

LEWIS & CLARK COLLEGE



SPRING 2026

# THEATRE

# NEWSLETTER



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ŠTĚPÁN S. ŠIMEK  
THEATRE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

It is my pleasure to once again write a celebratory (and hopefully informative) preamble to our magnificent biannual newsletter, and to welcome you to the magical world of the Theatre Department!

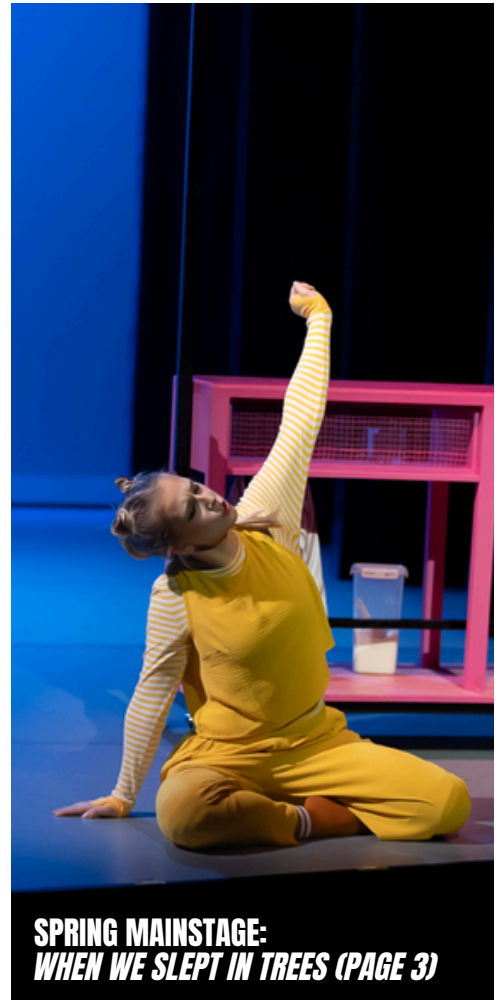
As you will see in the following pages, the department is doing well. The Fir Acres Theatre has once again been filled with activity day and night. Our students were acting, directing, writing, designing, researching, stage-managing, producing, and engaging in every aspect of the making of the theatre.

As is always the case, the Spring semester has been largely dominated by the preparations for our **Senior Thesis Festival**. This year, we graduated a record number of nervous, overworked, yet excited, creative, and energetic seniors. Our Senior Thesis Festival featured a fantastic array of original work including five fully staged productions, including a one-person show, and a fully realized staged reading of an original full-length play. The individual works are described in the following pages, and I won't go into detail here. Suffice to say, that all the productions were a wonderful testimony to the kind of creativity, collaboration, and artistic rigor that we are proud to practice in

our department. Additionally, since we like to pride ourselves on educating "Artists/Scholars," all our seniors have also written extensive research papers as part of their thesis, and each student also presented their research project at a series of polished and informative research presentations.

The big mid-semester moment was our mainstage production of an original devised piece of "Dance Theatre." This was the first time that we produced a mainstage in direct collaboration with our Dance concentration, and the play, ***When We Slept In Trees***, was collaboratively written, designed, and produced by our Performance and Dance faculty, Rebecca Lingafelter, and Tiffany Mills, and students from both concentrations. It featured our thesis students, Jamie Kushnick, Gianvito Cassanelli, Naledi Tshela, Zoe Chin, and Iman Agic, in significant roles in fulfillment of their Creative Thesis requirement, and the magnificent props were designed by a Design Concentration senior, Corey Near-Ansari. You will see pictures of the production and find out more about the process creating it as well as the experiences of the participating students in the following pages.

