



Governors State University

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **New musical about young John Lewis to premiere at The Center for Performing Arts**

(University Park, IL, December 2, 2024) Premiering at [Governors State University's](#) (GovState) [The Center for Performing Arts](#) (The Center) on January 17, 2025, "Hero: The Boy from Troy," a brand-new musical about a young John Lewis, is part of the Center's Arts in Education Series and the first stop of the musical's national tour. The Center is providing developmental support for this new musical production.

The Center's Executive Director Scott Sowinski shares, "Hero: The Boy from Troy is brought to the Center for Performing Arts with hopes that it might act as a catalyst in contemporizing black history and promoting active and current cultural referencing that creates a greater sense of community and contribution to a greater whole."

Book writer and Chicago native Nambi E. Kelley was approached by Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera to pen a touring show for their Heroes program for family audiences. Deeply inspired by Congressman John Lewis, Kelley wanted to write a play for families so they could be inspired by his remarkable upbringing and perseverance.

She embarked on researching his early life to create work that would connect with young audiences at the same age. She invited longtime collaborator Joe Plummer to create original music for the play, and "Hero: The Boy from Troy" was born. This inventive, expansive new musical is directed by Harlem poet Daniel Carlton, who also cites Congressman John Lewis as a personal hero.

"What a joy to get to introduce family audiences to the brilliance that was John Lewis through the lens of a present-day 10-year-old boy," shares Kelley.

Sowinski adds, "Much of our Arts in Education offerings center around topics in Black History that have not advanced in storytelling and expression. While we greatly value Martin Luther King and Harriet Tubman, these stories are not broad in the telling and not always relatable to our younger generations of arts curators and historical learners."

"Hero: The Boy from Troy" explores the evolution of an exceptional young man named Jayden, who is stuck in detention with a book about Congressman John Lewis. But like any kid in trouble, he thinks that history has nothing to teach him. Together we go on a musical journey through the decades that shows how the heroes in the Civil Rights movement inspired young John Lewis to protest injustice and get into 'good trouble.'"

As a boy, John dreams of being a preacher who can help others. While he doesn't have a congregation yet, he does have a loyal group of singing chickens that listen to him as he finds his voice. On a harrowing road trip through the South, John's eyes and mind are opened to the injustices of segregation and racism, inspiring him to take action. As John meets Rosa Parks and Dr. King and ultimately becomes a leader and American hero himself, Jayden learns how he, too, can take a stand and be a hero just as John Lewis was.

This 45-minute play uses original songs spanning hip hop to gospel, is interactive, and a whole lot of fun for children of all ages and their families.

For tickets visit, <https://www.govst.edu/BoyfromTroyAIE/>

#### **Event Details:**

- **HERO: The Boy From Troy**  
Date: Friday, January 17  
Time: 10 a.m. and 12 noon  
Tickets: \$9  
Recommended for grades 3-6 and families

#### **How to Reserve Tickets**

- Online at CenterTickets.net
- Over the phone at 708.235.2222
- In person at the Box Office: 1 University Parkway, University Park, IL 60484

## The Center for Performing Arts 2024-25 Season Continues with...

### January 2025

17

#### [HERO: The Boy from Troy](#)

26

#### [HARANA presented by LÍRIKO: An Evening of Arias, Songs, and Serenades](#)

LÍRIKO is a Chicago-based group of Pinóy (Filipino) Tenors comprised of Ace Gangoso, Rodell Rosel, Geoffrey Agpalo, and Jared Esguerra, featured frequently at Lyric Opera of Chicago.

29

#### [Number the Stars](#) (SOLD-OUT)

In 1943, and when the call went out to round up Denmark's Jewish families, thousands of non-Jewish Danes worked together to smuggle their Jewish friends and neighbors across the water to neutral Sweden, and safety. That true series of events forms the basis of this compelling stage adaptation of *Number the Stars*, Lois Lowry's popular book for middle-school readers.

### February 2025

4

#### [The Cat Kid Comic Club The Musical](#)

Madcap musical presented by TheaterWorks USA, based on Dav Pilkey's irreverently hilarious book series.

8

#### [The Silhouettes® LOVE Happens](#)

The Silhouettes® -- first runner-up on *America's Got Talent* season six in 2011 and Golden Buzzer winners on *America's Got Talent: The Champions* in 2020 -- is America's premiere shadow-dance company. "LOVE Happens" is an entertaining, family-friendly story filled with the types of love that fill our world. Everything from the love of friendship, family, pets, to romantic love, the love of a child, love of music, the painful side of love, love of life -- even the love of chocolate!

