

Devised theatre unleashes new play

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STAFF WRITER

To kick off the second half of the 2024/2025 theatre season, an Arkansas State University original play pulls into the station. "Imagination Unleashed: Stuck on the Train to Nowhere" premieres in the Simpson Theatre this week.

This is the second to last show of the school year, with this "devised play" bringing audiences back to the theatre before Roger and Hammerstein's "Cinderella" arrives at the end of April on the Drama Theatre stage.

Devised theatre is a collaborative process of creating a performance without a pre-existing script. This means the script, costumes, lighting, sound and set design were nonexistent until the students of the devised theatre class started work on it.

The devised theatre class took place during the Fall of 2024 and was led by DayDay Robinson, assistant professor of theatre.

"We didn't start with a script, we started with what we call a hunch," Robinson said. "Our hunch in class was this idea of being stuck and how to get unstuck,

whether its relationships, grief, loss or identity."

The theatre page describes the class' goal as a student collaboration, creating a piece of theatre that is inspired by personal experiences and societal themes. Additionally, the class explores various elements of theatre, refining their ideas and creating a cohesive narrative.

The cast were intimately involved in the creation of both the characters and the story.

Donovan Walters, who is playing the role of Jordan, said that this hands-on aspect of the production was incredible.

"It feels like I've added to a piece of this and that feels amazing," Walters said.

The finished product was named "Stuck on the Train to Nowhere" and asks both the audience and characters a specific set of questions.

The promotion caption for the show describes the plot as a surreal psychological drama, infusing comedy with magical realism. The production includes plenty of plaguing questions regarding a person's ability to move forward and reflect on their past, particularly on the events which hold us back from progress.

The play takes place



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF ASTATE.EDU

on a mysterious train that never stops with a group of passengers who find themselves stuck and unable to leave. They can't remember how they got there or where they're going. The passengers are pulled into memories of their pasts and forced to confront their decisions by the mysterious train conductor.

Jace Hahn, playing the role of the conductor, said the role of the conductor is an intriguing part to play.

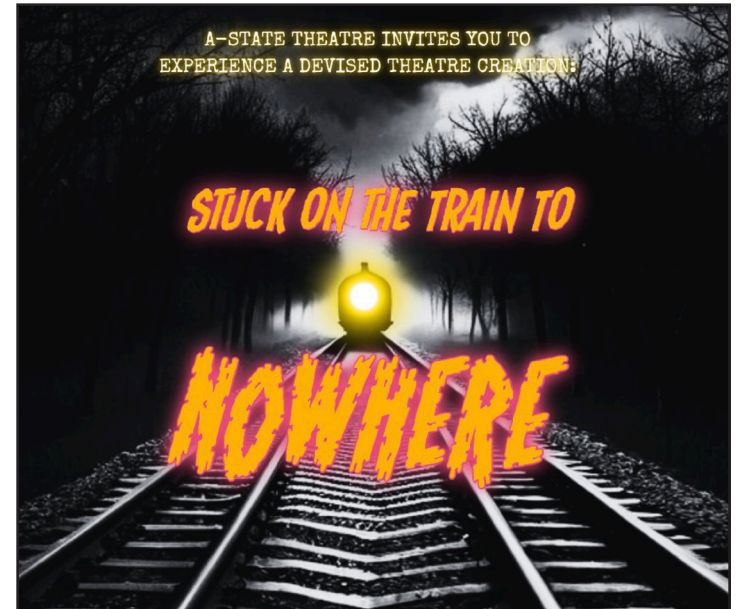
"I'm like their guide," Hahn said. "They're all stuck, both literally and metaphorically

and I'm trying to help them conquer whatever it is that's keeping them stuck."

The conductor will guide the characters through their memories, allowing them to learn more about the others characters on board as well as themselves.

Judith Bossi, the production's costume designer said that this particular play was fun but challenging.

"To understand the characters and how they would defined themselves through clothing has been hard because some of these



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF ASTATETHEATRE INSTAGRAM

characters haven't been around for very long, so it was a lot of me just figuring it out for the first time ever," Bossi said.

Deanne Flax, portraying the role of Martha, said this production was unique and entirely original to be apart of.

