

# Musical Theater Studies (M.A.)

---

## About The Program:

The Master of Arts in Musical Theater Studies is designed for graduate students to continue their education and practice in the disciplines of acting, music, and dance/movement in preparation for careers in education, performance, production, or direction. The Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts, comprised of constituent faculty and programs within the Department of Theater in collaboration with sister faculty and programs in the Boyer College of Music and Dance, is ideally suited to offer such a progressive degree opportunity. Both faculties are professionally experienced in Musical Theater as performers, directors, designers, musicians, and administrators, all notable and proven teachers with enviable records of success both professionally and academically.

Historically, students wanting to pursue a graduate musical theater degree in the United States had to choose between a Master of Fine Arts and a Master of Music, given that master's degree programs in musical theater were rare. Today, Temple University's M.A. in Musical Theater Studies is the only M.A. in Musical Theater Studies with a curriculum that combines classroom study with practical training in musical theater performance, including acting, directing, choreographing, and educating equally in all areas of musical theater production and performance. The curriculum reflects current institutional trends supporting interdisciplinary study in the performing arts, as well as the efficiency of a 30-hour, one-year program.

**Career Options:** The degree serves as a bridge for further specialization in the area of musical theater for students coming from the various genres of music, theater, and dance who want seek more advanced graduate education. Skills acquired in teaching and producing musicals in primary and secondary education could lead to immediate employment. The skills and expertise acquired would also apply to educational positions and outreach programs affiliated with professional theaters.

**Prerequisites for Admission:** All applicants must present credentials that are the equivalent of the appropriate baccalaureate degree at Temple University.

---

## Requirements of Programs:

- **Total Credit Hours:** 36
- **Culminating Events:**

*Master's Thesis:*

A final performance, demonstration project, and/or research paper is required. The student works with a thesis advisor, as assigned, until the project is completed. Prior to graduation, students make a formal presentation of their thesis for Theater faculty, students, and invited guests. Detailed guidelines for a written M.A. thesis process and evaluation are found in the Graduate Handbook.

## Core Courses

**American Musical Theater** – To obtain advanced understanding of the history, forms and elements of American Musical Theater through study of the developments of the art form and exploration of the most enduring works of the genre.

**Directing for the Musical Stage** – The focus of this class will be on advancing the student director's skill as pertains to the American Musical Theater repertoire. The course will address the myriad challenges of directing a musical work: including heightened stakes and storytelling techniques, intensified scheduling and management requirements of musical productions, and collaboration with musical directors and choreographers. Students will also apply and enhance acquired skills in script analysis, concept work, staging, working with actors and design elements by applying them to a challenging variety of material from the American Musical Theater.

**The Business of the Business in Theater** – The Business of the Business in Theater analyzes various management, organization, publicity, marketing, job preparation, casting, and agency techniques and practices as they apply to professionals in the non-profit and commercial theater industries. It offers a foundation for students interested in developing, launching, or advancing innovative enterprises in theater. The course is a study of the business of working in the theater at all levels and positions within the entertainment hierarchy and allows students to understand the nature and structures of arts enterprises. It consists of paper projects, guest artists, and hands-on opportunities that examine various scenarios involving actors, designers, managers, producers, and administrators to better prepare students for the challenges of a career in the arts. It explores early career opportunities such as internships, assistantships, fellowships, and entry level positions in the entertainment industry. The course will focus not only on establishing, but maintaining a career in the entertainment industry.

## **Dramaturgy**

## **Electives**

**Inclusive Vocal Development: Pre-Kindergarten - Secondary** – In this course, preservice music teachers learn to guide their future students through stages of vocal development. Emphases include presentation of an exemplary vocal model for one's students, voice care for choral musicians and teachers, and considerations for selecting repertoire appropriate for Pre-Kindergarten, elementary, and secondary school choral musicians. NOTE: Special authorization only. In-class performances and peer evaluations, and observations (in-class) required. This course is for majors only.

**Assessment of Music Learning** – Students learn to measure music learning (achievement), skill-based and cognitive-based, and to measure music potential (aptitude) across a range of ages. They write achievement tests, which they evaluate subjectively and statistically, and learn to evaluate the quality and appropriateness of standardized tests of music achievement and music aptitude. NOTE: Special authorization only. Required for all music education majors.

**Musical Theater Voice and Acting** – Advanced work in the application of performance techniques to specific songs from the American Musical Theater of the first half of the 20th century. The incorporation of truthful acting with attention to given circumstances and objectives is blended with principles of healthy, supported singing.

**Musical Theater Scene Study** – Advanced work in the application of performance techniques to specific scenes from the American Musical Theater provides further development for the student of musical theater. Vocal and acting skills are combined with the development of character in musical play scene-work including both song and dialogue. Students spend the semester in collaboration with fellow students on notable and challenging scenes from the musical theater.

