

CASE  
WESTERN  
RESERVE  
UNIVERSITY //

CLEVELAND  
PLAY HOUSE  
MFA ACTING  
PROGRAM



COLLEGE OF  
ARTS AND SCIENCES  
CASE WESTERN RESERVE  
UNIVERSITY



EXPLORE. EXPAND.  
BECOME.



MIDDLETOWN, 2020

**RANKED TOP 15 IN THE USA AND TOP 20 IN THE WORLD** -*The Hollywood Reporter, 2018-20*



# ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Since 1996, Case Western Reserve University has partnered with Cleveland Play House, recipient of the 2015 Regional Theatre Tony Award, to offer a Master of Fine Arts degree in Acting.

Over the past number of years, the performance landscape has seen major shifts in repertoire, style, markets and technology, but at the heart of it remains the artist: curious, imaginative, collaborative, empathetic, bold, and passionate. Those are the artists we look for. And we hope those are the artists that are looking for us.

If the information in this brochure speaks to you, we strongly encourage you to learn more about us at [clevelandplayhouse.com/mfa](http://clevelandplayhouse.com/mfa) and to apply to the CWRU/CPH MFA Acting Program.

We look forward to hearing from you.



HAY FEVER, 2019

## THE CWRU/CPH ACTOR

We seek out students who embrace the power of the ensemble, who understand how artistry, confidence and ability are developed in the context of being part of a company. If you are looking for an intimate program, where you can get the kind of personal attention that is impossible to get at schools with larger numbers, this may be the ideal institution, as we only take eight students every other year.

You will be in the company of some of the strongest, most dedicated and talented young actors in the country. Our expectations are high and we challenge you all to grow in a compassionate yet rigorous environment. We want our actors to leave the program with confidence, purpose, and the knowledge that they have grown significantly as actors and as people.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The CWRU/CPH MFA Acting Program leads the nation in financially supporting the ensemble without adding to the scholastic debt you might already have. Each student has the same financial package: a full tuition waiver for three years, a highly competitive yearly living stipend and health insurance. This support begins during the audition process: we are one of only a few major programs in the U.S that charges no audition fees. If you successfully complete the program you will graduate with an Equity Card by working on an AEA contract with Cleveland Play House during your time here.



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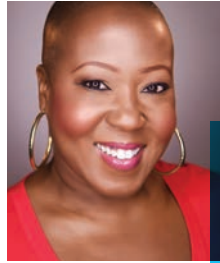
*...like hitting the acting school lottery. If you're one of the eight accepted students out of 800 applicants, you get a **full three-year tuition waiver**, a generous annual living stipend and experience at the Cleveland Play House." —THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER, 2018*

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER, 2017

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*Directing the CWRU/CPH MFA students on their production of **Macbeth** is a highlight of my career. This program is clearly one of the best in the country. In the rehearsal room, I met eight well-trained, highly committed, and extravagantly imaginative artists that I genuinely hope I get to work with again.*

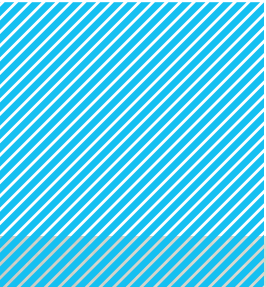
—TAIBI MAGAR  
OBIE-AWARD WINNING DIRECTOR / SOHO REP, ALLEY THEATRE, TRINITY REP, ATLANTIC THEATRE, AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATRE, SEATTLE REP, GUTHRIE THEATRE



## DENITRA ISLER MFA '99

Recurring roles on both **THE RESIDENT** and **THE ACT**. Film includes **JUST MERCY**, **LADY AND THE TRAMP**, **INSTANT FAMILY**, and **WHAT MEN WANT**.

*The CWRU/CPH Acting Program provided the tools needed for me to sharpen my acting chops and move confidently within the business of stage, TV, and film. The unique relationship between CWRU and CPH arms each student with hands-on experience in professional productions. That is priceless. It definitely was for me."*



# COURSE OF STUDY



## FIRST YEAR

The first year involves ensemble building, learning and applying a shared vocabulary, and addressing habits and tensions in body and voice. Improvisational work and devised creations are explored alongside contemporary scene study. The first year culminates in an MFA Ensemble performance in the Helen Theatre.

