** ("Mike Teavee"), Moorestown Upper Elementary School, Grade 6, Age 12, Moorestown
- Emma Witkowski** ("Grandma Josephine"), Mtown Upper Elementary School, Grade 6, Age 12, Moorestown
- Ethan Zeligson** ("Mr. Bucket"), De Masi Middle School, Grade 7, Age 12, Marlton

<sup>2</sup> = 2<sup>nd</sup> Year **MTC** / JTF Participant

The members of the Production Staff for **MTC's** JTF Trip were: **Mark Morgan** (Director, from Moorestown), **Carol Ann Murray** (Vocal Director, Moorestown), **Beverly Bennett** (Music Director, Mount Laurel), **Kaitlin Tumulty** (Choreographer, Moorestown), **Allison Canning** (Assistant Vocal Director, Hainesport), **Annette De Rosa** (Administrative Director, Moorestown), and **Chris Resavy** (Stage Manager, Lumberton).

Some quotes from various members of the **MTC** Traveling Party (and one very distinguished outsider):

Student **Jack Morgan** ("Willy Wonka", on his final JTF performance): "There is nothing like the JTF, and I am so glad that I was part of **MTC** winning a cast acting award in my final festival. The JTF is such a safe, fun environment for everyone to let out their inner theater nerd."

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Parent and **MTC** Board Member **Rick Williams** (of Channel 6abc): “As a parent, I loved how inspiring, constructive, and thought-provoking the adjudicators were with our children! The wisdom and knowledge they shared with my son (and me) will go a long way in his (and my) theatrical endeavors.”

Choreographer **Kaitlin Tumulty**: “What I loved most about JTF ’14 is the support and love of theater among not only members of our company but by the whole JTF Community. JTF provides kids and adults with so many wonderful opportunities to achieve their dreams. I can’t wait until JTF ’15!”

Student **Olivia Schriber** (“Mrs. Beauregarde”): “What I loved most about JTF ’14 was being able to be surrounded by other theater kids. I can’t wait to come back!”

Parent **Desiree Miller**: “What I love most about JTF ’14 was at any given time, I could look around and see a few thousand kids just mine! Living in a town [Moorestown] that is sports-oriented, I don’t often have this overwhelming feeling of joy!”

Vocal Director **Carol Ann Murray**: “My husband, **Mark Morgan**, and our two children, **Jack** and **Juliet**, have now been to three Jr. Theater Festivals [scouting in ’12 and bringing casts in ’13 and ’14]. It just keeps getting better and better. Our kids did such a great job performing, our parents had a wonderful time soaking in everything at the festival, and winning three awards was just some fantastic icing on top of an amazing cake!”

Student **Julianna Banfe** (Ensemble): “What I loved most about JTF ’14 was seeing all of the other theater companies perform. It was my first festival, and will be something I will remember when I’m 40. I almost felt this moment was waiting to come my entire life!”

Parent **Christine Zeligson**: “As our first time, it was a wonderful experience. The sense of family and support was very heart warming. Great job **MTC** and our performers!”

**MTC** Administrative Director and Parent **Annette DeRosa**: “I loved the enthusiasm and support all the performers had for each other. The JTF staff did a wonderful job. It was truly a magical experience.”

Student **Juliet Morgan** (“Violet Beauregarde”): “What I loved about JTF ’14 was that we got to hang out with our friends, but we also got to meet new friends. I also enjoyed how we got meet famous people, watch other kids and adults perform, and we got to have lots of FUN.”

Parent **Lenny Shepherd**: “What I loved most about JTF ’14 was being with everyone from **MTC**, seeing our kids shine, and feeling the positive and inspirational love from all who came. Thanks for making this happen!”

And finally, from Newark Star-Ledger theater critic emeritus, noted Broadway historian, and MTIShows.com columnist **Peter Filichia**: “Next up is Moorestown Theater Company of New Jersey with *Willy Wonka, Jr.* Director **Mark Morgan** nods when a certain choreographic move goes off particularly well. After “Pure Imagination,” I see a man from First Stage in Theatre Company in Huntington, West Virginia raise his hands to applaud, but just before he’s about to unleash an enthusiastic handclap, he stops mid-air. Now he remembers the announcement made beforehand that everyone should hold his applause for the end... but that’s so hard to remember and follow when kids are as talented as the Moorestown bunch.” (Read Peter’s full column at: <http://mtiblog.mtishows.com/filichia-features-on-stage-at-junior-theater-festival-14/>.)

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**About *Willy Wonka, Jr.*:** The mysterious “Willy Wonka” brings five lucky ‘Golden Ticket’ winners and one traveling companion to his magical chocolate-making factory, with the goal of finding an ‘heir’ to his empire. It is based on the original story, *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory* by **Roald Dahl**, which was published in 1964, and adapted from the 1971 film, *Willy Wonka And The Chocolate Factory*. This family-friendly musical has a score written by **Leslie Bricusse** and **Anthony Newley** that features the hit songs “Pure Imagination”, “The Candy Man”, the “Oompa-Loompa” songs, and “I’ve Got A Golden Ticket”.

The **Moorestown Theater Company** is a non-profit 501(c)(3) performing arts organization, incorporated in 2003, under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director **Mark Morgan**, Managing Director **Carol Ann Murray**, and Administrative Director **Annette De Rosa**. **MTC**, which prides itself on being the place “where families have fun performing musical theater together”, presents the following “season” of productions:

- “**Junior Stage**” (a children’s musical at the Jr. Theater Festival in January);
- “**Winter Stage**” (a children’s musical in March);
- “**Spring Stage**” (a Film & TV Camp or Modeling Camp held during the MTPS Spring Break week, April);
- “**Counsel Stage**” (a musical for the middle school students of Our Lady of Good Counsel School, April);
- “**Second Stage**” (an adult comedy, April);
- “**First Stage**” (a pre-teen children’s musical, May);
- “**Main Stage**” (an all-ages Summer Musical, July);
- “**Summer Stage**” (a children’s musical theater camp with four musical productions, July and August);
- “**Alternative Stage**” (an adult performance of Scenes and Songs, September);
- “**Extrava-Gala**” (a fund-raising dinner dance and auction, October);
- “**Quaker Stage**” (a musical for the students of Westfield Friends School, October);
- “**Second Stage**” (an adult musical, November); and
- “**Fall Stage**” (a children’s musical, December).

**MTC** also offers Spring and Fall Studio Classes in Acting, Dancing and Singing with a session-ending Spring Recital, as well as private voice and dance lessons, and individual audition coaching sessions. **MTC** is actively looking for its ‘own’ building to house all of these activities. For more information about **MTC**, please visit [MoorestownTheaterCompany.org](http://MoorestownTheaterCompany.org), or call **856 / 778-8357**.

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## MTC Jr. Theater Festival '14 Photo Captions

Photo Caption #1: The **Moorestown Theater Company** Staff and Cast of **Willy Wonka, Jr.** that traveled to the iTheatrics Jr. Theater Festival in Atlanta, GA during Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend (Jan. 17-19, 2014).

Photo Credit: **MTC**

Photo Caption #2: The **Moorestown Theater Company** Cast of **Willy Wonka, Jr.** after winning three acting awards at the iTheatrics Jr. Theater Festival in Atlanta, GA during Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend (Jan. 17-19, 2014).

Photo Credit: **MTC**

Photo Caption #3: **Moorestown Theater Company** Cast Member **Aren Duffy** ("Charlie Bucket" in **Willy Wonka, Jr.**, Age 11 from Marlton, NJ) receiving his "Excellent Individual Performance By A Male" Award at the iTheatrics Jr. Theater Festival in Atlanta, GA during Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend (Jan. 17-19, 2014). Pictured with Duffy are Disney Theatrical Production's Dramaturg **Ken Cerniglia** and Adventure Theatre Producing Artistic Director **Michael Bobbitt**.

Photo Credit: JTF

Photo Caption #4: **Moorestown Theater Company** Cast Member **Jordan Budney** ("Veruca Salt" in **Willy Wonka, Jr.**, Age 10 from Cherry Hill, NJ) receiving her "Excellent Individual Performance By A Female" Award at the iTheatrics Jr. Theater Festival in Atlanta, GA during Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend (Jan. 17-19, 2014). Pictured with Budney are *Newsies'* Cast Member **Andrew Keenan-Bolger** ("Crutchie") and Broadway Children's Novelist **Tim Federle**.

Photo Credit: JTF

Photo Caption #5: **Moorestown Theater Company** Producing Artistic Director and **Willy Wonka, Jr.** Director **Mark Morgan** receiving the Cast's "Excellent In Acting" Award at the iTheatrics Jr. Theater Festival in Atlanta, GA during Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend (Jan. 17-19, 2014). Pictured with Morgan are Joseph Weinberger Ltd. Music Director **Ryan Macaulay** and Broadway Choreographer **Karma Camp**.

Photo Credit: JTF

Photo Caption #6: **Moorestown Theater Company** Cast Members **Jack Morgan** ("Willy Wonka" in **Willy Wonka, Jr.**, Age 17 from Moorestown, NJ) and **Kylee Miller** ("Mrs. Gloop", Age 14 from Moorestown, NJ) were selected as "Broadway Jr. All-Stars" at the iTheatrics Jr. Theater Festival in Atlanta, GA during Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend (Jan. 17-19, 2014) by Adjudicators **Tim Federle** and **Kristen Singer**.

Photo Credit: **MTC**

Photo Caption #7: **Moorestown Theater Company** Acting Award Winners **Jordan Budney** ("Veruca Salt" in **Willy Wonka, Jr.**, Age 10 from Cherry Hill, NJ) and **Aren Duffy** ("Charlie Bucket" in **Willy Wonka, Jr.**, Age 11 from Marlton, NJ) with Producing Artistic Director and **Willy Wonka, Jr.** Director **Mark Morgan** (holding the Cast's "Excellence In Acting" Award) at the iTheatrics Jr. Theater Festival in Atlanta, GA during Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend (Jan. 17-19, 2014).

Photo Credit: **MTC**

Photo Caption #8: **Moorestown Theater Company** Broadway Jr. Choreography DVD Auditionees **Samantha Spirt** ("Phineous Trout" in **Willy Wonka, Jr.**, Age 13 from Voorhees, NJ), **Jordan Budney** ("Veruca Salt", Age 10 from Cherry Hill, NJ), **Rocco Ruccolo** ("Augustus Gloop", Age 11 from Moorestown, NJ), **Aren Duffy** ("Charlie Bucket", Age 11 from Marlton, NJ) with **Willy Wonka, Jr.** Choreographer **Kaitlin Tumulty** (holding their 'Golden Tickets' which they used as their entrance to the Choreography DVD Auditions) at the iTheatrics Jr. Theater Festival in Atlanta, GA during Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend (Jan. 17-19, 2014).

Photo Credit: **MTC**

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