

SEKOU LAIDLOW

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Passionate and experienced Julliard-trained actor and theater instructor with over 15 years' experience teaching theater/drama, including acting, theater appreciation, and stagecraft.
- Innovative, educational leader with experience in traditional, online, and hybrid formats to powerfully engage and assess educational results.
- My philosophy is based on the idea that the teacher-student relationship is collaborative and co-creational. The teacher functions as a facilitator of growth and discovery, creating space for emerging ideas, critical input, and bold choices free of judgment. My approach includes providing a safe and brave space that encourages risk-taking and room to always "play". I encourage students to engage their unique abilities, skills, personality, and instinct as part of the training. As a result, I have seen students gain agency and a sense of ownership as they witness the value and significance of what they already possess.
- Master's degree training in and desire to build community and to work with diverse populations seeking the opportunity to teach theater in the higher education space.

THEATER AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE

ARVOLD-WARNER STUDIO, ATLANTA, GA

Acting Instructor/Curriculum Developer, May 2021- Present

- Prepared actors through sensory and body exploration. Utilized a virtual Zoom platform to engage approximately 18 students in exercises that facilitate deeper embodiment and a heightened awareness of the senses. We explored innovative ways to use the virtual space to advance our actor training. Students effectively engaged scene work and scene partners and were able to stay grounded and connect emotionally without being in person.
- Designed and lead "Jam Sessions" that explored unique approaches to character work and scene development. In a virtual session of approximately 18 students we explored the five senses and instincts as if it were the first time. The aim was to unlearn some of the behavior that impedes our initial impulses. Students were able to identify the connection between these foundational imaginative exercises and the on-camera scene work they encounter as professional actors.
- Collaborated with fellow instructors to offer constructive feedback on teaching styles and process. As a teaching cohort we refined our teaching skills/approach and explored innovative ways to teach the craft of acting. Our class numbers ranged from 12 to 20 per session. Students shared personally and on social media the benefits of our approach and how it often resulted in call backs and booking gigs.
- Prepare actors through a ten step, "Total Prep" on-camera process designed by Erica Arvold and Richard Warner.
- Offered constructive feedback to students that improved on-camera technique, character choices, character analysis, audition technique, and on-set performance.
- Cultivated inclusive atmosphere that supports creative risk taking and exploration.

STUDIO 27 TALENT DEVELOPMENT, TYRONE, GA

Curriculum Developer/On-Camera Acting Instructor, May 2017- December 2019

- Created and taught on-camera acting curriculum for ages 9 and up. Developed curriculum for and taught "Discovery" sessions that explored/ignited the imagination and sensory impulses. Developed curriculum for and taught imaginative and sensory exercises for integration into on-camera scene work. Students increased the amount of callbacks and bookings they received as a result of this curriculum. Students also increased their ability to secure theatrical representation.
- Consulted with CEO on program development for Theater Department and developed curricula for students ages 9 and up. I designed a beginner, intermediate, and advanced curriculum that al-

lowed students to experience a condensed version of conservatory training that supports and advances on-camera actor training. Students were inspired to take risks that offered a unique interpretation to scene work.

- Trained instructors in the design, development, and implementation of curricula and advised instructors on upcoming teaching and theater trends and initiatives.
- Prepared professional actors of all ages, in one-on-one sessions, to deliver high calibre auditions that enable them to stand out before casting directors. As a result of my coaching, students secured more callbacks and booked motion picture and television roles.

GENERATION INFOCUS, ATLANTA, GA

Theater Teacher, June 2017-December 2018

- Prepared age appropriate lesson plans and activities in compliance with state standards. Lesson plans were designed for ages 7 to 12 yrs old. Classes ranges from 21 to 28 in a given week. Lesson plans were designed to keep students engaged with minimal distraction. Students were able to learn professional acting terms, tasks, and process through the utilization of technology, theater games and interactive activities.
- Produced and directed an original theatrical performance for students ages 7 to 12 yrs old. At semesters end students were able to integrate all they learned to become their characters and perform a play before an audience of approximately 100 people. Parents and teachers were impressed with their children's theatrical vocabulary and ability to identify the various components of a stage production.
- Administered lunch and snacks to students for established break times.
- Monitored students during recess to ensure safety and mediate conflict amongst students.
- Communicated with school staff and administration about behavior and progress of students.