In addition to the mainstage production and the five Senior Thesis performances, our students were also busy producing their own independent, albeit department-supported projects. This Spring, as we do each semester, we saw an energetic and fun-filled productions of several student written and directed plays at the rumbunctious "**Once-Upon-a-Weekend**" festival, another student generated a wonderful production of Arthur Miller's ***The Crucible***, and as usual, the dance students put together the very popular Spring Dance Concert, "**Dance Y!**"



SPRING MAINSTAGE:  
***WHEN WE SLEPT IN TREES*** (PAGE 3)

And finally, to top off the cornucopia of the department's activities, many of our students participated in the Festival of Arts as part of the college-wide "Festival of Artists and Scholars." The heavily attended festival featured several performances and exhibitions by our graduating seniors, there were food trucks, music and art galore, and the overall festive and creative atmosphere of the event clearly demonstrated the extreme vitality of the arts at the college in general and the strength of the Theatre Department in particular.



You will see that the following pages, describing the various student, alumni, and faculty activities in more detail, paint a picture of a department that is vital, fiercely creative, daring, and forward-looking. It is a place where students and faculty collaborate closely on the creative and intellectual exploration and the practice of the theatre. Theatre is a collaborative project; we are, as they say, "all in it together," and as a Chair, I couldn't be prouder about our students, our alumni, and my colleagues. Let us keep up the good work!

Cheers,  
Štěpán S. Šimek  
Chair, Theatre Department



Spring 26' Mainstage  
Production

# When We Slept In Trees

A New Dance & Theatre  
Collaboration



PAGE 3

## From the Directors of *When We Slept in Trees*:

We began with birds. Flocking, murmuration, flight. The possibility that our bodies can teach us about being together in a world that actively works to keep us isolated. We talked about our bodies as holding the memory of a time when we lived closer to our environment, in small groups and in more interconnected ways. We talked about tyranny and Plato's notion that the way to combat authoritarian rule is through movement, philosophy and love. We moved like cats and birds. We ate cookies, we drank tea.

All of this led to the story of two sets of neighbors, a cat, and a surrounding world of flock, pack, community, neighborhood. A story about getting stuck inside of grief and our desire to hold on to things that are not ours to hold. A story about letting go.

We asked; What is the nature of belonging? Can you have belonging without possessing? How do we belong to ourselves, to each other, to the larger family of animals and plants and living things?

This is the "devising" process; a performance discipline that values a collaborative approach to theatre making in which the piece is made in the room together through an iterative process. This process also marks a brand new collaboration between Theatre and Dance at Fir Acres. This interdisciplinary approach brought a whole new set of questions; When do words tell the story? When does movement reflect our inner experiences? When do characters learn about themselves through their interactions with others? How do we deliver our ideas through all of our senses? Everyone involved has brought a diversity of perspective and approach that deepened our process. From our first workshop last summer, all the artists involved have brought curiosity, integrity, and rigor to the room and a willingness to stretch out of their comfort zone.

-Rebecca Lingafelter, Director &  
Tiffany Mills, Movement Director

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**FIR ACRES THEATRE  
2026 SPRING MAINSTAGE PRODUCTION**



**PAGE 4**



**When We Slept in Trees- March 6- 14, 2026**

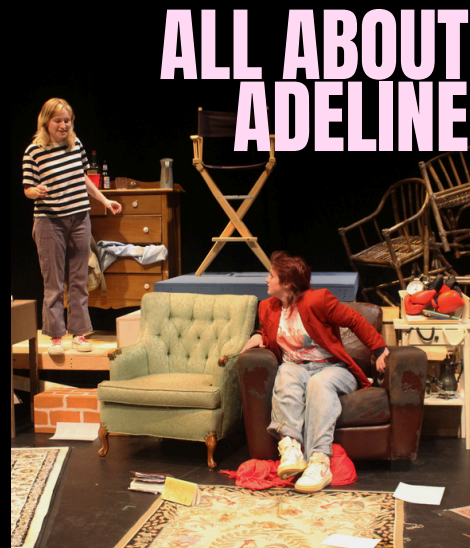


**The Theatre Thesis Festival** represents the culmination of the senior capstone experience for Theatre majors. This year-long journey begins in the fall with a rigorous process of drafting and revising project proposals, resulting in a diverse showcase that bridges creative performance with academic scholarship. Spanning five concentrations—including directing, acting, devising, stage design, technical direction, and playwriting—the festival highlights senior work from all these areas. Each student’s work is also supported by a written thesis that explores the historical and theoretical contexts behind their artistry.

