Brown Graduate School & Trinity Repertory Theater

Fall 2015
Effective Performance: Communication and Improvisation for Graduate Students

• A Five-Part Workshop Series (November 2-30, 2015): Mondays, 6-9pm
• A One-Session Introduction (December 8, 2015): Tuesday, 1-4pm

Lead Instructor: Mauro Hantman, Trinity Repertory Theater

The Effective Performance workshop series for graduate students is designed to introduce students to performance values, drawn from improvisational and theatrical techniques. In the Fall and the Spring of 2015-16, the Graduate School and Trinity Repertory Theater are piloting two workshops, one a five-session workshop series and the other a one-time three-hour workshop. Students may apply to join a cohort of 12-20 students to participate in the multi-week interactive workshop or apply to participate in the one-session workshop, both led by experts from Trinity Repertory Theater. The workshops will focus on helping students improve their teaching, communication, and presentation skills, and to strengthen their comfort and confidence in presenting their research in engaging ways. The workshop will also offer an opportunity for participants to build connections with students in other programs. Working together in a spirit of collaboration and open exchange, students will work on developing skills in enhancing presence, active listening and storytelling, and responding dynamically to an audience.

Purpose
To help prepare graduate students to be effective communicators for research and teaching through interactive workshops.

Learning Goals
1. Explore theater techniques, experimenting with play, spontaneity, and connecting to your audience.
2. Discover the story behind your research and study.
3. Develop comfort and confidence in making an engaging research statement.

Workshop Series: 5 Interactive Sessions
Taught by Trinity Repertory Theater Company member, Mauro Hantman, this workshop will meet over five weeks. We will do some improvisation work in every class, using it as our core study and touchstone. Each class will include a food break and a short period at the end for group reflection.

Nov 2 Improvisation and Performance Values/Finding Your Story
(Lead Teacher, Mauro Hantman)
We will learn the basics of improvisational theater as a way to examine performance values. We will also explore story-telling: what is your story, and how do you engage an audience? Exercises will examine:

• Accepting and building,
• Creating interest: Engage, Establish, Escalate
• Authentic response
• Basic Stagecraft: stand and deliver, find your target
• Storytelling: What's your Engine?
Nov 9  Shaping Speech  
(Lead Teacher, Angela Brazil)
How do you shape speech to best communicate your ideas? This class will focus on using the sound and structure of language to convey meaning. Using simple texts, students will learn to utilize toned endings, parenthetical phrases, consonants and pitch to carve meaning out of spoken text. Exercises will include:
• Identifying the important ideas
• Breaking text into technical elements
• Moving through with vigor while landing key points

Nov 16  Dropping Into the Body  
(Lead Teacher, Shura Baryshnikov)
This class will focus on the body as a primary tool of expression. How do you remain current and sharp within your narrative? How do you maintain presence and embodiment through body and voice? Exercises will investigate:
• Living in your body
• Authentic response
• The quick fuse: how do the body and psyche spark at once?

Nov 23  Your Fullest Voice  
(Lead Teacher, Rachael Warren)
How do you produce sound to communicate content? This class helps students connect to breath for a more full, open, and powerful voice. Exercises will explore:
• Identifying and releasing physical tension
• Sending sound to a target
• Maintaining a focal point
• Awareness of the audience: has your info been received?

Nov 30  Putting It All Together: Performance  
(Lead Teacher, Mauro Hantman)
In this final class we will combine what we have learned in performance. Students will practice improvisational scenes and do short solo presentations with enhanced emphasis on class feedback and critique. A final discussion will focus on the application of learned techniques to professional and everyday settings.

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Students who do not participate in the 5-Session Workshop Series may also apply to:

A One-Session Introductory Workshop: Effective Performance  
December 8 2015: Tuesday, 1-4pm

This three-hour workshop will offer students an introduction to performance values, drawn from theatrical techniques. Students will learn some key principles and have the opportunity to try some improvisational exercises in a fun and collaborative group setting.