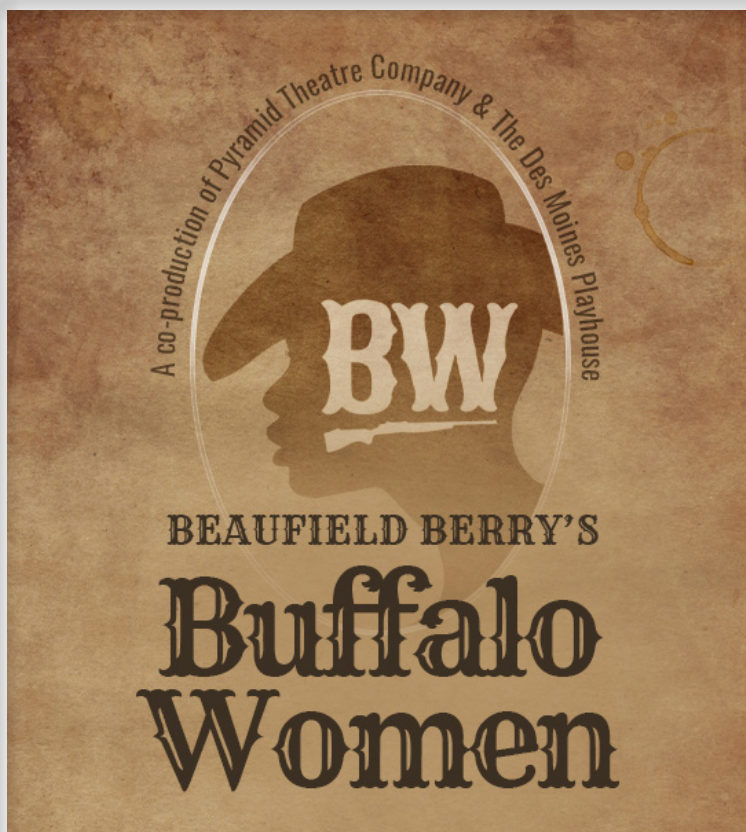


Standing OVATION



June 19-26, 2022

Beaufield Berry's Buffalo Women is a co-production of



PYRAMID
THEATRE COMPANY



THE PLAYHOUSE

Directors Notes



Katy Merriman, Des Moines Playhouse
Artistic Director/*Buffalo Women*
Co-director



Tiffany Johnson, Pyramid Theatre Company
Producing Artistic Director/*Buffalo Women*
Co-director

Our second co-production between Pyramid Theatre Company and The Des Moines Playhouse has been a complete deviation from working on a standard show. Last season, we presented *A Love Offering*, by Jonathan Norton, as our first collaboration. It was a play, the themes were about aging and caring for family, and the play was new but had been published and produced already by other theatres. This year, hold onto your hats. *Beaufield Berry's Buffalo Women* has never been produced, is brand new and still undergoing edits, is a cowgirl *musical*, and will take you on an epic journey that will make you cry tears of both laughter and empathy.

Beaufield's musical checks a lot of boxes for what we want our collaborations to be. We're picky about the stories we tell together because we want them to speak to every audience member, even though it may mean different things to different people. Working together on shows like *Buffalo Women* helps us bring relevant topics, often concerning race, to the stage in a way that's both entertaining and enlightening. It needs to mean something to you, teach you something, or affirm your own struggles. We've been incredibly lucky to work closely with

Beaufield herself throughout this process. Tiffany has directed another play by Beaufield in the past year, and Katy spent time in Omaha at the Bluebarn Theatre during their initial workshops of *Buffalo Women*. Beaufield is gracious, brave, and a fantastic playwright; we've been lucky to work with her.

What you will see today is a work in progress. We have given the characters costumes and some props, suggested locations, and select scenes are staged. We will oscillate between sections of the musical that are read like a play reading workshop and scenes that are fully staged. At times, narration will help guide you through the story and give you a full picture of what this show could be when fully produced. Don't let the unusual format trip you up. Stick with these characters, the story, and the music, and appreciate what it will be when it has reached its full potential.

Thank you for supporting this collaboration, new and local playwrights, and a bright future in theatre and storytelling.

