

The Brass Tacks Ensemble

2018 Theater Exploration Troupe Application

Thank you for your interest in the 2018 BTE Theater Exploration Troupe. You probably want to know what all this is about. Here are a few things that might help:

What is the Theater Exploration Troupe?

The Theater Exploration Troupe is a series of classes to explore the organized chaos that is theater. Those who have experience (professional or amateur) in theater will benefit from the fundamentals that we introduce in the classes and so will those who have never set foot on a stage: The troupe is open to people from all areas of theater and beyond -- actors, directors, playwrights, designers, stage managers, lawyers, doctors, ministers, anybody and everybody. The focus of the classes will be on the basics of play production, storytelling, and exploration of the "live" element of theater. We will approach production and scene work from two directions:

Building a strong structure through play and scene analysis

- What is a play, and how is it different from other forms of writing and art?
- What is the story that is being told and how can we tell it theatrically?
- How do you break down a play into performable chunks?
- How do you then break down those chunks to find the smaller moments?
- What is intention and how can it lead to stronger performances?
- How can the intentions of individual characters lead to a stronger show?

Using improvisation to explore every corner of the structure we've built

- How can we learn to trust our first instincts?
- How can we create better communication onstage and offstage?
- How can we be less clever and more authentic?
- What goes into telling a really good story?
- How can we respond to things in the moment?
- How can the basics of improvisation be applied to written text?

These classes are for everybody and can influence all aspects of theater production as well as other aspects of professional life -- giving speeches, presentations, sermons, and basic communication. Because we want to emphasize the practical nature of the classes we are offering, we require that Troupe members be involved in at least two Production Practicals, taking roles as actors, as assistant directors, as stage managers, as production designers, or in some other production/administrative capacity. Those participating in productions will report back to the Troupe in discussion sessions what they have learned by working on the production and how it connects to what they have learned in the classes.

When is this happening?

The 2018 Theater Exploration Troupe will begin meeting once per week, starting the week of February 12, 2018 (day and time will be determined by the availability of Troupe members). Each session will be three hours long. The introductory block--Level One--will meet for sixteen weeks and will consist of twelve class sessions and 2-3 discussion sessions interspersed throughout the Level One classes. (The discussion sessions are based on Production Practicals and outlined below under "Rules For Being In the Troupe.")

After the Level One classes have ended in late May/early June, there will be a short break and two Level Two class blocks--six sessions per block--will be offered--one from June through August, the other from August through October. The first will be a further exploration of improvisation techniques introduced in Level One; the second will be a further exploration of some of the analysis techniques introduced in Level One. Both Level Two sessions will include more extensive scene-work and possibly development of a new show for a later BTE season. Level Two classes are not required--that is, you can end your commitment after the Level One block of classes should you choose to do so. Additionally, commitment to one Level Two class block--either improvisation OR analysis--does not require you to be committed to the other.

Our Spring show is April 20-22 & April 27-29, 2018

Our Summer show is August 2-4, 2018

Our Fall show is November 2-4 & November 9-11, 2018

(The plays we have selected for our productions will be announced very soon.)

What's in it for you?

This is a holistic approach to theater. We are looking at how improvisation and analysis can lead to more compelling theater productions from every angle. For those who have not been involved in theater previously, this is a perfect opportunity to strengthen other aspects of your professional lives, as well as a chance to learn what goes into theatrical production.

You will have a better understanding of storytelling in general

You will have a better understanding of how we tell stories in theater

You will have a better opportunity to explore the planned and the unplanned elements of theater (the orderly chaos)

You will be better able to embrace the "live" aspect of theater and not be afraid to explore it--even in performance (both onstage and backstage!)

You will learn to make stronger choices in the moment

The Brass Tacks Ensemble is committed to education as well as production. The success of our 2017 Acting and Directing Troupes have helped in the development of the 2018 Troupe.

We hope to give everyone an opportunity to learn with and from each other and to create a truly unique experience in the Washtenaw theater community.

Your involvement will also help us develop both our theatrical philosophy and our future educational programs. Additionally, you will help bring our 2018 season of plays to the stage, as well as strengthen our membership (should you choose to pursue that option).

Rules For Being In the Troupe

Troupe members will be expected to miss no more than two classes during the Level One schedule. (This will be strictly enforced.) These classes will be the basis for all discussions, exploration, and Level Two class offerings. The Level Two class semesters will be advanced version of the Level One classes to further explore the topics. You do not have to commit to Level Two classes during the initial application process, though the Level One block is a prerequisite for each Level Two block. Level Two classes will have similar attendance expectations.