### CURRICULUM

- **ACTING:** Contemporary scene study, Viewpoints, improvisation and collective creations
- **MOVEMENT:** Posture, presence, mask work, foundational combat and Grotowski
- **VOICE:** Linklater
- **SPEECH:** Skinner/IPA
- **TEXT:** Individual and collective analysis of contemporary work

## SECOND YEAR

In the second year, the class is introduced to a wide range of movement styles and more complex texts. The Greeks, Shakespeare, and the great shift in the theatrical landscape with Ibsen and Chekhov are explored. Students are involved in classroom workshop presentations, singing tutorials, and SAFD fight certification. The class also performs in fully produced MFA Ensemble productions each semester in the Helen Theatre.

### CURRICULUM

- **ACTING:** Modernist, contemporary, classical and period theatre
- **VOICE:** Lessac and Roy Hart
- **SPEECH:** Dialects and classical Text
- **TEXT:** The modernists as well as classical and period plays
- **MOVEMENT:** Unarmed and armed stage combat (SAFD Certification), period styles and movement genres
- **SINGING TUTORIALS**

## THIRD YEAR

The third year is spent in a professional internship with CPH that includes all students performing in at least one mainstage production on an Actors' Equity Association contract, along with a final MFA Ensemble production in The Helen Theatre. In conjunction with CPH, the class participates in a new play development workshop (*First Flight*) with visiting professionals. Each student also presents a final solo show (*Solo Flight*) as an expression of their personal aesthetic and area of interest. Extensive on-camera classes, voice-over training, audition lab, and an emphasis on practical professional development round out the training. At the end of the year, MFA candidates present an actor showcase in New York City. Recent graduates have generated dozens of interviews and signed with major agents and managers.

### CURRICULUM

- **ON-CAMERA ACTING:** Scene work
- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** The business of being an actor and showcase preparation.
- **AUCTION TECHNIQUE:** Film and theatre
- **WORKSHOP INTENSIVES:** On-camera commercial and voice-over work
- **SINGING TUTORIALS**



THE PHILADELPHIA STORY, 2015

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*In workshopping a new play with the MFA actors, I found that they were insightful, profoundly generous and had fantastic instincts. The play took a giant leap forward because of their terrific contributions during the process.”*

—PIRRONNE YOUSEFZADEH  
 DIRECTOR OF ENGAGEMENT/ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, GEVA THEATRE  
 ACTORS THEATRE OF LOUISVILLE, CLEVELAND PLAY HOUSE, ENSEMBLE STUDIO THEATRE, WILLIAMSTOWN THEATRE FESTIVAL



MACBETH, 2017



FIFTH OF JULY, 2018



**A.J. CEDEÑO MFA '10**

**Z:** THE BEGINNING OF EVERYTHING, THE GOOD WIFE, ELEMENTARY, ROYAL PAINS, THE BLACKLIST, and PROJECT PAY DAY

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*Since graduating from the CWRU/CPH MFA Acting Program, I've been lucky enough to work in an array of settings. The foundation of training I received in grad school prepared me to succeed at every single one of them.”*

# CLEVELAND PLAY HOUSE & PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

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*In my production of Luna Gale at CPH, two of the most demanding roles were taken by CWRU/CPH MFA students. Their work was as assured as the work of everybody else in the top-flight cast that we had. I saw the entire graduating class's work. I've rarely seen so many gifted, and beautifully trained, actors in one MFA program."*

—AUSTIN PENDLETON  
ACTOR/DIRECTOR/TEACHER: BROADWAY,  
OFF-BROADWAY, STEPPENWOLF,  
WILLIAMSTOWN, FILM AND TV

CPH's lauded history as America's first regional theatre, and its deep roots in the nation's artistic landscape, provide the Program's actors with a tangible example of creative excellence and invaluable practical experience. Interaction with CPH includes new play readings and workshops with staff and guest artists, the annual New Ground Theatre Festival, and a third-year professional internship that includes all students performing in at least one mainstage production on an Actors' Equity Association contract.



