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# Illinois Theatre Association

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## ITA EVENTS

### Save the Date!

August 25-26, 2018  
ITA's 3rd Annual Gala and Awards Celebration  
at Drury Lane Theatre,  
Oakbrook  
Stay Tuned for Details.

[Submit an Event](#)

## JOB POSTINGS

[North Shore Country](#)

eFOLLOWSPOT

FEBRUARY, 2018

## IT'S MARCH! TIME TO CELEBRATE THEATRE IN OUR SCHOOLS

**Dear Theatre Educators,**

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO to bring theatre to the next generation of artists. Let's celebrate theatre -- and all the amazing work you do -- in Illinois throughout the month of March: Theatre in Our Schools Month!

[Click here](#) to learn about a fun opportunity -- ILLINOIS THEATRE IN OUR SCHOOLS VIDEO for teachers and students to show how important theatre is in your school!

Also, "Wear Your Show Shirt Day" is March 9th! Please promote this in your schools, take pictures and post them on social media! Don't forget to tag the ITA (@IllinoisTheatre) and the AATE (@AATENow) in your posts and use the hashtag #TIOS18 or #TheatreInOurSchools.

If you'd like to participate in other TIOS events, [click here](#) to check out this website with ways to get involved!

Thank you again for all that you do. Let's celebrate our life-changing art!

Sincerely,  
Britnee Kenyon, ITA Secondary School Theatre Division Rep.  
Justin Charles, AATE High School Network Co-Chair

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## FLAVOR OF THE 'ITAs": 2018 STATEWIDE AUDITION RECAP

by Joan McGrath, ITA Professional Theatre Rep.

Breathe deeply.

Deeper.

**Day School** , Winnetka, IL,  
is seeking a costumer for the 2018-19 school year.

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**The Aurora Civic Center** Authority in Aurora, Illinois,  
is seeking an Education and Community Engagement Assistant.

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**The 2nd Act Players** , based in Evanston, is looking for board members for its 2018 season.

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**Franklin Fine Arts Center** (K-8 CPS magnet school) is in need of a licensed teacher to cover a drama maternity leave from April 9 through the end of the school year ( June 20 ).

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Lights/Props Supervisor needed at **Glenbard North High School** for remainder of school year effective immediately.

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**Timber Lake Playhouse** is now accepting applications for paid and unpaid internship positions for the 2018 Summer Season.

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**The Illinois Thespian Society** is searching for troupe directors to serve on its Board of Directors.

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**Grand Stage Company** is seeking to fill the position of Rental Manager.

**Click Here for all Job Details, or to Submit a Job Posting.**

## AUDITION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Relax, kiddo.

Fix on that smile.

Shake out the nerves.

Warm up.

Vocalize.

Crack those knuckles.

Exhale.

The hallway in front of the Recital Hall Auditorium on the underground floor of the University of Illinois/Chicago's School of Theatre and Dance vibrated with eager, hopeful, passionate and inspired performers. 251 of them were preparing for their 90-second spotlight opportunity at the 2018 ITA Statewide Non-Equity Professional Auditions. They came from Chicago, downstate Illinois, Iowa, Indiana -- fresh grads of university acting programs, professional novices, newcomers to Chicago and seasoned veterans.

Populating the auditorium, 38 professional artistic directors, talent agents and casting directors, in respectful concentration of the earnest performances. They represented 31 elite companies like Music Theater Works, Goodman Theatre, Metropolis Performing Arts, Timber Lakes Playhouse, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, and Oak Park Festival Theatre.

On Saturday, Feb 3, from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., auditionees presented 16 bars of a song, followed by a dramatic or comic monologue. In his fifth year as ITA's audition maestro, pianist/entertainer Andrew Blendermann (Blenderful Music) adroitly accompanied the selections from Broadway tunes to jazz, rock and light opera.

On Sunday, Feb. 4, the non-musical actors performed two contrasting monologues to showcase their range. Slices of classic Shakespeare, serious drama and deftly timed comedy vied to be distinctive and memorable.