***All About Adeline***

April 23 & 25, 7:30pm  
Lead Artist: Marlee S. Zimmer

Determined to control her surroundings in a worsening break from reality, Adeline Thomas-Portoco begins to envision her life as a stage show where everything from the set to the costumes to the dialogue of the characters must follow her “artistic vision.” Comedy, horror, drama or musical, one thing’s for sure: it’s ***All About Adeline***.



**ALL ABOUT  
ADELINE**



***Yerma***

April 23 & 25, 8:30pm  
Lead Artists: Josh Nguyen, Andrew Van Vorhees, Evelyn Gore, Marion Richardson-Beatty, and Bertie Mahoney

What happens when we refuse to let go of a dream? Adapted from Lorca’s 1934 Spanish tragedy, our Yerma thrusts the titular anti-heroine into the modern world and asks just how far we are willing to go to get what we want.

***Phantasmagoria***

April 24 3:00pm  
Lead Artist: Ellie Schwartz

This is a play about storytelling. It is about how we make sense of the narratives of our lives; how we discover ourselves through the stories we tell; how the art we make reflects the world we live in. More than that, it’s about the people — the complicated, messy, brilliant people at the center of this story.

**PHANTASMAGORIA**



**CONTINUED ON PAGE 6**

**CONFESSIONS  
OF THE MAD**

***Confessions of the Mad***

April 22 & 24, 7:30pm  
Lead Artist: Brodie S. Joseph

***Confessions of the Mad*** is a play based upon three of Edgar Allan Poe's most famous works: The Cask of Amontillado, The Tell-Tale Heart, and The Raven. Originally a radio drama, this stage adaptation follows Edgar Allan Poe himself as he visits a mental institution called Ravenswood Lunatic Asylum, so that he can interview the inmates there. He is hoping this will ignite his passion for writing and has chosen to seek out inmates so he hopefully can gain insight as to why murder happens. This is a story about mystery, memory, horror, murder, and madness.



**COMMENCEMENT**



***Commencement***

April 22 & 24, 8:30pm  
Lead Artists: Samantha Knofler

***Commencement*** is about how we, as humans, grieve in the aftermath of tragedy through different perspectives that often go ignored. After an atrocity, how are victims heard and how can we continue living when it feels as though everything is gone?

**“If I were to pass on some advice to future theatre students here, it would be to always be seeking a space to perform outside of class. I love this department and all of its people. This has been a fantastic four years, and I hope to work with everyone again someday. I’ll miss my time here greatly.”**  
-Jamie Kushnick '26

***I Mourned for All of Spring***

April 22 & 24, 9:30pm  
Lead Artists: Jazz Buskin

“Any regrets?”  
“The Shame.”

Bouncing between relationships, Spring's story is about the vain attempts we make to find worth and identity through romance, and the sacrifices we make to negotiate who we are. ***I Mourned For All Of Spring*** is the fractured, disembodied nature of memory, exploring how we piece it together in retrospect in order to forgive our own humanity.





