



Oscar Hammerstein II
Center for Theatre Studies
601 Dodge Hall
Mail Code 1807
2960 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Phone: (212) 854-3408
theatre@columbia.edu
Rev 10/17

The Late Wedding, directed by Mei Ann Teo '14
with Brett Radke '17, Clarisse Van Kote '17,
Emily Murphy '17, Sun Hye Park '17

MFA PROGRAM IN ACTING

Seeking the bold, the curious, the fearless.

The actor of indomitable spirit.

The Columbia MFA Acting program provides a comprehensive range of resources, a wide variety of techniques for students to explore, and a remarkable faculty from whom to learn. Our program is catered to give each actor the individual guidance they need to grow and mature as an artist. Each class is hand-picked to create a core company of actors that will live and breathe their art together during an intense and invigorating three-year program. The vision of the Acting program is to create a consistent and clear throughline of training, experience, and development from the first day of class until the last performance.

The curriculum focuses both on rigorous discipline as well as open improvisation and proceeds from a deep exploration of the text. It is about freeing the actor's voice, body, and mind. Working primarily in laboratory situations, this exploration takes many forms, drawing upon traditions as varied as Stanislavski, Meisner, Brook, and Grotowski, among others.

In addition to examining the great artists of the past, students investigate modern and contemporary playwrights through scene study and modern acting technique. The program demands rigorous training of the voice, physical dexterity, a keen analytical mind, and a willingness to discover many approaches to acting.



A Midsummer Night's Dream, directed by James Rutherford, with Wei-yi Lin '12 and Daniel Bielinski '12



Light, directed by Brian Kulick,
with Marcel Spears '15

Ensemble work and collaboration are fundamental to the training, while constant attention is integral to each student's individual progress. The training offered at Columbia provides graduates with the tools necessary to succeed in classical, contemporary, and experimental theatre, as well as in television and film.

The foundation of self-exploration begins in the first year. A thorough study of physical movement, Feldenkrais principles and movement improvisation, along with Alexander technique, lead our first-year students to a heightened examination of the body.

The Columbia Acting program believes in the unification of its Voice and its Speech classes. We blend modalities—Linklater, Rodenberg, Berry, and Susan Cameron's ankleweight work—to help the actor connect to impulse, as well as to free the actor's voice from habitual tension in order to meet the various demands of the industry.

The study of the past is intended to provide a foundation to inform the present and a starting point for creating theatre of the future. Therefore, the second year continues those traditions while also expanding actors' teamwork with the guidance of Andrei Serban and the work of Shakespeare and Chekov, among others. Clown and Suzuki work are also deeply explored, as well as on-camera audition technique and acting through song.

Speech and dialect classes expand upon the actor's vocal work in the second year. The speech work is taught through the framework of phonetics for both the study of Neutral American speech and for dialects.

The third year is the culmination of our students' time at Columbia, and celebrates the intense program of study of the first two years. Students focus on what it means to be a professional actor, both onstage and off, through the following components:

- The Acting Thesis Performance is a fully realized and produced production with material selected to best showcase the strengths and talents of the graduating Acting class. The third year also provides the time and opportunity to perform in other Columbia Theatre thesis productions or Columbia student films.
- In the spring of the third year, industry showcases in New York and Los Angeles are held for agents, managers, and casting directors. Students work throughout the Spring on material selection and scene preparation.
- Every spring, third-year Columbia MFA actors form the Classic Stage Company Young Company. This company performs Shakespeare productions for NYC high school students at CSC's 13th Street home. Actors are paid a weekly salary and an additional stipend if they choose to teach pre-performance workshops in the schools. Through a special arrangement with Actors' Equity Association, the actors who participate in the Classic Stage Company Young Company will be eligible to join the union.





