

ANNUAL

THE  
**THEATRE  
SCHOOL**  
AT DePaul University

REPORT

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY  
THE THEATRE SCHOOL



2020  
2021

## LETTER FROM THE DEAN

Serving as The Theatre School's Interim Dean for the 2021-2022 school year is a great honor. Like many people who love theater, I was drawn in by spectacle, by the magic of sitting in an audience experiencing whole new worlds unfold in front of me. But what made me truly fall in love with theater, to make it the focus of my life and career, was theater as a process—working with other people to figure out how to make those worlds come alive.

I think we will all remember the past year as one that challenged us to find new ways of being together at a time when the best thing we could do for our community's well-being was to be physically apart. There is no doubt that it was a difficult year: repeatedly, we heard that our community was lonely, scared, stressed. We were afraid for ourselves, our loved ones, and our whole industry: as theaters across the country closed their physical spaces, leaving on their ghost lights, where did that leave us? It turns out we found not just a space of uncertainty, but great possibility too.

I am proud to be a part of an artistic and educational community that worked hard to meet the challenge of making Zoom, Slack, Instagram, and other digital technologies feel like a live space, a spectacle space, a magic space. Some of our shows went on as planned—gorgeous digital productions of Shakespeare, Lorca, and Fornes. But we also created space for new things, knowing that there is



no time like an unprecedented time to do something you've never done before. Our students directed short films, did voices for animation, and designed utopic pageants. We created immersive theater that played out through letters, escape rooms designed for audiences of one, and audio tours that invited people to get to know themselves better. Our students, faculty, and staff brought extraordinary creativity and a sense of possibility to their work.

The past year asked us to consider what our work means and why we love theater and live performance. It asked us to find the core. It was also a year that asked us to reconsider: as a reinvigorated racial equity movement swept the country, our students, alumni, faculty, and staff asked us to be more self-reflexive, more aware. How we tell stories and who we tell them with matters. The past year has been a

reckoning as we conducted an audit of our practices, diving into discussion and debate about what The Theatre School might look like as an anti-racist conservatory that centers on the Vincentian values of personalism and human dignity. We don't have all the answers, but we are asking the questions that will get us there.

In the meantime, we will continue to do what we do best: create, design, explore, and meet our challenges with the strong sense that what we do matters enough not to give up. I am so proud of The Theatre School community and so excited to see what the future holds: this year, next year, and beyond. Thank you for being a part of our spectacle, our story, and our world.



Coya Paz Brownrigg

## MISSION

The Theatre School trains students to the highest level of professional skill and artistry in an inclusive and diverse conservatory setting.

## VISION

We will educate enterprising artists, thinkers, innovators, leaders, and globally conscious citizens who transform communities across DePaul, Chicago, the nation, and the world.

We will support an expert, passionate faculty and staff committed to advancing the vibrancy of live theatre and performance while continually adapting to a broadening and changing profession.

We will become a role model of diversity and inclusion for the University and the field.

We will produce public programs and performances that challenge, entertain, and stimulate the imagination.

We will foster cross-disciplinary collaboration to further student understanding and appreciation for every aspect of theatre work.

## VALUES

### EDUCATION

We advance intellectual development and ethical consciousness. We foster moral, spiritual, social, political, and artistic growth. We promote participation in civic life.

### RESPECT

We inspire respect for self, for others, for the profession, and for humanity. We embrace the Vincentian model of service.

### FREEDOM

We build a community founded on the principles of creativity and freedom of expression. We value initiative, innovation, exploration, and risk taking.

### IMAGINATION

We celebrate the primacy of the imagination in our work.

### SPIRITUALITY

We believe theatre is a place for reflection, awakening, and the development of moral awareness.

## JOHN CULBERT

John Culbert retired on June 30<sup>th</sup> after serving as Dean of The Theatre School for 20 years and as a faculty member for 33 years.



John came to the school as the head of the lighting design program. He was granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor in 1991 and was promoted to Professor in 1995. John served as chair of the design/technical department for six years and became Associate Dean in 1998. Following the death of Dean Michael Maggio in 2000, John was appointed Interim Dean in 2000. After

a nationwide search John was appointed Dean of The Theatre School in July 2001.

During his tenure as Dean of The Theatre School, John has led the school through an extraordinary transformation. This transformation has led to increased recognition of The Theatre School nationally and placed it in a position to be a leader in the field for decades to come.

The most visible change is the move to the school's state-of-the-art facility. John was instrumental in fundraising to support this investment and led the staff and faculty through a collaborative design process with the renowned Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects that led to an award-winning result. The Theatre School's artistic home was awarded the United States Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT) 2016 Architecture Award Honor, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Distinguished Building Design, and was certified as a LEED Silver building.

Beyond the evident physical change, John has led the school through a period of significant growth. New degree programs in sound design (2008), projection design (2019), comedy arts (2019), and wig and makeup design and technology (2020) were all established under his leadership. Applications have increased by 150% during his tenure and, through careful management of resources, the school was able to support an enrollment growth of 30%. The school has also expanded to include an intensive summer high school training program for rising juniors and seniors, and Creative Root, offering theatre arts classes for kids starting at age 4 through adult.

Beyond his service to the university in his responsibilities as Dean, John has supported the provost in the development of important procedures and policies to improve the university's delivery of a quality education for

all students and to examine support of adjunct and term faculty.

“John Culbert is one of the most consequential Deans in the history of DePaul,” explained Dean Corrin, Associate Dean for TTS. “The transformation of The Theatre School is the most evident to many people, but in his leadership at the university he made an impact that will be lasting. Of course, on a personal level, I will miss him greatly because he was such a wonderful colleague and mentor.”



