

Student Org Spotlight: LAB! Theatre



Note: On March 22nd-24th, LAB! Theatre will present a performance of ?lockdown,? written by UNC Junior Gage Tarleton. LAB! Theatre will present ?Bethany? by Laura Marks, the final mainstage production of the season, from April 6-8.

If you're looking for an enjoyable night at the theater, a chance to experiment and explore new artistic ideas, or an opportunity to make friends and join a tight-knit community, LAB! Theatre might be right for you. UNC's oldest student theater group, LAB! Theatre was formed in 1982 and initially focused on experimental theater, but has since expanded to support many different genres of theater, from musicals to dark dramas.

?We're never scared to try something new,? said LAB! Theatre Publicity chair Caroline Robinson. ?We very much explore, whether it's a new written work, or a staged reading of a musical, or performing a two-person play in Linda's Downbar. We love testing the boundaries of theater and letting artists explore a work, explore a space, and explore an idea.? Robinson, a senior Communications and Dramatic Art double major, described her time with LAB! Theatre as ?so formative. I've been able to grow not only as an artist but as a person.?

Robinson has worn many hats throughout her for years as a member of LAB! Theatre, from stage manager to sound designer to actor. In November 2018, Robinson made her directorial debut with *Eurydice* by Sarah Ruhl. Robinson describes this experience as ?the hardest yet most fulfilling thing I've ever done,? and encourages students at all interested in theater or creative expression to participate in LAB! Theatre. ?Try it all, go to all the interest meetings, audition for everything,? Robinson said. ?Know that for LAB!, there's always a way to get involved.?

LAB! Theatre prides itself on producing student works, such as on upcoming performance of *lockdown*, written by UNC Junior Gage Tarleton, and a rotating repertory of student works, including February's *The Belkin Tales*. LAB! Theatre additionally strives to replicate a professional show process to help students learn about the procedures involved with mounting a production. ?Overall, we're always looking to push it to the next level,? commented Robinson. ?We're always looking to see how we can make our show process even more professional, and bring our level of art and community to the next level.?

LAB! Theatre's final essential tenant lies in its policy of providing admission-free performances for all of its productions. "We believe in accessibility to the arts," said Robinson. "That's always been a part of LAB!. I think everyone deserves to see the arts."

When asked why students should participate in LAB!, Robinson bursts with enthusiasm. "Oh, why should they not?" she gushes. "People who want to explore their artistic mind and explore ideas they're grappling with should do LAB!, because even if you're not a theater artist, LAB! is so open to newcomers and new ideas that if you have an idea, LAB! is so likely to let you take your idea and run with it."

"You're not gonna have another opportunity like this, to find a group of artists so willing to explore with you," concluded Robinson. "If there's something scratching within you and you have something that needs to be heard, even if it's not completely understood, LAB! is the place to explore."

Note: Photo is from Eurydice by Sarah Ruhl, directed by Caroline Robinson, Fall 2018. Students pictured are Meredith Edmonds and Jack Turner. Photo taken by Michael Sparks.

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