

# CCM Acting Student Handbook

2017-2018

CCM Acting is as a comprehensive and rigorous actor-training program that provides students with creative performance opportunities in various media and styles that will prepare actors for careers in theatre, film, television, and the media arts. Our vision is to create an academic and creative environment in which students can learn important skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century- research, rehearsal and performance techniques, flexibility, discipline, artistic kindness, and collaboration.

CCM Acting has been ranked by U.S. News and World Report as one of the top Acting Programs in the U.S. and is home to world-renowned faculty who work from coast to coast and internationally as directors, fight choreographers, and voice, speech, and dialect coaches. Our rigorous acting curriculum includes intensive training in Viewpoints, Suzuki, Meisner, and Chekhov techniques. Students experience a dedicated voice production sequence that includes training in Alba Emoting, dialect and voice-over work. A dedicated movement sequence challenges students with a full year of Stage Combat in rapier, dagger, and quarterstaff and a full year of Mask Characterization in neutral, full face primitive, half-face character, and quality masks.

Students engage in comprehensive performance opportunities over four years, acting in full length scripted dramas as part of main stage and studio series, in student created devised theatre projects, in our annual 48 Hour Film Festival and in various film, commercial, and media opportunities. CCM Acting is recognized for its excellence in community engagement with collaborations and student placement in projects with local organizations such as Ensemble Theatre Cincinnati, Cincinnati Shakespeare Festival, The Know Theatre, Cincinnati Opera and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. A student in CCM Acting is in demand for his or her talents, with students frequently being cast in film and commercial projects while in school. Union membership in AEA and SAG-AFTRA is encouraged.

Actor Showcases in the final semester provide a bridge to the profession. Senior Showcases for all seniors are presented in New York and Los Angeles for agents, managers and casting directors. Students regularly engage with CCM Acting Department sponsored master classes with industry professionals from New York and Los Angeles and there is an active culture of students securing internships and acceptance into intensive trainings with prestigious companies and organizations around the world.

CCM Acting has a deep commitment to diversity and nondiscrimination. In CCM Acting we *imagine the possibilities* every day.

## Learning Outcomes

1. Create a personal performance process.
2. Analyze and research roles from scripts.
3. Analyze and interpret history and current events.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of truthful acting.
5. Establish and demonstrate artistic and professional work habits in rehearsal and performance in scripted and original works in all media.
6. Demonstrate effective collaboration skill.
7. Create original performance material for both stage and film media

## **Departmental Experiences**

We expect you to take your education seriously. A Conservatory can often be a pressure-cooker of sorts. It takes seriousness of purpose, recognition of responsibility, a pervasive spirit of joy and love for hard work, and a good sense of humor to survive and thrive. All four attributes will serve you well at CCM and professionally, and will enable you to survive the rigors of this demanding and rewarding business.

## **Attendance Policy**

We expect you to attend classes. The nature of the coursework will be primarily hands-on, and your participation in class is crucial to success. The attendance policy for all Acting Department courses is as follows: Each student is allowed two absences. For each additional absence thereafter, final grades will be lowered one letter grade per absence. (Courses that meet only once a week should not be missed. One absence is allowed.) Excessive tardiness is unacceptable, including tardiness to classes, rehearsals, fittings, assignments, and production deadlines. All CCM ACTING MASTERCLASSES are MANDATORY unless so noted when posted on the callboard. Plan early to avoid conflicts with outside jobs and commitments.

## **BFA In Acting**

The degree requirements for the Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree are divided in four categories: Performance Aspects, Production Aspects, Critical Aspects, and Required Academics. The bulk of credit hours to be earned can be found in Performance Aspects, and include the core areas of Acting, Movement, and Voice which are taken every semester for four years. This is a professional actor-training program. Your training will be very specific.