John Culbert with his wife Kitty Culbert.

Dean Culbert has a significant standing as a designer in the American theatre and has designed for theatres around the country. In Chicago, John has designed scenery and or lighting for the Buckingham Fountain, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Goodman Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre, Garfield Conservatory, Field Museum of Natural History, Drury Lane Theatre, Timeline Theatre Company, Victory Gardens Theater, Chicago Children’s Theatre, Chicago Opera Theatre, and more than thirty productions

at Court Theatre. He has received Jeff Award’s for the lighting for Court Theatre’s *The Illusion* and for the Goodman Theatre’s *Mirror of the Invisible World*. John has also designed scenery and/ or lighting for the Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Singapore Rep, Berkeley Rep, Shakespeare Theatre and the McCarter Theatre. He has received numerous awards for his design work.

John has demonstrated a significant commitment to DePaul over the last three decades and has always modeled effective leadership, teaching, and design skills to The Theatre School and DePaul communities. He exemplifies the core values of the school. John Culbert has left a legacy of growth, collaboration, and integrity that will serve the school for many years to come.



John Culbert taking a tour of The Theatre School as building was in progress.

## YEAR AT A GLANCE

### AUDITIONS/INTERVIEWS

7 audition weekends  
344 interviews  
100% virtual

### THE INCOMING CLASS

140 new students  
124 BFA | 16 MFA

### COMING FROM...

27 states + DC (top states in order: IL, CA, TX, FL, and MI & NY [tied])  
5 non-US countries (Ireland, South Korea, Spain, Poland, United Arab Emirates)  
81% are coming from out-of-state  
4% are coming from abroad  
7% are coming from other colleges/universities (BFA transfer students)

### SELF-IDENTIFY AS...

34% domestic students of color  
61% white domestic students  
53.5% female 38.5% male  
8% gender diverse (trans, non-binary, agender, genderqueer, etc.)

### FALL 2021 APPLICANTS

1,895 Applicants

1,658 BFA | 237 MFA

### APPLIED FROM...

49 states + DC + Puerto Rico (just missing Alaska this year!)  
31 non-US countries (all continents except Antarctica)

### AND...

14% of BFAs will be the first in their families to go to a four-year university  
10% of BFAs qualified for Pell Grants  
The average incoming GPA for BFAs is 3.8/4  
9 out of 10 graduate students graduating with distinction (GPA average 3.928)  
69 Undergraduates  
3 double majors 35 minors  
Average GPA 3.709  
12 graduating Cum Laude  
22 graduating Magna Cum Laude  
22 graduating Summa Cum Laude

AND... Overall, we had a 15% admit rate

### SELF-IDENTIFIED AS...

35% domestic students of color  
60% white domestic students  
62% as female 33% as male  
4% as gender diverse (trans, non-binary, agender, genderqueer, etc.)

### SUMMER HIGH SCHOOL TRAINING PROGRAM

43 summer program students applied  
21 admitted total  
13 incoming across seven different majors:  
3 Acting  
2 Comedy Arts  
2 Costume Design  
1 Lighting Design  
1 Scene Design  
2 Theatre Arts  
2 Theatre Management  
62% yield of admitted Summer High School Training Program students who also comprise 12% of the incoming undergraduate class

## A FOCUS ON EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Equity, diversity, and inclusion have been among The Theatre School's stated values for many years, but in 2020-2021 the school took needed steps to re-evaluate its curriculum through a specifically anti-racist lens. Working with artEquity, a nationally acclaimed consulting firm focused on organizational culture change, staff and faculty engaged in a comprehensive effort to identify the school's vision for a modern theatre conservatory with racial justice at its core. The Theatre School is in the beginning of this process, not the end, but here's what happened in the past year:

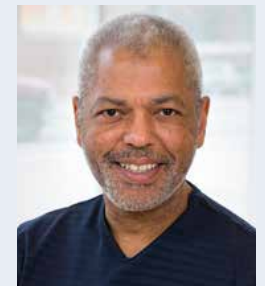
- ▶ The Theatre School diversity office expanded to include an additional part-time staff member, Azar Kazemi, who is an alumna and part-time faculty at the school. As part of her work with the diversity office, Azar hosted The Call-In series, a monthly meeting space for faculty, staff, and students to have open discussions around topics of anti-racism and inclusion in the theatre and entertainment industries.
- ▶ The season selection committee and the executive committee were expanded to include a broader diversity of perspectives and transparency around decision-making in the school.
- ▶ The Deans' Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Council—comprised of student-nominated representatives—met with the Dean, Assistant Dean, and Diversity Advisor monthly to advocate on behalf of the student body.
- ▶ During the fall quarter, the school held five anti-racism sessions for faculty and staff. Classes were cancelled to allow for 90-minute sessions dedicated to community building, group discussion, and effective anti-racism practices. The school also hosted three sessions for students during these periods, with a focus on building a shared language for difficult discussions.

- ▶ The work with artEquity involved identifying a core team of faculty and staff who developed a resource and needs assessment for the school.
- ▶ In Winter Quarter, the entire faculty and staff of The Theatre School participated in a two-day training led by artEquity Executive Director Carmen Morgan. These sessions were focused on the specific workings of The Theatre School, inviting the community to be as specific as possible about the issues that impact equity at the school.
- ▶ Following the retreat, the Core Team continued to meet and discuss organizational challenges, working closely with artEquity to identify strategies the school can implement to build a more just and equitable culture for all of the Theatre School community.

The work of envisioning and implementing new ways of working in The Theatre School is ongoing. Real change is slow, but the school's commitment to it is absolute.



