

2018 Summer Acting Camp Bios of Teachers

Denise Crawn (Director)

Denise Crawn is the director and creator of the State Theatre Summer Acting Camp, and owner of Prestige Productions. Denise's experience in theater includes years of acting, directing and producing both professionally and locally. Some of her theatrical work with children includes; the director and choreographer for Bangor Area Middle School's Drama Club musical for nine years, director for several community theater children's productions and casting for local commercials and movies.

Outside of theater, Denise is an ordained Interfaith Minister through One Spirit Interfaith Seminary in NYC and performs the traditional rites of passage including weddings, baby blessings and funerals. Also the owner of Walking Awake, LLC and author of "Walking Awake The Faces In Nature" her passion is helping others "walk awake" through their connections with Nature via her guided walks, workshops, inspirational talks and Celtic Pilgrimages to Scotland.

Jen Wescoe (Acting Instructor)

Jennifer has proudly served as the Acting Instructor at this amazing camp since 2006, and she absolutely loves her summer theatre family! Jennifer began her teaching career at Freedom High School in Bethlehem, PA during the fall of 2000. In addition to teaching Drama and Public Speaking, she enthusiastically serves as the FHS Theatre Company Director and Stage Crew Advisor. Jennifer, along with her FHSTC students, were featured in the documentary *Most Valuable Players* which appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Network (2011).

FHSTC's *Wizard of Oz* cast and crew were also the subject of the Warner Brother's web series *High Drama 2*. During her time as the FHS SADD advisor, Jennifer's students earned two "Project Ignition Driver Safety" grants (2011 and 2012). They also received a \$100K grant through State Farm's "Celebrate My Drive" program (2012), in which they utilized interactive theatre programs such as "Project SOS: Students Own Safety" and the "Super Improver Safety Squad" to promote driver, pedestrian, and bicycle safety to all twenty-two schools in the Bethlehem Area School District. Jennifer was honored to receive the Bethlehem Fine Arts Commission Tribute to the Arts Award (2013), the Bethlehem Education Scholastic Trust Anthony Ruggerio Award (2011), and the WFMZ 100.7 Teacher of the Quarter Award (2006). Jennifer received

both her undergraduate and masters degrees at Lehigh University (Masters in Secondary Education: 2000 and Bachelor of Arts: 1998). When Jennifer is not with the students of FHS or The State Theatre Acting Camp, she enjoys instructing graduate courses to wonderful educators across the Lehigh Valley through Performance Learning Systems and Wilkes University.

Jerri Brown (Dance Instructor)

Jerri graduated magna cum laude from Marymount Manhattan College in New York City with a BFA in Dance and a minor in Business. She was a member of the MMC Dance Company where she performed in Off-Broadway productions. While studying in the city, Jerri taught at the 92nd Street Y and at The Neighborhood Playhouse. She is a certified group fitness instructor through the American Council of Exercise, the National Exercise Training Association, and Marymount Manhattan College.

She directed and choreographed fourteen ballets for Star Maker School of the Arts Dance Company in Flemington New Jersey. She has also written her own one act ballets, "The Business Man's Day Dream," "Journey of a Gift", "Chess", "Common Variables" and "Cirque du Chapeau". Jerri held the titles of Ballet Mistress and Studio Manager at Star Maker and developed a highly respectable tap program. Many of her tap routines earned Regional and National titles and awards.

Jerri has taught master classes for Hunterdon County Teen Arts, Acrodanse Theatre's Junior Dance Company Summer Camp Intensive, Tap Ties and The Pennsylvania Youth Theatre Dance Intensive and choreographed for the Amwell Community Children's Theatre productions "Sister Act" and "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat" as well as Flemington-Raritan Community Theatre's production of "Godspell." She has also directed and taught her own dance camps at The Somerset Valley YMCA and Northampton Community College's Horizon's for Youth summer program. Jerri has judged and choreographed for dance competitions and worked with models for A Wish Come True, a costume catalog company that services dance studios across the country.

Currently, Jerri is Dance Director at Pennsylvania Youth Theatre. She teaches and choreographs for the Dance Division's Mosaic, Jr. Mosaic and PYTap Companies as well as classes in Ballet, Tap, Jazz and Musical Theatre. At PYT, she choreographed Aladdin Jr., Beauty and the Beast Jr. and had the privilege to choreograph select numbers from Harry Connick Jr.'s musical, The Happy Elf. Harry Connick Jr. worked very

closely on the project spending much time at PYT to prepare the play for release to other organizations to perform. Jerri also choreographs for PYT's Annual Senior Caberet.

