

# THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

## THE MUSICAL THEATRE & ACTORS STUDIO



### Director's Notes

This second issue of *The Directors Cut* is coming to you a few days early due to some pre-planned extensive travel. A close friend of mine is getting married in Santorini, Greece so I will be out of the classroom [and country] for an extended time, and will return Monday, October 9<sup>th</sup>. But don't worry, I've already set everything and everyone up for success!

In my absence, students will have the opportunity to experience a week-long Improvisation Masterclass, led by Mr. Pete Bergen. Each class will be supported and encouraged to break out of their proverbial shells and take some big risks. Improv is a great tool in breaking barriers and getting students to loosen inhibitions and unlock true potential. I cannot wait to see the student's growth afforded by Pete's instruction upon my return.

Finally, as it's important to me that I stay relevant to my students by practicing what I preach, I'd like to share that I am performing in *Avenue Q* at Reston Community Players, where I'll be portraying the role of Nicky. *Avenue Q* won 'Best Musical' at the 2003 Tony Awards, beating out *Wicked* for the coveted honor. I'd love to see you at the show, but please be aware: **It's rated R and may not be suitable for younger audiences.**



With Endless Gratitude,

*Erich DiCenzo*

DIRECTOR OF THE MUSICAL THEATRE &  
ACTORS STUDIO

Spotlight on:

**signature**

Tony Award®-winning Signature Theatre is thrilled to partner for a third consecutive year with the Musical Theatre & Actors Studio during this 2023/24 school year! Our partnership is focused on giving Fairfax Academy's students access to Signature's staff and affiliated artists in an unprecedented manner. Each semester, MTAS classes will receive multiple customized workshops that aim to address each class's skill levels and artistic development goals. First semester [1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarters], students will focus on choreography; second semester [3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Quarters], students will shift focus to acting and song. On Thursday, October 12 and Friday, October 13, students will participate in their first workshops of the year with Maurice Johnson.



*Mr. Johnson was born in Lexington, Kentucky. He received his bachelor's degree in communications from the University of Kentucky with a minor in Spanish. He studied and performed with a variety of notable dance institutions including The Lexington Ballet, Alvin Ailey Dance Repertoire, Gus Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago and North Atlanta Academy School of Dance. He appeared in the HBO movie "Miss Evers' Boys" and performed in the U.S Olympic ceremonies. His choreographic talents has enabled him to work with the production teams of Michael Jackson, Janet Jackson, Madonna and Paula Abdul among others. Today, he is one of the area's most sought after choreographers and master teachers. Mr. Johnson is current faculty at Joy of Motion Dance Center. He also serves as adjunct faculty for American and Catholic Universities.*

While workshops have been a hallmark of the partnership since the beginning, a greater emphasis has been placed on curriculum support than has been in the past and feedback has been tremendously positive. In addition to the workshops, one of the most exciting components of the Signature/Fairfax Academy partnership is the spring showcase that will take place at Signature Theatre in Arlington, Virginia. This showcase will feature performances by graduating seniors for an audience that will include area directors and casting representatives. Stay tuned for details!

Finally, Signature Theatre will offer a graduating senior from the MTAS an opportunity to participate, via full scholarship, in Overtures: The Musical Theatre Institute. Designed for recent graduates and college students, Overtures is a two-week intensive, professional training program designed to provide students with the necessary steppingstones from high school and university training to working in musical theatre professionally. Stay tuned for details!

*David Zobell*  
Education Director  
Signature Theatre

*& Matthew Taylor Strote*  
Education Program Manager  
Signature Theatre

Veteran Voices: Seniors in MTAS for 2+ Years Share Advice

“Take in the craziness, the madness, the direction, and the endless support. MTAS will take to places beyond your comfort zone, but that’s exactly what makes it so good. Academy students shine!” **Gary Valdivieso** [Hayfield SS]

“Don’t be afraid to fall down. Your call will catch you.” **Emma Campbell** [Woodson HS]

“Simply: Enjoy it! Not every base school in the area gets this resource so just get as much out of it as your can.” **Jonah Uffelman** [Madison HS]

