

The Contemporary Theatre of Ohio

The Contemporary Theatre of Ohio Launches 2024 Summer Teen Program to Provide Central Ohio High School Students with On- and Off-Stage Work Experience as Paid Theatre Artists

COLUMBUS, Ohio, January 24, 2024 -- The Contemporary Theatre of Ohio (formerly CATCO) announced the launch of their latest educational program for budding theatre professionals: The Summer Teen Program. Taking place during the month of June 2024, this paid workplace training program for high school students from across central Ohio is designed to introduce students to careers in theatre. Eight students will be selected through an audition process starting in mid-March. Students will participate in daily rehearsals as paid actors and attend career readiness workshops to learn skills such as resume writing, interviewing, and time management in relation to a career in the theatre. Rehearsals will culminate in a fully-staged production of the play *The Day the Music Came Back* by Alvaro Saar Rios, running for four performances June 27 – 30, 2024 at the Riffe Center Studio Two Theatre.

Teaching Artist, Director, and Production Manager of The Contemporary, Tony Koehler, will direct the production. Students will work with a professional stage manager and professional designers to produce the production.

“The Summer Teen Program brings together students from across Central Ohio and provides them with the opportunity to work as a close-knit team,” said Christy Farnbauch, Executive Director of The Contemporary. “The program is inspired by a citywide program that Leda Hoffmann, our Artistic Director, ran prior to coming to The Contemporary. As a paid summer job, our program aims to lower and remove barriers to participation.”

The Day the Music Came Back was one of three plays chosen for a staged reading as part of The Contemporary’s 2022 New Works Festival for Young Audiences. The response to this play, which explores complex themes of social justice, solidarity, and trust, was so positive that it was selected for the inaugural Summer Teen Program. It was written specifically for young performers and takes place in a society that has banned music for several generations, where

people have been “extinguished” simply for listening to music. Despite their fears of being caught, a group of teens decide to meet in secret to talk about music.

“At the talkback after the reading, it was clear that the audience questioned their assumptions and drew parallels to current and past social movements,” said Hoffmann. “We expect that all participants in the Summer Teen Program will learn to appreciate the transformative power of theatre and how it can be a tool to develop empathy that leads to community change.”

In-person auditions will be held at the Riffe Center on Saturday March 9th. Pre-recorded audition submissions will also be accepted for those that cannot attend the in-person auditions. Audition information can be found at: <https://www.thecontemporaryohio.org/auditions/>

“This is an opportunity for teens to meet and work with peers from across Central Ohio,” said Hoffmann. “All Columbus theatre companies will benefit from having a pre-professional theatre program, impacting the pool of available and trained local artists for many years. We hope that The Summer Teen Program provides a solid start to working with city leaders and nonprofits to form a citywide summer arts internship for teens across Columbus.”

Thursday, June 27, 7:30 p.m. is a preview performance; opening night is Friday, June 28, 8 p.m. Performances run through June 30 with additional performances on Saturday, June 29 at 8 p.m., and Sunday, June 30 at 2 p.m. The play runs approximately 60 minutes with no intermission and is recommended for patrons 11 years of age and older.

Tickets for *The Day the Music Came Back* are \$25 for adults and \$15 for students (18 & under) and can be purchased in advance by telephone (614.469.0939), in-person at the CBUSArts ticket office, 55 E. State St., or at the venue starting two hours before showtime. Tickets are sold at the box office, 77 S. High St., Fourth Floor, up to two hours before curtain and are subject to availability.

Patrons can enter the building from the High Street entrance, or through the parking garage entered from Front Street.

Nationwide is the season sponsor for The Contemporary’s 39th season. Funding for The Summer Teen Program comes from The Ohio Arts Council’s ARTSNext program. Season support comes from The Greater Columbus Arts Council, the city of Columbus, and Franklin County, as well as The Shubert Foundation, Inc., and the Ohio Arts Council, a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally, and economically with state tax dollars from the Ohio Legislature. The Contemporary also appreciates the support of Leona and Rowena Kesler Memorial Fund, Helen W. Wildermuth Fund for Drama and Music with the assistance of the Ingram-White Castle Foundation of The Columbus Foundation who assists donors and others in strengthening our community for the benefit of all its citizens.

About The Contemporary Theatre of Ohio

The Contemporary Theatre of Ohio is central Ohio's leading professional Equity theatre company, providing exceptional productions and educational programs for adults and young people, in response to our community's needs. We believe theatrical storytelling transforms people of all ages by immersing them into immediate, communal experiences. The Contemporary exists to harness the transformational power of theatre that engages with our current moment to inspire a community of empathy. For more information, visit TheContemporaryOhio.org.

The Contemporary Ohio's Vision

We strive to become an anti-racist, nationally recognized contemporary theatre company that anchors a thriving Columbus theatre ecosystem in an empathetic, equitable world.

The Contemporary's Purpose/Mission

To harness the transformational power of theatre that engages with our current moment to inspire a community of empathy.

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