

MASTER OF FINE ARTS: ACTING AND DIRECTING

Student Learning Outcomes

Students graduating from this program will:

- A detailed understanding of their individual processes as actors through which they find the physical, vocal, emotional and intellectual availability to meet the requirements of a given role.
- A working knowledge of the human voice as a primary means of communication.
- A working knowledge of the human body as a primary means of communication.
- A working knowledge of the human psyche as a primary means of motivation.
- A working knowledge of research methods through which to gain an understanding of the circumstantial life of a character.
- An experiential knowledge of theatrical performance genres from classical roots through contemporary theatre.
- A strong familiarity with a wide range of dramatic literature.
- The ability to work with directors of varying working processes and communication styles.
- The ability to work in collaboration with an ensemble of artists.

Program Requirements

The acting program is a three-year, minimum 60-credit-hour professional actor-training program interacting with the Kansas City Repertory Theatre, a professional Equity LORT B Theatre. M.F.A. students are subject to the General Graduate Academic Requirements (<http://catalog.umkc.edu/general-graduate-academic-regulations-information/>) of the University for graduate study.

First Year

The first year of training is a highly disciplined, process-oriented period of study including: a morning group warm-up; collaboration class which integrates students and faculty from each area of study; intensive breath and vocal production; basic speech work; introductory dialect work; text analysis; applicable fitness and nutritional programs, alignment and self-use process; physical approaches to characterization including physical isolations and effort shape; neutral, emotional and character mask work; ballroom dance. We pursue intensive exploration of creative technique, based on Constantin Stanislavski, Stella Adler and Morris Carnovsky's principles of theatrical truth; building a character; and ensemble play. Performance work includes the first-year "Discovery Project", that usually is inspired by classical material. Other projects may center around social issues of the day or character searches.

Second Year

In the second year of training the student actor continues with a morning warm-up; collaboration class; voice production along with continued speech and dialect work and a focus on heightened text and extended voice; private and ensemble singing tutorials; stage combat (unarmed, rapier, dagger; subtle energy work; period-style movement including social convention and dance; Commedia dell' arte characterization, mask work and personal clown; continued work on acting Shakespeare; intensive work on Moliere verse text integrated with the period-style movement and comic technique; restoration or other heightened language text; and application of the actor's process to audition technique and contemporary text. Essential Meisner work is folded into exploration of creative technique. Second-year actors begin public performance work with guest and faculty directors on new, contemporary and period plays chosen specifically for the training. Occasionally, roles at the Kansas City Repertory Theatre, and other professional theatres in town, are available for second-year actors.

Third Year

Third year actors continue to apply their craft to challenging studies in many styles of plays; they deepen their understanding and application of Meisner technique; singing; tutorials in speech and movement as well as voice over workshops and acting for the camera. Public performance work intensifies with specific productions chosen to challenge the actor's art within the training program. Actors also, when applicable, audition for Kansas City Repertory productions and are cast, when appropriate, in roles or as understudies. Actors also audition and perform, when appropriate, in other Kansas City professional Equity theatres. In May, the actors are showcased in New York. All students who are considered "in good standing" participate in showcase.