

## CONTENT NOTES and CASTING BREAKDOWNS SPRING 2023 Season

Auditions for the shows in USC's spring 2023 season will be held on Saturday, January 14; with callbacks on Sunday, January 15. Actors will be able to audition for the following productions:

- 10-Minute Play Festival
- *The Light*
- *Spring Awakening*

Content and casting information for each show is included below. Bring any questions to auditions/callbacks, or email intimacy director Marybeth Gorman Craig at [gormanm@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:gormanm@mailbox.sc.edu). Hard copies of scripts will be available for perusal in BTW lobby.

### ***10-Minute Play Festival***

Performances: February 23-26, 2023

The "festival" will consist of the following plays:

- **COQ AU VIN** by Jon Robin Baitz
- **THE BEAR** by Anton Chekhov
- **THREE GUYS AND A BRENDA** by Adam Bock
- **MEMORY SOUNDS** by JJ Steinfeld
- **GERSHWIN'S LAST RIDE** by Ryan Stevens

Specific information and content notes for each play are provided below. Note: theatrical intimacy will be choreographed in collaboration with an Intimacy Director.

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**COQ AU VIN** by Jon Robin Baitz

Directed by Marybeth Gorman Craig

**Synopsis:** from <https://www.playscripts.com/play/1747>

"Michael and Terry have been out of work so long that the only gig they can get is playing chickens at the local county fair. When they discover something sinister about the job, they face their dread by remembering their love of performing and being with each other. A darkly satiric look at the sacrifices two men\* must make to do what they love."

**Content Notes:** Characters use profanity; portrays characters persecuted because they are gay.

**Casting:** 3 actors, any race, not gender specific; however, Michael and Terry will be cast to portray a non-heteronormative relationship.

Chicken One (Michael): Actor forced to play a chicken; vocally frustrated with the situation; in love with Terry. Uses almost continuous stream of profanity.

Chicken Two (Terry): Actor forced to play a chicken; scared of an unknown threat; in love with Michael.

"Man": Explains chickens to audience, slits Terry's throat.

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**THE BEAR** by Anton Chekhov  
Directed by Dustin Whitehead

**Synopsis:** from <https://stageagent.com/shows/play/11841/the-bear>

“Melancholy widow Elena Ivanovna Popova walls herself up in her home, refusing heed her footman Luka’s advice to rejoin the living as she mourns her much beloved, yet faithless, husband. When Grigory Stepanovitch Smirnov arrives to collect on a debt from her late husband, desperate with urgency to make his own mortgage payment on time, she tries to put him off, pleading a lack of cash and a lack of inclination to deal with money matters on the seven-month anniversary of her loss. Smirnov, full of rage at debt dodgers in general and silly, sentimental female delicacy in particular, refuses to leave, and a battle of wills and battle of the sexes ensues. Will it end with a duel, a heart attack, or a wedding? Two fierce, passionate, ridiculous individuals come to know themselves, and each other, in the course of an afternoon and an argument.”

**Content Notes:** Gender-related argument. Guns on stage. Short kiss between Elena and Grigory.

**Casting:** 3 actors, any race: 1F, 1M, 1 not gender specific

Elena Ivanovna Popova: (Female) a landowning widow with dimples in her cheeks

Grigory Stepanovitch Smirnov: (Male) a middle-aged landowner

Luka: (Not gender specific) Elena's aged footman caring, loyal, obedient, and not so intelligent

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**THREE GUYS AND A BRENDA** by Adam Bock  
Directed by Erica Tobolski

**Synopsis:** from <https://www.playscripts.com/play/1030>

“Three guys sit around while one tries to screw up the courage to talk to a female co-worker. He does, and more. It may be hard being a guy, but these three manage to find a bit of bliss.”

**Content Notes:** some adult language; cross-gender casting; a kiss between 2 characters

**Casting:** 4 F, any race

Bob: a man, played by a woman; 20s-50s; factory worker; emotionally sensitive; not as verbal as Joe or Randall.

Joe: a man, played by a woman; 20s-50s; factory worker; emotionally sensitive; aware of the difficulty of gender roles.

Randall: a man, played by a woman; 20s-30s; factory worker; willing to express his attraction to Brenda and initiates a kiss between them.

Brenda: a woman, played by a woman; 20s-30s; a co-worker with the three guys but not on the factory floor; no-nonsense but not unfriendly; accepts a kiss from Randall.

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**MEMORY SOUNDS** by JJ Steinfeld

Directed by David Britt

**Synopsis:** Two gentlemen from different backgrounds and generations meet and learn about the history of the tragedy of the holocaust.

