

# Darrell Johnston AEA

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MFA: University of South Carolina/PATP

## Education

MFA University of South Carolina/PATP

- Graduation May 2019

BA Graceland University

- 2010

## Awards

Helen Hayes nomination (Outstanding Ensemble in a Play) 2020

Best Iowa Film (The Highway Walkers) 2016

Irene Ryan Nomination 2009

Karen Sue Thompson Award 2008

Ava Carmichael Award 2009

## Teaching Philosophy

My experiences directing and acting on a professional level, award winning work, and connections in the film and theatre industry enhance the classroom and student experience. For example I have interviewed actor Bryan Cranston, Jeff Daniels, Stephen Colbert, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, producers, governors, senators, acted with Dolly Parton at the Ordway, with Broadway star Allison Luff at the Folger Theatre, learned about innovative theatre techniques from Oscar winner Francis Ford Coppola, and taught many workshops at the Guthrie, UCLA, Graceland University, Concordia College and other regional theaters. Additionally I have collaborated with National Geographic, Public Television, and my films with Highway Walkers Media have been purchased by Oscar affiliated websites. As a proud member of Actor's Equity Association, my professional experiences have taught me the value of hard-work and being a generative artist. I am always looking for opportunities to enhance the classroom experience by continuing to learn and work at a high level.

First and foremost I teach students that inclusion and safety come first. In educational performance, risk-taking is necessary and can only happen when everyone in the class contributes to a positive environment. Students respond to my teaching methods as is proved by my attached student evaluation from the University of South Carolina.

My theatre pedagogy is based on three fundamentals; improvisation, movement, and rigor. Improvisation teaches students to maintain a flexible mind and to always listen to each other. Movement teaches discipline and to focus on the work rather than the outcome. Rigor reminds students to always be academically and physically specific. The incorporation of all three is rooted in the training I received from the Pacific Performance Project/ East which revolutionized my perception of physical specificity and academic precision. I studied with Robyn Hunt and Steve Pearson, founders of P3/East at Theatre South Carolina while earning my MFA.

When tracking the progress of my students I look at their individual ability to grow and their willingness to

learn. My grades are catered to each student's needs. When grading more objective coursework a rubric and strict outlines are provided. Students understand the expectations of the class and I provide detailed, timely responses.

It is my job as an educator to continue my professional development. I utilized institutional training at the University of South Carolina and have taken courses in; sexual assault prevention, diversity training, and Green Zone Ally Training, the goal of which is to confront the issues and concerns faced by military affiliated students. My diversity training is rooted in performance and the necessity of providing theatre to under represented economic and racial groups. From 2010-2014 I provided theatre to rural communities and underserved populations. I toured an improv show to Hazelden, the foremost addiction rehab center in the country. Hazelden invited me to use improv training in hope of streamlining communication between patients and professionals.

My unique and eclectic background and experiences make me a dynamic instructor to the benefit of the students and institution. Students leave my class with the tools necessary to not only navigate a career in acting but to excel at any path they choose.

## Teaching Experience

Guthrie Theatre *Slow Tempo/Viewpoints* Sep. 2019-Present

- The BFA program at the University of Minnesota is a joint program with the Guthrie Theatre.
- This physical training was founded by Shogo Ohta and was perfected by Robyn Hunt and Steve Pearson of P3/east. Slow Tempo takes a “nearly microscopic look at the human condition” (P3/east).
- Slow Tempo requires actors to; experience each moment in its simplicity, control breath, maintain focus, increase endurance, and reveals nearly imperceptible discoveries by living moment to moment.

University of Wisconsin Eau-Claire *Guest Instructor* March 2020

- Introduced Suzuki acting training to BA Theatre majors and minors. Emphasized the importance of concentration and physical articulation.
- Introduction to improvisation workshop.
- Integrated Cicely Berry voice training into the BA Theatre majors and minors curriculum.

California Institute of the Arts *Voice and Breath Workshop* April 2020

- Taught Voice to undergraduate stage managers.
- Used the teachings of Roy Hart and Cicely Berry.
- Through activation of the diaphragm the students communicated confidently and articulately.
- Taught the importance of breath control.
- Prioritized support over volume.