CAMPAIGN FOR BLACK MALE ACHIEVEMENT RUMBLE YOUNG MAN RUMBLE CONVENING, LOUISVILLE, KY

Artist in Residence, November 2016-December 2016

- Designed and co-produced intergenerational presentations for maximum impact and outcomes. We utilized storytelling and performance to convey how the lives of black men and boys intersect across generations, ethnic difference, and social standing. We presented to a room of approximately 110 men.
- Performed relevant drama pieces for various sessions of the BMA convening. I performed a series of monologues that were reflective of the themes particular to each session of the convening. Participants were inspired by the monologue renderings and shared how relevant and nuanced the portrayals were, leading to a deeper reflection on the subject matter.

CITY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK, THEATER CLASS - NEW YORK, NY

Substitute Acting Teacher, June 2017

- Trained students on proper demarcation of a piece of text through identification of the characters' action as well as the beats of the scene.
- Drove class efforts in taking risks beyond their areas of comfort for personal development.
- Taught movement and clown exercises for a more effective delivery of a piece of monologue text.
- Trained students in improvisational and discovery exercises that supported their normal training.
- Taught audition techniques that expanded students options in reaching desired acting goals.
- Implemented voice and speech exercises for participants to properly utilized their vocal instrument.

CUNARD CRUISE: QUEEN MARY II - HAMBURG, GERMANY

Lead Teaching Artist, June 2012

- Demonstrated excellent leadership capabilities in supervising four teaching artists from various disciplines.
- Presided over daily team meetings to establish specific agendas for individual group sessions.

- Lead instructors and children in warm-up exercises on a daily basis. Trained youth in improvisational games to adequately prepare them for the daily activities.
- Expertly directed final performance, that included 45 children ages 9 to 15 yrs old. Utilized translators for children who did not speak fluent English. Instructors and children collaborated to perform before an audience 120 people that included parents, friends, and cruise staff. We performed a series of independent short stories that included comedy and drama. Parents and staff raved about the final performance and were surprised at the production quality with such a limited amount of time.

JUILLIARD ARTIST INITIATIVE - GABARONE, BOTSWANA

Lead Teaching Artist, June 2011-July 2011

- Collaborated with artists of other disciplines and a Production Team in establishing a multidisciplinary program for the Marua-Pula School and Botswana locals. The collaboration included actors, dancers, musicians, and singers.
- Trained instructors in techniques that expanded their ability to engage participants more effectively in learning their parts. We had approximately 80 participants ranging from 13 to 21. I taught a variety of clown exercises that facilitated freedom and a sense of play. I taught a number of voice and speech exercises for participants to properly utilize their voice and project.
- Facilitated mock teaching scenarios in preparation for actual sessions with students and local participants. Mock sessions prepared instructors to effectively address some of the language barriers that we were challenged with as visitors.
- Trained participants to identify plot, objective, conflict, resolution, protagonist, antagonist etc. in preparation of their group independent story projects. We taught students how to perform their stories effectively before an audience.
- Spearheaded the development of a vegetable garden for the Monoko Village in partnership with fellow artists and the Peace Corps.

GLUCK COMMUNITY SERVICE FELLOWSHIP - NEW YORK, NY

Performing Artist & Instructor, September 2009-April 2012

- Exemplified expertise in performing drama, poetry, singing, improv, scenes, and dance within various facilities encompassing HIV infected patients; mentally challenged kids and adults; nursing homes; hospices; children abuse, and terminally ill patients.