The Government Inspector, directed by
Jesse Berger, with Phillip Shinn '14
and Kristie Larson '14

- A year-long Professional Practice class which strives to prepare the actor for the rigors of the industry and professional world. In addition, students participate in ongoing professional development workshops to prepare to enter the profession. Workshops are led by casting directors at major New York theaters, including Playwrights Horizons and Manhattan Theatre Club, and New York- and Los Angeles-based agents, managers, and actors.
- The third year also provides the time and opportunity for Proof of Concept, which encourages Acting students to create and develop their own original work.
- Third-year Columbia students are invited to participate in a four-day-long teacher training institute at the Roundabout Theatre Company as part of the Columbia@Roundabout collaboration.

The Acting Program is committed to educating astute and generous collaborators, and seeks to integrate its training into the work of the rest of the MFA program's curriculum and their full cohort of theatre makers.

ACTING FACULTY

The Theatre Program boasts an accomplished and diverse faculty who bring their years of professional experience into the classroom.

James Calleri, Concentration Head, is a casting director and the owner and president of Calleri Casting, where he casts theater, film, and television. With Robert Cohen, he is the co-author of *Acting Professionally: Raw Facts About Careers in Acting*. He has taught at NYU Tisch Graduate Acting, Syracuse, NCSA, and guest lectured all over the country. He serves on the board of the Casting Society of America.

Rick Andrews, is a teacher and performer at The Magnet Theater, and has been studying, performing, and teaching improvisation since 1999. He has been a featured performer and instructor at Improv Boston, Washington University, and more than 25 other theaters and festivals. Rick helped found The Magnet Theater's corporate training arm, The Magnet Genius Machine, in 2011.

Arnold Aronson is a theatre historian and has taught at Columbia since 1991. He is the author of a number of books including *Ming Cho Lee: A Life in Design* (2014) and *American Avant-Garde Theatre: A History* (2001). Prior to coming to Columbia, he chaired the theatre departments at Hunter College and the University of Michigan and has also taught at Cornell University and the University of Virginia.

Tina Benko has performed on Broadway in such shows as *The Cherry Orchard*, *Not About Nightingales*, *Irena's Vow*, and three of Ivo Van Hove's productions, including the acclaimed staging of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. She has worked extensively on new play development at The Lark, New Dramatists, Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference, EST, and Lincoln Center Directors Lab.

Anne Bogart is a Co-Artistic Director of SITI Company, which she founded with Japanese director Tadashi Suzuki in 1992. She is the recipient of a Doris Duke Artist Grant, a USA Fellowship, a Rockefeller Fellowship, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. Bogart is the author of five books: *A Director Prepares*, *The Viewpoints Book*, *And Then, You Act*, *Conversations with Anne*, and most recently *What's the Story*.

Susan Cameron is a voice and speech teacher, dialect coach, and specialist in accent reduction. She was Master Teacher and Chair of Voice and Speech at NYU, on the faculty of NYU's MFA Graduate Acting program, and currently teaches at the New School for Drama in addition to Columbia. She is the author of *Perfecting Your English Pronunciation*. Susan holds an MFA in Acting from Yale School of Drama.

Nick Cianfroga is New York-based actor and teaching artist in speech and voice. Nick has taught at NYU Tisch, Molloy College, The New School, and The Lee Strasberg Institute at NYU, among others. Notable dialect work has been with Ann Dowd in HBO's *The Leftovers* and with Jimmy Biberi in *Ocean's 8*.

Margi Sharp Douglas instructs in acting, pilates, and Alexander technique and is a graduate of Columbia's MFA acting program. She is a founding member and Producing Director for Magis Theatre Company. Margi has taught at Tom Todoroff Conservatory and Columbia University. Acting credits include Orlando Shakespeare, Opera House Arts, La Mama, Abingdon Theatre and the New Ohio Theatre.

Kyle Fabel has appeared on Broadway in Aaron Sorkin's *The Farnsworth Invention* and in John Guare's *A Free Man of Color*, in addition to regional theaters across the country. He has directed for Portland Stage, Berkshire Theatre Festival, and Merrimack Repertory Theatre. He teaches and directs at NYU, New Studio on Broadway, and Stella Adler Studio.