## RICH SOMMER MFA '04

Co-star of award-winning series *MAD MEN*, *GLOW* and Off-Broadway's *BURIED CHILD*

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*I have not had a single day of acting work in which I have not somehow accessed the training I received at CWRU/CPH. It's an integral part of who I am as an actor."*



THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE, 2018



CLUE, 2020



SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE, 2017

## RECENT ALUMNI CREDITS

Actors Theatre of Louisville  
The Ahmanson Theatre  
The Alliance Theatre  
American Repertory Theatre  
Arena Stage  
*The Blacklist*  
*Blindspot*  
*Blue Bloods*  
*Bones*  
Broadway and Off Broadway  
*Bull*  
Cape Playhouse  
Chautauqua Theatre Company  
Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park  
Cleveland Play House  
*Curb Your Enthusiasm*  
Denver Center Theatre Company  
*Elementary*  
Ensemble Theatre  
Florida Repertory Theatre  
Florida Studio Theatre  
*Fringe*  
*Glow*  
*The Good Wife*  
Goodspeed Opera House  
Great Lakes Theatre  
*Grey's Anatomy*  
Gulfshore Playhouse  
Idaho Shakespeare Festival  
*In The Dark*  
Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival  
*Law and Order*  
*Law and Order: SVU*  
*Limitless*  
*Love*  
The Long Wharf  
*Mad Men*  
*Madam Secretary*  
*Masters of Sex*  
The McCarter Theatre  
*Mr. Robot*  
National Tours  
NCIS  
*NCIS: New Orleans*  
New York Shakespeare Exchange  
The Old Globe  
Oregon Shakespeare Festival  
Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival  
Portland Stage Company  
Repertory Theatre of St. Louis  
Royal Alexandra Theatre  
Royal Manitoba Theatre Center  
*Run*  
Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey  
Theatre For A New Audience  
*Wet Hot American Summer:*  
    *Ten Years Later*  
*White Collar*  
*Z: The Beginning of Everything*

# APPLY

## FACULTY

The faculty is comprised of artists who maintain professional careers as actors, directors, or coaches in theatre, film, and TV, while committed to the training goals of the CWRU/CPH MFA Acting Program. The faculty works as a team using opportunities to intersect training disciplines so that students have a holistic experience.

## DIRECTOR

**DONALD CARRIER** Director of the CWRU/CPH MFA Acting Program // Acting, Text, Audition Technique, Professional Development

## FACULTY & GUEST ARTISTS

**GEOFF BULLEN** Shakespearean Verse

**JAIRO CUESTA** Grotowski Intensive

**KEVIN INOUE** Movement

**LAURA KEPLEY**

Artistic Director, Cleveland Play House // Special Projects, Text

**BETH MCGEE** Voice

**JERROLD SCOTT**

Chair CWRU Department of Theater // Speech, Acting

**JEFFREY ULLOM** Performance History

**DAVID VEGH** Acting, On-Camera Acting

## VISITING ARTISTS

Through our associations with both CPH and CWRU, we have hosted acclaimed visiting artists for short-term intensives and lectures, as well as longer workshop opportunities. Over the last few years we have welcomed such artists as award-winning dramatists Dominique Morisseau, David Henry Hwang, Suzan-Lori Parks, Ayad Akhtar, and Tony Kushner for intimate lectures, as well as prolific directors Austin Pendleton, Giovanna Sardelli, Kate Bergstrom, and Pirronne Yousefzadeh for dynamic workshops. Recently, the program's production of *Macbeth* was directed by Obie-award winning artist, Taibi Magar.



## THE AUDITION PROCESS

The CWRU/CPH MFA Acting Program sees candidates through the University/Resident Theatre Association's National Unified Auditions as well as conducting private auditions by appointment.

For information about U/RTA's National Unified Auditions and Interviews and their audition requirements, please go to [urta.com](http://urta.com). For actors who are not participating in the U/RTA auditions, you can make an independent appointment to audition with the CWRU/CPH MFA Acting Program.

If you are participating in the U/RTA National Unified Auditions, we will not be able to schedule you a private audition until after we have seen your work during the U/RTA process.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- Three years of rigorous conservatory training including Acting, Voice, Text Analysis, Speech and Dialects, Movement, Period Styles, Singing, Audition Technique, On-Camera Acting, and Stage Combat.
- A third-year professional residency at the 2015 Regional Theatre Tony Award recipient, Cleveland Play House, performing and understudying in their mainstage season.
- Full three-year tuition waiver
- Healthcare
- Generous yearly living stipend
- MFA Ensemble productions with faculty and guest directors
- New York City industry showcase
- Membership in Actors' Equity Association upon successful completion of the program
- Nationally and internationally recognized faculty and guest instructors

MORE INFORMATION AND AUDITION DETAILS AVAILABLE AT

[CLEVELANDPLAYHOUSE.COM/MFA](http://CLEVELANDPLAYHOUSE.COM/MFA)



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