Knowledge and skills are developed in students in a variety of ways. Degree requirements include classroom instruction in skills and information integral to basic success as an actor. As well as classroom instruction, students are required to perform in Departmental Mainstage and Studio productions. Lab productions, completely reliant on student passion and ingenuity, are also encouraged. Each student creates a film each year in the annual 48 Hour Film Festival, and is annually placed on a team to create an original devised theatre piece in our TRANSMIGRATION Festival of Student Created New Works.

It is the responsibility of each student to monitor his/her own academic progress, and to be sure that all grades are officially correct on your official transcript. Be sure to get all Incompletes (I) and no grades (NG) changed within one year, or they will be automatically converted to a failing grade (F). Your advisor, and the entire drama faculty, is eager to offer advice and to answer questions as they arise. Seek advice from your advisor.

## **Registration for classes**

Once each semester you will be asked to register for the following semester. When priority registration begins, you should check on-line to view the quarterly class bulletin. Seek advice from your advisor and monitor your progress with regular self-audits. If you have any questions regarding coursework, requirements, or transfer credits see Richard in Room 3704C Corbett Center (CC). Failing to priority register inevitably causes problems later. You may be closed out of a class by registering late due to specific course enrollment limits. Be sure to be registered for 12 credit hours each semester or you will lose scholarships.

## **CCM Drama Advisors 2016-2017**

Freshmen	Professor D'Arcy Smith
Sophomores	Professor Brant Russell
Juniors	Professor Susan Felder/k. Jenny Jones
Seniors	Professor Richard Hess

## **Retention Policies and Performance Boards**

A student in CCM Acting should be making progress in his/her growth as an actor, and twice a year in the first two years of study each student will participate in performance boards. These boards allow each student to demonstrate effort and talent in a performance setting. Members of the CCM Acting faculty evaluate the board performances, and those exhibiting growth in performance, technique, effort and talent will receive satisfactory evaluations. An evaluation of unsatisfactory will put the student on probation and serve as notice that marked progress must be made by the next board. Clear goals will be given to students receiving unsatisfactory evaluations on board presentations; continued unsatisfactory evaluations will be a factor in the retention of students.

A student may be dismissed from the program for receiving a grade below a C (C- through F is considered below a C) in any required core course. Students not receiving grades of C or higher in all required departmental courses in Acting, Movement, Voice Production, Artists in Society, Script Analysis, Senior Showcase, New Works Production and all Rehearsal and Performance courses may be dismissed from the program. If the faculty determines that the individual may remain in the program, then those core courses must be repeated and a grade of C or better achieved.

There is to be no alcohol consumed or drugs taken around productions and rehearsals or between shows at CCM.

Violation of this element of the UC code of conduct may result in dismissal from the University. If you are concerned about a class-mate please bring those concerns directly to a member of the faculty.

By the end of the sophomore year all Drama majors should have completed English 1001 and 2089.

### **Freshman Year**

#### Performance Board One

December

The student will present two contrasting monologues, one classic, and one contemporary, not to exceed 5 minutes in total combined length. The student will demonstrate a simple, honest emotional truth through clear emotional connections to both pieces. These pieces will be chosen by the student and will be new pieces never worked on in ANY class at any time in any way; for this, and all boards, the pieces will be chosen and developed by the student without any faculty assistance. This will be true of each of the ensuing boards.

Immediately following the boards, the faculty will meet to assess the students' progress as either SATISFACTORY or UNSATISFACTORY. After the faculty meets, the students will participate in a round-robin style feedback session. The Department Chair will share the consensus of the faculty evaluation and students will receive comments from each faculty member, with no mention of their individual 'vote' in the overall assessment.

#### Performance Board Two

April

The student will present one monologue and one scene with a partner. Scenes are not to exceed five minutes in total length, and monologues should be three minutes or less. One of the choices must be from the classic repertoire, and the other should be a contemporary work. The faculty will be watching for the student to demonstrate: the release of tension through relaxed work, a simple, honest truth which is theatrically worthy, clear emotional connection, and the ability to work off of an acting partner in the scene.