Luther College *Guest Instructor* April 2020

- Guest instruct a movement workshop based on the work of Suzuki and Shogo Ohta.
- Introduction to improvisation workshop.
- Integrated Cicely Berry voice training into the BA Theatre majors and minors curriculum.

- Graceland University *New Play Residency* Jan. 2018
- A two week residency to workshop a new musical with industry professionals.
  - A jukebox musical about how small towns can value the arts.
- Concordia University *Movement Workshop* Nov. 2018
- Taught Ki training as instructed by the Pacific Performance Project/east. Developed by Steve Pearson, Ki training brings immediate results by focusing attention to the vital energy in the body.
- UCLA *Guest Lecturer* Oct. 2018
- Prioritized *action* through improvisation, viewpoints, yoga, and Suzuki training. After experiencing how *action* improves communication, the class of fifteen playwriting students were challenged to incorporate it into their writing.
- University of South Carolina *Professor of Record* Aug 2016-May 2018
- Taught Fundamentals of Acting for four semesters. Classes ranged from twelve to fifteen students.
  - Taught the Pacific Performance Project/East, Suzuki, improvisation, yoga, Grotowski training, Alexander technique, and Roy Hart vocal technique based on the teaching of Stan Brown.
  - Created lesson plans and learning goals.
  - Received excellent reviews from students and professors.
- Graceland University *Guest Lecturer* Feb. 2013
- Presented original documentary to film studies course.
  - Discussed how to produce and fundraise original work. I spoke about generating and funding film and stage work.
  - Encouraged students to be generative artists and what practical steps they could take right now that would benefit them as producers later.
- Festival Theatre *Teaching Artist* Aug 2010-2015
- Led warmups and taught vocal technique to children and adult professionals. Fostered a creative and safe working environment.
  - Guitar and trap-set individual lessons to eight students. Focused on rock, blues, and folk.
- Wayside Theatre *Teaching Artist/Band Leader* Nov-Dec 2012
- Facilitated musician rehearsals. Worked with artists ranging from seven to seventy. Was the primary guitarist. Led group warmups and vocal exercises.

## Directing

<i>TBD- Fall Comedy</i>	<i>Graceland University</i>	Oct. 2020
And a Guitar	<i>Graceland University</i>	Jan. 2019
Elephant's Graveyard/Music Director	<i>Festival Theatre</i>	Aug. 2018
Sand-Point	<i>Theatre South Carolina</i>	Feb. 2018
All in the Timing	<i>St. Croix High School</i>	Sept. 2015
No Exit	<i>Graceland University</i>	May 2010
Oh Wot A Lovely War	<i>Graceland University</i>	May 2010
Selected Scenes	<i>Graceland University</i>	2009-2010

## Script Writing

And a Guitar	Jan. 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A jukebox musical using the music of Paul Simon, Joni Mitchell, Bob Dylan, and others.</li><li>• The luthier is being forced out and his community is forced to decide how/if they can support the arts.</li><li>• First produced at Graceland University and Maples Rep.</li></ul>	
Sand Point	Feb. 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A historical look at faith and family through a yogic lens.</li><li>• Produced at South Carolina University.</li></ul>	
Full Moon	Feb. 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A comedy that explores the pressures of extreme wealth, extreme poverty, and Christmas.</li><li>• Currently being workshopped.</li></ul>	
State Song	May 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In 1910 three musicians are commissioned to write the state song of Iowa.</li><li>• A fictional retelling of how Iowa has the terrible state song it does.</li><li>• This original musical focuses on history, Native populations, women, and rural Iowa.</li><li>• Currently being workshopped.</li></ul>	

## Related Experience

Highway Walkers Media LLC.	Dec 2011-Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Founded a media company that specializes in documentaries that focus on history, humor, and adventure. Manage the budgets for current and future projects. Those films have budgets ranging from \$50,000-\$170,000.</li><li>• Scheduled and organized international screening tour for <i>Less Traveled: A Journey from Pine to Palm</i>. Organized and filmed the meetings with high ranking politicians, managed the budget, scheduled the screening tour, and edited the feature length film.</li></ul>	

- Met with past and current Governors of Iowa, Lt. Gov. of Louisiana, and spoke with many other Governors at the National Governors conference. I was asked to sit on a panel called, *Purple Docs*. A discussion panel where Governors could learn more about how documentaries can affect policy.
- Films have been porched by Oscar affiliated website Shorts TV and air on Public Television.
- Interviewed prominent politicians like Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senator Chuck Grassley, and actors like Bryan Cranston and Jeff Daniels.