Azar Kazemi



Dexter Zollicoffer

## IN THE NEWS

### JULY 2020

About Face Theatre welcomed alumnus **Mikael Burke** to its staff in the role of Associate Artistic Director to lead AFT's education and new work development programs. Burke also serves as the Head of Directing for The Theatre School's Summer High School Training Program.

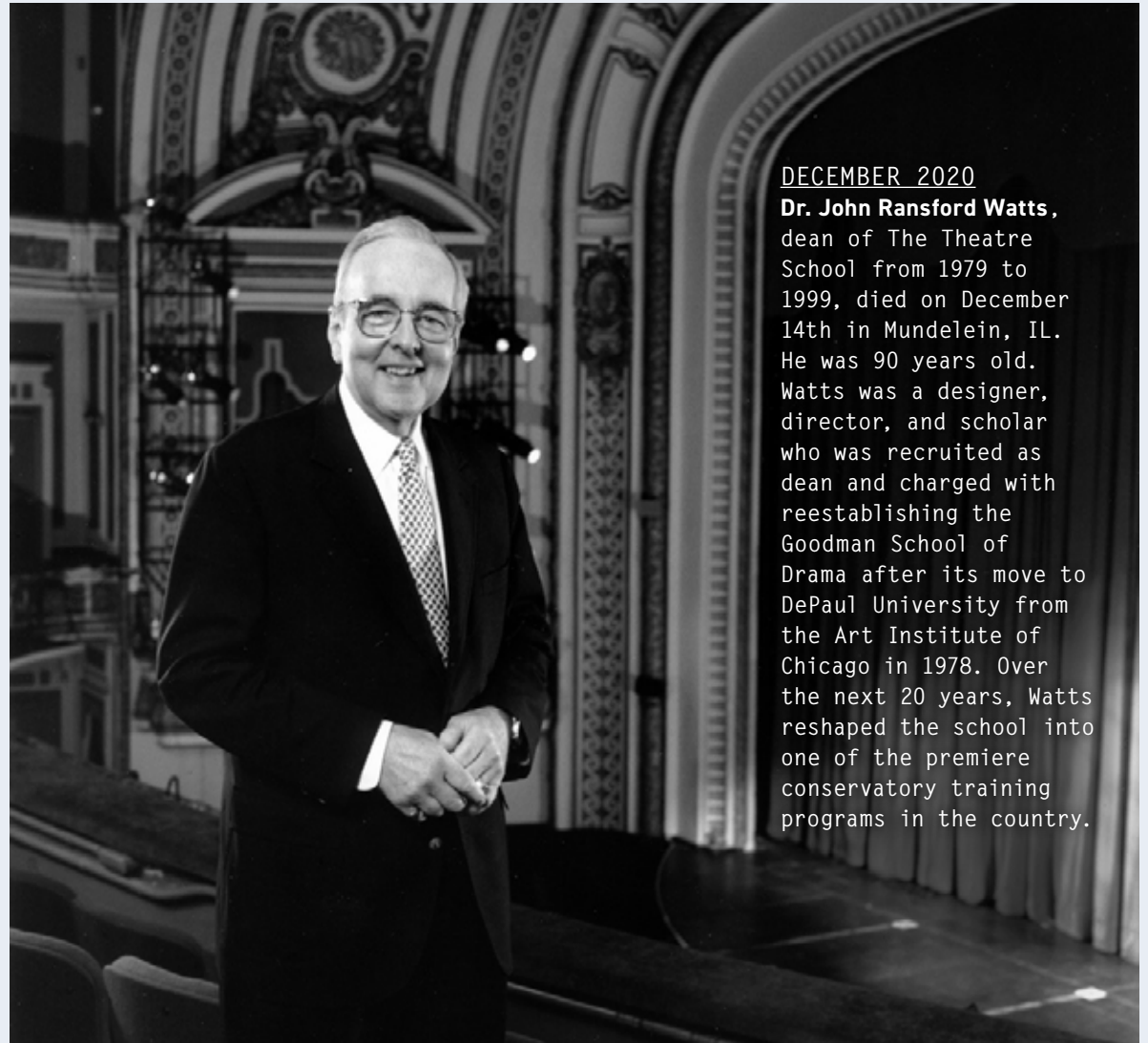


### JULY 2020

**Lisa Portes**, Head of the MFA Directing program, was named to Theatre Communications Group's Board of Directors as Secretary.

### OCTOBER 2020

Celebrated producer and alumna **Marie Cisco** has launched Cisco & Co. Productions, LLC, a full-service production house that specializes in live theatrical events and filmed content with a focus on uplifting stories of Black and African culture in addition to its intersection with feminism. Cisco begins this new venture after working at many esteemed theatrical and film organizations including The National Black Theatre, The New Black Fest, The Lark, The Public Theater, and Lee Daniels Entertainment



### DECEMBER 2020

**Dr. John Ransford Watts**, dean of The Theatre School from 1979 to 1999, died on December 14th in Mundelein, IL. He was 90 years old. Watts was a designer, director, and scholar who was recruited as dean and charged with reestablishing the Goodman School of Drama after its move to DePaul University from the Art Institute of Chicago in 1978. Over the next 20 years, Watts reshaped the school into one of the premiere conservatory training programs in the country.

### DECEMBER 2020

Alumnus **Lucas Baisch** received a 2020 Steinberg Playwright Award from the Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust. The annual awards recognize an early-to-mid career playwright with a \$10,000 prize.

