

Curriculum Vitae

Jessie Marie Bender

Theatre Educator, Manager, & Artist

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Education

M.F.A. — Drama: Stage Management, June 2024

University of California, Irvine

Thesis: “*Intimacy Direction & Consent Practices in Academia*”

Advisors: Don Hill and Joel Veenstra

B.A. — Theater Arts, June 2021

University of California, Santa Cruz (Cum Laude)

Teaching Experience

Chapman University, Orange, CA - Part Time Lecturer (Sep. 2024-Present)

Courses Taught:

Theatre 209: *Stage Management I*

Theatre 305: *Theatre Production*

Theatre 314: *Stage Management II*

Description of Classes:

Stage Management I— This course is an introduction of the role of the stage manager within the live entertainment industry involving production from inception to completion. Students will learn basic stage management skills and techniques to prepare them to contribute to the production process as a stage manager with a focus on organization, leadership, and communication.

Theatre Production — Serving as a faculty mentor for stage management students on productions. This course is designed for those students who have been given a significant creative, technical, management or administrative production responsibility in theatre production other than performance. Such roles may include, but are not limited to: stage

manager, assistant designer, assistant director, dramaturg, master electrician, props coordinator, and other comparable roles.

Stage Management II — This course is an in-depth study of Actor's Equity Association contract and legalities, advanced rehearsal, technical rehearsal and performance scheduling and management including dance, opera, musical theatre, and touring theatre. Students will be assigned an Assistant Stage Manager or Stage Manager position for student directed scenes or a Department of Theatre student directed one-act production.

Responsibilities Beyond Teaching:

Mentorship & Oversight: Serve as the primary mentor for all student stage managers on mainstage productions and one-act projects, providing guidance on best practices, problem-solving, and leadership development.

Production Support: Attend tech and dress rehearsals, offering targeted feedback to enhance production processes and student learning outcomes.

Season Planning & Coordination: Collaborate with the department chair to assign stage management teams for the theatre season, ensuring equitable distribution of opportunities and skill development.

Program Development: Oversee and contribute to the growth of the stage management program, refining curriculum, fostering industry connections, and supporting student success beyond the classroom.

Irvine Valley College, Irvine, CA - Associate Faculty, Part Time (Jan. 2025-Present)

Courses Taught:

Theatre 54: *Special Topics for Stage Management*

Theatre 51-53: *Stage Management Practicum*

Theatre 61-65: *Theatre Production Crew*

Description of Classes:

Special Topics for Stage Management — An advanced course in stage management for musical theater, concert dance, ballet, opera, and other productions where music plays a central role.

Stage Management Practicum — This course is for students working on a production as a member of the stage management team.

Theatre Production Crew — This course is for students working on production show crews and as production assistants on the stage management team. Students are evaluated on attendance, professionalism, respect for safety, and if they meet the basic requirements for the position/job they are performing.

Responsibilities Beyond Teaching:

Student Mentorship & Leadership Development: Guide and mentor all student stage management teams, fostering their growth as leaders while encouraging autonomy in their productions.

Production Support & Feedback: Attend all rehearsals, technical rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and performances, providing constructive feedback and support while empowering students to take ownership of their roles.

Season Oversight: Serve as the Production Stage Manager for the department's season, overseeing all stage management teams, ensuring smooth operations, and maintaining professional standards across productions.

University of California, Santa Barbara - Part Time Lecturer (Jan. 2025-Present)

Courses Taught:

Theater 95: *Introduction to Stage Management*

Theatre 195: *Advanced Stage Management*

Description of Classes:

Introduction to Stage Management — Foundational exploration of stage management for theatre and dance productions.

Advanced Stage Management — Advanced principles of stage management, focusing on practical applications and in-depth analysis

Responsibilities Beyond Teaching:

Student Mentorship: Supervised and mentored student stage managers on theatrical and dance productions, fostering applied learning in artistic collaboration, technical execution, and production leadership.

University of California, Irvine - Graduate Student Instructor / Teaching Assistant (2023-2024)

*Denotes a course that I independently developed and launched rather than adapting from a pre-existing curriculum.

Courses Taught:

Drama 50E: *Introduction to Stage Management*

Drama 199: *Intimacy Direction & Consent Practices*

Description of Classes:

Introduction to Stage Management — This class aims to teach students the foundational practices of stage management from pre-process, rehearsals, performance run, and post production. The course focuses on the teaching of ethical work practices, effective communication styles with all company members, how to create and distribute production paperwork, and the fundamentals of show calling.

