



CSU

THEATRE

CSU Theatre is proud to announce our 2023-2024 season

Tying into CSU's campus-wide theme, we ask: What makes a democratic society? And what does democracy mean to theatre artists?

To us, it means:

Building Community. Theatre, an inherently collaborative artform, is all about building communities – within our rehearsal rooms, on our stages, and with our audiences. Through storytelling, we invite conversation about what defines us as individuals...and as a society.

Fighting Injustice. Artists hold mirrors up to culture, asking vital questions about what we want our world to be. We tell stories that ask us to look at ourselves with new eyes, open spaces in which to see one another, and invent, imagine, and invite new possibilities together.

Diverse Representation – At CSU Theatre, we believe that diversity makes a democracy. Who is represented, and how, matters if we are to forge a more inclusive, welcoming, and equitable world.

Laughing at our Foibles – As we tackle life's heavy, difficult subjects, we also believe that being able to laugh at ourselves is vital to humanity's well-being. At the center of theatre is a spirit of play – playing with words, with ideas, and with each other. And change is only possible when we let go of old vocabularies...and invent new ones.

In this spirit, we offer the following season of plays and performances:

Fall 2023

***Silent Sky* by Lauren Gunderson**

In the Studio Theatre

Directed by Debbie Swann

Opens September 2023

A whipsmart, headstrong pioneer at the dawn of modern astronomy, Henrietta Leavitt must leave her Wisconsin home to pursue her dream of studying the night sky. But she soon discovers that the distance to the stars is less than the distance to acceptance in the male-dominated world of turn-of-the-century science. In this magical story of a scientist's quest for the sky in a society determined to keep a woman in her place, Henrietta and her female peers change the way we understand both the heavens and Earth.

This play demands a place at the table for the forgotten women of science and is written by one of our finest contemporary playwrights, Lauren Gunderson (www.laurengunderson.com).

***The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* by Rachel Sheinkin and William Finn**

In the University Thrust Theatre

Directed by Noah Racey

Opens November 2023

An eclectic group of six pubescents vie for a spelling championship. While candidly disclosing hilarious and touching stories from their home lives, the tweens spell their way through a series of (potentially made-up) words, hoping never to hear the soul-crushing, pout-inducing, life un-affirming "ding" of the bell that signals a spelling error. Six spellers enter and learn that winning (and losing) isn't everything. A riotous ride, complete with audience participation, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* is a delightful den of comedic genius.

In this light-hearted musical, conceived by Rebecca Feldman, we get to laugh at our foibles as this jamboree of idiosyncratic nerds builds their own quirky community. And our audiences are invited to spell out their participation.

SHOWCASE SERIES: Fall

At the end of the Fall semester, we showcase our students' work with public performances of classwork: The 3rd and 4th year Acting students perform a Monologue Festival, first years create a verbatim theatre project, Directing and Acting majors share scenes, Lighting Designers stage the Rock Band Project, and Voice students do their recitals. All are open to audiences.

ON THE BRINK

Directed by Saffron Henke

Our reading series, aimed at amplifying marginalized voices and exposing students to a diverse array of BIPOC, queer, and women artists from around the nation and the world, will work on a community engagement project this Fall that takes work – and our students – out to local schools.

Spring 2023

***Fairview* by Jackie Sibblies Drury**

In the Studio Theatre

Directed by a guest artist (TBD)

Opens February 2024

The 2019 Pulitzer Prize winning drama, *Fairview* is a candid examination of race in contemporary American society. In a well-off African American household reminiscent of TV sitcoms, a black family is preparing for grandma's birthday. A group of white spectators

comment on the scene. When the play reverses the positions between spectator and spectacle, however, the audience is invited to face our deep-seated prejudices, examine the white gaze, and play our parts in America's story.

Timed to coincide with Black History Month, this brilliant play addresses racial injustice, speaking truth the power in a very theatrical way. In staging a play by Jamaican-American playwright, Jackie Sibbles Drury (www.jackiesibblesdrury.com), we also examine issues of who is represented – and how – on our stages.

***Our Town* by Thornton Wilder**

In the University Thrust Theatre

Directed by Wesley Longacre

Opens April 2024

This American classic won the Pulitzer Prize in 1938. Exploring timeless questions about the meaning of love, companionship, life and death, *Our Town* tells the story of the fictional American small town of Grover's Corners, New Hampshire between 1901 and 1913 through the everyday lives of its citizens. Using metatheatrical devices, Wilder's play offers up a microcosm of the human life cycle for our reflection.

This classic play, about a specific community that could be any of our hometowns, asks: What makes us citizens? What makes a democracy? How are we defined by our humanity? And our community?

SHOWCASE SERIES: Spring

At the end of the Spring semester, we showcase our students' work with public performances of classwork: The 1st and 2nd year Acting students perform a Monologue Festival, Advanced Directing and Acting majors share scenes, Voice students do their recitals, and the Devising class share their unique creations. All are open to audiences.

At CSU Theatre, we make art that matters. For a world that needs it more than ever.