

J. Austin Eyer

Unions: AEA

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

My career consists of Broadway, Off-Broadway, and National Tour credits, a published book, professional skills as a theatre director and choreographer, creative academic research, leadership as head of a BFA program, and 20 years of international teaching experience (including two top-ten American musical theatre programs). My current research focuses on queer representation in musical theatre and best practices for training queer and questioning students in the performing arts.

Education:

The Pennsylvania State University May 2020

- MFA in Theatre, Concentration in Directing (Susan H. Schulman - Advisor)

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 approximately 52 Musical Theatre BFAs, 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, and 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- topics in directing, arts admin, devising, and theatre for social justice

The Pennsylvania State University 2014-2020

- Assistant Teaching Professor of Theatre, Co-coordinator of dance

Primary students included 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 Dance (the roots and branches of Jazz), and Beginning Jazz
- Sophomore Studio—Song Analysis and Musical Scene Study
- Junior Studio—Scene Study (plays and musicals)
- Musical Theatre Dance Styles
- Advanced Jazz
- Senior Studio—NYC Industry Showcase and Cabaret
- Independent Study—special topics include how to swing, assist, dance captain, partner, and an introduction to 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... Billy Elliot</i>	Swing (9 tracks) /Assist. Dance Captain Ensemble (u/s Tony)	Dir./Chor. Rob Ashford 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>On the Town</i>	Director/Choreographer	University of Texas Arlington
<i>Footloose</i>	Director/Choreographer	The Firehouse Theatre
<i>Head Over Heels</i>	Director/Choreographer	University of Texas Arlington
<i>Saturday Night Fever</i>	Choreographer	The Firehouse Theatre
<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 Student Orientation
<i>The 25th Annual...Spelling Bee *2020</i>	Director/Choreographer	Penn State Centre Stage
<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>Constellations</i>	Director	Penn State University
<i>Rotterdam</i>	Director	Penn State University
<i>Elektric (World Premiere)</i>	Director	NuMusical Festival
<i>Hands on a Hardbody</i>	Choreographer	Penn State Centre Stage
<i>Penn State Halftime Show</i>	Choreographer	Beaver Stadium
<i>Kiss of the Spider Woman</i>	Choreographer	Penn State Centre Stage
<i>Be More Chill</i>	Choreographer	Penn State Centre Stage
<i>Something Wicked This Way Comes</i>	Co-Director (Brian Hill)	NuMusical Festival
<i>Women Front and Centre</i>	Director/Creator	NuMusical Festival
<i>Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade</i>	Choreographer	NBC
<i>Urinetown</i>	Choreographer	CAP21 Mainstage
<i>StinkyKids the Musical</i>	Choreographer	Vital Theatre Company
<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
<i>Florida Teacher of the Year Awards</i>	Choreographer	Universal Studios
<i>Book of Secrets</i>	Choreographer/Creator	Edinburgh Fringe Festival
<i>National Educators Association</i>	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 provided weekly donation-based dance classes and workshops to musical theatre professionals working in New York City. Duties included 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 included 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.

Musiktheater Bavaria

2014-2016

- 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 schedules, selecting and supervising Musical Theatre faculty, choreographing, and teaching daily acting and dance classes for the opera and musical theatre studios. Students totaled around 8 musical theatre students and 15 opera students each summer.

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 the 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, and running auditions or placements. Students totaled around 46 two-year certificate students and 80 summer program students.

Other Teaching Experience:

Meadowmount School of Music	Contemporary Alexander Technique	2024
Dr. Phillips High School	College Audition Prep	2023
Booker T. Washington High School	Workshop in Audition Prep	2023
Musiktheater Bavaria (Oberaudorf, Germany)	Acting, Alexander Technique, Dance, Head of Musical Theatre	2012-2016, 2023
American Musical Theatre Live (Paris, France)	Alexander and Movement	2023
Oberlin College	Intro to The Alexander Technique	2023
Dreyfoos School of the Arts	Broadway Swing Workshop	2022
Texas Thespians Conference	Workshops in College Pre-screen Prep	2020, 2021
College Audition Prep Weekend	Workshops in College Audition Prep	2020-2021, 2023
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)	Broadway Guest Artist	2015, 2017
Joop Den van den Ende Academy (Hamburg, Germany)	The Process of Casting Intensive	2015
Broadway Dance Center	Jazz/Theatre Dance	2013-2014
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

Author

- 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

Co-Author

- 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. The 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 - MIT and UTA 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 7th 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 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 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 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 the 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.

Grants and Awards

Nominated for Faculty Research Award	2024
CoLA Faculty Research Endowment	2023
Nominated for Faculty Diversity Award	2023
MIT CAST Cross-Disciplinary Class Grant (Co-Writer)	2021

University and Professional Service

<i>The University of Texas at Arlington:</i>	
LGBTQ+ Faculty & Staff Network - President (University)	2022-Present
IDEAS Meetings - Culture and Inclusion Officer (Department)	2023-Present
Curriculum Committee - Member (Department)	2020-Present
Student Mentorship - Mentor (Program)	2020-Present
Search Committee - Head (1), Member (3)	2022-Present
Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Committee - Member (Department)	2020-2023
CoLA Research Awards Committee - Member (College)	2020-2023
Women and Gender Studies Working Group - Member (University)	2020-2021
<i>Penn State:</i>	
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
<i>CAP21/NYU:</i>	
Student and Faculty Advisor	2010-2014
<i>Professional Service:</i>	
Musiktheater Bavaria - Board Member	2021-Present

Continuing Education

The Contemporary Alexander School 2021-present

- 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.

KultureCity Sensory Inclusive Training 2023

- KultureCity strives to create acceptance and inclusion for all by promoting the freedom for everyone to be included in all activities everywhere. Since 1 in 4 individuals in the USA has a sensory processing need, this training discusses how to understand and accept this growing community while teaching how individuals with sensory needs view the world.

Intimacy Directors and Coordinators 2020-2022

- Attendance of IDC’s ongoing workshops in LGBTQ+ representation, as well as their 4-week Level 1 Intensive in theatrical intimacy.

Creating Safe, Inclusive Theatre Programs for Trans and Non-Binary Students 2021

- Attendance of a seminar co-sponsored by Re: Theatre and A Place for Us. This seminar celebrates trans and nonbinary artists in musical theatre, by supporting and amplifying the incredible trans, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming artists in the theatre community from Broadway to the UK. This seminar also aims to provide education and resources for continued structural change and a brighter future for trans and nonbinary young people in theatre. Speakers included Preston Allen, Sis, Maybe Burke, Lee Harrison, L Morgan Lee, Pooya Mohseni, and Aneesh Sheth.

QPR - Question, Persuade, and Refer - Suicide Prevention 2021

- 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.

Theatrical Intimacy Education 2020-2021

- Attendance of TIE workshops in theatrical intimacy for virtual productions, as well as their Introduction to Theatrical Intimacy Direction - Best Practices.

Anti-racism Training 2020

- A virtual training course presented by the Diversity and Resilience Institute of El Paso.

**Professional and academic references available upon request*