

The Honors Acting Conservatory at The Theatre Lab



Isn't it time you took charge of your acting career?

If you've always wanted to study acting seriously, with great instructors and truly dedicated fellow students - but were afraid it couldn't be done without abandoning other work commitments - we've created an acting conservatory just for you.

The Honors Conservatory at The Theatre Lab is a comprehensive actor training program designed for people who are serious about entering the acting profession. This one-year institute is an intensive and thoroughly unique actor training experience.

"I believe that the best acting happens when actors no longer care what anybody thinks of them while they're performing - when pleasing the audience or the critic is the farthest thing from their minds. That can only happen once they've assimilated a certain amount of technique, so inexperience won't betray them. Once that training is in place, I focus on freeing actors from the unhelpful worries and preoccupations that get in the way and keep their acting from achieving its full power."

—Deb Gottesman

What the Honors Conservatory at The Theatre Lab offers:

A year to focus intensively on your acting . . .

One year of concentrated attention to all aspects of the acting craft can make an enormous difference in the life of an actor. Taking classes now and then is beneficial, of course, but when it comes to learning what you're really capable of, nothing can match the value of immersing yourself totally in the craft.

. . . without turning your life upside down

Keep your day job - for now! The Honors Conservatory at The Theatre Lab takes place solely on evenings and weekends, so you can continue to earn a living at your current occupation while preparing for a career in the theatre. No need to pull up stakes and head off for a two- or three-year MFA program. Here's your chance to receive graduate-equivalent training from the area's most respected working professional actors, directors and casting directors, with attention to every aspect of the art and business of the acting profession, and all within one calendar year. What's more, The Honors Conservatory is much more affordable than any comparably extensive program in the area.

Fellow students who are as dedicated as you are

Admission to the Conservatory is by audition, and Conservatory faculty select only students they believe can succeed in the acting profession. Demonstrated ability and commitment are prerequisites for admission, so the acting student's perennial problem - the scene partner who doesn't show up for rehearsals or drops out of class - will not be a concern. Instead, students can count on working with scene partners and classmates who share their dedication to acting, and who will support and challenge each other as members of a committed acting/learning ensemble.

A truly comprehensive curriculum

Honors Conservatory students receive extensive training in scene study, advanced improvisational skills, auditioning, performance skills, physical and vocal technique, and the business of the business. In addition, Conservatory students study other theatrical disciplines to put that training in the appropriate context. To gain experience on the technical side of things, each student will run crew for at least one Theatre Lab production. Upon finishing the program you will have been exposed to a wide swath of theatre history and will be familiar with dramatic literature from across a spectrum of diverse styles.

Extensive access to The Theatre Lab's acclaimed faculty

The program is directed by Theatre Lab Founders and Directors Deb Gottesman and Buzz Mauro, MFA graduates of The Catholic University of America, and popular actor and instructor Kim Schraf. A core curriculum of ongoing Monday night scene study and advanced improv training plus a minimum of nine six-week courses – taught by distinguished Theatre Lab faculty – is required of all Honors Conservatory students, but there's no requirement to stop there. When spaces are available, Honors Conservatory students may take other Theatre Lab classes—*for no additional fee* – as long as the extra work doesn't interfere with the Conservatory curriculum.

Special workshops with top theatre professionals

The Theatre Lab is known for introducing actors and acting students to the wisdom and inspiration of top theatre talents from both Washington and New York. Past master classes and workshops have been led by Bruce Dern, Pat Carroll, Michael Kahn, Craig Wallace, Naomi Jacobson and many others. A variety of special guests will work solely with Honors students in 2021, as a supplement to the regular Monday night acting classes.

Regular progress evaluations

Students will receive detailed evaluations of all their work throughout the year. All instructors will provide honest, specific and constructive criticism as a way of guiding each student through their unique development as a theatre artist. And learning how to take and use that criticism will itself be an important part of each actor's Conservatory education.

Personal and professional mentoring throughout the year

Another important aspect of acting training that is made available solely to Honors Conservatory students is an ongoing advisory component. The directors and faculty serve as mentors, making themselves available to Honors students to discuss any and all aspects of course work and preparation for the professional theatre. Individual attention is central to the Honors Conservatory philosophy.

A wide variety of performance opportunities

Honors Conservatory students will perform throughout the year. All students will play a major role in a production arising from one of our performance classes (past productions have included *Othello*, *Les Miserables*, *August: Osage County*, and *The Crucible*), and there will be frequent showcases of the scene work done in class. Final projects will consist of productions of one-act small-cast plays, chosen, produced, directed, and acted entirely by students under faculty supervision.