When their pre-assigned timeslot arrived, the aspirants came center stage and announced their names, the audition number displayed on their chests and their selected material. The clock started with the first note or syllable of their audition piece. When precisely 90-seconds had elapsed, if not done delivering their material, ITA Membership Coordinator Susan Rothchild, functioning as official timer, mandated "Stop."

Then, exit stage right, marked by beaming smiles, stunned looks, gracious "thank you's," and not a few audible sighs.

2018 was the 39<sup>th</sup> year this ritual of breaking into professional theatre played out. Since 1979, over 10,000 aspiring actors and musical performers have brought their dreams center stage at the ITAs, Illinois' largest and most prestigious combined auditions.

For the performers, who affectionately call the experience "harrowing but thrilling," the event affords invaluable exposure before Chicago and regional theaters looking to cast bonafide roles and/or expand their talent pools.

Auditions for **Western Illinois University's** BFA Musical Theatre Program are scheduled for  
Sat., Feb. 24, 2018  
Sat., Mar. 24, 2018

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**Northern Illinois University's** School of Theatre and Dance BFA Acting & Design Technology programs.  
Fri., March 30, 2018  
Fri., April 13, 2018

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**Timber Lake Playhouse** announces auditions for resident company and single contract performers for its resident summer company.

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**Aurora University's** Theatre Scholarship Auditions and Interviews for a BA in Theatre or Musical Theatre Sat., April 21, 2018.

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**Millikin University's** B.F.A. program auditions:  
Fri., March 23, 2018  
Sat., April 7, 2018.

**Click here for All Audition Details, or to Submit an Audition Announcement.**

## FEATURED PERFORMANCES

Monticello Theatre Association  
***The Glass Menagerie***  
3/2/18 - 3/4/18  
Fri. and Sat. at 7:30 pm  
Sun. at 2:30 pm

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Western Illinois Theatre  
***Sense and Sensibility***  
2/28/18 - 3/4/18  
Wed. - Sat. at 7:30 pm;  
Sun. at 2 pm

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From the perspective of the casting reps, the "cattle call" auditions are an extremely efficient way to screen new performers (ITA handles all the logistics, from recruiting to registering to binding headshots/resumes). The ITAs are also a significant way for professional theatres to embrace the next generation with genuine encouragement.

For the producing organization, according to Executive Director Aimee-Lynn Newlan, the auditions represent a fulfillment of ITA's mission to connect established theaters and dedicated actors in a mutually meaningful way.

Of course, translating that vision into reality requires a significant foundation. Molly Hernandez, indefatigable Audition Coordinator, was supported by the energetic contributions of volunteer students, university personnel and ITA board and association members who orchestrated signage and meals and registration and the myriad of "whathaveyou" tasks. It's a huge undertaking.

As one of the ITA Professional Theatre Board reps, I want to step away from this overview to celebrate the success of the 2018 ITAs and to personally thank ALL of the participants, on stage and off. Being there was empowering.

I also wish to extend an invitation. We begin organizing for 2019 ITAs this August. Will you join us?

## 3 WAYS TAKING CHILDREN TO THE THEATRE CAN BOOST THEIR EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Submitted by **Cassandra Quinn**, ITA Theatre for Young Audiences Rep.

"Experts are in full agreement. Going to see live theatre shows can help aid children's understanding of emotions" - I find power and encouragement in quotes like these because as a theatre educator and artist myself, I know in my heart and have seen first-hand the impact that theatre has on the emotional health and wellbeing of kids and adults alike.

However, arts education is not supported and funded on "warm and fuzzy" anecdotes and intuition - which is why I'm so grateful there are researchers in the world doing the much needed work of studying, analyzing and crunching the data to help show the world what I know to be true as I see it play out daily through my work at Compass Creative Dramatics and other educational theatres.



To link to this article, [click here](#).

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## HOW MANY HATS DO YOU WEAR?