### JANUARY 2021

Faculty member and alumna **McKenzie Chinn** was among the fifteen emerging storytellers selected for the Sundance Institute's January 2021 Screenwriters Lab, which also includes alumnus Tarrel Alvin McCraney as a Creative Advisor.



## FEBRUARY 2021

**Dr. Rachel Shteir's** article "Why We Can't Stop Talking About Betty Friedan" appeared in the In Her Words column of *The New York Times*. Shteir is working on a book about Betty Friedan, and is the head of The Theatre School's dramaturgy/criticism program.

## FEBRUARY 2021

Alumna **Gillian Anderson** won the Golden Globe Award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Series, Limited Series, or Motion Picture Made for Television for her portrayal of Margaret Thatcher in Netflix's *The Crown*. She also won the Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Female Actress in a Drama Series for this same role.

## FEBRUARY 2021

**Justen Ross** (BFA Acting '21) was selected to receive one of New York Stage & Film's NEXUS Initiative Artist Grants. The committee selected 20 individuals for their accomplishments in exploring new forms of storytelling.



## MAY 2021

Alumnus **Ben Raanan** was named Artistic Director of Phamaly Theatre Company, a Denver-based organization that is a creative home for theatre artists with disabilities.

## MAY 2021

Alumna **Kelly Kerwin** was named Artistic Director of Oklahoma City Rep, winner of the American Theatre Wing's National Theatre Award in 2012.



## MAY 2021

MFA Directing student **Stephanie LeBolt** was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship for Directing and will travel to Berlin in the fall to study dance, theater, and youth-led movements fighting climate change. The Fulbright U.S. Student Program provides grants for individually designed study/research projects or for English Teaching Assistant Programs. During their grants, Fulbrighters meet, work, live with, and learn from the people of the host country, sharing daily experiences. The program facilitates cultural exchange through direct interaction on an individual basis in the classroom, field, home, and in routine tasks, allowing the grantee to gain an appreciation of others' thoughts, viewpoints, and beliefs.

## GALA RECAP

This year The Theatre School held its first-ever virtual gala, with alumnus P.J. Byrne as host. The event featured current students and alumni and was livestreamed to hundreds of supporters across the country and around the world. Here are a few alumni testimonials about the importance of scholarships.



[WATCH](#)

**The Importance of Community**



[WATCH](#)

**Supporting Scholarships**



[WATCH](#)

**Tools for Success**

## GUEST ARTISTS

During the 2020-21 academic year, The Theatre School was proud to host a variety of guests who spoke to various classes within the Design/Technology, Performance, and Theatre Studies departments or offered workshops to current students. These guests included the following individuals:

### **Narda E. Alcorn,**

\*Chair, Stage Management Program; Yale School of Drama

### **Greg Allen,**

Director; The Neo-Futurists

### **Gillian Anderson,**

Emmy Award-winning Actor

### **Nina D'Angier,**

Immersive Designer

### **James Anthony,**

Marketing Manager; Collaboration

### **Ali Barthwell,**

Writer; Last Week Tonight with John Oliver

### **Benedetti,**

Comedian, Writer; Game Night Out, Reductress

### **Jim Van Bergen,**

Broadway Engineer & Sound Designer

### **Karly Bergmann,\***

Puppeteer

### **Brad Berridge,**

Director of Sound Operations; Feld Entertainment

### **Tracey Bonner,\***

Actor

### **Jaaron Boger,**

Filmmaker, Executive Director; PRJ Productions

### **Nick Bowling,\***

Director; TimeLine Theatre Company

### **J. Nicole**

**Brooks,** Actor, Director, Playwright; Lookingglass Theatre Company

### **Mikael Burke,\***

Director

### **Parker Calihan,**

Comedian, Director, Editor; Twitter, The Annoyance

### **P. Carl,**

Artist, Activist & Scholar; Emerson College, HowlRound

### **Carey Cannon,**

Associate Artistic Director; American Players Theatre

### **Karen Cardarelli,**

Executive Director; Facets Multi-Media

**Lucy Carapetyan,** Casting Director; Steep Theatre

**Lucy Carr,** Casting Director; Oak Park Theatre Festival

### **Hailey Cohn,\***

Digital Campaign Analyst; Chief Media

### **Celeste Cooper,\***

Actor

### **Frankie Charles,\***

Assistant Technical Director; Minnesota Opera

### **Rachel Chavkin,**

Director

### **Tom Clareson,**

Project Director; Performing Arts Readiness

### **Kristiana Rae**

**Colón,** Activist & Playwright; The Breathing Room

### **Glenn Davis,\***

Actor, Co-Artistic Director; Steppenwolf Theatre Company

### **Will Davis,\***

Director

### **Sandra Delgado,**

Actor, Director & Playwright; Teatro Vista, Collaboration

### **Ty Defoe,**

Playwright & Activist; Indigenous Direction

**ien DeNio,** Composer & Sound Designer

**Caitlin McLeod DesSoye-** Designer & Puppeteer

### **Katrina Dion,\***

Director of Education; Free Street Theater

### **Kendra Driskill,**

Wig Builder

### **Jen Ellison,**

Director; The Neo-futurists, The Second City

### **Marika**

**Englehardt,\*** Actor

### **Tyler English-**

**Beckwith,** Actor, Filmmaker & Playwright

### **Rick Engler,**

Director of Marketing & Public Relations; George Street Playhouse

### **Andres Enriquez,**

Casting Director & Ensemble; Lifeline Theatre

### **Lauren Nicole**

**Fields,\*** Artistic Director; Birch House Immersive

### **Mikhail Fiksel,**

Obie & Lortell Award-Winning Sound Designer & Composer

### **Maggie**

**Fullilove-Nugent,** Production Manager; TimeLine Theatre Company

**Brendon Fox,** Director, Associate Professor of Theatre; Washington College

**Caroline Macon Fleischer,\*** Writer & Editor

### **Hildo Franco,**

Educator and Cultural Strategist; Justice Informed

### **Deya Friedman,**

Production Manager & Stage Manager

### **Charles Andrew**

**Gardner,** Actor, Educator & Filmmaker

### **Ryan Garson,**

Company Manager; Hamilton Tour

### **Stephen Adly**

**Guirgis,** Pulitzer Prize-Winning Playwright

### **Annie Hardt,**

Caged Wig Builder

### **Wendall K.**

**Harrington,** Projection Design

### **Claire Haupt,**

Assistant Production Manager; Steppenwolf Theatre Company

### **Tempestt Hazel,**

Arts Program Officer; Field Foundation

**Adriane Heflin,** Technical Director; Children's Theatre Company

### **Jerrell L.**

**Henderson,** Director & Puppeteer

### **Hannah Herrera**

**Greenspan,\*** Journalist; Chicago Tribune

### **Mary Hungerford,**

Stage Manager; Steppenwolf Theatre Company

### **James Ijames,**

Director & Playwright; Wilma Theater, Villanova University

### **Scotty Iseri,**

Web Series & Mobile App Creator, Sound Designer

### **Jamie Joeyen-**

**Waldorf,** Broadway Producer & Human Resources Project Manager; *The New York Times*

### **Jerrilyn Lanier,**

Wig Designer and EDI Advocate

### **Christina M.**

**Leinicke,** Resident Costume Design Assistant; Paramount Theatre

### **Tonika Lewis**

**Johnson,** Artist; The Folded Map Project

### **Will Liverman,**

Opera Baritone

**Lindsay Jones**,  
Tony-Nominated  
Composer and Sound  
Designer

**Celise Kalke**,  
Managing Director;  
Synchronicity  
Theatre

**Kelly Kerwin**,\*  
Artistic Director;  
Oklahoma City  
Repertory Theater

**Leanna Keyes**,  
Playwright

**Janie Killips**,\*  
Artistic Director,  
Birch House  
Immersive

**Joe C. Klug**, Scenic  
Designer

**Jeffrey D. Kmiec**,  
Scenic Designer

**Michael Kramer**,  
Scholar; SUNY  
Brockport

**Lex Liang**, Costume  
& Scenic Designer

**Becca Levine**,  
Comedian, Head  
Writer; Cards  
Against Humanity

**John Loos**,  
Comedian, Writer  
& Producer; Funny  
or Die, The Second  
City

**Bob Mason**,  
Casting; Chicago  
Shakespeare  
Theater

**Jennifer  
McClendon**,  
Production  
Manager; Lifeline  
Theatre

**Maggie McNamara**,  
Director of  
Marketing;  
Lookingglass  
Theatre Company

**Jared Mezzocchi**,  
Obie Award-Winning  
Multi-Media  
Designer

**Catherine Miller**,\*  
Casting

**Richard A.  
Mosqueda**,  
Director &  
Producer

**Janet Mullet**,  
Managing Director;  
Northlight Theatre

**Patrick Mulvey**,  
Actor

