



**WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY**  
Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities

— DEPARTMENT OF —  
**PERFORMING  
ARTS**

DANCE | MUSIC | THEATRE

**Weber State University's Department of Performing Arts' Theatre Department presents  
a Workshop Production of  
the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' Commissioned Play *Mockingbird***

*Theatre Professor, Tracy Callahan selected to direct, Mockingbird, a play focused on the daily struggles and successes of a young girl with Asperger's syndrome*

Ogden, Utah - Aug. 28, 2013 – [The Weber State University Department of Performing Arts](#) (WSUDPA) today announced a workshop production of *Mockingbird*, a play by Utah playwright, Julie Jensen, will be directed by Theatre Professor, Tracy Callahan. The Weber State University Theatre Department will present a workshop of the [Kennedy Center](#)'s newly commissioned play from March 28 to April 5, 2014, which the Kennedy Center will then further develop for a future season, with Callahan set to direct. *Mockingbird* is part of the 2013-2014 Theatre season at Weber State University.

“For the first time in my career, my involvement as director of, *Mockingbird*, combines both my personal and professional life,” said Tracy Callahan, Professor of Theatre at Weber State University. “Just as the family of the main character encounters unique challenges in creating a safe and accepting environment for someone with Asperger's Syndrome; I too, have dealt with these issues as it relates to my son. This production is an outgrowth of a deep passion I have to direct a play that not only educates the audience but causes them to think about the, *what if's* in their own family,” said Callahan.

The theatre production of *Mockingbird* is based on an award-winning novel, *Mockingbird*, by Kathryn Erskine. The book depicts the story of Caitlin, a young girl with Asperger's Syndrome, an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Caitlin encounters a world that for her is very chaotic and threatening. Her resulting anxiety makes it difficult for her to understand others or to be understood. In addition, the young girl must chart a new course after the untimely death of her brother, Devon, whom she had always relied on for help in navigating the world. Now Caitlin must look to herself. In that process she comes to learn that the world holds surprises and rewards she didn't know were there.

Additionally, in late August 2013, Callahan will conduct a workshop of the play at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. and will work directly with professional actors, the playwright, and expert researchers on Autism. A free, staged reading of the play will be presented in the Kennedy Center Family Theater on Saturday, August 31 at 4 p.m. as part of the Kennedy Center's *Page-to-Stage* new play festival.

*Mockingbird* marks Callahan's third time to be invited to the Kennedy Center. In 2000, she brought *The Serpent* to the National Festival of the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. This was followed in 2007, with her directing a production of *Macbeth* for The New Shakespeare Project Initiative as part of the Kennedy Center's Shakespeare in Washington

“Live theatre provides a unique opportunity to explore and discuss difficult and important situations in our lives,” said Julie Jensen, playwright of *Mockingbird*. “I look forward to working with Professor Callahan and the students at Weber State University on this piece. Utah has the highest incidence of Autism in the country. We have an audience here that needs access to this kind of play.”

Tickets are already on sale for *Mockingbird* which opens on Fri., March 28, 2014 and runs through April 5, 2014. Tickets can be purchased at [www.weberstatickets.com](http://www.weberstatickets.com) or by phone at 801-626-7000.

For more information and updated details on events surrounding the performances please visit: [www.weber.edu/performingarts](http://www.weber.edu/performingarts).

### **About Weber State University’s Department of Performing Arts**

The Weber State University Department of Performing Arts is located in the Lindquist College of Arts and Humanities at Weber State University. The Department of Performing Arts combines world-class instruction with opportunities for students to excel in live theater, music and dance performances. For more information on the Weber State University Department of Performing Arts, please call 801-626-6437 or visit the at ([www.weber.edu/performingarts](http://www.weber.edu/performingarts)).

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