

# Craig A. Miller

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(803) 767-5915 • craigamiller1974@gmail.com

## TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

*“Those who know, do. Those that understand, teach.”*

— Aristotle

The world can be a dangerous place for young theatre artists who are relying on themselves, each other – and who will ultimately be relied upon by their audience – to be present, open, truthful, listening and connected in their work. Life is a barrage of barriers to the ability for all of us to be present and connected with one another; we live in a global community that allows, and often requires us to be shut or closed off to one another in a meaningful, impactful way. This unswervingly demands that my talents, skills, and understanding of the art, and my abilities to teach the craft rise to meet that challenge. Tearing down and breaking through this disconnection and the ever rising fear of absolute intimacy in relation to our fellow humans is the first step in addressing the modern acting and directing student. Being present in their life and work and interested in the world outside of themselves is the fundamental pathway to teachability in this craft.

Since the theatre innately examines the human condition, in which there is an inborn equality in all of us being unique in our understanding and perceptions of the world around us, teaching this craft requires a deep commitment to the student as an individual and the unique ways they individually learn. It is this concept has delivered me to a philosophy that, as a teacher, I need to be a resource of many teaching methodologies, which foster and create a learning environment and experience that can rise to meet the gambit of student needs. Of course, I am also a firm proponent that talent and a proclivity for this work must exist in the student, as well as drive and ambition. However, it is the hunger for leaning and the desire to be taught and develop the skills, discipline and work ethic of the theatre that is key for any student to arrive at a successful result.

As teacher, I see my purpose to be a guiding voice and facilitator in the room that inspires and incites the desire for exploration of the craft thorough the actual “doing” of the art. It is only through providing opportunities for students to be in the heart of the work that discovery can be available and achieved. Encouraging students to make choices, fostering a space where they can exhibit bravery in those choices, demanding that they accept the challenge of being present in their work and in their lives, and their investment and involvement in continuing the conversation of what is facing them as artists is vital to my approach. I also believe strongly that any well-rounded participant in this collaboration requires the opportunity of learning the respect and appreciation for all of their fellow collaborators, through working in all disciplines of the theatre art, not just focused on their specialty; this keeps them humble, appreciative and inspired by their colleagues.

As a student, I was taught at the proverbial knees of great teachers like Stanislavski, Spolin, Hagen and Mesiner as an actor, and of course by the great directors, Clurman, Hodge, and Brook. Some part of all of these great classic teachings and techniques are a part of my toolbox. My real-world experience as a working, professional actor, director and producer offers an even deeper resource for my students, which is only fortified by my insatiable appetite for continuing to be a pupil myself. If I can inspire that same appetite in my students, I know that I am instilling in them something that they can carry forth into every aspect of their lives, whether they continue into a career in theatre, or not.

I have found that being an artist and a teacher in the theatre comes with great power, and we must be careful to understand and respect that power. I set the bar high. I demand that my students be present, open, truthful, listening and connected and demand the same from myself. I strive to use the power I have through my craft, knowledge and experience to pave a way for every student’s unique journey. I deeply understand this collaborative art and my craft as director, actor and especially as teacher. The presence that I have to that understanding, my passion for theatre’s transformative power, and my desire to helping students find that within themselves is what makes me a vital, vibrant and viable teacher of theatre.