**Karissa Murrell  
Myers**, Casting  
Director; Strawdog  
Theatre

**Alka Nayyar**, Actor,  
Performer, & PR  
Consultant

**Ashley Neal**,  
Casting Director;  
Rivendell Theatre  
Ensemble

**Lila Neugebauer**,  
Director

**Janet Newcomb**,  
Executive  
Director; National  
Coalition for Arts'  
Preparedness and  
Emergency Response

**Robert O'Hara**,  
Playwright

**Matthew Ozawa**,  
Opera Stage  
Director

**Sharath Patel**,  
Sound Designer

**Rachael Patterson**,  
Director; Acting  
Studio Chicago

**Tyrone Phillips**,  
Artistic Director  
& Founder;  
Definition Theatre

**Lauren Port**,  
Casting; Goodman  
Theatre

**P.J. Powers**,  
Artistic Director  
& Co-Founder;  
TimeLine Theatre  
Company

**Mikalina Rabinsky**,  
Director; Piven  
Theatre

**Gabrielle Randall**,  
Research Fellow;  
Court Theatre

**Cree Rankin**,  
Community  
Engagement  
& Education  
Associate; Congo  
Square Theatre

**Ericka Ratcliff**,  
Community  
Engagement  
& Education  
Associate; Congo  
Square Theatre

**Jo Michael Rezes**,  
Actor, Director  
& Scholar; Tufts  
University

**Karla Rivera**,  
Executive  
Director; Free  
Street Theatre

**Maren Robinson**,  
Dramaturg;  
TimeLine Theatre  
Company

**Adam Rowe**, Emmy  
Award-Winning  
Art Director  
& Production  
Designer

**Amanda Saeger**,  
Sound Engineer

**Bri Ng Schwartz**,\*  
Manager of Donor  
and Community  
Relations; JACK

**Jen Seleznow**,\*  
Production &  
Technical Design

**Helen Shaw**,  
Journalist; New  
York magazine

**Yu Shibagaki**,  
Scenic Designer

**Jaymi Lee Smith**,\*  
Lighting Design,  
Associate Dean for  
Student Success;  
University of  
California Irvine

**Kevin Spellman**,  
Technology  
& Innovation  
Specialist; Chicago  
Shakespeare  
Theater

**Kristy Staky**,\* Wig  
Builder, Owner;  
Top Knot Wigs &  
Facial Hair

**Zandra Starks**,  
Theatre Artist and  
Educator

**Joanna Lynne Staub**,  
Audio Engineer &  
Sound Designer

**Cathy Tantillo**,  
Costume Design  
Assistant; Chicago  
Shakespeare  
Theater

**Cathy Taylor**,  
Owner; Cathy  
Taylor Public  
Relations

**Stephanie Tomey**,\*  
Wig Designer

**CJ Tuor**, Comedian,  
Head Writer;  
Jackbox Games

**David Turrentine**,  
Accountant  
and Business  
Consultant for  
Artists

**Alden J. Vasquez**,\*  
Stage Manager;  
Goodman Theatre

**Rita Vreeland**,  
Stage Manager

**Jo Weldon**,  
Author, Activist,  
Performer &  
Educator; New  
York School of  
Burlesque

**Nik Whitcomb**,  
Casting Associate;  
Paskal Rudnicke  
Casting

**Sharifa Yasmin**,  
Director &  
Playwright

## **PRODUCTIONS**

### **FALL 2020 PROTOTYPES**

*The Garden*  
by Genevieve Swanson  
directed by  
Luke Riggs

*Inside the Mind:  
Poems from a  
Florida Man!*  
written and  
performed by  
Lazarus Howell

*A Love Play*  
by Saskia Bakker  
directed by  
Stephanie LeBolt

*This is What  
I Miss Most*  
by Gena Treyvus,  
Jeffery Baker, and  
Ethan Venzon  
directed by  
Nikolette Olson

*LADEATH/Relax*  
written and  
directed by SaVaughn  
McClaine

### **INTROS Devised by Ensembles**

*CTL + ALT + DELETE*

*No\_Body*

*Tough Ca11*

## **COMEDY ARTS**

*I'm Doing Great  
Actually*  
a variety act  
directed by  
Comedy Arts  
Ensemble

### **WINTER 202 VIRTUAL SEASON**

*Suicide Incorporated*  
by Andrew Hinderaker  
directed by  
Keira Fromm

*Blood Wedding*  
by Federico García  
Lorca  
directed by Lisa  
Portes

*American Teenager*  
written and  
directed by  
Monty Cole

*The Thanksgiving Play*  
Larissa Fast horse  
directed by Mallory  
Metoxen

*small rooms*  
devised by the  
ensemble  
directed by  
Stephanie LeBolt

*Long Time Since  
Yesterday*  
by P.J. Gibson  
directed by Wardell  
Julius Clark

*Building the Wall*  
by Robert Schenkkan  
directed by Phyllis  
E. Griffin

### **INTRODUCTION TO PERFORMANCE**

*Stupid Fucking Bird*  
by Aaron Posner  
directed by Jeremy  
Ohringer

*Barbecue*  
by Robert O'Hara  
directed by Azar  
Kazemi

*I'm Pretty Fucked Up*  
by Ariel Stess  
directed by Rob Adler

### **PROTOTYPES**

*Between Two Rooms*  
written by Jonah  
Fessler & Joel  
Davila

*The Last Night of  
the World*  
written by Emily  
Townley  
Directed by  
Nikolette Olson

### **COMEDY ARTS**

*Motivation*  
Variety Act from  
Comedy Arts  
Ensemble

### **Comedy Arts: Winter Labs**

Variety Act from  
Comedy Arts  
Ensemble

*Nobody's Perfect  
Everybody's Fabulous*  
Sketch Show from  
BFA 2 Ensemble

*Doing it Wrong, Right?*  
Sketch Show from  
Comedy Arts  
Ensemble

### **SPRING 2021 VIRTUAL SEASON**

*The Gap*  
by Emma Goide1  
directed by  
Christine Freije

*715 Pearl Street  
(in the Garage)*  
by Megan Lucas  
directed by  
Megan Carney

*Exit the King*  
by Eugene Ionesco  
directed by  
Damon Kiely

*V.I.P*  
by Molly Rosen  
directed by  
Joanie Schultz

*Faustus*  
adapted and  
directed by  
Nicole Ricciardi

*Dance Nation*  
by Clare Barron  
directed by  
Stephanie LeBolt

*Sunset Baby*  
by Dominique  
Morisseau  
directed by  
Chika Ike



*American Teenager*

*As You Like It*  
by William Shakespeare  
directed by Jeff Mills

## INTRODUCTION TO PERFORMANCE

*Machinal*  
by Sophie Treadwell  
directed by Mikael Burke

*if the table moves*  
created by the ensemble  
directed and co-created by Kurt Chieng

