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Contact:
Aimee-Lynn Newlan
312-265-5922 x1

PRESS RELEASE

SCHOOLS FROM ACROSS THE STATE SELECTED TO PERFORM

43rd Annual Illinois High School Theatre Festival: *The Power of Transformation*

ANNOUNCING FULL-LENGTH AND SHOWCASE PRODUCTIONS

The 2018 Illinois High School Theatre Festival (IHSTF), the largest and oldest non-competitive high school theatre festival in the nation, is proud to announce the slate of full-length and showcase productions that have been selected to appear at this year's Festival:

FULL-LENGTH PRODUCTIONS

Name of Show

The Crucible
Leaving Iowa
Seussical the Musical TYA
Close Ties
Noises Off!
White Guy on the Bus
The Laramie Project
Magic: A Fantastic Comedy
All Shook Up
We Will Rock You – School Edition
The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)

Name of School

Antioch High School
Belvidere High School
Harrisburg High School
Lake Park High School
Maine South High School
Niles West High School
Normal West High School
Rockford Lutheran School
Wauconda High School
West Chicago High School
Huntley High School

SHOWCASE PRODUCTIONS

Name of Show

Sixteen in 10 Minutes or Less
14 Ways to Screw Up Your College Interview
No One Wants to Know
The Taming of the Shrew
Sorry
The Trojan Women
'08

Name of School

Belvidere North High School
Homewood-Flossmoor High School
Keith Country Day School
King College Prep
Lincoln Park High School
Taft High School
Vernon Hills High School

The Illinois High School Theatre Festival strives to showcase student performances from throughout the state. To achieve this goal, two or three theatre educators (responders) view a submitted production. Following the performance, a discussion is held with the cast and crew where they can ask questions of the responders. The responders may also state their opinions and give suggestions. The 30-minute discussion is an amazing learning experience for all. After the performance, the responders complete a written critique/recommendation form, which is submitted to the Play Selection Committee, who makes the final decision.

About the Illinois High School Theatre Festival

Now in its 43rd consecutive year, the Illinois High School Theatre Festival (IHSTF) is the largest and oldest non-competitive high school theatre festival in the world. Over 4,500 students, teachers, university representatives, exhibitors, and volunteers come together to put on theatrical workshops and various high school productions. The IHSTF organizes over 150 workshops, whose topics range from acting, musical theatre, auditions, improvisation, technical theatre, directing, stage management, make-up and costumes, lighting and special effects, to name a few. In addition, more than 20 high school productions, both showcases and full-length, from around the state are selected to perform at the IHSTF each year.

This year's Festival, themed "The Power of Transformation" is led by IHSTF Executive Director Nathaniel Haywood (Downers Grove North HS) and features the Broadway smash hit of *Big Fish* as its All-State production. The All-State cast, crew, and pit orchestra is comprised of the top student performers, technicians, and musicians in the state of Illinois. *Big Fish* will be performed throughout the Festival.

On the first night of the Festival, participants attend the much-anticipated Opening Performance with a guest artist or troupe. This year's opening features Visceral Dance. Past opening ceremonies have included Broadway's Seth Rudetsky, Wilson Heredia, Tyce Green, Chicago's Second City, The Neo-Futurists, and many others.

Another highlight of the IHSTF includes the college/university auditions and technical portfolio presentations for high school juniors and seniors. Students who plan to pursue theatre or musical theatre in college may audition/interview for theatrical programs in and around the state of Illinois. In the past, there have been over 35 colleges/universities in attendance.

Over the main two days of the Festival, attendees will see and participate in different sets of workshops, student showcases, high school productions, and various social activities, plus the All-State Production of *Big Fish*.

The three-day Festival takes place every year in early January and switches locations between the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Illinois State University. Illinois State University will host the 2018 Festival from Thursday, January 11 to Saturday, January 13.

The IHSTF 2018 Festival is supported in part by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, and corporate donations or in-kind services. Each year contributions are made to the Julie Anne Nelson Memorial Fund, which provides overall support for the Festival and scholarships to schools in need of financial assistance, and the Clif Aldridge Scholarship Fund, which provides financial assistance to All-State Company members. For more information about how to make a contribution please contact Aimee-Lynn Newlan, ITA Executive Director at aimeelynn@illinoistheatre.org or call the Illinois Theatre Association office at [312-265-5922](tel:312-265-5922).

About the Illinois Theatre Association

Founded in 1972 and celebrating its 40th consecutive season, the mission of the Illinois Theatre Association is to advocate quality theatre in Illinois through:

- Encouragement and facilitation of closer and better communication amongst all theatrical divisions -- professional theater, university/college theater, secondary school theater, community theater, theatre for young audiences, and creative drama -- in Illinois;
- Provision of public information about the extent and variety of theatre in Illinois;
- Cooperation with state and federal agencies, and with regional and national theatre organizations in promoting recognition and development of theatre programs at all levels;
- Maintenance and improvement of theatre production, teaching, and research at all levels;
- Affirmation of the value of theatre in the lives of individuals.

The Illinois Theatre Association provides support and professional development opportunities for all divisions of theatre. Annual events include the Illinois High School Theatre Festival, ITA's Statewide Non-Equity Professional Auditions, ITA's Theatre In Our Schools Conference (produced in partnership with the American Alliance of Theatre & Education), ITA's Middle School Conference, and ITA's Gala/ Awards of Excellence Ceremony. For more information about the Illinois Theatre Association, visit www.illinoistheatre.org.