**Content Notes:** Characters discuss the atrocities of the holocaust.

**Casting:** 2 men

Joel: College student

Elderly man: An older man played by a student. Opportunity for character work and use of aging makeup.

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**GERSHWIN'S LAST RIDE** by Ryan Stevens

Directed by Patrick Michael Kelly

**Synopsis:** from <https://newplayexchange.org/plays/296493/gershwins-last-ride>

“Gershwin, a prize-winning bull, goes one-on-one with the hottest pro bull rider today, AJ Hawkins. Gershwin's renowned for his fury, already has a body count, and given the right amount of stress he just might snap again. In ten minutes (and eight seconds), these two champions clash and leave forever changed.”

**Content Notes:** Characters use profanity; violence; death; dancing.

**Casting:** 3 actors, any race: 2 male-identifying, 1 female-identifying, but casting could be non-gender specific.

Tucky: Rodeo clown. Great with kids, motor mouth.

Gershwin: Brangus Bull. 1,842 pounds. Never been ridden for the full 8 seconds, and damn proud of it.

AJ Hawkins: The Next Big Thing in professional bull riding.

## ***THE LIGHT***

By Loy A. Webb

Directed by Ibi Owolabi

Performances: March 16-19, 2023

**Synopsis:** from <https://www.concordtheatricals.com/p/66267/the-light>

“Not every marriage proposal goes as planned. Loy A. Webb’s *The Light* introduces Rashad and Genesis on what should be one of the happiest days of their lives, but their joy quickly unravels when ground-shifting accusations from the past resurface in this gripping two-character drama. Can their relationship survive the growing divide between them over who – and what – to believe? *The Light* is a reckoning that unfolds in real time and peels away the layers of truth, doubt, pain and, ultimately, the power of love.”

**Content notes:** Portrays characters in intimate relationship, involves choreographed physical intimacy (including kissing). Characters discuss experiences with sexual assault.

**Casting:** 2 actors, African-American; 1 M, 1 F

(in quotes below are the descriptions from Samuel French script):

Genesis: “African-American woman, natural hair, mid-to-late thirties.” Strong convictions and moral integrity. History with sexual assault.

Rashad: “African-American man, mid-to-late thirties.” Head-over-heels in love with Genesis. Struggles to understand her POV.

## ***SPRING AWAKENING***

Book and Lyrics by Steven Sater

Music by Duncan Sheik

Based on the play by Frank Wedekind

Directed by Travis Greisler; Music Direction by Eric Shorey

Performances April 7-14, 2023 (no performance on Easter Sunday, Monday)

**Synopsis:** edited from <https://www.mtishows.com/spring-awakening>

*Spring Awakening* explores the journey from adolescence to adulthood with a poignancy and passion that is illuminating and unforgettable. Set in Germany in 1891, in a world where the grown-ups hold all the cards. Wendla explores the mysteries of her body and wonders aloud where babies come from... until Mama tells her to shut it and put on a proper dress. Elsewhere, the brilliant and fearless young Melchior interrupts a mind-numbing Latin drill to defend his buddy, Moritz – a boy so traumatized by puberty that he can't concentrate on anything... not that the Headmaster cares. He strikes them both and tells them to turn in their lesson. One afternoon, in a private place in the woods, Melchior and Wendla meet by accident and soon find within themselves a desire unlike anything they've ever felt. As they fumble their way into one another's arms, Moritz flounders and soon fails out of school. When even his one adult friend, Melchior's mother, ignores his plea for help, he is left so distraught that he can't hear the promise of life offered by his outcast friend, Ilse. Naturally, the Headmasters waste no time in pinning the "crime" of Moritz's suicide on Melchior to expel him. And soon, Mama learns that her little Wendla is pregnant. Now the young lovers must struggle against all odds to build a world together for their child."

**Content Notes:** *Spring Awakening* contains material pertaining to sexual discovery, homosexuality, physical violence, sexual assault, sexual and physical domestic abuse, molestation, suicide, and abortion. \*Note: Physical intimacy in this production will be choreographed within actors' boundaries in collaboration with an Intimacy Director. (Study/parental guide regarding the themes in the show: [www.gradesaver.com/spring-awakening/study-guide/themes](http://www.gradesaver.com/spring-awakening/study-guide/themes))

**Casting:** 15-17 actors, any race. Actors of all gender identities will be considered. Note the gender identities of the characters in the breakdowns below, and consider this information when filling out your audition form.

