



Conservatory 2019-20
Student/Parent Handbook

Hello CTC Conservatory families!

Please read through this handbook entirely with your student. If you have any questions after going through the information, please do not hesitate to call or email us!

Class Descriptions

Conservatory classes offer a more rigorous track of study for students looking for advanced training in our School of Theatre Training (SOTT). They are conducted by a small group of master teaching artists, which allows for an in depth, yet flexible curriculum that meets the individualized needs of each student. Placements are by audition only. Conservatory classes we currently offer:

1) New Works (6th – 12th grade)

Students collaborate in the writing of a new play or musical with a director and playwright. Then the students rehearse and perform the touring production throughout the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community.

2) Young Company (6th – 8th grade)

Students train in a conservatory-style setting, rotating between acting and musical theatre focuses. This collaborative method emphasizes training of the whole actor. Topics covered during the year include Shakespeare, Michael Chekhov technique and choral vocal training. These specialized topics will also bring awareness to the student's individual areas of needed growth. There is an expectation of additional work outside of class, including script reading and extensive memorization.

3) Jr. Acting / Musical Theatre Company (7th – 10th grade)

Offers two separate tracks: Jr. Acting Company and Jr. Musical Theatre Company. Both companies focus on integrating the skills necessary for performance (beats, objectives, tactics, etc.). Acting track emphasizes strengthening the mind-body connection, cultivating observable physical choices in the student's work, and Musical Theatre track emphasizes cultivating breathwork to make a strong emotional connection to the song and support the "story of the song." There is an expectation of additional work outside of class, including script reading and extensive memorization. Students should arrive warmed-up and ready to begin work.

4) Acting Company / Musical Theatre Company (9th – 12th grade)

Company offers two separate tracks: Acting Company and Musical Theatre Company. Students work in a masterclass setting performing and receiving feedback on materials prepared/memorized outside of class. Acting track provides specializations including deeper exploration of psychological gesture (Chekhov), and Musical Theatre track provides specializations including advanced vocal training and breathwork. There is an expectation of additional work outside of class, including script reading and extensive memorization. Students should arrive warmed-up and ready to begin work.

Master Class Model in the Curriculum

Some of our classes, such as Jr. Acting / Musical Theatre Company and Acting / Musical Theatre Company embrace the master class model to allow a deeper dive into course materials. In this setting, a highly proficient artist/teacher works with one student and/or a small group in front of an audience. The intention is to provide a learning opportunity for performers as well as observers. In this flexible model, a student may be a performer one week and then an observer the next week. To prepare for performing in a master class setting, we recommend the following:

- Rehearse the material and know it thoroughly.
- Be prepared to stop and start at the whim of the teaching artist.
- Be prepared to accept criticism in front of an audience and to respond in an open and engaging way.
- Take time outside of class to integrate what you've learned.

General Expectations and Policies

1) Attendance / Tardy Policy

Students must commit to attending all scheduled classes during the twenty weeks. Students are expected to arrive for class on time and ready to begin work. It is recommended to arrive 15 minutes before the start time to give yourself an opportunity to change clothes or warm-up before class begins.

Any absence due to illness must be communicated by noon on the day of class, and when applicable, accompanied by a doctor's note. **Because of the rigor of the course work with Conservatory classes, more than two absences will require students to be withdrawn from the program for the current session.**

Special consideration may be given for an absence due to a technical rehearsal, school requirement or other extenuating circumstances like a family emergency. Each will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Application for an anticipated absence must be submitted no later than two weeks prior to the class the student will be absent. Additional work may be assigned by the teaching artist.

Additionally, late arrivals are not allowed in the program. Below is the progressive discipline process for being tardy.

- 1st late arrival: verbal warning
- 2nd late arrival: written warning
- 3rd late arrival: removal from early registration for OnStage
- 4th late arrival or more: counts as one absence, with continued lateness a student may be withdrawn from the program for the current session

2) Classroom behavior

At CTC we strive to create an active and safe space for all students to explore the theatre arts. In Conservatory classes this is even more critical. The student's group and its development in the program is the core of their training. When you work on building an ensemble you are also working on building the individual. Students involved in the process will learn to work with others, gain experience with interpersonal communication skills and problem solving, practice active listening and empathy, take risks, and grow in self-confidence. Other encouraged behaviors include:

- Respect for your peers and the teaching artist is maintained at all times. This includes active listening when others are performing rehearsed materials.
- Create a safe space where you and others can take risks and "feel free to fail."
- Refrain from talking negatively about your peers during or outside of class.
- Arrive at class each week prepared and with all needed materials, including any memorized text.

3) Materials needed for class

Dress code for each class:

- Wear clothes you can move in comfortably or would wear to play a sport. No jeans, dresses, bulky clothes or anything that would limit full, physical engagement.
- Wear under garments that offer proper support and protection for full, physical engagement.
- Be mindful of personal hygiene. Keeping yourself clean is courteous to your classmates and teaching artists. Bringing deodorant/body spray, a sweat towel and an extra t-shirt is encouraged.
- Wear dance or sport shoes (no cleats). No sandals, flip-flops, Crocs or Ugg-type boots.

- Hair should be out of your face.
- No bulky jewelry.
- No chewing gum.