Cast List

Opening June 19, 2022

Closing June 26, 2022

Pyramid Theatre Company and Des Moines Community Playhouse Present in the Kate Goldman Theatre

BEAUFIELD BERRY'S BUFFALO WOMEN

By Beaufield Berry

Music and Additional Lyrics by J. Isaiah Smith

Sponsored by **Des Moines Mercantile** and **ITA Group**

Directors: **Tiffany Johnson, Katy Merriman**

Music Director: **Courageous Fire**

Choreographer: **Toné Chéré**

Scenic Designer/Lighting Designer: **John G. Pomeroy**

Projections Designer: **Nicholas Amundson**

Costume Designer: **Kessehu Usert-Wonten**

Properties Advisor: **Angela Lampe**

Stage Manager: **Paige Beck**

Assistant Stage Manager: **Tinika Roland**

Cast

In Order of Appearance

Bethula	Rebecca Davis
Zadie.....	Alexis Davis
Cathay.....	Cle Shai Harden
Biddy.....	Rae Fehring
Stagecoach Mary.....	Alexandra Gray

Time: 1865

Setting: Frontier

Beaufield Berry's Buffalo Women is presented with a 15-minute intermission

Musical Numbers

ACT I

<i>Good Morning</i>	Bethula
<i>Wild in the West</i>	Zadie
<i>Kill 'Em Dead</i>	Zadie, Bethula
<i>Land I'm From</i>	Zadie, Bethula, Cathay
<i>Slow Coffee</i>	Zadie Bethula, Cathay
<i>Good Trouble</i>	Zadie, Bethula, Cathay

ACT II

<i>True Grit</i>	Biddy
<i>Stagecoach</i>	Mary, Bethula, Biddy, Cathay, Zadie
<i>Where Were You, God?</i>	Bethula
<i>Wayfaring Stranger</i>	Mary, Bethula, Biddy, Cathay, Zadie

Band

Piano/Conductor	Courageous Fire
Drums	Scott Yoshimura
Guitar	Sean Veeder

Production Crews

Technical Director: **Nicholas Amundson**

Light Board Operator: **Paige Beck**

Set Construction: **Brynn Kelly, JP Ungs**

Master Electrician: **JP Ungs**

BUFFALO WOMEN SPECIAL THANKS

Travis Edrington, Francine Griffith, Madison Ray and The Finesse

Cast & Production Headshots



Alexis Davis
Zadie



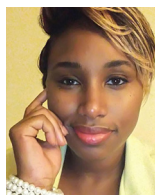
Rebecca Davis
Bethula



Rae Fehring
Biddy



Alexandra Gray
Stagecoach Mary



Cle Shai Harden
Cathay



Tiffany Johnson
*Director/Pyramid Theatre Company
Producing Artistic Director*



Katy Merriman
*Director/Des Moines
Playhouse Artistic Director*



Courageous Fire
Music Director



Toné Cheré
Choreographer



John G. Pomeroy
*Scenic Designer/
Lighting Designer*



Nicholas Amundson
Projections Designer



**Kessehu Usert-
Wonten**
Costume Designer



Angela Lampe
Properties Advisor



Paige Beck
Stage Manager



Tinika Roland
Assistant Stage Manager



Baufield Berry
Playwright

Cast & Production Team Notes

Alexis Davis (*Zadie*) is a founding member and managing director of Pyramid Theatre Company. A native of Country Club Hills, IL, she came to Des Moines to attend Drake University, where she received her bachelor's degree in journalism and mass communications in 2013 and a master's in communications leadership in 2017. Alexis is very passionate about community engagement and diversity and bringing arts back into education. She serves on several boards including Drake University's Black Alumni Association and African American Leadership Academy's Advisory Board. She is a member of the Des Moines Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, and serves on several committees. She works as a strategy content manager at Business Publications Corporation. Her character, *Zadie*, is dedicated to the importance of listening to Black Mothers and supporting Black Maternal Health in our nation. Alexis thanks her parents for loving her, supporting all her endeavors, and reminding her that there are no limits.

Rebecca Davis (*Bethula*) is a Des Moines native. She enjoys singing, working out, and being a personal trainer. Rebecca loves to cook and runs a catering business. In 2020, she played the role of Songstress in *Wild Widow Poker* by A'ndrea Wilson. She wants to shout out to Tiffany Johnson for "seeing things in me that I didn't see in myself." Rebecca is dedicating her role in *Buffalo Women* to her mother, Monica Davis, may she rest in heaven.

