



Touring Productions 2024-2025

A YEAR WITH  
**Frog and Toad**  
**Study Guide**

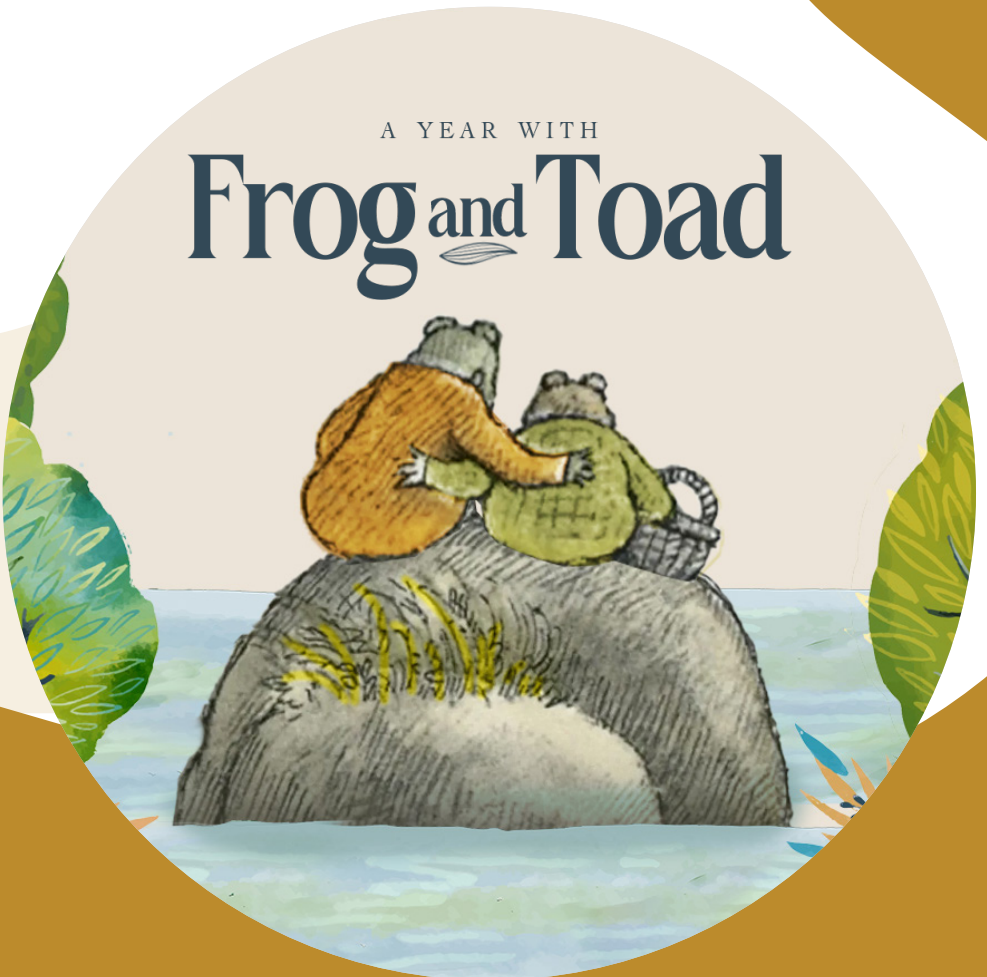
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**THE CHISHOLM  
FOUNDATION**



Director & Choreographer  
Xerron Mingo

Music Director  
Angie Rawls



**NEW STAGE**  
*Theatre*

[newstagetheatre.com/educate](http://newstagetheatre.com/educate)



1100 Carlisle  
Jackson, Mississippi 39202

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A YEAR WITH  
**Frog and Toad**  
Based on the books by **ARNOLD LOBEL**

*A Year with Frog and Toad* tells the story of a friendship that endures throughout the seasons. Waking from hibernation in the Spring, Frog and Toad plant gardens, swim, rake leaves, go sledding and learn life lessons along the way. The two best friends celebrate and rejoice in the differences that make them unique and special. Part vaudeville, part make believe... all charm! The jazzy, upbeat score of *A Year with Frog and Toad* bubbles with melody and wit, making it an inventive, exuberant and enchanting musical, perfect for introducing theatre to youngsters while keeping adults entertained, as well.



