

MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN THEATER: CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE 2009–10

Curriculum

The MFA in Theater: Contemporary Performance offers an integrated curriculum that includes:

- psychophysical acting work of Jerzy Grotowski;
- Viewpoints as performance technique and directing/choreographic method;
- vocal work, integrating Roy Hart, extended vocal technique, traditional speech and bel canto approaches;
- somatic physical techniques and contemporary dance/movement forms;
- contemplative arts and meditation training;
- techniques of generating text through ensemble playwriting and self-scripting.

Emphasizing ensemble work, in addition to technical training, the program trains students to create original work (both solo and ensemble) and provides tools for performance and reinterpretation of traditional forms. The program is committed to creating new techniques and aesthetics in collaboration with students and to establishing a home for the next generation of innovators and practitioners of performance.

Students are expected to work in a technically and aesthetically extended physical, vocal and emotional range. They should have the maturity and desire to create original work, to work with the traditional play form and work under direction. The program is designed to support professional performance and teaching careers in an interdisciplinary, critical theater. Considerable production work in a variety of scales, with particular emphasis on political and social relevance, is ongoing especially in the second year. The cultivation of teaching skills is addressed in the training.

The curriculum is supported by a contemplative practice and view component grounded in the environment of a Buddhist-inspired university. This includes formal meditation practice and study of Buddhist teachings on the nature of the mind. All techniques refer to mindfulness and awareness as a ground and point of view. This reflects the program's commitment to the reintegration of dance and theater; and to supporting the evolution of contemporary acting/performance technique in its journey away from Freudian or Gestalt-based American method.

Program Design

First-year training takes place Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Total hours in studio training average 5 1/2 hours per day with additional project and rehearsal periods during evenings and weekends. The training is in ensemble and proceeds in a daily, integrated progression. Showings of work take place throughout the year.

All MFA classes take place in Naropa's 55,000 sq. ft performing arts facility at 63rd and Arapahoe Avenue in Boulder. The Nalanda Campus is ten minutes by bus from the Arapahoe Campus.

The following outline for year one is subject to change in sequence, but over the course of the two-year program, all these components and faculty will be present. Both practice and view and core training in acting, voice and movement are ongoing throughout the two-year curriculum. Students take 12 credits per semester for a total of 48 credits.

MFA THEATER: CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS*

First year, fall

First seven weeks:

Foundation Somatics/Investigating Physical Virtuosity:

Developmental movement, experiential anatomy, release, dynamic alignment—Wendell Beavers, Erika Berland

Roy Hart Vocal Work: Ethelyn Friend

Psychophysical Acting/Grotowski Based: Plastiques, corporals, cultivating immediate access to emotional sources, creating containers for emotion, understanding of presence—Core and guest faculty

Contemplative Arts and Meditation Training: Meditation practice and orientation to Buddhist phenomenology and psychology; nature of mind teachings from the Buddhist tradition—Barbara Dilley and Naropa faculty

Middle three weeks:

Viewpoints Intensive: SITI Company, Wendell Beavers

Voice Tutorials: Ethelyn Friend

Physical Technique: SITI Company/Butoh/Wendell Beavers

Practice and View: Barbara Dilley, Erika Berland

Applying Psychophysical Technique to Character Work, Styles and Performance: Guest faculty

Moment Work/Directing/Playwriting: Leigh Fondakowski

Final four weeks:

Physical Training/Viewpoints: Wendell Beavers

Voice Intensive: Roy Hart guest faculty, Carol Mendelsohn and Saule Ryan

Ensemble Playwriting: Tectonic Theater

Applying Psychophysical Technique to Character Work, Styles and Performance: Guest faculty

Presentations

SUBTOTAL 12

First year, spring

First three weeks:

Physical Training: Developmental, experiential anatomy forms

Directing and Ensemble Playwriting: Tectonic Theater

Presentation

Second four weeks:

Advanced Somatic Technique, Experiential Anatomy/Eastern Arts: Erika Berland, Wendell Beavers/Naropa faculty

Vocal Intensive: Roy Hart or extended vocal technique—guest faculty

Tectonic Theater Play Development: Leigh Fondakowski

Composition/Choreography/Postmodern Tradition: Barbara Dilley, Wendell Beavers, guest faculty

Practice and View: Barbara Dilley

Presentations

Final seven weeks:

Roy Hart Vocal Work: Ethelyn Friend

Ensemble Projects: Faculty

Physical Training: Somatic technique, Butoh—faculty

Final First Year Project Presentations

SUBTOTAL 12

Second year, fall

Advanced Physical Technique: Dance-based techniques, release, somatic forms, yoga—Wendell Beavers and faculty

Theater-Based Physical Techniques: Drawn from Butoh, Suzuki, Grotowski Plastique and Corporals—SITI Company, Butoh guest, Stephen Wangh and faculty

Scene, Monologue and Character: Faculty

Teaching Seminar: Stephen Wangh, Wendell Beavers, Barbara Dilley

Vocal Work: Relating song to text, extended vocal techniques—Roy Hart faculty, Carol Mendelsohn, Saule Ryan, Meredith Monk, The House company members