Photos by Makenna Susman

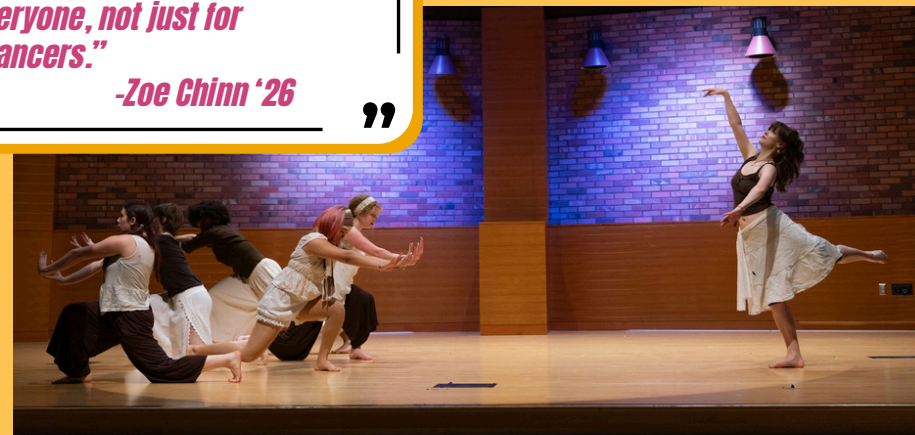
## DANCE Y- APRIL 18<sup>TH</sup> & 19<sup>TH</sup> 2026

Dance Y has been a long-standing Spring semester tradition for the Lewis & Clark dance community. It allows student choreographers to showcase their work while giving dancers of any skill level the opportunity to take part in an artistic process and perform for an audience.

Dance Y is entirely student-produced and sponsored by the LC Dance Collective.



“*There is no dance community like the one at LC. Dance is for everyone, not just for “dancers.”*”  
-Zoe Chinn '26”



# ONCE UPON A WEEKEND



## FEBRUARY 20- 21, 2026

Once Upon a Weekend is an opportunity for students to write, develop, and produce a short play/sketch/scene based on a theme. The catch is that they do this all within ONE WEEK!

Once Upon a Weekend is sponsored by L&C Journal of Dramatic and the Theatre Department, also known as (Pause).

The Spring 2026 Theme: "So.... What Are We?"

“Every single production that I've worked on at this college has taught me something monumental. Some of the things I've learned don't always pertain to theater, but I've learned nonetheless.” -Quinn Newberry '26

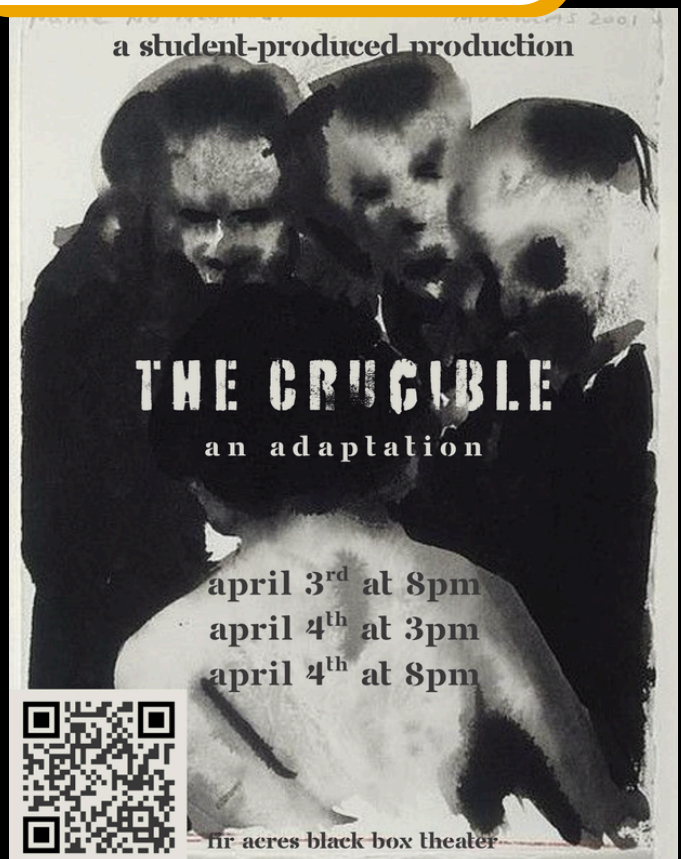
# The Crucible

## APRIL 3-4, 2026

This Spring's Student-Produced production was an adaptation of *The Crucible*, directed by Leigha Fickling.

