

New Robson PAC

— An evening, a performance, and a grand opening that will be remembered in these parts for a long, long time. “Beauty and the Beast” was an opportunity to sit back in comfortable seats, watch a troupe of energetic young thespians do their thing on a gigantic stage, and listen to beautiful music delivered via a fantastic sound system.

That was the grand opening of the Robson Performing Arts Center in Claremore last weekend.

Frank and Ludmila Robson presented the \$13 million facility to the Claremore public school system, the largest single gift ever given to an Oklahoma public school. Frank, with his family in attendance, including sister Helen Walton of Bentonville, Ark., cut the ribbon in time for the curtain to rise on time.

The Center’s inaugural performance, “The Beast,” by the Oklahoma Shakespearean Festival based at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant, ran for two packed-house nights and two matinees, and they were splendid.

While the musical was wonderfully entertaining to see, the Center itself stole the show.

From a huge, graceful entry to hands free restrooms, not a single detail seems to have been overlooked. The 70,000 square foot Center includes seating for 1,100, with not a single seat more than 85 feet from the 45x114-foot stage. There simply is not a bad seat in the house.

From the first note out of the sunken orchestra pit it is obvious that the Center is equipped with a state-of-the-art sound system. For the performers, there is not a weak spot on the stage. The sound, lighting and technical equipment is designed to accommodate any type of a production.

There are other performing art centers in Oklahoma, but there is only one Robson Performing Arts Center, and thanks to Frank and Lu Robson, it’s right here in Claremore.

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