

The 29<sup>th</sup> Annual

# Young Playwrights Festival

Pasant Theatre, Wharton Center for Performing Arts  
May 10, 2025

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## **Institute for Arts & Creativity**

Kelly Stuible-Clark, Senior Education Program Manager

Laurie Briseño, Education Operations Manager

Ben English, Community Engagement & Special Projects Coordinator

Hope X. Still, Intern

Connor Reilly, Intern

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## **We would like to acknowledge our talented finalists:**

Malayna Brink, Cozmo Neubauer, Malia Reitz,

Richard Shelton, Madison Snawder & Charlie Valas

Wharton Center Institute for Arts & Creativity & the MSU

Department of Theatre would like to thank our generous sponsors:

**MSU Federal Credit Union**

**Wharton Center Inner Circle**

## SCHEDULE

Welcome from Sarah Hendrickson and Eric Olmscheid.  
There will be a reception in the lobby after the final performance.

### **The Chicanerous Murder of A Sunscreen Saleswoman**

Written by Malia Reitz, Holt High School

Sponsoring Teacher: Lauren Hallett

Playwright Mentor: Emilio Rodriguez

Directed by Matt Durland

Colette.....Savannah Perez

Lucian.....Shelby Parker

Julian.....Jhon Govaere

Tanner.....Stephanie Kochel

### **Count to 10**

Written by Richard Shelton, Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy

Sponsoring Teacher: Karen Horwath

Playwright Mentor: Eric Marlin

Directed by Ava Ballagh

Earn.....Ben Perry

Levitt.....Jhon Govaere

Customer.....Alec Althoen

Hendrix.....Alexis Mendez

### **Defiance in Name Only**

Written by Malayna Brink, Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy

Sponsoring Teacher: Karen Horwath

Playwright Mentor: Shawntai Brown

Directed by Ava Ballagh

Teru.....Jhon Govaere

Father.....Ben Perry

Emerald.....Lexa Busch

## **Double Life**

Written by Madison Snawder, Dewitt High School

Sponsoring Teacher: Katie Nolen

Playwright Mentor: Joe Giardina

Directed by Cayla Joy

Lindsay.....Maddie Affer

Lindsay Double.....Lexa Busch

Sam.....Ben Perry

Sam Double.....Alexis Mendez

## **Wired in Parallel**

Written by Cozmo Neubauer, J.W. Sexton High School

Sponsoring Teacher: Ms. Potts

Playwright Mentor: Bella Poynton

Directed by Cayla Joy

Jaron.....Alexis Mendez

Evelynn.....Maddie Affer

Thyria.....Savannah Perez

Overseer.....Shelby Parker

## **SUPER FUN SPACE ADVENTURES!!!**

Written by Charlie Valas, East Lansing High School

Sponsoring Teacher: Diana Sanchez

Playwright Mentor: Jill Holden

Directed by Matt Durland

Captain.....Stephanie Kochel

Private.....Maddie Affer

Cow.....Lexa Busch

Barry.....Alec Althoen

Wharton Center wishes to express thanks to the following organizations & individuals:

***MSU Department of Theatre***

Stephen Di Benedetto, Chair

***Faculty Mentor/Advisor for Playwrights***

Rob Roznowski, Head of Acting & Directing, Professor

***Faculty Mentor/Advisor to Student Directors***

Sarah Hendrickson, Academic Specialist of Acting and Improvisation, Teaching Artist in Residence, Wharton Center Institute for Arts & Creativity

***Play Selection Committee***

Brooke Cousins  
Anthony Monteleone  
Nathaniel Myers  
Rob Roznowski  
Alexandra Spevetz

***Intimacy Director***

Connor J. Reilly

***Stage Managers***

Connor J. Reilly  
Ally Doederlein  
Kyle Angiolino

***Special thanks to our playwright mentors:***

Shawntai Brown  
*Detroit-based Theatre Artist*  
Joe Giardina  
*New York City Theatre Artist*  
Julie Daniels  
*L.A.-based Playwright*  
Eric Marlin  
*New York-based Theatre Artist*  
Bella Poynton  
*SUNY AI Teaching Fellow*  
Emilio Rodriguez  
*Michigan-based Theatre Artist*

*Young Playwrights Festival is sponsored by MSU Federal Credit Union with additional support from Wharton Center Inner Circle.*

# THE YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL

The Young Playwrights Festival (YPF) is celebrating its 29th anniversary this year. What began as a new educational opportunity in 1996 has grown into one of the most influential and respected theatre programs in the state, allowing high school students to see their original work come to life on stage. Presented collaboratively by Wharton Center and the Michigan State University Department of Theatre, YPF is an annual event showcasing original works written by high school students and produced by university graduate and undergraduate students, creating a collaborative and immersive program.

More than 30 scripts were submitted by Michigan high school students, which were read by the initial screening committee. From the 12 semifinalists selected, six finalist scripts were chosen to be produced.

In March, student directors for the finalist plays held auditions with rehearsals starting in May. Playwrights were assigned professional theatre mentors who, over five weeks, advised the playwrights on rewriting their plays.

MSU Department of Theatre students are stage-managing and providing the technical crews for today's performance, allowing college students to engage in the learning experience and work with young directors and writers to create their production.

Throughout its existence, YPF has fostered up-and-coming talent by providing writers with the opportunity to work with creative professionals. At its core, YPF has always been a celebration of the original work submitted to the program every year. The participants are dedicated to producing the student's work and teaching lifelong skills like creative thinking, professional writing, working with a team, and leadership.