Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy revolves around creating and developing a new generation of theatre artists that will further enrich their communities and beyond through interpersonal communication, advanced training, artistic imagination, cross-cultural collaboration, and affirmation of social justice.

Since the onset of my appointment at LMU eight years ago, I felt honored and privileged to be a part of a University and Department that is so strongly dedicated to the issue of social justice and the creation of the constant dialogue among faith, culture, and the arts. Being born and raised in the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic city of Sarajevo, where only five blocks from my home sat a Catholic Cathedral, Muslim Mosque, Jewish Synagogue, and Eastern Orthodox Church, I learned at an early age how to enjoy, appreciate, and utilize the great advantages of living in a diverse community. Unfortunately, I also experienced how tragically riveting, and even deadly, the consequences of brutally tearing apart that beautifully mixed community may be. Throughout my entire career in the performing arts until this very day, I have always exercised and believed in the idea that we relentlessly strive to collaborate across various cultural, religious, ethnic, and racial backgrounds, artistic disciplines, and opposing worldviews. My strong personal sense of social justice and equality always guided me throughout my educational and artistic efforts. It was always in the very center of my teaching method to open up these disciplines and worldviews to my students. I do not believe that any of them can be educated as a whole person, without that spirit of openness and cosmopolitanism. We live in a century of global communications, where everyone can learn about other nations and cultures in a matter of seconds. Due to this kind of global environment, it is my belief that the next generation of theatre artists must be able to cross over cultural and linguistic barriers and reach out to their theatre equivalents from all over the world. Genres must blend together, and future actors, directors, and designers must provide audiences in any part of the world with an exciting and unique live stage performance that is also easily recognizable and understood. While trying to achieve this goal, I do not dismiss the past, with its solid, proven, and applicable forms of theatre training. It is my objective to connect those great techniques of the past with the exciting possibilities of the future. Unfortunately, today’s explosion of information is not always equivalent to the explosion of knowledge. Due to that fact, my goal as an educator in the information age is to seek out and stress the importance of the quality of information rather than the quantity.

Teaching, for me, has two fundamental challenges: It must provide a strong base of knowledge, but, more importantly, it must provide connections between different subjects and disciplines. My curriculum’s aim is not simply to train students by giving them bare information for the mastery of a narrow specialized goal, but also to educate them as whole persons, in a set of guidelines that they may use throughout their lives while becoming competent actors, directors, designers, and thinkers. I always try to keep my courses practical, open-minded, and versatile. Students of theatre arts should all specialize in as
many aspects of theatre as possible. Only if they are trained in an eclectic and cosmopolitan fashion can they guarantee the survival of theatre arts for centuries to come. Otherwise, theatre may be lost in the haze of the known and yet unknown medias of the future.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize what motivates me the most in my work as an educator. In the very center of my educational engagement lies the service to our students. These young adults are entering highly demanding, competitive, and globally interconnected world of international markets for arts, business, finances, and culture. To fully prepare them for this complex task, I strive to go beyond my work in the classroom. Beside my professorial activities at LMU, for which I am truly grateful, I also embarked on engaging our students in my professional work outside of the LMU campus. During the last several years, I directed various shows in which I have given opportunities to many of our students and alumni to participate in those projects in the capacity of actors, designers, and stage managers. Being part of these productions, most of them have earned their first professional credits and reviews while collaborating with other professional in our field of work. I also successfully recommended many of them for various other professional projects. I help them, to the best of my ability, in their relentless search for agents, casting directors, producers, and theatre companies. Seeing our students succeed and build up on these first steps in the “real” world is one of the most gratifying feelings an educator may experience. To educate our students as whole persons, we must stay engaged with them and their careers long after they leave LMU campus.

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