The Student-produced production is entirely envisioned, organized, and executed by students rather than faculty. Unlike the main Department-sponsored productions, these projects represent a "by students, for students" approach to performance that emphasizes creative independence. Because the initiative is an entirely student-run enterprise, the theatre faculty holds no decision-making power over which projects are selected; instead, the responsibility for choosing the season falls to the Student Side Artistic Committee (SSAC).

While students must follow specific departmental guidelines, they are given the autonomy to lead their own artistic visions from concept to curtain call.



# NOTES FROM MOROCCO

BY DAVIS BERRY '27



You'll be pleased to hear rumors of my death have been greatly exaggerated. Yes, it is I, the long lost Davis Berry, writing to you from across the great Atlantic after fulfilling an extended stay in the Kingdom of Morocco! I, along with a tight-knit team of five other intrepid students, including our very own Cassandra Whitmore, have studied, worked, and explored tirelessly for the entirety of this spring semester under the guidance of Sociology and Anthropology Professor Oren Kosansky. I report back to you now with tales from abroad.

Our journey began in the red city, otherwise known as Marrakesh, so named for the natural color of its many old red clay buildings. There we took a crash course in Moroccan Arabic (called Darija) at a mystical place called the Center for Language and Culture. This community gem is a hub of education and fellowship, teaching Moroccan students English, acting as base camp for our academics, and providing a space for various events, including a new course in Moroccan Sign Language! We loved this course since it helped us communicate with our friends working at the in-house Sign Language Cafe.

This initiative helps to provide jobs for deaf Moroccans, and was begun by one of our most beloved professors, Nora Fitzgerald Belahcen! She taught a course called Development and Sustainability in Morocco. Among other things, we got to learn about the amazing work she is doing with her nonprofit Amal, which means hope in Darija. The Sign Language Cafes are just one part of this work, which began with her desire to educate Moroccan women to find employment as chefs. She also provided disaster relief to indigenous Moroccan communities in the Atlas Mountains outside of Marrakesh, which were the epicenter of a devastating earthquake in 2023. We were graciously welcomed into these communities to share a meal with them and witness their way of life. Other Marrakesh highlights include: a brush with the edge of civilization via the Sahara desert (completed on camel-back), a trip to Essaouira (a Portuguese-built city on coastal bluffs) and many evenings spent perusing the souks of Jemaa el-Fna.

Next, we embarked across the Strait of Gibraltar to Grenada, Spain, in the name of adventure! (and to renew our travel visas). There we witnessed the great architectural beauty of the Umayyad Dynasty, a Muslim dynasty that once united Spain and Morocco under one entity now referred to as Andalusia. After a few whirlwind nights watching flamenco, wandering ancient royal gardens, and staring out into the Mediterranean, we decided it was time to clear our heads, report back to the mainland and get down to business.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

# FIR ACRES THEATRE SPRING 2026 STUDY ABROAD

The next two weeks were in Rabat, the coastal capital of Morocco! There we worked with the Moroccan-American Commission for Educational and Cultural Exchange to continue learning about Moroccan development and sustainability initiatives. We also had the chance to practice traditional Moroccan embroidery and make small versions of zellige, the iconic ceramic tiling that is a staple throughout Moroccan design. Of particular note was the beauty of Rabat's old city (called a medina in Darija), and our exploration of ancient Roman ruins in the Chellah Necropolis (yes, the Romans made it all the way to the western edge of Africa).



“ All in all, it was an incredibly rich trip, distinguished by discovery, growth, and most of all, cherished connections made with many lovely Moroccans.