**Musical Theater Dance Techniques** – An intensive study of dance vocabulary, styles, and combinations utilized in auditions and performances for the professional musical theater stage. This course is designed to explore the unique principles and techniques characteristic of Theater Dance, as well as an approach to the audition process, storytelling, characterization, and self-expression through movement. This course also explores the significance and historical/cultural impact of the art form of musical theater, focusing on the choreographic element. Prior dance experience and understanding of the fundamentals of dance technique is required. Students will execute a ballet and jazz based warm-up, conditioning, technical skills, and various combinations drawing from the musical theater repertoire of the 20's through today.

**Speech for the Actor I** – In the fall, students concentrate on developing the actor's awareness of speech and articulation patterns. They learn vocal anatomy and the fundamentals of articulation. It is the goal of this class to help the actor have command of the International Phonetic Alphabet in preparation for dialect work and to learn the Detail Model, the Standard American Speech of Edith Skinner and General American English. Through in-class coaching they apply this knowledge to the final poetry performances.

**Vocal Production for the Actor I** – Fall term will focus on self discovery, increasing sensitivity and awareness, and finding release. We will be involved in taking personal inventory. What is our vocal history? What are our patterns of use? Where do we hold tension? How is our breath and physical life supporting or inhibiting our communication? Are there psychological / emotional issues we need to address in order to feel less inhibited in exploring our sound and claiming our own authentic voice? We will evaluate and determine where our present patterns function well and where they need to be replaced with a fuller, healthier, or more efficient way of producing and supporting sound. We will introduce the Fitzmaurice system of deconstructing and structuring.

**Vocal Production for the Actor II** – Spring term will continue the work of the previous term. We will continue to explore the journey from breath to voice using a variety of exercises and approaches (including Fitzmaurice voice work). We will be exploring vocal possibilities with and without text. We will address support, balance, tension zones, groundedness, and energy flow as it translates into vocal energy (just how we extend ourselves in communication). We will explore the mind-body relationship of voco-physical experience through Laban concepts and work with chakras.

**Dance for the Actor I** – Movement: In the fall, students are introduced to the basic principles of the Alexander Technique and begin to apply the Technique to their physical and vocal organization in simple everyday tasks. Students are introduced to kinesthetic awareness of the relationship between the head, neck, back, and pelvis, and its role in the coordination of the acting instrument. The goals of this course are to give actors greater awareness of their vocal and physical habits, to give them a psycho-physical means which they can use to live fully in the present moment, and to provide a method of working actors can use to develop a more coordinated use of their vocal and physical instruments. Dance:

Modern Dance Technique, Lester Horton and Martha Graham. Actors learn a strong physical warm-up including Pilates. Actors are introduced to improvisation, isolations, and Laban work which culminates in short performance scenes.

**Dance for the Actor II – Movement:** The spring course is a continuation of TH 5241. Students learn to kinesthetically explore and intellectually understand the role of the head, spine, and pelvis in increasingly complex activities. Students explore developmental movement and begin to analyze movement patterns and relate them to basic movements covered in the 1st semester. They also continue to learn how a person's habits of Use correlate with their understanding of how the body works. Students begin to apply the Technique to increasingly athletic activities and to performance. The goal of this class is to prepare students for the vocal and physical work of their 2nd year of training and to further develop a means of working that they can use to improve their performance both on and off the stage. Dance: Continue work with Lester Horton. Long Neck and Space combinations. Ballet technique is introduced (Baker center work and space). Period dance is introduced as well (for example, Pavanne, Morris Dance, and Galliard). Strong warm-up technique component continues. Class also addresses Physical Gesture in Shakespeare scenes, Meyerhold and Chekhov projects.

### **Rehearsal & Performance**

**Script and Score Analysis** – This course is designed to equip students with a set of tools from which they may draw in the analysis of a musical theater text. Through weekly readings and discussion students will develop and refine criteria for analyzing and understanding musicals as well as making judgments about their merits.

**Costume Production** – This course is an introduction to the process of costume construction from the designer's sketch to the finished garment. This course will cover basic skills necessary to construct a garment and create costume props and accessories. Sewing skills, fabric identification and basic pattern layout are some of the topics included. All Theater/Design candidates actively participate in design and production work in the Theater Department's main stage season. This design and production work is an extension of what is presented in the classroom and an experiential component to the degree program.

**Lighting Design II** – To provide a clear understanding and strong basis of language analysis and its application in lighting design. Various techniques in text interpretation will be used and explored. These techniques will then be used to the design process. There will also be a research project in the direct application of contemporary scientific developments. Throughout this course, the design process for the current Temple productions will continually be examined. All Theater/Design candidates actively participate in design and production work in the Theater Department's main stage season. This design and production work is an extension of what is presented in the classroom and an experiential component to the degree program.

