

# J. Austin Eyer

Unions: AEA

Affiliations: NDEO, MTEA, ATHE, TxETA, SDC ASSOCIATE

My career in theatre consists of Broadway performance credits, a published book, professional skills as a director and choreographer, creative research, administrative experience as the head of a BFA program in musical theatre, and 19 years teaching experience including two nationally recognized top-ten musical theatre programs. My connection to the current theatre industry, as well as my knowledge of musical theatre history, makes me a well-rounded educator for students hoping to explore a career in the theatre.

## **Education:**

The Pennsylvania State University May 2020

- MFA in Theatre, Concentration in Directing
  - Program Advisor: Susan H. Schulman

New York University May 2004

- BFA in Drama, Tisch School of the Arts

## **Academic Employment**

The University of Texas at Arlington 2020-Present

- Assistant Professor and Area Head of the BFA in Musical Theatre (tenure-track)
  - Primary students include approx. 52 Musical Theatre BFAs as well as some BFA Acting and BA Theatre majors, and dance minors. Duties include a 3/3 teaching load, creative research, service, directing the yearly senior industry showcase, area-head duties, recruitment, student and faculty mentoring, as well as directing and choreographing mainstage productions.

### Courses Taught

- Singing for the Actor I (song analysis)
- Singing for the Actor II (musical scene study)
- Dance for Musical Theatre
- Musical Theatre Auditions and Showcase
- Independent Study- special topics in directing, devising, and theatre for social justice

The Pennsylvania State University 2014-2020

- Assistant Teaching Professor of Theatre, Co-coordinator of dance
  - Primary students include around 48 Musical Theatre BFAs and 25 BS Dance Majors, with some Acting BFAs and Dance Minors. Duties included 4/5 teaching load, academic advising, directing/co-directing NYC senior industry showcases, directing productions, choreographing for mainstage productions, directing/choreographing the President's Tailgates and other university service events, and service on the diversity and undergraduate curriculum committees.

Courses Taught:

- Acting I
- Intro to Jazz, and Beginning Jazz
- Sophomore Studio—Song Analysis and Musical Scene Study
- Musical Theatre Dance Styles
- Advanced Jazz
- Senior Studio—New York Industry Showcase (6 showcases total)
- Independent Study—special topics include how to swing, assist, dance captain, partner, and dance pedagogy

CAP21 Conservatory/NYU Tisch School of the Arts

2003-2014

- Adjunct Instructor, Dance Coordinator, Admissions Assistant, Student Advisor, Director and Choreographer
  - Employment spanned all programs leading up to the transition to Molloy College: NYU (Tisch) BFA, Two-year Professional Conservatory, CAP21's Pre-College and Professional Summer Training Programs, and the Cayuga pre-college program. Duties included: average 2/2 teaching load, student and faculty advising, scheduling and hiring of dance faculty, recruitment, admissions, senior showcases (9 total), choreography for mainstage productions, and direction of studio projects.

Courses Taught:

- All levels Jazz/Theatre Dance
- Beginner Tap
- Beginner and Intermediate Ballet
- Song and Dance Workshop
- Senior Industry Practicum—choreographer and industry advisor on 9 programmatic Senior Showcases

**Selected Performance Experience:**BROADWAY

<i>Evita</i>	Ensemble	Dir. Michael Grandage Chor. Rob Ashford
<i>How to Succeed...</i>	Swing (9 tracks) /Assist. Dance Captain	Dir./Chor. Rob Ashford
<i>Billy Elliot</i>	Ensemble (u/s Tony)	Dir. Stephen Daldry Chor. Peter Darling
<i>The Little Mermaid</i>	Swing (11 tracks, u/s Prince Eric, Jetsam)	Dir. Francesca Zambello Chor. Stephen Mear
<i>Curtains</i>	Swing/Assist. Dance Captain (u/s Johnny)	Dir. Scott Ellis Chor. Rob Ashford
<i>The Secret Garden</i>	Colin	Dir. Susan H. Schulman Chor. Michael Lichtefeld

NATIONAL TOUR

<i>Billy Elliot</i>	Ensemble (u/s Tony)	Dir. Stephen Daldry Chor. Peter Darling
<i>White Christmas</i>	Ensemble	Dir. Walter Bobbie Chor. Randy Skinner
<i>Evita</i>	Ensemble	Dir. Harold Prince

