

SUMMER SCHOLARS ON-STAGE 2024 PRESENTS:

CURSES!

A THREE-ACT MUSICAL



FRIDAY, JULY 5TH, 7:00 PM
SATURDAY, JULY 6TH, 1:00 PM

McCOMAS HALL, MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
FREE ADMISSION

WRITING THE PLAY

The creative process for writing a Summer Scholars Onstage show is a gossamer thing. I'm never quite sure how it works, and this is my 21st year through this, out of the four plus decade history of the camp. Mysterious though it is, the process always begins with nothing more than blank paper, scented magic marker, and the brain power of our writers. They throw out ideas for me to catch and write down on giant easel pages, in shades of blueberry ink. They can be character, plot, setting, or theme ideas, as any one of these can tell you the other three you'll need. Some ideas are immediately stronger than others. We may even stop down to discuss possibilities of a given one. We spent at least an hour on artificial intelligence as a possible theme before seeing something shinier down the list. After 54 ideas, the writers agreed we had enough and it was time to start whittling them down, with me crying "Yay or nay?" as I crossed them out in cherry red.

Looking back on our brainstorming pages, the ingredients that became this year's show are all right there. Battle of the Bands/beefing musicians turned up at #3 and factors into two different acts (though you may not immediately know it). A perennial rejected idea, Pregnant Pirate, turned up at #5 and refused to go away. Space Travel popped up at #9, Medieval at #14 and its complimentary idea, Jester Knights, at #17. Oddly, Pirates vs. Cowboys (#48) was rejected and crossed out in red at first pass, but later snuck back in to become Act III's base theme. However, it was the idea of staging a family curse across three acts (#46) that finally gave us the foundation atop which the rest of the play was constructed.

We sent writers into rooms with a basic outline of each act, but these were largely ignored in favor of new and even more creative ideas in the room. The script evolved. The music writers soon joined the process, and crafted brilliant songs that were key to telling each act's story.

That is the beauty of Summer Scholars Onstage. We start with blank paper... a week later we have an original three-act musical comedy. We've been told this is impossible. We just don't tell the campers that, and they write it anyway.

--Eric Fritzus, Script Coordinator

A NOTE FROM THE CAMP DIRECTOR

Welcome to the 42nd production of Summer Scholars On Stage. For those of you who are veteran fans or alumni of camp, thank you for your continued support and encouragement. This year, 16 campers, led by script writing, music composing, technical, and residence hall staff, wrote the script and original music for *Curses!*. A cast of 42 campers from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Virginia, and Texas have rehearsed for the last two weeks to bring you this performance. From song, dance, drama, and more, these campers have worked very hard with an exceptional staff to accomplish this task. The staff and the students are an amazing group of creative and talented young artists. Enjoy the show!

Joe Ray Underwood
Camp Director

A NOTE FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Every year I think this is it, this is the best group of kids I've ever seen. I've never felt this more than this year. All of the campers and staff members have put a tremendous effort into this show. I am so proud of everyone involved and they all have a special place in my heart. Thank you, parents and family, for your support and for trusting me with your children. It's been an honor to be their camp mom throughout this process. I hope you enjoy the show!

Leah Wright
Program Director/Head Counselor

Videography and flash photography are strictly prohibited during the show. It is distracting for both performers and attendees. A video of the performance will be available for purchase later this summer.

ACT I—*Jest One of Those Knights*

Cast, in order of appearance:

KING CRISPIN.....	Sophie Haug
GARLIC.....	Cedar Underwood
ALISTER.....	Anthony Kirkland
CHIVES.....	Sam Staggers
CLOVERTHORN.....	Zoey Fortuin
THISTLEHEAD.....	Piper Conrad
QUEEN ESMERALDA.....	Phoebe Jones
PETTY.....	Kylin Ellis
DUNCAN.....	Parker Prince
HAGATHA.....	Andrew Robertson
FIREBALL.....	Megan Blalock
JULIUS.....	Kingston Hayes
DOUG.....	Coretta Powers
ELEANOR.....	Carissa Palmer

ACT I ORIGINAL SONGS

Haterade

- Written by: Phoebe Jones, Keylon Mays-Moore, Maggie Pike, Paulina Roman & Dezmond Williams
- Performed by: Andrew Robertson (Solo); Carissa Palmer & Coretta Powers (Duet); Megan Blalock & Kingston Hayes (Duet); Piper Conrad, Zoey Fortuin, Sam Staggers & Cedar Underwood (Ensemble)

Loverade

- Written by: Phoebe Jones, Keylon Mays-Moore, Maggie Pike, Paulina Roman & Dezmond Williams
- Performed by: Megan Blalock, Piper Conrad, Zoey Fortuin, Parker Prince, Sam Staggers & Cedar Underwood (Solos); Kingston Hayes, Carissa Palmer & Coretta Powers (Ensemble)