Rae Fehring (*Biddy*) is a resident artist with Iowa Stage Theatre Company (ISTC). She returned to the stage after a 20-year hiatus to play Big Alison in the ISTC production of *Fun Home*, then followed up in quick succession with three more ISTC shows: *Bright Half Life*, *Exit Strategy*, and *The Cake*, as well as participating in the theatre's Scriptease readings. Since moving to Des Moines in 2005, Rae has spent much of her artistic energy writing and recording original music as a solo artist and as one half of the acoustic duo The Honeybees. Prior to the pandemic, Rae was the lead singer of the local jazz-funk group, The Tighten Up. She also founded a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering girls through music education, Girls Rock Des Moines. Her previous

stage roles include Ayah in *The Secret Garden*, Gymnasia in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, and Lucia in *Black Coffee*. While studying voice at Central College, Rae performed in scenes from such operas as *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *The Medium*. This is Rae's first show with Pyramid Theater Company and The Des Moines Playhouse.

Alexandra Gray (*Stagecoach Mary*) was last seen at The Playhouse as Zelda Zanders in *Singin' in the Rain*. Her other Playhouse roles include Medda Larkin in *Disney's Newsies*, Sarah's Friend in *Ragtime* (2018), and Deloris Van Cartier in *Sister Act* for which she received a Dionysos Award for Outstanding Performance. Her favorite role to date was Mary Sunshine in *Chicago* at Columbia College in Chicago. Alexandra is the lead teacher in the three-year-old classroom at Traditions Childcare Center. She is also the owner of Sweet Tea Baking Company and Haus of Saints Designs.

Cle Shai Harden (*Cathay*) is known for her slick-talkin', confident portrayal of Nikki Patterson in Rikkia Lillard's *Coming Home for Christmas*. Local audiences may have seen her performing at various venues throughout the Des Moines area under her stage name Love Series. Away from the stage, Cle Shai enjoys being a writer and is currently working on her book, *Lady Love Series*.

Tiffany Johnson (*Director/Pyramid Theatre Company Artistic Director*) was born in St. Louis, MO, but raised in Iowa and considers herself an Iowa native. Acting has always been a passion of hers as she feels it gives her a unique opportunity to ask tough questions, raise awareness of issues, and many times walk right up and touch the elephant in the room. Her stage credits include *Good People* and *Clybourne Park* with StageWest; *The Jack Trice Story* for Juneteenth; *The Mountaintop* for Westminster Presbyterian Integral Arts; and *Silent Victory* and *Amen Corner* for Pyramid Theatre Company. In 2014, under the direction of Ken-Matt Martin, she played Rose in *Fences* at Des Moines Social Club, receiving an acting award from Broadway World. She moved to the production side of theatre with *A Soldier's Story* at Des Moines Social Club,

Cast & Production Team Notes

serving as the show's associate director. In August 2015, Tiffany became one of the founding members of Pyramid Theatre Company which was established to serve as a gateway to the arts and to enhance the experience by illuminating the presence of Black artists and providing opportunity for more diverse artistic expression. Tiffany made her directorial debut in 2016 with Pyramid's first production, *A Raisin in the Sun*. She has since directed *Akeelah and the Bee* for Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre, *Dead Dog Park* for Open Door Rep, *Intimate Apparel* for Pyramid, *How I Learned What I Learned*, a co-production of Pyramid and Iowa City's Riverside Theater, and *A Love Offering*, a co-production of Pyramid and The Playhouse. Tiffany was featured by the Des Moines Register as one of the people to watch in 2019, and by the end of the year the State of Iowa awarded her the 2019 Martin Luther King Jr. Achievement Award for her contributions to art and her commitment to the community utilizing art to educate and enhance the Black experience in Iowa. More than anything, Tiffany loves to give of herself to her community as she firmly believes "as you empty your vessel, your vessel is filled." She also believes it takes a village to raise our children, to support our communities, and to nurture our tomorrows, and intends to use her gifts to make room for others to utilize theirs.

Katy Merriman (*Director/Des Moines Playhouse Artistic Director*) has been an active member of the local theatre community since moving to Des Moines in 2013. Her Playhouse directing credits include *The Sound of Music*; the world premiere of *Escaping the Labyrinth*; the co-production with Pyramid Theatre Company, *A Love Offering* (co-directed with Tiffany Johnson; *I and You*; *The Roommate*; and *Elephant & Piggie's "We Are in a Play!"* Prior to becoming artistic director, Katy appeared on The Playhouse stage in shows including *Into the Woods* (Cinderella), *Les Misérables* (Cosette), *Completeness* (Molly), and *Legally Blonde the Musical* (Elle Woods) and was the musical director for The Playhouse Performance Academy from 2016 to 2018. Katy worked with Iowa Stage Theatre Company as a resident artist where her performance credits include *The Glass Menagerie* (Laura) and *Our Town* (Emily). She also directed their 2018 production of *Fun Home*.