Items to bring for each class:

- A designated notebook for all Conservatory students. **This will not be a private journal.** Teaching artists will periodically read the entries and provide feedback. A composition notebook is ideal.
- Any assigned materials including scripts, handouts or other texts.
- Pencils for taking notes and marking in your scripts.
- A recording device to record musical pieces. If your cellphone can record sound, that will work!
- Water bottle to avoid leaving the room.

**** If purchasing any of the items listed above creates financial hardship for your family, please contact Adam Montague, Early Childhood and SOTT Manager, at adamm@ctcharlotte.org as soon as possible and we will work out a solution. ****

4) Work expected outside of class

Because of the rigor of the course work with Conservatory classes, additional work outside of class is expected and required of all students. Specific assignments and exercises will be made clear by each teaching artist. Some assignments may include:

- Additional reading of plays or other texts, which may include additional research on the part of the student for context.
- Memorization and/or rehearsal of assigned materials.
- Writing in a journal, which may include assigned questions from the teaching artist and serve as an ongoing assessment of the student.
- Physical preparation or conditioning, which may include exercises assigned by the teaching artist.
- Attending productions at CTC or other performing arts venues.
- Any additional outside enrichment taken by the student to continue being “a reflective artist.”

Dance / Movement Requirement

Conservatory students are required to either take dance classes provided by CTC’s supplemental training or provide a record for an outside equivalent class. Dance technique and movement training is an essential part of an actor’s development, and because of that our Education Department requires students to pursue additional instruction, cultivating a mastery of technique and skill in dance or movement.

In addition to dance and movement classes offered by CTC, an outside equivalent may be substituted. Classes must meet for a minimum of one hour once a week for ten-weeks, in both fall and winter sessions. All substitutions must be approved by the Education Department and the teaching artist. Below is a list of training programs that may be considered for the Conservatory track requirement.

- Dance class at a public or private school
- Professional dance studios
- Martial arts, yoga, Pilates, aerial silk/fly classes
- Casting and rehearsal in CTC mainstage musical

The student must maintain a weekly log of training that specifies date and time class, with the outside instructor or choreographer initialing each entry. Contact information for the outside instructor or choreographer must be provided, including best email to contact them. The student log must be submitted to their teaching artist every ten-weeks by an agreed upon deadline. Teaching artists may seek additional clarification with the outside instructor or choreographer to satisfy the requirement. (Template for weekly log provided at the end of the handbook.)

For each ten-weeks, all Conservatory students must write a brief paragraph assessing current dance or movement ability and listing goals for the class at the beginning of the session. At the end of the session, Conservatory students must write a brief paragraph assessing their growth in the class. Depending on the discretion of the teaching artist, these written paragraphs may be considered work towards their weekly journals.

Because of the dance technique or movement training requirement, absentee policy for these classes will be the same as for all Conservatory tracks. If absences are excessive, students may be withdrawn from the program for the current season. If a student is found misrepresenting their attendance on the weekly log, they will immediately be asked to leave the program.

Assessments

To provide Conservatory students with more effective feedback, there are two assessments offered by teaching artist throughout the year, as well as ongoing self-directed student assessments. Self-directed assessments may be a part of the weekly journal. Each assessment gives feedback on specific acting, vocal and movement skills.

The assessments may either be in our rubric format similar to SOTT open enrollment or may be in a brief written paragraph format. Depending on the class, multiple teaching artists may be contributing to each assessment. Depending on the teaching artist, there may also be a scheduled time to meet privately with the student to discuss progress in the class.

Additional Opportunities

1) Private Voice Lessons

CTC offers private voice lessons for \$250 per session. Each session consists of five half-hour lessons with one of our vocal performance professionals. Lessons are taught one-on-one with care for the developing voice. Students focus on resonance, breath control, intonation, and development of their higher and lower registers. Additionally, tips for good vocal health are covered to prevent damage to the vocal chords. Sessions for 2019-20 are on Saturdays from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m.

- 1st session – Oct. 5 to Nov. 2
- 2nd session – Nov. 9 to Dec. 14
- 3rd session – Jan. 11 to Feb. 8
- 4th session – Feb. 15 to March 14

2) Mainstage

Students currently enrolled in Conservatory classes have the opportunity for a “first-look” audition for our 2019-20 professional mainstage season. Auditions occur in the spring for the following season’s shows.

3) OnStage

OnStage is an opportunity for Conservatory students to apply their skills in a professional theatre experience. During the spring, this intensive five-week program challenges 150 students to produce four shows during one weekend. Conservatory students are offered early registration into this program before it is offered to our Open Enrollment students in SOTT. OnStage shows for 2020 are:

The Sound of Music... Getting to Know You Ed.
Curtains Young@Part Ed.

Wilde Tales
Antigone

4) NCTC College Discovery Day

The North Carolina Theatre Conference (NCTC) will host College Discovery Day on November 23, 2019 at Greensboro College. Meet theatre faculty and current majors from around the state to get the “inside scoop” on programs. Audition opportunities and workshops are also available for students and parents.

Attending the event is not a class requirement but is highly encouraged for students in 10th – 12th grade. To learn more and register online, see the link below:

<http://www.nctc.org/college-discovery-day-3/info-for-hs-students/essential-info/>