Manoel Felciano is a graduate of Yale University with a BA in Humanities and NYU with an MFA in Acting. Manoel has taught at Viterbo University, NYU, and the American Conservatory Theater, and has offered master classes around the country. As a director, Manoel has worked on Harold Pinter, Arthur Miller, and original work.

Eugene Ma is a Toronto-born, Hong Kong-raised, New York-based international multidisciplinary theatre maker. As an actor, director, composer, and music director, Eugene's work has been presented all over the country. A certified teacher of Clown and Commedia dell'Arte, Eugene completed his teaching apprenticeship at Yale and Juilliard. www.playwitheugene.com

Sita Mani is a physical acting and movement instructor. Sita has held apprenticeships in Psychotherapeutic Principles for Working With The Body, Aerial Acrobatics, Alexander Technique, Voice and Creative Impulse, Authentic Voice Workshops, Iyengar Yoga, and Mindfulness Meditation, and has taught in the US and India. Sita's work has been featured at the Lucid Body House, the Brooklyn Arts Exchange, and the Asian American Theater Festival.

Kelly Maurer is a founding member of the SITI Company based in New York City. She has performed in many of SITI's productions, as well as at theaters all over New York City. Kelly teaches the Suzuki Method of Actor Training and the Viewpoints Training at SITI, the Atlantic Theater Acting School, Columbia, and NYU. She has been a guest faculty member at the Juilliard School and has taught numerous workshops around the U.S. and abroad.

Shanga Parker is a New York-based actor and teaching artist specializing in Suzuki Technique. He received his undergraduate education from Brown University and an MFA from U.C. San Diego. As an actor, Shanga has worked in television and both local and regional theaters across the country. Shanga also teaches at NYU Tisch.

Andrei Serban studied at the Theatre Institute in Romania. His award-winning *Fragments of a Greek Trilogy* has been performed at more than 20 international festivals. *The Cherry Orchard*, which he directed at Lincoln Center, won a Tony Award for Best Revival. He has directed at every major theater in the United States, the Royal National Theatre in London, Schauspielhaus Bochum, and the Comedie Française in Paris, among others. He acted as general director of the Romanian National Theatre.

Michele Shay is a Tony-nominated award-winning actress, director, producer, healer, and certified Coach. She has appeared on and off-Broadway, on television and film and in regional theaters around the country. She is currently a member of the Actors' Center Theater Workshop Company founded by J. Michael Miller in New York City.

Rafi Silver is an actor, writer, and educator. He co-created the Proof of Concept class, which was developed to encourage acting students in their final year of training to begin the process of creating their own original performance-based content. He has worked in television and regional theaters, and has taught at NYU, Columbia, and The Acting Corps Studio in LA.

Joseph Travers has worked as a professional fight director, stunt coordinator, and stage combat teacher for over twenty-five years. Recent work includes the Off-Broadway musical *The View Upstairs* and the Broadway production of *Bronx Bombers*. He teaches at Columbia University and American Musical and Dramatic Academy, and is the managing director of Swordplay.

Ron Van Lieu was the Master Teacher of Acting and eventually Chair of the NYU Graduate Acting Program where he taught from 1975 to 2004. In 2004 he was appointed the Lloyd Richards Professor of Acting and Chair of the Acting Program at the Yale School of Drama where he taught until 2017. He is the Artistic Director Emeritus of The Actors Center NYC where he continues to teach.

COURSES OFFERED (subject to change)

First Year

Acting I & II
Scene Study I & II
From Text to Character
Improv
Physical Movement
Alexander Technique
Stage Combat
Viewpoints
Voice and Text
Speech
History & Theory of
Performance
Collaboration

Second Year

Acting III & IV
Acting Studio
Acting through Song
Shakespeare
Acting for Camera
Clown
Suzuki Technique
Voice and Text II
Speech
Dialects
Visiting Artists

Third Year

Professional Practice
Proof of Concept