

SO TA

SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Where
creativity
gets real.

ART & DESIGN | MUSIC | THEATRE & DANCE

2025/2026



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HELLO CREATIVES!

Welcome to SOTA
where creativity
gets real.

The easiest part of all of this is knowing you're a creative. It's a force you have felt your whole life. Creating art, performing on stage, developing a design, or playing an instrument is simply what you do. For most of us, the hard part is knowing how to turn that passion into an elevated appreciation a mastered craft, a way forward, and a profession. We and many others know an answer. It's SOTA.

D.J. Stroud
Theatre and Dance, BFA 2026



LIVE IT TO LEARN IT.

It's SOTA's secret sauce.

SOTA is where passion meets profession. It's an environment that makes creativity real and tangible. It instills foundational learnings that lead to mastery. It's a place where creative confidence will always bring real possibilities and you'll nurture the professional you aspire to be.

Here artistic expression is born, unhindered by the limitations of time and opportunity. It's a place where creative bravery is fostered. Learning at SOTA is a bit like being immersed in a living laboratory and shaping your ideas into outcomes that prepare you in real-time for your creative life. It will challenge you, it will prepare you and it will change you.

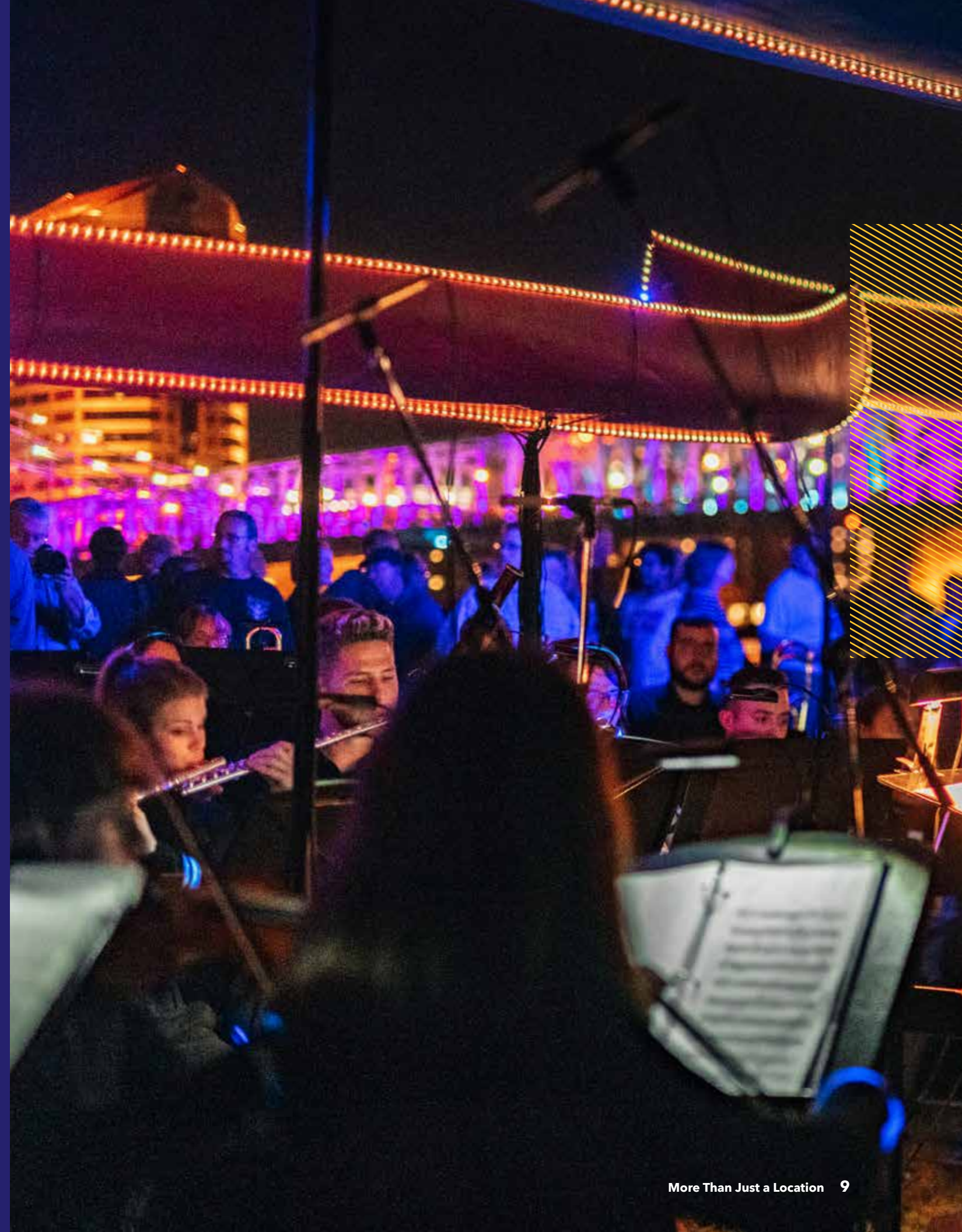
Hannah Cherry
Art & Design, BA 2027



WELCOME TO NORTHERN KENTUCKY.

Where Kentucky meets
the Queen City,
creatively speaking.

Centrally located and culturally vibrant, SOTA is perched on the northern most Kentucky ridgeline overlooking downtown Cincinnati. Our safe, supportive small town feel, is a short five minutes from the city, and offers students a diverse perspectives and artistic development opportunities.



REAL
FACTS.
REAL
IMPACT.

Take a look at these numbers. It's real creativity at work.

20,000+
Annual Performance
& Gallery Patrons

10,250+
SOTA Alumni Network

100+
Annual Plays, Events,
Musicals, Concerts,
Speakers, and Exhibits

75+
Visiting Artists and
Professionals in Our
Classrooms Every Year

20+ Annual Community Projects
and Collaborations

100+ SOTA Faculty
and Staff

