

Master of Arts

APPLIED THEATRE ARTS



USC
SCHOOL OF
THEATRE

WELCOME TO THE USC SCHOOL OF THEATRE GRADUATE PROGRAMS.

I AM VERY PLEASED THAT YOU ARE TAKING THE TIME TO FIND OUT ABOUT US AND TO EXPLORE WHETHER OUR SCHOOL IS THE RIGHT ONE FOR YOU.



Since its founding in 1945, the USC School of Theatre has been one of America's premier institutions for professional training in the dramatic arts. Although the School has a long heritage, the current Masters of Fine Arts programs in Acting and Dramatic Writing and the Master in Applied Theatre Arts were all created in the last five years.

The opportunity to create a graduate curriculum from the ground up is very rare. The majority of America's distinguished acting and playwriting programs were established some fifty years ago to train artists for a professional world that has since changed radically. The guiding principle behind our new graduate programs is that they prepare writers and actors to be successful artists in the profession as it is today – which is to say, a profession that is not only much different from what it was a half century ago but also a profession which is dynamic and rapidly changing.

We believe that theatre is an action not a place or a building. We hope that all of our graduates work widely in theatre, but our programs also train you for a career that will most certainly extend from live performance to film and television and beyond to forms, platforms and media that have yet to be conceived.

At the core of the training are the skills that have always been and will remain essential for dramatic artists.

But in addition to that central training, the students in the Dramatic Writing Program study writing for film, television and New Media through our association with USC's renowned School of Cinematic Arts and our M.F.A. actors are trained in acting for the camera over the three years of the program.

The new Master in Applied Theatre Arts extends the 'act' of theatre even further and takes theatre training into non-traditional settings – e.g., classrooms, hospitals, clinics, prisons – and uses that training to improve people's lives.

We consider it essential that that our graduate students work with experienced professionals. One of the important advantages of the USC School of Theatre is that it is in Los Angeles. As a major center of American theatre and, of course, a world center for film and television production, the city is home to an unmatched community of artists upon which the School draws for its faculty and guest artists.

By working with professionals, our graduate students receive practical insights into their art and the crucial experience of performing in "real world" conditions. They also make professional contacts that are critical for starting a career.

Our goal is to provide you with the knowledge, skills, flexibility, experience and confidence to work in any medium, form or technology. We want to nurture artists who do not merely adapt to changes in fashion, technology or the "industry," but who will lead, innovate and create the performance and storytelling of the future.

In the pages that follow, you will find a fuller description of our programs.

Again, we very much appreciate your interest in the USC School of Theatre.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Madeline Puzo'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large loop at the end.

Madeline Puzo
Dean

The Master of Arts in APPLIED THEATRE ARTS

“Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it.” (Augusto Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-actors*)

Our newly-launched M.A. in Applied Theatre Arts invites community-based artists, educators, therapists, social workers and political activists to explore how theatre can be applied to non-traditional theatrical settings through a rigorous course of study over three semesters (Fall/Spring/Summer).

The curriculum is inspired by the work of the late Augusto Boal. Boal’s work, known as Theatre of the Oppressed, is a popular, expressive art form where actors and non-actors collaborate to investigate personal, social and political problems towards the aim of individual and collective transformation. Practiced in more than 70 countries on five continents worldwide, Theatre of the Oppressed techniques are typically utilized in the areas of education, social work, therapy and political activism.

Students will learn the basic techniques including: **Games for Actors and Non-actors** - games which promote increased interaction, engagement and spontaneity; **Image Theatre** – the practice which facilitates the embodiment and critical analysis of challenging community problems; **Forum Theatre** – the public display of theatrical scenes where audience members can replace the protagonist to improvise alternative solutions to difficult situations; **Rainbow of Desire** - Boal’s method of Theatre and Therapy; **Legislative Theatre** - the use of Forum Theatre with elected officials and policy-makers towards the goal of audience-involved political change; and **Aesthetics of the Oppressed** - the inclusion of visual art, spoken word, expressive movement and music in the development of community-based theatre events.

In addition, students will be expected to maintain an on-going partnership with local Los Angeles grass roots organizations towards the development of community-based theatre projects in the interests of liberatory education and social, political or therapeutic change. The course of study culminates with a four-week, thesis focused foreign externship, where students will observe an overseas Applied Theatre Arts organization. (Up to a \$4,000.00 subsidy will be given to each student to support travel and housing for this externship).

“Theatre is the art of looking into oneself and into society. We are all actors of our daily life and spectators of our own actions. To be human is to be theatre – no other living being has this possibility.” (Boal, 2005)



The late Augusto Boal (center) taught a workshop at USC on "Theatre of the Oppressed."

CURRICULUM

FALL

THTR 521 - Engaging Community Narratives (3)

Provides training for actor/artists who partner with non-actors in community-based theatre projects.