Immediately following the boards, the faculty will meet to assess the students' progress. This assessment will then be used in the retention evaluation process. Many factors will be used to determine whether a student will be retained in the program. Significant among those will be classwork and grades, all board evaluations, the ability of the student to thrive in this particular program, and the faculty's confidence in the student's potential to successfully enter the profession.

After the faculty meets, the students will receive a letter sharing the cumulative results of the faculty evaluation. The board performance will be assessed as either SATISFACTORY or UNSATISFACTORY and the student will be either

RETAINED or NOT RETAINED. The next day, the students who have been retained will participate in a round-robin style feedback session with the faculty. Students not retained will be invited and encouraged to make individual meetings with faculty members as needed.

Those students not passed on to the sophomore year will be dismissed from the program. After dismissal, students may continue to take courses at UC in another major.

### **Sophomore Year**

#### Performance Board Three

December

The student will present one monologue and one scene with a partner. Scenes are not to exceed five minutes in total length, and monologues should be three minutes or less. One of the choices must be from the classic repertoire, and the other should be a contemporary work. The actor will demonstrate: an honest connection to both the givens of the scene and the presence of the partner, clear and clean moment-to-moment work, and the ability to go to character.

Immediately following the boards, the faculty will meet to assess the students' progress as either SATISFACTORY or UNSATISFACTORY. After the faculty meets, the students will participate in a round-robin style feedback session. The Department Chair will share the consensus of the faculty evaluation and students will receive comments from each faculty member, with no mention of their individual 'vote' in the overall assessment.

#### Performance Board Four

April

The student will present one monologue and one scene with a partner. Scenes are not to exceed five minutes in total length, and monologues should be three minutes or less. One of the choices must be from the classic repertoire, and the other should be a contemporary work. The scene work must demonstrate a simple, honest connection to both the givens of the scene and the presence of the partner in clear and clean moment to moment work. The release of tension through relaxed work is also of importance. In choosing pieces for this board, the student should focus on strong characterizations, risk taking, and control of craft and technique. Students must demonstrate that they can go to character in both scene and monologue work.

Immediately following the boards, the faculty will meet to assess the students' progress. This assessment will then be used in the retention evaluation process. Many factors will be used to determine whether a student will be retained in the program. Significant among those will be classwork and grades, all board evaluations, the ability of the student to thrive in this particular program, and the faculty's confidence in the student's potential to successfully enter the profession.

After the faculty meets, the students will receive a letter sharing the cumulative results of the faculty evaluation. The board performance will be assessed as either SATISFACTORY or UNSATISFACTORY and the student will be either RETAINED or NOT RETAINED. The next day, the students who have been retained will participate in a round-robin style feedback session with the faculty. Students not retained will be invited and encouraged to make individual meetings with faculty members as needed.

Those students not passed on to the sophomore year will be dismissed from the program.

### FALL SEMESTER PERFORMANCE BOARDS- CCM ACTING

Monday, December 4, 2017

Sophomore Performance Boards- **Non-Retention Board**

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon Student rehearsal time Cohen Family Studio Theatre

12:00 Noon-4:00 p.m. Performance Boards Cohen Family Studio Theatre

4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Round Robin-Feedback immediately following - 3705 CC

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Freshman Performance Boards- **Non-Retention Board**

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon Student rehearsal time Cohen Family Studio Theatre

12:00 Noon-4:00 p.m. Performance Boards Cohen Family Studio Theatre

4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Round Robin-Feedback immediately following - 3705 CC

SPRING SEMESTER PERFORMANCE BOARDS- CCM DRAMA

Tuesday, April 24, 2018

Freshman Performance Boards- **Retention Board**

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon Student rehearsal time Cohen Family Studio Theatre

12:00 Noon-4:00 p.m. Performance Boards Cohen Family Studio Theatre

Wednesday, April 25, 2018

Sophomore Performance Boards- **Retention Board**

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon Student rehearsal time Cohen Family Studio Theatre

