

April 27th, 2024

Acting for the Camera

Wright/Laird Casting

An On-Camera Audition Workshop - Participants will be introduced to the professional casting process with real time auditions from select attendees in each session. Scripts from actual auditions will be used and onlookers will participate in constructive critique and redirection. The workshop is applicable to prospective actors, directors, & producers in film, TV, and theatre.

Be a Leader: Stage Management

Katia Milazzo

Want to learn real life leadership skills? Explore one of the most important positions in a theatrical team. Learn the responsibilities of stage management and how to help create and run a production.

Rasaboxes

Elizabeth Sullivan

Get on your feet in a Rasaboxes acting and movement session that explores our eight emotions through our breath, body, and voice. Instructor, Elizabeth Sullivan trained under Rachel Bowditch at Arizona State University, a protégé of Rasaboxes creator, Richard Schechner.

Creative Character Building

Andrea Hobley

Use your creative thinking skills to build a character through acting, games and improvisation.

Behind the Magic: Directing in Musical Theatre.

Katia Milazzo

Directing a musical is a lot of fun. In this workshop you will learn how to be the director. That's right, feel the power of being in charge.

Art and Storytelling Through Music

Maria Milazzo

Students will interactively learn ways to create art and stories through music.

Special Effects Makeup for Stage/Film

Jake Jackson

A hands on exploration of bruises, wounds, monsters, and more. Join professional makeup artist Jake Jackson in this interactive workshop.

Save the Dress.

Jamie and Ashlyn Rhue

A crash-course in costume quick fixes and alterations. Saving the day is just a stitch away.

What is a Technical Theatre Challenge?

The Tech Challenge is a series of events that are designed to test students knowledge of basic skills every technician should have. The combination of partner and individual events underline the principle that theatre technicians work together to make the production successful. As technicians we also have to perform the tasks quickly and efficiently so as not to disrupt the production process. High school students across the state enjoy these challenges at Kansas and International Thespian Festivals. Thus, For JFest, we bring you a true master of technical theatre, Dustin Pence, (Olathe North High School). Mr. Pence will teach four sessions with a different technical theater challenge as the emphasis. In these sessions students will learn the skill followed by a quick competition to complete the task. These Tech Events represent the basic skills that every technician should possess to be well rounded theatre professionals. Participate in as many as you like!

Platform Power

For this session you will learn to leg a platform and then compete for best time!

Knot Tying

For this session you will learn how to tie a series of knots, and then compete for best time!

Quick Change Magic.

For this session you will learn how to change costumes in seconds, and then compete for best time!

Props Shift

For this session you will learn how to change a set of props in seconds, and then compete for best time!

Satur.....DAY Live

Will Averill

Learn how to write your own sketch comedy. Work with playwright Will Averill to create funny sketches, just like on Saturday Night Live.

Musical Theatre Dance

Gwentessa Alfie/ Mindy Moritz & Belden

Learn to dance to your favorite Musical Theater songs. Great for students who have no previous dance experience but also LOTS of fun for all.

Shakespearean Insults and Swordfights

Jeanne Averill

Learn some Shakespeare and stage combat in an interactive fun-filled workshop. You can fight and insult like the bard himself.

Crafting Musical Theatre Numbers

Maria Milazzo

Explore using movement and expression while acting in a musical theatre number. Students will learn how to craft a compelling character to share the story of the song.

Escape from the Labyrinth

Ric Averill

Be a part of New Play development - during a 2 session workshop, participants will be quickly cast (everyone will have several roles) and read a new script in development based on the Greek Myths of Theseus and the Minotaur, Ariadne and the Labyrinth, and Icarus.

Face Off : Wigs and Stage Make Up

Jennifer Morgan

Dive into the world of stage makeup and hair. Learn how to create characters with wigs and make up. Also, learn how to properly maintain your resources.

Voice Acting for Animation and Commercials

Andrea Fantauzzi

Jump into the world of vocal acting. Students will learn about using their voices to create characters for animation or commercials.

Audition Tips and Techniques

Mindy Moritz Belden

Do auditions make you nervous, excited or both? Come work your skills and gain the advice and tips to create a compelling and interesting character that will impress your directors.

CORE Improvisation

Gracie Heath

CORE is an improv workshop where we learn about core (Character, Objective, Relationship, Environment) and play improv games focused around those important concepts.

