
Education

Master of Fine Arts in Directing • Illinois State University • illinoistate.edu
3.98 GPA
2015

Master of Arts in Literary and Cultural Studies • Carnegie Mellon University • cmu.edu
3.77 GPA
2011

Bachelor of Arts in English and Theatre • Duquesne University • duq.edu
3.9 GPA
2009 *summa cum laude*

Performing Arts Experience

Professional Positions

South Coast Repertory • Costa Mesa, CA • scr.org

Assistant Director to David Emmes on the world premiere of Rajiv Joseph's *Mr. Wolf*, 2014-15 season

Assisted founding artist director David Emmes on *Mr. Wolf*, including involvement in development of the new script together with Rajiv Joseph, consultation with designers, stage management, and production staff, actor coaching, dramaturgical research, and private meetings with Mr. Emmes on the progress of the show.

Illinois Shakespeare Festival • Normal, IL • the-festival.org

Assistant director to Paula Suozzi on *Elizabeth Rex*, 2014 season

Assisted Ms. Suozzi with actor coaching, including running understudy rehearsals and side rehearsals, consultation with designers, stage management, and production staff, and dramaturgical research.

Illinois Shakespeare Festival • Normal, IL • the-festival.org

Casting Associate, 2014 season

Assisted Artistic Director Kevin Rich in casting the summer 2014 season of three cleverly connected shows performed in rep-*Elizabeth Rex*, in which the Lord Chamberlain's Men have just performed *Much Ado About Nothing*, and Shakespeare begins to write *Antony and Cleopatra* on the eve before Lord Essex is to be executed by Queen Elizabeth I, with acclaimed Milwaukee Rep resident artist Deborah Staples as both Elizabeth I and Cleopatra. The Festival employs 6 AEA and 8 non-AEA actors along with an intern company. As the liaison between Kevin and submitting actors I handled audition postings, over 1,000 actor submissions, audition appointments, and filing of all resumes, headshots, and video submissions for audition locations in Chicago, New York, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis.

Illinois Shakespeare Festival • Normal, IL • the festival.org

Box Office Associate, 2014 season

For the 2014 summer season I processed tickets Ticketmaster software, assisted in the management of season subscriptions, promoted special ticketing offers, created daily financial reports including light money handling, and served as front of house management on show days. My duties also included general customer service for our patrons and handling third party vendors for our community partnerships.

The Summer Company • Pittsburgh, PA • thesummercompany.com

Producer, 2010-2012

Steve Fatla, Jay Keenan and John E. Lane, Jr. created The Summer Company in 1993. Fatla is head of the Carlow University Theatre Department, while Keenan and Lane were producer and technical director of the Duquesne University Red Masquers. A team of 8 produces 2 or 3 shows a season. Some producers have left to pursue their careers in other avenues or cities, and new producers have joined the company. The constant is the mission of the company "to produce quality productions of classical and soon to be classic plays in the company of friends. All productions have taken place at Duquesne University, Carlow University and, most recently, the Gemini Theatre Company. Shows produced in my three seasons with The Summer Company include *A Thurber Carnival*, *Up the Down Staircase*, *Look Homeward*, *Angel*, *Rhinoceros*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *House of Blue Leaves*, and *Suddenly, Last Summer*.

Gemini Theatre Company • Pittsburgh, PA • geminitheater.org

Production Associate, 2009-2010

Gemini Theater Company was established in 1996 as an interactive children's theater including classic children's theatre performances, special Needs Workshops, Tickets for Underprivileged Children Program, Summer Theater Camps, school assembly performances and community outreach. During my season with Gemini I managed box office and ticketing during business hours and show times for six children's theater productions throughout the year, assisted in running and coordinating monthly special events for parents and children, created daily reports of ticket sales and finance, participated in production work on 6 shows a year including stage management, set, sound and light design, worked as technical staff on traveling shows to area schools.