If Only They Knew

- Written by: Phoebe Jones, Keylon Mays-Moore & Dezmond Williams
- Performed by: Phoebe Jones & Kylin Ellis

ACT II—Hoops & Harmonies

Cast, in order of appearance:

SHAWNA RICHMOND.....	Albany Mercer
JOLENE RUTHERFORD.....	Varayla Smith
KATIE.....	Vivian Karges
STEPHANIE.....	Maddie Englert
MICHELLE.....	Kate Rader
PENNY.....	Emilee Nichols
THE BRIT.....	Keylon Mays-Moore
THE HAIR.....	Ranier Smith
THE BAD BOY.....	Josiah Palmer
THE GOOFBALL.....	Myrto Sergi
DORCAS BUFORD.....	Lindy Peterson
COACH C.....	Jonah Evans
DJ LUNCHMONEY.....	Trinity Hirshfeld
KACHING!.....	Miles Baker

ACT II ORIGINAL SONGS

Set My Heart Aflame

- Written by: Dezmond Williams
- Performed by: Myrto Sergi (Solo); Ranier Smith, Keylon Mays-Moore & Josiah Palmer (Ensemble)

Penny's Ballad

- Written by: Paulina Roman
- Performed by: Emilee Nichols (Solo); Kate Rader, Maddie Englert & Vivian Karges (Ensemble)

Lights Down, Music Up

- Written by: Phoebe Jones, Keylon Mays-Moore & Dezmond Williams
- Performed by: Miles Baker, Maddie Englert, Keylon Mays-Moore & ACT II Ensemble

ACT III—Space Scoundrel Showdown

Cast, in order of appearance:

REDLEY MCLOVIN.....	Dezmond Williams
PAMELLA PETTY.....	Robin Veasley
ARROW KINZO.....	Riyaz Mathews
SCOUT.....	Lillie Moore
DOLLY SMITH.....	Ainsley Bourgeois
JANICE COOKE.....	Anna Beth Hirshfeld
BRANDY ZELINSKI.....	Paulina Roman
TINA GOODMAN.....	Amelia Rodgers
PAULY GRAHAM.....	Maggie Pike
ANNE GILLY.....	Calyn Sharp
CAPTAIN HIGHWATER.....	Caitlyn Zuege
POCO.....	Addison Manning
MARTHA LEBLANC.....	Sabrina Kauchak
SERENA FISCHER.....	Lydia Vinson

ACT III ORIGINAL SONGS

Roll Call

- Written by: Phoebe Jones, Keylon Mays-Moore, Maggie Pike, Paulina Roman & Dezmond Williams
- Performed by: Ainsley Bourgeois, Calyn Sharp, Caitlyn Zuege, Robin Veasley & Maggie Pike (Solos);
The Petty Crime Gang & the Cressvale Crew (Ensemble)

One True Love

- Written by: Phoebe Jones & Maggie Pike
- Performed by: Maggie Pike & Robin Veasley

Sunrise

- Written by: Phoebe Jones, Maggie Pike, Paulina Roman & Dezmond Williams
- Performed by: Parker Prince, Amelia Rodgers, Paulina Roman
Varayla Smith, Dezmond Williams & Full Cast

THE WRITERS

Script Coordinator: Eric Fritzius

ACT I—Jest One of Those Knights

- Act Leader: Grant Peterson
- Writing Assistant: Will Norris
- Writers: Sophie Haug, Anthony Kirkland & Carissa Palmer

ACT II—Hoops & Harmonies

- Act Leader: Sally Stafford
- Writing Assistant: Shelby Stafford
- Writers: Megan Blalock, Albany Mercer, Lindy Peterson
& Robin Veasley

ACT III—Space Scoundrel Showdown

- Act Leader: Jace Fye
- Writing Assistant: Jaylon Ashford
- Writers: Kylin Ellis, Trinity Hirshfeld, Cedar Underwood
& Caitlyn Zuege



PRODUCTION & TECHNICAL STAFF

Production Staging Director.....	Kris Lee
Rehearsal Co-Directors.....	Sarah Blackwell & Savion St. John
Production Coordinator/Songwriting Instructor.....	Joe Evans
Director of Music.....	Kenzie Claire Burchfield
Technical Director/Set Design/Light Design.....	Patrick McFadyen
Technical Assistant/Sound Design/Sound Technician.....	Zak Mayo
Stage Manager/Scenic Design.....	Emma Crumpton
Pit Coordinator/Songwriting Instructor/Lead Musician.....	Ryan Bergman
Songwriting/Music Instructor.....	Ansley Preston
Choreography.....	Jonette Shurden
Choreography/Makeup Design.....	Erin Harrison
Props/Costume Designers	Jaylon Ashford, Will Norris & Grant Peterson

