

**JOHN MICHAEL DiRESTA**

Assistant Professor of Theater  
 Skidmore College  
 851 N. Broadway  
 Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

[johnnymd@gmail.com](mailto:johnnymd@gmail.com)

646-285-6592

[www.jmdiresta.com](http://www.jmdiresta.com)

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING****DEGREES HELD**

- 2013: M.F.A., Theater Directing, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL.  
 Thesis Production: *The Drunken City* by Adam Bock  
 Written Thesis: *Gay Shame and Personal Connection: Directing The Closet in 2014*  
 Thesis Chair: Anna D. Shapiro  
 Thesis Committee: Jessica Thebus, Walt Spangler
- 2004: B.A., English, Columbia University, New York, NY.

**OTHER TRAINING**

- 2015: Fiasco Theater: Month-long Shakespeare intensive, New York, NY.  
 2014: Old Vic Theater: Master class with Ian Rickson on Greek theater, New York, NY.  
 2014: Drama League Professionals Week, New York, NY

**SCHOLARLY AND CREATIVE WORKS****PROFESSIONAL THEATRE DIRECTING (FULL PRODUCTION)**

<i>The Drunken City</i>	Adam Bock	Steppenwolf Theater Garage
<i>The Same Day</i>	Stefan Ivanov	LaGuardia PAC/Theatre Sfumato
<i>From Pilgrim Landing</i>	Ed Wasserman	Columbia Stages
<i>Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike</i>	Christopher Durang	Yale Dramat
<i>Lafayette</i>	Ian Curteis	Francis Gould Hall
<i>Blood on the Tracks</i>	Alec Silberblatt & Steve Diubaldo	Judson Church
<i>Body of Words</i>	Vincent Sessa	Theater for the New City
<i>Oedipus</i>	Sophocles (Trans. Sean Graney)	Hangar Theatre
<i>Hare and Tortoise</i>	Brendan Murray	Hangar Theatre
<i>Scenes from the Middle Voice</i>	Alec Silberblatt & Steve Diubaldo	Rising Phoenix Rep
<i>The Memory Tax</i>	Chad Eschman	Araca Project
<i>Favorites</i>	Charlotte Miller	Rising Phoenix Rep
<i>Jump Into The Abscess</i>	Eric Scholl	Where Eagles Dare Theater
<i>Back to Society</i>	MCC Theater Youth Co	Abrons Arts Center
<i>1000 Words</i>	MCC Theater Youth Co	Developing Artists/Rebel Verses

**PROFESSIONAL THEATRE DIRECTING (WORKSHOPS, READINGS, CONCERTS)**

<i>Basically Children</i>	Charlie O'Leary	The Tank/PrideFest 2022
<i>This Exquisite Corpse</i>	Mia Chung	JKB Theatre/Skidmore College
<i>Catch as Catch Can</i>	Mia Chung	New Dramatists
<i>Jeanine's World</i> (w/ Camryn Manheim)	Frankie Krainz	Atlantic Theater
<i>Orville and Wilbur Did It</i> (w/ Matt Doyle)	David Zellnik	York Theatre Company
<i>Costs of Living*</i>	Timothy Huang	B-Sides Productions
<i>Start Down**</i>	Eleanor Burgess	Luna Stage
<i>This Exquisite Corpse</i>	Mia Chung	Skidmore JKB Theater
<i>Nostalgia</i>	Shpend Xani	Society Theater Company
<i>Mined/Matter</i>	Jeff Smith	Dramatists' Guild
<i>Humiliation Play</i>	Charlie O'Leary	Artists' Co-op
<i>Antigone</i>	Sophocles (Trans. Sean Graney)	Drama League
<i>The Udmurts</i>	David Zellnik	Ensemble Studio Theater
<i>Agent Showcase</i>	Harvard/ART Actor Training	ART Theater/Boston
<i>Houston</i>	Sandy Rustin Fleischer & Eli Bolin	B-Sides Productions
<i>Adam Then</i>	Terry Milner	NYU/Tisch MFA
<i>You Kill Me</i>	Janine DeMaria	NYU/Tisch MFA
<i>The Farmer and the Indian</i>	Christian DeMarais & Tim Nicolai	Stratford New Works Lab
<i>Winter Wind Sings</i>	Rich Silverstein	54 Below
<i>Disney Rides</i>	Thomas Daniél Valls	Drama League
<i>Ordinary Days</i>	Adam Gwon	Laurie Beechman Theatre
<i>For Unto Us</i>	Stephen Kaplan	Luna Stage
<i>Price of Freedom</i>	Glenn Gordon	Public Theater/NYSF
<i>ANTONYANDCLEOPATRA THE END</i>	Jihae Park	Public Theater/NYSF
<i>Long Island Arpeggio</i>	Mia Chung	Labyrinth Theater Company
<i>The Insurgents</i>	Lucy Thurber	New Dramatists
<i>Romeo (Reduced)</i>	William Shakespeare	Hangar Theatre
<i>Radiance</i>	Howard Meyer	Axial Theater
<i>Underneath the Water Tower</i>	Steve Diubaldo	Middle Voice Theater Company
<i>La Casa De Schwarz</i>	Stephen Kaplan	Judson Church
<i>A Real Boy</i>	Stephen Kaplan	Dramatists Guild
<i>Yellowface</i>	David Henry Hwang	Northwestern University
<i>Big Questions</i>	Lily Mooney	Master Clash
<i>A Crack in the Canvas</i>	David Zhen	MCC Theater FreshPlay 2012
<i>Watching the Thunder</i>	Adam Gonzalez	MCC Theater FreshPlay 2010
<i>Taking Leave</i>	Cullen Golden	MCC Theater FreshPlay 2009