Pittsburgh New Works Festival • Pittsburgh, PA • pittsburghnewworks.org

Play Selection Reader 2008-present

Festival Judge 2011

Pittsburgh New Works Festival (PNWF) is dedicated to fostering the development of original one-act plays. PNWF is an annual event. Each September, 18 new one-act plays are produced by Pittsburgh region theater companies during the six weeks of the festival. As a reader, for the last 6 years I have rated and scored 15 plays a year to be submitted to the festival directors. As a festival judge in 2011, I attended all 18 productions and evaluated them on acting, directing, and playwriting merits.

Current Theatrics • Pittsburgh, PA

Producer 2011

I, along with a group of Pittsburgh-based actors traveled to the Cleveland Irish and Cultural Festival where we produced three one act plays from upcoming Irish playwrights in just 48 hours from first read to open.

Director

Water by the Spoonful	Quiara Alegria Hudes	Illinois State University School of Theatre
Stop Kiss	Diana Son	Illinois State University School of Theatre
The Forever Waltz	Glyn Maxwell	Illinois State University School of Theatre
The Moon Please	Diana Son	Illinois State University School of Theatre

Matrix, Inc.	Diana Raznovich	Illinois State University School of Theatre
The 8: Reindeer Monologues	Jeff Goode	Illinois State University School of Theatre
Home Free!	Lanford Wilson	Illinois State University School of Theatre
House of Blue Leaves	John Guare	The Summer Company
Look Homeward, Angel	Ketti Frings	The Summer Company
Thrown	Rebecca Ellis	Pittsburgh New Works Festival
Bug Rescuing	Judy Klass	Pittsburgh New Works Festival
History Lesson	Fiona Keane	Current Theatrics for the Cleveland Irish Fest
The Maids	Jean Genet	Duquesne University Red Masquers
Perks	Justin Sines	Duquesne University Red Masquers
Goodbye April, Hello May	Ethan Lipton	Duquesne University Red Masquers
Bedtime Story Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea	Sean O'Casey Dean Caivano	Duquesne University Red Masquers Duquesne University Red Masquers
Boy Meets Girl	Wendy Wasserstein	Duquesne University Red Masquers
No Skronking	Shel Silverstein	Duquesne University Red Masquers

Assistant Director

Mr. Wolf	South Coast Repertory (dir. David Emmes)
Elizabeth Rex	Illinois Shakespeare Festival (dir. Paula Suozzi)
Mother Courage and Her Children	Illinois State University School of Theatre and Dance (dir. Sandra Zielinski)
Merry Wives of Windsor	Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Park (dir. Tommy Costello)
A Stitch in Time	Pittsburgh New Works Festival (dir. Justin Sines)
Pinocchio	Gemini Theater (dir. Jill Jeffrey)
The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles	Duquesne University Red Masquers (dir. John E. Lane, Jr.)
An Evening with the Mother of Us All	Duquesne University Red Masquers (dir. John E. Lane, Jr.)

Stage Manager

A Thurber Carnival	The Summer Company (dir. John E. Lane, Jr.)
The Voysey Inheritance	The Summer Company (dir. John E. Lane, Jr.)
Homeless: The Musical!	The Summer Company (dir. John E. Lane, Jr.)
Babes in Toyland	Gemini Theater (dir. Jill Jeffrey)
Aladdin	Gemini Theater (dir. Jill Jeffrey)
The Eight Reindeer Monologues	Duquesne University (dir. Gail Hofbauer)
Oh Dad, Poor Dad...	Duquesne University (dir. Nancy Bach)
Antigone	Duquesne University (dir. David M. Katzin)
The Taming of the Shrew	Duquesne University (dir. John E. Lane, Jr.)
The Jeweler's Shop	Duquesne University (dir. John E. Lane, Jr.)
Gammer Gurton's Needle	Duquesne University (dir. John E. Lane, Jr.)

Teaching Experience

Principles of Stage Direction • Illinois State University

Instructor, expected fall 2014

Acquaints the student with the basic principles of stage direction and provides a basic vocabulary and methodology. 10 minute final scenes are presented at the end of the semester.

