

IRIS SOWLAT

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TEACHING / RESEARCH INTERESTS

Directing, Acting pedagogy, Voice & Speech, Shakespeare, New Play Development, LGBT Theatre

EDUCATION

MFA Theater Directing, University of Massachusetts Amherst / May 2024

BA Theatre Arts & English Literature, Illinois Wesleyan University / May 2015

Alumni Fine Arts Scholarship / Dean' List / Sigma Tau Delta (English Honor Society)
IWU London Program; London, UK

UNIVERSITY THEATER TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor, Theater 140: Fundamentals of Acting, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Fall 2021-Present

- Independently teach introductory Theater Department acting course to undergraduate students of varying theater experience levels
- Teach students who come from diverse backgrounds and identities, and create a classroom environment that celebrates diversity, through the use of tools like Collective Agreements and daily group check-in's.
- Lead a major Scene Study project where I assign students challenging scenes from contemporary plays, teach students effective rehearsal techniques, and provide tailored direction to groups twice during the semester
- Develop and teach lesson plans based on Action/Objective acting methods, scene study, play analysis, improv games, and ensemble-building
- Facilitated Viola Spolin-style improv and ensemble-building games to introduce acting concepts and build students' collaboration skills, listening skills, and confidence
- Give feedback and coaching on scenes, grade papers, and evaluate overall student progress

ADDITIONAL THEATER TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Acting Faculty & Associate Director of High School Rep Production, Interlochen Fine Arts Camp, Summer 2023

- Served as Faculty for one of the top high school arts conservatories in the country, drawing a diverse range of students from all 50 states and international students.
- Associate Director of high school mainstage production of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, directed by Shelby Lewis
- As an AD, gave actors individual text-coaching, monologue work, and scene direction
- Taught a daily acting class to high school-aged campers, which included monologue prep, action/objective-based acting techniques, introductory Shakespeare text work, basic Laban movement analysis, physical/vocal warm-ups, improv games, and ensemble-building

Camp Director, Summer on Broadway Rising, Skokie Park District, Summer 2022

- Camp Director and lead teaching artist for a summer musical theater camp for 5-7 year olds
- Created and implemented a curriculum of theater games, acting lessons, and camp activities
- Wrote, adapted, and curated material for short showcases, and directed five bi-weekly showcases
- Supervised three staff members, including a music specialist, dance specialist, and camp counselors
- Supervised campers and staff on weekly field trips
- Enforced best practices for safety and First Aid, documented First Aid incidents and behavior incidents, and communicated with parents regarding safety concerns when needed
- Provided any needed care or adaptations for campers who had physical or behavioral access needs

THEATER DIRECTING CREDITS

Full Productions

Emilie:

<i>Le Marquise du Chatelet Defends Her Life Tonight</i>	Lauren Gunderson	University of Massachusetts Amherst
<i>Orlando</i>	Sarah Ruhl, from V. Woolf	University of Massachusetts Amherst
<i>Late: A Cowboy Song</i>	Sarah Ruhl	University of Massachusetts Amherst
<i>Romeo and Juliet*</i>	William Shakespeare	Accidental Shakespeare Co. (film, virtual)
<i>The Anxiety Variety Show*</i>	Caleb Walker	Clown House, at RhinoFest
<i>Underworld Anthem*</i>	Alexandra Ranieri	RhinoFest
<i>The Days Are Shorter</i>	Corinne Kawecky	Pride Films & Plays
<i>Joan of Arc *</i>	Alexandra Ranieri	RhinoFest
<i>Narratives of Achromatopsia*</i>	Iris Sowlat	Chicago Fringe Festival
<i>Turn That Thing Around*</i>	Aaron Harris	Chicago Fringe Festival

*indicates also Producer

Staged Readings & New Play Development

<i>Sunshine</i> (fully-staged workshop)	Jacob Menke	UMass Amherst (in-class showcase project)
<i>Jane</i> (2022)	Paula Kamen	Violet Surprise Theater
<i>The Icon Project</i>	Ensemble-devised	Violet Surprise Theatre (virtual)
<i>Area 33</i>	Natalie Meisner	Self-produced (virtual)
<i>Karaoke Phantom</i>	Reina Hardy	Self-produced (virtual)
<i>ABCD</i> (Lab Production)	Rukmini Girish	Piven Theatre
<i>Gemma</i>	Kellee Terrell	Pride Films & Plays
<i>Jane</i> (2017)	Paula Kamen	Chicago Women's History Center
<i>Jarred</i>	Eli Campbell	20% Theatre