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Faculty Feedback Session for Freshmen Room 3705 CC – **Retained students only**

12:00 Noon-4:00 p.m. Performance Boards Cohen Family Studio Theatre

Thursday, April 26, 2018

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Faculty Feedback Session for Sophomores Room 3705 CC – **Retained students only**

### **Junior Year**

All members of the junior class will be expected to prepare smart performance work for industry guests who are invited to Cincinnati for Master Classes. Students should know their type and have the ability to show, in monologue and scene choices, a clear snapshot of who they are and what they can do in a professional context. (Guests include New York and Los Angeles agents and casting directors.) Having a professional headshot and resume ready at a moment's notice is a constant requirement.

### **Senior Year**

Senior Showcase

March/April

The CCM Acting Senior Showcase is designed to be the departmental UC capstone experience for all graduating seniors. However, participation is not mandatory. Those students who have discovered an alternative passion in their CCM careers may be better served by creating a personal capstone experience instead of showcasing in New York and Los Angeles. This is not only allowed, but encouraged, for two reasons. Firstly, if you have no serious intention or readiness or ability to move to either New York or Los Angeles following graduation, it is pointless to showcase your talents in those cities. It is disingenuous and harms both you and the reputation of the school. Secondly, if your life is heading in a new direction thanks to your training, your time will be much better spent focusing on that new direction.

Two recent examples of alternative capstone experiences include a student who wanted to become a voice and speech teacher who spent a semester abroad studying in Ireland rather than showcasing, and a second student who wanted to pursue stand-up comedy who spent the year writing and performing material and creating an act before leaving school.

The senior showcase will perform in Cincinnati, New York, and Los Angeles. For those students who choose to participate in this capstone experience the following requirements must be met:

- Students must be on track to complete all required graduation requirements by the end of Fall Semester in December of their final year. If a student is found deficient in hours or in required courses, and there is no way all missing requirements will fit into the final Spring Semester and be completed by the April graduation deadline, a student will NOT be allowed to participate in Senior Showcase. A fall semester web audit will determine graduation standing.
- Students must have a color headshot/resume by December 1.

- Students must launch a website with headshot/resume/production photos/ and bio by December 1.
  - Students must have participated in at least one professional theatre, training, or international acting/performance experience outside of CCM Drama during their CCM career.
  - Students must have one film/television/web/ or commercial credit.
  - Students must have a voice over demo linked to his/her web-site, ready for duplication by February 1.
- Students should have a short 2 minute reel, preferably linked to his/her website.
  - Students should have started a union affiliation: AEA/SAG-AFTRA

### **Board Forms**

Board forms can be picked up in the departmental office one week prior to boards, and must be turned in promptly. After filling out the top information on your board forms, please include a concise, clear sentence or two where it says: TO WORK ON: These are your personal goals and objectives for the board. Let us know what you're working on. Share some insight as to why you made the choice you did and what you hope to learn through the material at the board. Freshmen goals will be different from sophomore goals. Be clear and concise. The clarity of your objectives and the readiness of your way of working should be obvious. You may ask teachers about your objectives, but do not think the purpose of this is for you to gather objectives from all your teachers. It's really the opposite. We want to see how you're thinking about your work. We look forward to an exciting, dangerous, grounded, well-prepared, and risky board. Have FUN! Seriously.

### **Audition Policies for Mainstage and Studio Productions**

All Acting Department students must audition for all Mainstage and Studio productions. Any student enrolled in Acting I, whether a true freshman or transfer freshman, cannot audition for Mainstage or Workshop productions until the end of the first year of study. All students will be asked to bring a headshot/resume to all auditions.

Audition requirements change with each project. Information will be posted on the callboard prior to auditions. Monologues are frequently used; cold-readings are the norm for callbacks. You must dress appropriately and professionally at auditions.

### **Outside Auditions**

We encourage any student, except freshmen, to audition for productions outside of CCM, including professional and student film projects and productions at The Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati, The Human Race Theatre Co. in Dayton, The KNOW Theatre, the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company, or the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. All we ask BEFORE you audition is that you notify the department chair about the outside opportunity and discuss the impact it would have on classes and prior casting obligations. If you hear of an outside opportunity of interest, you must start by speaking with Richard. We are happy to encourage you in endeavors that will enrich your experiences, provided that you have no obligations to CCM productions pending. Learning to create clear communication lines about your goals and intentions will serve you well when you arrive in New York or Los Angeles. Completing outside work while successfully attending classes and meeting school obligations takes a special amount of effort, care and maturity. Not all students are always ready, and certainly each student is not magically ready at the same time. Requests are treated on a case by case basis.

### **Health and Safety**

The transition from high school to college can often be difficult. Because acting requires you to examine, understand, and refine many aspects of your life, it is always easier when that self is healthy, both in mind and body. If you have any medical conditions that require you to take medications, you must advise your core teachers (Acting, Voice, Movement) and the Department Chair, so that your history and conditions are known in case of emergency or markedly radical

behavior changes. If you find that you need help at any time during the school year, the Walk-In Clinic (556-0648) will see anyone. Also, good physical health will allow you to progress faster and keep absenteeism to a minimum; see a doctor early when you don't feel well and take care of yourself with healthy eating habits and by getting as much sleep as you can. Please remember that your strong and healthy body must serve you for years to come in a grueling profession. One in 5 women and one in 16 men are sexually assaulted while in college. More than 90% of sexual assault victims on college campuses do not report the assault. Alcohol consumption often plays a mitigating factor; be safe and be smart and avoid compromising situations. Think hard about any permanent tattoos or piercings that, while in fashion now, may be a negative factor in future casting. We discourage the use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs, and urge those that are sexually active to practice safe sex. We encourage counseling for those students with disorders who need help in coping with areas that prohibit good work in the acting classroom. Evidence of substance use (alcohol or drugs) in or around any school rehearsal or performance or between performances may result in dismissal.

### **Acting Callboard, E-mails and Website**

Check the CCM Callboard regularly, located on the wall in the hallway on the way to D'Arcy, Jenny, Susan, and Brant's Offices. Bulletins, announcements, auditions, rehearsal calls, job postings, departmental notices, newsletters, and alumni updates are posted and changed regularly. Most departmental communication is by e-mail. Please respond when asked. You are responsible for timely communication. Make it a regular responsibility to update your website bio (and headshot when applicable) by sending regular updates to Richard.

### **Artistic Kindness**



It is joyous hard work to prepare actors for careers in theatre, film, television, and the media arts. Our goal is to create an academic and creative environment in which students can learn important skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We want you to practice artistic kindness and collaboration. The core of your training here at CCM centers on performance work. We require 18 credit hours in performance work (Rehearsal and Performance (STAGE and FILM) and New Works) in order to graduate. You will be a busy actor as a student in CCM Acting. We produce two mainstage productions per year, which are fully produced and heavily sold in our 375 seat modified-thrust theatre. We focus on classic and large cast shows. Our Studio Series consists of two smaller sized titles of both new and classic titles, presented in our 130 seat Studio Theatre. We also produce an annual Festival entitled TRANSMIGRATION: A Festival of Student Created New Works and an

annual 48-Hour Film Festival. Film and commercial projects are abundant. Challenge yourself to be involved. Challenge yourself to use your four years to practice auditioning, to grab a role and to chew on it hard in rehearsal and performance. Don't waste your opportunities. Learn to get in the way of opportunity.

Being ready and prepared and on time is a basic component of good work in everything you do in every situation while in college. Good habits formed while in school will help you keep jobs as professional artists. A professional honors commitments and does what they say they will do. It is unprofessional to not do what you say you will do.

Through classes, productions, and film projects, through studying history and making history, we welcome you to join our proud 35 year history. You stand on mighty shoulders.

*Welcome to the journey.*