

Nick Cutelli

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Theatre Educator | Director | Improv Specialist

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Theatre educator with over 20 years of experience in both professional and academic settings, specializing in collaborative directing and the Spolin-Close acting through improv method. Skilled in educational program design, teaching, and directing, I integrate my Chicago and Los Angeles industry experience with a strong academic foundation to prepare students for real-world success. My teaching approach emphasizes bridging the gap between classroom training and the professional industry, ensuring students develop both artistic and business acumen. Committed to fostering inclusive, ensemble-driven storytelling, I integrate improvisational methodologies into traditional theatre education to cultivate adaptable, industry-ready performers.

EXPERIENCE

Hilarity Theatre Improv, Denton TX *Founder- Artistic Director* Oct 2024 - Present

A nomadic improvisational and sketch comedy theatre dedicated to exploring the Spolin-Close Method through performance, education, and ensemble development. Hilarity Theatre produces mixed-format improv shows that integrate both short-form games and long-form scenic improvisation while fostering a collaborative and process-driven approach to comedy.

- Designed and directed improvisational and sketch comedy productions, integrating both structured and spontaneous performance techniques.
- Developed and facilitated workshops in improvisation, ensemble building, and sketch writing for performers at various skill levels.
- Cultivated and coached improv ensembles, guiding performers in the application of the Spolin-Close Method to strengthen storytelling and character work.
- Produced and directed original sketch revues, leading writers and performers through the creative and rehearsal process.
- Established a mobile theatre model, bringing accessible improv education and performances to diverse communities.

University of Idaho Theatre Department, Moscow ID *Teaching Assistant (Online)* May 2024 - Dec 2024

Teaching Graduate Assistant for the masters courses "Foundations of American Theatre" and Directing.

Foundations of American Theatre:

- Designed and implemented course curricula aligned with academic learning objectives and industry best practices.
- Prepared discussion questions based on weekly readings to facilitate critical thinking and engagement among students.
- Managed online discussions via Canvas, ensuring productive and respectful exchanges on emotionally challenging topics, including plays with themes of racism, sexism, and classism.
- Delivered mini-lectures on key historical and theoretical aspects of American theatre, contributing to students' understanding of the material.
- Supported students in developing a strong historical and theoretical foundation for contemporary American plays, with special attention to significant movements and tropes in American theatre history.

Graduate-Level Directing:

- Assisted in lectures and developed discussion questions to deepen students' understanding of directing methodologies.
- Emphasized an on-your-feet approach to directing, incorporating improv discovery, table work, and collaborative scene exploration.
- Guided students through the art, craft, and responsibilities of directing, helping them develop a distinct creative vision.
- Supported the development of students' skills in play analysis, research, and conceptualization, which are essential for crafting innovative directorial approaches.
- Encouraged a team-based, ensemble-driven mindset, allowing students to apply their learning to real-world directing assignments for public presentations.

North Texas Performing Arts , Southlake TX

Theatre Director

August 2023 - August 2024

- Developed and taught three undergraduate level courses. The Actor's Portfolio: A course focusing on the business aspects of acting, including resume building, audition techniques, and networking strategies. A Comedy of Ethics: A lecture class exploring the history and cultural evolution of comedic theatre, analyzing its impact on society through different eras. Long Form Improvisational Theatre: A practical course on the art of the improvised Harold, emphasizing creativity, collaboration, and performance skills.
- I lead the comprehensive management of our theatrical space. Additionally, I serve as the Creator and Artistic Director of the new Improv Theater Program at the North Texas Performing Arts Center. Within this role, I have developed a range of classes, workshops, shows, and house teams.
- Functioning as an Executive Producer and Show Runner for all theatrical productions hosted at our location, I oversee all aspects of management to ensure seamless execution. This includes hiring directors, choreographers, and music directors, as well as handling show budgeting and creating production schedules.
- Collaborating closely with the theatrical board, I spearhead efforts to identify fundraising opportunities and apply for grants.

SE Missouri State, Cape Girardeau MO

Guest Instructor (Online)

Jan 2023 - June 2023

Developed and taught an online master class designed to prepare college actors for professional careers by building their industry knowledge and marketing materials.

- Instructed students on creating a professional actor's portfolio, including headshots, resumes, and demo reels (acting, commercial, and character-specific).
- Guided students through the process of self-submission, agent submissions, and audition strategies to navigate the professional acting industry.
- Provided hands-on training in branding and marketing for actors, including website creation, social media presence, and promotional materials.
- Educated students on industry best practices, including avoiding scams, understanding contracts, and professional networking.
- Fostered a practical, career-focused approach to acting, ensuring students gained the tools to transition from academia to the professional entertainment industry.