-Davis Caroline Berry '27”

Finally, we wrapped up our adventures in Fez, which is the oldest of all the old cities! And that means old. This time, we stayed in the heart of the medina, which meant maze-like streets, history embedded in the landscape, and... hey, not much of a nightlife, but when in Morocco! There, we worked with the Institute for Languages and Cultures, engaging in new coursework on North African social movements and gender studies within the walls of a traditional Moroccan riad. We also enjoyed excursions to Chefchaouen (the blue city!) Tetouan (the white city!) and one particularly memorable trip to Tangier, although I would advise you not to press for details. As well as some more Roman ruins at the site Volubilis! Man, they got around.

All in all, it was an incredibly rich trip, distinguished by discovery, growth, and most of all, cherished connections made with many lovely Moroccans. If you wish for further information on Lewis and Clark's study abroad to Morocco, I welcome all inquiries! Save those on Tangier. I trust you'll respect my discretion in that regard.

A hearty b'slama and see you next year,  
Davis Caroline Berry



# NIELS TRUMAN '22



Niels Truman's play, *Online Now* was performed at the Fertile Ground Festival of new works in April 2026, also featuring recent LC alumni: Percival Walter '25 who starred in the production and Ruby Keyes '24 as Stage Manager. *Oregon ArtsWatch* highlighted *Online Now* as one of the new works to see. Niels also works at Third Rail Repertory Theatre as a Marketing and Box Office Associate. In his Q&A with LC's theatre department, Niels offers some advice for recent theatre grads:

**ONLINE NOW**  
by niels truman  
directed by melory mirashrafi  
april 24 @ 7:30 pm  
april 26 @ 6 pm  
boiler room theatre  
1620 sw park ave

**What was the first thing you did after graduation from Lewis & Clark?**

The first thing I did after graduating college was get a job as a food runner at a restaurant/movie theater. I spent the summer and fall working late nights, immersing myself in the chaotic ecosystem of the food service gig, hardly thinking about theatre at all except when I got hit by waves of anxiety for not "doing enough." In retrospect I'm glad this is how I spent my time—it was a total 180 from L&C and, in a way, grounded me in the world post-graduation. I'd honestly recommend taking a break from theatre to any recent graduate. There is no shame in not actively making or pursuing theatre at every moment, and I actually think it is helpful for artistic/human development to spend time in a totally different environment from the deadline driven culture of academia.

“Online Now is intimately concerned with the effect of 21<sup>st</sup> technology on the human condition. “We live in this hyper-mediated reality,” says Truman. “Everyone’s on their phones all the time. We’re on Zoom right now. Email. Whatever. I was really interested in how theater can communicate that life experience. What is the experience of talking to someone online like? And how can that experience be expressed theatrically in this embodied live world?”

–Niels Truman in *Oregon ArtsWatch*, “A Trio of new Fertile Ground Festival Plays”, by Bobby Bermea, April 20, 2026”

**Are there specific classes or instructors that played a key role in preparing you for your current work?**

Creating my senior thesis project was a pivotal experience in my artistic life and I'm really grateful for how the theatre faculty at L&C guided us through every stage of the creative process (Thesis was managed by Rebecca in my year but all the faculty do this). For my thesis, I workshoped an original script with a director and actors and then produced the show as part of the Thesis Festival. Theatre is an inherently collaborative art form and playwriting does not happen in a vacuum—a lot of the most exciting work happens in the rehearsal room in partnership with artistic collaborators. Thesis allowed me to experience this process, and it's informed how I approach writing ever since—including with *Online Now*, which underwent a similar workshop process leading up to the Fertile Ground Festival. Štěpán's Playwriting class and Rebecca's Directing class are two other amazing courses I'd like to shout out. Also Karen Gross's Chaucer class—this was through the English department, but was one of my all time favorite classes and taught me an enormous amount about storytelling, voice, humor, and character.