Costuming

Jennifer Morgan

Discover the magic of fabric and design. Dive into this workshop to learn the responsibilities of the costume designer and create sketches and designs of your own.

Stage Movement Techniques

Andrea Fantauzzi

Learn how to use your body to create awesome characters. This workshop will explore physical expression and how to show age, emotion and character through each part of your body.

Improvisation with LGIC

Locally Grown Improv Co.

Join Locally Grown Improvisation Company's team to learn the basics of improvisation and games to take back to your schools.

Storytelling Through Song

Jeanne Averill

Students will work in groups to act out lyrics of a famous song: Taylor Swift, Billie Eilish, Beyonce or Garth Brooks, new music video in the making!

Thespy and Workshop Registration opens March 22nd- March 29th. Please fill out the Workshop registration form by March 29th.



**KANSAS
JUNIOR THESPIANS™**

AN EDUCATIONAL THEATRE
ASSOCIATION AFFILIATE

KSJFest Guest Artists



Gwentessa Alfie

Choreographer and
Dancer.

Gwentessa Alfie has enjoyed performing for as long as they can remember. Their focus has been in dance and musical theatre performance. They have appeared in several shows, including In the Heights at the Topeka Civic Theatre. Most recently they collaborated with the Lawrence Art Center's Theatre and Dance for the Very Young Program (TDVY) in the devised production of My Name Is Loofa Tutu. In addition to performing, Gwentessa choreographs for school musical productions and choir variety shows, the latest performance being Newsies Jr. When Gwentessa isn't busy with theatre, they work as a paraeducator for the Lawrence Public Schools.

Jeanne Averill has been a professional actress and award winning educator for more than 25 years. She has appeared in almost every professional venue in Kansas City, getting her start at our own Coterie Theater in roles such as Marmee in Little Women and Ma in The Little House on the Prairie plays. In addition to Kansas City theaters such as The Coterie, Kansas City Rep, Kansas City Actors Theater, New Theater Restaurant, and American Heartland Theater, she has also appeared in national theaters such as The Denver Performing Arts Center and the Black Hills Playhouse. She has an extensive resume in film and commercials and has appeared in national films with actors such as Martin Sheen, Patty Duke, John Hurt, Ari Graynor, Colin Hanks, and Jeffrey Tambor, among others. Jeanne holds a BS in education and an MA in theater, both from the University of Kansas. During her career she has been awarded the Kansas Theater Teacher of the Year, the Lawrence Secondary Teacher of the Year, and the AATE (American Alliance for Theater in Education) National Theater Teacher of the Year.



Jeanne Averill
Freelance Actress,
Director and Teaching
Artist.



Ric Averill

Playwright,
Executive Director of
Performing Arts Emeritas.
Lawrence, Arts Center.
Owner: Averill Acting
Institute

Ric Averill is a freelance director, playwright, screenwriter, actor, composer, music director, keyboard player and conductor. He retired as artistic director, emeritus, of the Lawrence Arts Center, the organization that supported his artistic life for 16 years and allowed him to tour the country (37 states with his Seem-To-Be Players) and produce professional and educational theatre (including the award-winning Summer Youth Theatre program, which he co-founded with actress wife, Jeanne.) Averill has been commissioned by the Coterie Theatre in Kansas City, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., First Stage Milwaukee and San Diego State University's Theater of the World Festival to write plays and operas. The body of his work may be found at Dramatic Publishing. Averill's most recent work, Midnight Visit to the Grave of Poe: A Grotesque Arabesque, an opera with modern dance, rock instrumentation and digital scenery, premiered at the Lawrence Arts Center in October 2015. Most recently, he has been awarded the 2018 Charlotte B. Chorpensing Playwright Award.

Will Averill has been working in theatre and comedy for more than 20 years. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in theatre from the University of Kansas, he founded the Card Table Theatre in Lawrence, Kan., which produced new and original works, including the one-act "Bunnies" by Michael O'Brien. In 2003, Averill moved to England and co-founded Axis of Evil Productions, touring the UK and Europe and attending the Edinburgh Festival Fringe from 2007-2010 with his adult hand-puppet theatre troupe, S.D.P.T. Averill worked as head writer and director for The Victor Continental Show, was featured in the YouTube web series "Men in Their Thirties Who Are Roommates", and is currently working on multiple writing and directing projects. His 2016 all-female production of Bertolt Brecht's Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui was named "Best Revival of a Local Production" by the Lawrence Journal-World's Best of Lawrence Awards. He has also worked extensively with middle-school theatre programs to develop new and exciting works for large-cast productions. Averill currently lives and writes in Lawrence, Kan., with his family, where it's too hot, too cold and full of tornados.