A final showcase for the area's most influential directors and casting directors

Upon completion of the program, Honors Conservatory students will be formally introduced to the professional community in a showcase of their best work, presented to artistic and casting directors from a wide variety of Washington theatres and casting agencies.

"I'm often asked why I teach, since I've devoted so much of my life to it, and my answer is always pretty much the same, with variations: There's nothing as exhilarating as experiencing a roomful of people hurling their bodies and their minds into an active exploration of what it means to be human, in ways that would be frowned upon in the typical office job. And I love encouraging that kind of behavior."

—Buzz Mauro

The Curriculum

The Honors Conservatory curriculum consists of an ongoing Monday night course in acting technique plus a series of six-week courses that meet once a week. Many of these courses have been specially designed for Honors students; others are drawn from the standard Theatre Lab curriculum. Some classes will consist of Honors students alone; others will be a mix of Honors and non-Honors students. Most courses require fairly extensive preparation and rehearsal outside of class. Honors students will receive special assignments, guidance, and evaluation in all their coursework.

Honors students meet every Monday as a group with at least one of the program Directors (Deb, Buzz and Kim) for advanced improvisation and scene study. Students generally have two other classes during the week, to include the core classes listed below and electives from the full Theatre Lab curriculum.

"My ideal classroom is a laboratory where students can take big risks without fear of failure in an atmosphere of intellectual rigor, wild imagination, and compassion mixed with a little humor. My role in this mix is part catalyst, part midwife, and in no way omniscient guru. The kind of acting I want my students to discover is a marriage of our most human dichotomies: work that is both vulnerable and driven, playful and disciplined, deeply honest and carefully crafted."

—Kim Schraf

Core Classes

- **Ongoing Monday Night Improvisation and Scene Study**
Training in a wide range of theatrical styles and periods, approached from many perspectives, with the aim of arming students with as many techniques as possible for bringing dramatic characters of all times and places to life. Periodic showcases will be presented, open to the public.
- **Stanislavsky**
An in-depth look at a wide variety of approaches to actor training, using the influential writings of Konstantin Stanislavsky as a jumping-off point.
- **Theatre History**
A survey of dramatic literature and production from the 5th century BCE to the present.
- **Voice for the Actor**
Rigorous training in vocal production and expression.
- **Movement for the Actor**
Physical training designed to promote effective use of the body onstage.
- **One Performance Class**
One double-session course culminating in a full production of a play or musical, or a series of staged readings.
- **Dialect**
Techniques for developing proficiency in any regional accent.
- **One Specialized Acting Class**
One course in an advanced aspect of script work or improvisation, such as working with a director, incorporating the presence of an audience, or filling out a character's "backstory."
- **Auditioning**
Focused work on acting solo, developing a broad audition repertoire, and dealing with technical aspects of the theatrical audition scenario.

Final Project

During the second semester, students will pair up to direct and act in one-act plays of their choosing. Scenes from the plays will receive attention in the Monday night classes and each play will receive full public performances.

Final Showcase

All students will perform in a showcase at the end of the program, presented to decision makers from across the spectrum of Washington's professional theatres. The work included will be drawn from students' coursework throughout the year, including, but not limited to, the Final Projects.

Tuition

Tuition for the Honors Acting Conservatory is \$7,100 for the 2021 calendar year if paid in full before the program begins, or \$7,860 payable at \$655 per month beginning in December 2020 and ending in November 2021.

The Application and Audition Process

An application for the Honors Acting Conservatory at The Theatre Lab consists of the following:

- A completed **Application Form**.
- A **Statement of Purpose** outlining your reasons for applying to this program and your goals for the future, in no more than 500 words.
- A **Resume** of your acting experience.
- Two **Letters of Recommendation** from people who are able to comment on your acting ability, work ethic, or other qualities that might imply readiness to undertake an intensive course of study.
- *Note: The application fee has been waived for the 2021 year of study.*

Applications are being accepted now through October 19, 2020.

Coursework begins in January.

You will be asked to prepare two short, contrasting monologues, at least one of which should be contemporary.

Applications available online. Visit theatrelab.org/honors for more information and to apply.

Please direct any questions you may have to Buzz Mauro at (202) 824-0449 or buzz@theatrelab.org.