

# Online Theatre - What to Expect

Thank you for your interest in Salmon Bay's After School Theatre. After School Theatre will be running online programming until further notice. This summer, our Program Coordinator and another of our frequent teaching artists independently ran a wide variety of theatre classes online to students from 1st to 9th grade, including two student-written puppet shows and an online play. Through these experiences, we've found a successful model for online plays and classes, and are excited to bring this to Salmon Bay's After School Theatre Program this fall.

With school online, we are especially grateful that we can provide a place where students can come together and find a multi-aged community. We are just as committed as ever to creating opportunities for students to learn and play in a way that is engaging, exciting, and social.

## Fall Play

As I'm sure you can imagine, our program looks a little different online than in person. The most important and relevant change is a hard cap on our enrollment for our fall play, along with a change in age requirements. This year, since the fall play will be online, we cannot accept more than **24 actors** and **6 crew members**. Once we reach capacity through registration, we will start a waitlist for additional interested students. Students who are not able to participate in the fall play will be given first priority in signing up for the next age appropriate play. If you think your student is interested, we encourage you to fill out the registration form sooner rather than later to reserve your spot.

After careful consideration, we have also decided that our usual "Just for Fun" or "JFF" model for our youngest cast members will not be as successful or fulfilling online as it is in person. However, we will be offering an online Creative Drama class later this fall specifically for students in the K-2 age group. Our fall play is for students in grades 2-8, and we do not recommend this play for students who will have a hard time reading without in person assistance. If you're looking for guidance on which program your student will enjoy most, please don't hesitate to reach out.

The play will kick off with auditions on October 12th and will wrap up with our final performances on November 7th, so the process will be four weeks total. See the "Logistics" section for more information.

## What will Rehearsal Look Like for an Actor?

We only have roles for 12 actors in the fall play, so our play will be double cast - meaning that we'll have students paired up playing the same character in order to have a total of 24 actors working on the play. On stage in person, we can easily have scenes that have lots and lots of characters, but over Zoom, we can only see a small handful of participants at a time. Double-casting the play will help make sure that actors have a sizable role. Each cast will get two performances.

Students interested in participating as an actor in our fall play should be in 2nd grade or above, and will be more successful if they have reasonably strong independent reading skills. When they sign up, students will be able to indicate their interest in either a Medium (M) or Serious (S) role. Please see our FAQ for more information about the difference between these roles. If you have a student on the younger side and you aren't sure what they'll find most enjoyable or be most successful at, please contact me at [sbatterschooltheatre@gmail.com](mailto:sbatterschooltheatre@gmail.com).

All students interested in acting **must audition**. Our auditions will take place on **Monday, October 12th, 3:30-5:30pm**. If this date does not work for your student, please contact me by email to schedule an audition for an earlier day. All students will be sent an audition packet by **Monday, October 5th** with instructions on what they should prepare.

Actors will attend rehearsal 1-5 days per week during the first three weeks of rehearsal depending on their outside commitments and interest level, and are asked to be available for all of our technical rehearsals. To see all dates, check the "Logistics" section below.

Each rehearsal will start with a ten to fifteen minute social check-in. This will be an opportunity for students to talk and get to know one another and the directors. Students can eat a snack and get settled during this period. This period is also when directors will reach out to families if there are absent students.

Once check in is over, we will warm-up as a group. Students and directors will play theatre games, engaging their minds, bodies, and voices to get ready for rehearsal.

After we've warmed up, students will either work with a director on their character and scenes, or they will be put in a breakout room where they may work on their lines with fellow actors, collaborate with crew members on their setup, or play theatre games led

by a teacher or volunteer. All breakout rooms will be moderated by a director, or led by a parent or student volunteer.

At the end of rehearsal, we will always take time to check out as a group and reflect on our time together.

### **What will Rehearsal Look Like for a Crew Member?**

Students interested in participating in crew must be in grades 3+. Crew will meet twice per week and then are required to be at all technical and dress rehearsals. Crew will meet on Wednesdays from 2:15-3:45pm, and we will determine the second rehearsal day for crew based on the schedules of interested students.

Crew will participate in the group check in at the start of rehearsal, and based on the needs of the day will either participate in the group warm up games or will separate and do activities led by one of the directors.

