

# DRAMA



The Drama Program at the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities provides pre-professional actor training for students who demonstrate artistic instinct, dedication, enthusiasm, and talent. The demanding two-year curriculum is built on a conservatory model and includes courses in acting fundamentals, voice and speech, movement, dance, singing, rehearsal and performance, and special topics. The focus of the program is on the artistic process. Acting classes emphasize empathy, communication, and truthful human behavior. Movement, voice and speech, and special topics classes support the acting process and encourage development of the total student/actor. Performance is limited to the senior year and is viewed as a natural extension of studio work.

## *ADMISSION*

Admission to the program is by audition, though previous experience is not required. Sophomores apply to be enrolled their junior year. Auditions include two contemporary monologues, a song, and an interview with drama faculty members.

## *COURSES*

### **Honors Acting 3A**

This course begins developing a genuine understanding of the actor's craft, exploring techniques and theories essential to theatrical performance. Students are introduced to the Stanislavski system and exercises of Sanford Meisner, Uta Hagen, Robert Lewis, and others. Actors learn to define and identify the components of technique through script analysis. Improvisational exercises emphasize ensemble, commitment, risk, imagination, and intuition. The work culminates in the rehearsal and performance of selected scenes.

### **Honors Voice and Speech 3A**

This two-fold course introduces foundations of Voice and Speech for the stage and Singing. The following topic areas are covered: respiration, phonation, articulation, resonance, physical alignment, vocal production, the anatomy and mechanics of the human voice, an introduction to the International Phonetic Alphabet (Skinner System), and phonetic transcription.

### **Honors Special Topics 3A**

This course includes classes designed to augment the Drama curriculum by offering experiences in areas not wholly encompassed in traditional acting classes. In the first year, students develop an awareness of dramatic movement. The training encourages flexible, well-conditioned bodies that will respond readily to the creative demands of acting. Students will also develop specific movement skills. Topics are drawn from alignment, physical conditioning, theatre movement, stage combat, tai chi, tap dance, modern dance, jazz dance, yoga, pilates, mask, gymnastics, circus skills, and physical comedy. First year students will also study Theatre History as a means of better acquainting themselves with the

art's origins, influences, and innovations. Participation outside class time is required.

### **Honors Acting 3B**

This course expands upon the foundations learned in Acting 3A classes. Actors are challenged to apply their knowledge of acting technique to improvisational situations and non-dramatic material. Text analysis may include playwriting and the investigation of plays from the American Realist genre. Students progress toward integrating the analytical, physical, and imaginative components of acting through studio exercises and the rehearsal of selected scenes, which are formally presented in the Spring Scene Showcase.

### **Honors Voice and Speech 3B**

The second semester continues first semester topics and introduces the following subjects: text analysis, non-dramatic texts, scoring of text, and synthesis of vocal and physical action. Other topics include vocal health and basic musicianship skills.

### **Honors Special Topics 3B**

This course continues the movement studies begun in the previous semester. As actors develop more responsive instruments, they begin to distinguish between habitual physical expression and more organic, dynamic, and stage worthy responses, while acquiring valuable professional skills. Topics are drawn from alignment, physical conditioning, theatre movement, stage combat, tai chi, tap dance, modern dance, African dance, mask, yoga, pilates, gymnastics, circus skills and physical comedy. Participation outside class time is required.

### **Honors Acting 4A**

This course encompasses the process of rehearsing and performing a play or theatre project. In rehearsals, students apply physical, vocal, and interpretive skills as they transform into dramatically viable characters. In technical rehearsals, actors learn to incorporate costumes, lighting, scenic elements, and props into their performances and develop a more comprehensive understanding of the theatrical process. Work culminates in performance before a public audience as actors synthesize elements of training and rehearsal.

### **Honors Voice and Speech 4A**

Voice classes focus on Shakespeare for the actor: language, structure, rhythm, scansion, and other essentials for performance; singers apply fundamental techniques to musical theatre repertoire, culminating in a cabaret performance at semester's end.

### **Honors Special Topics 4A**

In the third semester, movement training is still a mainstay, with other topics that support the actors' development layered in. Topics may include modern dance, stage combat, yoga, tai chi, audition preparation, technical theatre, entrepreneurship, and film studies.

## Honors Acting 4B

In this course, students broaden their knowledge of acting as they approach material that makes increased demands on their physical, vocal, technical and imaginative resources. Topics may be drawn from contemporary, modern, classical drama, and/or screenplays, and are selected specifically for the needs of each class.

## Honors Voice and Speech 4B

The final semester will be devoted to application and synthesis. The student will work to fuse Voice, Singing, and Acting through the process of rehearsing and performing a language-based play, typically from Shakespeare or the Greeks.

