



PRESS RELEASE
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SYRACUSE STAGE ADDS SENSORY FRIENDLY PERFORMANCE FOR EVERY PRODUCTION IN 2023/2024 SEASON



sensory friendly
PROGRAMMING EXPANDS



SYRACUSE, NY – Continuing the commitment to deliver artistic enrichment to every member of the Central New York Community, Syracuse Stage today announced that its 50th Anniversary Season includes a milestone in theatrical accessibility: All six shows in the 23/24 season will offer a Sensory Friendly performance for patrons of any age to enjoy.

In 2016 Syracuse Stage offered its first Sensory Friendly performance with “Disney and Cameron Mackintosh’s *Mary Poppins*,” which was met with overwhelmingly positive patron response. The community enthusiasm for this inclusive event prompted Syracuse Stage to include Sensory Friendly performances of the ever-popular holiday musical in each season that followed. This year, because of the continued success of these Sensory Friendly performances, Stage’s leadership is honored to expand this programming, giving community members of all ages opportunities to engage with each production of the 50th Anniversary Season in safe, inviting and meaningful ways.

“Syracuse Stage aims to cultivate an inclusive space for all who attend our performances. There are a number of people who are able to enjoy a production better when it is presented in the relaxed, accommodated environment of a Sensory Friendly show. The joy and communal experience of live theatre is something that we want everyone to be able to participate in,” said Robert Hupp, artistic director.

Sensory Friendly performances are designed with unique considerations for autistic adults and children, patrons with anxiety, cognitive or physical disabilities and other sensory processing needs. Sensory Friendly Performances operate differently from other traditional performances in several key ways: House lights will be dimmed at curtain though will remain on throughout the show's runtime, the sound levels in the theater will be lowered significantly, guests will not be discouraged from vocalizing in response to the performance and patrons are invited to come and go as they please at any time during the show. By creating a non-judgmental, "shush-free" atmosphere, Sensory Friendly performances are part of Syracuse Stage's commitment to make the theater a more accessible and inclusive live experience.

To prepare for Sensory Friendly performances, Syracuse Stage has engaged with community members and professional consultants to identify elements and content that may prove distracting or irritating to those in the neurodivergent community. For each show, Syracuse Stage has developed a "Sensory Friendly Guide" that outlines such moments and themes in the production in order to prepare audiences for the experience. For example, if there is a loud sound effect or slamming door, the guide will give an approximate time the event will occur, and small lights on either side of the theatre will illuminate prior to the event.

During Sensory Friendly+ shows – family-friendly offerings, like this season's "A Christmas Carol" – moments or scenes may be altered to facilitate a more enjoyable experience. Performance modifications will vary depending on the show, and every consideration is made to uphold the artistic integrity of the production.

In addition to accommodations within the theater, trained staff will be on hand to assist patrons, and quiet spaces will be available for use any time before or during the Sensory Friendly performance. During Sensory Friendly+ shows, full Sensory Rooms will be available, and outfitted with sensory objects, gym mats and activity stations. Although Sensory Friendly shows are specifically designed for children and adults with sensory sensitivity needs, families of these individuals — as well as any member of the community — can also enjoy these performances.

Syracuse Stage remains committed to making each and every performance accessible to all patrons, which is why sensory friendly safety kits are available at all non-Sensory Friendly performances. These kits include fidget toys, sunglasses and ear plugs for patrons to use throughout the show. More information about Sensory Friendly performances and sensory accommodations can be found on Syracuse Stage's [accessibility page](#).

All tickets for Sensory Friendly performances for the 2023/2024 are \$35 and may be exchanged or returned for a 100% refund up until show time. Tickets and subscriptions may be purchased through the Box Office (315-443-3275) or at www.syracusestage.org

What the Constitution Means to Me

By Heidi Schreck

Directed by Melissa Crespo

Sept. 13 through Oct. 1

Sensory Friendly Performance: Tuesday, Sept. 26 at 7:30 p.m.

Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill

By Laine Robertson

Musical Arrangements by Danny Holgate

Directed by Jade King Carroll

Oct. 18 through Nov. 5

Sensory Friendly Performance: Tuesday, Oct. 31, at 7:30 p.m.

A Christmas Carol

Written by Charles Dickens

Adapted by Richard Helleesen and David deBerry

Music Orchestrations by Gregg Coffin

Directed by Melissa Rain Anderson

Featuring 2 Ring Circus

Co-Produced with the Syracuse University Department of Drama

Nov. 24 through Dec. 31

Sensory Friendly+ Performance: Saturday, Dec. 30, at 2:00 p.m.

Clyde's

Written by Lynn Nottage

Directed by Chip Miller

Co-Produced with Portland Center Stage.

Jan. 31 through Feb. 18

Sensory Friendly Performance: Tuesday, Feb. 13, at 7:30 p.m.

Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express

Written by Agatha Christie

Adapted by Ken Ludwig

Directed by Robert Hupp

March 12 through April 7

Sensory Friendly Performance: Tuesday, March 26, at 7:30 p.m.

Once

Book by Enda Walsh

Music and Lyrics by Glen Hansard and Markéta Irglová

Based on the motion picture written and directed by John Carney

Directed: Melissa Crespo

May 1 through May 19

Sensory Friendly Performance: Tuesday, May 14, at 7:30 p.m.

About Syracuse Stage:

Founded in 1974 and celebrating its 50th Anniversary Season, Syracuse Stage is the non-profit, professional theatre company in residence at Syracuse University. It is nationally recognized for creating stimulating theatrical work that engages Central New York audiences and significantly contributes to the artistic life of Syracuse University, where it is a vital partner in achieving the educational mission of the University's Department of Drama. Stage's mission is to tell stories that engage, entertain, and inspire people to see life beyond their own experience. Each season, 70,000 patrons enjoy an adventurous mix of new plays, and bold interpretations of classics and musicals, featuring the finest theatre artists. In addition, Stage maintains a vital educational outreach program that annually serves more than 15,000 students from 14 counties. Nationally, Syracuse Stage is a member of the Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for American theatre; The League of Resident Theatres (LORT), the largest professional theatre association in the country; the Professional Non-Profit Theatre Coalition (PNTC), independent venues, promoters, and festivals representing every state, Washington, D.C., and Guam. Regionally, Syracuse Stage is a member of the Arts and Cultural Leadership Alliance (ACLA), Center State CEO, the University Hill Corporation, and the East Genesee Regent Association.

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