"I was able to see the characters grow from the ground up instead of some pre-established thing to go out and research," Flax said. "I was able to 'research' and write for the character at the same time."

Content warnings for the show include some mature themes like strong language, depictions of emotional and

physical abuse, references to substance abuse, grief and loss.

Opening night is on Valentine's Day and the last show closes on Feb. 23. Friday and Saturday's performances begin at 7:30 p.m., while Sunday's performances are matinees and begin at 2:30 p.m.

Arkansas State students are able to get in for free by showing their student ID upon arrival or by going to the box office at First National Bank arena from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on weekdays.

Elijah Templeton | Life Editor contributed to this report.

"The Breakfast Club" turns 40

ELIJAH TEMPLETON

LIFE EDITOR

Saturday, "The Breakfast Club" will celebrate its 40th birthday.

While the opening credits label this "A John Hughes Film," I personally regard it as "The" John Hughes Film.

Hughes, who both wrote and directed, is widely-known for his many comedies of the '80s and '90s, including classics like "Home Alone" and "Ferris Bueller's Day Off," but "The Breakfast Club" is his magnum opus.

A defining film of the 1980s and for my money, the defining teen movie of a generation.

Set entirely at Shermer High School, the plot follows five teens who all embody a different stereotypical role in the high school social structure as they are forced to interact with one another during a Saturday detention.

There's the wrestling team jock (Emilio Estevez), the insecure 'basketcase' (Ally Sheedy), the nerd (Anthony Michael Hall), the prom queen (Molly Ringwald) and the brash, obnoxious tough guy (the fabulous Judd Nelson).

This particular detention is special however, because it lasts all day, plenty of time for our characters to get to know each other a little better.

The kids start off disinterested, at times even hostile, with each other as they all play up their 'roles' that they have settled into within the halls of Shermer.

The gang are united against the tyrannical Mr. Vernon, played by Paul Gleason, who embodies every adult who does not quite understand our heroes and cannot be bothered to try.

Mr. Vernon is almost comically horrible, entirely one note as a character but it is what he represents that serves this movie so well.

The cast are terrified of losing their identities, however stereotypical they may be, because they believe that growing up is a trap and in doing so, they will lose any sense of individuality and become just like their parents.

They are simultaneously restricted and comforted by the cliques they reside within, but this detention acts as a sort of limbo for the group, they are literally at school but not bound by the rigid social structure that rules it.

As the kids slowly open up to one another, their walls come down and the masks of the characters they play begin to slip.

A particular favorite example of this is seen with Nelson's character John Bender.

Upon arrival, Bender has on a scarf, a trench coat, a denim jacket, a flannel button up, a long-sleeve white tee, fingerless gloves, denim pants and heavy boots.

As the film goes on and Bender opens up, layers of clothing are removed. His walls that he has built up to protect himself are lowered and he finds genuine

connection for seemingly the first time in his life.

Nelson is unquestionably the heart of this movie, with Bender's aggression and action being the catalyst for any and all plot progression.

The performances are wonderful from the entire cast, with Ally Sheedy portraying her introverted 'basketcase' to perfection, both confusing and charming the audience throughout.