THTR 544 - Embodied Poetics (2)

Explores the relationship between vocal and physical expression and the spontaneity of human impulse within the community-based context.

THTR 578 - Theatre Games for Cultural Fieldwork (3)

Offers students the basic theoretical foundations of game playing for populations at the margins of power.

THTR 579 - Scripting Community Narratives (3)

Students learn how to work with community partners to co-create performative narratives for actors and non-actors towards a shared popular theatre event.

THTR 587 - Liberation Arts and Community Engagement – Theory (4)

Historical foundations of liberatory movements using expressive arts towards community-based goals of reciprocal and collaborative empowerment, civil rights, psychological or political freedom and justice.

SPRING

THTR 505 - Staging Community-based Theatre (3)

Explores the theory and practice of staging community-based popular theatre, including Theatre of the Oppressed, street theatre, witness theatre, agit-prop and festival theatre events.

THTR 568 - Popular Theatre for Education and Development (3)

Theory and practice of Theatre in Education and Theatre for Development as resources for conscientization and liberation of communities at the margins of power.

THTR 577 - Theatre and Therapy for Cultural Fieldwork (3)

Explores the theory and practice of theatre and therapy in the cultural fieldwork and community development settings.

THTR 588 - Liberation Arts and Community Engagement – Praxis (3)

Theory and practice of developing liberatory and Theatre of the Oppressed events, from first community contact to staged public event.

THTR 589 - ATA: L.A. Residency (2)

Supervisory, logistical and theoretical container for students to continue their previous semester's partnerships and employ their skills as practicing Applied Theatre Artists.

THTR 594a - Master's Thesis (2)

Credit on acceptance of thesis. Graded CR/NC.

SUMMER

THTR 598 - ATA: International Externship (2)

Supervisory, logistical and theoretical container for students exploring cultural fieldwork in international settings.

THTR 594b - Master's Thesis (2)

Credit on acceptance of thesis.

A minimum of 34 units of graduate coursework must be completed prior to degree being granted.

PLEASE NOTE: A revised curriculum of the Masters in Applied Theatre Arts program is currently in process and will be in place by Fall 2011. Information presented in this brochure represents the curriculum as it currently stands.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Brent Blair

Director of M.A. in Applied Theatre Arts

Founding Director of the Applied Theatre Arts program at USC, Brent Blair holds a Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology and is currently completing his Ph.D. in Depth Psychology with an emphasis on Liberation Arts and Community Engagement, a core focus of the new MA program. A Fulbright fellow with a focus on indigenous community-based theatre in Eastern Nigeria, he trained as a voice teacher with Kristin Linklater in the late 1980s and has taught directing, acting, voice and/or applied theatre arts courses at Emerson College, Boston University, Naropa University, UCLA, CSULA, The Center for Theatre of the Oppressed, Rio de Janeiro, The University of Rwanda, Butare and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He has worked and trained with the late Augusto Boal, founder of Theatre of the Oppressed, and has been invited to work as a TO Joker (practitioner) all over the world. He founded the Center for Theatre of the Oppressed and Applied Theatre Arts, Los Angeles (CTO/ATA/LA) which hosted Boal four times in Los Angeles from 2001 – 2005. He has led workshops in partnership with global and local grass-roots organizations on issues of juvenile

justice, labor exploitation and collective trauma, including: work with Rwandan genocide survivors and trauma counselors; workshops for prisoners and cultural fieldworkers in Brisbane, Australia; and, most recently, a series of workshops with Muslim youth, Imams and community organizers in partnership with Cambridge University in London to explore issues of religious radicalization and social marginalization. Brent has received the USC Teaching Has No Boundaries Award, the USC Good Neighbor Volunteer Award, as well as two School of Theatre Bill White Faculty Recognition Awards, and was selected by a student survey as one of the Ten Most Recommended Professors at USC.

OUR FACILITIES

The USC School of Theatre maintains the intimacy of a small school while offering the vast resources that come with a major research university. The School's administrative core is the Drama Center which houses the offices of the Dean, Associate Deans and Academic Affairs, as well as the Massman Theatre – a flexible performance space that seats 50-75 people. Other venues include the Bing Theatre – a traditional proscenium house with a seating of 550; the Scene Dock Theatre – a flexible black box theatre that seats 95 people; the Village Gate Theatre – a cabaret style performance space that seats 70; and the McClintock Building – which houses the McClintock Theatre – a flexible performance venue that seats 95 people – as well as our state-of-the-art Voice Over Studio.



ADMISSION INFORMATION

You must hold a bachelor's degree from an approved college or university in order to be an M.A. student. You may complete your undergraduate coursework while applying. It is not necessary to wait to apply until after your fall, senior year grades are posted.