# NIELS TRUMAN '22 CONTINUED

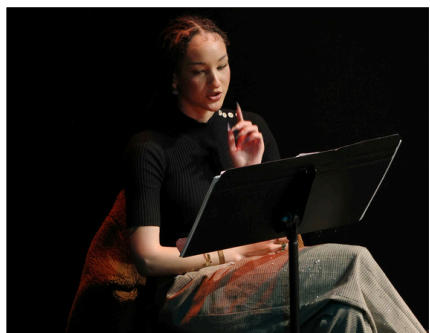
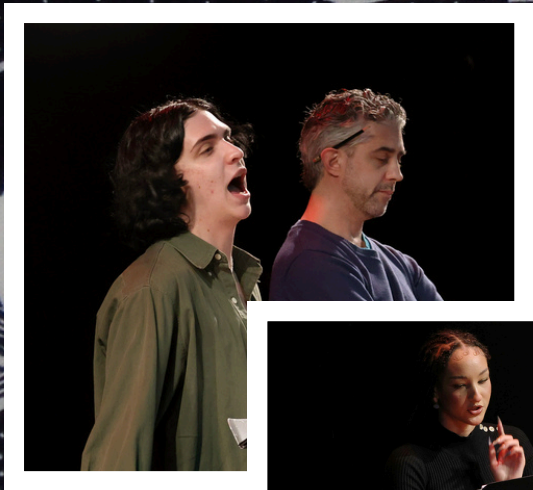
**What's a favorite memory you have from Lewis & Clark?** The audition room for *Once Upon* my senior year! I transferred to Lewis & Clark as a junior during the height of COVID, so it wasn't until near the end of my time as a student that I got to experience at scale the sheer madness the theatre students can generate. But on audition day, 70+ students were crammed into the Black Box, screaming and running around and performing with a very serious and somewhat maniacal investment in the work of *Once Upon*. It was an amazing room to be inside of (plus I ended up getting cast as a teenage boy who gets serenaded by his own sperm)!



PHOTOS BY ANDREA MARKOWSKI FROM *ONLINE NOW READING*

**Any advice for current theatre students?**

Respond to your emails and be a nice person. This is, like, half the work. Be someone you would want to collaborate with.



**What's next for you?**

I'm trying to get *Online Now* produced, and I'm pursuing MFA programs in Playwriting. I'm also interested in stretching a different muscle and getting involved in devised projects.

**Anything else?** I felt a lot of pressure as an undergrad to maximize my time, thinking if I didn't take full advantage of every resource and opportunity available to me I was wasting what I had, believing all the people who said that "college is the best years of your life." I would like to relieve current students of this false sense of urgency. "College is the best years of your life" is a pathetic lie that reveals way more about the people who say it than the people who hear it. Being in college is incredibly hard. It's ok to feel burnt out. It's ok to say no to things. Try and focus on what's right in front of you and trust that if you keep doing this you'll get where you need to go.

# LOOKING

AHEAD

FALL 2026

**FALL MEET & GREET**  
**8/31 5:30PM**

***NATASHA, PIERRE & THE GREAT COMET OF 1812***

**AUDITIONS: 9/2- 9/4**

**PERFORMANCES: 10/30- 11/7**

***FALL ONE ACT FESTIVAL***

**AUDITIONS: TBD**

**PERFORMANCES: 10/1-10/3**

***ONCE UPON A WEEKEND***

**10/16-10/17**

***DANCE X***

**AUDITIONS: 9/8**

**PERFORMANCES: 12/3-12/5**



# STAY IN TOUCH!

IG: @FIRACRESTHEATRE FB: FIR ACRES THEATRE  
Email: theatre@lclark.edu to sign up for  
Fir Acres Theatre's weekly newsletter

“In an age of extreme disconnect, in which we have become more connected with the artificial and computerized, leaving behind the alive, imperfect, and humanized, I look to theatre to return this humanity.” -Evelyn Gore, '26

”

*OverCuey*  
PHOTOGRAPHY