**Costume Design II** – The goal of Costume Design II is to develop skills leading to a profession in the field of costume design for the performing arts (theater, television, film, opera, dance, etc.) or entertainment industry. Advanced projects in script analysis, character development, primary and secondary research as well as real-world problem solving. All Theater/Design candidates actively participate in design and production work in the Theater Department's main stage season. This design

and production work is an extension of what is presented in the classroom and an experiential component to the degree program.

**Theatrical Makeup** – The course is designed to give to students an overview of basic makeup techniques with the hands-on opportunity to learn and apply the principles of standard and character stage makeup. All Theater/Design candidates actively participate in design and production work in the Theater Department's main stage season. This design and production work is an extension of what is presented in the classroom and an experiential component to the degree program.

**Scene Design II** – This is a skills/activity course in the theory, process, and techniques of scenic design for the theater. Topics will include principles, elements, and concepts of design; script analysis; design concept development; creative research and its interpretation; and the communication and presentation of theatrical ideas. Specific projects, lectures and discussions, followed by student presentation and response will structure the course. Projects and presentations will include: scenic plots, research, thumbnails, sketches, ground plans, elevations, color renderings and models. All Theater/Design candidates actively participate in design and production work in the Theater Department's main stage season. This design and production work is an extension of what is presented in the classroom and an experiential component to the degree program.

### **Project in Acting**

**Projects in Directing I** – The course is offered each year on a tutorial basis and may be repeated for credit.

**Research** – A research project and written documentation may be required of all MFA Design candidates at some point during their three year program. Subject and format to be determined by the candidate and their mentor. All Theater/Design candidates actively participate in design and production work in the Theater Department's main stage season. This design and production work is an extension of what is presented in the classroom and an experiential component to the degree program.

**Thesis** – A thesis project and written documentation is required of all MFA Design candidates. The candidate will create a thesis committee to preside over their defense and approval of the written document. All Theater/Design candidates actively participate in design and production work in the Theater Department's main stage season. This design and production work is an extension of what is presented in the classroom and an experiential component to the degree program.

---

## **Courses:**

Click [HERE](#) for more information on the courses below.

- American Musical Theater
- Musical Theater Dance Techniques
- Directing for the Musical Stage
- Speech for the Actor I
- Speech for the Actor II
- Acting I
- Acting II
- Vocal Production for the Actor I
- Vocal Production for the Actor II
- Dance for the Actor I

- Dance for the Actor II
- The Job Market
- Rehearsal/Performance
- Directing Practicum I
- Directing Practicum II
- The Business of the Business in Theater
- Musical Theater Practicum I
- Musical Theater Practicum II
- History of Décor
- History of Fashion
- Theatrical Model Making
- Design Drafting
- Design for TV and Film
- Dramaturgy
- Playwriting I
- Playwriting II
- Adaptation
- Docudrama
- Poetry As Performance
- Script and Score Analysis
- Lyric Seminar I
- Lyric Seminar II
- Seminar in Dramatic Literature
- Speech for the Actor III
- Speech for the Actor IV
- Acting III
- Acting IV
- Vocal Production for the Actor III
- Vocal Production for the Actor IV
- Dance for the Actor III
- Dance for the Actor IV
- Costume Production
- Drawing and Rendering for the Theater I
- Drawing and Rendering for the Theater II
- Scene Painting I
- Scene Painting II
- Projects in Technical Production
- Lighting Design II
- Lighting Design III
- Costume Design II
- Costume Design III
- Draping and Flat Pattern Drafting I
- Costume Crafts
- Draping and Flat Pattern Drafting 2
- Theatrical Makeup
- Projects in Costuming
- Scene Design II
- Scene Design III
- Playwriting III
- Playwriting IV
- Teaching Playwriting
- Vocal Arranging
- Music Direction for the Musical Theater Stage
- Teach in Higher Education
- Lyrics/Book Seminar I
- Lyrics/Book Seminar II
- Theater Internship
- Graduate Ensemble Practicum
- Speech for the Actor V
- Speech for the Actor VI
- Acting V
- Acting VI
- Vocal Production for the Actor V
- Vocal Production for the Actor VI
- Dance for the Actor V
- Dance for the Actor VI
- Acting for the Camera
- Project in Acting
- Projects in Directing I
- Projects in Directing II
- Directing Practicum III
- Directing Practicum IV
- Seminar in Technical Production I
- Seminar in Technical Production II
- Projects in Technical Production
- Musical Theater Practicum III
- Seminar in Lighting I
- Seminar in Lighting II
- Projects in Lighting
- Musical Theater Practicum IV
- Seminar in Costumes
- Seminar in Costumes II
- Projects in Costuming

- Seminar in Scenery
- Seminar in Scenery II
- Projects in Scene Design
- Projects in Playwriting
- Research
- Thesis