

# Courtney Esser

Teacher/Actor/Facilitator

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206.393.8204 

Denver, CO/New York, NY 

linkedin.com/in/courtney-esser 

## EDUCATION

MASTER OF FINE ARTS  
Acting  
National Theatre Conservatory  
Class of 2012

BACHELOR OF ARTS  
Drama, minor in History  
University of Washington  
Class of 2005

## TOOLBOX

Catherine Fitzmaurice Voice/Speech  
Phonetic Alphabet and Dialects  
Augusta Boal-Forum Theatre,  
Theatre of the Oppressed  
Low-Flying Trapeze and Aerial Dance  
Joan Skinner Releasing  
Viewpoints and Suzuki Techniques  
Stanislavsky Method and Meisner  
15 years of Ballet, Modern, and Jazz  
Directing  
Choreography  
New Play Development  
Devised Ensemble and Student-  
Generated Theatre

## PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Actor in the field for over 25 years across the country. Educator of university, adult, and K-12 students in New York City and Denver for ten years in a variety of dramatic disciplines including acting, voice/speech, and movement. MFA from a top-tier graduate school boasting nationally recognized acting and movement programs, and an emphasis on scratch made theatre. Directed and acted as a member of New York-based AMIOS Theatre Company. Highly valued for ability to connect with students and colleagues, lead an ensemble, and cultivate creativity and enthusiasm. Adaptable and flexible with a strong facility for elevating and inspiring regardless of age, level, or ability.

## EXPERIENCE

### Teaching Artist

**Denver Center Theatre Company – Education Department (Adult and K-12 Programs)**  
**Denver, CO – 2011-2012, and 2014-Present**

Having successfully served as a K-12 instructor and co-director of teen showcases, the director of education along with multiple colleagues recommended that my role be expanded to cultivate a place for voice and speech with the adult acting program. Proving myself a passionately competent instructor across a variety of theatrical disciplines, my role evolved to include teaching movement for actors, low flying trapeze, and leading an ensemble made movement project.

### Adult Program

- Facilitated authentic and dynamic dramatic storytelling from students of all backgrounds and abilities by encouraging them to find meaning and personal investment in their own work.
- Translated master's level voice and movement curriculum into a language the entire class could speak and cultivated a conservatory level commitment to whole body listening, whole body speaking, and whole body acting.
- Employed multiple modalities and techniques in order to best serve the needs of each class: Catherine Fitzmaurice voicework, Viewpoints training, Augusta Boal Forum/Theatre of the Oppressed, and Joan Skinner release work.
- Encouraged and inspired students to harness the power of their unique voice and their unique body efficiently, effectively, and safely, and to take that work into their everyday.
- Led multiple voice/speech and movement workshops for the Denver business community, schools, and theatre companies including devising and adapting voice/speech and low-flying trapeze classes for Phamaly (Physically Handicapped Amateur Musical Actors League).
- Consistently requested back as a teacher and co-teacher by students and colleagues.

### K-12 Program

- Taught K-12 students a variety of theater-based concentrations including dance/movement for actors, Viewpoints, Augusta Boal Forum/Theatre of the Oppressed, Leban, and Joan Skinner Releasing
- Designed and adapted lesson plans to be engaging and enriching for all ages.
- Facilitated the process of wholly creating and rehearsing an original musical performed by young people.
- Acted as assistant director, voice/speech coach, and choreographer of teen intensives of fully produced original plays.

### Private Coaching

- Honed students' acting and audition skills and led them toward successful entry into a variety of schools and programs.

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## CHARACTER(ISTICS)

Charismatic and Disarming Facilitator

Able to Manage a Classroom with  
Humor and Grace

Keen Listener

Flexible and Intuitive

Generous Ensemble Member &  
Inspiring Ensemble Maker

Diligent, Creative, and Articulate

Infectiously Passionate and a  
Consummate Theatre Artist

Imaginative, Connective, and Student-  
Centered

## FURTHER TRAINING

THE ACTORS CENTER  
CONSERVATORY  
New York, NY

Nine Month Intensive, 2006

Acting, voice, movement, clown, & mask  
with Yale, Juilliard, & NYU faculty.

Shakespeare with members of the Royal  
Shakespeare Company.

PACIFIC PERFORMANCE PROJECT  
Seattle, WA

Three Week Intensive, 2005

Suzuki Technique with Robyn Hunt and  
Steve Pearson.

## EXPERIENCE continued

### Teaching Artist

**Theatre Development Fund (Stage Doors and New Audiences)  
New York, NY - 2012-2014**

The Theatre Development Fund's Education department aims to make hands on theatrical experiences accessible to students and community members regardless of economic background. My position with TDF incorporated intensive training from a variety of NYC's top artists and facilitators from Broadway to Lincoln Center. I led several residencies that introduced plays to high school students and utilized a plethora of interdisciplinary dramatic techniques to engage them more deeply with curriculum. Noting my ability to inspire students and teachers, the Director of Education invited me to help develop their New Audiences program where I led workshops for university students and community members that used theatre to more deeply connect them to their own lives and their own stories.

### New Audiences

- Facilitated an experience that made Broadway and Off-Broadway shows accessible to university students and adults at multiple institutions in underserved communities throughout NYC and its boroughs.
- Generated a passion for and connection to theatre through workshops and exercises that engaged students in an active dialogue about the stories they see, and the stories they feel need to be told.
- Created a space where students could share their own experience, find community, and openly challenge adversity and disenfranchisement.
- Scaffolded a process where students used their stories to create dramatic art.
- Requested back several times by students and partnering institutions.

### Stage Doors

- Taught multiple residencies in Harlem, the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens that used theatre as a means to connect students of all backgrounds more deeply to themselves and to classroom curriculum.
- Cultivated perspective and empathy using viscerally connective dramatic experiences, i.e. leading students through a physical theatre exercise that guided them into the body of a WWI soldier in trench warfare.
- Collaborated with head teachers to develop and implement a line of inquiry that was both artistically evocative and able to meet educational concerns.
- Scaffolded a process of student generated creative work that encouraged personal endowment and an ensemble ethic, and which culminated in a final presentation.

## RELATED EXPERIENCE

**Actor/Facilitator -Kaiser Permanente Arts Integration  
Denver, CO - 2019-Present**

- Developed national Rise-Up initiative for both live and virtual platforms as one of three members of the flagship Colorado team.
- Act in and facilitate workshops that provide educators and staff with hands on professional development focused on navigating student interactions with a trauma sensitive approach and cultivating a culture of resilience.

### Professional Actor and Theatre Maker

**New York, Denver, and Other - 2008-Present**

- Member of Actors' Equity since 2008, performer in regional and summer stock theatre since 1988.
- Conceived, created, and performed solo Shakespeare show based on King Lear's Cordelia using cross texts and original work.
- Created and performed in multiple shows using poetry, low-flying trapeze, and aerial dance as part of the storytelling.