

**STUDY GUIDE:
Students & Educators**

New York Premiere

**SHE PERSISTED,
THE MUSICAL**

script & lyrics by Adam Tobin
music by Deborah Wicks La Puma
adapted from the book written by
Chelsea Clinton & illustrated by
Alexandra Boiger
published by Philomel Books
music supervision by **Macy Schmidt**
Directed & Choreographed by
MK Lawson



Heather Baird
Director of Education

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I | THE PLAY

Synopsis

Themes

SECTION II | THE CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

Creative Biographies

Characters/Cast List

Behind the Scenes Look

SECTION III | YOUR STUDENTS AS AUDIENCE

Theater Vocabulary

She Persisted, the Musical Vocabulary

The Women of *She Persisted, the Musical*

SECTION IV | YOUR STUDENTS AS ACTORS

Reading a Scene for Understanding

Scene/Character Analysis

SECTION V | YOUR STUDENTS AS ARTISTS

Post Theater Creative Response Activity: Role Models

Drawing to Write Activity

Creating Your Own Review: Thumbs Up Or Thumbs Down?

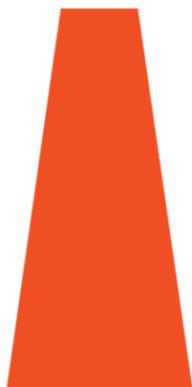
Common Core & DOE Theater Blueprint

SECTION VI | THE ATLANTIC LEGACY

SECTION I: THE PLAY

Synopsis

Themes



SYNOPSIS

This new musical, inspired by Chelsea Clinton's best-selling book, *She Persisted: 13 American Women Who Changed the World*, tells the story of a fourth-grade girl whose trip with her class to the museum turns into an adventure in time travel during which she meets inspirational women who are overcoming barriers and making history.

THEMES

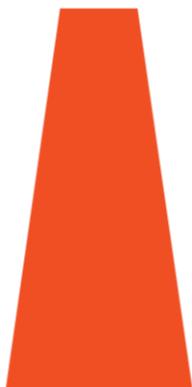
- Empowering Women
- Overcoming Obstacles
- Role Models
- Feminism
- Courage
- Time
- Dreams

SECTION II: THE CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

Creative Biographies

Characters/Cast List

Behind the Scenes Look



CREATIVE BIOGRAPHIES

ADAM TOBIN (*Script & Lyrics*) is the writer and lyricist of *She Persisted, The Musical*, adapted from Chelsea Clinton's children's book for Bay Area Children's Theatre. A Senior Lecturer teaching screenwriting and television at Stanford University, Tobin created the television series "About a Girl" and "Best Friend's Date" for Viacom's The-N network (now TeenNick), won an Emmy for writing on Discovery Channel's "Cash Cab," and worked in script development for Jim Henson Pictures and The National Basketball Association. He has taught story seminars to DreamWorks Animation, Aardman Animation, and Blue Sky Studios. Tobin also performed with Los Angeles Theatresports and the comedy group The But Franklies, and was a founding member of the Stanford Improvisors. He holds a Bachelor's degree from Stanford in English and an MFA from USC School of Cinematic Arts in Screenwriting.