Will Averill

Playwright,
Executive Director; Card
Table Theatre



Andrea Fantauzzi

Award Winning Actress,
Singer and Dancer

Award Winning Actress (BUTTER CUP, AFTER YOU) - SAG-AFTRA (16 years), Singer (NEW YORK, REGIONAL - trained by MET Opera star Claudia Catania), Dancer (Broadway Dance Center, Miller-Marley School of Dance and Voice), Award Winning Director (LETTERS FROM A FATHER - Co-Starring Hala Finley), Producer (BLACK ZONE - Emmy Award Winning Team), Teaching Artist (COTERIE THEATRE, FANTA-ZEE), Writer (LETTERS FROM A FAHTER - Co-Starring Hala Finley, FANTA-ZEE), Editor (BLACK ZONE - Emmy Award Winning Team, FANTA-ZEE), Script Supervisor (THE LAST BUTTERFLIES starring Cooper Andrews - THE WALKING DEAD). Most well known in Kansas City for her work as Susan Pevensie in NARNIA THE MUSICAL presented by Starlight Theatre and performed at the Kauffman Center for Performing Arts and Teen Fiona/Peter Pan in the Theatre for Young Audiences World Premiere of SHREK THE MUSICAL presented by the Coterie Theatre. Graduate of The Second City, and The New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts.

This is Gracie's second year hosting a workshop at KSJF. Gracie Heath is a soon-to-be University of Central Missouri graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and a Minor in Art. She has six years of improv experience and has taught at the Coterie, Summit Theatre Group Studio, and the LSR7 school district. Gracie is also the proud owner of Fabled Fox Theatrics in Lee's Summit. Stop by her workshop to learn about the basics of improv!



Gracie Heath

Theater Teaching
Artist.



Andrea Hogley

Professional Actress.

Andrea has been performing, and learning and working in the local community theatre industry for 12 years. Comedy and Character roles are her specialty. Her favorite Past Roles have been Mrs. Darbus in High School Musical 1 and 2, Bree in Fancy Nancy at the Lawrence Arts Center. and Liza in Forbidden Broadway. She has been singing, dancing and entertaining her friends and family for her entire life and is excited to share her unique personality with you.



Brandon Baker



Josiah Crandall



Dalton Hayes-Tinker

Locally Grown Improv Co has been producing family friendly quality improv to the Johnson County and surrounding KC area since the fall of 2022. They put on their own shows, and are available for hire for shows, parties, business events, trainings, or workshops! They have done a number of different workshops in the area. We are a two time winner of KC Improv's Underground Throwdown, They are also so excited to put on a workshop for the Jr. Thespians!



Jake Jackson is a multiple award-winning special makeup effects artist, producer and director whose career has spanned over 20 years in the independent film industry. His most recent special makeup effects and producing work can be seen in the feature films Exposure, I Am Lisa, Alchemy of the Spirit, and They Wait in the Dark, as well as the award-winning short films "Crockpot" and "Fountain."

Other makeup credits include the multiple award-winning feature film Hell Town, the forthcoming feature film Bloody Famous, and short films "Road Demon" and "Bedtime Story," which he also directed.

Jake Jackson

Owner: Monster Maker By Night FX
MMBN Productions
Topeka, KS

Wright/Laird Casting has been the primary casting company in Kansas City since 1993. Principal owner and casting director Heather Laird has been in the industry for 25 years and has worked on more than 65 film & television projects and over 1,000 commercial & print advertisements. Heather cast for the critically acclaimed WINTER'S BONE, which won 4 Academy Award nominations, a Golden Globe nomination, the 2010 Sundance Grand Jury Prize for dramatic film, and the Casting Society of America's coveted Artios award for Best Casting in an Independent Dramatic Feature. Other notable films include Robert Altman's KANSAS CITY, Ang Lee's RIDE WITH THE DEVIL, TRUMAN (Gary Sinise) , and the Hallmark Hall of Fame television series SARAH, PLAIN AND TALL. Recently Heather worked on THE GOOD LIE (Reese Witherspoon) and two Kansas City kids are featured in the film. Wright/Laird is Better Business Bureau accredited with an A+ rating. Heather Laird is on the Professional Advisory Board for the University of Kansas Film & Media Studies Dept. and the former president of the board of the Film Commission of Greater Kansas City.



