

THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

THE MUSICAL THEATRE & ACTORS STUDIO



Director's Notes

This third issue of *The Directors Cut* closes out our first quarter and kicks-off the best of the fall season. When I reflect on all that we've accomplished so far, I feel excited for what's to come and motivated to keep-up the momentum. Think about it: In just these first few months together, we've produced our first showcase, engaged in a week-long improvisational masterclass with Pete Bergen, experienced the first of four Signature workshops with Maurice Johnson, participated in a Career Expo, and auditioned for our mainstage musical. And none of this includes all the growth and progress made each day within the classroom curriculum. Needless to say, we are off to a great start!

I want to take a moment to thank those of you who made it out to see *Avenue Q*. It meant the world to see so many familiar faces after the curtain closed each night. I also want to thank you for the patience you've shown over the last month. With extensive travel and my return to the stage, it's been tricky to balance proactive communication and provide foresight to curriculum. I appreciate your support.

The second quarter will bring about a good deal of excitement. It begins with our field trip to see Signature Theatre's production of *Ragtime*. Then, of course, many students will be opening their own shows at their base schools. Break a leg to all involved.

With second quarter will come an increase in rigor as we move from strong dance and choreography focus to singing, acting, and musical theatre history. With the busy season upon us, please be sure to stay on top of all assignments and deadlines. As always, let me know how I may be able to support.

With Gratitude,

Erich DiCenzo

DIRECTOR OF THE MUSICAL THEATRE & ACTORS STUDIO

OFF TO A *Glowing* START!



Senior MTAS student performers pose with Mr. DiCenzo at the "Ready, Set, GLOWcase!"

On Wednesday, October 18th, twenty-four of our seniors performed in the *Ready, Set, Glowcase*...a showcase highlighting elements of their college audition materials! Along with the seniors' own supportive friends and family members, the audience was also filled with the freshmen, sophomores, and juniors who make-up the rest of the Musical Theatre & Actors Studio.

In this co-curricular endeavor, each of our underclassmen were tasked with providing constructive feedback to every one of the performers. Our seniors will now have over sixty pieces of individual, invaluable feedback from their peers, all while the underclassmen have had an opportunity to strengthen their ability to provide meaningful, helpful reviews and criticism. It's a win, win!

"It was really fun seeing all of the different styles, not to mention the varieties of each performer. You could see how much fun they were having and that was cool to witness."

Lucy Wilkerson [Oakton HS]

"I think the showcase was an amazing opportunity to get to know the rest of the talent in the Academy as well as perfect my own critiquing skills."

Jane Keifer [Herndon HS]

"I thought that I would be a lot more nervous than I was, but I wasn't. When the music started playing, I remember hearing my voice echo through the speakers and thought it was such a cool experience. I'm glad I got to participate."

Fortune Picker [Madison HS]

"The showcase was a perfect opportunity to test out my college materials in a unique, singular moment that afforded me feedback from my peers, while also having the opportunity to connect with people from other classes."

Sammy Leigh Hayes [Fairfax HS]

"I remember the whole experience being one of the least nerve-wracking performances I've done. I think it's because of how welcomed and supported I felt by all of my peers and fellow performers. When one of us would be done performing, we'd come off stage to cheers and celebration."

Johnny Villa [South Lakes HS]

How do YOU get over your SPOOKY STAGE FRIGHT?

“In my opinion, having stage fright is just part of being an actor, and I like to use that energy to better my performance.”

Natalie Beasley [South County HS]

“Be confident in your craft and trust in all the work you put in. And if you are working with scene partners, trust in their work as well!”

Scarlett Spano [Langley HS]

“Know that everyone is there to support you and want you to succeed.”

Alejandro Cahoon [Fairfax HS]

“I recognize that rehearsals are safe-spaces, and that is the best place to try to get your nerves and fears out. Plus, the audience is always rooting for you!”

Cozette Humen [Madison HS]

“I always try to remind myself that everyone you are performing with or performing for want you to succeed. Nobody wants you to fail...and there’s always going to be another opportunity.”

Xia Jax Klosk [Robinson SS]

“I like to try to ‘lock-in’ by tapping my forehead and reminding myself how much fun I’ve had with the people I’m on stage with, not who I’m on stage in front of.”