Appropriate for elementary audiences

# Audience Etiquette



For many of your students, *A Year with Frog and Toad* may be their first theatre experience. It may be helpful to discuss with them the expected behavior of an audience. New Stage asks that prior to the performance, students are made aware of the following:

- **Stay with your group at all times and pay attention to your teachers and chaperones.**
- **Be sure to go to the bathroom before the performance begins. It is hard to leave once the performance begins.**
- **Make yourself comfortable while keeping movement to a minimum.**
- **Please do not stand up, walk around or put your feet on the seat in front of you.**
- **Absolutely no gum chewing, eating or drinking in the theatre.**

## Noise

Live theatre means live actors who can hear not only what is happening on the stage, but in the audience as well. While laughter and applause at appropriate time are appreciated by the actors, excessive noise and talking is not. Even whispering voices can be distracting to the actors and others in the audience.

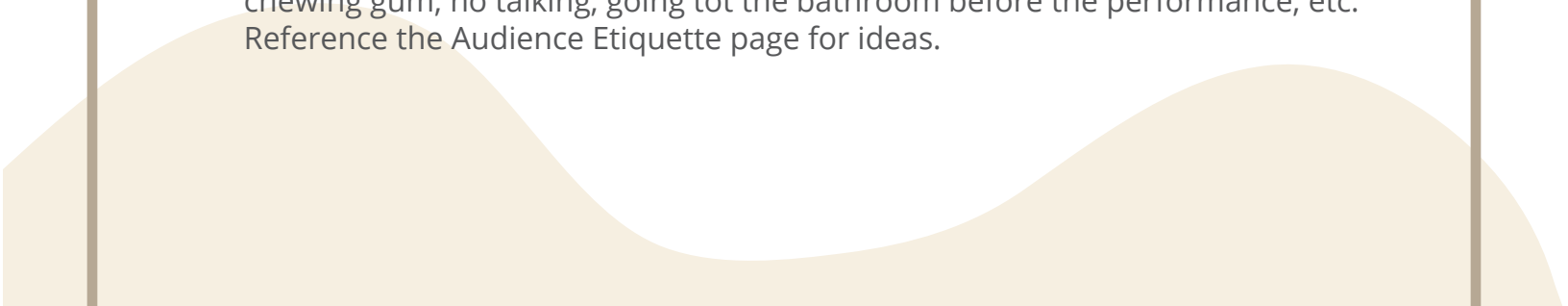
- **Do not talk during the performance.**
- **Cell phones are prohibited in the theatre. If you have one turn it off and put it away and do not bring it out during the performance.**

## Applause

Applause is used to acknowledge the performers and to voice appreciation or approval. Traditionally, applause comes before intermission and during curtain call which happens at the end of a performance when the cast returns to the stage for bows.



# Pre-show Discussion

1. Print out the Post show discussion pages of this study guide for everyone who will be attending the performance.
  2. Go over the vocabulary, plot synopsis, and background information from the guide with you students.
  3. When possible read Frog and Toad books to become familiar with the characters and some of the events in the show.
  4. *A Year with Frog and Toad* takes place over the course of one year in the lives of Frog and Toad. Discuss the four seasons of the year and their characteristics with your students, including weather and outdoor activities associated with each. Have students discuss the season both in your region and other parts of the country. Do you have snow in winter like Frog and Toad or is it warm all year where you live?
  5. There are no human characters in *A year with Frog and Toad*. In the musical, human actors and actresses will play the roles of animals. Have students brainstorm ways in which they think this will be represented, As they come up with ideas, remind them to thin of all aspects of theatrical performances including costumes, vocal quality, gestures, movements, etc.
  6. The Birds open the show with the line, "We flew south for the winter." Discuss the migration of birds and the why that is important so that your students will understand what the birds are referring to.
  7. After Snail finally delivers Frog's letter to Toad, he is very happy and proud of himself. He sings a song called, "I'm Coming Out of My Shell," announcing the new proud and outgoing Snail he has become. Explain this expression to your students so that they understand it is not meant literally, and ask them if there have been times when they have "come out of their shells."
  8. Discuss with you students the etiquette of being an audience member at a live theatrical performance. Items for discussion: appropriate responses, no chewing gum, no talking, going tot the bathroom before the performance, etc. Reference the Audience Etiquette page for ideas.
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# The Cast of Frog and Toad