Heather Laird
Wright/Laird Casting



Katia Milazzo

Theatre Teaching Artist

Katia Milazzo graduated from Notre Dame de Sion High school and UMKC and is currently studying at Rockhurst University for her Masters of Education. Katia has directed musicals for 7 years including The Little Mermaid, Aladdin, Seussical and many more. She has also directed several plays at City Theater of Independence and Bell Road Barn Players. Summer of 2023, Katia stage managed for Beauty and the Beast at Leawood Stage Company. She is now currently directing Legally Blonde the Musical for Leawood Stage Company Summer 2024.

Katia has a passion for music and theatre and is thrilled to be able to be a part of this festival again! This is her second year presenting and is excited to share her love of stage management and direction.

Maria Milazzo currently teaches theology at Notre Dame de Sion High School in Kansas City, Missouri. Maria has recently been seen teaching musicianship classes and leading workshops with students at Harmony Project KC. With an extensive background in music, vocal performance, music education, and theatre, Maria has directed choirs and worked with singers of all ages. Maria has directed numerous musicals with students 3rd-8th grade at Nativity of Mary Theatre including, but not limited to, Frozen Jr., Seussical Jr., and Beauty and the Beast, Jr. As a Soprano, Maria can be seen singing at engagements throughout Kansas City such as the Festa Italiana and the Kansas City Diplomatic Ball among others. Maria holds a B.M. (Westminster Choir College) and M.M. (UMKC Conservatory) in Voice Performance as well as a Masters of Divinity from Saint John’s School of Theology and Seminary.



Maria Milazzo

Theatre Teaching Artist and Vocal Performance



Jennifer Morgan

Theatre Teaching Artist

Jennifer Morgan is excited to be back in Kansas this weekend! Currently the Director of Theatre at Brownell Talbot in Omaha, NE, Jennifer serves on Nebraska Thespians Board of Directors as Advocacy Chair and as Co Chair for The Educational Theatre Association's Advocacy Leadership Network. An EdTA and Kansas Thespians Hall of Fame inductee, Jennifer has worked at the educational, community, and professional level in all areas of storytelling. Ms. Morgan is thrilled to be back in Kansas to work with one of her favorite areas of expertise- costumes and hair and makeup.



Mindy Moritz Belden is no stranger to the stage! She has been involved in over 250 musicals as an actress, director, or choreographer. She has performed professionally all over Kansas City. Mindy is the Artistic Director for Inspired Purpose: www.IPTheater.com where she directs and choreographs a full musical production in just five days – several times a year. Trained at Miller Marley, she has strong skills in tap, jazz, ballet and ballroom, and choreographs for many schools and theatre companies all over Kansas City. She especially enjoys teaching students who have a passion for musical theatre!

Mindy Moritz Belden
Dancer and Choreographer



Jamie and Ashlyn are a mother-daughter costuming team who love to sew and work together. They are excited to bring some quick tips to our young sewers!

Jamie and Ashlyn Rhue



Dustin Pence
Theater Director
ONHS
Performing Arts
Department Chair.

Mr. Pence is currently the Theatre Director at Olathe North High School. He is heavily involved in Kansas Thespians as a sponsor and volunteer for the Kansas Thespian Festival. Mr. Pence received a BA Theatre and Speech, and History and Government at MidAmerica Nazarene and a MA Theatre, from University of Houston

Elizabeth Sullivan has an M.F.A. in Theatre for Youth and K-12 teaching certification from Arizona State University. She is a community-based artist, teaching artist, director, and performer. Elizabeth acted with The Seem-To-Be Players, a nationally touring children’s theatre troupe. She served as lead facilitator and actor for MADE Garden, an interactive art and play installation for young children at Mesa Art Center’s SPARK! Festival for Creativity. She worked as Asphalt Art’s Resident Artist at Phoenix’s Tumbleweed Center for Youth Development where she led homeless youth in poetry, spoken word, drama, performance, and digital storytelling. Elizabeth directed, facilitated, and performed in Lawrence Arts Center production of Rethink: I Am a Veteran, an original storytelling project focused on women veterans.



Elizabeth Sullivan
Artistic Director of
Performing Arts
Lawrence Arts Center.

At the end of your session, don't forget to say thank you to these amazing theatre artists that have brought their talent and expertise to you! We hope you enjoy working with them!