Acting Work: Relating psychophysical work to the Viewpoints, scene, classical text—Stephen Wangh

Project/Production

Play Development: Leigh Fondakowski

Cultural and Academic Context Seminar: Guest faculty (runs throughout semester)

SUBTOTAL 12

Second year, spring

Advanced Physical Technique: Continuation of semester I sequence

Viewpoints: Composition, directing and performance technique—Wendell Beavers, SITI Company members, faculty

Vocal Work: Continuation of semester I sequence

Ensemble Playwriting/Directing: Tectonic Theater

Teaching Seminar: Barbara Dilley, Wendell Beavers, guest faculty

Ensemble Production: Meredith Monk and Company

Culminating Projects: Initiated and designed by the student in the fields of service learning, creating pedagogy, pure research focused on training issues or production

SUBTOTAL 12

TOTAL CREDITS 48

** This fact sheet describes the 2008–09 curriculum for the MFA in Theater: Contemporary Performance. Naropa University faculty and staff are committed to regular review and revision of the curriculum, to reflect new findings and understandings in the field, feedback from alumni and the professional community, and faculty expertise. Please inquire with the Office of Admissions and/or the Graduate Theater Department for any curricular changes that are being considered for future academic years.*

MFA Theater: Contemporary Performance Faculty

The faculty and associated artists who were brought together to create the MFA in Theater: Contemporary Performance program include some of the best-known and most important innovators of new techniques and aesthetics in performance and theater education developed over the past twenty-five years. The faculty is under the direction of Wendell Beavers, director of performing arts at Naropa. The training is provided by a combination of master teachers new to Naropa, distinguished Naropa faculty, a group of associated artists and three associated companies.

Faculty and Associated Companies

Naropa Faculty:

Wendell Beavers (movement/dance, somatic technique, Viewpoints)

Erika Berland (Experiential Anatomy, BMC™-based somatics)

Barbara Dilley (dance, contemplative arts, meditation)

Leigh Fondakowski (Tectonic Theater, directing)

Ethelyn Friend (Roy Hart Vocal Work, Shakespeare)

Naropa Academic Faculty (view and practice)

Wendell Beavers, chair, joined the Naropa faculty in 2003. He was a founding faculty member and early director of New York University's Experimental Theater Wing (ETW) where he taught from 1978 to 2003. He was named a Master Teacher at Tisch School of the Arts in 1996. He is one of three major teachers and developers of The Viewpoints, along with originator Mary Overlie, with whom he danced from 1977 to 1985, and the director Anne Bogart. He began choreographing his own work in the early '90s and his solo and group works have been produced in New York by Dance Theater Workshop, The Danspace Project at St. Mark's Church and a number of smaller venues. He was also co-founder and director of Movement Research, Inc. He has trained casts or collaborated with many directors at ETW and elsewhere including Robert Wilson, Anne Bogart, Richard Foreman, Moises Kaufman, Tan Dun, Kevin Kuhlke and Steve Wangh. His students have gone on to work in many experimental companies including The Wooster Group, Mabou Mines, Tectonic Theater, Stomp and have been featured in film, television and many commercial venues.

Erika Berland, a certified practitioner of Body-Mind Centering™, holds a massage therapy license from New York State and is a nationally registered movement therapist. She currently maintains a private practice in NYC and Boulder, CO, specializing in both massage and movement therapy. A graduate of New York City's Performing Arts High School, and a professional dancer for many years, she has an extensive background as a dance teacher and performer and has taught workshops in experiential anatomy and dance applications of Body-Mind Centering™ in studios and schools in the United States and Europe. From 1978 to 1983 she was on the dance faculty of The Naropa Institute. Returning to NYC in 1983 she helped design the Movement Program at Sports Training Institute, the first sports training program in the country, and was the director of movement analysis at Plus One Fitness Clinics. Ms. Berland is also a certified meditation instructor in mindfulness-based meditation and has been a student and teacher of Shambhala Buddhism for more than twenty-five years. She joined the MFA Theater: Contemporary Performance program as an adjunct teaching core curriculum in 2004.

Barbara Dilley received her BA at Mount Holyoke College where she studied and performed dance in New York City and toured internationally with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company (1963–1968). She participated in the Judson Dance Theater and in 1970 became part of Grand Union, a dance/theater collaboration that extended the definitions of the art of improvisation. She has choreographed and performed solo and group works nationally and in Europe. Ms. Dilley designed the dance program at Naropa beginning in 1975, served as president from 1984 to 1993 and then returned to the faculty. She continues to teach contemplative dance art in this country and abroad.

Leigh Fondakowski (playwright/director) was the head writer of *The Laramie Project* and has been a member of Tectonic Theatre Project since 1995. She is an Emmy nominated co-screenwriter for the adaptation of *The Laramie Project* for HBO. Her latest work, *The People's Temple*, has been performed under her direction at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Perseverance Theater and The Guthrie Theater. Another original play, *I Think I Like Girls*, played to sold-out audiences in San Francisco and at La Jolla Playhouse and was voted one of the top 10 plays of 2002 by *The Advocate*. Other directing credits include *I Think I Like Girls* (La Jolla Playhouse and Encore Theatre), *The Laramie Project* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Perseverance Theatre), *La Voix Humaine* by Jean Cocteau (Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh), *Agatha* by Marguerite Duras (French Alliance, New York City), *Gwen John* adapted from the novel by Jane Warrick (HERE, New York City), and readings and workshops of new plays by Jeff Baron, Stephen Belber, Colman Domingo and Lisa Ramirez.