DEBORAH WICKS LA PUMA (*Music*). A composer, music director and orchestrator, Deborah Wicks La Puma is one of the most produced Theatre for Young Audiences artists working today. With bestselling children's author Mo Willems she has created *Elephant and Piggie's: We Are In A Play* (The Kennedy Center), and *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience* (Seattle Children's Theatre). Her many and diverse works with playwright Karen Zacarías include *Ella Enchanted* (based on the book by Gail Carson Levine), *Olivério: A Brazilian Twist* (The Kennedy Center), *Frida Libre* (La Jolla Playhouse), *Looking for Roberto Clemente* (Imagination Stage) and *Einstein Is a Dummy* (The Alliance Theatre). With playwright Doug Cooney, La Puma created *Nobody's Perfect* (based on the book by Marlee Matlin), a bilingual musical in English and American Sign Language, commissioned by Very Special Arts and the Kennedy Center. Upcoming 2019 premieres include *She Persisted, The Musical* (based on the book by Chelsea Clinton) with Adam Tobin at Bay Area Children's Theatre, and *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus: The Musical* with Mo Willems at the Kennedy Center. Her adult works include the lyric opera *Dakota Sky* and the Mexican folk musical *Perdita* (based on Shakespeare's Winter's Tale) with Kathleen Cahill; and Cornerstone Theater Company's *Making Paradise: The West Hollywood Musical*. She received her MFA from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, her Bachelor's degree from Stanford University, and she studied folk music with ethnomusicologist Alfredo López Mondragón. Her honors include the Jane Chambers Playwriting Award, an NEA New American Works Grant, two Parents' Choice Awards, and a Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Musical Adaptation. A proud Mexican-American and "Navy brat" who grew up in Brazil, Portugal and California, La Puma is a member of TYA USA/ASSITEJ, ASCAP and The Dramatists Guild. Mother to three daughters and Mimi the Cat, La Puma lives in Southern California with her PR agent and loving husband, Chris.

CHELSEA CLINTON (*Original Book Author*). As vice chair of the Clinton Foundation, Chelsea Clinton works alongside the Foundation's leadership and partners to help create economic opportunity, improve public health, and inspire civic engagement and service across the United States and around the world. In particular, Chelsea focuses on promoting early brain and language development through the Too Small to Fail initiative, and uplifting/empowering female entrepreneurs and women-led businesses around the world through initiatives like the Caribbean-focused Women in Renewable Energy (WIRE) Network. She also serves on the boards of the Clinton Health Access Initiative and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. In addition to her Foundation work, Chelsea also teaches at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health and has written several books for young readers, including *The New York Times* bestsellers *She Persisted: 13 American Women Who Changed the World* and *She Persisted Around the World*, as well as *Start Now! You Can Make a Difference; Don't Let Them Disappear*; and *It's Your World: Get Informed, Get Inspired & Get Going*. She is also the co-author of *The Book of Gutsy Women* and *Grandma's Gardens* with her mom Hillary Clinton and of *Governing Global Health: Who Runs the World and Why?* with Devi Sridhar. Chelsea holds a Bachelor of Arts from Stanford, a Master of Public Health from Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health, and both a Master of Philosophy and a Doctorate in international relations from Oxford University. She lives with her husband Marc, their children Charlotte, Aidan and Jasper, and dog Soren in New York City.

ALEXANDRA BOIGER (*Illustrator*) grew up in Munich, Germany as the youngest of seven children. She studied Graphic Design at the Fachhochschule Augsburg before working in Feature Animation at Warner Brothers and DreamWorks. After working in animation, Alexandra decided to pursue a lifelong dream of becoming a children's book illustrator. She has illustrated many picture books, including *She Persisted: 13 American Women Who Changed the World*. *Max and Marla* was her debut as both author and illustrator. Alexandra now lives in Northern California with her husband and daughter.

MACY SCHMIDT (*Music Supervisor*) is an NYC-based Music Director, Orchestrator, and Copyist. Most recently, she worked on the Broadway production of *TINA: The Tina Turner Musical*. She spends much of her time on projects collaborating with contemporary musical theatre artists on musicals in development. Macy has taken her work across the globe as well, and recently returned from Asia, where she Music Directed for Shanghai Starz, an international musical theatre camp in Shanghai, China, and India, where she worked on the music team for the London-bound stage adaptation of *Monsoon Wedding*. Macy also serves as a faculty pianist at the Manhattan School of Music & Cap 21 Conservatory, and teaches Music Theory at Pace University. She is a passionate advocate for women in music. macyschmidtmusic.com