Dir./Chor. Larry Fuller

OFF BROADWAY

<i>Anyone Can Whistle</i>	Ensemble	Dir./Chor. Casey Nicholaw
<i>My Big Gay Italian Wedding</i>	Gregorio/Choreographer	Dir. Teresa Cicala
<i>Apartment 3A</i>	Tony	Dir. Valentina Fratti

Selected Directing/Choreography Credits:OFF BROADWAY

<i>My Big Gay Italian Wedding</i>	Choreographer	St. Luke's Theatre
<i>Boys Just Wanna Have Fun</i>	Choreographer	The Actor's Playhouse

OTHER

<i>Cabaret</i>	Director/Choreographer	Maverick Theatre Company
<i>9 to 5</i>	Director/Choreographer	Maverick Theatre Company
<i>Spring Awakening</i>	Director/Choreographer	Maverick Theatre Company
<i>Moving Forward (World Premiere)</i>	Director	University of Texas Arlington
<i>Results Will Vary</i>	Director/Co-Creator	Penn State University - New Student Orientation
<i>Cabaret</i>	Director/Choreographer	Penn State University
<i>A Little Night Music</i>	Choreographer	Penn State Centre Stage
<i>Paint Your Wagon</i>	Assistant to the Director	The MUNY - Dir. Josh Rhodes
<i>Men on Boats</i>	Director	Penn State Centre Stage
<i>Hands on a Hardbody</i>	Choreographer	Penn State Centre Stage
<i>Constellations</i>	Director	Penn State University
<i>Penn State Halftime Show</i>	Choreographer	Beaver Stadium - Penn State vs Ohio State Football
<i>Kiss of the Spider Woman</i>	Choreographer	Penn State Centre Stage
<i>Rotterdam</i>	Director	Penn State University
<i>Elektric (World Premiere)</i>	Director	NuMusical Festival
<i>Be More Chill</i>	Choreographer	Penn State Centre Stage
<i>110 in the Shade</i>	Choreographer	Penn State Centre Stage
<i>Something Wicked This Way Comes</i>	Co-Director	NuMusical Festival
<i>Women Front and Centre</i>	Director/Creator	NuMusical Festival
<i>Dogfight</i>	Choreographer	Penn State Centre Stage
<i>Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade</i>	Choreographer	NBC
<i>On the Town</i>	Choreographer	CAP21 Mainstage
<i>Urinetown</i>	Choreographer	CAP21 Mainstage
<i>StinkyKids the Musical</i>	Choreographer	Vital Theatre Company
<i>Children of Eden</i>	Choreographer	CAP21 Mainstage
<i>The Brain that Wouldn't Die: in 3D</i>	Choreographer	NY Musical Theatre Festival
<i>The A List</i>	Choreographer	Bravo TV
<i>MTV Woodie Awards</i>	Choreographer	MTV

Florida Teacher of the Year Awards	Choreographer	Universal Studios
Book of Secrets	Choreographer/Creator	Edinburgh Fringe Festival
National Educators Association	Choreographer	Walt Disney World

### **Leadership Experience**

The University of Texas at Arlington 2020-Present

- Area Head of the BFA in Musical Theatre
  - Duties include recruitment, student and faculty mentoring, search committee assignments for the hiring of faculty, committee assignments (department, college, and University), adjusting and maintaining the BFA curriculum to align with NAST guidelines, and administrative duties associated with a BFA program of approx. 52 students.

Broadway Donation 2013-2020

- Co-Founder/Artistic Director, Teacher
  - Artistic direction of Broadway Donation, a non-profit organization that provides weekly donation-based dance classes and workshops to musical theatre professionals working in New York City. Duties include scheduling, hiring teachers, publicity, promotion, training and managing staff, and strategic planning.

S.T.A.T.E. Summer Program 2017-2020

- Coordinator of Dance, Instructor
  - Coordination of Penn State Musical Theatre's two week pre-college program. Duties include scheduling dance classes, creating curriculum, hiring dance faculty, reviewing applicants, and leveling around 35 accepted students. Also in charge of coaching and filming pre-screen monologue, song, and dance videos for participants.