Mililikin University Dept. of  
Theatre & Dance

**Mr. Burns,**

**a post-electric play**

3/1/18 - 3/4/18

Thurs. - Sat. at 7:30 pm

March 3 at 2 pm

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Indian Valley Theatre

**On Golden Pond**

3/2/18 - 3/11/18

Fri. and Sat. at 7:30 pm

Sun. at 2 pm

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**Want your performance  
to be featured here?**

Visit the [ITA  
Performance Calendar](#) for  
details.

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College/University Group  
Discussion

Community Theatre Group  
Discussion

### by Stacy Deemar

Imagine directing sixty to seventy second graders in a musical annually. The second graders are required to perform in the musical as part of their enhanced music program. Rehearsals are not after school but rather during the forty-minute drama class that meets once a week. The script has less than twenty speaking roles and must be divided to account for an entire grade level that consists of three classes. On a marginal budget, all the actors are costumed and a simple set is created. There is no lighting designer, make-up artist, or stage crew. How many hats do you wear?

The awesome responsibilities associated with directing a musical can be overwhelming. Perseverance and flexibility are the key components in achieving a successful musical production. Forego faltering when "the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry". Someone is guaranteed to get sick on the day of the performance. Trust your wisdom and creative mind, maintain a safe space for artistic expression, and nurture the students' imagination through your passion for drama and theatre.

#### Divide the Script

To accommodate a whole grade level, the script is first divided into three sections because there are three classes of approximately twenty-two students. If the script has scenes, divide the scenes evenly among the classes. For example, if there are six scenes, each class performs two scenes.

Take inventory of the characters in the two scenes. Compare the number of characters in the two scenes to the number of students in the class. If there are not enough characters,

divide the character. For example, if the character roles are generic like Pirate, divide pirate into Pirate #1, Pirate, #2, etc. Apply this practice to other roles that can be divided. Conversely, if there are more parts than students, assign students to multiple roles.



#### Casting

With limited instructional time, there is no time for auditions. Instead, students are asked by a show of hands if they prefer a large or small speaking role. Students requests should be considered when assigning the roles.

Unisex casting is encouraged because it does not place limitations on the part a student can play.

#### Script and Spreadsheets

Each student is given a script with her name on the front. If the script can be reproduced, a spreadsheet is inserted t in the front of the script with each actor's name, character assignment, and page numbers where the character appears in the musical.

Students are required to bring their scripts to class each week. Furnish the classroom teacher with three classroom scripts as well as an electronic version in case a script gets lost.

Creative Drama Group  
Discussion

Professional Theatre  
Group Discussion

Secondary School Theatre  
Group Discussion

Theatre for Young  
Audiences Group  
Discussion

### **FOLLOW OUR TWEETS:**

Illinois Theatre Association

IHSTF

**Illinois  
Theatre  
Association**

The ITA is a network of dedicated theatre artists and educators advocating quality theatre throughout Illinois. Please join us!

123 Mill Pond Dr.  
Glendale Heights, IL  
60139  
312-265-5922 (office)  
312-265-6101 (fax)  
[www.illinoistheatre.org](http://www.illinoistheatre.org)

### **Please Visit ITA's Corporate Sponsors:**

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Midwest Event Solutions

Most second graders are unfamiliar with a script and have never been in a production. Students will need to be taught how to read a script. Take the time before rehearsals commence and explain the format of the script. Show how the stage directions are in italicized writing and the dialogue is in a regular font. Demonstrate how to highlight the dialogue and write directions on the script. Explain the purpose of writing down directions and encourage those to use pictures if they are unable to write.

### **Rehearsals**

Rehearsals take place during class time. If each class meets only once a week for forty minutes, determine how many class periods will be allotted for rehearsals prior to the production.

The rehearsal process includes having the entire cast run the show in the performance space a minimum of three times. If the performance is on a stage and the rehearsals have been in the

classroom, students will need time to get accustomed to using a stage. Students will need to learn how to use a microphone, use the exits and

entrances, and get familiar with the lights shining on them.