Crew members will collaborate with the directors and actors to help design the sets for each actor. We will also provide materials so that students can create props and potentially set or costume pieces for the actors to use in the play. Depending on the needs of the show, crew members may also help find or create sound or lighting effects and/or backgrounds for our actors.

Being on crew will call for some independent work. While a director or parent volunteer will always be on the meeting with our students, we will be asking students to follow instructions to create props or work on other small tasks without hands-on help. We are always happy to talk with students or families to make sure they will be set up for success, so if you have a student who is curious and wants to know more but you aren't sure if it's the right fit, please reach out so we can find time to talk.

### **Logistics**

Our play and classes will take place over Zoom. We will use a consistent meeting ID and password, but will also email families each morning with a link as a reminder on the days their student is scheduled to be at rehearsal/class. Students will need an internet connection and device friendly with Zoom. We've consulted with some of the Salmon Bay staff, who have assured us that the computers and iPads distributed by SPS should work for this purpose. We'll also be testing and troubleshooting before rehearsal starts in order to have a reliable system in place ahead of time. We've also reached out to a consultant to ensure that our meetings stay **safe** and **secure**.

Students will do best if they can set up for rehearsal in a room where they are visible on camera (not backlit) and where they can stand up and move around. If they are sharing their space, headphones will help keep background noise to a minimum and ensure that students can hear their peers and directors.

The schedule for the play is as follows:

\*Auditions - All Actors: Monday, 10/12 - 3:30-5:30pm

\*Read-through - All Actors & Crew: Tuesday, 10/13 - 3:30-5:30pm

Regular Rehearsals: Wednesday, 10/14 - Friday 10/30

- Monday/Tuesday/Thursday/Friday 3:30-5:30pm

- Wednesday 2:15-5:15pm

\*Tech Rehearsals: Monday & Tuesday, 11/2 & 11/3, 3:30-6:00pm

\*Dress Rehearsals: Wednesday, 11/4, 2:15-5:15pm; Thursday, 11/5, 3:30-5:30pm

\*Performances: Friday, 11/6, 4:30pm & 7:00pm; Saturday, 11/7, 2:00pm & 4:30pm

- All Cast and Crew members will be called at least 45 minutes before each performance.

\*The rehearsals marked with an asterisk indicate the dates that students must be present unless their conflicts have been cleared with the Program Coordinator before October 12th.

Students in crew will attend regular rehearsals on Wednesday from 2:15-3:45pm, as well as on a second day of rehearsal to be determined based on the schedules of interested students.

Actors will attend rehearsals on a regular schedule based on their indicated commitment level (usually between 1-3 days/week for medium roles and 2-5 days/week for serious roles) and their availability.

We have been in contact with the Salmon Bay Boys & Girls Club and are happy to let you know that students in this daycare program are still welcome and able to be a part of the fall play. Please make sure you indicate that this is the case for your student in your registration form. If your student is in a different daycare program, please reach out to make sure they'll be able to participate in the play from that site.

## **Fall Classes**

In addition to our 2nd-8th grade play, we will be running online classes from mid-November until winter break. We will have classes for students grades K-8. Stay tuned for more details about these classes. If your student is interested in doing some theatre but is a little nervous about a full play, this might be a great fit! If you have immediate questions or specific topics you'd like to see covered, please reach out to me via email.

## **Feedback from Online Students**

It's hard to imagine what online theatre will look like until you've done it or seen it, so we wanted to share some feedback from families and students who took place in our programs.

"[Classes] were exceptionally engaging and productive. ... [the kids] never felt left out or like they were just staring at the screen. [students experienced] movement, an opportunity to socialize, theatre skill-building, social-emotional learning, collaboration with peers outside of class, creating art." - Parent

"What worked best about online classes was seeing people and working with them... The auditioning [class] was helpful for the future and helped me feel more prepared [and] the production one was fun to use the format [of Zoom] as a tool instead of trying to get around it and it felt great to come together and make a show." - Student

"This is the place to be if you want your students to have a positive experience and actually learn about the skills of acting and performance in a supportive environment. It's educational theater with professional expectations." - Parent

"One thing that worked really well about the online play was that I still felt the sense of community despite the online setting. It was great that we could still do theatre games and practice lines the same way as in person and everything felt comfortable even though everything was slightly different." - Student