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Winthrop Celebrates the 50th Anniversary of HAIR

Winthrop University

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Winthrop Celebrates the 50th Anniversary of HAIR

Quick Facts

- Showtimes are 8 p.m. Oct. 4-7 and 2 p.m. Oct. 8. in Johnson Theatre.
- Tickets are \$10 with a Winthrop ID or \$15 for the general public.



ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – It's the dawning of the "Age of Aquarius" at **Johnson Theatre** on Oct. 4 when Winthrop University's **Department of Theatre and Dance** opens its 2017-18 season with "**HAIR.**" The American rock musical will run through Sunday, Oct. 8. Showtimes are 8 p.m. Oct. 4-7 and 2 p.m. Oct. 8.

"HAIR" celebrates the 60s counterculture in all its barefoot, long-haired, bell-bottomed, beaded and fringed glory. The show

wows audiences with songs such as "Aquarius," "Good Morning, Starshine," "Hair," "I Got Life" and "Let The Sun Shine" to an infectious energetic rock beat. Exploring ideas of identity, community, global responsibility and peace, "HAIR" remains relevant as ever as it examines what it means to be a young person in a changing world.

"HAIR" follows a group of politically engaged "hippies" living in New York City and protesting the Vietnam War draft. Claude, his good friend Berger, their roommate Sheila and other friends try to balance their free spirits against their parents and a conservative society, especially when Claude must decide if he will resist the draft like his friends or give in to society's demands.

This year marks 50 years since the original musical made its debut on Broadway, and to many of the cast members, the musical is just as relevant today as it was in 1968. Freshman **Phillip Dean** (Rock Hill, South Carolina), who portrays Claude, believes that the likenesses between the musical and today's current events may be surprising to audiences.

"It's a great story to tell because it relates so well to what happened in the 60s, but you can connect it to mainstream events happening in today's culture," Dean said. "I think it's a bit of a culture shock to see the similarities. It may open a lot of people's eyes."

The cast hopes that audiences are excited by the show but remember the deeper meaning behind the songs.

"It's a reminder that things are still happening out there, and it's our job to fix it," said sophomore

Sean Riehm (Irmo, South Carolina). Riehm portrays Berger. “[The millennial generation] has the power to vote, and it’s up to us to not take things for granted.”

Professor of Theatre and Dance Stephen Gundersheim will direct the production with Winthrop alumni **Brittany Johnson '15** and **Jamie Drye '09** serving as choreographers.

Drye, who lives and works in New York City, worked with the cast for just one week. The return to Winthrop has been a positive one, he said.

“It’s always nice to work with students that care and are as invested in the project as you,” Drye said. “When I was a student, the professors empowered me, so to walk in and feel comfortable in the space is really cool.”

Johnson teaches dance at Kelly Miller Elementary School in Winnsboro, South Carolina, and enjoys working with the cast, which differs from her experience with elementary-aged children.

“With kids, they are very new to everything, so you have to start with the basics,” Johnson said. “Whereas working with students who have decided art is going to be their career, they come in with different identities and goals and a pretty proficient understanding how to be onstage and interact with an audience.”

This production includes mature content. Tickets are \$10 with a Winthrop ID or \$15 for the general public. Tickets can be **purchased online** or at the Department of Theatre and Dance Box Office one hour prior to show time or 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday-Friday beginning Oct. 2. Free parking is available in the parking lot between Johnson Hall and Alumni Drive.

For more information, contact **Whitney Hough**, director of communications and community engagement for the **College of Visual and Performing Arts**, at 803/323-2399 or houghw@winthrop.edu, or visit the website at www.winthrop.edu/arts.

[\[Back to Previous Page\]](#)

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