**OLD MAN, CHARLIE BROWN**

**PREMIERES AT FORT SALEM**

SALEM, NY — In keeping with its ten-year tradition of presenting world premiere musicals, Fort Salem Theater announces the first-ever production of the Peanuts Parody, *You’re An Old Man, Charlie Brown,* debuting for one weekend only, July 15-17, at the Washington County venue. Penned by the Fort’s artistic director Jay Kerr and attorney/humorist Jeremy Blachman (regular online humor columnist for *The Wall Street Journal, McSweeney’s,* and *Barnes and Noble* and co-author of the June, 2016, release of *The Curve,* a novel about a Trump University-type law school), *Old Man* is a send-up of Clark Gesner’s 1967 classic musical, *You’re A Good Man, Charlie Brown.*

“*Peanuts* was really never about kids. When Charles Schultz created the characters in 1948, he called his comic strip, *‘*Little People,’” notes Kerr. “That’s what they are. Little *big* people. Lucy is not that annoying girl down the street. She’s her mother. Charlie Brown isn’t a nerdy six year old we feel sorry for; he’s the nerdy guy-next-door we feel sorry for. And now, for your musical theatrical pleasure, they’re grandparents — on social security and living at Leisure Villages in a state very much like Florida. Warm, sunny, and exactly where Florida is.”

Clark Gesner, who died at age 64 in 2002, graduated from Princeton in 1960, where he wrote musicals for the Princeton Triangle Club. Kerr wrote for Triangle from 1963-1967. “We all idolized Clark; he was who we aspired to be — he was writing clever songs for Manhattan cabarets and also writing for *Captain Kangaroo.* Then in 1967, *Charlie Brown* opened off-Broadway, and it was a big hit.” As Gesner had mentored Kerr (“He got me my first job out of college, holding cue cards for *Kangaroo!”),* Kerr mentored Jeremy Blachman while he was writing at Princeton, graduating in 2001. Blachman and Kerr co-wrote *A Christmas Carol: The Musical,* Fort Salem’s first Mainstage production after Kerr renovated the theater in 2007.

The week it was published in 1967, Gesner gave Kerr a book of songs from *Charlie Brown.* “On the title page, he wrote ‘For Jay, to play with.’ That’s what Jeremy and I have done, forty-nine years later.”

Along for the ride are several Friends of the Fort and accomplished members of Actors’ Equity, including musical and soap actress Kathleen Devine (Lucy) and former Rockette and Broadway singer/dancer Joyce Nolen (Peppermint Patty — “she’s dropped the ‘peppermint’”), joined by Albany’s Gregory Anderson (Charlie) and Greenwich actor David Braucher (Linus), seen in last season’s *Dracula’s Grandmother,* playing her grandson. Glens Falls actor/musician John Muller plays Snoopy, and Kerr will be playing the Fort Steinway as Schroeder.

“Jeremy is thirty-seven. He’s been teaching me about old people,” says Kerr, who turned seventy late last year. “Old people take lots of medications,” Blachman tells him. “Not all of them. I don’t,” claims Kerr. “Well, the rest do,” responds Blachman, backing up each of his medical facts with support from his gerontologist wife, Nina Langsam.

*Old Man* examines and comments on a variety of senior activities. Charlie Brown involves his friends in a competitive pickle ball league. Patty encourages Charlie to explore senior dating. Lucy and Linus reflect upon their changing roles as individuals, parents, and grandparents. They all see aging and death as aspects of life. And accept the advent of modern technology, even though it baffles them. “These are all real people, determined to make their golden years their best years.” Even Snoopy, who lost his reproductive rights at an early age, accepts the curves life has thrown his way, and integrates enthusiasm and good humor with his resentment.

*You’re An Old Man, Charlie Brown* plays Friday and Saturday nights, July 15-16, at 8 PM and Sunday, July 17, at 2 PM. More information is online at *[fortsalemtheater.com](http://fortsalemtheater.com)* and tickets are available by calling the Fort;s box office at (518) 854-9200.