Courageous Fire (*Music Director/Conductor/Piano*) was told as a young girl that singing was only effective when it told a story. That turned on a light for her that has been on ever since. Courageous still has memories of her first music lessons at four years old. She remembers her second-grade teacher, a beloved friend of the family, telling her "I'm going to teach you how to accompany. *Anybody* can play, but when you're playing for someone to sing, they need an accompanist." She began playing for congregational church hymns at nine years old. She noticed the way the older women in her church didn't seem to care about what she considered to be ugly melody lines because they were so impassioned by the story they got to sing (tell) in the songs. She paid attention to the way music could influence a person to make life-changing decisions in moments if she played and sang a certain way during the altar call. All the while, she quietly watched her dad direct the church choir and obediently sang with her family. As she grew older, she noticed how voices could be enhanced or strained, all based on the choices of the vocal arrangements. She wanted to remove that specific storytelling barrier in her own family group, so she began arranging their vocals and directing accordingly. As a young woman she began directing choirs and arranging vocals for various churches throughout the South and eventually made her way back to doing this work in the Midwest. Over the years she saw just how effective music truly was - when it was properly accompanied, effectively arranged, and emoted vocally - in telling stories. She watched these stories save lives, restore relationships, give permission for growth, and bring unbridled joy. In her arts and in her life's work with Black women, Courageous realizes everything truly is the sharing of a story. In that story, much can be experienced that has the power to free those who experience it. In arranging vocals for *this* story, Courageous hopes her years in music, her accompaniment of Beaufield Berry's brilliant work, and her permission given to the vocalists/actors and musicians during this process, will touch your soul in ways you *never* forget. www.facebook.com/CourageousFire • www.instagram.com/cfire_llc/ • www.linkedin.com/company/courageous-fire/

Cast & Production Team Notes

Toné Cheré (*Choreographer*) is an upcoming senior at Drake University earning her B.F.A. in musical theatre. A Des Moines native, she has recently become a choreographer around the community. Some of the shows she's choreographed include *It Shoulda Been You* at Drake University and *Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical* at The Des Moines Playhouse. She is very excited to be a part of this show and cannot wait to see it get up on its feet. She would also like to thank her friends, family, and cast for all their loving support through this process.

John G. Pomeroy (*Scenic Designer/Lighting Designer*) has been a professor of theatre, technical director, and designer at Drake University since 1993. For Pyramid Theatre Company, he has designed lights and served as technical director for many productions including *A Love Offering*, *A Soldier's Play*, *Too Heavy for Your Pocket*, and *Prowess*. When not at the theatre, John enjoys gardening, woodworking, hiking, watching hockey, and keeping up with his son's career.

Nicholas Amundson (*Projections Designer*) earned his B.F.A in theatre design and technology from the University of South Dakota. Working on theatre all over town, he has designed in many different styles with StageWest Theatre Company (*Ugly Lies the Bone*, *Marjorie Prime*), Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre (*The Hobbit*, *James and the Giant Peach Jr.*), Noce (*bare: A Pop Opera*), and Kata Klysmic Productions (*The Rocky Horror Show*, *Reefer Madness*). He served as scenic designer for *The New Mel Brooks Musical Young Frankenstein*, *Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka*, *A Chorus Line*, *Choices*, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*, *Ragtime*, *Catch Me If You Can*, and many more at The Playhouse. In the 2019-20 season, he directed and designed *James and the Giant Peach* in the Kate Goldman Children's Theatre. His favorite thing about theatre is creating out-of-the-box ways to present a story that gives the audience something fun to experience.

Kessehu Usert-Wonten (*Costume Designer*) is a fashion and graphic designer. She studied at Iowa State University and London College of Fashion. While in London she was lead costume designer at the Blue Elephant Theater for a play called *The Butterfly Lovers*. She's been a seamstress at a local fashion house, a

stylist for a merchandise company, and was a product development designer for an industrial manufacturing facility in Iowa. She has used her creative skills in a variety of projects throughout her life and continues to grow her skillset to be the best creative she can be. She would like to thank her family for their support and cultural education, to honor and give recognition to all the Black women who came before her to make this possible and honor all the people in our 400-year history of resilience and continual triumph towards liberation and justice.

