


# Seuss on the stage

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“The Cat in the Hat” delights audiences of all ages

Photo by [The University of Central Missouri Division of Theatre](#)

The cast and crew of the “Cat in the Hat” smile on stage after their performance. The University of Central Missouri presented “Cat In the Hat” on Feb. 27-28 and March 1-2. The costume design was done by Cassie Kay Hoppas, the scenic design was done by Powell Brumm, lighting design was done by Aleksandra Combs and props design was done by Spencer Musser.

From Feb. 27 to Mar. 2, the University of Central Missouri Division of Theatre staged a performance in the Highlander Theatre of one of Dr. Seuss’s classic books that we’ve all known since childhood, “The Cat in the Hat.” “The Cat in the Hat” came to UCM’s campus for a live production that entertained not just kids, but parents and students as well.

“The Cat in the Hat” is an iconic children’s picture book written and illustrated by Theodor Geisel under the pen name Dr. Seuss and published in 1957. Dr. Seuss wrote “The Cat in the Hat” to help first graders learn to read. The story was adapted as a play in 2009 by Katie Mitchell, a British theatre director whose unique style and uncompromising methods have divided both critics and audiences.

Most audience members felt that UCM’s “The Cat in the Hat” was an enjoyable show, with many praising Thing 1 and Thing 2 for their standout performances. Their energetic antics, comedic timing, and playful interactions captivated the audience, making them the most memorable characters in the production. Adults affectionately referred to it as both very cute and funny, appreciating the lightheartedness and charm it brought to the experience. “My favorite characters were Thing 1 and Thing 2,” said Arlo, one of the children in the audience, who was very pleased with the performance.

Sophomore Madison Keep played the role of Conrad Walden, also known as “Boy,” the imaginative yet destructive and misbehaved 12-year-old.

Keep enjoyed portraying an exaggerated human character, emphasizing big movements and emotions. Preparation involved extensive rehearsals focused on choreography, without actual dancing. Keep felt the audience’s reactions positively impacted her performance

“It was amazing to finally have an audience. Hearing their reactions and laughter made us even more excited,” said Keep. “It was so different from performing in tech without an audience.”

Keep’s favorite moment was riding a bike on stage, despite the director’s initial concerns. Technical challenges included aligning sounds and cues.

“Riding the bike was actually my favorite part,” said Keep. “I begged to be able to ride the bike on stage, and our director was very scared at first that I was gonna get close to the edge of the stage, but I didn’t feel scared at all.”

The director, Jenise Cook, emphasized the importance of growth and skill development for students preparing for professional careers in the acting world. The production utilized the Lecoq movement method, incorporating physical and movement-based acting. Preparation involved extensive rehearsals focused on choreography, without actual dancing.

According to Cook, This innovative approach not only allowed the actors to deepen their connection to their characters but also encouraged them to explore their physicality and expressiveness on stage. Students were encouraged to incorporate their unique skills, such as juggling and acrobatics, into the show. Cook made it one of her goals to stay true to Dr. Seuss’s world while adapting the script.

“Growth is my top goal. These students are preparing for professional theater careers, and as someone in regional theater, my aim is to help them get there,” Cook said.



Carlton Jennings is a sophomore at the University of Central Missouri pursuing a bachelor's degree in Graphic Design and a minor in Computer Science. As the sports editor, Jennings is responsible for reporting on interesting UCM sporting events and people. Jennings likes to read and spend time at the gym. After graduation, Jennings plans on working in Web Design or Web Development.