*The Book of Magdalene*  
by Caridad Svich  
directed by Sara Rademacher

## WRIGHTS OF SPRING First-Year Students

*um and and um*  
by Jeffery Luke Baker

*Igneous Cycle*  
by Gena Treyvus

*Late Night Snack*  
by Caylah Willette

## Second-Year Students

*Timed Avoidance*  
by Helaina Coggs

*Nightwatchmen*  
by Henry Zahn

*Masks Off*  
by Holly Dodd

*Doting, Dawdling, Dangerous: Devotee*  
by Kenny Finch

*Leviticus 20:13*  
by Grace Halfacer

*Innocent*  
by Genevieve Swanson

*Super Duper Adventures of Super Nova: Episode 1*  
by Lila Engelhardt

## Third-Year Students

*Past, Wrapped*  
by Ethan Doskey

*A Mural*  
by Felix Correa-Priest

*Pieces that Remain*  
by Grace Lowry

*Milkshake Beach*  
by Jacob Craigo-Snell

*Meeting Points*  
by McLennan

*Cassandra at Cumae*  
by Ross Milstead

*The Lord, The Lady, The Girl, The Baby*  
by Sam Kerns

*Against the Sky*  
by Saskia Bakker

## Fourth-Year Students

*Mother Chrysalis*  
by Bobby Halvorson

*Teeth*  
by Camilla Dwyer

*Relics: Fragmented Histories*  
by Jana Heili

*Friends From Camp*  
by Molly Rosen

## COMEDY ARTS

### First-Year Students

Bizzaro Debutante Ball

Sydney Copeland

Daniel DeVenney

Lucas Johnson

Quinn Kempe

Cooper Lyke

Gabriel Manglano

Jack Maricle

SaVaughn McClaine

Ben Meneses

Keaton Moore

Lilly Musgraves

Chava Novogrodsky-Godt

Jake Rasof

Shane Jordan Steinman

Tanner S. Sykes

Kathy Thompson



Blood Wedding

### Second-Year Students

#### STAND-UP PERFORMANCES

Jack Melcher

Caroline Koonce

Lexi Hanna

Lazarus Howell

Kathryn Courtney

Dev Wright

Cammie Allen

Robert Vetter

Joel Davila

Logan J. Munoz

Trevor Dudasik

Mo

John Bordeau

Laila Wenrich

Cammie Allen

Marisel Sierra

Stuart Williams

### INDEPENDENT PROJECTS

The Theatre School supported more than 25 independent projects during the 2020-21 academic year. Students received financial support, project guidance and advising, and use of space and equipment. Projects ranged from small films to full-concert lighting set-ups, from costume designs and creations to digital comedy festivals. These projects expanded the students' thinking about how to creatively produce work that engages audiences in new ways and through varied communication platforms.



Dance Nation

## PROFILE

Liz Joynt-Sandberg



### WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO THE THEATRE SCHOOL?

I left my interview feeling like I'd finally found "my people" as an educator. The way that my future colleagues talked about collaborating with each other and their students felt like what I had been reaching for in my own creative and teaching practices. Then meeting the brilliant and hilarious initial (now BFA 3!) Comedy Arts cohort over terrible pizza really sealed the deal! Watching those students immediately implement the comedy theory we discussed in a short workshop I taught during my interview remains a treasured memory for me.

A more "what was my career path" answer: Three things brought me to TTS: 10,000 hours in drunk people at midnight (i.e. lots of comedy experience as a writer, performer, and director), incredible mentorship and advocacy by Anne Libra at Columbia College/The Second City where I taught for a number of years before my time at DePaul, and Dean Corrin who saw potential in my work and hasn't yet had the good sense to stop encouraging my wild ideas.

### WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THE UPCOMING SCHOOL YEAR?

To have an excellent second first year! I spent my first-year teaching at DePaul all virtually, so I'm giving myself a do-over of a first-year as I get to know colleagues and students

IRL, get lost repeatedly in the building, and learn the ins and outs of TTS (what is Backstage and why can't I figure it out?!). I'm also VERY excited to be directing DePaul's first-ever comedy festival Mess Fest. My primary goal in that work is to empower everyone involved to get wild and free as we all reconnect in community this fall.

### WHAT'S YOUR GREATEST PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT?

Honestly? Navigating this past year. Between doing my best to help my two kids with their remote learning tasks and teaching remotely myself, I learned a lot about patience and practicing what I preach as someone who espouses the power of an improvisational mindset to manage uncertainty.

### FAVORITE FOOD

It's hard to beat a late-night hotdog eaten sitting on a curb after an improv show!

### HOMETOWN

Mount Pleasant, Michigan

### WHAT'S ONE THING YOU WOULD LIKE PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT YOU?

That this Q&A took me twice as long to complete because I was constantly writing and deleting jokes!

## CREATIVE ROOT

The Theatre School launched Creative Root in April of 2020 and started with a series of virtual classes for young people (ages 4-16) amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Offerings included workshops in improv and storytelling; imaginative play; creative movement and dance; and musical theatre. Creative Root also partnered with Chicago Public Schools, working with 400 students grades K-6th, and hosted its first-ever summer theatre camp, offering two sessions in-person at The Theatre School.



### SO, WHAT IS CREATIVE ROOT ALL ABOUT?

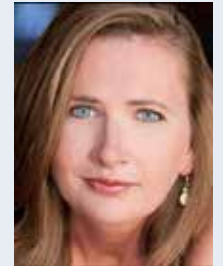
Creative Root offers classes for both young people and adults, summer camps, and school partnerships. The program employs a holistic theatre arts education strategy that embraces restorative and diverse approaches to learning that

center student and community needs. Creative Root works to build responsive spaces to empower young people, educators, and intergenerational learners in Chicago with the tools necessary to believe in the power of their own creative voice, to collaborate with others to build strong communities, and to uplift their mind-body-spirit connection.

“It’s been such an incredible experience to build this brand-new program over the past year,” explained Mechelle Moe, Director, Creative Root. “The response from students, families, and schools has been so positive. And the opportunity to create meaningful programming—that centers wellness and joy—while responding to the needs of this moment is extremely rewarding. And there’s more to come!”

As part of the Creative Root program The Theatre School partnered with James Hedges School located in the southwest side of Chicago. Over the course of four months, Creative Root remotely delivered the school’s first-ever classroom theatre programming to nearly 400 students in 14 classrooms throughout six grade levels (K-6th).

Creative Root engaged 15 teaching artists and mentors, including DePaul students currently in training to become future arts educators. James Hedges School is 96% Hispanic, and 98% low income. The project was funded by the Children’s First Fund.



