

Artist Spotlight: Sarah Kennedy

Terms like reliable, organized, intelligent, and personable are too mild when it comes to describing the amazing Sarah Kennedy. Her work ethic and personality have been essential to establishing Watershed Public Theatre (WPT) as a strong voice for professional theatre in Middle Tennessee. Currently transitioning from company stage manager, a position she has held since 2017 (and she wants you to know that position is open for applicants!), Sarah is



now moving into the role of Education and Outreach Manager. From her early years of teen stage work through her jobs in the entertainment industry in Franklin and Nashville, her yearly fun working with a Haunted venue, and her position as founder and director of Mid-South Youth Theatre and Arts in Spring Hill, Sarah has the background for the job.

As director of Education and Outreach for WPT, Sarah will work closely with public, private and home school groups to connect them to performances and provide relevant curriculum. Sarah's work with the Mid-South Youth Theatre and Arts and her further experience with Ghostlight Books (which she founded during the pandemic as a revenue source while the theatre went dark) prepare her with foundational knowledge in working with school age children and researching for resources they may need. She will also help with WPT's Boys and Girls Club afterschool program, teaching the kids the fundamentals of theatre and guiding them to their first full, afterschool performance. As the demands of the job expand, Sarah will be ready to provide what's required. In fact, she will probably be the one thinking up new opportunities to pursue.

Sarah is a living example of the saying that if you want something done, ask a busy person. She devotes much

time and energy to the youth theatre she founded in Spring Hill as well as its affiliated bookstore, which she is expanding from its original Spring Hill site to include a second location in Columbia's CAB building. Additionally, she is responsible for the care of her beautiful and precocious toddler Benjamin. He is having a wonderful childhood, surrounded not only by loving parents and doting grandparents, but also all the wonder of musical theatre, stage fog, costumes, and shelves of books for him to investigate. Some might think she has too much going on already, but those of us who know Sarah understand that she is just getting started.

Years ago, a fellow theatre worker here in Columbia told Sarah that she'd never make any money pursuing her interests in this town. It's a memory she laughs about every time she deposits a check from her work as a paid WPT professional. She enjoys proving that former colleague wrong and is dedicated to the continuing success of Watershed Public Theatre and its ability to provide theatre artisans with a paycheck.



2016, Sarah takes a break from stage managing a local production to introduce her infant son Ben to the stage.

WPT partners with Boys & Girls Club

Watershed Public Theatre recently partnered with the Boys & Girls Club of South Central Tennessee to provide a new afterschool program to Maury County youth. Since August 9, 2021, WPT teaching artists have been providing one hour of weekly theatre arts instruction to middle school students at the Teen Center in downtown Columbia and at Battle Creek Middle School in Spring Hill.

Each lesson teaches a new theatre concept to the 6th, 7th and 8th grade participants. Applying their new skills, the theatre students will create a student showcase at the end of each semester. The showcases will be conceived, designed and performed by the students to allow them to experience first-hand the wide variety of skills required to produce a play or musical.

Thanks to financial support from the Tennessee Arts Commission and Predators Foundation, the afterschool program is provided for no cost to the Club or participants. The funds provided by the two granting organizations help to provide classroom materials, showcase supplies such as costumes and props, and to pay the artists who provide the weekly instruction.

The program is administered by WPT Education and Outreach Manager Sarah Kennedy. Local theatre professionals Tristen Peters Meza, Megan Roberts and Tracie Williamson are the teaching artists who provide weekly instruction. The theatre games and skills that they teach help to build students' confidence, critical thinking and creativity.

"It is a joy getting to know these talented kids. They are full of creative willingness and enjoy every lesson that comes their way," said instructor Williamson. "My personal favorite moment was when two children decided to do an improv scene together and one said, 'This is great cause it gives us a chance to get to know each other more.'"

According to Tristen Peters Meza, "It's been amazing to see how the kids are opening up to the world of theatre. At the beginning of the program the students were a little hesitant, but they've grown so much in their participation, skills, and creativity! Each week when we arrive, the students are so excited for 'theatre day' and are very enthusiastic to participate in games and improv. I'm so glad that they are able to experience the joy of theatre and I'm excited to see how they grow in their skills throughout the semester."

While the program is currently only offered to middle school students, the long-term goal will be to gain enough program support to provide instruction to other age groups and serve more Boys and Girls Club sites across South Central Tennessee.



WPT Education & Outreach Manager Sarah Kennedy (left) and Executive Director Kate Foreman (right) pose with students of the Boys & Girls Club of South Central Tennessee at the Teen Center in Columbia. The Club youth and WPT representatives accepted a check from the Predators Foundation supporting the new afterschool program.

