

Sarah Koestner

sarah.koestner@gmail.com

201-819-5383

Academic Teaching Experience:

Montclair State University BFA Acting Program, Adjunct Professor: Voice and Speech, Montclair, NJ 2018-Present

A year long course focusing on Miller Voice Method and speech from a Miller perspective. Focus is on integrating the voice and speech with text through the use of historical speeches, monologues and culminating in scene work from a contemporary play.

NYU Steinhardt Musical Theatre Program, Adjunct Professor: Voice and Speech, New York, NY, 2017-2018

A year long course divided into 3 units. Unit 1 focuses on laying the foundation of an open vocal instrument through the work of the Miller Voice Method. Unit 2 layers in creating clear speech through the work of Robert Neff Williams and Unit 3 is where we integrate the voice and speech work we've been doing all year with foundational acting principles.

Certified Miller Voice Method Teacher, Instructor, Voice/Speech/Acting Coach, 2004-Present

Coach actors on an individual as-needed basis for upcoming professional auditions, speech coaching for non-native speakers and in preparation for MFA Acting graduate school entry.

New York Film Academy, Instructor, Meisner Technique, New York, NY, 2011-2015

Led actors through the first year Meisner progression through the use of exercises and scene work - focusing on the Meisner principles: reality of doing, listening, responding truthfully under imaginary circumstances and emotional preparation.

New York Film Academy, Instructor, Scene Study, New York, NY, 2011-2015

Built a foundation of acting through the study of the execution of a written scene. By working on published plays, actors learned the basic concepts of scene study: defining and pursuing objectives, breaking the scene down into beats, understanding an arc, playing actions and working to overcome obstacles.

NYU Graduate Acting Program, Master Teacher Mentorship, New York, NY, 2010-2012

Assisted and shadowed Scott Miller, professor of voice in NYU's Graduate Acting program.

Rutgers University, Instructor Acting I & II, New Brunswick, NJ 2002-2004

Used Meisner as a foundation, introduced students to the foundations of acting through the use of exercises, monologues, scene study, character analysis and use of the body and voice to communicate.

Education:

MVM Certification program: NY, NY: 2022 Year long certification program in MVM.

Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey: 2004 MFA, Acting

Emerson College, Boston, Massachusetts: 2000 BFA, Acting, Magna Cum Laude

Selected Stage Acting Credits

2015 Landscape of the Body, Betty, Garage Theatre Group, NJ

2013 The Libertine, Malet, The Calderwood Pavilion, Bridge Rep, MA (dir. Eric Tucker)
2012 The Understudy, Roxanne, Amphibian Stage Productions, TX
2012 Love Song, Joan, The Access Theatre, NYC
2011 Waiting for Lefty, Miller The Working Theatre, NYC (workshop)
2010 Doubt, Sister James, Garage Theatre Group, NJ
2010 The Libertine, Malet, Theatre Row, NYC (dir. Eric Tucker)
2009 One Good Marriage, Steph, Garage Theatre Group, NJ
2009 Betrayal, Emma, Teatro La Tea, NYC
2009 Shining Days, Maude Gonne, Lovestreet Productions, NYC
2008 Over the River and Through the Woods, Caitlin O'Hare, The Public Theater, ME
2007 A Christmas Carol, Christmas Past/Mrs. Cratchit, Tri-State Actors Theatre, NJ
2007 Patriot Acts, Karina, Midtown International Theatre Festival, NYC
2007 The Maids, Claire, Garage Theatre Group, NJ
2007 A Night of Ken Urban, Mirabel, Gene Frankel Theatre, NYC
2006 She Stoops to Conquer, Constance, Centenary Stage Co., NJ
2006 A Month of Sundays, Nurse Wilson, The Public Theatre, ME
2005 Curious George, Doctor/Various, Theatreworks/USA, NYC (dir. Jeremy Dobrish)
2004 Two Gentlemen of Verona, Lucetta, Rutgers Theatre Company, NJ
2003 Serenading Louie, Gabrielle, Rutgers Theatre Company, NJ
2003 Sganerelle, Martine, Rutgers Theatre Company, NJ
2003 Equus, Dora Strang, Rutgers Theatre Company, NJ
2001 Snow White, Queen Elvira, Grove Street Theatre, NYC
2001 Othello, Bianca, The Willful Company, NYC
2001 Romeo and Juliet, Various, Expanded Arts, NYC
2000 Imitate the Sun, Queen Isobel, Bank Street Theatre, NYC

