

MUSICAL THEATRE DEPARTMENT

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Philosophy

NOCCA's Musical Theatre Department provides well-rounded training in dance, acting, and music—the fundamental skills required for admission into Musical Theatre programs in colleges and universities. In all three aspects, emphasis is placed on basic technique upon which to build advanced skills, professionalism for a working musical theatre artist, and how to work within an ensemble.

Admission and Placement

Admission to the Musical Theatre High School program is based on an audition consisting of a dance call, a singing audition, and an acting exercise. All first-year students begin in Level I and progress each year of their enrollment. Continued enrollment is contingent upon participation and progression in the classroom.

General Requirements and Guidelines

Attendance and Participation: As success in the classes in the Musical Theatre Department is largely based on participation, consistent attendance is imperative. Students understand that they are making a commitment to participate in the entire NOCCA culture, which includes classes, field trips, masterclasses with visiting artists, and other department activities evenings and weekends.

Productions: The Musical Theatre Department produces two full productions a year. All students audition for the productions and must accept any role that is offered, at the discretion of the faculty. Rehearsals take place from 4:00 – 6:30 p.m. weekdays, with later evening and weekend rehearsals as performance dates near. A full rehearsal schedule is provided at the time of the audition.

Dress Code: Students are expected to dress in all black for their Musical Theatre classes. For music and acting classes: black t-shirts, shorts, sweatpants, sweatshirts, etc. For dance classes: leotards and tights are appropriate for girls; black, tight-fitting dance clothes (jazz pants, athletic shirts, and tank tops) are appropriate for boys. Baggy clothes are not allowed in dance class. Ballet, Tap, and Jazz dance classes require specific footwear.

Participation in Community Productions: Community and sending-school performances are encouraged for Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors *as long as they do not interfere with NOCCA classes or rehearsals*. Freshmen may not audition for or participate in outside productions. All Musical Theatre students must get permission in writing before auditioning or accepting any outside theatre work. Participation in an unapproved production will result in the student being asked to withdraw from the outside activity.

Counseling: Twice a year, after the midterm, all students receive one-on-one counseling with the faculty to discuss their progress in the classroom and suggestions and guidance for further improvement.

College Preparation

It is the goal of the Musical Theatre faculty and curriculum to provide as much assistance as possible for the student who wishes to continue their training in college Musical Theatre programs.

In the fall semester, Seniors focus on college preparation, including how to apply, audition preparation, and career counseling. All Seniors, regardless of whether they are continuing into a college Musical Theatre program or not, must prepare an audition binder of songs and monologues and participate in Senior Juries.

In addition to classroom audition preparation, Seniors are encouraged to seek individual coaching from the faculty.

Seniors are offered the opportunity to attend the Unified College Auditions in Chicago. The auditions take place the first weekend of February, and the department makes plans and travels together. To participate, students must meet the financial obligation (varies from year to year) and apply to and schedule auditions for no less than three colleges.

Curriculum

All high school students receive three honors-weighted credits for their arts classes at NOCCA.

DANCE:

Ballet: Students are introduced to basic ballet concepts and terminology, focusing on mastering the ballet barre (warm up), proper placement and alignment, and movement across the floor (center). As they progress, students dig deeper into ballet pedagogy, partnering in ballet, and choreography.

Jazz: Students explore the specific techniques of classical jazz with additional exposure to elements and styles of commercial jazz, jazz funk, and hip hop.

Tap: Students are introduced to the fundamentals, including terminology, the use of counting, clarity of footwork, and weight shift. Students develop a sense of musicality, and how to comprehend and perform various subdivisions and rhythms. By putting knowledge of musicality and tap vocabulary to the test, students begin to explore the art of improvisation, which is equally important as technique.

ACTING:

Fundamentals of Ensemble: Students receive an overview of and training in the Viewpoints Technique to build spatial awareness, presence on stage, and the creation of an ensemble

Scene Work: In addition to in-studio presentations, students focus on textual analysis to develop critical and analytical thinking while approaching text and material.

Monologue Preparation: Students focus on the fundamentals of audition technique with an emphasis on reading plays, finding monologues within them, and learning how to find material appropriate to age, style, and content.

MUSIC:

Vocal Technique: Students receive a foundation in classical singing to allow healthy performance in all Musical Theatre styles (legit, classic Broadway, belting, rock/pop, etc.).

Music Theory: Students learn the skills of sheet music reading, sight-singing, and ear training necessary for professional work and admittance to college music programs.

History and Repertoire: Students survey the shows and trends in American Songbook, Golden Age of Musical Theatre, and Contemporary Musical Theatre, while focusing on appropriate vocal styles for each period.

Middle School Workshop (students in grades 7-8)

The Musical Theatre workshop is a 5-week non-credit course that meets on Monday and Wednesday. Eighth grade students meet in the fall semester and 7th grade students meet in the spring semester. The Workshop is an access program, designed to provide an introduction to the high school curriculum and prepare students for the high school audition. Beginning in the 2017/18 school year, there is no audition for the Middle School Program; enrollment is through an online sign-up process. ***Participation in the Middle School program does not automatically guarantee acceptance to the 9th grade program.***

Musical Theatre Certificates

Certificates in Musical Theatre are presented to Seniors upon their matriculation from NOCCA with a “B” grade or better, and participation in NOCCA productions and showcases.

Certificate of Artistry: Students who complete the curriculum for Level III or IV.

Certificate of Performance: Students who complete the curriculum for Level II.

Certificate of Recognition: Students who complete the curriculum for Level I.

In all cases, the judgment of the Musical Theatre faculty regarding the awarding of Certificates is final.