GREATER ALLEN CATHEDRAL OF NEW YORK - NEW YORK, NY

Drama Ministry Director, August 2002- June 2012

- Assumed accountability in formulating skits and plays for churches, nursing homes, and group homes within the metropolitan area and beyond.
- Organized annual schedule for the development of various drama productions including monologues, short plays, and full-length plays. Trained members to develop and perform monologues for future events and productions.
- Facilitated training for drama leaders to teach improvisation, warm-ups, and scene study to drama members.
- Trained drama leaders and members on basic voice and speech skills.
- Directed the drama portion of multidisciplinary holiday programs, such as Christmas and Easter for church presentations.
- Trained youth in improvisational games to adequately prepare them for the daily activities.
- Taught voice and speech exercises for participants to properly utilized their vocal instrument.

ACTING EXPERIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

ON-CAMERA

WOMEN OF THE MOVEMENT
THE BREAKS
THE GOOD WIFE
THE MEND

RECURRING
RECURRING
GUEST STAR
SUPPORTING LEAD

ABC:TINA MABRY
VH1:SEITH MANN
CBS: BROOKE KENNEDY
DIR: JOHN MAGARY

POP FOUL
THE WIRE

LEAD
PRINCIPAL

DIR: MOON MOLSON
DIR: AGNIESZKA HOLLAND

BROADWAY
AIRLINE HIGHWAY
BOYS IN THE BAND

VARIOUS
U/S BERNARD

MANHATTAN THEATRE CLUB
BOOTH THEATER

REGIONAL
SKELETON CREW
A DOLL'S HOUSE
FATHER COMES HOME
OF MICE AND MEN
THE MOUNTAINTOP
THE CO.

REGGIE
TORVOLD HELMER
HOMER
CROOKS
MARTIN L. KING JR.

BALTIMORE CENTER STAGE
HUNTINGTON THEATER CO.
AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER
PIONEER THEATER COMPANY
THE PHILADELPHIA THEA-

AWARDS

Student Choice Award - Best Performance for Pop Foul (2006) - Columbia University Film Festival
Richard Kind Dramatic Award, Best Actor Narrative Short for Pop Foul (2006) - Trenton Film Festival

EDUCATION

THE JUILLIARD SCHOOL OF DRAMA

Graduate Artist Diploma-2012

- Mr. Laidlow was the first student at Juilliard ever to be asked to render a monologue for the School's commencement ceremony -- performing in front of virtuosos James Earl Jones, South African playwright Athol Fugard and songstress Nancy Wilson -- all honorary degree recipients that year.

CANDLER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY-EMORY UNIV.

Master of Divinity-2021

- As a student-teacher Mr. Laidlow was the first to teach a class called "Preaching for Virtual Impact" to masters and doctoral level students. He taught movement, voice/speech, and other theater exercises that enable speakers to be more grounded, connected to the breadth and their audience.

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

BS in Religion -2007

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Georgia Council for the Arts - GCA Teaching Artist Registry for community engagement
Atlanta, GA August 2020- Present

Relational Uprising - Organized Relational Culture Convening to build mutual care
Virtual Convening June 2020- December 2020

Senior Mentor - Greater Allen Cathedral of New York Rites of Passage Program
New York, NY. September 1998 - May 2002

Mountaintop Conference - Advancing a Multi-Faith Movement for Justice - Hosted by Auburn Seminary
Atlanta, GA. June 2016

Love Thyself: Black Bodies and Religious Space Convening - Hosted by Princeton Theological Seminary
Princeton, NJ February 2016

Facing Race: A National Conference-The Center for Racial Justice Innovation - Hosted by

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Pro Solutions Training - Professional Development Certificate: Child Abuse and Neglect: Mandated Reporting Requirements for Employees, Volunteers, and Contractors of Georgia Public Schools Atlanta, Georgia July, 2017

Interests include - Open Water scuba diving, avid basketball fan, lover of nature, and passionate reader.

Additional experience includes President and CEO, Q's Comment, Inc., 2004-2008 (starting a small business and managing creation and sales of casual and sport clothing line, including [any big numerical success?]).

Itinerant Elder in the A.M.E. Church?

Let Me Introduce Myself Podcast - Co-host of self-produced podcast, [Let Me Introduce Myself](#), which is an intimate, one-on-one- format. Laidlow and co-host Maxime Paul challenge the myths of Black manhood.