Troupe members will be expected to take part in two Production Practicals. Production Practicals are opportunities to be involved in the production aspects of BTE shows, without necessarily taking on the full role. These Practicals will offer practical experience and observation time for BTE productions that will be brought back and discussed with the Troupe to enhance the troupe experience. While you may act in any of the shows that the directors cast you in, only one of those roles may be counted toward the Production Practical requirement; the other Practical must be in another aspect of the production. (Neither Practical is required to be acting-based, but they both must involve different parts of the productions.) Non-acting options include two-week (at a minimum) stints as a stage manager or an assistant director, designing a specific element (lighting, props, costumes, set), or acting as the Production Coordinator (designing all aspects of the production) or part of a Production Coordination Team.

Production Practicals should be spread over at least two productions, and, if possible, it is desired that the Troupe fill all of the production roles for the season's shows. If you are selected for a production role that you have no experience with, the BTE will guide you through that position so that you can be an effective member of the production team.

Troupe members will also be expected to attend regular Discussion Sessions to discuss the experience as a whole, the classes and their connections, their experiences from Production Practicals, and any other projects that the Troupe initiates during the year. These sessions will be held 2-3 times during the Level One block of classes, and a member should not miss more than two Discussion Sessions during the year.

Note: Directors and producers, in conjunction with the Artistic Director, will have final say on who is cast in each show and who who will be involved in the rehearsal and performance

process. We are committed to open auditions for our productions. We are also committed to providing our directors with the staff that they think they will need.

Class Availability for Non-Troupe Members

Once the 2018 BTE Troupe has been assembled, a limited number of spaces to the Level One classes and the advanced Level Two classes will be made available for purchase by the public. Non-troupe members will not be responsible for fulfilling Production Practicals, and they will not be invited to attend the Discussion Sessions. In essence, a person may purchase and attend the classes, but they will not be involved in the Troupe experience.

Pricing: You may purchase the Level One block of twelve classes for \$50. The fee will need to be paid by the time of the first class session. If for some reason, you choose to drop out of the classes, you may be able to receive a refund, less \$5 per class that you have already attended. Level Two classes will be negotiated at a similar rate.

IMPORTANT: All admission to the classes, whether as part of the Troupe or by purchase, will be subject to an application and interview process.

What's next?

If you are interested in being involved in the classes--either through becoming a part of the Troupe or through purchased classes--you will have to fill out a brief application (next page), and attend two interview sessions (one individual, one group).

Timeline:

Applications will be due January 6, 2018. Applications can be sent to thebrasstacksemble@gmail.com.

Individual interviews will be held the week of January 7-13, 2018. You will be notified via email about time and place.

Group interviews will be held January 14-20, 2018.

Admission notification will be sent out January 26, 2018.

Any questions can be sent to the Artistic Director, James Ingagiola, at jamesingagiola@gmail.com.

Thanks and good luck.

James

2018 BTE Theater Exploration Troupe

Please provide the following information

Basic Information

Name:

Telephone Number:

Street Address:

City/State/Zip:

Email Address:

Theater Experience (if any)

Please list up to ten shows you have been involved in--title of show, role in the show (onstage or backstage), company, date/year. Please include any work you have done with the BTE. If you have a resume, you may attach it instead. *If you have no onstage or backstage experience*, please list any plays that you have seen that you have enjoyed and when (roughly) and where you saw them.

Have you ever taken any acting classes--high school, college, workshops? If so, where and when? And was there a specific focus in the class(es)?

Please answer the following question:

Describe a moment in your theatrical career, your professional career, or in your life when you had expectations set out for you--either by a director, a producer, a boss, a parent, or even yourself--and when you did not meet those expectations. How did you deal with the situation? What did you take away from it? What did you do afterward?

Schedule Information

It is difficult to predict what may come up over the course of a year, but please answer the questions below to the best of your ability. We're trying to get a general idea of people's availability.

Weekly Level One classes will begin the week of February 12, 2018 with occasional breaks for holidays and Troupe discussion sessions (which will not be breaks for the Troupe members, obviously). They will be in the evenings or on the weekends depending on everyone's schedules.

In general, when are you available Sunday through Thursday evenings (days and times)?

Sundays:

Mondays:

Tuesdays:

Wednesdays:

Thursdays:

Are there any dates from February through June, 2018, that you know you will not be available?

Signature & Date: