



Placer Repertory Theater

Performing arts, cultural & economic enrichment for Placer County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Placer Rep Announces New VAPA Academy of Colfax

Due in no small part to the scholastic vision and creativity of Superintendent Andrew Giannini and the Colfax Elementary School District, Placer Rep is excited to announce the establishment of the Placer Repertory Theater VAPA Academy of Colfax, a pilot program developed for grades K-8.

The VAPA Academy program employs the visual & performing arts as a foundation from which applied arts, language arts, social sciences, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) may be integrated and explored through non-traditional thematic and experiential curriculum & activities outside the regular academic school day to address students' social, emotional, physical, and mental development.

“Huge thanks belong to Superintendent Andrew Giannini and the Colfax Elementary School District for their scholastic creativity and vision. Funny story – I first reached out altruistically to help Andrew find a visual arts educator. As our conversation migrated to Placer Rep’s current education outreach programs to middle & high schools and colleges, it became apparent that there was a tremendous opportunity in Colfax to build something substantial, due primarily to Andrew’s creativity and kind willingness to raise funds and garner support for a K-8 extended learning program,” said Placer Rep Founder Teresa Stirling Forsyth.

Through expert facilitation of thematic and experiential curriculum, VAPA Academy students learn to use their creativity and imagination to conceive, plan, author, collaborate, lead functional groups, direct, design/craft, produce and perform age-appropriate new works relevant to the students, reflective of their individual voices and



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collaborative group voice.

The VAPA Academy program operates in three formats:

- Intersession: All-day programming (usually for one week) during school breaks.
 - April 3 through 7, 2023 from 8 a.m. to 5:30 PM
- Summer Program: All-day programming for four to six weeks outside the regular academic school year.
 - May 29 through June 30, 2023, from 8 a.m. to 5:30 PM
- Extended Education: Daily afternoon programming throughout the academic school year.
 - August 2023 through May 2024 from 2:30 to 6 PM.

Some of the Placer Rep Company Members and Affiliates who selected to participate in the VAPA Academy administration and student education facilitation include Teresa Stirling Forsyth, MFA MS, Founder/Producing Artistic Director for Placer Repertory Theater, expert in new works development and social sciences; Judy Merrick, BFA USC and RADA training program, with 13 years professional theater in NY, LA and UK, who is an expert in improvisation; Kyla Quinn, BA Technical Theater, who worked for Lifetime and Asylum Studios and is a specialist in Performing Arts Technology, and Carey McCray, BFA NYU Tisch, who is a professional regional theater performer and musical theater specialist, along with Matthew D. Heyer, BFA, professional actor, Arie Krastev BS Computer Science, BS Mathematics and early career actor and STEM specialist, Shianne Dingeman, BA in Film/Media Studies, minor in Theater from UC Santa Barbara, our digital media specialist; and Cloud Adams, BA in Theology who has professional film acting credits and is our humanities specialist. Visit Placer Rep's website for more information on the program and biographies of the artist/educators helping to facilitate the Placer Rep VAPA Academy of Colfax: <https://placerrep.org/placer-repertory-theater-vapa-academy/> or contact the Colfax Elementary School District (<https://www.colfax.k12.ca.us/>).

Scholastic entities interested in Placer Rep's Education Outreach programs to colleges, middle & high schools that offer artists-in-residence, visiting educators, productions and masterclasses, or school districts interested in a version of the Placer Repertory Theater VAPA Academy for their scholastic institutions may email Placer Rep: artisticdirector@placerrep.org.

Placer Repertory Theater (www.PlacerRep.org) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with the mission to offer educational and quality-of-life enriching professional performing arts



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and cultural programs relevant to the people of Placer County and surrounding area, while supporting local organizations and acting as an economic engine for the region. Follow Placer Repertory Theater on Facebook (PlacerRep), Twitter and Instagram: @PlacerRep and subscribe to their YouTube Channel (Placer Repertory Theater).

Publishers: FMI: contact Info@placerrep.org



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FACILITATION TEAM

Below are some of the Placer Rep Company Members and Affiliates who participate in the Placer Rep VAPA Academy of Colfax.



**Teresa Stirling
FORSYTH**

TERESA STIRLING FORSYTH – Producing Artistic Director, VAPA Academy program oversight, administration, facilitation. With an MFA in Dramatic Arts and an MS in Business Management & Leadership, this former Silicon Valley high-tech VP and critically acclaimed professional director/playwright also plays the role of Producing Artistic Director for Placer Repertory Theater, which includes all program oversight, including Placer Repertory Theater VAPA Academy.

Previously, the artistic director for two San Francisco theater companies and founder/board president of an economic & workforce development nonprofit organization for Santa Cruz County, her performing arts background includes international tours as an actor/singer/dancer, and director/playwright for national and international touring productions with renowned professional performing artists, such as Brenda Wong Aoki (AEA/SAG/AFTRA), and companies like Dell'Arte Players (AEA). Projects on which Forsyth worked performed at venues such as the Kennedy Center, the Smithsonian, Magic Theatre, Cowell Theater, Mark Taper Forum, Dallas Theatre Center, San Diego Repertory Theater and many other renowned venues, and received Dramalogue Awards, Critics Circle Awards, Indy Award: Best Spoken Word Album, Broadway World Awards, the Gloria Burt Fellowship, as well as numerous grants from the NEA, NEH, CAC, ACPC and corporations.

She is a member of the professional organizations: The Dramatists Guild of America (DGA), Stage Directors & Choreographers Society (SDC), The Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE), Theatre Communications Group (TCG) and NNP/Play Exchange.



Placer Repertory Theater

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**Judy
MERRICK**

JUDY MERRICK – Senior Education Facilitation. Judy worked for 13 years in New York as a performer and director. Her favorite credits include Portia in *Merchant of Venice* (Santa Monica Playhouse) and Lysander in *Midsummer Night's Dream* (RADA). She co-founded the NYC theatre Company, The Amoralist, and some of her credits include *The Cheaters Club*, Adam Rapp's *Ghost in the Cottonwoods* and *Bring Us the Head of Your Daughter*. Judy also worked at Playwrights Horizons, and the Manhattan Theatre Club, and toured with *Knuckleball*, which won best show, and she, best actress, at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

With a BFA from USC, she trained at RADA and AADA in NY. More recently, Judy performed in *Persephone's Tale* with her new Nevada City theater company House of Fates, and in Placer Rep's award-winning production *Persuasion: a holiday romantic comedy*.



**Kyla
QUINN**

KYLA QUINN – Senior Education Facilitation. Kyla Quinn's background spans professional, academic and community performing arts. Kyla received their BA degree in Technical Theatre in 2020 from California State University Long Beach and worked in the art department for both Lifetime and Asylum Studios in southern California. In addition to professional work on set, Kyla worked on several academic productions as both a designer and crew member. Most notably they worked as a makeup designer for a collaboration piece between California State Long Beach and the Long Beach Opera entitled *The Penal Colony*.

As a performer, Kyla starred in two independent films and particularly enjoys playing the roles of antagonists like Mr. Small in Placer Rep's production of *Sherlock Holmes Sign of the Four*, and Miss Henrietta Musgrove in Placer Rep's *Persuasion: a holiday romantic comedy* in 2021. Kyla was named a Placer Rep company member in January 2023, and is engaged in Placer Rep's professional growth program Studium-Practicum learning new theatrical theories, methods and tools, and the philosophies behind them.



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**Carey
MC CRAY**

CAREY MCCRAY – Education Facilitation. Carey McCray is a Placer Rep Affiliate who has been a part of creating and championing musical theatre both on and off the stage as an actor, producer, dramaturge, teaching artist, and director at companies including the National Alliance for Musical Theatre, Collaborative Arts Project 21, The Roundabout Theatre, Theatreworks in Palo Alto, SF Sketch Fest, The New Conservatory Theatre, and as Co-Founder and Executive Director of FOGG Theatre in San Francisco.

She received her BFA from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, and received training at International Theatre Workshop in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Carey began working as a teaching artist 20 years ago as a director and choreographer of children's theatre productions in the Bay Area. Over the years, Carey has worked as a teaching artist for many theatres and schools including Playful People Productions, The New Conservatory Theatre, The French American International School in San Francisco, Clarendon Alternative Elementary School, Children's Musical Theatre in San Jose, FOGG Theatre's Youth Conservatory, and with the Lyric Rose Theatre in Nevada County.



**Matthew
HEYER**

MATTHEW HEYER – Education Facilitation. Graduate of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette where he received his BFA in Theatre, Matthew won the Irene Ryan award for his ensemble work in 2018 and for his performance as Elliot in *Completeness* in 2019. Behind the scenes, Matthew is also a Costume Designer and Fabricator, a Set Designer and Constructor, and a Lighting Designer and Lighting Technician, and dabbles in Stage Management. His design credits include *The House that Will Not Stand*, *Completeness*, and *The Bard on Broadway*.