Reese Wheatley [Oakton HS]

GUEST ARTIST ADVOCATES

Welcoming in guest artists for workshops and masterclasses is nothing new here at the Musical Theatre & Actors Studio. Already, our students have gotten to work with two such artists directly during class time [Pete Bergen & Maurice Johnson]. And if students attended our Academy Career Expo, they were able to hear from and work with six additional guest artists. When students are exposed to these industry professionals, their opportunity for growth is boundless. And it seems, the inspiration shared works both ways!

I have the good fortune of having a job that I love. I get to go to middle schools, high schools, and colleges all over the DMV and work with theater students. Fairfax Academy is unique in that it brings together passionate kids from all over the county. They are treated as professionals by Mr. DiCenzo, and I honestly think that makes them behave more professionally.

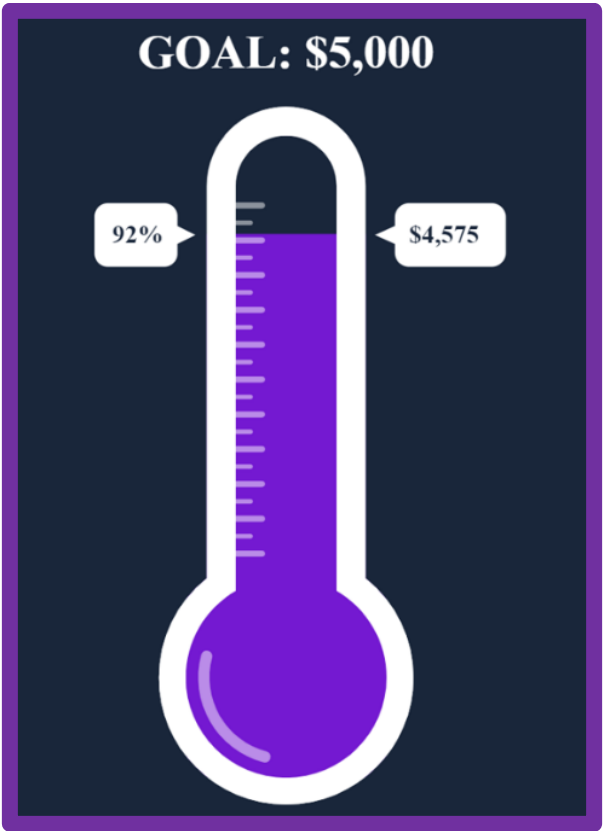
Because the students are bussed in and then must leave to go back to their base schools, the Academy has the potential to be chaotic, but my favorite thing about working there is that it is exactly the opposite! I think it starts with the fact this is a program that welcomes kids who genuinely care and take their craft seriously. It is always easier to work with people who care. Apathy is the enemy of creativity.

Because they care, they make an effort to include everyone and lift each other up. It is such a joy to see a kid I may have known since they were in 7th grade evolve into a great young artist. When I say “great” I am not referring to their ability on stage. “Great” refers to their ability to trust, listen, participate, and play in a smart, joyous, and empathetic way. I always leave my time at Academy recharged and I look forward to hopefully being able to send someone else down that path.

Pete Bergen

Professional Improvisation Artist

A Word from Our Sponsors...



We are SO CLOSE to reaching our goal of raising \$5,000 for the Musical Theatre & Actors Studio! So far, twenty-six contributions have been made, averaging \$175 each. At just \$425 away from our goal, any size donation helps. Please consider contributing and becoming an official sponsor today. Remember, each sponsorship level comes with great incentives!

[CLICK HERE](#)

to make your contribution TODAY!

A LOOK AHEAD

Friday, November 3rd

Early Release

NO MID or PM Blocks Meet

Monday, November 6th

Teacher Workday/Student Holiday

Tuesday, November 7th

Teacher Workday/Student Holiday

Wednesday, November 8th

Ragtime Field Trip @ Signature Theatre

Wednesday, November 22nd – 24th

Thanksgiving Break/No School

Wednesday, November 29th

**“Cry-Baby” Cast & Parent Meeting
6:30-8:00pm**