

CURIOSITY DOESN'T END WHEN THE BELL RINGS

TEACH

A NEW PLAY BY
**DONNA
HOKE**

DIRECTED BY
**SABRINA
KAHWATY**



THE FLEXIBLE THEATRE

FEBRUARY 21, 22, 23 AT 7 PM | FEBRUARY 24 AT 2 PM & 7 PM

FEBRUARY 25 AT 1 PM



BUFFALO STATE
The State University of New York

Please help support the Theater Department at Buffalo State

The Theater Department is a space where the practice and study of theater and dance is the focus, where we educate our students, collaborate across campus, and contribute to the health of our community. Our students engage their physical, intellectual, and emotional resources during their liberal arts career to inspire adaptability, creative thinking, and innovative solutions.

The Theater Department Fund is the basis of everything we do in the Theater Department. It encompasses all endeavors artistic, scholarly, and exploratory. It funds theatrical productions undertaken by our students as they gain experience on the stage. It brings in special artists and programs to further our students' education in the arts. It allows us to support deserving students in the ways they need.

We need your help to continue supporting theater students in this way. Please make a gift to the Theater Department Fund today!

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Letter From The Chair

Welcome to Buffalo State Theater!

I personally invite you to get to know Buffalo State Theater—our educational team, our students, our productions, and our programs. We are a community of individuals brought together by an understanding of the potential power of live theater and the potent benefits of theater training. Scholarship and artistry, confidence in vulnerability, and the true integration of self and community are just a few of our goals.

We seek to bridge demographic, geographic, and social differences to strengthen the community of our campus, our city, and our world. We offer a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Theater, Arts and Letters degrees in Theater and Dance, and a minor in Theater/Dance.

Check out our website or contact us for more information!
Theater.buffalostate.edu, becklecy@buffalostate.edu.

Welcome. Enjoy the show, and we hope to see you again soon!

Carol Beckley
Theater Department Chair

DIRECTORS NOTE

When I was asked to direct a reading of TEACH for Buffalo State's First Thursday series last April, I was excited. When I was asked to direct the first ever production as part of the season, I was thrilled. Now that we are here, sharing it with you, I am over the moon! I've been well-acquainted with—and a huge fan of—this play since its draft stages. Each time I read it through development, I was captivated. Even now, when I have analyzed, watched over and over, and know practically every line, it still manages to keep me on the edge of my seat.

That is thanks to playwright Donna Hoke, whose ability to get to the heart of what it means to be human never ceases to amaze me. Like all of Hoke's plays, TEACH is a brilliant exploration of connection and humanity, which makes the work inherently relatable. Even if audience members haven't experienced situations identical to the ones depicted here, I am confident that forbidden attraction, loneliness, desire to connect and feel seen, uncertainty, and regret will resonate—they are universal. Perhaps more importantly, TEACH's deft examination of power imbalances and gender bias invites self-reflection and important discussion. If the conversations the cast and I have had in rehearsal are any indication, this play is even more relevant today than when Hoke wrote it in 2016.

This production is compelling in large part because of exceptional work by the cast and crew. So much of this story is deeply embedded in the student experience; it is fitting that students be the first to fully stage it. This is not an easy play, and these students rose to the challenge. I am indebted to their talent, maturity, and commitment. (An exciting note: in the coming weeks, TEACH will be published, and these stellar performers will be listed as the first production cast!)

Like all good plays, TEACH does not ask questions of the audience, but rather prompts audiences to ask the questions themselves. As Chris reminds Ken, "Curiosity doesn't end when the bell rings," so I hope your curiosity continues long after today's visit to Roosevelt High School.

Thank you for joining us,
Sabrina Kahwaty

CAST OF TEACH

Female Chris.....Jemia Bennett
Male Chris.....Manuel Mejia
Ken.....Min Zo
Male Emerson.....Myshawn Sikes
Female Emerson.....Zoe Goñez

CREW OF TEACH

Deck Crew.....Bryan Harris
Light Board Op.....Fedeline Jean-Philippe
Sound Board Op.....Madison Burnett
Wardrobe Crew....Gianna Cotto, Shailin Paredes

Meet the Playwright

Donna Hoke

Donna Hoke's work has been seen in 48 states, on five continents, and locally at Buffalo United Artists, Shea's Smith, Brazen-Faced Varlets, Alleyway, Second Generation, Subversive, Road Less Traveled, Alt, and—next season—Bellissima. Donna is a Primus, Blackburn, and Laura Pels prize nominee, three-time winner of Buffalo's Emanuel Fried Award for Outstanding New Play (SEEDS, SONS & LOVERS, ONCE IN MY LIFETIME), and three-time *Artvoice's* Buffalo's Best Writer (and only woman). Donna has served the Dramatists Guild since 2012, is a blogger, *New York Times*-published crossword puzzle constructor; author, speaker, and produced screenwriter (The Wives Club). donnahoke.com.