****Intimacy Direction & Consent Practices*** — This course covers the fundamental foundation of how to create a consent forward space within the entertainment industry and how to safely navigate the staging of intimate moments in theatre. The class consisted of lecture based content, class discussions, and on your feet class activities/exercises to help students practice the art of setting boundaries, enforcing said boundaries, understanding how to be an advocate, and (on paper for hypothetical scenes) notate and create the staging of intimacy on stage.

University of California, Irvine - Teaching Assistant (2021-2024)

Courses TA'd:

Drama 100: *Theatre Production*

Drama 101: *Theatre Production and Management*

Drama 135: *Show Business*

Description of Class:

Theatre Production — This class is dedicated to the actors cast in the production of *The Prom*. The students are evaluated on their professionalism, attendance, growth as a performer, and respect for safety.

Theatre Production & Management — This course is for students working on production show crews and as production assistants on the stage management team. Students are evaluated on attendance, professionalism, respect for safety, and if they meet the basic requirements for the position/job they are performing.

Show Business — This class focuses on the entertainment industry and how to have a successful career in “this business we call show”. Students practice mock agent interviews, portfolio work, setting both short and long term goals, and are encouraged to

think about alternative ways to remain financially stable by using their unique skill sets to hold various jobs they enjoy and ultimately still support their career as an artist.

Stage Management Experience

Member of Actors Equity Association (AEA)

*Signifies a world premiere

The Shed, New York, NY (2025)

The Brothers Size, Dir. Tarell Alvin McCraney & Bijan Sheibani - Assistant SM

The Old Globe, San Diego, CA (2025)

Hell Yeah! (workshop reading), Dir. Steve H. Broadnax III- Production Assistant

Geffen Playhouse, Los Angeles, CA (2024)

The Brothers Size, Dir. Bijan Sheibani - Production Assistant

International City Theatre, Long Beach, CA (2024)

**Marilyn, Mom & Me*, Dir. Luke Yankee - Assistant SM

New Swan Shakespeare Theatre Company, Irvine, CA (2023)

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged, Revised, Redone), Dir. Eli Simon - Production SM

Surflight/Laguna Playhouse, Laguna, CA (2022)

A Chorus Line, Dir. Luis Villabon - Assistant SM

University of California, Irvine (2021-2024)

The Prom, Dir. Don Hill & Daniel Keeling - Production SM

Cherry Wine in Paper Cups, Dir. Sam Allen - Production SM

New Slate 2022, Artistic Dir. Lisa Naugle and Vitor Luiz - Production SM

Physical Graffiti 2021, Artistic Dir. Lindsay Gilmour - Production SM

Dance Visions 2022, Artistic Dir. Cyrian Reed and Tong Wang - Assistant SM

Romeo and Juliet, Dir. Andrew Borba - Assistant SM

The Seagull, Dir. Summer Session - Assistant SM

New Slate 2021, Artistic Dir. Dr. S Ama Wray - Assistant SM

University of California, Santa Cruz (2019-2020)

**The Fifth Dimension: Into the Twilight Zone*, Dir. Sequoia Schirmer - SM

**No Connection*, Dir. Amber Gebert Goldsmith - SM

Intimacy Directing Experience

University of California, Irvine (2024)

Cabaret, Dir. Angela Cruz

King Lear, Dir. Lucas James Nelson

Spring Awakening, Dir. Ruby Lapeyre

The Brothers Paranormal, Dir. Jon Lawrence Rivera

The Prom, Dir. Don Hill and Daniel Keeling

Midsummer Night's Dream, Dir. Harrison Tate-Pascua

Cherry Wine in Paper Cups, Dir. Sam Allen

Gruesome Playground Injuries, Dir. Samantha Sun

Real Women Have Curves (ID Mentor), Dir. Bridgette Betanzos

Playwriting & Directing Experience

*Signifies Jessie was the playwright in addition to the director

**Embrace the Chaos* — Written and directed by Jessie Bender, a full length play inspired by ancient Greek mythology that sets to examine the female experience. Produced by The Barnstorm Theater Company at UC Santa Cruz. (2020)

Tea Patches — Written by Helen Everbach and directed by Jessie Bender. Synopsis: Maddy is an American college student studying abroad in Australia, her family and support network on the other side of the world. She has one friend from home with her and meets a girl, another American studying abroad with a passion for smoking weed, but she's on her own a lot and trying to recover from her anorexia, which only seems to be getting worse. Produced by The Barnstorm Theater Company at UC Santa Cruz. (2021)

The Sisters of Resistance (in development) — Currently developing a historically inspired feminist play on Dutch WWII resistance fighters.