\*2016 Richard Rogers Award Winner

\*\*2015 Keneda Award

**ACADEMIC THEATRE DIRECTING**

<i>John Proctor is the Villain*</i>	Kimberly Belflower	Skidmore College/JKB Theater
<i>The Harvest</i>	Sam Hunter	Skidmore College/JKB Theater
<i>Cabaret</i>	Kander and Ebb	Skidmore College/JKB Theater
<i>Maybe Tomorrow, Maybe Next Year</i>	Ensemble Generated	Skidmore College/JKB Theater
<i>Sweat</i> (Staged Reading)	Lynn Nottage	Skidmore College/JKB Theater
<i>An Enemy of the People</i>	Henrik Ibsen	New York City Dramatic Academy
<i>Lyle the Crocodile</i>	Kevin Kling/Rich Gray	Northwestern University
<i>The Romeo and Juliet Project</i>	Ensemble Generated	Northwestern University
<i>The Glass Menagerie</i>	Tennessee Williams	Northwestern University
<i>The Normal Heart</i>	Larry Kramer	Northwestern University

\*Northeast Premiere

## **ASSISTANT DIRECTING**

<i>Ode to Joy</i> (dir. Craig Lucas)	Craig Lucas	Rattlestick /Cherry Lane Theater
<i>Little Fish</i> (dir. Jen Waldman)	Michael John Lachaise	B-Side Productions
<i>Skylight</i> (dir. Bill Brown)	David Hare	Court Theater
<i>The Verona Project</i> (dir. Amanda Dehnert)	Amanda Dehnert	American Music Theater Project
<i>Judgment Day</i> (dir. Caitriona McLaughlin)	Odon Von Horvath	Summerscape, Bard College
<i>Killers and Other Family</i> (dir. C. McLaughlin)	Lucy Thurber	Rattlestick Theater

## **DRAMATURGY**

<i>Astronomy 101</i>	Bella Poynton	ATHE New Play Development '22
<i>For Tonight</i>	Spencer Williams/Whitney Rhodes	Michigan State Theatre
<i>The Wild Duck</i>	Henrik Ibsen	Summerscape, Bard College
<i>Fur</i>	Charlotte Miller	Access Theater
<i>In The Moment</i>	Nelson Patino, Jar	MCC Theater Youth Company
<i>Taking Leave</i>	Cullen Golden	MCC Theater FreshPlay

## **PRODUCING**

<i>This Property is Condemned</i>	Tennessee Williams	Hangar Theatre
-----------------------------------	--------------------	----------------

Resident Producer of MCC Theater Youth Company, 2007-2010.

*On The Fly* (2007: Provincetown Playhouse, 2008: Westside Theater, 2009: Vineyard Theater)

*UnCensored* (2008: Zipper Theater, 2009: Cherry Lane Theater, 2010: Julia Miles Theater)

*The Freshplay Festival* (2007: Theater Row, 2008: Playwrights Horizons, 2009: The New School).

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Tang Teaching Museum. Label for “Where Worlds Falter: Art and Empathy” exhibit. Saratoga Springs, NY. 2022. \$200.

“The Uptown Transfer,” *The Brooklyn Rail*, July 2018.

“The Sol Project,” *The Brooklyn Rail*, October 2016.

“Doing It Anyway: Judson Church’s Magic Hour,” *The Brooklyn Rail*, May 2015.

“Ball Slapping on a Pile of Trash: Café Cino Returns,” *The Brooklyn Rail*, September 2012.