The Pennsylvania State University 2014-2018

- Co-Coordinator of Dance
  - Coordination of dance classes for BFA Musical Theatre and BS Dance Majors. Duties included relaying information between the Heads, faculty, staff and students, scheduling, developing and implementing curriculum, reviewing and auditioning applicants, assessing and placing students, academic advising, and collaborating with other dance faculty. Students total 48 BFA Musical Theatre Majors and 25 Dance Majors.

NuMusical Theatre Festival 2015, 2017

- Associate Artistic Director, Director/Choreographer
  - Associate direction of the NuMusical festival, a 2-4 week festival in conjunction with Centre County Artsfest that workshops and performs new musicals. Duties included finding/contacting authors of new works, season planning, budgeting, casting, directing, consulting with authors on their work, directing, choreographing, and promotional events.

2014-2016

## Musiktheater Bavaria

- Head of Musical Theatre, Dance and Acting Instructor
  - Heading the musical theatre studio of a 4 week intensive in Oberaudorf, Germany. Duties included creating/implementing the dance and acting curriculum, recruiting students, directing 3 public concerts each summer, class and rehearsal scheduling, selecting and supervising Musical Theatre faculty, choreographing, and teaching daily acting and dance classes for both the opera and musical theatre studios. Students totaled around 8 musical theatre students and 15 opera students.

## CAP21 Conservatory

2013-2014

- Dance Department Coordinator, Admissions Assistant, Teacher
  - Coordination of the two year professional training program and the summer pre-college and professional programs. Duties included revising dance curriculum, hiring and managing 20 dance faculty members, observing classes, monitoring students level and progress, reviewing grades, annual faculty reviews, student advising, mediating conflicts, recruiting, reviewing and processing applications, running auditions and placements. Students totaled around 46 two-year certificate students and 80 summer program students.

### **Other Teaching Experience:**

Texas Thespians Conference	Workshops in College Pre-screen Prep	2020, 2021
College Audition Prep Weekend	Workshops in College Audition Prep	2020, 2021
Broadway Donation	Theatre Dance, How to be a Swing	2013-2020
Summer University Theatre Experience	College Audition Prep	2019, 2020
Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts	How to be a Swing - Masterclass	2019
Showa University of Music (Tokyo, Japan)	Guest Artist	2015, 2017
Joop Den van den Ende Academy (Hamburg, Germany)	Audition Prep	2015
Broadway Dance Center	Jazz/Theatre Dance	2013-2014
Musiktheater Bavaria (Oberaudorf, Germany)	Acting, Dance, Head of Musical Theatre	2002, 2012-2016
Chattanooga High School Center for the Performing Arts	Song Analysis Masterclass	2013
Theatre Arts Center	Dance, Movement and Acting	2009, 2010
Broadway Connection	Song Analysis and Dance Masterclasses	2009-2010
NYU Graduate Acting	Guest Dance Instructor	2005
Act III Acting Studios	Acting/Scene Study/Musical Theatre	2000-2001

## **Publications**

*Musical Theatre: A Handbook of Practical Exercises* 2020

- Selected by Digital Theatre+ to author an online handbook of 15 exercises to bring together techniques from the three areas of musical theatre. This handbook introduces and reinforces the vocabulary needed for teachers and students who wish to gain a clear process for learning a monologue, song, or dance. There is a consistent narrative that carefully helps young artists trust their own instincts and experiences when first interacting with dramatic material. Digital Theatre + is an online educational subscription website used by over three million students at 2,000 academic institutions in over 80 countries.

*Broadway Swings: Covering the Ensemble in Musical Theatre* 2015

- Part “how-to” and part stories from the best Swings on Broadway, *Broadway Swings* educates future Swings and theatre enthusiasts on what it takes to be a Swing. Research includes over 100 interviews with Swings from such shows as the original *West Side Story*, *Starlight Express*, *Carrie*, *Wicked* and *The Book of Mormon*, as well as interviews with Industry professionals like Rob Ashford, Jerry Mitchell and Susan Stroman (who also wrote the foreword for the book). Published on October 22, 2015 by Bloomsbury/Methuen Drama. ISBN-10: 1472590015

