

Cobb Energy Centre revs up Broadway season

The **Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre** is ushering in a new season of dazzling shows designed to captivate every audience.

The Gas South Broadway Series, which launches Nov. 30, offers a lineup of Broadway classics, such as “The Wizard of Oz” and “A Chorus Line.” Featuring musicals that have inspired generations, the series aims to attract new audiences as well as people who enjoyed these classics years ago.

“This is a very accessible series, and it has something for everyone — families, couples, singles and all age groups,” said Michael Taormina, managing director of the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre.

Formerly known as the Atlanta Broadway Series, it landed a key sponsorship from Gas South and was renamed the Gas South Broadway Series. The wide appeal of the series was attractive to **Gas South LLC**.

“We were excited about the shows because they were very well-recognized and had broad-based appeal, which we felt was a great fit with our customer base,” said Kevin Greiner, president and CEO of Gas South.

Atlanta-based Gas South, a natural gas supplier with 250,000 customers in Georgia, has been a sponsor of the venue since it opened in 2007.

Doing Broadway shows, especially those that appeal to wide audiences, has been part of the center’s strategy from the beginning, Taormina says. This is the third season of Broadway at the state-of-the-art venue on Cobb Galleria Parkway in northwest Atlanta — and he says there will be more to come.

The center was specifically designed for opera, ballet and Broadway shows.

“It’s the right size and the right fit for Broadway,” Taormina says. “You can see and hear from anywhere in the room.”

Ticket sales this season have topped previous years, Taormina says. The center has almost reached its goal for season tickets, and single tickets are selling well, he said. Season tickets

(four-show packages) start at \$64.

This season opens Nov. 30 — just in time for the holiday season — with the Broadway hit “Cirque Dreams Holidayze,” which tells the story of a magical Christmas tree that comes to life. This whimsical production features an international cast of acrobats, aerialists, singers, dancers and musicians performing an original musical score and a few holiday favorites.



It’s the perfect time of year to draw crowds, as families and groups are looking for holiday fun, Taormina says.

Next in the lineup is “Oklahoma!” running Jan. 6-9. Premiering on Broadway in 1943, the award-winning play has been remade many times. It is a classic American musical that tells the love story of a cowboy and a farm girl.

In early February, “The Wizard of Oz” takes the stage. One of Broadway’s most enduring shows, it is known as a crowd-pleaser for young audiences, as well as for adults who remember their first trip down the yellow brick road.

Another energetic classic, “A Chorus Line,” comes to town March 17-20. The award-winning musical chronicles the story of Broadway dancers auditioning for a show.

The Gas South Broadway Series, which was created in partnership with WH Management Group and Key Brand Entertainment Inc., offers something for all ages, says Taormina.

“There have always been revivals of these classics because there are always new generations who have not seen

them,” Taormina said. “People remember their first time seeing a Broadway show and that’s what we want.” Part of that memorable experience is the venue.

“One of the things that really strikes you when you attend an event there is the overall experience,” Greiner said. “The customer experience is unparalleled with great views from any seat and fantastic acoustics.”

Star power for 2011: “Oklahoma!” runs Jan. 6-9, with “A Chorus Line” on stage March 17-20.



Greiner says the convenient location and easy access make the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre attractive, as does its friendly staff.

The center is a very valuable asset to Cobb County, said Don Beaver, president and CEO of the Cobb Chamber of Commerce.

Beaver says the arts are a critical element of economic development and the center is a “jewel in the crown” for the county.

“The venue has set a standard that is second to none,” Beaver said. “It has really redefined where Cobb County is trying to go in the next 20 to 25 years.”

The Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre hosts three resident companies: the Atlanta Ballet, the Gas South Broadway Series and The Atlanta Opera. The \$145 million facility includes a 2,750-seat theater, a 10,000-square-foot ballroom and other meeting spaces.