## **CONFERENCE PAPERS**

“Autonomy and Self-Determination: Creating Consent-Based Practices in Auditions and Rehearsal”  
Association for Theater in Higher Education Conference, 2022, Detroit MI.

“Rethinking Casting Exercises as A Pedagogical Intersection of Teaching Anti-Racism and  
Directorial Point of View”  
Association for Theater in Higher Education Conference, 2022, Detroit MI.

“Beyond Color-Blind: A Dramaturgy-Forward Approach to Anti-Racist Casting”  
Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas Conference, 2022 Philadelphia, PA.

"Revolutionary Casting to Enable Revolutionary Voices: Pedagogical Strategies for Imbedding Anti-Racist Praxis into Directorial Point of View Through Deliberate Casting."

Mid Atlantic Theater Conference, 2022, Cleveland, NY.

"This Not That - Revising the Musical Theatre Canon: Timothy Huang's *American Morning*."

Association for Theater in Higher Education Conference, 2021, Online.

"The Drive for New Voices: Directing and Developing New Works in the Academy."

Association for Theater in Higher Education Conference, 2020, Online.

"Pursued by A Bear: A Multidisciplinary Workshop in Dynamic Transitional Storytelling."

Association for Theater in Higher Education Conference, 2019, Orlando, FL.

"Using Improvisation in Table-work Rehearsals." Global Improvisation Institute G3 Symposium, 2019, Middlesex University, London, England.

"Revolutionizing Table Work in Rehearsal with Undergraduate Actors." Association for Theater in Higher Education Conference, 2018 Boston, Massachusetts.

### **INVITED TALKS**

"Art or Entertainment? Theater in The United States Before the Civil War." Encores Lecture Series, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY, November 2022.

"Ask a Theater Director" Fora Literary Arts Education. [www.foraforall.com](http://www.foraforall.com). March, 2021

"Theatrical Stopwatches: The First 90 Seconds of a Play" Encores Lecture Series, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY, November 2019

"Today's Teaching Artist: Trends and Practices (4 session lecture/workshop series)." NYU Steinhardt, November 2009.

"JAY-Z In the Classroom: Hip-Hop, Theater, and Censorship in the Urban Classroom." NYU Steinhardt, October 2008.

"Corruption! Scandal! Song!: Political Satire in the American Musical." Lafayette College, October 2006.

### **GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND PROFESSIONAL INVITATIONS**

#### **INTERNATIONAL**

Global Improvisation Institute G3 Symposium/Improbable Theater Company: Invited Speaker, Middlesex University, London, England, 2019.

La Guardia Performing Arts Center/Theater Sfumato: Global Exchange Program. Queens, NY and Sofia, Bulgaria, August-October, 2017.

Prague Quadrennial of Scenography: Northwestern Fellow. Prague, Czech Republic, 2011.  
\$1500.

## **NATIONAL**

Nielsen Center/Eckerd College: Teaching Workshop for Early Career Faculty. 2022. \$1500.

Nielsen Center/Eckerd College: Summer Stipend for Independent Research. 2022. \$500.

Association for Theater in Higher Education: Directing Program Debut Panelist. 2018. \$150.

Drama League Art + Party Resident Director: New York, NY, 2018.

Drama League Directing Fellowship: Selection Committee. New York, NY, 2015-2016.

New American Musical Award: Selection Committee. B-Sides Productions, New York, NY, 2015-2016.

Drama League Directing Fellow. New York, NY, 2014. \$2400.

Collaboration Reloaded: Director. NYU Tisch and The Public Theater, led by Oskar Eustis and Susan Lori Parks, 2014.

Actors Studio Playwright/Director Lab: Member. New York, NY, 2014-2019

Young Playwrights Regional Competition: Selection Committee. New York, NY, 2014.

Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers: Observership Pool. 2013-2015.

## **INSTITUTIONAL**

Faculty Development Grant. Skidmore College. Saratoga Springs, NY. 2022. \$930.

Bridge Experience Pedagogy Cluster. Skidmore College. Saratoga Springs, NY. 2019. \$1000.

Tang-Mellon Faculty Seminar Trip to Washington, DC. Skidmore College. Saratoga Springs, NY, 2019.

## **PUBLIC DRAMATURGY: AUDIENCE TALKBACK FACILITATOR**

### **Professional Theater**

*Lafayette* by Ian Curteis. Francis Gould Hall, New York, NY, March 2015.

*Red* by John Logan. Hangar Theater, Ithaca, NY, June 2014.

*Little Shop of Horrors* by Howard Ashman. Hangar Theater, Ithaca, NY, June 2014.

*Around the World in 80 Days* by Mark Brown. Hangar Theater, Ithaca, NY, July 2014.