15

#### [DRUMLine Live!](#)

This show-stopping attraction created by the musical team behind the hit movies, "Drumline" and "Drumline: A New Beat," embodies the soulful, high-stepping style of the Historically Black College and University (HBCU) marching band experience with riveting rhythms, bold beats, and ear-grabbing energy.

25-26

#### [Tubman: Road to Freedom](#)

Harriet Tubman was born a slave around 1820, but from the time she was a child, she knew that she had to be free. After several

attempts to claim her freedom, she finally succeeded in escaping to the North – and that’s just the beginning of her story.

28

[DREAM presented by The GovState Dance Company](#)

The show's theme explores Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s iconic speech "I Have a Dream," offering a unique perspective on the power of imagination and the reimagined American Dream.

March 2025

1

[DREAM presented by The GovState Dance Company](#)

8

[UPTOWN: A Celebration of Motown and Soul](#)

From New York City, the epicenter of contemporary Pop and Soul, Uptown is a group of men who combine the smooth stylings of R&B with the fresh hits of today. The perfect mix of Bruno Mars caliber stage presence with the vocals of Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye.

12

[MYTHOLOMANIA!](#)

It’s the class report from Hades, as an ensemble of six actors present the greatest hits in Greek mythology - in under one hour!

15

[ARTRAGEOUS! The Electrifying Art & Music Circus](#)

Step into an outrageous adventure of art: the ONLY show where you can witness the fusion of live visual art, rock concert, imaginative movement, vocal performance, comedy, blacklight Bunraku, Artpunk wear, and inclusion in one magical experience. A high-energy, immersive experience that encourages audience participation with music, dance, puppetry, storytelling, and original, speed-painted visual art!

20

[Captain Nemo’s Adventure Academy](#)

Take a deep dive into environmental stewardship and earth science with cantankerous and ever-curious Captain Nemo.

23

[ROSIE AND THE RIVETS](#)

An electrifying female-fronted retrospective tribute to the first ten years (1954-1964) of Rock & Roll. Along with early Rock & Roll favorites, you’ll hear Girl Group, Rockabilly, R&B, Surf, and British Invasion featuring Rosie’s powerful and versatile voice.

April 2025

1

[One Man’s Trash: A Repurposed Circus](#)

With the limitless spirit and can-do attitude of the circus, CIRQUE US' inventive production reclaims and reanimates all that's left in trash cans and littered in the garage to create a junkyard adventure like none other.

3-6

[DOG SEES GOD presented by GovState Theatre and Performance Studies \(TAPS\)](#)

An "unauthorized continuation," this play reimagines characters from the popular comic strip *Peanuts* as degenerate teenagers.

22

Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra presents:

[ALL-STAR WARS YOUTH CONCERT](#)

Join us for an unforgettable journey to a galaxy far, far away with our special "All-Star Wars" concert. This performance features the combined talents of 30 local all-star student musicians and 35 professional IPO musicians, performing the iconic Star Wars Suite by John Williams.

23

[Ada Twist, Scientist and Friends](#)

A fun musical based on the books *Rosie Revere, Engineer*; *Iggy Peck, Architect*; and *Ada Twist Scientist* by Andrea Beaty, which spotlights the STEM curriculum (focusing on science, technology, engineering, and math).

**May 2025**

25

[Opera Up Close presents MIMOSAS AND MELODIES:  
A Mother's Day Brunch](#)

Join Opera Up Close favorites John Concepcion, Mike Cavalieri, and their friends for this vocal tribute to Mothers. Spanning Broadway to Classical and Opera, celebrate Mother's Day with this mimosa-fueled, musical extravaganza!

**Box Office Hours**

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Thursdays, 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Open two hours prior to show times

Discounts are also available for seniors 65+, groups of 10+, GovState faculty and staff, and patrons purchasing tickets to three or more shows. To purchase tickets, call (708) 235-2222, visit [www.CenterTickets.net](http://www.CenterTickets.net), or visit the box office.

**Flex Passes**

There's still plenty of time to bundle with a Flex Pass! Flex buyers (patrons who purchase three or more shows) save 15% off tickets, receive priority seating, and enjoy flexible exchange or bank-a-credit privileges.

### **Know Before You Go**

Parking is free. For best GPS directions, use the location search term "Governors State University."

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