## Performance Experience

<i>Pump Boys and Dinettes</i>	Jackson/Guitarist	Abbey Campbell	Sac. Theatre Co.
<i>Smoky Mntn Christmas Carol</i>	Fred/Eben	Curt Wullan	Ordway
<i>Macbeth</i>	Banque/Duncan/Seyton u/s	Robert Richmond	Folger Theatre
<i>Nell Gwynn</i>	Hart/King Charles u/s	Robert Richmond	Folger Theatre
<i>The Country Gentleman</i>	Sir Cautious	Jennifer Hopkins	Folger Theatre
<i>Leading Ladies</i>	Jack	Mark Rosenwinkel	Festival Theatre
<i>The Fantasticks</i>	Mortimer	Seth Kaltwasser	Festival Theatre
<i>Elephants Graveyard</i>	Preacher/Guitarist	Jason Richards	Festival Theatre
<i>The Crucible</i>	John Proctor	Robert Richmond	Theatre SC
<i>Twelfth Night</i>	Orsino	Louis Butelli	Theatre SC
<i>Million Dollar Quartet</i>	Fluke (drums)	Paul Kerr	Maples Rep
<i>Mr. Burns: Post-Electric Play</i>	Mr. Burns/Gibson	Jeremy Skidmore	Theatre SC
<i>Hamlet</i>	Hamlet/Polonius	Steven Pearson	CPE
<i>The Seagull</i>	Dorn	Steven Pearson	CPE
<i>The Water Station</i>	Man with Heavy Load	Robyn Hunt	CPE
<i>Cosi</i>	Zac	Steven Pearson	Theatre SC
<i>Noises Off</i>	Lloyd (lead)	Jennifer Ward	Festival Theatre
<i>Keep on the Sunny Side</i>	Ralph Peer (guitarist)	Nick Piper	Barter Theatre
<i>Unnecessary Farce</i>	Eric (lead)	Nick Piper	Barter Theatre
<i>Half a World Away</i> (orig. cast)	Shawn	Tricia Matthews	Barter Theatre
<i>Ring of Fire</i>	Multiple roles (drums)	Doug Nuttelman	Great Plains
<i>White Christmas</i>	Sheldrake/ ensemble	Doug Nuttelman	Great Plains
<i>Glory Bea!...</i>	Mike (lead & guitarist)	Warner Crocker	Wayside Theatre
<i>Alaska Cabin Nite</i>	Charlie (lead & guitarist)	Jake Hill	Cabin Nite
<i>Proof</i>	Hal (lead)	Jennifer Ward	Festival Theatre
<i>Mystery of Irma Vep</i>	Edgar/ Jane (lead)	Jennifer Ward	Festival Theatre
<i>Red, White, and Tuna</i>	Multiple roles (lead)	Bill Pearon	Festival Theatre
<i>Is He Dead?</i>	Bastien Andre	Carl Lindberg	Festival Theatre
<i>Doubt</i>	Father Flynn	Filipe Valle Costa	Shaw Center
<i>The Music Man</i>	Harold Hill	Terry Roberts	SCIT Theatre
<i>You're a Good Man CB</i>	Linus	Terry Roberts	SCIT Theatre

<i>Dancing at Lughnasa</i>	Michael	Melissa Thompson	Shaw Center
<i>The Laramie Project</i>	Multiple Roles	Melissa Thompson	Shaw Center
<i>No Exit</i>	Garcin	Darrell Johnston	Shaw Center