## Associate Artists 2024-2025



**Jacob Heuer** graduated from the University of Mississippi with a BFA in Acting for the Stage and Screen. In college, he starred in a number of UM Theatre productions, including performing as Mr. Mushnik in *Little Shop of Horrors*, The Baker in *Into the Woods*, G/Zeus in *Polaroid Stories*, Mr. Callahan in *Legally Blonde*, Robert in *Boeing Boeing*, and Mr. Laurence in *Little Women the Musical*. In the summer seasons of 2023 and 2024, he performed professionally as Ali Hakim in *Oklahoma!* and as Oliver Hix in *The Music Man* at the Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts. Jacob has spent the last year working as an acting intern at the Florida Repertory Theatre in Fort Myers, Florida, and is looking forward to working with a new group of artists at New Stage Theatre.



**Keith Allen Davis, Jr.** is an actor, writer, musician, and director from Meridian, MS. He recently received his Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts at Alabama State University. During his time at ASU, he has been cast in and worked on productions such as *Dreamgirls*, *The Wiz*, *Tracks*, *Slammin II*, *Blues for An Alabama Sky*, and the Student Choreography Showcase 2022. He has also written for and co-directed *Montgomery*, Alabama's performance for the worldwide festival of The Walk (Little Amal) in 2023. He hopes to continue use all the tools he has acquired from Alabama State to propel him successfully into his professional career.



**ASHLYN PINKERTON** is a 2024 graduate from Belhaven University with a BA in Theatre Performance. She was born and raised in Brandon, Mississippi. Her previous performance roles include A Lovely Sunday for Creve Ceour (Dorothea) and Suite Surrender (Murphy) at Belhaven University. She made her directing debut at Belhaven with her spaghetti western adaptation of *The Marriage Proposal* by Anton Chekhov. Ashlyn is pursuing a career in film acting and directing. She is thrilled to be a part of Newstage's team.



**CAMERON VIPPERMAN** is excited to continue her journey of lifelong learning, creativity, and empathy-building with New Stage Theatre. Originally from Columbia, SC, she is a graduate of Winthrop University's honors program with a bachelor of arts in theatre, concentrating in musical theatre and minoring in education. Some of her favorite performances include *Pippin* (Catherine), *The Wizard of Oz* (Dorothy), *Sweeney Todd* (Johanna), and *Romeo and Juliet* (Montague). She has performed professionally as a Resident Chorus Member in three seasons with Opera Carolina. Some of her long-time passions are choral music, piano, musical theatre, history, songwriting, playwriting, summer camp, reading, and drinking coffee on porches. Some of her newer interests are Shakespeare, theatre for youth, vocal pedagogy, and weightlifting. She is so grateful to get to do what she loves as a profession. Micah 6:8



**TATIANA GRACE** is thrilled to be a part of the team at New Stage Theatre! Originating from Georgia, she received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Performance at Columbus State University in Columbus, GA. Her favorite past productions include *Stupid F\*\*king Bird* (Mash), *Three Little Birds* (Cedella), *Into the Woods* (Jack's Mother), and *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* (Billie Holiday). She would like to thank her friends, family, and professors who have helped and supported her along the way!

# Characters and Plot

**Frog**  
**Toad**  
**Snail**

**BIRDS**  
**MOUSE**  
**TURTLE**  
**LIZARD**

**SQUIRRELS**  
**MOLES**  
**YOUNG FROG**  
**MOTHER FROG**

**FATHER FROG**  
**THE LARGE AND TERRIBLE FROG**



## THE PLOT

Frog and Toad are best friends. We meet them as they wake up from their long winter's nap to begin another year together. Throughout the year they do many fun things like baking cookies, going swimming, flying a kite, and planting a garden. They spend a lot of time with each other and with other animals they know. But not every day is fun for them. Sometimes they get angry, but in the end they always remember that they are best friends who care about each other very much.





