

Our Town



WHERE WE LIVE AND WHO WE ARE

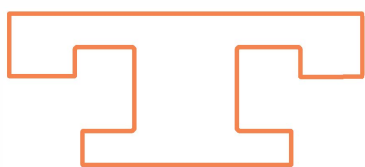
Theater Camp

First- through eighth-graders are learning the ins and outs of theater at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center this week. Hosted by children's theater education company Compass Creative Dramatics, the students have spent the week preparing to present "Peas & Harmony."



George Horsford | Daily Sun

Portraying the part of Silly Princesses, Kaitlin Mitsunaga, 7, left, and Gabbie Keese, 8, right, rehearse.



By **KRISTEN FIORE** | Daily Sun Senior Writer

The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center stage has seen seasoned performers such as Tony Bennett and Petula Clark, but this week it's the place to be for budding artists learning the ropes of theater. Clad in colorful sneakers, pigtails and neon T-shirts, 65 incoming first- through eighth-graders worked through scenes, played games, had snacks and learned songs and dances. The joys of theater camp. Hosted by children's theater education company Compass Creative Dramatics, the students spent the week learning "Peas & Harmony," a show adapted from "The Princess and the Pea." Students will perform the show at 5 p.m. on Friday and Saturday at The Sharon.

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THEATER

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The performances are open to the public. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased online at thevillagesentertainment.com or at any Villages Box Office location.

"All of our shows are adaptations," said Jill Matel, one of the CCD teaching artists working with the group. "We like to put our own spin on things, and in this show, the spin is that the queen is upset that Rose does not find her joke funny, so she decides to trick her with the peas. At the end of the day, Rose teaches her that if our feelings get hurt, maybe it's better to talk about them versus retaliation."

Thirteen-year-old Emily Veri plays Princess Rose, and she described the character as "cool and chill."

"It's been really fun," Veri said of the camp. "At first, I was kind of scared to be here because I didn't know anybody, but I've found a few friends."

Matel said she hopes the theater camp will teach the children to lead by example.

"We try to lead by example and we teach them to lead by example," she said. "We're not a professional training program. It's more about teamwork, and learning how theater works and what it means to be an actor."

Jacob Ballecer, 7, plays one of the jesters in the show and said he's been learning a lot.

"I've learned how to get your body working and your voice ready," he said. "You have to have creativity and focus on your goal."

Seven-year-old Alexander Roca, also a jester, is excited for the performance.

"I love theater camp because I want to perform in front of all of the people," he said. "This is my first time doing this."

Matel said the camp is meant to teach the children valuable life skills.

"Even if somebody doesn't want to be an actor later in life, this gives them confidence and helps them learn to work



George Horsford | Daily Sun

Portraying the part of cooks, left to right, Nevaeah Fox, 7, Griffyn Daughtry, 7, and Anne Kreiger, 8, rehearse at the Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

together, which they'll have to do at any workplace at some point in their life," Matel said.

Matel and the other teaching artist working with the group, Sonia Goldberg, will perform in the show alongside the students.

A second week of theater camp will be offered at The Sharon next week, and students will learn and perform "Cinderella Saves the World." The camp is sold out.

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