Students: Why should you major in theatre?
Parents: Why should you allow your son or daughter to major in theatre?

For many good reasons! Theatre majors learn a wide variety of skills that are directly applicable to jobs in business, education, science, human services, medicine, psychology, writing, and management of all sorts, in addition to the arts.

Theatre students study how to present themselves clearly and expressively. They learn this through the acting classes, but also through directing, and the presentations they do of their designs.

If you think that most theatre artists are divas or temperamental, think again! Theatre students learn how to work effectively with other people. Theatre is a community, cooperative enterprise. Theatre artists need to communicate clearly with each other and work together in order to create an effective production.

Theatre students learn how to budget their time wisely and see a project through from start to finish. There are hard deadlines in theatre – opening night can’t be postponed.

As performing artists who represent the human condition through acting, design, and tech, theatre students develop their empathy skills and learn how to see other peoples’ points of view.

Theatre students learn how to see both the BIG PICTURE and the small picture. Being part of a theatrical production means that you are a part of something bigger than yourself and other people depend upon you to do your job (your small part) well.

Theatre students learn how to lead and how to follow. They feel equally comfortable in both roles because during their training they have been challenged to do both and they know when the appropriate time to assume each is.

Theatre students are able to work with a limited budget. Most theatres and theatre departments survive on a shoestring. Those constraints actually encourage creativity and imagination.

Theatre students learn to make good decisions. The artistic process is filled with nothing but choices and part of training deals with how to make good decisions when faced with a myriad of choices.

Theatre students are willing to take risks. Exciting theatre only happens when performers and designers are willing to go out on a limb and take chances. A theatre degree gives students many opportunities to challenge themselves to be fearless.

Theatre students are able to improvise. Things don’t always go according to plan in the theatre or in life. Theatre students get years of practice – formally and informally – in focusing, thinking quickly, and acting “as if,” to keep the show flowing seamlessly.
Theatre students get used to **working hard** as they develop **self-discipline**. These qualities, once developed, extend to other areas of life.

Many theatre majors have gone on to become successful entrepreneurs because all of these skills are extremely useful in a business environment. In fact, more than 15% of the members of the Entrepreneur’s Organization have a background in the arts.

**The abilities for success in the 21st century** reflect all of the skills studied in a theatre major. **Daniel Pink** (2006) says in his book *A Whole New Mind* that these abilities are: Story, Design, Symphony, Empathy, Play, and Meaning.

**Story** is developed through Acting, Dramatic Structure, Playwriting, and Directing.

**Design** is developed through design and tech classes.

**Symphony** (the ability to synthesize as opposed to analyze) comes into play in all theatre classes as students connect elements of real life with theatre skills and transform them into the final outcome of a production.

**Empathy** is developed through all theatre classes.

**Play** also is developed through all theatre classes.

**Meaning** is the outcome of the final work of art. The process of creating theatre is to make meaning that will speak to the audience.

Enough said?