

Welcome to Odyssey Theatre for the Young of Art Summer Drama Workshop. If you are receiving this letter you are either newly registered for this year in 2026 or you have participated in the recent past or may know someone who may be interested in being involved. There are a lot of opportunities for students of all ages, actors, techies, interns, staff. This year's workshop will begin on Monday, June 8th at noon in the MV Middle School District Auditorium. While you can find all of this information on our website at www.odyssey-theatre.com, I thought it also worth sharing here. If you have any questions, please contact me via email at Steffran5@gmail.com or send a text to me at 319.213.0147. Hope to see you soon onstage, backstage, or in the audience. Here's to a GREAT SUMMER!!! Onward, Karla

Following are some typical Odyssey Theatre for the Young of Art Questions and Answers to the basics and the rules of play:

- ❖ **What exactly are the workshops?** The workshops provide an opportunity for students aged 5-25 to become involved in live “Theatre for and by the Young of Art,” to learn about all aspects of creative dramatics and theatre and to work collaboratively to create a shared work that culminates in a final production for audiences. While most students choose to focus on ACTING in our workshops, we do offer a focus on TECHNICAL classes to students 5th grade and up who would like to learn more about backstage—from building sets to costumes, from finding and making props to painting, and hanging lights—as well as stage management and front of house responsibilities.
 - ❖ **How much does it cost?** The cost has changed very little over the past twenty years here in Mount Vernon because I wish to make it possible for each and every student to participate—without any child or parent/guardian worrying about the cost. Toward that end both partial and full tuition scholarships are available upon request—and I've been known to barter for a really good pie or two—and no questions asked. That said, there are considerable costs to pull this madcap fun off so regular registration prices are listed on each year's registration forms. We also welcome donations if you feel so inclined to support our Odyssey scholarships, or our complimentary ticket program, or our graduating seniors gift program to show support of the local arts and art students!
 - ❖ **What if I can't afford to pay?** As noted above, no one is ever turned away from playing with us. Pay what you can or not at all. The important thing is being involved in play!
- 📅 **When are the workshops?** The workshops are held once a year (used to be twice a year but my day job as a therapist at Cornell does not allow me the time necessary to do that—maybe again someday): The Summer Drama Workshop meets for three weeks 3 hours per day during June.
- 📍 **Where will we meet?** We will be meeting in the Mount Vernon Middle School in the Auditorium, Band Room and/or in the Gymnasium. Students should enter through front doors unless otherwise notified and should be picked up promptly at the end of rehearsal each day

🎭 How long will we meet every day? For the Summer Workshop we will meet noon till three p.m Mondays through Thursdays. **NOTE: We will ask students who accept larger parts to come in for a few hours (if parents are willing to do) in addition to the regularly scheduled hours; there will also be additional hours for costume fittings.**

🎭 What should I wear? Wear comfortable clothing and shoes that you can move/dance/tumble in--no platform, no heels, --shoes for moving!!

🎭 Will we have breaks? Yes, we will begin the day with a break and will take a short break every hour. So, please have snack and water bottle AND ONLY WATER—no juice or sodas or sugary drinks Interns are in charge of monitoring students over the break periods--and encourage others to share food, take the opportunity to get water, go to the bathroom and/or run around outside on for a bit to stretch the legs and the soul. However please note that students must pick up after themselves.

🎭 Should I bring food or drink? Yes, please plan on bringing a LIGHT snack--no candy please--and some water--NO SODA please. Bring healthy snacks that will give you energy--not a sugar buzz! Feel free to bring a bit extra as a number of students end of sharing!!

🎭 What role will I play? Do I get to choose? The role you will end up playing involves a number of factors, first and foremost your willingness to be kind, supportive and a team player. Second, it involves your attitude and third, your experience and ability and finally, what role you are best suited to play. While we pride ourselves on being fair, we will not give a student a role unless it fits--think of it like a shoe, it must be a comfortable fit--the right size. A student may get a part with lines or without lines, with dance numbers or without dance numbers--but everyone will be involved, and yes, everyone will sing--regardless of ability. The MOST IMPORTANT part is to make the very most of the role your do receive and to be caring and supportive of others.

🎭 -Is it a lot of work? Yes, theatre involves both play and work--lots of work and a good deal of patience. You must be willing to play hard and work hard and be prepared to wait patiently while others are on the stage. Theatre is about waiting your turn, supporting others and being a respectful audience member. Bring a book, your homework, something to keep you occupied while you wait quietly!!