PIT MUSICIANS

Alto Saxophone.....	Anna Beth Hirshfeld (ACT I & II), Myrto Sergi (ACT I & III)
Bass.....	Jacob Jordan (Staff)
Cello.....	Ryan Bergman (Staff)
Clarinet.....	Cedar Underwood (ACT II & III)
Drum Set.....	Joe Evans (Staff) & Ranier Smith (ACT I & III)
Flute.....	Sophie Haug (ACT II & III)
Guitar.....	Ryan Bergman (Staff) & Phoebe Jones (ACT II & III)
Keyboard.....	Josiah Palmer (ACT III) & Paulina Roman (ACT I & II)
Percussion.....	Joe Evans (Staff) & Keylon Mays-Moore (ACT I & III)
Trombone.....	Piper Conrad (ACT II & III)
Trumpet.....	Trinity Hirshfeld (ACT I & III) & Josiah Palmer (ACT I & III)
Violin.....	Sabrina Kauchak (ACT I & II)

CAMP STAFF

Camp Director.....	Joe Ray Underwood
Program Director/Head Counselor.....	Leah Wright
Associate Director.....	Sean Richmond
Associate Director.....	Joel Rutherford
Director of Operations.....	Lauren Gerhart
Girls' Counselors.....	Liz Jones & Sally Stafford
Boys' Counselors.....	Jaylon Ashford & Jacob Jordan
Staff Assistants.....	Jace Fye, Erin Harrison, Will Norris, Grant Peterson, Ansley Preston, Sarah Rendon & Shelby Stafford
Graphic Artist.....	Jaylon Ashford
Photographer.....	Liz Jones & Ainsley Bourgeois
Junior Counselor.....	Carissa Palmer
Senior Intern.....	Anthony Kirkland

Staff Ensemble (*Brown Eyed Girl* by Van Morrison)

Emma Crumpton, Joe Evans,
Liz Jones, Jacob Jordan, Will Norris, Ansley Preston,
Sean Richmond, Joel Rutherford,
Joe Ray Underwood & Leah Wright

PATRONS AND SPONSORS

whose donations helped make this camp possible.

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Sunday School for All Ages 11:00 a.m.
Youth Group Sunday evening during school year



MISSISSIPPI
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HALL OF FAME 2024



"It was a night just like this (or an afternoon just like this, if you're here at the Saturday matinee), long, long ago, during the final years of the last century—recorded by historians as 1991—when a shy, young boy by the name of Kris Lee took a very brave step for the very first time onto the very same stage that you see in front of you now, as a first-year camper at OnStage! Summer Scholars. It was the start of a lifelong romance not only with the camp (to which he would return every summer until 1995) but also with the world of theatre. It's a romance that continues to this day. And why shouldn't it? Once you learn that magic is real, and that theatre is where it lives, it's rather hard to go do anything else."

- Kris Lee (Camper: 1991-1995; Production Director: 2008-2011; 2013-2024)

This year's Summer Scholars OnStage! Hall of Fame honoree is Kris Lee. After experiencing OnStage! as a camper and staff volunteer, he happily found himself returning once again, in 2008, in the role of Production Director and is now in his fifteenth year as Production Director. In his life outside of camp, it should hardly be surprising to learn that his other professional endeavors are just as firmly rooted in creative work: on, for, and off the stage, wearing one hat as Kris Lee and a second hat as T.K. Lee. As Kris Lee, he has kept an active hand in theatre both as actor and director and has been fortunate to receive a host of honors over the years from various organizations, festivals, and professional affiliations across the state, the region, and the country. As T.K. Lee, he is poet, playwright and professor, with award-winning work that crosses genre, and has appeared in national and international publications, translated into Italian and French. His growing list of writing credits includes prize-winning plays, such as *On How To Accommodate Marlo's Frying Pan*, *Sindication*, and *Paper Thin*, among others. He is also the author of two acclaimed poetry collections (*To Square a Circle*; *Scapegoat*) each having garnered high critical praise and receiving multiple award nominations. He has been named a Eudora Welty Fellow and a Tennessee Williams Scholar and is the past recipient of the coveted MAC Literary Artist Fellowship for his play *Bob and the Tree* about American watercolorist Walter Anderson. He proudly serves as tenured faculty in two nationally ranked MFA programs (Creative Writing; Theatre Education) both at the historic Mississippi University for Women, in Columbus, Mississippi. In no small measure, he credits OnStage! for the invaluable lessons the camp has taught him on bringing your own story to life, and for this, he is forever grateful that camp found him when it did...at just the right age for those lessons to stick.