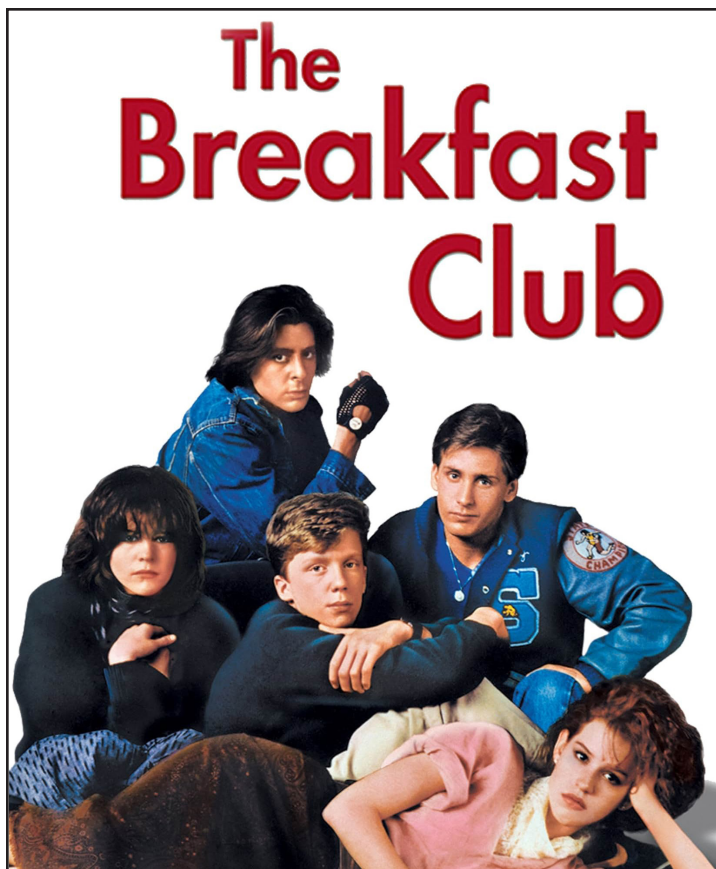
Ringwald plays the spoiled princess to perfection and her conversations about her parents giving her everything but their love adds some real emotional

complexity to the character.

Nelson delivers a true career defining performance that will far outlive him and with this being his sole appearance in a Hughes production, his impact is felt even more.

This film is a lovely tale of teenage angst, capped off with one of the greatest 'roll credits' needle drop moments in cinema history, making it an all time classic that is both endlessly rewatchable and quotable in.

You've had 40 years, but if you haven't already, watch "The Breakfast Club," and I am sure you won't forget it.



COURTESY OF IMDB

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NEW TRACK

RANKINGS

LAILA CASIANO

OPINION EDITOR

- 1. OPEN ARMS**
- 2. JONI FT. DON TOLIVER**
- 3. TAKE YOU DOWN**
- 4. PSA**

Graphic by Elijah Templeton | Life Editor

Life

CLUB SPOTLIGHT: PRE-LAW CLUB

LAILA CASIANO

OPINION EDITOR

For students considering law school, the journey can feel overwhelming — but the Pre-Law Club at Arkansas State University is working to ease the transition from undergraduate to law school.

The Pre-Law Club's mission is to gather students from all majors interested in pursuing a legal career and prepare them for the next step.

"It's about creating opportunities, providing guidance and fostering a strong sense of community among future legal professionals," Levi Seward said.

Seward, a junior political science major from Blytheville, Arkansas, is the club's president. He said he initially joined the Pre-Law club because he wanted to surround himself with "like-minded" people who were serious in their pursuits in law.

"As I became more involved, I saw the potential for the club to be more than just a meeting space—I wanted to help turn it into a true resource for aspiring law students," Seward said.

He said his dedication to helping his peers navigate the path to law school regarding offering mentorship and hands-on experiences and networking motivated him to step into a leadership role.

"I pursued the presidency because I saw an opportunity to push the club forward," Seward said. "I wanted it to be a hub of real preparation for law school and a network that students could rely on."

The Pre-Law Club has seen major growth in recent years, allowing the club to expand its outreach and event planning.

"The club has grown from a small group to a real force on campus, with bigger events, more networking opportunities, and a stronger presence," Seward said. "I see it continuing to expand and becoming a key resource for pre-law students at A-State."

The club provides students LSAT prep resources, networking opportunities and a chance to develop leadership and public speaking skills.

"The club is for anyone interested in law, regardless of major," Seward said. "One misconception is that you have to be a certain major to join

or that only political science students can go to law school. In reality, law schools accept students from all majors, and our club is open to anyone interested in law, no matter their academic background."

Seward said the club has given him a sense of direction, a strong network of peers and the confidence to pursue law school with a clear path. He said he encourages students interested in joining to connect with pre-law advisors, to current students and to attorneys for a better understanding of the journey.

Jada Sumpter, a political science major from West Helena, Arkansas, is the club's vice president.

She joined the club in her first-year after encouragement from advisors. Initially, she was not involved in student organizations, but she said she decided to take a chance and participate — eventually running for secretary before stepping into her current leadership role.