WEHO TV NEWS, West Hollywood CA

On Camera Host

June 2017- Oct 2022

Served as an on-camera host for Emmy Award Winning WEHO TV News, delivering engaging and informative segments on community events, entertainment, and local news in West Hollywood. Combined strong improvisational skills with journalistic storytelling to connect with diverse audiences.

- Hosted and reported on local news, arts, and entertainment events, providing dynamic on-camera coverage.
- Conducted interviews with community leaders, artists, and public figures, facilitating insightful discussions.
- Utilized improvisation and comedic timing to create engaging and accessible news content.
- Collaborated with producers and editors to ensure content aligned with the station's vision and audience engagement goals.
- Developed a confident and adaptable on-camera presence, translating complex topics into compelling narratives for viewers.
- Host Reel available upon request.

Actor, Writer, Director, Teacher Los Angeles CA

AEA // SAG-E

August 2004- Oct 2022

- Professional actor with roles in nationwide commercials, video game voiceovers, and web series, bringing a versatile and dynamic presence to screen and stage.
- Represented by Buchwald, one of the top ten talent agencies in the world.
- Worked as an acting coach for reality TV stars transitioning into scripted acting, helping them develop character work, scene study techniques, and on-camera presence.
- Two-time Final Draft Big Break Quarterfinalist, recognized for excellence in screenwriting.
- Designed and led interactive actor portfolio workshops at prestigious college theatre programs, covering headshots, resumes, demo reels, and marketing strategies.
- Developed and taught acting, directing, and improvisation masterclasses, specializing in the Spolin-Close method and the business of being a working actor.
- Created and produced original scripted and improvised content, blending Chicago-style long-form improv with Los Angeles' cinematic approach.
- Actors' resume and reel available upon request.

SCHOLARSHIP & RESEARCH

- Author, *Long-Form Improv: Mastering the Harold through Strong Characters*
A comprehensive guide to the Harold, focusing on character-driven improvisation and ensemble storytelling. Includes a structured workbook for ensembles, offering practical exercises for rehearsals and performances.
- Author, *Long-Form Improv: Mastering the Scene*
a practical guide to character-driven storytelling and ensemble performance
- Author, *Improv Show Builder: A Blueprint for Creating Engaging Shows for Any Audience*
A Blueprint for Creating Engaging Shows for Any Audience, a practical guide to producing, hosting, and customizing improv shows for any crowd
- Author, *Actor on a Budget: The Nuts and Bolts of Creating Your Actor Portfolio for Next to Nothing*
A step-by-step guide helping actors build their professional materials, market themselves, and navigate the entertainment industry.

COURSES DEVELOPED & TAUGHT

- **Comedy of Ethics:** Examines the evolution of comedic theatre and its relationship to society, exploring how humor has shaped and reflected cultural norms throughout history. Connects historical comedic works to modern ethical dilemmas, analyzing the responsibility of comedy in today's world.
- **The History of Improv Theatre:** A comprehensive study of improvisational theatre from its origins in Commedia dell'arte through the modern Chicago improv movement. Explores key figures, movements, and theories that have shaped improvisational performance, including The Second City, IO, and long-form structures.
- **Spolin-Close Method: Improvisation for Acting:** A performance-based course utilizing the improv games and theories of Viola Spolin and Del Close to train actors in improvisational techniques for character development. Focuses on helping actors tap into their subconscious to create strong character points of view, using improvisation as a modern acting methodology.
- **Introduction to Improv:** Foundational improv course covering fundamental principles such as **Yes, And**, active listening, and group collaboration. Students develop confidence in spontaneous performance while enhancing creativity and teamwork skills.
- **The Improvised Harold:** Advanced improv course focused on long-form improvisation, specifically the Harold structure. Students learn how to connect scenes, build thematic narratives, and create compelling comedic and dramatic performances through improv.
- **Musical Long Form Improv:** Teaches improvisers how to create spontaneous songs and musical numbers within an improvised performance. Covers song structure, lyrical storytelling, and collaboration between actors and musicians.
- **Actors Portfolio:** Teaches actors how to build professional materials that showcase a range of acting skills, including headshots, resumes, cover letters, and video reels. Students will also explore the business aspects of an acting career, with an emphasis on creating a strong, marketable identity. Through practical exercises and feedback, students will develop the tools they need to confidently present themselves in the competitive entertainment industry.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Actors' Equity Association (AEA)
- Screen Actors Guild - Eligible (SAG)

EDUCATION

University of Idaho -	Master of Fine Arts	Theatre	Jan 2023 - Dec 2024
S.E. Missouri State -	Bachelors of Fine Arts	Acting/Directing	Aug 2002 - May 2006