Performance Experience

*Signifies a devised piece of work

Themed Entertainment

California's Great America, Santa Clara, CA (2017-2019)

Swing Host for *The Peanuts Block Party* - Performed

Dancer for *The Peanuts Block Party* - Performed a total of 7 tracks

Character Performer for Meet & Greet - Lucy Vanpelt, Peppermint Patty,

Winterfest Bear

Theatre

West Valley Community College, Saratoga, CA (2017, 2020)

The Children's Hour - Lois Fisher - Dir. Amy Zsadanyi Yale

**How to Survive a Pandemic 101* - Self/Ensemble - Dir. Amy Zsadanyi Yale

Los Banos Community Theater, Los Banos, CA (2018)

Beauty and the Beast - Silly Girl - Dir. Jennifer Ramsey

My Son Pinocchio - Ensemble/Featured - Dir. Jennifer Ramsey

Early Educational Theatre Experience (Selected Credits) (2015-2016)

Romeo & Juliet - Lady Capulet, U/S Juliet - Dir. Anthony Beal

Beauty and the Beast - Enchantress, Featured Dancer - Dir. Anthony Beal

A Midsummer Night's Dream - Featured Fairy - Dir. Anthony Beal

Film

Film: Glorioso Casting

13 Reasons Why, Role: Background Actor

Casting Coordinator

New Swan Shakespeare Theatre Company, Irvine CA

Assistant Casting Coordinator 2024 Season

University of California, Irvine, CA

Assistant Casting Coordinator 2023/2024 MEGA Season

Event Management

Irvine Barclay Theatre- Wedding

Served as the Stage Manager and Day Of Coordinator for a theatrical wedding ceremony and reception. Responsible for the following duties: arranging decorations and table arrangements, overseeing the stage set up and operations, calling cues during the ceremony according to a cue sheet, overseeing the wedding party's photo call, ensuring all wedding day events ran smoothly and according to schedule, served as the primary contact for all vendors, production staff, and wedding party/guests.

University of California, Irvine, CA

Event Managed several rentals & special events at UCI including dance recitals, ACDA Dance Conference, 25th International Nursing Philosophy Conference, Dragon Kim Foundation Showcase, guest speaker engagements including HBO's Janet Graham Borba, and a theatrical wedding at IrvineBarclay Theatre.

Awards, Grants, & Honors

Graduate Student Summer Research & Travel Grant, UC Irvine (2024)
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Chris Montana Scholarship, West Valley College (2019)
Character of the Month Award, California's Great America (2018)
Gypsy Robe Award, Los Banos Community Theater (2018)

Creative Research, Certifications, and Professional Development

Intimacy Directors & Coordinators Professionals (IDC)

Intimacy Professional Acceleration Program, Online (Current/In Progress)
Level 1: Foundations of Intimacy & Consent Practices, Online (2023)
Level 2: Applications of Intimacy & Consent Practices, Online (2023)
Certificate: Consent-Forward Artist Program, Awarded June 12, 2023

Theatrical Intimacy Education (TIE)

Best Practices, Online Workshop (2023)
Intimacy Choreography for Live Performance, Online Workshop (2024)
Intimacy Coordination for Film/TV, Online Workshop (2024)
Theatrical Studio Techniques, Casting, and Policy, Online Workshop (2024)
Stage Management and Intimacy, Online Workshop (2024)

West Valley College - Saratoga, CA (2017-2019)

Laura Lowry – Acting I, The Foundations of Acting as a Craft
Laura Lowry – Acting II, The Meisner Technique, Developing Your Character
Will Springhorn Jr. – Acting III, Auditioning and Shakespeare
Laura Lowry – Acting for Film, TV & Movies
Will Springhorn Jr. – Acting for Film, Commercials

UC Santa Cruz - Santa Cruz, CA (2019-2021)

Danny Scheie – Acting Studio II, Shakespeare
Patty Gallagher – Acting Studio III, Clowning
Greg Fritsch – Meisner Technique
Kinan Valdez – Intro to Directing
Kristen Brandt – Directing Studio
Kristen Brandt – Playwriting

Skills & Technical Proficiencies

Technology Software:	Microsoft Suite, Google Suite, Canvas, Banner, Canva, Adobe Acrobat, QLab (basic), Vectorworks (basic), Cuelist, Stage Write
Production & Event Management:	Rehearsal & Tech Scheduling, Rehearsal & Performance Management, Production Calendar Development, Cue Calling, Show Reports, Wedding & Special Event Coordination
Interpersonal & Leadership:	Team Mentorship, Collaborative Problem-Solving, Company Management, Equity & Consent-Based Communication, Trauma-Informed Practices
Specialized Training:	Intimacy Direction & Consent Education (IDC, TIE), First Aid/CPR/AED Certified, DEI-Centered Curriculum Development