MK LAWSON (*Director, Choreographer*) is always happy to be back working for one of her favorite companies, having directed and choreographed the world premiere of *The Big One-Oh!* earlier this season. MK has choreographed 5 other amazing projects for Atlantic for Kids, and directed last season's *James and the Giant Peach*. As a choreographer: award-winning productions for Florida Rep, White Plains Performing Arts Center, Ocean State Theatre Company, and Sharon Playhouse; numerous productions and events for NYU. As a director/choreographer: new musicals for the International Fringe Festival and NY Children's Theatre Festival; *Celebration, Brigadoon* and *The Secret Garden* (NYU); upcoming immersive revival of *The Drowsy Chaperone* (Out of the Box Theatrics). As an Associate Director: *Romy and Michele's High School Reunion* (world premiere at the 5th Avenue), *The Gentle Whisper of Trees* (Westport Country Playhouse), *Atlantis*: a new musical (world premiere at Virginia Rep), *Rock of Ages* 10th Anniversary production (New World Stages). If you wanna know more check out mklawson.com !

CHARACTERS/CAST LIST



Auberth Bercy
Ruby Bridges/Bailey



Jianzi Colón-Soto
Sonia Sotomayer/
Juno



Amanda Corday
Dr. Virginia Apgar/
Sally Ride



Amber Jaunai
Naomi



Cynthia Nesbit
Harriet
Tubman/Florence
Griffith-Joyner



Heather Sawyer
Ms. Chan/Time

BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK AT REHEARSAL

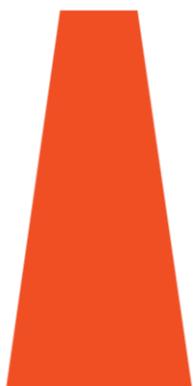


SECTION III: YOUR STUDENTS AS AUDIENCE

Theater Vocabulary

She Persisted, the Musical Vocabulary

The Women of *She Persisted, the Musical*



THEATER VOCABULARY

TEACHER OBJECTIVE

To be able to discuss theater through a common, shared vocabulary.

STUDENT GOAL

To understand that the most effective way to discuss theater and new ideas is through a shared vocabulary.

OVERTURE: An orchestral piece at the beginning of an opera, suite, play, oratorio, or other extended composition.

GHOST LIGHT: An electric light that is left energized on the stage of a theater when the theater is unoccupied and would otherwise be completely dark.

PROLOGUE: A separate introductory section of a literary or musical work.

VOICE OVER: A piece of narration in a movie or live performance, not accompanied by an image of the speaker.

REPRISE: A repeated passage in music.

NARRATOR: A person who delivers a commentary accompanying a movie, broadcast, piece of music, etc.

CURTAIN CALL: The appearance of one or more performers on stage after a performance to acknowledge the audience's applause.

FICTION: Literature in the form of prose, especially short stories and novels, that describes imaginary events and people.

GENDER NEUTRAL CASTING: Casting which allows actors to portray any character, irrespective of gender.

CHARACTERS: Individuals the audience learns about from their actions and reactions.

ENSEMBLE: A group of performers working together to create a complete production.

DIALOGUE: The exchange of speech between two or more characters that reveals the feelings of the character as well as the story of the play.

MONOLOGUE: A speech by one actor on stage that is intended to reveal the inner thoughts of the character the actor plays.

CHARACTER ARC: The change produced in a character by the events and other characters in the play.

MOOD: The overall feeling the play evokes.

COSTUME: The clothes, boots, etc., worn by the actors based on their character.

PROP: Objects used by an actor to enhance their character.

SET: The constructed environment of a play where the action takes place.

SOUND: Noises and music in the play.

SHE PERSISTED, THE MUSICAL VOCABULARY

ADAPTATION (THEATRICAL): When a material from one artistic medium (a book, a poem, a movie) is re-written or reimagined in a scripted form to be performed on stage.

EXHIBIT: A public display (a work of art or item of interest) in an art gallery or museum or at a trade fair.

PERSISTENCE: The act or fact of stubbornly continuing to do something—the ability to stick with something.

THE WOMEN OF *SHE PERSISTED, THE MUSICAL*

From *She Persisted: 13 American Women Who Changed the World*



HARRIET TUBMAN

Harriet Tubman was born a slave, and her story could have ended there. Instead, **she persisted**, escaping from slavery and becoming the most famous “conductor” on the Underground Railroad. She risked her life many times to lead countless slaves to freedom, including her family, friends, and strangers; every person she led to freedom arrived safely.

