The Youngstown Playhouse announces the streaming premiere of Call Me Elizabeth
Written and performed by Kayla Boye
Directed by Erin Kraft
Streaming March 19–28, 2021
Post-premiere talkback on March 19 at 8:45pm

Youngstown, OH — In celebration of Women’s History Month, The Youngstown Playhouse announces the world premiere of Call Me Elizabeth, a one-woman show about the early life of Elizabeth Taylor. Written by Kayla Boye and directed by Erin Kraft, the production may be viewed on-demand March 19–28, 2021.

Fresh off her triumph as Best Actress and recovery from a recent brush with death, Elizabeth Taylor is struggling with her hardest role yet: herself. Through an intimate conversation with her biographer, Call Me Elizabeth examines the movie star’s early life, career, and loves as she grapples with the culture of celebrity and her place as Hollywood’s brightest star.

Tickets are on sale now for on-demand viewing of the 75-minute film adaptation, which premieres on Friday, March 19, at 7:30pm, followed by a post-premiere talkback at 8:45pm via Facebook Live. Tickets are $15 per household and may be purchased at youngstownplayhouse.org.

The creative team includes Kayla Boye (Actor), Erin Kraft (Director), Christopher Pazdernik (Associate Producer), Ryan Cassell (Cinematographer), Ethan Deppe (Composer), Bethany Thomas (Vocalist), and Kächí Mozie (Production Photographer).

Kayla Boye states, “Like so many, I have long been fascinated with Elizabeth Taylor, a pop culture icon who continues to captivate. In her youth, Taylor epitomized movie stardom, later becoming associated with her fabulous jewels, her popular perfumes, and her activism in the fight against HIV/AIDS. But what is the story behind the image? How does a star develop into a legend, and how does that legacy sustain itself? With Call Me Elizabeth, I hope to pay tribute to the life of this extraordinary woman by exploring how the strength of her character enabled her to break barriers with unshakable bravery—and with signature style.”

The engagement is supported by the Arts Midwest Touring Fund, a program of Arts Midwest that is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional contributions from Ohio Arts Council and the Crane Group.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS
Post-Premiere Talkback: Friday, March 19, at 8:45pm EST via Facebook Live.
Join the creative team of *Call Me Elizabeth* in a Facebook Live discussion following the streaming premiere. [facebook.com/youngstownplayhouse](http://facebook.com/youngstownplayhouse)

**Musical Theatre Master Class:** Saturday, March 20, 10:30am-12:00pm EST via Zoom.
In this virtual master class taught by Kayla Boye, participants will learn a musical theatre dance combination followed by a discussion of best practices to build confidence in audition and performance technique. For youth and adults ages 12+. Registration is $15 per participant and is due by Friday, March 19, via [youngstownplayhouse.org](http://youngstownplayhouse.org).

**ABOUT THE SHOW**
*Call Me Elizabeth* is a solo performance piece about the early life of Elizabeth Taylor. Set in May 1961, the play is inspired by Taylor’s conversations with writer Max Lerner as they discuss plans for a biography. Through a morning session with Lerner at The Beverly Hills Hotel, Taylor rediscovers her sense of self following her 1961 Academy Awards triumph and recovery from a nearly fatal battle with pneumonia. The play examines Taylor’s career, life, and loves, chronicling her survival in the face of adversity and tragedy, and illuminating the core compassion of her character that inspired her later activism in the fight against HIV/AIDS. *Call Me Elizabeth* had its first staged reading on October 1, 2019, at The Den Theatre in Chicago, Illinois, directed by 12-time Joseph Jefferson Award-winner Hollis Resnik. In alignment with Taylor's advocacy work, the evening benefited Howard Brown Health. The play was named one of the Top 3 Solo Events of 2019 by the Michael and Mona Heath Fund.