1 Premier Regional Creative
Destination for the Arts

31
Individual
Areas of
Study

1:15
Average Instructor
to Student Ratio
for Hyper-personalized
Instruction



HEY _____ , (insert your first name here) YOUR CREATIVE BRILLIANCE IS NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER.

Welcome to creativity paired with purpose. SOTA's unique curricula share a common thread of creativity, collaboration, and foundational learning to inspire the next generation of cultural game changers. Off-the-chart imagination and practical application make SOTA graduates talented powerhouses relevant and ready to embrace the ever-evolving future.

Brianna Wallace
Art & Design, BFA 2026





Victoria Jackson
Music, BFA 2026

HOW TO BE WORLD RELEVANT.

Or why an arts
education is about
more than just art.

*Future of Jobs
Report, World
Economic Forum
2016

Each decade the world moves faster and farther away from what we've known. Technology, business, and communications advances continue to disrupt every industry, creating opportunities while fostering collective anxiety (AI, anyone?). What careers can we count on? What new careers will appear? What does self-dependence look like over the next few years? What can students and parents count on? Well, with change comes good news. Despite technological advances, the demand for human skills continues to rise. **The top three needs for employers and businesses are complex problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity.*** Learning to think and contribute creatively are special human skills that will not be replaced by technology or machines. More than ever, our world needs people that can contribute meaningfully. A creative education rooted in the arts sets you up to enrich the world and be a catalyst for change. Boom.

BEHOLD OUR SUPERPOWERS!

**SOTA and the 10 real reasons
to believe it's the best place
to create.**

01

A Long Legacy of Learning.

Continually progressing and adapting, NKU has made the community a better place to live, learn, and work since 1968. NKU has fueled the successful careers of thousands of individuals, with the arts always an integral ingredient of a rich educational offering. Some have even been beautiful and famous, like George Clooney, for example.