TEACH

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director.....	Sabrina Kahwaty
Stage Manager.....	Shelby McNulty
Costume Design.....	Jaden Browne
Costume Director.....	Erica Fire
Set Design.....	Shawn Smith
Technical Director.....	Ron Schwartz
Lighting Design.....	Harry Mandris
Intimacy Director	Nicolette Navarro
Sound Design.....	John Shotwell

CASTING HALL

PRODUCTIONS EBOARD

President.....	Zoe Goñez
Vice President.....	Gianna Cotto
Treasurer.....	Emily Cannon
Vice Treasurer.....	Manuel Mejia
Secretary.....	Neshiah Alston
Marketing Manager.....	Armando Giangreco-Marotta
Publicity Chair.....	Morgan Rogers
Audience Services Manager.....	Stepheney Warnstadt
Org Rep.....	Jaden Browne

CAST AND CREW BIOS

Jemia Bennett (She/Her), Female Chris.

Jemia is currently a senior at Buffalo State University majoring in Early Childhood Education with a minor in theater. In the past, she's starred in the productions of *Percy Jackson and a Lightning Thief*, *Annie*, *Skeptic and a Bruja*, *Medea*, etc. She will graduate with her undergrad this May and continue to grad school. Jemia is super excited for people to come out and see all the fantastic work they are doing!

Manuel Mejia (He/Him), Male Chris.

Manny is a sophomore theater major at Buffalo State. He has appeared on stage in Buffalo State's *On the Verge* (Alphonse, Mr. Coffee, Nicky), *Medea* (Aegeus), as well as *Clue* (Wadsworth), and *The Miracle Worker* (James). He's excited to continue stage and camera work after this amazing show, and thanks everyone who is a part of this process for their hard work and dedication. Enjoy!

Min Zo (He/Him), Ken.

Min is currently a junior majoring in theater arts. He has been in the past productions of *Medea* and *On the Verge* here at Buffalo State. This is his biggest role to date, and he is very excited. Min also hopes to be in as many upcoming shows as possible before graduating.

Myshawn Sikes (He/Him), Male Emerson.

Myshawn is a sophomore theater major at Buffalo state University. He performed in last year's production of *Medea. Teach* is the second show he has been cast in. He's excited to perform in an amazingly written and directed play and can't wait to see what the future holds for him.

Zoe Goñez (She/Her), Female Emerson.

Zoe is currently a senior theater major and television and film arts minor at Buffalo State University. Her recent credits include *Medea* (2023) and assistant director of *On the Verge* (2023). This semester Zoe received the President's Medal for Outstanding Undergraduate Student and will be speaking at her commencement this May. She is beyond grateful to be a part of the first production of *Teach*, and thanks her family and partner for supporting her every step of the way.

CAST AND CREW BIOS

Sabrina Kahwaty (She/Her), Director.

Sabrina Kahwaty is a Buffalo-based actor/director. Directing credits: *The Way It Is*, Buffalo Infringement Festival; “Fighting Mr. Right” and *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*, Niagara University; *A Kid Like Jake* (reading); Second Generation Theatre. Upcoming: assistant directing at *Road Less Traveled* and *Starring Buffalo*; directing for *Bellissima* in 24-25. Sabrina has appeared with Alleyway, Irish Classical, RLTP, TOY, Shakespeare in Delaware Park, Second Generation, MusicalFare, Ujima, and O’Connell and Company. Thanks to the *TEACH* team, especially Mom, for trusting me with your words.

Shelby McNulty (She/Her), Stage Manager.

Shelby is thrilled to be stage managing with Buffalo State for the first ever production of *TEACH* by Donna Hoke. Shelby graduated from Niagara University with a BFA in Theatrical Performance, with a minor in ASL and Deaf Culture, in 2022.

Backstage production credits include *Air Heart* (Stage Manager, Revelation Theatre), *Murder Ballad* (Wardrobe Head, Road Less Traveled Productions), *Nice Work If You Can Get It* (Wardrobe Head, MusicalFare Theatre), *Disaster!* (Rehearsal Stage Manager, MusicalFare Theatre), *Moving Back Home: Dance Concert* (Stage Manager, Niagara University), etc.!

Performance credits include Diana Barry Understudy (*Anne of Green Gables*, Theatre of Youth), John/Curly (*Drunk Peter Pan*, Drunk Theatre Buffalo), Fanny Cranberry (*On the Verge*, Niagara University), Officer Collins (*Murder’s Afoot*, Murder Mystery Train Rides with the Arcade & Attica Railroad Company), and Priest/Others/Young Woman Understudy (*Machinal*, Niagara University).

Nicolette Navarro (She/Her), Intimacy Director.

Nicolette Navarro is the founder and Artistic Director of Bellissima Productions. She is a director, educator, and intimacy director (ID). Her job as an ID is to make sure that productions are using best practices when performing any kind of intimate act and ensure all actors feel safe on and offstage. Nicolette graduated with her Masters in Differentiated Education from Canisius College and is certified through IDC as an Intimacy Director.

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As one of only two programs accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) in Western New York, Buffalo State offers students in-depth, hands-on training. In addition to our award-winning faculty, our students are paired with local theater professionals for mentoring and are active in Buffalo's thriving theater scene. A Buffalo State theater graduate is prepared with professional experience and the skills necessary for rewarding careers in theater

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