**ABOUT THE ARTISTS**
*Kayla Boye (Writer/Producer/Actor)* is elated to premiere *Call Me Elizabeth* at The Youngstown Playhouse, where she has been previously seen in *Mary Poppins, Chicago*, and *Curtains*. Chicago credits include: *The Wizard of Oz* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), *South Pacific* (Drury Lane Theatre), *Can-Can, Billy Elliot, Little Me* (Porchlight Music Theatre), *Pippin, Mary Poppins* (Mercury Theater Chicago), *Anything Goes, Gypsy, and Mame* (Music Theater Works). Regional credits include: *Guys & Dolls, A Christmas Story* (Fireside Theatre), *On the Town* (Capital City Theatre), and seasons with Bigfork Summer Playhouse and The Huron Playhouse. She holds a BA from Youngstown State University. [kaylaboye.com](http://kaylaboye.com)

*Erin Kraft (Director)* is a Chicago-based director whose recent projects include: *In A Word* (Urbanite Theatre, Sarasota), the world premiere of *The Great Inconvenience* (Annex Theatre), *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation...*, *The Fairytale Lives of Russian Girls, Circle Mirror Transformation, Tender, The Lady From the Sea, and The Merchant of Venice* (The Theatre School). She has directed new play workshops and world premieres for Seattle Repertory Theatre, Chicago Dramatists, 20% Theatre, Prop Theatre, Washington Ensemble Theatre, Book-It Repertory Theatre, and Northwest Playwrights Alliance. She is a member of the Lincoln Center Director’s Lab, the SDCF 2018-2019 Observership Class, and earned her MFA in Directing from The Theatre School at DePaul University, where she is currently a directing faculty member for the Summer High School Training Program. [erinkraft.com](http://erinkraft.com)

*Christopher Pazdernik (Associate Producer)* is a Chicago-based artist with a “a near encyclopedic knowledge of musicals" (NewCity Stage). Past highlights include his Jeff Award-winning production of *High Fidelity* (Production of a Musical & Director of a Musical) for Refuge Theatre Project, where he also served as Artistic Director for three seasons; directing eight productions for *Porchlight Revisits*, *Porchlight Music Theatre's* lost musicals series; curating multiple cabaret revues on the history of musical theatre; and his current position as Casting & Company Manager for Porchlight. A staunch advocate for new works, Christopher has also directed many new musicals in development, served as a judge for the
Chicago Musical Theatre Festival, served as reader for the National Alliance for Musical Theatre and cast the World Premiere of *Miracle* in 2019. An openly HIV+ artist, he is also very involved with HIV/AIDS advocacy work, having served on the Ambassador Committee for AIDS Run/Walk Chicago and Chairperson of Howard Brown Health's Community Advisory Board, as well producing *Belt Fest*, an annual benefit concert for Howard Brown.

**INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS**
The Youngstown Playhouse gratefully acknowledges Briarfield as Box Office Sponsor of the 2021 Season: [briarfield.net](http://briarfield.net)

**ABOUT THE YOUNGSTOWN PLAYHOUSE**
As we anticipate our 100th Anniversary Season, The Youngstown Playhouse remains committed to our mission of presenting quality theatre arts performances, providing educational initiatives, and establishing and maintaining community partnerships while supporting and participating in the revitalization of the City of Youngstown.

Since our inception in 1924, The Youngstown Playhouse has sustained a legacy of quality live performance theatre in Northeast Ohio by staging innovative, unique, and accessible theatrical performances of both classic and modern productions. Located in Youngstown’s Glenwood Avenue Corridor, we annually serve over 9,000 audience members of all ages with a full season of 10 musicals and plays complemented by workshops, readings, and concerts in our mainstage theatre (400 seats) and our intimate blackbox space, The Moyer Room (75 seats). Our vibrant Youth Theatre Program serves nearly 150 participants through classes, workshops, and fully staged productions attended by over 1,000 local public school students annually. We remove barriers to arts access by requiring no participation fees for our youth productions and by offering financial assistance for class and workshop tuition. Our tickets are affordably priced, with regular tickets not exceeding $16, and with discounts available for seniors, students, and military. We rely on a lean, part-time staff of 5 members, 80 volunteers, 16 board members, and on the annual artistic contributions of nearly 300 local actors, technicians, and designers. Learn more at [youngstownplayhouse.org](http://youngstownplayhouse.org)

###