“Don’t be afraid to put yourself out there. The MTAS Academy is a judgment-free zone and every person you are performing in front of wants to see you succeed. Let loose and have fun! When you are free to play around, that’s when the breakthroughs happen.” **Cassidy Loria** [Oakton HS]

“Although easier said than done, leave your inhibitions at the door. You are walking into a room full of your biggest fans!” **Haley Kim** [Woodson HS]

“Be yourself. This community is so welcoming. It’s somewhere where anyone can bring their most authentic self and be accepted so take advantage of that.” **Kate Townsend** [Madison HS]

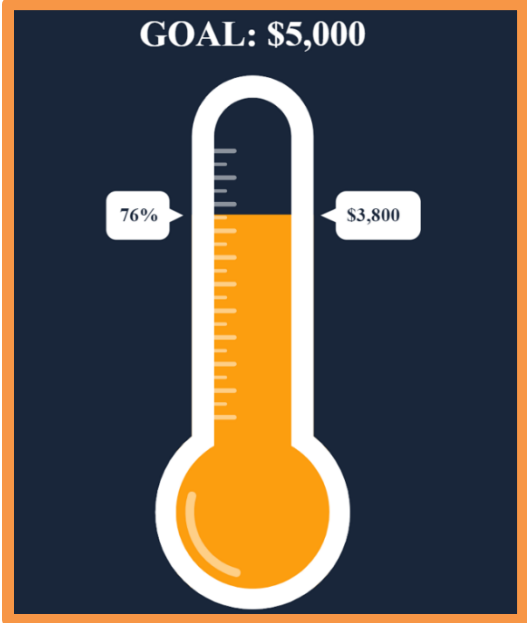
“I wake up every day excited to go to Academy. It’s where my people are! All the kind, encouraging people who want to be here working on their craft are here. They also do the MTAS Academy show, and you should too! It’s a great place to build community, meet new people and have so much fun!” **Brielle Steeves** [Woodson HS]

“There is no better place to be to get to where you want to go than the [MTAS] Black Box Studio. Take advantage of every resource and opportunity it gives you; don’t waste it.” **Zoey Miller** [Madison HS]



PM Block Musical Theatre Workshop classes send Mr. D off to Egypt with a try at their own pyramid.

GO FOR THE GOAL!



A big thank you to everyone who has already contributed to our brand new **MTAS Sponsorship** program! With *only* 20 contributions we are 76% closer to our goal! That means we are only 24% away from reaching that \$5,000. If YOU haven’t yet become an official sponsor, it’s not too late! Any amount – big or small – helps to get us closer. Please consider showing your support. Funds raised will help elevate our production and provide students with professional resources and experiences. Plus, you get some fun incentives! Our initial goal is to raise \$5k. **Can YOU help us reach that goal?**

A CROWD FAVORITE:

It’s Pete Week!



Pete Bergen is a local stand-up comedian and improv performer. He has opened for and performed with some great artists like Patton Oswalt, Rory Scovel, Bobcat Goldthwait, David Koechner, Chris Katan and at some great venues like the DC Improv (DC), Arlington Cinema and Drafthouse (VA), Magooby’s Joke House (MD), Church Of Satire (PA) and The Drafthouse Comedy Theater (DC). You may recognize Pete from his numerous appearances on Investigation Discovery shows or from his episode on the classic Americas Most Wanted. Pete can also be seen as a contributor on local panel shows “Like it or Not” and “The Final 5”, both on Fox 5 DC, offering up humorous takes on the day’s events.

In my absence, Pete Bergen will be working with students in all MTAS courses from October 2<sup>nd</sup> – October 6<sup>th</sup>.

A LOOK AHEAD

- Monday, October 9<sup>th</sup>**  
Staff Development Day/Student Holiday
- Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup>**  
PSAT Day/NO Academy Classes Meet
- Friday, October 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>**  
Signature Theatre Workshops  
In-Class
- Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup>**  
Avenue Q Opening Night  
[Runs Weekends 10/13-10/29]
- Wednesday, October 18<sup>th</sup>**  
MTAS Senior Showcase  
7:00pm FHS Auditorium
- Wednesday, October 26<sup>th</sup>**  
Academy Career Expo  
All Day Field Trip to Academy