Dress rehearsals are discouraged. If the costumes are delicate, the possibility of costumes getting torn or broken during a dress rehearsal is very high.

### **Email parents and the classroom teacher**

Write a letter to the parents and explain the expectations of a rehearsal and each student's responsibility in the musical. Include in the email dates of when students should be off book, suggestions for how to memorize lines, information about how parents can be involved in the production, dates and times of the performances, and contact information. Attach an electronic copy of the script and spreadsheet to the email.

Send weekly updates about the rehearsal progress.

### **Program**

Approximately one month before the performance, have a contest for students to draw the program cover. In the program, include all the content that is required by the publisher in addition to student names and special thanks. Copies of the program can be printed at school on copy paper at least one week prior to the production.

### **Costumes**

With a limited budget, maximize every dollar. Send an email asking parents to donate costumes they currently own to refurbish or to make costumes.

Each costume is labeled with the student's name, student's teacher, and character and placed into an individual bag. All

Northern Illinois University  
School of Theatre and  
Dance

USITT Midwest

Vertigo

## Associate Corporate Sponsors:

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Chicago

Music Makers Theatre

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The Illinois Theatre Association is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

bags are placed into a box and labeled with the classroom teacher's name.

Costumes are distributed and worn no more than sixty minutes prior to the performance.

After the performance, costumes are placed back into their bags and into the appropriate box with the teacher's name.

### Performance

Performing once for younger elementary students and family during the school day is ample. Having students return to school for a night performance may be burdensome for some families resulting in absent cast members.

### Special Need Students

A student who is unable to read is paired with a strong reader who can assist him during the rehearsal process. The assistant can read the lines alongside the student who is unable to read or read the lines first and then the student repeats them.

English second language learners can either do their role in their native language or work with a bilingual student who can assist in translating. Students on the autism spectrum disorder can be given smaller speaking roles or pantomimed parts. A student or teacher can shadow shy and autistic students to provide individual guidance. The teacher models a scene for visual learners.

Hyper active students are given breaks to move around and a marker on the floor for placement. Hearing impaired students are placed close to the director and/or actor speaking.

### Managing a Rehearsal

Explain the rehearsal process and expectations at the beginning of each rehearsal.

Give students a job to do when they are not active in a scene. Assign additional non-acting roles including a stage manager, assistant director, pencil sharpener, script manager, line monitor, theatre critic, blocking supervisor, waiting area overseer, bathroom pass controller, projection chief, gesture director, etc.

Provide an incentive for good work that can be coupled with your school's social emotional program.

### Debrief

After the performance during the next drama class, congratulate the students on working diligently, cooperatively and creatively. Share your pride in their great accomplishment and review the importance of working collaboratively.

Allot time for students to share their experience performing in a musical. Pose questions that will elicit profound responses.

Most importantly, enjoy the amazing journey with your students.

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## MAJOR BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS WHO ATTEND LIVE THEATRE, STUDY FINDS

**Submitted by Beth Ann Barber, ITA Secondary School Rep.**

As a Drama teacher and an English teacher I am always trying to get my students to see live theatre whenever possible. I try to provide as many experiences as I can. There is proof that this enriches the experience. Please read the attached article about the "**Major Benefits for Students Who Attend Live Theater**" by Professor Jay Greene

**October 16, 2014, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville**

**Summary:**



Field trips to live theater enhance literary knowledge, tolerance, and empathy among students, according to a study. The research team found that reading and watching movies of Hamlet and A Christmas Carol could not account for the increase in knowledge experienced

by students who attended live performances of the plays. Students who attended live performances of the play also scored higher on the study's tolerance measure than the control group by a moderately large margin and were better able to recognize and appreciate what other people think and feel.

To link to this article, [click here](#) .

For more information on this subject, [click here](#).

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**SUPPORTING THE ARTS - WHY COMMUNITY THEATRE IS IMPORTANT**

by Amanda A. Fails

Submitted by James Crow, ITA Community Theatre Rep.

To link to this article, [click here](#).

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