🎭 Can I bring games or portable ds systems or iPad to play on during break or while I wait? No, we ask for many reasons that you please leave all of these electronic devices at home, mp3 players, ds players, iPod, iPad, etcetera. We understand that many students will have smartphones in order to contact parents but again we ask that you not use them during the rehearsal period; we encourage you to socialize with others by playing and running around, sitting, and talking face to face, having a conversation, or sitting and reading or studying quietly. We continually

encourage students to include everyone in their play...no one may be left out for any reason!!!

🎬 **-When will I get a copy of the script?** Scripts are usually handed out during the first week of practice or early the second week for the larger roles, as we spend the early days getting to know one another better. Ensemble and Interns receive digital copies that can be downloaded or with pages printed out as desired. Anything to save a tree branch!

🎬 **-What's the most important thing to know?** Our most important rule is: BE KIND TO OTHERS!!!!!! No one is allowed to be unkind for any reason. Period. INCLUDE EVERYONE--no one should be left out, EVER!! Our Mantra with one another is very simple, a promise from each and all to acknowledge to one another verbally: *"If you need me, I will be there."*

🎬 **-What if I'm not very good at acting or singing or dancing?** No fear, when you arrive, you will be included no matter what...we're here to learn what we need to know together and to have fun! Everything important comes down to remembering one thing: *"Acting is Reacting!"*

🎬 **-How will I know what to do?**

As I said: it's about learning; these workshops are all about learning about theatre not proving what you already know. It's about having fun and playing. Trust me, you'll learn what you need to know...and when you don't know, that's okay to ask. There's no such thing as a silly question. Whether it's learning about blocking or lines, steps, or cues, or how to cheat out or finding your light—as well as the hot spot in your light, this is the place to learn through play. After all, they call it putting on a PLAY for a reason! We learn best through play!


-When are the actual plays? The play performances are the Friday evening


and Saturday afternoon of the final week of the workshop (which in summer is 3 weeks long and in winter is 6 weeks long but with shorter hours each day).


🎬 **-What kind of costumes will I wear?** We will supply your entire costume for the most part--although we will ask for you to bring a number of things from home, including white undershirt/t-shirt (to wear under costume), black stockings for the girls, black socks for the boys, black dress shoes (boots or dance/ballet slippers are also fine), hair ties, makeup: rouge, lipstick, base, eyeliner--everyone must wear makeup under the stage lights, males and females alike). There will be changing in front of peers and so we suggest that some kind of biking shorts are worn for the dress rehearsals and performances.


🎬 **-When do I get to intern?** Interns are invited to work with us when they are


entering HS or are in the 8th grade and may intern throughout high school. We encourage students to be involved and learn all aspects of theatre...if you're interested or know someone who is, no experience necessary...we will train interns! We will invite some 7th graders to participate as junior interns—as an exception but normally regard anyone younger than 8th grade to be a tech student in training who must register as a student just like actors...as you are learning.

 **-What do the interns get to do?** Interns learn all aspects of stagecraft over time, including lights, sound, stage management, assistant stage management, assistant directing, front of house, coaching/assistance of actors.

 **-What if I miss a day or longer?** Everyone must miss at various points for various reasons (sickness, other commitments). Do your best to be here when you are healthy, stay home when you're not, but when you are not--no matter the reason, please give us a call or drop an email so we do not worry about you and your whereabouts. Many students participate in Orchestra or a dance class and we encourage students to attend these...except perhaps during our final week of practice...as those are very very important. Also, I will send out a full rehearsal schedule with any additions, etcetera in the first several weeks to note costume fittings etcetera.

 **What if I get sick for the actual play?** Of course, that has happened, but let's focus on staying well...by eating healthy foods, getting plenty of sleep, washing your hands often throughout the day and drinking lots of water...and share food, but not drinks...and wash your hands after you go to the bathroom...and before you eat.

 **I'm in High School and I want to be in the play as an actor? Can I still be involved onstage and does it cost anything as a HS actor?** Actors in high school and HS interns pay no tuition. Tuition is charged only for ES and MS students--whether tech or acting. That said, there are ALWAYS scholarships available for students who need a break or full tuition remission.

 **What are the THREE PLUS RULES OF ODYSSEY?** We have THREE ESSENTIAL RULES at Odyssey that we live and work and play by:

- 1.) RESPECT SELF;
- 2.) RESPECT OTHERS;
- 3.) RESPECT THE SPACE.

PLUS, have FUN!! Nothing else matters. If we work together and include everyone, the magic happens and the play will be a success!

Any other questions, drop me a line at Steffran5@gmail.com or message me at **319.213.0147**.

Sincerely yours,

Karla M. Steffens, LMSW, MFA, MA