Angela Lampe (*Properties Advisor*) began her tenure with The Playhouse in 1993 and has designed costumes, sets, and props for nearly 300 productions including *Guys and Dolls*, *Meredith Willson's The Music Man*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, *Ella Enchanted*, *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, *Ragtime*, *Les Misérables*, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*, *West Side Story*, *Into the Woods*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Sunset Boulevard*, and *Hairspray*. She has a B.A. from Central College in Pella and an M.F.A. in theatre from the University of Nebraska. She is the recipient of four Cloris Awards for excellence in costuming and puppetry.

Paige Beck (*Stage Manager*) always dreamed of being involved with a great theatre company that encourages and nurtures change, and, thanks to Pyramid Theatre Company, she is fulfilling that dream. Through the years she has performed many jobs in theatre including designing, acting, directing, dramaturgy, and stage managing. Her past shows as production stage manager include *Shakuntala* and *Shakuntala: On the Move* for Gateway Dance, three years of the Cloris Awards, and *A Love Offering*, *How I Learned What I Learned*, *Too Heavy for Your Pocket*, *Intimate Apparel*, *Prowess*, *The Amen Corner*, and *Mississippi Goddamn* with Pyramid. She was stage manager for the most recent production of *Triple Espresso* at the Temple Theatre. In 2016, she won the Region V Dramaturgy Award during the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival and hopes to pursue a future in both stage management and dramaturgy. A renaissance woman, her hobbies include photography, singing, dancing, crocheting, embroidery, sewing, JASNA (Jane Austen Society

Cast & Production Team Notes

of North America) and traveling. Paige thanks her Pyramid family; her mentor, Janet Albanese; her college professor, Kristin Larson; her family – mom, dad, and sister Jordyn – for their babysitting and flexibility; and her children, Joice, and Dominic, for supporting her and giving her the love, strength, support, courage, and tools to become the stage manager and artist she is today.

Tinika Roland (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is a graduate of Iowa State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in apparel/fashion design. She earned a master's degree in business leadership from Upper Iowa University with an emphasis in quality management and human resource management. The performing arts have always been one of Tinika's first loves. She was involved in acting and show choir growing up in Davenport as a military dependent. Although she never pursued performing arts, she had the opportunity to perform in Dr. Rosenna Bakari's production of *Talking Trees* at DMACC's Ankeny campus. This was the first time she shared the stage with her son, former Pyramid Theatre actor Khalil D. Adams, when he was a student on campus. Tinika's love for theatre opened opportunities to serve as house manager for Pyramid Theatre beginning with the 2015 production of *A Soldier's Play* at the Des Moines Social Club. She served as assistant costume designer for the productions of *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Hooded: Being Black for Dummies*, *Amen Corner*, *Mississippi Goddamn*, and *Prowess*. She also assisted with props on the production of *Intimate Apparel*. Tinika is currently working in higher education serving in various capacities as outreach coordinator, orientation coordinator, and academic advisor at DMACC Urban Campus. She is the owner of a fashion and a consulting company. Tinika is excited to serve in the capacity of assistant stage manager working with a great cast and production team.

Scott Yoshimura (*Drums*) is a multi-instrumentalist, recording artist, and producer specializing in percussion. The son of two band directors, he began learning piano at age five and continued studying music with percussion, learning everything he could. Through jazz band, concert band, marching band, pep band, church band, and Des Moines Youth

Symphony, he developed a passion for music all his own. He continued studying music, focusing on jazz in college at Iowa State University. His professional music career began in 2003 when he joined The Envy Corps, touring the world with bands such as Minus the Bear, The Killers, Passion Pit, Imagine Dragons, X Ambassadors, The Neighbourhood, and many more. He began working on his own music outside of The Envy Corps as vocalist, guitarist, and songwriter of the band Canby and multi-instrumentalist and producer of the band Edison.

Sean Veeder (*Guitar*) is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa School of Music. A native of Waterloo, he has been living and playing jazz guitar in Des Moines for the past several years. Sean is the guitarist for the Des Moines Big Band and has worked with various vocalists and ensembles including the trio Shevelia, consisting of UNI alumni Nic Addelia (drums) and Gabe Scheid (saxophones). While in Des Moines, Sean has also worked as clinician, meeting with local high school jazz bands and their rhythm sections, often working one-on-one with guitarists.