# The Creative Team

## behind A Year with Frog and Toad

**XERRON X. MINGO (Education Director/Director/Choreographer)** is a graduate of Florida A&M University. Born in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands and recently resided in New York City where he worked as a health & safety manager for productions on Apple TV and HGtv. He also worked as a testing secretary and production coordinator for television shows with LIONSGATE and Apple Music Reviews. For the past ten summers, Mingo has worked at Raquette Lake Camps teaching musical theatre to students from all across the world. He recently made a return to the stage and served as choreographer while playing the role of Fezziwig in *A Christmas Carol* at New Stage in 2021. He has worked professionally at a plethora of regional theatres in a handful of states. Some of his past credits include *Matilda* (Rudolpho/Choreographer), *Hell In High Water* (Cephus), *Sister Act* (TJ), *Shakespeare in Love* (Wabash/Frees), and Disney's *Beauty & The Beast* (Monsieur Dar'que). Moreover, *The Wiz* (The Lion) and *The Hot Mikado* (Pooh-Bah) at the GLOW Lyric Theatre in Greenville, S.C. He was in *Black Nativity* (Narrator) at Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe, *The Great Society* at Asolo Rep, and *Hairspray* (Gilbert) at American Stage. Mingo continues to live in the Light and could not be more blessed to do so as he embarks on this new journey as education director at New Stage Theatre.

**NINA FROST (Costume Designer)** is from Jackson and is a recent graduate of Belhaven University with a B.A. in theatre. She has constructed many costumes over the past three years, but her favorite was Dorothy's blue dress in *The Wizard of Oz* at Belhaven. Recently, she spent her summer at the New London Barn Playhouse in New London, N.H. as a stitcher and wardrobe crew. She is excited to be working at New Stage this season!

**ALBERTO MEZA (Resident Sound and Projection Designer)** is a graduate of Belhaven University 2019 with a BFA in Theatre. He is from Brandon, Miss. and is excited to work in the only regional theatre near his hometown. He began working with New Stage Theatre since January 2020 and has continued to work here for over the past 3 years. Some of his regional design credits for both sound and projections include: *Pipeline*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *A Christmas Carol*, *I Just Stopped by to See the Man*, *A Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*, *9 to 5*, *Clue*, *The Sound of Music*, and *Every Brilliant Thing*. He has also worked with Belhaven University Theatre as their professional guest artist as the sound engineer/designer for their main stage productions of *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Spitfire Grill*. Meza was also the streamer and editor behind the *Thursday Night Virtual Plays*, *Conversations*, & *Cocktails* that was presented over the virtual season at New Stage Theatre.

**RICHARD LAWRENCE (Technical Director)** serves as the vice president of Fondren Theatre Workshop and has appeared in *A Christmas Memory* at New Stage, FTW's *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Buck Nekkid for Jesus*, directed FTW's *Every Christmas Story Ever Told*, and most recently appeared as Trekkie Monster in *Avenue Q*. He was also the director of the widely successful productions of *Cabaret and Company*, which were joint productions of FTW and Actor's Playhouse of Pearl, with support from New Stage. Lawrence has been seen in New Stage productions of *The Trip to Bountiful* and UnFramed's *The Eight: Reindeer Monologues*, *How I Learned to Drive*, *The Weir*, *Circle Mirror Transformation*, and *Dublin Carol*. Lawrence has won three Best Set awards at Mississippi Theatre Association conferences, and has also won Best Set at Southeastern Theatre Conference.

**MICHAEL MONTGOMERY (Set Designer)** is an artist and actor from Mobile, AL. He moved to Jackson, Miss. to study Studio Art, Music and Creative Writing at Millsaps College. There, he performed in *The Receptionist*, *Violet*, *Eurydice*, and *All in the Timing: Sure Thing* and *The Universal Language*. He has also served as a set painter for New Stage's *Johnny Cash*, *Lend Me a Soprano*, *What The Constitution Means to Me*, *Elf The Musical*, *The Secret Garden: Spring Version*, *Chicken and Biscuits*, *Junie B. Jones the Musical*, and Unframed's *Is God Is*.

