

Fame Jr.

April 25 - May 4, 2025

Fridays & Saturdays at 7:30 pm

Sundays at 3:00 pm

2nd Street Stage

Hannah Block Historic USO/Community Arts Center

120 South 2nd Street



Set during the last years of New York City's celebrated High School for the Performing Arts in the early 1980s, *Fame JR.* is the bittersweet, but ultimately inspiring, story of a diverse group of students who commit to four years of grueling artistic and academic work. With candor, humor and insight, the show explores the issues that confront many young people today.

About the Thalian Association

Thalian Association Community Theatre is a non-profit, membership organization that's dedicated to enhancing the rich artistic environment of the Cape Fear region. Tracing

its roots back to 1788, the Thalian Association Community Theatre was founded

to provide arts education and bring the excitement of the performing arts to

Wilmington, North Carolina. Today the Thalian Association Community Theatre

produces five major productions annually on the Main Stage at historic Thalian

Hall, offers a Youth Theatre program and professionally manages the Hannah

Block Historic USO/Community Arts Center for the City of Wilmington. In 2007,

the North Carolina legislature named the Thalian Association Community Theatre

the Official Community Theater of North Carolina.



Facts about Performing Arts

The characters in *Fame Jr.* are all students at a performing arts high school in New York City. Read the following information from UNESCO about the history of the performing arts and answer the questions to learn more!

The performing arts range from vocal and instrumental music, dance and theatre to pantomime, sung verse and beyond. They include numerous cultural expressions that reflect human creativity and that are also found, to some extent, in many other intangible cultural heritage domains.



Urtiin Duu, traditional folk long song [Read more on the element](#)

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Music is perhaps the most universal of the performing arts and is found in every society, most often as an integral part of other performing art forms and other domains of intangible cultural heritage including rituals, festive events or oral traditions. It can be found in the most diverse contexts: sacred or profane, classical or popular, closely connected to work or entertainment. There may also be a political or economic dimension to music: it can recount a community's history, sing the praises of a powerful person and play a key role in economic transactions. The occasions on which music is performed are just as varied: marriages, funerals, rituals and initiations, festivities, all kinds of entertainment as well as many other social functions. Dance, though very complex, may be described simply as ordered bodily movements, usually performed to music. Apart from its physical aspect, the rhythmic movements, steps and gestures of dance often express a

- What is the definition of the performing arts that UNESCO gives? What do you think “intangible cultural heritage” means?

- What is the most universal performing art according to UNESCO? Why do you think this is?

- What are some of the occasions where music is performed? What is an occasion where you have heard music performed in your own life?

sentiment or mood or illustrate a specific event or daily act, such as religious dances and those representing hunting, warfare or sexual activity.

Traditional theatre performances usually combine acting, singing, dance and music, dialogue, narration or recitation but may also include puppetry or pantomime. These arts, however, are more than simply 'performances' for an audience; they may also play crucial roles in culture and society such as songs sung while carrying out agricultural work or music that is part of a ritual. In a more intimate setting, lullabies are often sung to help a baby sleep.



Samba de Roda of the Recôncavo of Bahia [Read more on the element](#)

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The instruments, objects, artefacts and spaces associated with cultural expressions and practices are all included in the Convention's definition of intangible cultural heritage. In the performing arts this includes musical instruments, masks, costumes and other body decorations used in dance, and the scenery and props of theatre. Performing arts are often performed in specific places; when these spaces are closely linked to the performance, they are considered cultural spaces by the Convention.

Many forms of performing arts are under threat today. As cultural practices become standardized, many traditional practices are abandoned. Even in cases where they become more popular, only certain expressions may benefit while others suffer.

Music is perhaps one of the best examples of this, with the recent explosion in the popularity of 'World Music'. Though it performs an important role in cultural exchange and encourages creativity that enriches the international art scene, the phenomenon can also cause problems. Many diverse forms of music may be homogenized with the goal of delivering a consistent product. In these

- What is UNESCO's definition of dance? Why do you think dancers often try to express a mood or emotion through dance?

- What is the definition of intangible cultural heritage that UNESCO gives? How is this definition similar or different from the description of intangible cultural heritage you gave in the first question?

- What are cultural spaces? Are there any cultural spaces that you have been to?

- Why are many forms of performing arts under threat today according to UNESCO? Do you agree or disagree with this idea?

***Fame Jr* Character Descriptions**

Now that you have learned about the history of performing arts, read the following character descriptions to learn more about the characters in *Fame Jr*!



- Nick Piazza: Nick Piazza is focused on learning the craft of "real" acting. Cast a good singer and actor who has maturity and wisdom on his side. He has a secret romantic interest in Serena.
- Serena Katz: Serena Katz loves the life of an artist but is equally as interested in boys, specifically Nick. Serena should have a beautiful voice and a solid handle on her acting skills.
- Joe "José" Vegas: Spanish acting student who is the comic of the show. Comes from a bad home and is dealt the bad hand. Develops a crush on Carmen, but it is later revealed that it's much more than "just a crush." He does not handle his sexual feelings well, either. He is also considered a bad boy and isn't liked by Serena very much. He is the class clown who loves performing on and offstage. Joe has just a few solo lines, so casting an actor who is funny and over the top is more important than finding someone with brilliant singing skills.
- Carmen Diaz: Carmen Diaz is sassy, confident, and determined to make it big. She is obsessed with fame and confident in her abilities. Initially, Carmen has a casual relationship with Tyrone but develops returned romantic feelings for Schlomo. She also has a romantic interest in Joe. She leaves school and moves to L.A. during the middle of 11th grade after an "agent" promises to make her a star. Carmen believes she is ready for stardom, and nothing is going to stop her. This is the role to cast your true triple threat - great actor, great singer and great dancer.