“I should fight for my liberty as long as my strength lasted.”

VIRGINIA APGAR

Inspired from an early age by her brothers’ childhood illness, Virginia Apgar was determined to be a doctor, long before many girls had such dreams. Even though she qualified to be a surgeon, the male head surgeon at her hospital discouraged her because she was a woman. Nevertheless, **she persisted**, becoming an anesthesiologist and creating the Apgar score to test a newborn baby’s health, which hospitals all over the world still use today.



“Nobody, but nobody, is going to stop breathing on me.”



RUBY BRIDGES

When Ruby Bridges was in kindergarten, many schools across America, particularly in the South, still refused African American students their equal right to an education. Ruby wouldn’t be treated like a second-class student, and **she persisted**, walking for weeks past angry, hateful protesters to integrate an all-white elementary school in New Orleans.

“That fateful walk to school began a journey, and we all must work together to continue moving forwards.”

SALLY RIDE

Sally Ride always believed women could succeed in any math or science career. Although not everyone agreed, **she persisted**, and became the first American woman in space. But that wasn't enough for Sally. She traveled into space once more, and then created science and engineering programs specifically for girls so she could help generations of young women achieve their dreams, too- both on Earth and in outer space.



"Young girls need to see role models in whatever careers they may choose, just so they can picture themselves doing those jobs someday. You can't be what you can't see."



FLORENCE GRIFFITH JOYNER

When, as a kid, Florence Griffith Joyner visited her father in the Mojave Desert, he would urge her to run faster and faster- to run as fast as a jackrabbit. Even when she had to leave college to help support her family, **she persisted** in her training on the track, then went back to school and got faster and faster; her unbroken world records in the 100-meter and 200-meter sprints set at the 1988 Summer Olympics mean she is still the fastest woman ever.

"When anyone tells me I can't do anything... I'm just not listening anymore."

SONIA SOTOMAYOR

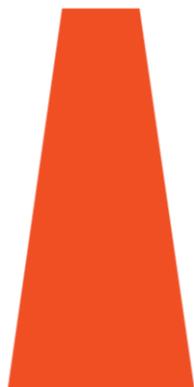
Watching fictional judges on television inspired Sonia Sotomayor to want to be a real-life judge when she grew up. She knew she'd have to speak English as well as she spoke Spanish, study hard in school and manage her diabetes before she could one day wear a judge's robe with a gavel in hand. **She persisted**, eventually becoming a Supreme Court justice and the first-ever Latina to sit on America's highest court.



"I have never had to face anything that could overwhelm the native optimism and stubborn perseverance I was blessed with."

SECTION IV: YOUR STUDENTS AS ACTORS

Reading a Scene for Understanding
Scene/Character Analysis



READING A SCENE FOR UNDERSTANDING

GRADES 5+

TEACHER OBJECTIVE

To introduce the Practical Aesthetics “tools” for breaking down a scene. To understand the character and the story of the scene by relating the character’s actions to the student’s own life.

STUDENT GOAL

To understand that an important part of creating a simple, honest character involves knowing what that character wants.

THE ATLANTIC TECHNIQUE EXERCISE

STEP ONE

Divide the students in pairs. Ask the students to select which character they want to portray.

STEP TWO

Allow the students time to read the scene silently to themselves.

STEP THREE

Ask the students to read the Introduction to the Practical Aesthetic Introduction sheet and have the students answer the four questions on the Scene Analysis Worksheet.

NOTE: The four questions and the students’ answers to them form the basis for the Practical Aesthetics scene analysis; and enables the actor to create a simple, honest character. They’re simply being honest to their own experiences!

STEP FOUR

After the students have completed the question worksheet, ask each pair of actors to read the scene in the front of the classroom for an audience. The students should incorporate the ideas from the worksheet as they read the scene.

SHE PERSISTED, THE MUSICAL SCENE:

NAOMI

Sally Ride! Where are you going?

SALLY RIDE

Space. Not directly. We've got a lot of work first. The mission leaves in June of 1983. You up for it?

NAOMI

You mean, really go to space? Zero gravity? Look back at the earth?