# Words from A Year with Frog and Toad

**Adieu** French for farewell or goodbye.

**Bamboo Shoot** The hard, woody stems of the bamboo plant. Bamboo is a tall tropical grass.

**Hibernation** To spend the winter in a dormant (sleeping) state.

**Hubbub** Loud noise.

**Indisputable** Certain to be true, undeniable, without a doubt

**Magnanimous** Unselfish, generous in forgiving

**Rutabaga** A root vegetable somewhat like a turnip

**Underrated** Underestimated, rated too low, not given enough credit.



**Snail says a lot of crazy words while delivering Frog's letter to Toad. Here are some of them:**

**Aghast** Shocked and amazed.

**Agog** Eager and excited

**Chew the fat** To chat, have a lengthy talk.

**Dusky** Somewhat dark.

**Escargot** an edible snail dish, often served as an appetizer before the meal.

**Exhausting** Very tiring.

**Fleeter** Faster.



# Word Search

B G H W M O U S E C S V X L K  
T P O I N H G T U N Q H S X A  
U K L A L O N E E W U Y U C Y  
R C D A S K U I T B I L M B H  
T K N F T X V H H N R P M V J  
L I Z A R D W G E O R D E J O  
E B F E L K I U K I E S R T S  
F B S P R I N G I D L A L K N  
D N C D E R T J T E A H I F A  
Y O U I G F E L E F P J U E I  
T S H I V E R S O Q O F A L L  
I Z R E G F H X Z S U R A R W  
T T O A D B N Y M T J O D J F  
L H J Y F V B I R D S G N K D  
C O O K I E S I U J C M K G P

## Seasons

Fall  
Spring  
Summer  
Winter

## Characters

Birds  
Frog  
Lizard  
Mouse  
Snail  
Squirrel  
Toad  
Turtle

## Stories

Alone  
Cookies  
Shivers  
The Kite



# Post-Show Discussion

## Science

All the characters in *A Year with Frog and Toad* are animals. Help your students do research on the various animals (frogs, toads, birds, turtles, mice, lizards, moles, squirrels, snails) and how they actually live and behave. Focus on those behaviours that you saw in the show (eating habits, habitat, migration, hibernation, movement, etc.) Before you start, have your students brainstorm a list of the things that they think were human characteristics given to the animal for the show as opposed to actual characteristics of the animal.

*(National Standards for Science: Content Standards 3 & 4)*

## Technology

In the past writing and sending letters by messenger, like Frog does by asking Snail to deliver his letter, was the only means for sending news to someone. Various inventions over the past decades and centuries have made it possible to send news more quickly in both written and verbal form. Have students brainstorm the different ways that people use to get information to other people.

*(National Standards for Technology: Content Standards 1 & 4)*

## Dance

During "Seeds" Toad decides that he will perform an interpretive dance for his seeds to encourage them to grow. Give your students the motivation for an interpretive dance. It could be to tell a story, to convince you that they can have recess, or anything else that might be fun for them and get them inspired. Once they understand their goal, remind them to pay attention to the composition of the dance, making sure it has a beginning, middle, and end. Individuals or small groups can create dances.

*(National Standards for Dance: Content Standards 1, 2 & 3)*

## Theatre

Collect a number of costume pieces that your students think would be helpful and have them try to recreate some of the characters and scenes they saw in the show or create new scenes based on other Frog and Toad stories that were not included in *A Year with Frog and Toad*.

*(National Standards for Theatre: Content Standards 1 & 2)*

**Contact New Stage Ed for more activity ideas!**

# Evaluation Form for Students

1. What was your overall reaction to the play?
2. What was your reaction to the acting?
3. What was your reaction to the scenery, costumes, etc. of the play?
4. What was your favorite part of the play?
5. Did you learn anything from this production? If so, what?
6. What other stories would you enjoy seeing staged by live actors?

.....

**Send us your feedback!**

Please send you feedback and thoughts to us! Return form to:

**New Stage Theatre, ATTN: Education Director, 1100 Carlisle Street, Jackson, MS 39202**

# Evaluation Form for Teachers/Leaders

1. What was your overall reaction to the play?
2. What was your reaction to the acting?
3. What was your reaction to the scenery, costumes, etc. of the play?
4. Please comment on the educational value of the play.
5. Do you feel this production was age appropriate for your students?
6. What titles or subjects would you like to see staged for student audiences?
6. Do you have other suggestions for future performances?

.....