Directing Experience

2014 Gaza on the First Date, Christopher Sullivan, The Access Theatre, NYC
2013 The Red Coat, John Patrick Shanley, NYFA Ensemble

Voice and Speech Coach:

2019 Orlando, Montclair State University, Director: Debbie Savietz
2020 The Rover, Montclair State University, Director: Jean Randich
2021 Top Girls, Montclair State University, Director: Susan Kerner
2021 As You Like It, Montclair State University, Director: Avery Glymph
2022 Big Meal, Montclair State University, Director: Susan Kerner

Professional Memberships

Actors Equity Association
VASTA

References

Scott Miller
Professor of Voice at NYU-Graduate Acting Program mvmethod@gmail.com
212-340-1219

Heather Benton
Montclair State University, Program Coordinator BFA Acting
bentonh@mail.montclair.edu
973-655-3085

John Patrick
JP Com Consultants
john.patrick78@gmail.com
919-636-8509

Teaching Philosophy

I employ a holistic approach to acting. That means I believe in order for an actor to perform at their optimal level they must master three things. First, a voice that is trained so that it is clear and open. Second, a body that is physically agile so it may withstand the rigors of an 8 show week. And last, an open and available emotional instrument so that any emotion required for the scene may come through the actor in an easeful way. It is my job to help the actor integrate these three facets of performance.

To encourage, challenge and enliven my students in these areas, I employ a variety of methods. For the voice, I draw primarily on the Miller Voice Method. MVM is invaluable in allowing the student's entire vocal apparatus to open up and perform at its maximum capacity in a way that is highly efficient. In addition, when actors come into their breath, they also come into the present moment. Through the work with the breath and the voice, the actor naturally becomes more present and available to their scene partner.

My primary acting influence is Meisner. I trained in his technique while studying at Rutgers University. I believe his work is very beneficial at getting the students out of their heads and into the present moment. I employ many of Meisner's exercises, including repetition and Independent Activities. These improvisations can be immensely helpful at diminishing the actor's self-consciousness and freeing their impulse.

However, there are different "ways in" for every student and I don't believe in a one-size fits all style of teaching. I have been profoundly influenced by the movement-based work of Michael Chekhov as well as the work of Uta Hagen and Larry Moss. Outside-in can be just as effective as inside-out. We need to give actors as many tools as possible so they can create their own technique.

I encourage my students to read plays and see as much theatre as possible. They should also invest in their liberal arts education through reading both fiction and history. A good actor is a well-rounded actor. For instance, if they're going to work on Shakespeare, they need to understand the social and historical context of the Renaissance era.

For me, the most rewarding thing about teaching is to serve as a guide for students. Sometimes a student will come up to me at the beginning of the semester and say, "I can't do this work!" Yet when I lead the actor gently through their own limitations, they discover they can do so much more than they thought possible. They have unlocked the key to their success and it is a truly magical moment for me.

I have a deep love of acting and of the theatre and hope to impart that passion to my students. Israel Hicks, one of my teachers in graduate school, said to my class, "Theatre is my church." I encourage my students to come to class with that same commitment.

Talent doesn't matter so much to me - what matters to me is showing up, possessing a great work ethic, loving the craft and having a willingness to take risks. I believe actors are some of the bravest souls on earth. They are brave because they reveal the softest parts of themselves onstage. I want to invigorate my students with a fierceness in their acting. If my students come away from my class feeling inspired, challenged, surprised at what they've accomplished and curious about how much further they can go, then I have done my job.