Experiencing Theatre • Illinois State University

Instructor, 2012-2015

An introduction to the principles and the collaborative processes of theatrical production. Theatre attendance to three main stage productions is required along with a "lipdub" final project.

Advanced Directing • Illinois State University

Teaching Assistant, Spring 2014 (Sandra Zielinski)

Advanced work in directing theory and practice. The course is designed to provide practical experience in collaboration and process. A capstone experience is the direction of a one-act play. Directors work with lighting designers to produce a weekend one-act play festival.

Principles of Stage Direction • Illinois State University

Teaching Assistant, Fall 2013 (Dr. Don LaCasse)

Acquaints the student with the basic principles of stage direction and provides a basic vocabulary and methodology. 10 minute final scenes are presented at the end of the semester.

Theatre Practicum • Illinois State University

Teaching Assistant, 2012-2014 (Shannon O'Neill and Dr. Don LaCasse)

Production experience in costume, properties or scenery construction; lighting preparation, scene painting, backstage crew or ushering, entrance, exit, and midterm interviews required with instructors.

Music and Arts Day Camp • Chatham University

Instructor (grades 5-12), Summer 2013

Produced two short plays and a musical with kids ages 10-17, including monologue and scene work.

Academic Details

Master of Fine Arts in Directing • Illinois State University • illinoistate.edu

3.98 GPA

2015

- Awarded full tuition scholarship and graduate assistantship
- Member, Curriculum Committee 2013-2014
- Panel, Women and Gender Studies Symposium 2014, *This Woman's Work: Directing in an Unwelcome World*, followed by a presentation of Diana Son's *The Moon Please*.
- Sandra Zielinski (Chekhov, script analysis), Deb Alley (Absurdism, script analysis), Don LaCasse (Realism), Kevin Rich (Ibsen), Sonja Moser (The Greeks, Shaw)

Master of Arts in Literary and Cultural Studies • Carnegie Mellon University • cmu.edu

3.77 GPA

2011

- Raymond Williams Fellowship in Cultural Studies
- "Weapons," *The Oakland Review*, Fall 2012

Bachelor of Arts in English and Theatre • Duquesne University • duq.edu

3.9 GPA

2009 *summa cum laude*

- Outstanding Theatre Major, 2009
- Red Masquers, Historian, 2008-2009

The Red Masquers are the oldest amateur theatre company in the city of Pittsburgh. Known as the Red Masquers since 1914, the group traces its roots back to the late 1800s when Duquesne first started to offer an education in dramatics.

- "The Cane Lady," *:lexicon*, Fall 2007
- "Dandelions," *:lexicon*, Spring 2009
- John E. Lane Jr, (directing, dramatic criticism, stage management), Mark C. Thompson (script analysis) Laura Engel (playwriting) Anne Brannen (Medieval Theatre)

Miscellaneous

Alzheimer's Association www.alz.org/pa

09/11-07/12

- As an **Administrative Assistant**, managed the Pittsburgh office of the Greater PA branch, including processing payment, using multi-line phone systems, account processing, and customer service
- Served as executive assistant to the CEO and volunteer board, including drafting materials for meetings, minute taking, scheduling and event support
- Donations processing using Convio software and first contact for all donors
- Managed all community volunteers
- Assisted with fundraising event organizing including Walk to End Alzheimer's, support groups, and educational conferences
- Liaison for all vendors associated with the office

Jeffrey Associates www.jeffreyassociates.com

05/10-09/11

- As an **Administrative Assistant**, managed accounts, prepared new orders and invoices, and processed payment
- Directed all communications using multi-line phone system and Outlook email interface
- Filed accounts and inputted data using Microsoft Office software and light accounting via Quickbooks
- Arranged deliveries, prepared and processed all mail, drafted letters and memos to clients

Gemini Theater Company www.geminitheater.org

08/09-08/10

- As a **Production Associate**, managed box office and ticketing during business hours and show times for six children's theater productions throughout the year
- Assisted in running and coordinating monthly special events for parents and children
- Created daily reports of ticket sales and finances
- Participated in production work on 6 shows a year including stage management, direction, set, sound and light design with a cast and crew ranging from 8 years old to 75 years old
- Worked as technical staff on traveling shows to area schools