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# Theatre Vocabulary

- 1. Role** The character(s) played by an actor.
- 2. Props** Items held by actors such as a rake or a cake.
- 3. Script** the written words of a play the actors memorize their lines from.
- 4. Climax** the height and “changing point” of the story.
- 5. Blocking** the physical movement of actors. Where they stand and when they move.
- 6. Costumes** what the actors wear, including accessories such as a hat.
- 7. Playwright** the author of the play.
- 8. Improvisation** acting without scripted lines. Similar to ad-libbing, meaning to make something up on the spot.
- 9. Fourth Wall** the imaginary division between the audience and the actors. When actors speak directly to the audience, it is called “breaking the fourth wall.”
- 10. Dialogue** the words spoken between 2 or more characters. A conversation.
- 11. Monologue** a series of lines spoken by one actor only. They may be speaking to another on stage character, or may be alone on stage.

# About New Stage Theatre

*Winner of the 2019 Governor Arts Award for Excellence in Theatre, located in the heart of Jackson.*



## The Theatre

New Stage Theatre is located in Jackson, Mississippi. New Stage Theatre was chartered as a nonprofit organization in 1965 and produced its initial season in the winter and spring of 1966. New Stage's first home was an adapted church at the corner of Gallatin and Hooker Streets. The theatre produced 13 seasons in the 150-seat church before moving to its present site in Belhaven in 1978.

Built in 1963 for the Jackson Little Theatre, the 12,000 square foot structure includes the 364-seat Meyer Crystal Auditorium, and a flexible, smaller performing space, the Jimmy Hewes Room. The theatre also owns the five other structures on the site, four of which are used for actors' housing and one for offices. In 1997, the theatre complex was designated as the Jane Reid Petty Theatre Center in recognition of the New Stage founder's contributions to the development of professional theatre in Mississippi.



## The Mission

The mission of New Stage Theatre is to provide professional theatre of the highest quality for the people of Mississippi and the southeast. New Stage is committed to producing important contemporary works and classics, selected for their artistic merit and their power to illuminate the human condition. Challenging new works in development are included through the Eudora Welty New Play Series named for the distinguished writer who helped found New Stage. New in recent years is The Mississippi Plays Series.

# More about **New Stage Theatre**

The theatre is dedicated to cultivating and educating a culturally diverse audience by gathering the finest available resources including playwrights, actors, directors, designers, technicians, administrators, trainees, and board members. Integral to the theatre's total effort, New Stage's Education Department maximizes its impact within our surrounding community, through artistic and technical apprenticeships, which mount touring programs facilitated by our Apprentice Company, aided with classroom materials for schools statewide, and developing curricula for and instructing youth classes.



## **Mainstage Productions**

New Stage produces five plays each year in its subscription series, in addition to a holiday show, an annual student matinee, and a musical theatre summer camp featuring local youth. Mainstage productions range from master works to contemporary classics to new plays. All productions carry the mark of professional quality for which the theatre has long been recognized. Additionally, New Stage has a second season called Unframed, overseen by Artistic Director Francine Reynolds and facilitated by our Apprentice Company and Education staff, that features contemporary works. New plays are read and developed through the Eudora Welty New Plays Series and the Mississippi Plays Series.



## **The Staff**

The theatre staff is comprised of seven full time administrative and artistic staff members, six full time production staff members, four acting apprentices, and three part time employees. All actors are paid and typically one to two AEA actors are hired per production.

# Field Trips to New Stage

Attend our season productions during the school day for a discounted ticket price. Weekday performances are at 10 a.m. and admission includes a comprehensive study guide before the show and a post-show discussion with the company following the matinee.

## *GASLIGHT*

by Steven Dietz  
based on the original play by  
Patrick Hamilton  
**October 24 & 30, 2024**

## **MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET CHRISTMAS**

by Colin Escott  
**December 10, 11, 17, & 18, 2024**

## **The MOUNTAINTOP**

by Katori Hall  
**February 6, 12, & 13, 2025**

## *Little Women, The Broadway Musical*

Book by Allan Knee  
Music by Jason Howland  
Lyrics by Mindi Dickstein  
**March 26 & 28, April 2 & 3, 2025**

To reserve seats for your school or class call us at 601.948.3533 ext. 226 or email [mtillman@newstagetheatre.com](mailto:mtillman@newstagetheatre.com). Read more about each production at [newstagetheatre.com](http://newstagetheatre.com)!





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**Frog and Toad**

Based on the books by **ARNOLD LOBEL**    Music by **ROBERT REALE**    Book and Lyrics by **WILLIE REALE**

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