SALLY RIDE

That's the plan.

NAOMI

I bet you were dreaming of this your whole life.

SALLY RIDE

Not really. I wanted to be a pro tennis player.

NAOMI

So, I don't need to decide right now what I'm going to be? I don't have to be perfect at it already?

SALLY RIDE

Of course not, you're a kid! You don't have to be perfect at anything. You can mess up and learn and grow. But you know what else you can do?

NAOMI

What's that?

SALLY RIDE

Dream. Let's go.

THE ATLANTIC TECHNIQUE INTRODUCTION

ANALYSIS

Script analysis is the process of breaking down a beat within a scene. We ask four questions in order to do this:

1. What is the character literally doing?
2. What does the character want?
3. What is the essential ACTION?
4. What is that action like to me? It is AS-IF...

LITERAL: In this step, the actor determines what the character he or she is playing is literally doing according to the text.

PURPOSE: An actor has to travel far—think of this preparation as the road map.

WANT: In this step, the actor identifies the goal of the character in the scene, specifically what the character wants from the other character/s in the scene. The given circumstances of the story inform the WANT.

PURPOSE: To focus the actor on the characters' interaction.

ACTION: Playing an ACTION is the physical pursuit of a goal. Defining the ACTION of the scene allows the actor to determine what result or CAP he or she is looking for from the other actor/s in the scene.

EXAMPLES:

- Put someone in their place | • Beg someone for forgiveness | • Get a favor
- Get someone to let me off the hook | • Force someone to face the facts
- Inspire someone to greatness | • Get someone to see the light

PURPOSE: Using an action gives the actor a task and a specific point of view. The Atlantic Acting School teaches that the Action creates character.

AS-IF: In this step, the actor personalizes the action by finding a real-life situation in which they would behave according to the action they have chosen for the scene.

EXAMPLE: Get a favor. It's AS-IF I forgot to do my science homework and I'm asking my teacher for an extra day to hand it in.

PURPOSE: To gain personal insight and urgency to the scene or beat.

TACTICS & TOOLS: Different ways an actor goes about getting his action.

EXAMPLE: Plead, joke, demand, inspire, challenge, reason, encourage.

LIVING IN THE MOMENT: Reacting impulsively to what the other actor in the scene is doing, from the point of view of the chosen action.

SCENE ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Here are your “tools” for understanding your character:

	IF YOU'RE PLAYING NAOMI...	IF YOU'RE PLAYING SALLY RIDE...
WHAT IS MY CHARACTER LITERALLY DOING?	Naomi is literally meeting Sally Ride and talking about going to space	Sally Ride is literally talking to Naomi about her own journey of getting to space
WHAT DOES MY CHARACTER WANT?	Naomi wants Sally Ride to let her know that everything is going to be okay	Sally Ride wants Naomi to say that she is dying to go to space with her
WHAT IS THE ACTION I'M GOING TO PLAY?	To get someone to take me under their wing	To get someone to rise to a challenge
THE AS-IF...	It's as if I'm talking to my older sister about helping me study for a big test	It's as if I'm talking to my best friend about finally trying out for the basketball team

SECTION V | YOUR STUDENTS AS ARTISTS

Post Theater Creative Response Activity: Role Models
Drawing to Write Activity

Creating Your Own Review: Thumbs Up Or Thumbs Down?
Common Core & DOE Theater Blueprint



POST THEATER CREATIVE RESPONSE ACTIVITY: ROLE MODELS

GRADES 3-6

TEACHER OBJECTIVE

To engage students in lively writing exercise using the topic and a central theme of *She Persisted, the Musical*: role models.

STUDENT GOAL

To create a letter about or to a role model.

MATERIALS

Paper for writing, pen or pencil.

STEP ONE

Discuss the iconic women portrayed in *She Persisted, The Musical* and why they are considered role models.

STEP TWO

Have the students begin to brainstorm their own personal role models. Ask the students to write a letter to that person or to someone else about that person. Allow 15-minutes for this free write.

STEP THREE

Ask the students to share their letters, offering positive feedback after each share.