02

Professional creatives who just happen to be professional teachers.

At SOTA, you learn from the real-deal artists, designers, performers, creative directors, and composers who also happen to be teachers. It's learning beyond just academics—it's learning made more meaningful. It's a fast path to practical understanding taught by those who teach AND those who do.

03

Diversity drives us happy.

We don't believe in one size fits all. No matter who you are as a person, you'll be joining an eclectic, inclusive learning community. At SOTA, we believe that learning starts with living it. Empathy, understanding, and accepting others are at the core of our culture. It enriches everything we do and helps broaden our understanding of our world.

04

Geographically vibrant. Like a diamond.

Our location has many bright sides. Northern Kentucky is a thriving arts, culture, and business innovation region. On a clear day, you can see Cincinnati from campus. We are near Procter and Gamble, the birthplace of modern branding. We are home to numerous galleries, agencies, industry hubs, music halls, and theatres. And right behind us is an international airport open to rich educational programs. Need inspiration? Hop on the TANK and head downtown, or take a direct flight to NYC, Paris, or Tokyo. Get the picture?

05

We call this one the 8Cs (*yes that's a lot of Cs*): a carefully curated creative curriculum of collaboration, critical thinking, connection and courage.

A SOTA education features a curriculum rooted in foundational art principles and enriched with practical application that drives creative possibilities. It constantly evolves to meet industry trends and is always as relevant as possible by connecting you to people and outcomes that help you get to where you are going. This approach prepares you for what is known today and how to adapt to the needs of tomorrow. That's clearly the power of the 8Cs!

06

Proudly undergraduate-focused.

Our programs are designed for real-world learning, taught by dedicated professionals. SOTA faculty are your personal champions. Really. Because of this focus on undergraduate education, you are assured a multi-faceted arts education and connection to faculty that no other school in the region can match. And we wouldn't want it any other way.

07

We take "make learning personal" personally.

Our distinctly personal learning approach promotes individual ownership and more comprehensive understanding. Small class sizes, hands-on instruction, and genuine relationships make learning practical, rewarding, and unforgettable. And our hyper-personal super heroes known as Academic Advisors? They're like having a white-gloved concierge who happens to be a creative professional, advising you on how to navigate your own arts-focused academic career.

08

A network of real creative heroes.

The proof is in our people. Our SOTA alumni network shines brightly from all corners of the world. From Broadway to galleries, institutions to the world's biggest brands, you need not look any further than those who graduated from SOTA to see the power of a SOTA education.

09

Local yet global, y'all.

Through our international connections and communities, we are able to bring global ideas, thinkers, speakers, and new approaches straight into Northern Kentucky. And vice versa, we bring Northern Kentucky to the rest of the world through our various study abroad, networking programs, and our incredible alumni. It's a win-win situation for locals and globals.

10

Higher education is smart. A SOTA education is super smart. Duh.

We never stop coming up with ways to add value to your art education. With a regional Metro rate, nationally competitive tuition, and scholarships dedicated to the arts, we work to keep costs down and quality up for the highest possible return on investment for your time and tuition. Our robust scholarship program is built on a student-focus diversity-led approach that benefits our culture of creativity and inclusivity. From quality to the value we deliver SOTA is a great choice for everyone.

IS THE ART & DESIGN PROGRAM FOR ME?

Absolutely,
you got this.

“ The single greatest part of being in SOTA is the connections I have made with my fellow students and professors. The friends I have made here and the professors I’ve had the pleasure of working under are always encouraging and supportive. They all challenge me to be not only the best artist I can be, but the best version of myself. ”

Gigi Modaffari
Art & Design, BFA 2026



ART & DESIGN

Igniting curiosity.
Creating connections.
Nurturing creativity.

Because connecting to our world through expression and communication is essential, we have art and we have design.



Being hyper-focused and aware of the changing world of artistic, commercial, and industry creative practices is how we keep our students' needs in focus.