Beaufield Berry (*Playwright*) is a Midwest-based playwright, novelist, and arts education professional. Her work specifically takes on the drama, history, and joy of the Black Diaspora and often includes magical surrealism, musical, and mixed-media components. Beaufield's adventurous work has been performed across the country and in multiple conferences including the Great Plains Theater Conference, Philadelphia Sparkfest, Manhattan Rep, and Colorado New Play Summit. She has served as a guest artist with Inge Fest in Independence, KS, and on several panels and boards. Beaufield is currently the resident playwright at Creighton University in Omaha. Her most recent production, *In the Upper Room* (2018 O'Neill finalist), was produced at the Denver Performing Arts Center in February 2022. *Upper Room*, directed by Gregg T. Daniel (with dramaturg Regina Victor and scenic designer Efrén Delgadillo, Jr.), received rave reviews.



www.pyramidtheatre.org

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Ryan Crane, Director of Philanthropy, 515.974.5370, rrcrane@dmplayhouse.com

House Information

COVID-19 UNIQUE POLICIES

- Based on CDC and state guidelines at the time of your event, protocols may include masks required regardless of vaccination, social distancing, or more.
- Hand sanitizing stations are located throughout the lobbies for public use.
- Guests with COVID-19 symptoms such as a temperature of 100.4°F or higher or other symptoms, either before or during a performance, are asked to leave and exchange their tickets for a later performance.
- All tickets will be refunded or exchanged without fee upon request.
- Programs are available in print and digitally.

GENERAL PRACTICES

Accessibility

The Playhouse strives to make its facility and performances accessible to all guests. Our theatres are wheelchair accessible. Service animals are welcome. Assisted listening devices are available in the John Viars Theatre. If your hearing aid has a T-coil, toggle to that setting to receive the audio signal directly without any headset or other equipment needed. ASL interpreted performances and audio description performances are available upon request. For these and other needs, please call the ticket office with specific service requests.

Cameras

The taking of photographs and the use of recording devices are not allowed during a performance and are a violation of state and federal copyright laws.

Cancellations

If a show is cancelled due to bad weather, an email will be sent to ticket holders. Cancellations will be noted on the phone system, website, and social media sites. Tickets for a cancelled performance may be exchanged for another performance. Please be sure the ticket office has your email information and current phone in the event a performance is cancelled. The Playhouse does not sell its contacts and does not sell or trade its email addresses.

Concessions

A variety of beverages and candy may be available for purchase and are allowed in auditoriums. No outside drink or food are allowed. Staff reserve the right to deny alcoholic beverage service to anyone at their discretion.

Elevator

An elevator between levels is located at the east end of the building.

Emergency Exits

Please note the exit nearest your seat location. In the event of an emergency, guest services staff will provide direction.

Etiquette

Latecomers will be seated at an appropriate break in the play. Lobby chimes are sounded five minutes before curtain as well as the close of intermission. Disruptive, unruly guests, regardless of age, will be asked to leave. Cell phone ringers should be turned off.

Lost Items

Lost items will be held in the ticket office.

Parking

Free parking is available in The Playhouse lots and on streets surrounding the theatre. After 5:00 PM daily, free parking is available in the Shops at Roosevelt's east/back parking lot. Parking in the west/front Shops parking lot is always restricted to Shops customers. The Playhouse is not responsible for loss of any personal property left in vehicles.

Performance Content

The Playhouse does not rate subject matter as sensitivities vary from person to person. Questions about content, age appropriateness, or other aspects of the show such as strobe lights and other theatrical affects should be directed to the ticket office.

Performance Schedule

The regular John Viars Theatre performance schedule is 7:30 PM Wednesdays through Saturdays and 2:00 PM Sundays. The regular Kate Goldman Children's Theatre performance schedule is 7:00 PM Fridays, and 1:00 PM and 4:00 PM Saturdays and Sundays. The Family Holiday Classic performance schedule is 7:00 PM Wednesdays through Fridays, and 1:00 PM and 5:00 PM Saturdays and Sundays. All times are subject to change.

Preshow Talk

A preshow talk for each John Viars Theatre performance will begin 30 minutes prior to curtain in the west lobby.

Tickets

Each audience member must occupy a seat and have a ticket, including infants.

Ticket Office Hours

The ticket office is open Noon to 5:00 PM, Tuesdays through Fridays, and 90 minutes prior to performances. Tickets are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, online. Ticketing fees are the same whether purchased online, by phone, or at the ticket office.

Des Moines Community Playhouse

831 42nd Street
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DMPlayhouse

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**Ticket office and
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