

MUSICAL THEATER

The mission of the Musical Theater Department is to provide students with a comprehensive training in the three art disciplines needed to be a performer in the field: acting, voice and dance. Strong emphasis will be placed on discipline and work ethic as well as course content. This curriculum will allow students to grow within their given area of artistic interest while also expanding their appreciation and understanding of community and ensemble dynamics.

Students follow the curriculum prescribed by the Musical Theater Department. Class assignments are made by the faculty and department chair and are based on the student's age, experience and stage of mental, physical and technical development. Students may be required to take a department specific elective course.

The goals of the Musical Theater Department are:

- To equip students with the skills needed to present successfully in the highly competitive university and/or professional world after their high school years.
- To provide a safe and positive arena for the exploration of all work in order to allow young, creative talents the space for honest growth.
- To incorporate the unique American history of Musical Theater and to explore the multi-cultural aspects of its creators and performers.
- To engender an atmosphere of ensemble and a highly disciplined work ethic focusing on detail oriented, artistic process.
- To foster a positive and respectful group experience in order to take full advantage of the opportunity for personal growth offered by the Academy's diverse student body.

All components will be taught with full awareness of the curriculum of the other two art disciplines. Group numbers taught in voice and dance classes will be presented and augmented with respect to acting values, just as historical content from acting class will be explored in voice class through exposure to work of actual composers and lyricists. In dance class historical content will be explored in regard to dance styles. At each level there will be group work that encompasses all three areas.

MUSICAL THEATER COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

ACTING

ACTING I

The development of ensemble is the basis for this course. The basics of acting will be explored through physical and vocal exercises, improvisation, text analysis, and the beginnings of scene and monologue study. Concentration and focus exercises will be part of the daily class work. Students will learn how to approach the text in preparation for character and performance.

ACTING II

Second level students will be introduced to script/textual analysis and its application to dramatic material. Dramatic structure, including given circumstances, objective and super-objective will be explored within the context of scene study.

ACTING III

Students will be guided in researching and finding plays to explore on their own. They will engage in personal exploration to identify their own strengths and weaknesses, and with the assistance of the instructor, develop a plan for growth. Students will study midcentury and contemporary plays and work on longer form scenes.

ACTING IV

This course will comprehensively balance prior training to provide the senior with a wealth of tools and resources to successfully audition for colleges, roles and shows. In addition to continuing their scene study, students will explore their own interests and develop a devised piece of theater.

SHAKESPEARE

This course is typically introduced in the junior year, and has students explore the texts of Shakespeare through a personal lens. Students are guided to identify their own point of view as artists, and to discover new meaning in Shakespeare's work.

MUSICAL THEATER SCENE STUDY

Introduction to Scene Study is a course for seniors in the musical theater department. The course focuses on the study of musical theater literature from the early 1950's through present day. Students will explore different styles of musical theater through performance, with a special emphasis on the complicated history of the genre, and new material that looks to bring about social change.

DANCE

BALLET 1

This class incorporates basic elements of classical ballet, using techniques. The class work will focus on alignment, basic body positions, foot articulation, general strength and simple coordination of all parts of the body. Each student is expected to learn the French name for each basic movement, the translation of that name, and be able to explain how to execute the movement. The class begins with exercises holding onto the barre, continues with center work, and progresses to exercises that travel across the floor. All exercises are done on both right and left sides. The exercises are repeated each

day during the week, with minor changes to increase the difficulty of the exercise, or the stamina required.

BROADWAY TAP

The class will incorporate elements of Broadway Tap where dancers make frequent use of syncopation. Students will also learn an important element tap dancing which is improvisation. This can either be done with music and follow the beats provided or without musical accompaniment, otherwise known as a cappella dancing.

LUIGI DANCE

Luigi is considered the master innovator of jazz dance technique, which he developed while recuperating from a devastating car accident that left him paralyzed. His spirit of determination led him to develop exercises that resulted in his return to dance class within a year, and to performing in musicals a year after that. He then continued to expand his warm up for balance and flexibility and his fellow dancers followed along. Eventually, Luigi began to formally teach his “classical jazz” technique. He established Luigi’s Jazz Centre NYC. For more than sixty years, dancers and teachers from around the globe have come to study his “gold standard” of jazz technique and his style continues to be taught in schools and colleges worldwide.

The beauty of the Luigi technique is that the basic warm up is accessible to a beginner, while more experienced students can still find challenge. The Luigi technique seamlessly weaves ballet and tap techniques into a classic “Broadway” jazz style, all of which are vital to musical theater dance.

JAZZ DANCE (Levels 1 and 2)

The class incorporates basic elements of classical Jazz Dance. Concentrated work focuses on strength, alignment, coordination of all parts of the body and demonstrating different styles of choreography.

