

## Outdoor concert at Grinnell Library August 4

As part of the Grinnell Library's Summer Concert Series, cellist Ryan Mitten will play a family friendly acoustic show featuring Broadway and movie favorites. Ryan will be performing in the library's pavilion from 3 - 4 p.m. on Thursday, August 4.

Ryan plays what you might expect to hear played on a cello (think: Bach and Mozart), but encourages his audience to

think bigger. Be sure to take advantage of his routine offer after for "any requests" (and improvisational skills on the cello). He conjures almost any kind of folk music (bluegrass, Irish, country, the list goes on) and ties it all together with early 20th century sing-along ditties.

Grinnell Library is at 2642 East Main Street in Wappingers Falls.

## Boost your brain power with tips from stage actors

If you've ever marveled at how stage actors master a role, you might enjoy this newly published collection of interviews, "Off Book: Memorization Secrets from Performing Artists."

Over the course of three years, author and educator Brent Sverdlhoff interviewed emerging, mid-career, and established performing artists and asked them to share their approaches to memorization. The more than 40 interviews selected for his new book are filled with creative and effective strategies that help anyone improve their memory, on stage and off.

Actors, singers and musicians reveal their strategies for tackling especially challenging roles and getting back on track when their minds go blank. They discuss how their training and experience have shaped their learning process overall. Playwrights, monologists and songwriters also weigh in on how structure and character play into creating speech that is memorable to both the performers and the audience.

On and off stage, most of us are pursuing the same goals of mental clarity, physical expressiveness, and more intimate engagement with others. Whether we aspire to become a character in a play or a more enlightened person in real life, the lesson is this: the most successful tactics involve physical, psychological, emotional and even spiritual immersion.

The same techniques that guide actors in embodying a character can help the non-actor master a foreign language, reconstruct the order of historical events, or memorize the periodic table. We can sharpen our hearing and our awareness of our surroundings to create more vivid associations. By being more present and engaged, we remember more.

Some performers say that real life

makes them nervous, that they can relax only on stage. This will seem contradictory to non-actors since most of us are terrified of public speaking. Actors explain the importance of breathing and what to do with one's hands, and how staying calm—and curious—can strengthen our recall.

For anyone who has struggled with dyslexia, it will come as a welcome surprise that a number of talented actors have figured out how to compensate for their learning differences to commit material to memory.

When actors forget their lines, what do they do? They explain here how they get back on track, often without the audience even realizing that anything went awry.

What are the pros and cons of technology as it relates to memory? There are new apps that can facilitate line learning in context and technology that interferes with our ability to remain present.

Finally, let's not forget the value of old-fashioned hard work. Repetition and frequency contribute to muscle memory and etch deep grooves into our consciousness.

The book first took shape as a blog on Sverdlhoff's website, FlexYourMemory.com. The blog remains active and includes dozens of other interviews with professionals in related fields, such as educators and visual artists. Many work and reside in the Greater New York area.

To help others put these techniques into practice, Sverdlhoff is offering a free storytelling "playshop" on Saturday, Aug. 20, at the Starr Library, 68 West Market St., Rhinebeck. Participants will craft a story, commit it to memory, and deliver it with confidence.

For details and to register, visit FlexYourMemory.com/events. More sessions will be posted as they are scheduled.

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## County Players to host auditions Aug. 28 for October shows

County Players, one of the longest running community theatre companies in the area, has announced open auditions on August 28 for two readings being offered during the October CP2 Readers Theatre Series. Auditions will be held at the County Players Falls Theatre, 2681 W. Main Street, in the Village of Wappingers Falls.

Mini-Festival #1 Auditions on August 28,

1-3 p.m.: Admissions, by Joshua Harmon, directed by Christine Crawfis  
Sherri is head of admissions at a New England prep school, fighting to diversify the student body. She and her headmaster husband have succeeded in bringing it into the 21st century. When their only son sets his sights on an Ivy League university, personal ambition and progressive values collide, with convulsive results.

Performances: October 7 & 8  
3-5 p.m.: The Niceties, by Eleanor Burgess, directed by Kit Colbourn

A black student visits her white professor during office hours to discuss her paper on the American Revolution. The polite review of her thesis explodes into a high stakes debate over race, history, power, and revolution.

Actors of all ages, genders, and ethnicities are all encouraged to audition. Complete audition information including performance dates, character breakdowns are available online at

[countypayers.org/cp2-auditions/](http://countypayers.org/cp2-auditions/)  
**IMPORTANT: COVID-19 Protocol for Auditions at County Players**

At this time, **ALL ACTORS AND CREW MUST BE FULLY VACCINATED.** Please wear a mask and be prepared to show proof of vaccination when you arrive to the venue. Once inside the theatre, you may be unmasked (if fully vaccinated) and/or to read for the audition.

County Players will follow current CDC guidelines for domestic and international travel restrictions for fully vaccinated individuals (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019ncov/travelers/index.html>), and ask actors planning to audition to carefully consider travel out of state during rehearsals or performances.

One of the longest running community theatre companies in our area, County Players is an all-volunteer organization which has presented more than 200 productions and has served thousands of the at-riskers since 1958. Located in the Village of Wappingers Falls the all-volunteer theatre company acquired the former Academy Theatre and renamed it the County Players Falls Theatre, their home since 1977.

Hudson Valley Credit Union sponsors County Players' 65th Season.

For more information: CountyPlayers.org, twitter.com/CountyPlayers, or facebook.com/countypayers.