Short Plays

<i>Not Your Average Jo</i>	Allison Fradkin	Quick Creation Festival, Los Angeles (virtual)
<i>Lesbian Lipstick</i>	Allison Fradkin	OutWrite fest, Rochester, NY (virtual)
<i>It Starts with Me</i>	Chantal Bilodeau	Climate Change Theatre Action 2019
<i>I Really Love Lucy</i>	Eileen Mitchell	Violet Surprise: Femslash Fest w/ Otherworld
<i>The Bear</i>	Anton Chekhov	Accidental Shakespeare Co.
<i>The Tower</i> (scene from full-length play)	Keyanna Khatiblou	Women's Theatre Alliance Showcase
<i>Final Exam</i>	Rachel Bykowski	American Blues Theatre's Living Newspaper Fest
<i>Virginia & Orlando & Vita</i>	Natalie Meisner	Pride Films & Plays' History Lezons Fest
<i>The New Galileos</i>	Amy Barryman	Climate Change Theatre Action 2017
<i>This</i>	Caridad Svich	Climate Change Theatre Action 2017
<i>Barbarism</i>	Jason Grote	Collaboraction's Peacebook Festival
<i>That Last Light</i>	Riley Mondragon	Chicago Theatre Marathon
<i>Everyone's A Critic</i>	Michele Stine	Broken Nose Theatre's Bechdel Fest
<i>Art & Army</i>	Shozzett Silva	MadKap Productions' Short Play Festival

ASSISTANT DIRECTING CREDITS

<i>As You Like It</i> (Associate Dir.)	dir. Shelby Lewis	Interlochen Fine Arts Camp
<i>Dance Nation</i>	dir. Dawn Monique Williams	University of Massachusetts, Amherst
<i>Into the Breeches!</i>	dir. Jessica Thebus	Northlight Theatre

<i>Trans Scripts, Part I: The Women</i> (reading)	dir. Delia Kropp	About Face Theatre
<i>The Luckiest People</i>	dir. Jason Fleece	Stage Left Theatre
<i>Richard III</i>	dir. Mark Dodge	Fury Theatre
<i>Human Terrain</i>	dir. Benjamin Brownson	Broken Nose Theatre
<i>Raggedy And</i>	dir. Cecilie Keenan	Pride Films & Plays
<i>The Firestorm</i>	dir. Drew Martin	Stage Left Theatre

THEATER FESTIVALS PRODUCED

<i>SapphFest</i> (quarterly)	Violet Surprise Theatre (virtual)
<i>The Star-Crossed Lovers' Fest</i>	Accidental Shakespeare Co. (virtual)
<i>Violet Surprise: Lez Beaus</i>	Violet Surprise Theatre
<i>Climate Change Theatre Action 2019</i>	Switchboard Ensemble/NoPassport/Arctic Cycle
<i>Violet Surprise: Femme-Slash Parody Fest</i>	Otherworld Theatre Company / Violet Surprise
<i>WeFest 2018</i>	Pride Films & Plays
<i>History Lezons</i>	Pride Films & Plays
<i>WeFest 2017</i> (feat. Molly Brennan & Malic White)	Pride Films & Plays w/ Center on Halsted
<i>Climate Change Theatre Action 2017</i>	Global Hive Labs/NoPassport/Arctic Cycle
<i>SheFest: An Evening of Queer Celebration</i>	Pride Films & Plays
<i>After Orlando</i>	Pride Films & Plays/NoPassport/Missing Bolts
<i>Climate Change Theatre Action 2015</i>	NoPassport/Theatre Without Borders

SELECTED THEATRE MANAGEMENT

Interim Artistic Director, Accidental Shakespeare Co., *volunteer position*, March 2020-Aug 2021

- Led all aspects of the production of Accidental Shakespeare Company's virtual full production of *Romeo and Juliet* and virtual festival *The Star-crossed Lovers Fest* during the COVID-19 pandemic, upon the exit of the previous Artistic Director in March 2020
- Facilitated monthly company meetings, hired production personnel, managed production budgets, and led marketing initiatives

RECOGNITION

Windy City Times / 30 Under 30 / Honoring LGBT Chicagoans making an impact / June 2018

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Shakespeare & Company, Lenox MA

- Month-Long Shakespeare Intensive / Jan 2024
- Linklater Voice Progression Part 2 / Sept-Oct 2023
- 9-Day Shakespeare Intensive / Aug-Sept. 2023
- 3-Day Shakespeare Intensive / Apr. 2023

Theatrical Intimacy Education / Online courses / 2021-2022

- Best Practices
- Consent in the Acting Classroom
- Theatrical Studio Techniques
- Working with Minors

Chicago Dramatists / Devising course taught by Olivia Lilley / Oct--Dec 2020

Directors' Lab Chicago / Directing Participant / Aug. 2019

The Directors' Flight / Shakespeare directing training through Midsummer Flight Theatre / Dec. 2019 – Apr.. 2020

Stage Left Theatre / Artistic Associate / 2017-2020

American Theater Company / Artistic & Development Events Apprentice / 2016

Steppenwolf Theatre / Theatre Management Intern / 2015