



LAFAYETTE THEATRE ACADEMY — The Lafayette Society for Performing Arts will launch the Lafayette Theatre Academy Aug. 18. Students will receive weekly training in theater arts through the academy, Amy

McDow, LTA's program coordinator said. Shown above are performers on stage for "Annie, Jr.," the summer production of LTA.

Lafayette Theatre Academy opens Aug. 18

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LaGRANGE — The Lafayette Society for Performing Arts is preparing to open the Lafayette Theatre Academy Aug. 18.

Already well-known for its exceptional dance academy and theatre company, LSPA looks forward to providing the LaGrange area with extensive training in theatre arts education.

LTA will offer students a safe and supportive environment to express their individuality and creativity, while gaining the knowledge and developing the skills necessary to succeed in all areas of the theatrical arts.

Games, improvisation exercises, guest artists, scene work and full productions are just a few of the activities planned for this year's academy students.

Amy McDow, LTA's program coordinator, explains the value of participating in the theatrical arts. "Students build self-confidence, while developing a variety of artistic and professional skills; such as critical thinking, goal setting, team building, problem solving, conflict resolution, innovative thinking, craftsmanship, writing, communication, visual arts, dance, music, and more. We will help individuals identify their personal strengths and

then use the diversity of the theatre to help them discover their greatest potential for success," she said.

As an extension of the Lafayette Theatre Company, LTA has, for the last four seasons, offered summer intensive workshops for children. The LTA summer camps, under the direction of Valerie Longshore-Sargent, focused on introducing young actors to both the technical and performance aspects of theatre. The summer 2015 intensive culminated in a very successful production of "Annie, Jr.," also directed by Longshore-Sargent, which set the stage for the annual academy classes.

The addition of the semester based program is the next step in LSPA's mission to become the performing arts center of LaGrange and the surrounding West Georgia and East Alabama areas.

The productions being planned for this year are designed around an ensemble cast, where a large number of cast members have significant roles. This will allow each student to apply what they learn in class on the stage. In addition to acting, classes will teach about the different offstage roles that make a show possible and provide hands-on opportunities for students to put what they learn into practice.

Working with classical pieces, such as Shakespeare, and meaning-

ful dramas, such as "I Never Saw Another Butterfly," will provide new challenges for students with a background in theatre, McDow said.

Whether a child is being introduced to theatre for the first time or they feel at home on the stage and are looking for ways to strengthen their talents, LTA is in place to help them succeed, she added.

With the training provided through this program, these actors and actresses will be better equipped to work with other theatres or studios and pursue personal goals that involve the performing arts. Each member of the Academy will be provided with a professional headshot, go through audition training, determine individual talents and develop skills that will set them apart from the competition.

The 2015-2016 academy students will begin this inaugural year at orientation on Aug. 13, with classes starting Aug. 18. Classes will meet once each week on a semester schedule, with the continued summer intensives available during the summer months.

The Lafayette Theatre Academy is located at 214 Bull St. in downtown LaGrange. For registration or more information, call 706-882-9909 or email Amy McDow at amcdow@lsparts.org.