Coming Soon: Book Club

The Watershed Book Club is an opportunity for those in the community to come together and discuss a book inspired by upcoming Watershed productions. Membership is free. In addition to fun reading, fellowship, and lively discussions, members can receive discounts to Watershed plays. Book club meetings will be held quarterly at either the Maury County Public Library or the Columbia State Library at the Columbia Campus with virtual attendance optional via Zoom. Interested? Let us know by emailing info@watershedtheatre.org.

Specialty License Plates

Did you know that your license plate could help fund the arts across the state? The Tennessee Specialty License Plate Program was created in the 1980s to provide a dedicated revenue source for arts and cultural activities across our state. Since then, the program has become so successful that approximately 80% of funds granted by the Tennessee Arts Commission come from the specialty plate program.

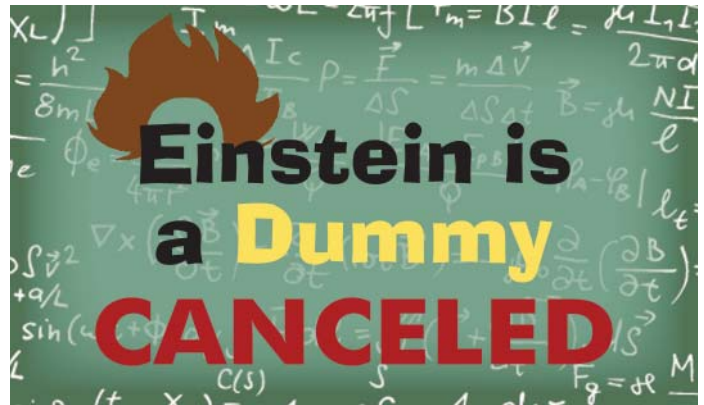


Want to show your support? Visit tnspecialtyplates.org for more details or visit your county clerk's office to purchase a personalized or specialty plate.

Become a member today

It's not too late to become a member for the 2021-22 season! We offer four different membership levels ranging from \$25 to \$75. Each pass includes three tickets that can be redeemed throughout the season. Other benefits vary with each level and include subscription to the WPT newsletter, discounts on additional ticket purchases and discounts on WPT merchandise. Visit WatershedPublicTheatre.org to purchase your membership pass today.

If you're already a member (or as we like to think of it, part of the extended WPT family), THANK YOU for providing sustaining support for our 2021-22 season! We hope you'll spread the word about this economical way to enjoy local, professional theatre all year long.



After weeks of rehearsal and planning, Watershed Public Theatre just announced the cancellation of its first production of the season, *Einstein is a Dummy*, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We are sorry that we will not be able to resume live theatre as soon as we had hoped," stated Executive Director Kate Foreman. "The health, safety and well-being of both the artists and the community we serve must remain at the forefront of everything we do, and with that in mind, we have made the difficult decision not to move forward with this production."

We extend our gratitude to the many artists who contributed weeks of work towards the production:

The Cast - Evan Hernandez as Albert Einstein, Kortney Ballenger as Cat, Megan Roberts as Elsa, Jordanis Ekimogloy as Constantin and Ellen Foreman as Frau Schloppnoppdinkerdonn

Director - Cheri Hughes

Choreographer - Megan Roberts

Stage Manager - Sarah Kennedy

Costume Designer - Melissa Durmon

Lighting Designer - Eva Garrett

Sound Designer - Kristin Carter

Projection Designer - Quantagus McFall

Production Crew - Cary Coblio-Harrell, Kanye

Conway*, Kate Foreman, Susan Gaw, Sydney Jason*,

Sherry Johnson*, Marjorie Pess* and Ella Weaverling*

(*Denotes a member of WPT's Journeyman Troupe)

Refunds will be issued to those who purchased advance tickets to the production. Season pass holders will be able to redeem their ticket for a different production of the 2021-22 season.

Patrons can receive assistance by contacting info@watershedtheatre.org or calling 931-797-6551.

Watershed Public Theatre
PO Box 441
Columbia, TN 38402

A Victorian Christmas Carol

with Charles Dickens

Adapted by Beverly Mitchell
Based on the story by Charles Dickens

December 10 & 11, 2021 7:00 pm

December 12, 2021 2:00 pm

Mt. Pleasant Grille
Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee

Dinner and Show
\$35 general admission
\$32 seniors
\$30 students/children

WatershedPublicTheatre.org
931.797.6551