## Honors Special Topics 4B

The final semester of this course introduces exciting new elements such as stage combat, acting with the camera, and playwriting and explores tai chi and other topics that contribute to a lifelong, self-directed pursuit of excellence.

## FACULTY

### **Daniel Murray**, *Department Chair, Acting/Movement*

Mr. Murray's professional acting credits include the New York Shakespeare Festival, North Carolina Shakespeare Festival, Shakespeare Festival of Dallas, George Street Playhouse, Playwrights' Theatre of New Jersey, Twelve Miles West Theatre, Ensemble Studio Theatre, New Dramatists, Kitchen Dog Theater, the Warehouse Theatre, and South Carolina Repertory Company. He has taught and served as a guest artist at the Dallas Theatre Center, Playwrights' Theatre of New Jersey, North Carolina Central University, University of South Carolina, Lander University, New Mexico School of the Arts, the University of Georgia, Wofford College, and Perry Mansfield, among others. Mr. Murray has served in the Residential High School Drama program since its inaugural year in 1999, and has directed the 10-month and summer Drama programs since 2001. He is certified through Fight Directors Canada and Yoga Alliance, and is an alumnus of the Kennedy Center Playwriting Intensive. He holds a BA in History from North Carolina State University, where he was a four-time Atlantic Coast Conference Scholar Athlete, and an MFA in Acting from Southern Methodist University's Meadows School of the Arts. Mr. Murray has been a proud member of Actors' Equity Association since 1995.

### **Jayce T. Tromsness**, *Speech, Shakespeare, and Theatre History*

Mr. Tromsness is a graduate of the MFA program at the University of South Carolina. He earned his bachelor's degree in Theatre with an emphasis in acting, costume design and stage management from Western Washington University. He also holds minor degrees in linguistics and art history from Fairhaven College. He was an associate professor of theatre at USC where he taught voice and speech, period styles, and improvisation. He has been a freelance professional actor, director, playwright, and designer for over fifteen years. He is a founding member of the Seattle chapter of the We're Not Your Mother's Players improvisation group and started the Columbia, South Carolina, chapter in 1991.

He is also a founding member of the Distracted Globe Theatre Company in Greenville, South Carolina. He has served as a vocal coach for numerous productions for the South Carolina Shakespeare Company, The University of the South, Sewanee, Trustus Theatre, the Warehouse Theatre, USC, and USC-Aiken. Mr. Tromsness is a long-time company member and former staff member of Trustus Theatre and is currently co-artistic director of the Distracted Globe Theater Company.

### **Candace Dickinson**, *Voice, Speech, and Singing*

Candace Dickinson teaches Voice and Singing for the Actor. She is a classically trained singer and received her Master of Music degree in Voice Performance from the University of Colorado in Boulder, CO. Candace made her professional debut as Hermione in Strauss' Die Ägyptische Helena at the Santa Fe Opera in 2001 where she later returned as a guest artist in Gilbert and Sullivan's Pirates of Penzance. She has worked with such conductors and as Alan Gilbert and Martin Isepp. Her opera roles include Nannetta in Verdi's Falstaff, Barbarina in Marriage of Figaro, Micaëla in Bizet's Carmen, and Lia in L'Enfant Prodigue by Debussy. Her concert work includes the soprano solo for Verdi's Requiem, Faure's Requiem, Bruckner's Te Deum, and John Rutter's The Mass of the Children, and Mozart's Requiem. She studied with Patsy Rodenburg at Michael Howard Studios in New York City where she completed all three levels of Shakespeare's Heightened Language workshops taught by Rodenburg. She frequently performs in recital and in collaboration with other musicians.

## Adjuncts

**Rhonda Murray**, *Dance*

**Alisa Caldwell**, *African Dance*

**Ben Weston**, *African Drum*

## GUEST ARTISTS

**Monica Bell**, Suzuki • **André DeShields**, Extreme Theatre

**Robert Francesconi**, Mask

**Megan Gogerty**, Playwriting • **Danny Hoch**, Performance

**Cecil O'Neal**, Acting and Auditioning

**David Rambo**, Playwriting

**John Patrick Shanley**, Playwriting

**David Strathairn**, Acting

**Liza J. Bennett**, Acting for the Camera and Scene Study

**Brandon Micheal Hall**, Acting

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Drama alumni attend The Juilliard Drama School, The University of North Carolina School of the Arts, Southern Methodist University's Meadows School of the Arts, Rutgers University/Mason Gross School of the Arts, Guthrie Theatre Program, Carnegie Mellon University, and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, among others. Graduates have performed principal roles in feature films, on television, on Broadway, off-Broadway, in national theatrical tours, in London's West End, and in America's leading regional theatres. They have been nominated for and won Tony Awards, Grammy Awards, and NAACP Image Awards.