Architectural Clay Products • www.architecturalclayproducts.com

01/10-09/10

- As a **Marketing Assistant**, designed mailings and flyers to market multiple company products
- Launched, designed, and updated company's social media campaign to leverage tools such as Facebook and Flickr to communicate with clients, donors, and community members
- Investigated and organized data on leads via the Pittsburgh Builders Exchange
- Contacted and informed prospective clients about premiere company products and arranged for further information to be mailed

Duquesne University Department of Sociology • www.duq.edu/sociology

08/07-05/09

- As an **Office Assistant**, greeted students and professors at front desk

- Directed communications to faculty and staff using a multi-line phone system
 - Maintained student files and records
 - Assisted faculty and staff with copying, mailing, letters and memos
- Designed informative flyers and bulletin boards for the Sociology major, minor and area concentrations

Press

WGLT Radio Datebook Interview with Laura Kennedy

<http://wgl.t.org/artslife/datebook/>

Publish Date: 10/17/2014 03:54 PM

“‘Water by the Spoonful’ to open at Westhoff”

Theatre<http://www.videtteonline.com/index.php/2014/10/21/water-by-the-spoonful-to-open-at-westhoff-theatre/>

The voice persists in “Water by the Spoonful,” which leaves the audience with more questions than answers. What is the difference between an addict and a person who struggles with addiction? What is the true definition of family? How do you avoid being defined by your mistakes? Director of the Illinois State University production, Leah Cassella, says the show is a study in recovery and hope.

“In a world that can be harsh, destabilizing, and rife with addiction and trauma, ‘Water by the Spoonful’ tells the story of a group of people who are able to find their way in the dark and face down their demons,” Cassella said.

“The hope they find in the relationships they tenuously build with each other illuminates the healing power of human connection. Quiara Alegria Hudes shows us with great empathy and vibrant humor that each connection we have, however small, is a rung on the ladder to recovery.

“*The Forever Waltz* to Open Thursday”

<http://www.videtteonline.com/index.php/2013/09/30/the-forever-waltz-to-open-thursday/>

“When asked why she chose to propose this play for the 2013-2014 season, Cassella spoke further on its universal, therapeutic nature. ‘This play is about the cycle of love and madness when we lose someone we love and when the memories won’t let us move on. What Maxwell has written is one of the most beautiful, poetic depictions of the cycle of grief that I’ve ever come across. “The Forever Waltz” is one of those rare theatrical balms with no motive but to soothe an incredible hurt and help give one the strength to begin again, even when it seems impossible to do so.’”

“Q&A: School of Theatre opens thought-provoking play”

<http://www.videtteonline.com/index.php/2014/02/18/qa-school-of-theatre-opens-thought-provoking-play/>

KS: What about “Stop Kiss” struck you? Why did you decide you wanted to tell this story?

Leah Cassella: It is about a choice: to look, or to look away. *Stop Kiss* is the journey of a woman who chooses to look away from her own life and most authentic self.

It is only through falling in love — something which is not a choice for Callie — that she finally decides to face life. This play tells us that the way in which we shape our choices is what matters most — that shaping our love is a way to move toward a more genuine, fulfilling and honest life. Choosing love can mean choosing hope. From there, who knows how we'll shape the world; but love will help us do it.

References

Deb Alley, Professor, Texas State University (formerly of Illinois State University)
dralley@txstate.edu • 309-838-2236

David Emmes, Founding artistic director, South Coast Repertory
DME@scr.org • 714-708-5511

Sandra Zielinski, retired Illinois State University professor
skzieli@icloud.com • 309-287-1563

Shannon O'Neill, Professor, Louisiana State University (formerly of Illinois State University)
soundslikes Shannon@gmail.com • 919-264-9538

Ann Haugo, Professor, Illinois State University
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John E. Lane, Jr., Professor, Duquesne University
lanej@duq.edu • 412-656-6698