

Edwardsville students part of 43rd Annual Illinois High School Theatre Festival All-State production

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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BLOOMINGTON - Edwardsville High School's Meghan Ide and Cole Frizzo were selected from over 350 students who auditioned from 57 high schools in Illinois to be part of the 2018 Illinois High School Theatre Festival.

Meghan Ide was selected to be a member of the technical construction crew and Cole Frizzo as part of the sound crew. The 2018 Illinois High School Theatre Festival

(IHSTF), the largest and oldest non-competitive high school theatre festival in the nation, will feature Broadway's smash hit, BIG FISH, as its 2018 All-State production. BIG FISH features a select ensemble of high school performers and technicians from throughout the state of Illinois.

Meghan and Cole's EHS theatre teacher is Ashley Melton.

"The State Theatre Festival is an awesome experience and opportunity and I am honored to have been chosen to participate," Meghan said. "I have met so many incredibly talented people and I look forward to working with them on the production of Big Fish."

"This is a great experience to be a part of and to have my name on" - Cole Frizzo said.

Lauren Ide, Meghan's mother, said she couldn't be more proud of Meghan and Cole for their selection.

"As I mentioned, Meghan and Cole have been driving up to Chicago once a month to work on this production," she said. "Our family looks forward to watching it on Friday, Jan 12. We couldn't be more proud of her!"

"Based on the celebrated novel by Daniel Wallace and the acclaimed film directed by Tim Burton, BIG FISH centers on Edward Bloom, a traveling salesman who lives life to its fullest... and then some! Edward's incredible, larger-than-life stories thrill everyone around him – most of all, his devoted wife Sandra. But their son Will, about to have a child of his own, is determined to find the truth behind his father's epic tales. Overflowing with heart, humor and spectacular stagecraft, BIG FISH is an extraordinary new Broadway musical that reminds us why we love going to the theatre – for an experience that's richer, funnier and BIGGER than life itself." (Theatrical Rights Worldwide)

The All-State cast, crew, and pit orchestra are comprised of top student performers, musicians, and technicians from Illinois. More than 350 talented students auditioned for BIG FISH and 109 were selected for the final production Company from 57 high schools. The Director for this year's production is LaDonna Wilson (Champaign Central HS).

The 2018 Illinois High School Theatre Festival All-State production of BIG FISH will celebrate the festival theme "The Power of Transformation" as it weaves between the fantasy of Edward Bloom's tales to his son, Will, and the reality of his mortality. Actors, singers, and dancers in this show will have to show their ability to navigate large musical numbers while still revealing the heart of the over-the-top characters.

Rehearsals for BIG FISH take place over several long weekends during the Fall of 2017, with final rehearsals occurring the last few days before the actual performances. This year's performance venue is Braden Auditorium at Illinois State University. BIG FISH runs from January 12th -13th , 2018. This is a closed event for participants of the Illinois High School Theatre Festival. There are no public tickets available for these performances.

About the Illinois High School Theatre Festival

Now in its 43rd consecutive year, the Illinois High School Theatre Festival (IHSTF) is the largest and oldest non-competitive high school theatre festival in the world, and is produced by the Illinois Theatre Association. Over 4,500 students, teachers, university representatives, exhibitors, and volunteers come together to put on theatrical workshops and various high school productions. The IHSTF organizes over 150 workshops, whose topics range from acting, musical theatre, auditions, improvisation, technical theatre, directing, stage management, make-up and costumes, lighting and special effects, to name a few. In addition, more than 25 high school productions, both showcases and full-length, from around the state are selected to perform at the IHSTF each year.

This year's Festival, themed "The Power of Transformation" is led by IHSTF Executive Director Nathaniel Haywood (Downers Grove South HS) and features the BIG FISH as its All-State production. The All-State cast, crew, and pit orchestra is comprised of the top student performers, technicians, and musicians in the state of Illinois. BIG FISH will be performed throughout the Festival.

On the first night of the Festival, participants attend the much-anticipated Opening Performance with Visceral Dance. Past opening ceremonies have included Broadway's Seth Rudetsky, Wilson Heredia, Tyce Green, Chicago's Second City, The Neo-Futurists, and many others.

Another highlight of the IHSTF includes the college/university auditions for high school seniors. Students who plan to pursue theatre or musical theatre in college may audition /interview for theatrical programs in and around the state of Illinois. In the past, there have been over 35 colleges/universities in attendance.

Over the main two days of the Festival, attendees will see and participate in different sets of workshops, student showcases, high school productions throughout the day, and various social activities, plus the All-State Production of Big Fish.

The three-day festival takes place every year in early January and switches locations between the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Illinois State University. Illinois State University will host the 2018 Festival from Thursday, January 11th to Saturday, January 13th.

The IHSTF 2018 Festival is supported in part by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, and corporate donations or in-kind services. Each year contributions are made to the Julie Anne Nelson Memorial Fund, which provides overall support for the festival, and the Clif Aldridge Scholarship Fund, which provides financial assistance to All-State Company members. For more information about how to make a contribution please contact Aimee-Lynn Newlan, ITA Executive Director at aimeelynn@illinoistheatre.org or call the Illinois Theatre Association office at 312-265-5922 .

About the Illinois Theatre Association

Founded in 1972 and celebrating its 45th consecutive season, the mission of the Illinois Theatre Association is to advocate quality theatre in Illinois through:

? Encouragement and facilitation of closer and better communication among all theatrical divisions -- professional theater, university/college theater, secondary school theater, community theater, theatre for young audiences, and creative drama -- in Illinois.

? Provision of public information about the extent and variety of theatre in Illinois;
• Cooperation with state and federal agencies, and with regional and national theatre organizations in promoting recognition and development of theatre programs at all levels;

• Maintenance and improvement of theatre production, teaching, and research at all levels.

? Affirmation of the value of theatre in the lives of individuals.

The Illinois Theatre Association provides support and professional development opportunities for all divisions of theatre. Annual events include the Illinois High School Theatre Festival, Statewide Non-Equity Professional Auditions, Theatre In Our Schools Conference (produced in partnership with the American Alliance of Theatre & Education), Middle School Conference, Annual Convention, and Awards of Excellence Ceremony. For more information about the Illinois Theatre Association visit www.illinoistheatre.org. [BI](#)