Matt studied IPA (the International Phonetic Alphabet) and performs duties as a Dialect Coach for Placer Repertory Theater productions. Currently, studying under PRT's Studium Practicum professional growth program, Matt has found new professional areas of concentration such as movement for the actor, vocal techniques, style acting and textual analysis. As an actor, for Placer Rep in 2021, Matthew played



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George and Milo in two one-acts in the production known as *From the Mind of Scott Charles*, and the title role in *An Evening with Sherlock Holmes*. In 2022, Matt performed with Placer Rep in the ensemble show, *Haunting History*, and was nominated for two Broadway World Awards, including his performances for PRT's 2022 monthly show, *Rifts in Time*.



**Shianne
DINGEMAN**

SHIANNE DINGEMAN – Education Facilitation. Shianne earned her B.A. in Film/Media Studies and a minor in Theater with a directing concentration from UC Santa Barbara, where she graduated with honors. During her time at UC Santa Barbara, Shianne directed a number of productions, including “Art/Work” by Russell Leigh Sharman, “South Lake Tahoe” by Brian Otaño, and scenes from Anton Chekhov’s *The Seagull* and Aaron Posner’s *Stupid F*cking Bird*. Currently, she is enrolled in Placer Rep’s Studium-Practicum, a professional growth program, and is the Co-Host of 2023 Collaboration LAB, a work & talent incubation and networking program.



**Arie
KNYAZEV**

ARIE KNYAZEV – Education Facilitation. Arie is an early career actor whose formal education at UC Davis led to the receipt of a BS in Computer Science, BS in Mathematics, and a minor in Psychology. Currently, outside of his acting career, Arie works as a Software Engineer touching signal processing and machine learning in the defense sector. Arie’s actor training includes musical theater training with a private instructor, several years of acting study at Studio 24 and current participation in Placer Rep’s Studium-Practicum, the professional growth program, as well as experiential education through on-the-job performance.

Some of Arie’s favorite roles include William Gillette in *The Game’s Afoot*, Max in *Lend Me a Tenor*, Don Pedro in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and of course his first role: Cogsworth in *Beauty and the Beast*. Arie’s first work for Placer Repertory Theater began in 2022 as a member of the ensemble cast that performed at the *Haunting History* events in Lincoln and Rocklin and performed stage readings of early drafts of the new play *Ghosts of Placer County* in Foresthill, Sacramento and Roseville.



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**Cloud
ADAMS**

CLOUD ADAMS – Education Facilitation. Cloud’s passion for theater and acting has been evident throughout his life. His initial foray into theater and acting began as the lead performer in theatrical works during his primary and secondary education. After 10 years of military service, during which he entertained soldiers when off duty, Cloud left the military and sought a college degree. Upon graduation from Sacramento State University with a B.S. in Judaism Theology, Cloud became quite serious about his acting career.

Cloud’s most recent works include the character George Spelvin in *The Actor’s Nightmare* by Christopher Durang, Apollo Host in *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* by Alan Janes, and as an extra in the film “In Broad Daylight,” and produces digital shorts on YouTube and Switch. Cloud recently was named a 2023 Company Member for Placer Repertory Theater and participates in their Studium-Practicum professional growth program.



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WHAT

Placer Repertory Theater VAPA Academy of Colfax

Extended Learning Opportunities for grades K-8.

DETAILS

The **VAPA Academy** program employs the visual & performing arts as a foundation from which applied arts, language arts, social sciences, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) may be integrated and explored through non-traditional thematic and experiential curriculum & activities outside the regular academic school day to address all four areas of student development: social, emotional, physical, and mental.

WHERE

Colfax Elementary School District
24825 Ben Taylor Rd
Colfax, CA 95713
Phone: (530) 346-2202

WHEN

Intersession: April 3 through 7, 2023 from 8 a.m. to 5:30 PM
Summer Program: May 29 through June 30, 2023, from 8 a.m. to 5:30 PM
Extended Education: August 2023 through May 2024 from 2:30 to 6 PM.

FMI

To register your student:

Colfax Elementary School District, 24825 Ben Taylor Rd, Colfax, CA 95713, Phone:
(530) 346-2202

To explore a Placer Repertory Theater VAPA Academy for your School District:

Email: artisticdirector@placerrep.org

WHO

Colfax Elementary School District and Placer Repertory Theater



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GRAPHIC:



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