

Matthew Phillips

Intro to Theatre Studies

24 April 2017

Professor Gibson

Acting Journal

Our guest speaker for acting was Professor Kyle Kennedy. He spoke to us about the performance courses offered here at MTSU, how to prepare for the world of professional acting and how to get involved with performance here at MTSU.

Upon arrival Professor Kennedy gave us a list of courses offered here at MTSU which is as follows: THEA 2500: Acting I, THEA 2510: Acting for Non-Majors, THEA 3500: Stage Movement, THEA 3510: Acting II, THEA 3520, Voice for the Actor I, THEA 3530, Voice for the Actor II, THEA 3540: Musical Theatre Performance, THEA 4510: Meisner Technique, THEA 4520: Acting for the Camera, THEA 4560: Acting III, THEA 4580: Acting IV, and THEA 4590: Topics in Acting. Of these courses, the ones that are required of every performance focus are THEA 2500: Acting I, THEA 3510: Acting II, THEA 3520: Voice for the Actor I, THEA 4560: Acting III and THEA 4580: Acting IV. The rest of their performance courses may be picked from the other courses on the list. Another interesting course is THEA 3910: Internship in Theatre. This course gives students cast in a professional production a chance to get course credit for their work

Professor Kennedy also spoke of ways to prepare for and get professional work. One of which was THEA 4560: Acting III, which teaches audition technique, resumes, headshots, agents, casting directors, and unions, which are details I feel a lot of people don't consider and just gloss over. He also mentioned ways to audition for summer acting work and graduate school. Several of these ways were conferences. Among these were TTA (Tennessee Theatre Association) which screens actors to pass on to SETC (Southeastern Theatre Conference) which is the largest conference in our area. He also mentioned NETC (Northeastern Theatre Conference) MWTA (Midwest Theatre Auditions) and URTA (University Resident Theatre Association) which functions as a hub for graduate school auditions.

Involvement in our theatre program was also discussed. Any MTSU student can audition for a school production regardless of focus or even major. We also have a great opportunity to get roles due to the fact that we only have an undergraduate program and don't have to compete with graduate students, such is the case at the University of Tennessee.

I found Professor Kennedy's lecture and information to be very worthwhile. I was unaware of how many courses were offered in the performance focus here at MTSU and how many chances there were to audition for professional work. I will definitely seek out more performance training here as performance is a strong interest of mine. I don't know if I will be able to go through the full catalogue however as I am also focusing heavily in design/tech.

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Directing Journal

Our guest speaker for directing was Professor Halena Kays. During the course of her lecture she spoke about the duty of a director, the directing process, and the opportunities available to us students.

Throughout the lecture, Professor Kays spoke to us about the duty of a director. The director is the artistic visionary of a production and is held ultimately responsible for how it turns out. She also asked us whether or not the director was supposed to be more of a collaborator or a leader in the rehearsal process. The director has the responsibility of working with many people in the process. These people include actors (the “talent” so to speak), stage management (who run the show once it is put up), fight choreographers (who make sure combat looks good and is safe), choreographers (who put together dance numbers), musicians (who perform the live musical elements), the music director (who makes sure the music sounds good), the dramaturg (who does related historical research for a piece of work), the assistant director (who, as the name suggests, assists the director), the scenic designer (who designs the scenic elements of the show), the costume designer (who designs the costumes and makes sure they are era appropriate), the sound designer (who designs the sound for the piece and makes sure it is pleasing to the ear), the video/production designer (who designs the video and production elements for the show), the technical director (who makes sure the scenic designer’s design can actually work, and if not, finds a way to make it work), the production manager (who manages the bookwork, such as budget, and if MTSU is any indication has an innate hatred for glitter), and the producers (who fund the show). The director has the responsibility of working with these people and making their contributions to the project flow together smoothly. To do all this, the director must be able to communicate, collaborate, have work ethic, a sense of humor, patience, imagination, curiosity, empathy, be willing to take risks and have a desire to create beauty.

Professor Kays also spoke to us about the directing process. It begins with the director finding a project that they are passionate about, if they aren’t passionate about it, they shouldn’t work on it. Then comes the preproduction/research/daydreaming period where the director determines what they want. Then they must find collaborators, the people from the list above. Then comes the design process and rehearsals, where the designs are created and put into place and the performance elements are polished, followed by technical rehearsals, where the technical elements are incorporated for the first time. After this the show opens and the director moves on to the next show.

To cap it all off, Professor Kays talked about opportunities available to students. These include classes, student produced work through APO, KCACTF, expressing interest, and just always being on the lookout for opportunities.

It was refreshing to get a view of a director as more than “the one who’s in charge,” I

may take a couple of directing courses to get an idea of what it's like.

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Education Journal

Our guest speaker for Theatre Education was Dr. Jette Halladay. She spoke about working with children, study abroad programs, and the classes offered.

The way Dr. Halladay spoke about working with children was truly inspiring and isn't something I've really thought about. She spoke about how theatre gave children hope and self-esteem and helped them with anxiety and fear. The more I thought of it the more it made sense and I realized that that's what it did for me and how much better off I would be if I had received that as a child. The idea of helping another individual through those problems sounds extremely rewarding.

Dr. Halladay also spoke about study abroad opportunities and other educational opportunities with theatre. Travel is a great love of mine and thus this interested me greatly. She mentioned trips to poverty stricken regions of Guatemala and her work with students and colleagues there. At first I was skeptical about what a work of theatre could do to help someone in poverty but then I again realized I was only thinking about physical needs and not emotional or spiritual needs and was honestly a little disappointed with myself. As a theatre practitioner and someone who wants theatre to be an integral part of their life this should have occurred to me sooner. Again, the idea of helping someone using what I love seemed inspiring. Dr. Halladay also spoke about internship opportunities with Nashville Children's Theatre, which sounded like a great opportunity for education focus students

She spoke of the classes offered here at MTSU that she teaches as well. Among them are Storytelling, Child drama, and Acting for Non-Majors. Story telling is of particular interest to me as I feel that could transition well into a performance skill. For students doing an education focus, a minor in education is required.

I really enjoyed this presentation. I was unaware of all of the study abroad opportunities available to students. The presentation made me realize how worthwhile, rewarding, and altruistic Theatre Education is. I don't believe it's something I will pursue as a career goal, but it is something I would gladly volunteer my time to.