Wendla: Character Gender: Female Character age: 15/17  
Innocent. With every passing day, she grows more curious about the world around her and her changing body. Both vulnerable and a willing participant in her evolution. Explores her newly-found sexuality with Melchior. Vocal range: E5 – E3  
This role involves choreographed physical intimacy, and portrays a character dealing with the following subjects: BDSM, dubious/non-consensual sex, abortion, death.

Melchior: Character Gender: Male Character age: 15/17  
A smart, headstrong boy who refuses to bow down to society's rules. An atheist and radical student. Struggles with his intense feelings for Wendla and his awakening sexual urges.

Vocal range: B4 – G2.

This role involves choreographed physical intimacy, and portrays a character dealing with the following subjects: BDSM, dubious/non-consensual sex, abortion.

Martha: Character Gender: Female Character Age: 15/17

A schoolgirl who faces constant physical abuse from her father. She harbors a secret crush towards Moritz. Vocal range: E5 – E3

This role portrays a character dealing with the following subjects: sexual abuse, physical abuse, incest.

Moritz: Character Gender: Male Character age: 15/17

Melchior's best friend, a troubled student. He desperately tries to please his father, but always seems to disappoint him. His haunting sexual dreams and academic failures eventually drive him to suicidal thoughts. Vocal range: A4 – C3

This role involves choreographed physical intimacy, and portrays a character dealing with the following subjects: suicide, masturbation.

Thea: Character Gender: Female Character age: 15/17

Wendla's best friend. A schoolgirl who tries to stay innocent and pure. Vocal range: E5 – E3

Hanschen: Character Gender: Male Character age: 15/17

Narcissistic schoolmate of Melchior's. He is comfortable with his own sexuality and uses his looks and intelligence to captivate and seduce Ernst. Doubles as RUPERT. Vocal range: D5 – Ab2

This role involves choreographed physical intimacy and addresses the following subjects: same-sex kiss, masturbation, physical violence.

Anna: Character Gender: Female Character age: 15/17

A German schoolgirl and Martha's best friend. Optimistic and a bit naive, she has a difficult time understanding Martha's trials. Vocal range: C5 – E3

Ernst: Character Gender: Male Character age: 15/17

A schoolmate of Melchior's. Naive and easily manipulated. Falls in love with Hanschen. Doubles as REINHOLD. Vocal range: A4 – Ab2

This role involves choreographed physical intimacy and addresses the following subjects: same-sex kiss, masturbation, physical violence.

Ilse: Character Gender: Female Character age: 16/18

Martha's sister, who was also abused and has run away from home to live in an artists' colony. She reaches out to her old friend Moritz in the last moments of his life. Vocal range: E5 – E3

This role portrays a character dealing with the following subjects: sexual abuse, physical abuse, incest.

Georg:

Character Gender: Male

Character age: 15/17

A clumsy schoolmate of Melchior's. He is overcome with his feelings for his piano teacher. Doubles as DIETER. Vocal range: D5 – Ab2

This role involves choreographed physical intimacy and addresses the following subjects: masturbation, physical violence.

Otto:

Character Gender: Male

Character age: 15/17

A classmate of Melchior's. He struggles with feelings he considers inappropriate. Doubles as ULBRECHT. Vocal range: D5 – Ab2

This role involves choreographed physical intimacy and addresses the following subjects: masturbation, physical violence.

Adult Woman:

Character Gender: Female

Character ages: 40-50

*(Possibly cast with non-student actor)*

Plays a variety of adult roles. Characters include FRAU BERGMAN, Wendla's mother; FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK; FRAULEIN GROSSEBUSTENHALTER; FRAU GABOR, Melchior's mother; and FRAU BESSELL, Martha's mother. Vocal range: A4 – D3

This role involves choreographed physical intimacy and addresses the following subjects: physical/sexual violence, abortion, suicide.

Adult Man:

Character Gender: Female

Character ages: 40-50

*(Possibly cast with non-student actor)*

Plays a variety of rigid adult roles. Characters include HERR SONNENSTITCH, the boys' teacher; HEADMASTER KNOCHENBRUCH; HERR NEUMANN, Ilse's father; HERR RILOW, Hanschen's father; HERR STEIFEL, Moritz's father; FATHER KAULBACH; DOCTOR VON BRAUSEPULVER; HERR GABOR, Melchior's father; and SCHMIDT. Vocal range: F4 – D3

This role involves choreographed physical intimacy and addresses the following subjects: physical/sexual violence, abortion, suicide.