

Ahren Potratz

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PROFILE

Actor and pedagogy professional with more than sixteen years of experience. Instructional expertise in a wide range of settings including traditional classroom, workshops, and private studies. Has extensive experience as a writer, director and performer. Member of Actor's Equity, SAG/AFTRA, and The Society Of American Fight Directors (SAFD).

EDUCATION

2013 MA, Theatre- *Villanova University*, Villanova, PA
2001 BFA, Theatre –*University of The Arts*, Philadelphia, PA

PERSONAL TEACHING STATEMENT

When I first started teaching I simply viewed it as a means to an end; a manner of supplementing my income while in between shows while at the same time giving my day some routine and purpose. I honestly thought it would be a short-term affair. I was wrong. After my very first class I discovered how much fun I had during the experience; the joy I felt at doing my best to impart knowledge to those eager and not so eager to learn. Now I have a true passion for teaching and the exchange of ideas and knowledge. And I'm interested in how that exchange can happen for every student in multiple ways.

I believe that students learn best when they are wholly engaging with material through physical, textual, vocal, and visual means. This presses me to find fresh, exciting, and diverse ways of delivering this material that touches upon an individual's unique learning style and offers the most varied means of repetition possible. However, it is my belief that all of that means very little if a student is not connecting with the knowledge on a deep and meaningful level that is personal. Without that component I would assert that a student is only retaining half of the information or skills that are being taught. I believe what is personal is ingrained. Theatre is personal.

Theatre opened me to a whole world of possibilities when I was young and it continues to do so today. I have always had encouragement and support from my family, but more importantly I have always had instructors that were rigorous, specific, and nurturing. And that is the approach I take in my classroom. I aim to treat each student with respect and admiration while demanding excellence from them. Now, I'd like to be clear about what I mean when I use the word "excellence." I never expect my students to be perfect. Perfection is a fallacy, because failure is inherent. What I do expect is that my students try as hard as they can and that they fail; fail boldly and without shame. I believe that true success is found in the doing of an activity, whether it is a scene, song, dance, or math equation, and that there is much to be learned if the activity fails. My goal is always to create a safe space where failure is, in fact, positive. I encourage my students to understand that failure is inevitable and, moreover, can be used to one's advantage. It has a great value. It is a necessary piece of the puzzle just like success is and without it there is no real way to complete a picture.

My interest lies in the integration of the body to any learning situation. I wish to use my dance, movement, mask, puppetry, and vocal training to enrich and deepen the acting experience. I am interested in how non-linear or abstract movement can serve the literal or gestural choices that characters make. I believe that the exploration of the large, obtuse, impulsive, interior and exterior physical life of a character can then be streamlined, minimized, and integrated into the overarching vitality of what is shown on stage.

On a whole, I am passionate about teaching and being taught in a classroom environment that is built on respect, patience, flexibility, exploration, and meaningful connect to the material and community. I aim to serve as a leader and role model to students and peers while maintaining a rigorously specific yet joyous demeanor as we move forward in the great adventure of inspiring young minds through knowledge.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Member, *Actors Equity*

Member, *SAFD*

Artistic Associate, *Enchantment Theatre Co*, Philadelphia

Advisory Board, *Theatrical Trainer*, Philadelphia

Member, *Friends of South High Theatre (FOSHT)*, Minneapolis, MN

PROFESSIONAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Spring 2015 Lantern Theatre Co, Philadelphia PA - Guest Teacher

- Responsibilities: Facilitate small group Shakespeare workshops with a focus on Stage Combat.

Spring 2013 Vineland High School, Vineland NJ - Guest Teacher

- Responsibilities: Facilitate large and small group acting and Shakespeare workshops for grades 9-12. Coordinate and run a culminating performance of parodied and classic Shakespearian scenes

2011-Present Historic Philadelphia Inc. Philadelphia PA

- Responsibilities: Accurately interpret historical figures (Thomas Jefferson) and interact with guest on tours and historical grounds.

Spring 2010 The Boys' Latin, Philadelphia PA - Guest Teacher

- Responsibilities: Coordinating and running Shakespeare and acting related workshops for grades 9-12. Casting and directing of school productions.

2006-2010 People's Light & Theatre Co, Malvern PA - Guest & Resident Teaching Artist

- Responsibilities: Provide acting and improvisation fundamentals to 9-12th grade students. Facilitating the New Voices Youth Ensemble. Writing and implementing two-week workshops for children with learning/behavioral differences at Collingdale Community School (DCIU). Developing programming and teaching acting and movement fundamentals for the Summerstage theatre camp. Facilitating Kinesthetic and Brain-Based learning technique teacher training workshops.

2001-2006 Arcadia Camp Shakespeare, Glenside PA - Manager & Teaching Artist

- Responsibilities: Coordinating and running the camp's day to day operation, including classes, meals and breaks, rehearsal and casting of plays, registration and introduction. Distribution and filing of all camp related paper work, i.e., registration, medical information forms, and insurance waivers. Managing teachers, assistant teachers, counselors, and campers. Development and implementation of camp curriculum.

Summer 2007 Enchantment Theater Co, Glenside PA - Project Coordinator/Lead Teaching

- Developed a summer program for youth ages 8-13 that includes classes in magic, masks, puppetry, acting, stage movement, and clowning. Responsibilities include: Hiring and managing teachers, assistant teachers, and counselors. Coordinating and running the camp's day to day operation, including classes, meals and breaks, rehearsal and casting of plays, registration and introduction.

2002-Present South High School, Minneapolis MN - Guest Teaching Artist & Director

- Responsibilities: Coordinating and running Shakespeare, acting, and combat workshops for grades 9-12. Casting and directing of school productions.



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AEA * SAG

Height:	6' 0"	Eyes:	Blue
Weight:	155 lbs.	Hair:	Blonde

THEATRE

The Taming Of The Shrew	Lucentio	The Lantern Theatre
In A Dark Dark House	Drew	Simpatico Theatre Project
Muswell Hill	Mat	Villanova University
The Drowsy Chaperone	Man in Chair	Villanova University
How I Learned To drive	Uncle Peck	Villanova University
Museum	Jean-Claude	Villanova University
Woman & Scarecrow	Man	Villanova University
The Comedy of Errors	Antipholus of Syracuse	Villanova University
SURVIVE!	Sand	Swim Pony Performing Arts
Theophilus North	Man 1	People's Light and Theatre Co
Jason & The Golden Fleece	Orpheus	People's Light and Theatre Co
Trying to find Chinatown	Benjamin	People's Light and Theatre Co
Master Harold and the Boys	Hally	The Lantern Theatre
The Tempest	Ferdinand/Ariel	The Lantern Theatre
Lovers	Joe/Mrs. Wilson	The Lantern Theatre
Don Juan	Ensemble	McCarter Theatre, NJ
All Over	Newspaperman	McCarter Theatre, NJ
Romeo & Juliet	Ensemble	McCarter Theatre, NJ

FILM & TELEVISION

Philadelphia: The Great Experiment ep.9 "The Storm" (John Dickinson)

EDUCATION: University of the Arts-BFA 2001 * Villanova University - MA 2013

SKILLS:

SAFD Advanced Actor-Combatant '14, additional fight resume upon request, (Unarmed, Broadsword, Rapier & Dagger, Quarterstaff (Examiner's Award), Small Sword (Examiner's Award), Knife (Examiner's Award), British, French, O.P., Midwestern, and Southern Dialects, Puppetry, Neutral Mask, Character Mask.



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