

THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

THE MUSICAL THEATRE & ACTORS STUDIO



Director's Notes

Firstly, I'd be remiss if I didn't take a moment now to thank each of you who attended our production of *Cry-Baby: the Musical*. The energy in the house each night was electric. I hope you enjoyed the show and were impressed by the talented student artists – both on stage and behind the scenes – who made it all happen! As a Director/Choreographer, *Cry-Baby* was show # twenty-something for me [I lost count], and it *easily* ranks Top 3 for the most enjoyable theatrical experiences I've had in my career. Thank you to everyone involved!

With the production under our belts, we shifted our focus onto welcoming prospective students from around the county into the studio. I am proud to say that we saw our highest number of visitors yet, surpassing all previous years. This is, in large part, thanks to the positive word-of-mouth messaging from students and families. So, to each of you who encouraged a friend or family member to check out MTAS...thank you!

This month's curriculum found students workshopping songs for performance. While the advanced 2-credit level classes tackled material from Disney's Songbook, students enrolled in 1-credit classes took on Contemporary Musical Theatre cuts. Additionally, we had the opportunity to welcome in guest artists for our third workshop series with Signature Theatre...and we even started a brand-new partnership with another Tony Award-winning theatre company! Lots to celebrate.

Erich DiCenzo

DIRECTOR OF THE MUSICAL THEATRE & ACTORS STUDIO

Pathways & Partnerships

Hey, MTAS Students & Families!

I am SO very excited to be your new Career Experience Specialist at #faxacad! I've adored getting to know so many of you this year in class, sit in on workshops, being blown away by *Cry Baby*, meet with some of you as Academy Ambassadors, and reconnect with former students.

Ok, so my focus is to provide industry connections and career opportunities to the Academy. I'm thrilled with the challenge to "find the good stuff" to share with you all. My awesome job has me out finding guest artists, speakers, internships, field trips, job shadows, and other fun, authentic, and meaningful opportunities and connections. I get to be a professional theatre gift giver. I finally have the chance to focus on the juicy stuff and crazy connections I've been able to collect over my career in professional theatre/dance, and education.



Bit about me: I have a background in language studies, theatre, and dance, and I arrive here after 24 years teaching and directing at Robinson. A proud George Mason University Theatre alum, I've enjoyed working and growing with the incredible regional artists and institutions here in the DMV area since the late 1900s... I've had the honor of choreographing, dancing, acting, and directing for various high schools, the Kennedy Center, Studio Theatre, Arena Stage, NBA & NFL Cheer/Dance teams, and others. Globally (hair flip), I was proud to be on the first Theatre Global Classroom project with a school in China, and have guest directed at the American College of Sofia, Bulgaria. Best fun fact according to my two daughters is that I paid the bills as a professional clown.

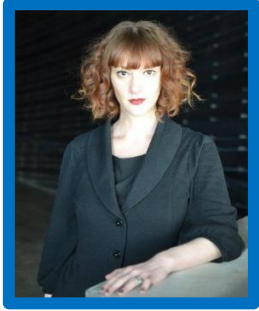
This year, we've been able to connect with so many astounding artists and jump into some challenging workshops. I'm very proud of and excited for our newest partnership with Arena Stage. They asked for us to be home for their *Voices of Now* devised theatre project. Academy students are collaborating with artists from VA and MD to create a world premiere original bespoke (true autobiographical) work centering on the experiences of military families. They will perform for the public at Arena Stage on May 16th and 17th at 7:30pm, at Boeing Headquarters for USO guests, and at Katherine Johnson Middle School for the community. These artists are developing new skills, building relationships with professional theatre artists from Arena, and creating important and impactful work.

I'm so terribly excited to see what's in store for the future. Thank you for your warm and generous welcome, and for giving me a space in the Black Box that feels like home.

Break legs and play it with love!

Ms. Amy Hard

February's Fresh Faces & Fresh Findings



Ashley Forman



Crystal Mosser



Elisa Rosman



Josh Bickford

Students were in for quite the treat as they welcomed in the dream team of Crystal Mosser and Elisa Rosman, the two latest industry professionals supported through our partnership with Signature Theatre. During their time in the studio [which included acting-through-song workshops with each and every course section], they observed students' 32-bar cuts and provided them with valuable critique. For many, they made helpful suggestions of new repertoire that would be right for that individual's type and talent.

This was also the first time [this year] that students had the opportunity to work with a live accompanist as opposed to digital tracks. This allowed students to get real-world experience communicating their cuts and tempos with a pianist. Elisa Rosman was a wonderful resource for students as she coached them on how best to introduce themselves to the accompanist and even offered suggestions for more effective cuts.

Then, students had the opportunity to meet the professionals behind our latest partnership with Arena Stage. Ashley Forman serves as Arena's Director of Education and Josh Bickford is a Teaching Artist/Director for their Voices of Now program.

"I really loved Crystal's approach to putting you in different circumstances for your songs. Her coaching was effective and gave me a different way to think about the song."

Fortune Picker [Madison HS]

"Crystal and Elisa made the environment feel so inclusive and safe. They got to know each student's voice quickly and customized the workshops accordingly. They took the time to gain a deeper understanding of our individual skillsets."

Michelle Stein [Robinson SS]

"Elisa was fantastic! It was amazing to work with a live accompanist for the first time in class this year. It gave us the opportunity to mark up our sheet music for the pianist and allowed for more freedom when picking a cut. Not to mention, Elisa is our pianist for our upcoming production of Pippin! It was exciting to meet her!"

M Ulses [Madison HS]

"It was great to have an accompanist in the space. Elisa was super kind. She gave us audition tips to bring into future rooms. She was also super knowledgeable and helped us tackle new interpretations of our songs."

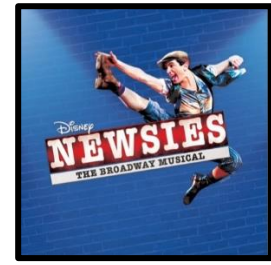
Alex Dealdo [Hayfield SS]

"Crystal's positivity and energy was infectious! She helped my own self-confidence in tackling a song out of my comfort zone."

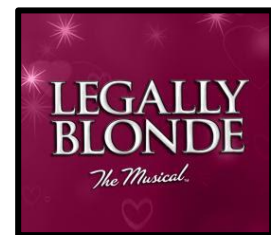
Kate Townsend [Madison HS]

Travel the Ticket Trek

Before a current production even closes, students already begin their eager questioning of: "What is next year's musical?" While that answer is still unknown, it's interesting to reflect and take a snapshot of how past productions sold. While educational theatre is more about students' learning experiences rather than the overall profits, a glimpse into the last three years is, nonetheless, intriguing.



1/28	Cancelled
1/29	177
1/30	228
2/3	102
2/4	333
2/5	178
<u>2/5</u>	<u>499</u>
Total	1,517



2/3	279
2/4	441
2/5	228
2/9	182
2/10	353
2/11	179
<u>2/11</u>	<u>490</u>
Total	2,152



2/2	201
2/3	222
2/4	192
2/8	167
2/9	360
2/10	211
<u>2/10</u>	<u>446</u>
Total	1,799