- Tyrone Jackson: A hip hop dancer who is talented but dyslexic and comes from a poor family. Tyrone shares a love-hate relationship with Iris. Tyrone Jackson has talent, but he wants to use it his own way rather than conform to the school's rules. He is constantly switching between his tough-guy persona and a young man trying to woo Iris. Tyrone is a dancer with no vocal solos, so cast an actor who is a great mover that also has solid acting skills.
- Iris Kelly: Iris Kelly pretends she is wealthy and high-class but drops these pretenses once she feels comfortable. She is a talented ballet dancer who is believed to be extremely wealthy although it is later revealed (in the amateur and school edition of the script) that she is not. She appears stuck up but is actually insecure. She shares a love-hate relationship with Tyrone. Iris should be one of your strongest dancers who can also act.
- Mabel Washington: Mabel Washington enjoys performing as much as she hates dieting. Mabel eventually learns to be happy with herself and her body, but not before fully experiencing the pains of being a dancer. When casting Mabel, try not to cast an especially skinny girl; however she does not need to be overweight either. Simply cast a good singer with soul who is comfortable talking about her weight onstage.
- Grace "Lambchops" Lamb: She is a drummer with a lively personality and a rock chick and tomboy who is the drummer for Schlomo's band. Does not take school very seriously. This featured role is great for a young actress who isn't afraid to take a few risks.





- Schlomo Metzenbaum: Schlomo Metzenbaum is a really likable guy who tries to get along with everyone. A quiet, saintly classical violinist (or pianist or flutist, depending on the actor), who sets up the rock band and takes on the role of caretaker to his classmates. Schlomo comes from a musical background, with a father who is a famous violinist. Schlomo is fed up with the strain of being expected to do well and wishes to rebel. Has a romantic interest in Carmen from afar. Constantly competes with Joe to win over Carmen. Does not like Joe very much but they begin to accept each other when Carmen leaves. Cast a solid actor and a good singer. It is a bonus if Schlomo is able to play the piano.
- Goodman "Goody" King: Goodman (Goody) King is the third band member in Schlomo's band; a trumpet/saxophone/guitar musician. Develops a love-hate relationship with Grace. Sarcastic yet sensitive at times. This role is perfect for a young student just learning to be confident onstage.
- Miss Esther Sherman: A strict, old-fashioned and academic English teacher who loves her students, despite the fact that she comes down hard on them. Miss Sherman is a powerful, strong woman who firmly believes academic subjects are the core of a solid education. Cast a mature actress with a strong speaking and singing voice.
- Miss Greta Bell: A dance teacher who likes different styles of dance and is "protective" of the students. Ms. Bell is a passionate teacher who is not afraid to push her students to reach their full artistic potential. Cast a natural leader who is both a great singer and actor.





- Mr. Myers: The drama teacher. Is a "father-figure" to Joe and is encouraging the students. Mr. Myers is perhaps the most relaxed of the teachers, but he still demands full commitment from the students. This non-singing role is a good acting challenge for either a male or female student with good rhythm.
- Mr. Sheinkopf: Mr. Scheinkopf is a German Music tutor who loves classical music but does not like rock and roll. Mr. Sheinkopf adds a bit of comic relief to the show but still doesn't let up when there is work to be done. Mr. Sheinkopf doesn't sing, but he does lead the most difficult section of "Hard Work." Cast an actor, male or female, with a solid sense of rhythm.
- Acting Ensemble: Acting Ensemble are male and female students who are in Mr. Myer's scenes and all ensemble numbers. They should be good singers, actors and movers.
- Music Ensemble: Music Ensemble are kids in all music scenes and ensemble numbers. Cast singers and actors. It would be a plus if a few of them can play a musical instrument, which you could highlight during the show.
- Dance Ensemble: Dance Ensemble kids have the hardest ensemble role in the show, so cast dancers who can sing. They don't have to be perfect ballerinas, but they will need to look comfortable in a dance class at a performing arts school.



Fame Jr Character Questions

Answer the following questions about the characters in *Fame Jr.*

1. Which characters are students at the performing arts high school where *Fame Jr.* takes place and which characters are teachers?
2. Who is Nick? Who is his secret love interest?
3. Who is Carmen Diaz? What kind of actor needs to be cast for the role of Carmen?
4. Who is Schlomo? Who are the three members of Schlomo's band?
5. Which character pretends to be wealthy?
6. The actors in this show are singing, dancing, and acting. List three singing roles and three roles that are non-singing roles.



Musical Theatre Math

1. If a show has 11 lead actors, 22 people in the Dance Ensemble, 17 people in the Acting Ensemble, and 15 people in the Music Ensemble, how many actors are cast in the show?



2. If three people from the Dance Ensemble decide to switch to the Acting Ensemble, how many people will be left in the Dance Ensemble?



3. If three people in the Music Ensemble are out sick, how many total actors would be in the show that night?