"The club has helped me solidify my future of becoming an attorney," Sumpter said. "It opened my eyes and helped me become more serious about my goals."

She said the club has been an eye opener to the possibility of what her future in law could hold.

"I have a clearer picture of what it takes to become the attorney I want to become," Sumpter said.

She said her personal goal for the club is to increase the active membership, hoping to reach as many prospective students as possible.

"I want to leave the lasting impression that our club welcomes everybody and is a resource to anybody that wants it," Sumpter said.

Lauren Rush, a senior political science and criminology major, from Manila, Arkansas, is the club's public relations chair. She said she always knew she wanted to attend law school, and the club has provided her with valuable insights and leadership opportunities.

"Considering law school can be daunting and the Pre-Law Club exists to make it easier," Rush said. "It helps students build connections and gain access to helpful resources."

She said one of the club's biggest benefits is the connections you create

with other members.

"It's really nice to know people who are studying for their LSAT or applying to law school at the same time as you. It makes the process way less scary," Rush said.

Another benefit is the law school tours and guest speakers the club provides. The Pre-Law Club traveled to the University of Arkansas in the fall semester, offering members a chance to expand their connections and opportunities.

At its most recent meeting, the club invited Craighead County District Court Judge Tommy Fowler to speak with the members. Rush said the club's access to the speakers has been pivotal in understanding what her legal career might look like.

"These discussions have really helped me understand the realities of the legal field and have benefited me immensely," Rush said.

The Pre-Law Club is open to students of all majors, including those unsure if law is their future career or those interested in the justice system but not necessarily as lawyers.

"The club is really open to anyone who wants to

understand more about the legal field whether they end up taking that route or a different one," Rush said.

She said the club is working on bringing in more speakers and dedicating time to showing members — and future participants — what law school and the legal field looks like post-graduation.

"As our PR chair, my main goal is to reach as many potential members as I can and to make our current members feel welcomed and comfortable," Rush said. "Law school and law school applications are a difficult process, and I want to make sure that we're helping students as much as we can."

Rush said being a part of Pre-Law Club has been such a pivotal part of her law school journey.

"It's given me such special opportunities and it's where I've met so many of my college friends," Rush said. "It's been such a helpful organization for me and I'm so glad to have been a part of it!"

The Pre-Law Club meets every Wednesday at 5 p.m., at the Phelps & Womack Pre-Law Center in the College of Liberal Arts and Communication.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LEVI SEWARD

(Left) Logan Cathey, Jade Sumpter, Levi Seward and George Vaughan at the Phelps & Womack Pre-Law Center.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LEVI SEWARD

Members of the Pre-Law Club at the Craighead County Bar Association in November 2024.

HOROSCOPES

shailey wooldridge | mystic correspondent



Aries

With Venus in your sign you'll shine in personal relationships but try not to be so intense in new situations.



Taurus

With Uranus in your sign, sudden shifts may occur that encourage freedom and disrupt your finances or home life.



Gemini

The full moon in Leo boosts self expression, but the Aquarius Sun is begging you to rationalize your approach in group settings.



Cancer

The full moon illuminates your career and public life, encouraging you to be yourself.



Leo

With the full moon in your sign this is your moment to express yourself, but the opposition to the sun in aquarius reminds you to consider others.



Virgo

The full moon calls you to reflect on your inner world and activates your 12th house of the subconscious.



Libra

The full moon in Leo opposes the Aquarius Sun, urging you to find balance between personal desires and the needs of the collective.



Scorpio

The tension between the Leo Moon and the Aquarius Sun calls for a balance between personal fulfillment and your public image.



Sagittarius

The Full Moon is lighting up your higher mind and spirituality. This could be a time of new insights, especially related to travel or higher education.



Capricorn

The square to Uranus might bring unexpected financial or relationship changes, so stay flexible and adaptable.



Aquarius

The tension between the Leo Moon and the Aquarius Sun suggests that it's time to speak up and express your feelings, but consider the needs of others involved.



Pisces

With Mercury about to enter your sign this is a time to clear out old emotional baggage and release what no longer serves you.