*Other Desert Cities* by Jon Robin Baitz. Hangar Theater, Ithaca, NY, August 2014.

*Ashville* by Lucy Thurber. Rattlestick Playwrights Theater/Cherry Lane Theater, New York, NY  
August 2013  
*Killers and Other Family* by Lucy Thurber. Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, New York, NY, October  
2009, August 2013  
*Skylight* by David Hare. Court Theater, Chicago, IL, January 2013  
*Family Week* by Beth Henley, MCC Theater, New York, NY, May 2010  
*The Pride* by Alexi Kaye Cambell, MCC Theater, New York, NY, February, 2010  
*Still Life* by Alexander Dinelerias MCC Theater, New York, NY, October 2009.  
*Coraline* by Stephin Merritt & David Greenspan. MCC Theater, New York, NY, April 2009.  
*The Third Story* by Charles Busch. MCC Theater, New York, NY, February 2009.  
*The Fifty Words* by Michael Weller, MCC Theater, New York, NY, October 2008.  
*Reasons to be Pretty* by Neil LaBute, MCC Theater, New York, NY, April 2008  
*Grace* by Mick Gordon and AC Graylin, MCC Theater, New York, NY, January 2008.  
*Spain* by Jim Knable, MCC Theater, New York, NY, October 2007.  
*The Seven* by Will Power. New York Theater Workshop, New York, NY, February 2006.  
*No Child* by Nilaja Sun. Barrow Street Theater, New York, NY, November 2006, February 2007.  
*Blue Door* by Tanya Barfield. Playwrights Horizons, New York, NY, October 2005.

### **Academic Theater**

*The Harvest* by Samuel D. Hunter. Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY, October 2019.  
*Cabaret* by Kander and Ebb. Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY, April 2019.  
*Yellowface* by David Henry Hwang. Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, February 2013.  
*The Romeo and Juliet Project*, Ensemble Devised. Northwestern University, Evanston IL, April 2012.

## **TEACHING**

### **ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS**

**Skidmore College, Artist in Residence, 2017-2022, Assistant Professor, 2022-Present**

#### Undergraduate Courses Taught

Introduction to Directing  
Intermediate Directing  
The Director as Collaborative Artist  
Workshop Directors  
Collaboration: Directors - Devising  
Collaboration: Directors - Producing  
Collaboration: Directors – New Work Development  
US-American Theater in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
BIPOC Queer Theater  
LGBTQ Voices on Stage  
Queer Performance During the AIDS Epidemic (Scribner Seminar/First Year Experience)  
Dramaturgy: Production Seminar  
Dramaturgy: Bridge Course (Public Dramaturgy)

**College of Staten Island, Adjunct Professor, 2016-2017**

Undergraduate Courses Taught

Introduction to Acting  
Theater History, 1600-1915

**Harvard University/ART Theater, Guest Instructor, 2017**

Graduate Courses Taught

Acting for Showcase (Directed 2016 Graduate Acting Showcase Performance in New York City and Los Angeles)

**New York City Dramatic Academy, Adjunct Professor, 2016**

Undergraduate Courses Taught

Theater History, 1800-1900

**Northwestern University, Graduate Instructor, 2010-2013**

Undergraduate Courses Taught

Fundamentals of Direction  
Theater in Context (Production: Run Crew and Scenic)

**WORKSHOPS AND RESIDENCIES LED**

Pre-Show Discussion Leader, Skidmore College Opportunity Project:

Fall 2018 (*We Used to Wear Bonnets/ And Get High All The Time* by Julia May Jonas)

Spring 2019 (*Cabaret* by Kander and Ebb)

Student Workshop: Public Speaking, Skidmore College Opportunity Project: Fall 2018.

Developer and Instructor: *Staging the World: Directing for Urban High School Seniors*. (Pilot program teaching directing to low-income NYC students of color, adopted into full program in 2018.) Drama League, New York, NY, 2016-2017.

Playwriting Intensive for NYC Theater Teachers: Helping Marginalized Teenagers Find Their Voice. Flushing Town Hall, New York, NY, March, 2010.

Workshop Leader: Using Theater in Homelessness Transitions. Bottomless Closet Organization, New York, NY, 2005-2008.

JAY-Z In the Classroom: Hip-Hop, Theater, and Censorship in the Urban Classroom. NYU Steinhardt, October 2008.

**GUEST LECTURES**

“Dramaturgy and Directorial Point of View in Tom Stoppard’s *Arcadia*.” Scribner Seminar: The Dynamics of Chaos, Prof. Rachel Roe-Dale, Skidmore College, October, 2022.

