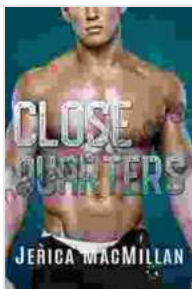


# Close Quarters Players: A Legacy of Excellence in Theatre and Community Engagement

## From Humble Beginnings to National Recognition

Nestled in the heart of Cleveland, Ohio, Marycliff University has been the proud home of the Close Quarters Players, a theatre company that has captivated audiences for decades. With a rich history dating back to the early 1970s, the Close Quarters Players have evolved from a student-led initiative to a nationally recognized ensemble that has left an indelible mark on the performing arts landscape.



### Close Quarters (PLAYERS OF MARYCLIFF UNIVERSITY

**Book 2)** by Jerica MacMillan

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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This article delves into the extraordinary journey of the Close Quarters Players, exploring their formative years, groundbreaking productions, educational outreach initiatives, and enduring legacy. Through interviews with key members, archival research, and first-hand accounts, we will

uncover the secrets behind their success and the profound impact they have had on the lives of students, audiences, and the community at large.

### **Laying the Foundation: The Early Years**

The roots of the Close Quarters Players can be traced back to the early 1970s, when a group of enthusiastic students at Marycliff University embarked on a quest to establish a vibrant theatre program. Led by the visionary professor Dr. Jack R. Baur, they transformed a small, attic-like rehearsal space into their creative haven, aptly named "Close Quarters."

During these formative years, the Close Quarters Players forged a strong bond through shared experiences and a deep love for the craft. Their productions, ranging from intimate dramas to ambitious musicals, showcased the boundless talent and passion of the student actors, directors, and crew.

### **A Turning Point: The Debut of "The Beard"**

The Close Quarters Players' reputation soared in 1975 when they staged a groundbreaking production of "The Beard," a controversial play by Michael McClure. The play's exploration of sexuality and gender pushed the boundaries of theatrical expression and sparked a heated debate on campus.

Undeterred by the controversy, the Close Quarters Players embraced their newfound artistic freedom. "The Beard" became a watershed moment, marking their transition from a student troupe to a respected theatre company that dared to provoke and inspire.

### **Artistic Excellence: A Journey of Innovation and Collaboration**

Throughout their illustrious history, the Close Quarters Players have consistently delivered exceptional artistic productions that have garnered critical acclaim and public adoration. Their repertoire spans a wide range of genres, from classic works of Shakespeare to cutting-edge contemporary plays.

A hallmark of the Close Quarters Players' artistry is their commitment to collaboration. They have forged partnerships with renowned guest directors, playwrights, and designers, bringing a wealth of experience and expertise to their productions. This collaborative spirit has fostered a dynamic and innovative environment where creative boundaries are constantly being challenged.

### **Original Voices: Nurturing Student Playwrights**

Beyond their celebrated productions of established plays, the Close Quarters Players have also been instrumental in developing and showcasing original works by student playwrights. Through workshops, mentorship programs, and staged readings, they have provided a platform for aspiring writers to hone their craft and bring their stories to life.

The Close Quarters Players' commitment to nurturing student playwrights has resulted in a rich body of original works that have been premiered at Marycliff University and beyond. These productions have given students invaluable experience in the creative process and fostered a spirit of artistic exploration and experimentation.

### **Expanding Horizons: The Touring Company**

The Close Quarters Players' impact extends far beyond the walls of Marycliff University. In the 1980s, they established a touring company that

brought their captivating performances to schools, community centers, and regional theaters throughout the Midwest.

Through their touring initiatives, the Close Quarters Players have played an active role in arts education and community engagement. Their productions have introduced countless young people to the transformative power of live theatre and ignited a passion for the performing arts.

### **Education and Community: A Vital Connection**

The Close Quarters Players have always recognized the importance of education and community outreach. They have established partnerships with local schools, organizations, and service groups to provide theatre-based workshops and programs that enrich the lives of students and community members.

These initiatives range from after-school drama programs to workshops for at-risk youth and senior citizens. Through their educational outreach, the Close Quarters Players have made a lasting contribution to the social fabric of the community, fostering creativity, self-expression, and a lifelong appreciation for the arts.

### **A Legacy of Impact: Shaping Lives and Inspiring Generations**

The Close Quarters Players have had a profound impact on countless individuals over the years. Their productions have captivated audiences, ignited imaginations, and inspired generations of students to pursue careers in the performing arts and beyond.

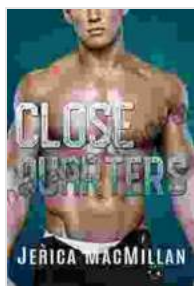
Alumni of the Close Quarters Players have gone on to become successful actors, directors, playwrights, and arts educators. They have carried the

values of artistic excellence, collaboration, and community engagement instilled in them by their experience with the company.

## **Celebrating the Past and Embracing the Future**

As the Close Quarters Players continue their remarkable journey, they stand as a testament to the transformative power of theatre. Their unwavering commitment to artistic excellence, collaboration, and community engagement has left an enduring legacy that will continue to inspire and enrich generations to come.

In celebrating the past achievements of the Close Quarters Players, we also look forward to their future endeavors. Their passion for the performing arts and their dedication to nurturing young artists ensure that they will continue to captivate audiences, challenge conventions, and make a meaningful contribution to the cultural landscape.



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