## **Creative Research:**

*Queer-Feminist-Antiracism and Design for the Future* 2021-2022

- On Friday, June 3, 2022 J. Austin Eyer and six undergraduate theatre students presented an exhibition performance titled *Design for the Future* at the MIT Media Lab in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This performance was the culmination of a two-semester hybrid course titled “Queer-Feminist-Antiracism and Design for the Future,” co-taught with MIT Professor Danielle Wood. Course material included works by Audre Lorde, bell hooks, Ibram Kendi, Gloria Anzaldúa, Lyrae Van Clief-Stefanon, Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Ntozake Shange, and Zora Neale Hurston. The live event brought the two campuses of MIT and the University of Texas at Arlington, together. UTA students traveled to the MIT campus to devise a piece of social justice theatre based on their research and readings from the fall and spring semesters. The students wrote and composed three pieces alongside the course instructors, guest artist Jennifer Harrison Newman, and projectionist Paul Lieber. The final performance explored concepts of joy, drawing from the rich traditions explored in the class of Black, Queer and Feminist cultural innovation. The event also exhibited the final projects from MIT graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in the course.

*Results will Vary\** 2017-2020

- Director and co-creator of a 40 minute musical sketch comedy show that works in conjunction with Penn State’s New Student Orientation. All incoming University Park students, around 8,200 total, see this interactive theatre performance, which helps prepare students for their first few weeks on campus. Topics include diversity/inclusion, campus resources, responsible drug/alcohol consumption, and

consent. Duties include co-creating/writing, budgets, hiring, casting, mentoring, editing, and upkeep of the show over ten weeks of the summer.

*Capsid: A Love Song*

2017

- Artist in Residence for a four week exhibition in support of research of HIV narratives in contemporary culture. This project was panel selected and funded by the Borland Space Project. Four public events were hosted in the space, including two interdisciplinary panels on art, science and the history of HIV, a reading of the 2017 Lambda-nominated work *Capsid* by the author/scientist Joseph Osmundson, and a theatrical staging and presentation of *Capsid: A Love Song*. Research/duties included proposal submission, creating a budget, acquiring additional funding for the author's campus visit, creating public programming, researching the history of HIV (in art, activism, pop culture and literature), researching the biology of the virus, creating a public gallery space that displays this artistic research, and directing a theatrical workshop of *Capsid*.

### **Conference Papers / Presentations**

*Enhancing Student Learning with Educational Theatre in Orientation*

2022

- Co-Presentation - **NODA (Association for Orientation in Higher Ed)- Baltimore, MD**
  - Former Penn State colleagues-Dan Murphy (Director of Student Affairs) and Katie Motycki (Director of NSO) reached out and we submitted a proposal to the NODA Conference to share our experience creating an interactive theatre piece to enhance New Student Orientation at Penn State (a project that is about to begin its 6th iteration next summer). The presentation discussed the origin story of Results will Vary\*, a brief history of theatre as a teaching tool, how data is collected after each show, an overview of the budget, styles of theatre used in the creation of the show, the personnel needed, and the process of devising theatre with messaging that strengthens and applies orientation messaging.

*Pause/Notice/Direct: Using Alexander Technique for Performance Preparation*

2022

- Demonstration Panel - **ATHE (Association for Theatre in Higher Education)- Detroit, MI**
  - Mindfulness and Self-Care in Practice - Five presenters share, in this "show-and-tell" style presentation, the practical application of various tools and techniques for incorporating mindfulness and self-care into your classroom and rehearsal spaces. Subjects include: active meditation, the Hakomi Method, the Alexander Technique, and the Michael Chekhov Technique.

*A Strange Loop: A Big, Black and Queer-Ass Musical*

2021

- Paper and Panel Discussion - **ATHE (Association for Theatre in Higher Education)- Austin, TX**
  - It is a common public cliché that Broadway is gay, and many scholars in musical theatre argue that the musical is a queer art form. From queer subtext and coding, to diva worship and the exaltation of gay icons, to drag and camp, a queer reading of a Broadway musical is not a stretch for the imagination. But has a QUEER musical ever been produced on Broadway? The musical *A Strange Loop* is clear about its purpose, through the voice of the queer protagonist, Michael R. Jackson wants to "show what it's like to...travel the world in a fat, Black queer body." This queer-ass musical, which was written and directed by queer artists for a queer audience, "conjures up" a number of current queer topics including HIV prevention, fetishization, barebacking, intersectionality, and racism within the queer community. In this paper I examine how Jackson's musical offers the possibility of a truly queer musical.

