

Desirée Dabney

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804-350-9010

Location: Willing to travel

Versatile Theatre Director with experience directing both plays and musicals, committed to creating inclusive, collaborative, and artistically rich productions. I believe in the importance of every performer being heard, seen, and valued, and I strive to create rehearsal environments where all voices contribute to the storytelling process. Skilled in script and score analysis, staging, and working closely with designers, choreographers, and musical directors to realize a unified artistic vision. I bring strong leadership and clear communication to every production, ensuring that each member of the cast and creative team has the support, resources, and guidance they need to do their best work. Passionate about building ensemble-driven theatre that is emotionally resonant, visually compelling, and deeply connected to its audience.

DIRECTING EXPERIENCE

Fox Theatre Atlanta: Rising Stars — Junior Director

Atlanta, GA | May–August 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013

- Directed and produced four consecutive seasons of youth theatre productions with casts of up to 40 performers ages 8–17.
- Conceived and staged original musicals and adaptations, guiding young actors in character development, ensemble work, and stagecraft.
- Collaborated with technical teams to deliver fully realized productions, integrating set, lighting, sound, and costume design.

For Colored Girls — Director

Ohrstrom-Bryant Theatre, Winchester, VA | February 2014

- Directed Ntozake Shange's groundbreaking choreopoem, focusing on movement-based storytelling and ensemble performance.

Their Story, Our History — Director/Writer

Ohrstrom-Bryant Theatre, Winchester, VA | February 2014

- Wrote and directed an original devised work exploring Black historical narratives through spoken word, music, and movement.

August Adventure — Director

SPARC (School of the Performing Arts in the Richmond Community), Richmond, VA | 2015–Present

- Directed annual junior productions including *Annie JR.*, *Aladdin JR.*, *Seussical JR.*, *The Lion King JR.*, and *The Jungle Book JR.* with casts of 40+ students.
- Mentored youth in voice, character development, and choreography, creating dynamic and educational theatrical experiences.

Movie Night — Director

Boushall Middle School, Richmond, VA | December 2019

- Directed a collaborative student performance, fostering creativity and leadership in a school theatre setting.

Once on This Island (Virtual Production) — Director

Clubhouse Online | May 2020

- Directed a virtual production reaching audiences worldwide, incorporating vocal coaching, creative staging, and multimedia storytelling.

Summer Staged Reading Series — Director

Heritage Theatre Ensemble, Richmond, VA | May–June 2022

- Directed staged readings of new works, providing dramaturgical support and actor coaching in a workshop environment.

How Black Mothers Say I Love You — Director

Richmond Triangle Players, Richmond, VA | January 2023

- Directed a **sold-out production** of Trey Anthony's play that won **Best Ensemble** and **Best Leading Actress** at the Richmond Theatre Critics Circle Awards.

- Guided nuanced performances exploring intergenerational Black motherhood, leading to critical acclaim and community impact.

She Persisted: The Musical — Director

Virginia Repertory Theatre, Richmond, VA | February 2023

- Directed a TYA musical celebrating female changemakers, merging theatrical storytelling with educational programming.

Harriet Tubman: Touring Production — Director

Virginia Repertory Theatre, Richmond, VA | February 2023

- Directed a touring historical drama for schools and cultural venues, enhancing historical literacy through theatre.

Rent — Director

Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA | April 2023

- Directed a **sold-out production** — **the university's first to sell out in over 11 years** — of Jonathan Larson's groundbreaking rock musical.
- Production received **national recognition** for its bold direction, innovative staging, and contemporary reimagining of a beloved classic.
- Led a diverse cast and creative team, emphasizing ensemble storytelling, vocal performance, and social relevance to connect with modern audiences.

The Descendants — Director

Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA | April 2024

- Directed a large-scale student production of the Disney musical, emphasizing ensemble storytelling and choreography.

Her Story — Director

Theatre Diva Productions, Touring Educational Theatre | 2023–2024

- Directed a touring production focused on women's narratives, presented across schools and cultural institutions.

Bumble Bee — Director

New Voices, SPARC, Richmond, VA | July 2024

- Directed a new works premiere as part of SPARC's New Voices Festival, mentoring emerging playwrights and performers.

The Lion King JR. — Director

Cadence Theatre Company, Richmond, VA | July 2024

- Directed a youth adaptation of the Disney classic, integrating music, movement, and storytelling for family audiences.

Mean Girls — Director

Maggie Walker Governor's School, Richmond, VA | January 2025

- Directed a full-scale high school musical, focusing on comedic timing, ensemble cohesion, and musical staging.

SpongeBob: The Musical (Tour) — Director

SPARC, Richmond, VA | July 2025

- Directed the **first-ever regional tour of *SpongeBob: The Musical* in the Richmond area**, expanding youth theatre access and engagement across multiple venues.

Once on This Island — Director

Dogwood Dell Theatre, Richmond, VA | July 2025

- Directed the **first all-Black musical production in Richmond theatre history**, attracting **over 20,000 patrons** and setting new audience records.
- Led creative direction, staging, and ensemble development in a landmark outdoor production celebrating Black storytelling and Caribbean heritage.

High School Musical — Director

Maggie Walker Governor's School, Richmond, VA | November 2025

- Directed a full-scale student production of Disney's *High School Musical*, focusing on large-ensemble choreography, contemporary staging, and musical theatre technique.

- Collaborated with a creative team to guide young performers in vocal performance, character development, and ensemble storytelling.
- Fostered a dynamic rehearsal environment that supported student growth and celebrated diverse talent.

EDUCATION

Shenandoah Conservatory, Winchester, VA — *Bachelor of Fine Arts: Theatre*
2010-2014

University of Richmond, Richmond, VA — *Masters of Education: Theatre* 2020-2022

Walden University, Virtual — *Doctorate of Education (In process end date May 2026)*