Ethelyn Friend, actor/singer, writer, teacher, began her training as an actor at Circle-in-the-Square Studio in New York City. She has acted in professional theaters in San Francisco, Boston and Denver/Boulder including Merrimack Repertory Theatre, New Repertory Theatre and the Colorado Shakespeare Festival. Since 1992 she has worked extensively with the Roy Hart Theatre of France, renowned for their pioneering work with the extended range of the human voice. It is the voice work that has informed and inspired Friend's work as a solo performance artist and teacher over the past five years. As a teacher of voice and acting, Friend is currently on the faculty of Naropa University and the University of Colorado, Boulder, and has taught private voice workshops throughout Colorado and in New York City, Boston and San Francisco. She is the artistic director of the Colorado Shakespeare Festival's Education Outreach Program, "Living Shakespeare."

Associated Artists

Daniel Banks (performance studies, cultural and academic seminar)

Erica Berg (psychophysical acting)

Tom Bogdan (song creation, vocal technique)

Steve Clorfeine (writing, directing)

Katie Geissinger (Meredith Monk and The House, vocal technique)

Gary Grunde (music theater, song creation)

Jennifer Hicks (Butoh)

Leon Ingulsrud (Viewpoints, choreography)

Katsura Kan (Butoh)

Moisés Kaufman (Moment Work, directing)

Kevin Kuhlke (physical acting, technique, scene study, directing)

John McAdams (Tectonic Theater, acting)

Carol Mendelsohn (Roy Hart Vocal Work)

Meredith Monk (song creation, vocal technique)

Peggy Pettitt (self-scripting, devised work)

Barney O'Hanlon, SITI Company (Viewpoints, choreography)

Saule Ryan (Roy Hart Vocal Work)

Dan Safer (scene work, choreography)

Stephen Wangh (psychophysical acting, ensemble playwriting, improvisation, pedagogy)

Associated Companies**

Meredith Monk and The House

Moisés Kaufman and Tectonic Theater

SITI Company

**master classes, workshop productions and ongoing core faculty involvement with members of associated companies.

THEATER: CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

You are strongly encouraged to visit Naropa University. Events for prospective students are scheduled every fall and spring. See www.naropa.edu/admissions/grad_events.cfm for more information. The

visitation coordinator will be happy to arrange for you to meet with an admissions counselor or a member of our faculty, visit a class or take a campus tour. Arapahoe Campus tours are offered Monday through Friday at 2 p.m. in the main lobby of the Administration Building. Nalanda Campus tours (BA Music, BA Visual Arts, BFA Performance and MFA Theater: Contemporary Performance) are offered Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3:30 p.m., also by reservation only (at least 24 hours in advance). The visitation coordinator can be contacted at 303-546-3548, 1-800-772-6951 or at admissions@naropa.edu. You can also use the online Visitation Request form or view our campus from the online tour.

If you decide you would like to apply for admission, we prefer that you do so electronically via www.naropa.edu/apply.

Suggested Deadline

- January 15 for fall semester admission

GRADUATE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution is required for admission to all graduate programs.

A completed graduate application for Theater: Contemporary Performance consists of the following:

1. Completed application form.
2. A \$60 nonrefundable application fee in the form of a check or money order, payable to "Naropa University." Applicant's name must be clearly indicated on the check.
3. Three-to-five-page typed, double-spaced statement of interest.
4. Resumé.
5. Three letters of recommendation (all must be on the forms provided and not from family members or current therapists).
6. Official transcripts of all previous college-level study that reflect the completion of a bachelor's degree, sent directly to Naropa's Admissions Office from the registrar of previous institutions or in a sealed envelope with the application.
7. Applicants must demonstrate professional accomplishment in one of the following areas and a minimum degree of competency in all three: **Acting:** preferably with significant training in more than one approach i.e., physical, Meisner. **Movement/Dance:** postmodern or modern forms, martial art or significant physical acting training; **Voice:** musical competency and foundation vocal technique either text or music based.
8. Prior artistic ensemble experience is highly encouraged.
9. Maturity and readiness to undergo a rigorous professional training.
10. Applicants must demonstrate high levels of commitment, maturity and dedication.
11. Head shot or representative photo.
12. Selected applicants may be asked to attend an interview/audition in Boulder, New York or San Francisco between January 15 and March 15. Applicants' admissions files must be complete before an interview/audition is scheduled by the department.

We particularly extend an invitation to mature applicants who have worked in theater, dance, musical theater or any realm of performance, who have grounding in traditional techniques and have cultivated their own point of view and body of work. Of course, exceptional applicants coming directly from undergraduate programs are also welcome.