## Film

<i>American Energy</i>	Commercial	Poolhouse Media
<i>Arvig Internet</i>	Commercial	Arvig
<i>The Buffalo</i>	Documentary (lead)	Highway Walkers Media
<i>Less Traveled: From Pine to Palm</i>	Documentary (lead)	Highway Walkers Media
<i>Jack's Backdoor Café</i>	Deputy Crawford	Valley Access Television
<i>No Prize: Walking Across America</i>	Documentary (lead)	Highway Walkers Media
<i>The Highway Walkers</i>	Documentary (lead)	Highway Walkers Media
<i>Passage</i>	Documentary (lead)	Highway Walkers Media
<i>Anything Can Happen in Alaska</i>	Jerk (lead)	Shattered Clock Productions
<i>They Came to Alaska</i>	Alien	Shattered Clock Productions
<i>Excel Energy</i>	Commercial	Channel Z
<i>Osceola Train</i>	Commercial	Wisconsin Tourism
<i>Digital Milk</i>	Spokesman	Digital Milk

## Print Media

<i>Post-it Notes</i>	Model	3M
<i>Babysitting Basics</i>	Model	Capstone Press
<i>How to Illustrate</i>	Model	Capstone Press

## Devised

Sand Point	Theatre South Carolina
The Heart of the Thing	Shaw Center
The Sacred Heart Archive	Theatre Company
The Key Said Run and the Door Said Fly	SECCA, Winston-Salem, NC

## Training / Master classes

Vocal Technique	Louis Sacco, The Ordway
Teaching & Working with Veterans	University of South Carolina
Title IX	University of South Carolina
Diversity Training	University of South Carolina
Sexual Assault Prevention Training	University of South Carolina
Live Cinema	Francis Ford Coppola
Acting the Song	Lynne Rothrock

Armed Stage Combat	Becky Foster
Period Styles	Becky Foster
Comedia Mask	Becky Foster
Musical Theatre Dance	Chuck Adamson
Vocal Training	Tom Hart
Vocal Training	Stan Brown
Movement	Robyn Hunt
Experimental Performance	Melissa Thompson
Short and Long Form Improv	Sew Good Improv
Yoga Teaching Certification	Yogvit Yogshala

### **Additional Skills:**

I am an excellent communicator, collaborator, fundraiser, organizer, coach, and recruiter. All these skills have been learned at various universities and at non-profits across the country. My skills have been developed in and outside of the classroom. Much of my living has come from my ability to teach myself music and other skills to adapt to various roles. I have been playing guitar for ten years, drums for fifteen years, euphonium for twenty. Other instruments include the autoharp, harmonica, and piano. Other professional skills include directing, acting, creating devised work, juggling, magic, unicycling, singing, and vocal techniques. I am also skilled at and teaching the following dialects: Irish, English, Cockney, Brooklyn, German, American Southern, Australian, Minnesotan.

### **Professional Goals**

- To work regularly on Broadway and the top regional theaters in the country.
- To develop the best acting curriculum in the country.
- To publish five novel length written works.
- To win an Oscar for Best Documentary Film.

### **Works in Progress**

Books:

*A Mountain for a Finish Line*

- A novel length work chronically a hitchhiking journey from Iowa to the coast of Oregon. Currently on the fifth draft with publication set for 2019.

*The Lengths I Go To Touch My Toes*

- A novel length work about receiving my yoga certification in Rishikesh, India. No set publication date.

### **Community Service**

Leon, IA

- Worked the Iowa DoT to officially recognize the Jefferson Highway as a Heritage Byway in Iowa to increase tourism and foster community pride

- Screenings of educational documentaries for the public and offer Q&A
- Trash pick up

#### Boy Scouts of America

- Trash pick up
- Cemetery clean up
- Mowing yards and general cleanup for the elderly

#### Mentorships

- Offered professional guidance to high school students about pursuing an acting career
- Have had many mentors looking for insight about fundraising for artistic pursuits
- I have coached monologues for undergraduate students across the country



## Professional References

Josiah Laubenstein:

Commonweal Theatre/Producer

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Jeremy Jones

Professional Training Manager

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Robyn Hunt

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Steve Pearson

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