

Print Page

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## Become Starfleet Academy cadet in 'Star Trek Live'

When "Star Trek" debuted in 1966, space was the final frontier. Over the next 45 years, the voyages of the starships Enterprise have captivated viewers on television and movie screens.

On Saturday, Mad Science Productions brings the franchise to a new venue, as the Raue Center for the Arts hosts "Star Trek Live," an interactive show that casts the audience as cadets at Starfleet Academy, the training school for all officers in the "Star Trek" universe.

Leonard Lipes, Mad Science Productions managing director and producer, said the show explains to children how prevalent science is in everyday life.

"The kids are having so much fun, they don't even realize they're learning," Lipes said.

Based in Montreal, Mad Science Productions stages science-based shows that create learning experiences for children and adults. It first created a family-friendly stage show based on the CBS hit "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation." Creating a show based around the "Star Trek" franchise was "a no-brainer," Lipes said.

"A lot of the science fiction used on the show is now a reality," he said.

While "Star Trek" took place in the 23rd century, "Star Trek Live" is set in the present day. The audience takes the role of members of the inaugural class of Starfleet Academy. When a renegade Romulan from the future comes back in time to kidnap a key scientist – setting science back and giving Romulans an advantage in the future – the cadets are asked to help Starfleet Cmdr. Sean Christopher (Trevor Pease) and Voula, a time-traveling Vulcan (Theresa Noon), save the day.

Lipes said Mad Science looked to the 2009 J.J. Abrams movie for inspiration.

"The 2009 movie was very accessible to everyone," he said. "It had cool moments for fans of the series, but didn't alienate people who weren't fans."

"Star Trek Live" takes a similar approach. The original cast and story, while using basic elements of the franchise, makes it easy for the audience to relate and get involved.

"The show stands on its own," Lipes said.

But that doesn't mean "Star Trek Live" doesn't use the rich history of the franchise. Toward the end of the show, screens set up on stage show footage from the 2009 film to tie the show to the larger universe. The on-screen appearances of iconic "Trek" characters Captain Kirk (Chris Pine) and Spock (Zachary Quinto) give fans of the franchise something to look forward to.

"We felt it was important to bring those characters in," Lipes said. "There's something in the show for truly everybody."

The hourlong experience ends with a question-and-answer session during which the audience can ask about what they've just seen. The actors in the show answer in character, Lipes said. He said the session can sometimes be the highlight of the show.

"The kids ask the most interesting questions, because you never know what's coming out of their mouths," he said.

Saturday's performance at the Raue Center is part of a 71-city tour for "Star Trek Live" that wraps in April.

Lipes said Mad Science has been pleased with the feedback it's received.

"It's very true to the Mad Science brand and very true to the 'Star Trek' brand," he said.

**"Star Trek Live"**

**WHEN: 2 and 6:30 p.m. Saturday**

**WHERE: Raue Center for the Arts, 26 N. Williams St., Crystal Lake**

**COST: \$12, \$6**

**INFO: [www.rauecenter.org](http://www.rauecenter.org)**

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