*Queer Representation in Musical Theatre from the Pansy Craze to A Strange Loop* 2021

- Paper Presentation - **Song, Stage, and Screen - Salzburg, Austria**
- Paper Presentation - **Watershed Festival - Toronto, Canada**
  - Musical theatre is an art form that queer and questioning students/performers seek out as an “accepting space” for authentic expression; however, commercial musical theatre has historically failed to represent the queer and trans\* community on the stage. By tracing the queer and trans\* representation in musical theatre from the “pansy craze” of the 1930s to *A Strange Loop* in 2019, I will show the lack of queer roles in mainstream musical theatre. Musical theatre continues to be dominated by cis-heteronormative stories where queer representation is relegated to funny sidekicks, or the tragic death of its queer character. The opportunities for meaningful queer and trans\* storylines exist in just a handful of shows. Citing queer critical works by John Kenrick, Stacy Wolf, and Georg Chauncey, I will also look to emerging queer artists that have created a momentum for more inclusive practices.

*Broadway Understudies, Dance Captains, and Swings* 2021

- Panel Discussion - **Broadway Stage Manager Symposium - Virtual Forum**
  - The Broadway Stage Management Symposium is a two-day forum featuring a series of panels, lectures and seminars by some of Broadway's most experienced stage managers. “Understudies, Swings, & More” brings together Broadway understudies, dance captains, and swings: James Brown III (*Harry Potter*), J. Austin Eyer (*Evita*), Josh Breckenridge (*Come From Away*), & Jennie Ford (*An American in Paris*) to share insights on their process and collaboration with stage managers.

*Creating Space for Queer and Questioning Students* 2019

- Paper Presentation - **NDEO (National Dance Education Organization) - Providence, RI**
  - Current dance pedagogy and career-based ideology are proving problematic for this generation of young theatre artists. This paper addresses best practices for supporting queer, trans\* and questioning students, such as adjusting delivery of curricular content, adding more inclusive repertoire, and staying up on LGBTQA+ vocabulary. The paper explores how to avoid the use of coded or binary language while giving feedback to students, and examines the pressure that exists for students to conform to narrow definitions of masculinity and femininity in the field of dance and musical theatre.

### University Service

*The University of Texas at Arlington:*

LGBTQ+ Faculty & Staff Network - Vice President (University)	2022-Present
Search Committee for Department Chair - Member (Department)	2022-Present
Search Committee for Assistant Professor of Design - Member (Department)	2021-2022
Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Committee - Member (Department)	2020-Present
Curriculum Committee - Member (Department)	2020-Present
CoLA Research Awards Committee - Member (College)	2020-Present
Student Mentorship - Mentor (Program)	2020-Present
Women and Gender Studies Working Group - Member (University)	2020-2021



**Penn State:**

LGBTQA+ Theatre Alliance - Faculty Advisor	2015-2020
Diversity Committee - Member	2014-2020
Penn State Students for Diversity - Faculty Advisor	2016-2018
Academic Advisement for Musical Theatre and Dance majors	2014-2018
Undergraduate Curriculum Committee - Member	2015-2017
<b>CAP21/NYU:</b>	
Student and Faculty Advisor	2010-2014

**Continuing Education**

Contemporary Alexander School	2021-present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance of ongoing workshops and intensives in the Contemporary Alexander Technique and its connection to research of the “physical armor” that BIPOC and queer students build through kinesthetic strategies of survival. Graduation from CAS and certification with the Alexander Alliance International is projected for 2025.</li> </ul>	
Intimacy Directors and Coordinators, and Theatrical Intimacy Education	2020-2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance of IDC’s ongoing workshops in LGBTQ+ representation, as well as their 4-week Level 1 Intensive in theatrical intimacy.</li> </ul>	
QPR - Question, Persuade, and Refer - Suicide Prevention	2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance of The Jordan Elizabeth Harris Foundation QPR training course. Question, Persuade, and Refer is suicide prevention training designed to give every person the confidence and competence to help someone at risk for suicide. The course teaches three simple steps: how to recognize the warning signs, offer hope, and get help.</li> </ul>	
Theatrical Intimacy Education	2020-2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance of TIE workshops in theatrical intimacy for virtual productions, as well as their Introduction to Theatrical Intimacy Direction - Best Practices.</li> </ul>	
Anti-racism Training	2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A virtual training course presented by the Diversity and Resilience Institute of El Paso.</li> </ul>	

*\*Professional and academic references available upon request*