Knowledge, craft, creativity, and self-discovery are where our curriculum leads to. These transformative experiences, provide a sense of purpose, joy, and a connection to something greater than us. From personal student-faculty and peer-to-peer relationships that endure well past graduation to collaborations that transform you into thinkers and practitioners, Art and Design is the program for those searching for life-long achievement.

Versed in the past and future-aligned, our graduates are ready to hit the ground running. Being hyper-focused and aware of the changing world of artistic, commercial, and industry creative practices is how we keep our students' needs in focus. From industry-critical internships and opportunities to connecting students to vast regional and national alumni networks, a big focus at SOTA is thoroughly ensuring the application of creative pursuits.



ART & DESIGN

Real facts. Real possibilities.

- ▶ Our exclusive Animation degree track program is the first and only in the region.
- ▶ Programs led by award-winning, experienced faculty of practicing artists, designers, animators, and photographers.
- ▶ Our Visual Communication Design program is rated the best graphic design program in Kentucky.*
- ▶ Professional exposure through industry-focused internships from galleries, design studios, agencies, and assisting artists.
- ▶ Embedded in a thriving creative region that is home to world-class museums, galleries, and countless networking opportunities.
- ▶ Inspired study abroad programs that put you in the center of global art and design trends.
- ▶ Scholarships that culminate in awards over \$100,000 for incoming freshmen along with notable Kentucky Governor's School for the Arts and Kentucky Governor's Scholars Program scholarships.
- ▶ Curriculum focused on creativity and pragmatism that builds foundations and helps jump-start your career in the \$1 trillion arts economy.¹



ART & DESIGN

Degrees and tracks
at a glance.

ARTS

BACHELOR OF ARTS (BA)

Art Education
Art History
Pre-Art Therapy
Studio Art

BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS (BFA)

Animation
Art History
Drawing
Integrative Media
New Media Art
Painting
Photography
Spatial Arts (Ceramics +
Sculpture)

DESIGN

BACHELOR OF ARTS (BA)

Visual Communication
Design

BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS (BFA)

Visual Communication
Design

MINORS

Art History
Photography
Spatial Arts
Studio Art

EXPERIENCES

Foundation Studies
Printmaking
Art Appreciation
Art Galleries + Exhibits
Study Abroad Programs





HELLO FRIEND. LET'S DO THIS.

You're made
to make it.

Here at SOTA, the Faculty and Staff are like family, and they only want what's best for you to succeed once you leave the walls of SOTA. I always say take every chance and opportunity to make this program what you need and want, as a growing artist.

Jathan Briscoe
Music, BFA 2026

MUSIC

Distinctly personal.
Richly collaborative.

Where a well-rounded music education meets real-world impact. Cultivating professional performers, composers, and educators starts with understanding your individual needs and desires. We create uniquely relevant educational experiences in ways most larger music universities can't.



With a primary focus on undergraduate instruction, students receive individual attention from world-traveled musicians, teachers, and scholars. Combined with SOTA's creative learning culture, your music education will be personally rewarding and rich with unparalleled opportunities.

Become a citizen of the wide world of music. As a member of the SOTA community, you'll be learning amongst a diverse population of versatile musicians and creative thinkers who are united in making a meaningful impact on the cultural vitality of local and global communities. And your immersion begins immediately through a curriculum built around standout performance opportunities starting with year one.



MUSIC

Real facts. Real possibilities.

- ▶ Study abroad in Salzburg, Austria, through the Kentucky Institute for International Studies, earning degree credits while immersing in the birthplace of classical music.
- ▶ Experience national and global performance opportunities like the NKU Choirs performing at Carnegie Hall and the NKU Philharmonic performing throughout Ireland.
- ▶ Auditions help enable a wide variety of scholarship opportunities.
- ▶ Immerse yourself in unexpected creative opportunities like BLINK, Cincinnati's nationally recognized lighting, art, and projection mapping event.
- ▶ Connect to a network of student organizations beyond our Northern Kentucky borders like the National Association for Music Education, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Sigma Alpha Iota, American String Teachers Association and the Student National Association of Teachers of Singing.



MUSIC

Degrees and tracks
at a glance.

MUSIC

BACHELOR OF MUSIC IN COMPOSITION

Commercial Music/Audio Production+ Traditional

BACHELOR OF MUSIC IN PERFORMANCE

Instrumental
Jazz Studies
Piano Pedagogy
Voice

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN MUSIC

Liberal Studies

BACHELOR OF MUSIC EDUCATION

Choral/Vocal
Instrumental

MINORS

Music
Audio Production





SHOW US WHAT YOU'RE MADE OF.

How far will
you go?

“ SOTA has given me the opportunity to meet experts in my craft, and shown me how to properly navigate the path I will need to take to be successful. The resources provided, along with those associated, are undeniably inspiring, uplifting, as well as encouraging for developing artists. This program has made a positive impact on myself and many others, and I’m grateful to be a part of that. ”

Ace Moore
Theatre and Dance, BFA 2027

THEATRE & DANCE

Start small and go big.

What if you could experience one-on-one mentorship, hands-on training, and small personal class sizes while enjoying the benefits of being in the largest theatre and dance program in the state of Kentucky? Welcome to SOTA where the theatre and dance program is designed for individual success.



Explore multiple paths to a career in the performing arts your way. Your unique professional artistic voice and will unfold as you traverse a curriculum designed to define processes, educational values, and artistic creativity all while benefiting from a liberal arts education.

All the world will be your stage, literally. Students are offered pre-professional training within their discipline. Performance, dance, theatre design, stage management, and playwriting are developed while learning the skills necessary for success in the 21st century, like critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. Our immersive classroom experiences, training, engaging mainstage and studio productions prepare you for the fundamentals. Internship opportunities, educational touring, and an extensive network of alumni worldwide, combine to make sure students are connected and prepared to contribute to our global society in real ways.





THEATRE & DANCE

Real facts. Real possibilities.

- ▶ 6 mainstage and 4 studio theatre productions annually, making us one of the largest producing theatre programs in the region.
- ▶ The Theatre & Dance Program awards over \$100,000 in scholarships annually to our majors.
- ▶ Rich study abroad and study away programs allow you to explore dance and theatre worldwide.
- ▶ Internships that foster real-world learning in a professional setting.
- ▶ Connections to a robust network of student organizations beyond the SOTA walls.
- ▶ Programs led by faculty that are also practicing professionals.
- ▶ Tour regionally with The Comedy Improv Troupe and the Musical Theatre Tour Troupe.
- ▶ Hit the ground running with our annual First Year Show, exclusively showcasing our First Year Students in their first semester at NKU.
- ▶ Be part of a highly-collaborative team culture united to create meaningful art.
- ▶ Participate in the annual performance experience of the student produced, directed, and designed "Henry" Studio Theatre Series.



THEATRE & DANCE

Degrees and tracks at a glance.

THEATRE PERFORMANCE

BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS (BFA)

Acting
Dance
Musical Theatre
Playwriting

BACHELOR OF ARTS (BA)

Theatre Arts

THEATRE DESIGN, TECHNOLOGY, AND STAGE MANAGEMENT

BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS (BFA)

Stage Management
Theatre Design
Theatre Technology

MINORS

Dance
Theatre



OUR STUDENTS

Creatives and creativity in the making.

SOTA's always-on energy is creativity displayed in real-time. Every single day. Every week feels like an ever-changing creative playground at SOTA. On stage, in studios, and in practice rooms, you'll experience how rehearsals, concepting, craft, and learning are made tangible and always evolving. Across our curricula, your chance to be immersed in this maker's culture starts when you enter the school. It's like a living lab for creative people and just one of the ways that creativity gets real. For real.





YOUR BEST CREATIVE LIFE STARTS HERE.

In Northern Kentucky,
to be precise. *(we're
serious)*

No matter where you are in your journey
to become the world's most potent
creative force, SOTA is where your talents
and passion are nurtured.



REAL JOB TITLES OF SOTA ALUMNI

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| · Actor | · Dance Instructor | · Photographer |
| · Agency Business Development Manager | · Editorial Designer | · Photojournalist |
| · Animator | · Editor | · Photo Studio Owner |
| · Archivist | · Educator | · Portrait Photographer |
| · Art Teacher | · Entrepreneur | · Primary Music Teacher |
| · Art Director | · Events Photographer | · Production Designer |
| · Artist | · Experiential Artist | · Production Potter |
| · Audio Engineer | · Experiential Designer | · Project Manager |
| · Band Director | · Facial Animator | · Prop Designer |
| · Brand Manager | · Film Actor | · Retoucher |
| · Brand Strategist | · Freelance Musician | · Session Musician |
| · Brand Designer | · Gallery Director | · Set Designer |
| · Cellist | · Glass Artist | · Stage Manager |
| · Ceramics Instructor | · Graphic Designer | · Stitcher |
| · Choir Director | · Guitar Instructor | · Storyboard Artist |
| · Colorist | · Identity Designer | · Studio Associate |
| · Content Creator | · Illustrator | · Studio Coordinator |
| · Content Designer | · Lighting Shop Manager | · Studio Manager |
| · Consumer Product Photographer | · Lighting Technician | · Tattoo Artist |
| · Costume Designer | · Marketing Manager | · Theater Development |
| · Creative Director | · Motion Designer | · Touring Actor |
| · Creative Recruiter | · Music Director | · Touring Dancer |
| · Crew Manager | · Music Performer | · Typographer |
| · Cruise Ship Performer | · Music Teacher | · UI/UX Designer |
| · Curator | · Music Therapist | · Upper Strings Teacher |
| · Dancer | · Non-Profit Designer | · Videographer |
| | · Packaging Designer | · Web Designer |



IGNITE AND CONNECT.

Are you ready to discover where world-ready creatives get their start? We thought so.

With a distinctly personal education founded on principles, exploration, and professional pragmatism, the world's most prepared problem solvers, innovators, and cultural game changers start here. The Midwest's most diverse creative destination would love to have you as part of the community. Ignite your passion and find your creative self at SOTA.

You've made it this far! Now we'd like to hear from you. Making your creative life real is as easy as reaching out and saying "hi, I'm a creative!"



Hi, I'm a Creative!

(check box if you're a creative)

01

SPEND THE DAY WITH A SOTA STUDENT



[nku.edu/academics/artsci/about/
SchoolOfTheArts/about/visit](https://nku.edu/academics/artsci/about/SchoolOfTheArts/about/visit)

What better way to see how creativity gets real than from a personalized feet on the street perspective?

02

TAKE A VIRTUAL TOUR



[nku.edu/academics/artsci/
about/SchoolOfTheArts/about/
open-house](https://nku.edu/academics/artsci/about/SchoolOfTheArts/about/open-house)

Easy peasy. See NKU from the comfort of your own home via our virtual tour. It's the second best thing to being here.

03

SUBSCRIBE TO THE SOTA NEWSLETTER



[nku.edu/academics/artsci/about/
SchoolOfTheArts/contact](https://nku.edu/academics/artsci/about/SchoolOfTheArts/contact)

We won't pester you with unhelpful emails but our newsletter is a great way to see all of SOTA's happenings going on all year round.

04

CALL OR EMAIL TO TALK TO A HUMAN



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859.572.5879

Talking about SOTA is one of our favorite activities! Let us answer any of your questions. Talk to our director, or one of our advisors or program heads.

SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Where
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