The class work begins with standing warm up exercises, stretches, and conditioning work sitting/lying on the floor, and advances to technical exercises done standing and/or traveling across the floor. A combination of movement/choreography is practiced.

VOICE

(All levels focus on technique)

Students will learn beginning to advanced techniques; proper posture, breathing, placement and resonance. They will be introduced to the varying elements of style inherent in each genre and taught how to utilize them effectively in their repertoire. In addition, they will learn about and practice basic stage deportment, focus, audition techniques, working with a pianist, and translating foreign-language text.

AUDITION PREP & PRODUCTION

AUDITION PREP & PRODUCTION Audition Prep & PRODUCTION is designed for students to identify and develop their artistic identity, source appropriate audition material, and prepare audition materials for pre-screens, self-tapes and in-person auditions. Students will use cameras and microphones to film audition reels and editing software to create clean and dynamic submissions as they learn to create submissions for college applications. The class outlines best practices for choosing and editing material for auditions, creating, formatting and editing resumes, and identifying what makes a “good” headshot. The class covers sourcing material and making digital cuts to both monologues and songs using pdf editing software. Students are given the opportunity to practice the process of auditioning for a live panel of adjudicators.

VOICE 1

Students will learn a repertoire based upon the standard composers, Gershwin, Porter, Kern, Rodgers, etc. In addition, basic stage deportment, focus and developing an interpretation will be taught. Vocal technique will include basic breath support, proper use and care of the vocal mechanism, smoothing out the break areas and the use of “passagio” or mixed voice, expanding the range and projection and learning how to produce a variety of sounds and styles from classical to Broadway. Sight singing and music theory will begin at the basic level using Solfeggio, the ability to sing small intervals, major, minor and chromatic scales and triad arpeggios. Students will work on solo works, improving audition techniques, dealing with an accompanist and developing an audition repertoire.

VOICE 2

The music explored at this level will be chosen from the 1950’s, 60’s and 70’s and be more complex and demanding. Students will be expected to perform in a manner already learned from level 1. The emphasis will be on acting the song with emotion, character, body and facial expression. Students will do a detailed lyric analysis of each song. Pieces will be coordinated with the acting and dance classes. Vocal technique will continue the process of expanding the range, projection, endurance and diction using classic bel canto techniques. Sight singing and music theory will be of intermediate difficulty with exercises in solo, two and three part harmony. The intervals will be larger and the rhythmic content more complex. Students will work on solo works, improving audition techniques, dealing with an accompanist and developing an audition repertoire.

VOICE 3

Students will prepare a series of selections from the 1980’s to the present. Pieces will be longer, more complex and demanding. There will be continued emphasis on acting the song and analyzing lyrics. Songs will be coordinated with the acting and dance classes. The class will continue to work to improve and strengthen vocal technique. Sight singing and music theory will include advance material for solo and four, or more, vocal part choral works. The intervals will be more chromatic and the rhythms more complex. Students will work on solo works, improving audition techniques, dealing with an accompanist and developing an audition repertoire.

VOICE 4

This course will comprehensively balance prior training to provide the senior with a

wealth of tools and resources to successfully audition for colleges, roles and shows including presentation, first impressions, etiquette, placement of your audience and material. Students will learn how to connect a musical piece with clear dramatic choices. Students will be pushed to explore the creative process with each piece of music, and find a deep emotional connection. Students will be asked to make strong physical choices to help create the story of the song. Emphasis will be placed on how to approach the collaborative process, taking direction, and the process of making clear choices.

ENSEMBLE COURSES

Musical Theater In Living Color

In Living Color is a course that explores the genre of Musical Theater through a racial and social justice lens. The course asks students to look critically at the roots of Musical Theater and its development through time as it related to race, class, gender, religion and politics. Specific emphasis is given to new works and how the art form can be used for social change.

MUSICAL THEATER PRACTICUM

Students will demonstrate steps and variations used in musical theater choreography including but not limited to classic tap time step with proper arms (single, double, triple, traveling, wing), pirouettes (classical, jazz), other tap steps, jazz leaps, jumps and turns. Everything has basis of Ballet. Students will learn various choreographic styles used in Musical Theater. Original Broadway choreography may be used. Singing may also be incorporated, depending upon chosen material.

TRIPLE THREAT

The course is designed to introduce both new and experienced students to the concept of working as an ensemble using all three disciplines of musical theater-acting, singing and dance. Each class will consist of a vocal and physical warm-up, followed by music and lyric memorization and then staging and rehearsing the piece in preparation of an informal performance.

DISCOVERING YOUR VOICE

This is an ensemble class for freshmen and sophomores in the Musical Theater Department. While creating large chorale pieces, the class focuses on the basics of music theory, sight singing, blending and harmonizing. Students will receive opportunities to perform for school events and for community events.