PARTS OF THE APPLICATION

- USC School of Theatre Supplemental Application Form
- USC Graduate School online application (\$85)
- Personal Statement
- Three letters of recommendation
- Resumé
- GRE Report
- Transcripts
- Creative Submission (see Application Checklist online)

PRIORITY APPLICATION DEADLINE:

JANUARY 7, 2011

Final Deadline: February 19, 2011

USC SCHOOL OF THEATRE

OFFICE OF GRADUATE ADMISSIONS

1029 Childs Way, DRC 104

Los Angeles, California 90089-0791

(M) 213.821.4163

(E) sotgrad@usc.edu

(W) <http://theatre.usc.edu/graduate>

The University of Southern California admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.



Bing Theatre



Scene Dock Theatre



McClintock Theatre

VISITING ARTISTS



The USC School of Theatre attracts a wide range of guest speakers and lecturers, including some of the most distinguished talents from stage, film and television.

1 Oscar & Tony Award nominated actress **Kathleen Turner** spoke to students about acting on stage, film & television.

2 During a conversation with Tony Award-winning actor **Brian Stokes Mitchell**, he conducted a song analysis on *The Impossible Dream* from his Broadway success, *Man of La Mancha*.

3 Oscar and Emmy Award-winning actress **Christine Lahti** taught a master class in acting.

4 Academy Award-winning actor **Tim Robbins** spoke to students about breaking into and maintaining a career in the entertainment industry.

5 Tony Award-winning actor **Bill Irwin** demonstrated various performance preparation techniques.

6 Internationally-acclaimed actress **Fiona Shaw**, whose performances range from Medea in London to Aunt Petunia in the Harry Potter films, held a master class in Shakespeare.

7 Director **Peter Sellars** lectured about the importance of staying true to your dreams as an artist.

8 World-renowned director and founder of the Royal Shakespeare Company **Sir Peter Hall** worked with student actors on performing Shakespeare.

9 **Twyla Tharp**, the award-winning director and choreographer of the Billy Joel musical *Movin' Out*, led a workshop on creativity based on principles in her book *The Creative Habit: Learn It and Use It for Life*.

“What’s great about the training at the USC School of Theatre are the necessary tools it provides for a long and varied career in show business. I use what I learned there every time I work. And in a business that is all about utilizing your talent and making connections USC is a great place to start.”

- Tate Donovan, Actor/Director
B.F.A. Acting, Class of 1985



Tate Donovan

ALUMNI

The strength of our programs is reflected in the professional success of our students in theatre, film, television and related careers. The School’s alumni have been honored with the most prestigious awards in our profession - the Oscar, Tony, Emmy, Golden Globe, Laurence Oliver and Palme d’Or - and include actors Forest Whitaker, Kyra Sedgwick, LeVar Burton, Eric Stoltz, Tate Donovan, Anthony Edwards, James Lesure, John Ritter, Sophia Bush, as well as writer/actor Grant Heslov (*Good Night, and Good Luck, Leatherheads*) writer Danny Strong (*Recount*), writer/director Andy Tennant (*Fool’s Gold, Hitch*), producer/director Jack Bender (*Lost, The Sopranos*) and producer Todd Black (*The Pursuit of Happyness, Antwone Fisher*). Recent graduates include Ryan Eggold (*90210*), Deborah Ann Woll (*True Blood, My Name is Earl*) and two who have starred on Broadway, Stark Sands in 2007’s *Journey’s End*, for which he received a Tony Award nomination as Best Featured Actor in a Play, and James Snyder who had the title role in the 2008 Tony Award-nominated Best Musical *Cry-Baby*. We are very proud of our distinguished alumni, some of whom are pictured below.



Forest Whitaker



Ryan Eggold



Stark Sands



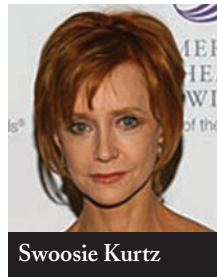
James Lesure



James Snyder



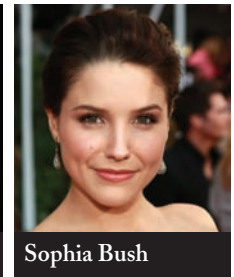
Grant Heslov



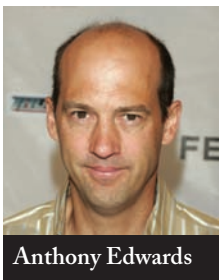
Swoosie Kurtz



Todd Black



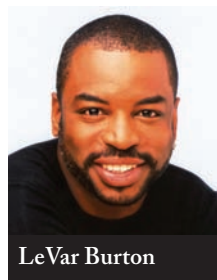
Sophia Bush



Anthony Edwards



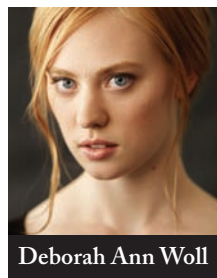
Kyra Sedgwick



LeVar Burton



Andy Tennant



Deborah Ann Woll



Eric Stoltz