Mechelle Moe,  
Director, Creative Root

“Creative Root was a great program and the students loved it!” remarked one fifth-grade classroom teacher at James Hedges School. “They were able to work on their speech, expression, and imagination. It was important to get students to have some time to express themselves.”

And Creative Root classes aren’t just for kids. Whether you’re a novice who wants to explore something new or a working theatre professional looking to hone a specific skill, all experience levels are welcome. Creative Root offers specialized classes in improv, voiceover, movement, mindfulness, yoga, and acting year-round.

[Learn more about Creative Root by visiting our website.](#)

## ALUMNI PROFILE

### Dennis Grimaldi

(L to R) Len Cariou, Dennis Grimaldi, Karen Carpenter, and Craig Bierko attend *Harry Townsend's Last Stand* at Sardi's restaurant in New York City.



### AN ONGOING LEGACY

Originally Published in DePaul Magazine  
Spring 2021 Issue

Things have a way of turning out right for award-winning theatre and television producer Dennis Grimaldi (THE '68). The Melrose Park, Ill., native was eager to pursue a career in acting and choreography, but the teachers with whom he wished to study at one institution had moved on to other pursuits. It was

through word of mouth that he learned that an audition for a scholarship to Chicago's Goodman School of Drama (GSD, now The Theatre School at DePaul) was approaching. When he won the scholarship, he found it was exactly the right place to prepare him for a successful life in the theatre.

"Dr. Charles McGaw was the most influential in my getting a scholarship," says Grimaldi of the dean of GSD. "The

Russian Tony-award-winning actress Eugenie Leontovich took me under her wing. She coached me and pried and brought out some things I didn't know were in me. Between her and acting teacher Joe Slowik, I learned so much. When I left the Goodman, Carl Stohn Jr., who awarded me the scholarship, hired me to come back to his theatre, the Pheasant Run in St. Charles, Ill. In essence, he started my directorial career."

As with most aspiring theatre professionals, Grimaldi moved to New York City and eventually became a producer, forming Dennis Grimaldi Productions in 1989. In that role, he has worked with some of the brightest lights on Broad-



On tour with Lynn Fitzpatrick in *No, No Nanette*; at the Goodman Theatre with guest artist Hiram Sherman





*Harry Townsend's Last Stand* star Len Cariou, producer Dennis Grimaldi, director Karen Carpenter and co-star Craig Bierko

way and beyond, including Mia Farrow, Brian Dennehy, Carol Burnett, Alan Alda and Candice Bergen in the Broadway run of *Love Letters*, Ron Leibman in the original production of *Angels in America*, and Simon Russell Beale and Stephen Sondheim in the London production of Sondheim's *Marry Me a Little*. He also produced *Gypsy* for television, as well as several ice-skating extravaganzas over the years.

His most recent production, *Harry Townsend's Last Stand*, teamed him with Len Cariou, extending the long association he has had with the actor that began at the Goodman, where Cariou was

a guest artist. "So many of the productions I produced or have been involved with have led me back to people who had helped me early on in my career," says Grimaldi. "I'm very proud of that, that I could give back."

It is because of the scholarship he earned and the assistance he received in his early career that Grimaldi established the Dennis Grimaldi Endowed Scholarship at The Theatre School at DePaul. The audition-based scholarship, which is awarded annually, is intended to help a first-year student get the great start that Grimaldi himself did years ago.

"One of the principles of the Goodman was teaching through doing, and I think that The Theatre School is really carrying on that tradition. There's nothing from my time at the Goodman that I would trade. Whether we had classes with Uta Olson, who was the costume teacher and a major influence on award-winning costume designer Theoni Aldredge (THE CER '53, DHL '85), or a lighting class with Nick Naselius, I learned so much that I was able to store and use later. So it wasn't so much going there as an actor, but going there to really, really learn my craft."

Grimaldi says that establishing the scholarship "filled my heart so much because it's like what happened to me. That's what I was saying about the Goodman legacy continuing. Discovering new voices, discovering new talent. That's why I want to be a part of it."

## **THE THEATRE SCHOOL BOARD**

The Theatre School Board has two primary functions: to raise funds to support the school's programs and scholarship awards, and to raise the visibility and stature of the school in Chicago and nationally. There are three categories of membership: Sustaining Members, who actively support the mission of the school through advocacy and philanthropy; Professional Associates, who promote connections between the school and the entertainment industry; and Honorary Board Members, elected in recognition of their dedication and service to The Theatre School. We are grateful for the many ways in which our board members contribute to the life of the school.

### **SUSTAINING BOARD MEMBERS**

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**Linda Sieracki**

**Richard Sieracki**  
CEO  
The Kenneth Group,  
LLC

**Monsignor  
Kenneth Velo**  
Office of Catholic  
Collaboration  
DePaul University

**Tomer Yogev**  
Co-Founder and  
Managing Director  
TandemSpring

### **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATES**

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Actor

**Glenn Davis**  
Co-Artistic  
Director  
Steppenwolf  
Theatre Company

**Scott L. Ellis**  
ADAMS Associate  
Artistic Director  
The Roundabout  
Theatre

**Scott and  
Samantha Falbe**  
Intelligent  
Lighting Creations

**Zach Helm**  
Screenwriter  
& Director

**Criss Henderson**  
Executive Director  
Chicago  
Shakespeare  
Theater

**Paul Konrad**  
Weather /Reporter  
WGN-TV News

**Amy K. Pietz**  
Actor

**John C. Reilly**  
Actor

**Charlayne Woodard**  
Actor & Playwright

**Dennis Zacek**  
Director, Former  
Artistic Director  
Victory Gardens  
Theater

### **HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS:**

**Merle Reskin**