Jerri is the choreographer for the Freedom High School Theater Company in Bethlehem. Her work with Freedom has been aired on the OWN Network in the documentary film, Most Valuable Players. Her choreography for Freedom can also be viewed on the WB web cast of "High Drama 2" and many of Jerri's numbers have been performed at the Annual Freddy Awards at the Easton State Theatre.

Jerri is a guest choreographer at Showbiz Kidz in Phillipsburg, NJ teaching the school's Dance Competition Teams tap routines to compete with throughout New Jersey.

Jerri continues to strengthen her skills by studying rhythm tap with Rochelle Haynes through the tap organization, "Tap Ties". Jerri is also member of the Tap Ties Company, a Lehigh Valley Pennsylvania Dance Company that performs and teaches throughout Pennsylvania.

Adam Conti (Drama Teacher Grades 1-3/Stage Manager)

Adam Conti is delighted to be returning to "The Spotlight is on You Actng Camp" at the State Theatre for his sixth year. Having served as both an assistant teacher and stage manager in the past, Adam is now the drama teacher for the 1-3 grade students. Adam has a B.M. in Music Education from West Chester University of Pennsylvania. He studied vocal education and performance with Dr. Stephen Ng. He was involved in many memorable performances with the Mastersingers Choir and Concert Choir which are the premier vocal performance ensembles at WCU. He performed "Le Roi David" (King David) by Arthur Honegger with the faculty orchestra and presented the tenor solo in the "Domine Deus" movement of the "Petite Messe Solennelle" by Gioacchino Rossini. As a theatre artst, he is active as the musical director of Third Mask Theatre Company. He also music directed A Christmas Story at Pennsylvania Youth Theatre in 2017. Some of his favorite roles include "Sweeney Todd" in Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street, "Thenardier" in Les Miserables, "Amos Hart" in Chicago: A Musical Vaudeville, and "Horton the Elephant" in Seussical the Musical. Adam teaches music to K-5 students at Easton Arts Academy Elementary Charter School. Adam cannot wait to explore the joy of theatre with the next class of young actors and performers!

Lauren Smith (Music Teacher Grades 1-3)

Lauren is currently the General/Vocal Music Teacher at F.E. Smith Elementary School in Cortland, New York. In addition to teaching grades

K-6, Lauren directs various choral ensembles such as 5th/6th Grade Chorus, Girls Choir, and is a co-founder/assistant director of the Cortland School District's Elementary Select Chorus, a 75 member auditioned chorus of students in grades 5-6.

Lauren received her Bachelor's Degree in Music Education at Ithaca College where she sang with the Ithaca College Chorus and Ithaca College Women's Chorale. During her studies, Lauren became very interested in African Drumming and Dance and participated in the African Drumming and Dance ensemble at Ithaca College for 3 years. In addition to her study of classical music and musical theatre, Lauren specializes in performing African American Spirituals and Gospel music.

Lauren continues to have a successful performing career. She is often a soloist with the Dorothy Cotton Jubilee Singers, an intergenerational choir located in Ithaca, New York. Most recently, Lauren premiered an oratorio as the featured Soprano soloist in Ithaca this past May.

Lauren is thrilled to be back at "The Spotlight is On You Acting Camp". This is her 5th year at camp and she is so excited to be working with our younger campers this year!

Nicholas Conti (Music Teacher)

Nicholas Conti is the Owner/Artistic Director of Third Mask Theatre Company in Bethlehem, PA. He has extensive experience in acting, pit conduction, teaching and direction in the Lehigh Valley. Currently, he works as the pit conductor for Dieruff High School Theatre Company and as the Assistant Director at Freedom High School Theatre Company. Nick has directed *Waiting for Godot*, *Assassins*, *Seussical the Musical*, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, *The Addams Family Musical*, and *Chicago: A Musical Vaudeville* at Third Mask Theatre Company. Conducting credits include: *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, *Seussical the Musical*, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, *The Addams Family Musical*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Chicago: A Musical Vaudeville* and *Side Show*. In 2017, he directed Pennsylvania Youth Theatre's productions of *Seussical the Musical* and *A Christmas Story*. Nicholas is a graduate of West Chester University (B.M. Performance) and Arizona State University (M.M. Performance). Nick is excited to be teaching at the State Theatre Acting Camp for the very first time!