“Queer Absurdism: Caryl Churchill’s *Far Away*” Theater of the Absurd, Prof. Dennis Schebetta, Skidmore College Theater Department, March 2021.

“But Do We Have the Actors?” Dramaturgy: Jubilee Course, Prof. Lisa Jackson-Schebetta, Skidmore College Theater Department, March 2020.

“Kate Bornstein and Queer Solo Performance” Queer Theater, Prof. Joseph Cermatori, Skidmore College English Department, April 2019.

“Rehearsal Techniques: Noting Actors.” Pace University, New York, NY, April 2016.

“Beyond Type: Contemporary Auditioning Techniques.” Hangar Theater Lab Company, Ithaca, NY, July 2015.

“Infusing Theater Into the Urban High School Curriculum.” City College, New York, NY, October 2014.

“Rehearsal Techniques.” The New School, New York, NY, February 2014.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAININGS ATTENDED**

“Inclusive Hiring Workshop.” Skidmore College, September 2022.

“Teaching Workshop for Early Career Faculty.” Nielsen Center at Eckerd College. (3x 3-day residential interdisciplinary symposia on liberal arts education.) January, May, October 2022.

“Responsive Pedagogy.” Dr. Brian Herrera, American Theater and Drama Society, January 2021.

“Experiential Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom.” Skidmore College, October 2019.

“Transitioning Your Course: Supporting Transgender Students.” Skidmore College, April 2018.

“Radical Empathy in Radical Theater.” Eric Ehn, Northwestern University, October 2010.

“Campus Wide Arts Integration in the Urban High School.” New York State Council on the Arts at MCC Theater. New York, NY November 2009.

“Creating Solo Theater.” Nilaja Sun at Theater Development Fund. New York, NY, January 2006.

“Musical Theater from Page to Stage.” Joe Iconis and Debra Barsha at Theater Development Fund, September 2006.

“Directing the Well-Made Play.” Scott Ellis at Theater Development Fund, January 2005.



## **SERVICE**

### **SKIDMORE COLLEGE**

Season Selection Committee, Theater Department, 2019-2023 (Chair, 2021-2022, 2022-2023)

Scholarly and Creative Endeavors Group, 2022

Anti-Racist task force, Theater Department, 2020-2021

Artist in residence in acting, search committee, Theater Department, 2019-2020

Assistant professor of acting and directing, search committee, Theater Department 2018-2019

Assistant professor of theater history, search committee, Theater Department 2017-2019

Student lab selection committee, Theatre Department, 2017-2022

Student black box selection committee, Theater Department, 2018-2020

### **INDUSTRY WIDE**

Drama League Directing Fellowship: Selection Committee. New York, NY, 2015-2016.

New American Musical Award: Selection Committee. B-Sides Productions, New York, NY, 2015-2016.

Young Playwrights Regional Competition: Selection Committee. New York, NY, 2014.

Collaboration Reloaded: Guest Director. NYU Tisch and The Public Theater, led by Oskar Eustis and Susan Lori Parks, 2014.

## **PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS**

- 2014-2015: The Hangar Theater, Ithaca, NY  
Drama League Directing Fellow (2014)  
Lab Company Mentor (2015)
- 2007-2010: MCC Theater, New York, NY  
Director of Education and Outreach  
Producer and Director, MCC Theater Youth Company
- 2006-2010: New York City Public Schools, New York, NY  
Teaching Artist, Middle School and High School
- 2005-2007: Theater Development Fund (TDF), New York, NY  
Associate Director of Education and Outreach  
Program Director, Open Doors Program

2004-2007: The Gage Group Talent Agency, New York, NY  
Assistant to Talent Agency

### **SECONDARY TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

Instructor: *Intro to Playwriting*. Columbia University HS Creative Writing Program, New York, NY,  
2013 – 2015, 2020

Master Class Instructor: The Path to Studying Theatre in College. MCC Theater Youth Company,  
2018, 2021

Master Class Instructor: Actor/Director Collaboration. MCC Theater Youth Company, 2014

Teaching Artist. Enact Theater, New York, NY, 2014-2015.

Teaching Artist. Theater Development Fund, New York, NY, 2006-2013.

Residential Teaching Assistant In Theater: Center for Talent Development, Case Western Reserve  
University, Cleveland, OH, 2003.

Residential Teaching Assistant: Improve Comedy. Center for Talented Youth, Johns Hopkins  
University at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY, 2001.

### **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS and AFFILIATIONS**

Association for Theatre in Higher Education  
American Theater and Drama Society  
Drama League  
Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers  
Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas

### **LANGUAGES**

English: native speaker  
Spanish: advanced beginner  
Latin: advanced beginner