

# Theatre and Dance Summer Camps Teach Art and Craft

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**A YOUNG CAMPER PRACTICES ON THE LYRA DURING THE AERIAL SUMMER CAMP OFFERED THROUGH THE THEATER AND DANCE DEPARTMENT.**

For most people, the summer camps offered through the theater and dance department aren't anything like those of their youth. There aren't any swim tests; no lanyard keychain making. In fact, art and craft mean something entirely different to the school-age kids who attend the STARS (Summer Theatre-Arts Retreat for Students) sessions.

During the weeklong aerial camp, middle through high school students learn how to fly using fabric, a trapeze, and a lyra. Students focus on artistry, technique, vocabulary, safety and the unique structure of aerial dance.

“The camp is an introduction to the art of flying and students love learning the language including skills with names like Birds Nest, Gazelle, Russian Climb, Amazon and Sling Drop,” says Gay Nardone, professor of theatre and dance. “We stress safety and the students are always respectful of what they are doing and the focus required to accomplish each skill.”

Young playwrights work with a director to explore a central theme, creating characters and scenes for an original production they will perform at the Hennessy Theater July 13, at 5 p.m.

In the intensive dance camp, students with three to five years of experience continue to perfect their abilities in ballet lyrical, tap, jazz, hip hop, aerial, contemporary, modern and partnering. The two-week series is taught by dance professionals, including faculty, alumni, and students from the UNH dance program.

For the first time in the nine years that Raina Ames, associate professor of theatre and dance, has directed the musical theater camp for high school students, the two week-camp will include middle schoolers. Previously, the two separate groups would present a shortened version of a musical on the last day of camp. This year the joint collaboration will offer a full-length production of “Annie.”

“There will be much to coordinate between acting, singing and dancing, and students will only have nine and a half days of rehearsal,” says Ames. “However, I find that students rise to whatever challenge is set before them, and create fully realized characters in this short amount of time.”

The new format allows a larger range and a greater number of students to experience a professional production process, Ames says.

“Our goal is to ensure that students of all abilities and experience levels have a chance to be part of a professional-quality production,” Ames says.

The Twinkle STAR musical theater camp will give students in kindergarten through second grade the opportunity to sing and dance. This is the first year this camp has been offered. A free performance for families and friends will take place Aug. 17 at 3 p.m. in the Hennessy Theatre.

Two drama camps take place at UNH through the theatre and dance department. Shining STARS is for third through fifth graders and uses drama, music, movement and art to help students showcase their natural acting impulses. The group will perform July 13, at 3 p.m. in the Johnson Theatre.

The camp for high schoolers has students participating in acting, voice, movement, elements of design, choreography and audition techniques. That performance will be held July 13 at 7 p.m. in the Johnson Theatre.

“Annie” will be performed August 17 at 6 p.m. and August 18 at 2 p.m. in the Johnson Theater. Tickets are \$5 and must be bought online before noon, August 17. [Visit here for ticket information.](#)

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