

Teaching Philosophy

As a progressive theatre maker, my teaching philosophy serves as a catalyst for transformation, inspiring theatre students to succeed, evolve, establish an artistic practice, and foster holistic processes.

At the core of my philosophy are **STUDENTS**. Engaging with creative, sensitive, and deeply enthusiastic artists alongside a supportive audience requires a robust yet adaptable vision complemented by practical communication skills. Although a director ultimately makes the final decisions, the essence of theatre lies in collaboration; we must honor all voices to achieve the most effective outcomes. The spirit of cooperation is at the heart of the community we serve. However, I have often observed that theatre pedagogy tends to lean toward competition. Instead of striving to be "the best," my approach encourages students to focus on becoming "their best" as they navigate their unique journeys. Each moment in rehearsal and performance presents a valuable teaching opportunity, enriching the experience for everyone involved. This guiding ethos has evolved through my roles at John Carroll High School, Summerfest, Birmingham Children's Theatre, Samford University, Birmingham-Southern College, and Indian Springs School. I have connected students with esteemed guest artists, nurtured creativity, programmed thoughtful and inclusive productions, and empowered students to share their stories. Central to my teaching philosophy is fostering agency and instilling gratitude for personal experiences. I teach students to celebrate their achievements and glean wisdom from their setbacks. My expertise encompasses Stanislavski, Boleslavsky, and Hagen-based Acting Methods, Embodiment Acting Methods, Stage Directing, Script Analysis, Musical Theatre Acting and Song Interpretation, Playwriting, Theatre for Young Audiences, New Works Development, and exploring Grief within the Creative Process. My profound respect for Arts Education informs my theatre practice. Having been on both sides of the footlights, I empathize deeply with emerging talent, using my experience to guide and encourage their artistic and personal development through thoughtful discussions and written evaluations.

My philosophy is rooted in the belief that theatre is a **PRACTICE** designed to challenge norms and engage in complex conversations. As a theatre practitioner, I select powerful, honest, poignant, and sincere stories. I aim for the actors, crew, and

audience to emerge as better individuals. I value opportunities to provoke thought and engage in meaningful dialogues, nurturing an artistic aesthetic that inspires and fosters influential, positive, and lasting theatrical experiences. This commitment to thought-provoking art aligns with my view of the theatre's mission to contribute to an ever-evolving global culture that demands kindness and social justice. I accomplish this through active listening, responsive engagement, and creating safe spaces for vulnerable work, ensuring everyone feels heard, valued, and respected. My methods involve creating liminal spaces for contemplation and mindfulness before starting creative work, encouraging dialogue, honoring the diverse experiences and opinions of others, and remaining attuned to the energy of each shared moment and adapting as necessary. This progressive approach has facilitated deeper connections among my students, enabling them to share their experiences, learn from their mistakes, celebrate their victories, and provide the support needed in this intimate practice.

My **PROCESS** as an interdisciplinary theatre-maker opens pathways for conversation and truth-seeking. As part of my MFA studies, I developed a performance piece called "Primogeniture," which explores the interplay between my life journey and my creative practice. My work explores the beauty that can emerge from grief-filled experiences, transforming them into a shared artistic expression of gratitude for the lessons learned, regardless of their challenges. This exploration has deepened my understanding of the human spirit's resilience and capacity for courage in the face of challenges, ultimately fostering a more profound connection to the divine. My broad understanding of the human experience lies at the heart of my artistic process and pedagogy. It reflects my ability to interweave multiple disciplines and perspectives, meeting individuals where they are to help them achieve their potential. My life journey is central to my creative practice, which serves as a guiding framework for essential understanding. By exploring my pain, I inspire my creative process, seeking beauty amidst grief and converting these experiences into a collective artistic expression of appreciation and wisdom. Through my work with students, I illuminate the human spirit's remarkable ability to confront challenges with courage, leading to a stronger connection to oneself and the world around them. As my technique has evolved from a "barking" to a collaborative approach, my students have responded with openness, fearlessness, compassion, thoughtfulness, dedication, empathy, and courage. A stronger, healthier person becomes a stronger, healthier artist.

Ultimately, using theatre as a conduit, my goal with this philosophy is to equip students for critical, ethical, and empathetic thinking—something we need more than ever in today's polarized world.