STEP FIVE

As additional writing practice, have students revise their work to ensure that every sentence is active and the writing is rich and descriptive.

STEP SIX

You may choose to take it to the publishing phase and put together an anthology of student letters.

DRAWING TO WRITE ACTIVITY

GRADES 2-4

TEACHER OBJECTIVE

Facilitate the students' abilities to gather details by having them write a story based on an original drawing. Encourage the students to develop their own creative insight by using these drawings as triggers for short written scenes.

STUDENT GOAL

To understand that recalling vivid details of an experience is a great artistic "tool."

MATERIALS

Pencils, crayons, markers, drawing paper, writing paper.

MOTIVATION

Discuss the following concepts with your students:

Does adding small details to your drawing make it more interesting to look at? Do these small details help your drawing tell a good story? Why?

Do details in writing a story make it more interesting? Believable? Funny?

STEP ONE

Using the art materials, ask students to draw scenes/tableaus of them meeting a woman who changed history, like Naomi does when she meets the historical figures in the gallery in *She Persisted, the Musical*.

STEP TWO

Use the students' individual drawings to inspire ideas for a written story about the images in their drawings.

STEP FOUR

Each student should create six lines of dialogue for each character.

STEP FIVE

Have the students work with a partner to rehearse and then read their scenes aloud to the class.

CREATING YOUR OWN REVIEW: THUMBS UP OR THUMBS DOWN?

GRADES 3-5

TEACHER OBJECTIVE

To introduce the critical thinking skills involved in expressing one's personal opinion.

STUDENT GOAL

To understand that the 4 Ws can be used to critically describe an artistic experience. To enhance the literacy skills of the 4 Ws and sequencing in writing.

MATERIALS

Paper, pen, copy of *She Persisted, the Musical* program, attached worksheets.

STEP ONE

Review the four W's (who, what where, when). For example: Who-Naomi.

STEP TWO

Review the "Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down" worksheet with your students. Remember there is no right or wrong response. Each student's review will be based on individual opinion.

STEP THREE

Using the "Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down" worksheet, ask the students to write their review in three paragraphs - beginning, middle and conclusion.

STEP FOUR

Post the reviews in the classroom.

THUMBS UP OR THUMBS DOWN?

WHO: _____

WHAT: _____

WHERE: _____

WHEN: _____

List some images that first spring to mind when you think about the play:

List some words or phrases that will remind you of points you want to make:

What did you think of the play? What was your opinion?

How do you think the costumes, lights, and music affected the performance?

How might you start your paper?

SHE PERSISTED, THE MUSICAL

A REVIEW BY: _____

COMMON CORE & DOE THEATER BLUEPRINT

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Theater conveys the significance individuals place on their life choices.

For example:

Theater conveys the meaning behind an individual's struggle to have his or her life or life choices validated by family, friends, community, and the broader world.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Does the direction and staging reinforce the theme of "time" in *She Persisted, The Musical*?

Do you accept the concept put forward in *She Persisted, The Musical* that a person can overcome challenges they may be presented with persistence?

SOURCES:

Clinton, Chelsea, and Alexandra Boiger. *She Persisted: 13 American Women Who Changed the World*. Philomel Books, 2017.

Additional Research:
Skyler Hoffman
Esme Zohn

STRAND BENCHMARKS

THEATER MAKING: ACTING

Benchmark: Students increase their ability as imaginative actors while continuing to participate as collaborative ensemble members. Students demonstrate the ability to reflect on and think critically about their own work.

THEATER MAKING:

PLAYWRITING/PLAY MAKING

Benchmark: Students refine their ability as playwrights to express point of view and personal vision.

DEVELOPING THEATER LITERACY

Benchmark: Students develop skills as critics by analyzing the critical writings of others.

MAKING CONNECTIONS THROUGH THEATER

Benchmark: Students demonstrate a capacity for deep personal connection to theater and a realization of the meaning and messages of theater.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Benchmark: Students invigorate and broaden their understanding of theater through collaborative partnerships with theater professionals.

SECTION VI | THE ATLANTIC LEGACY

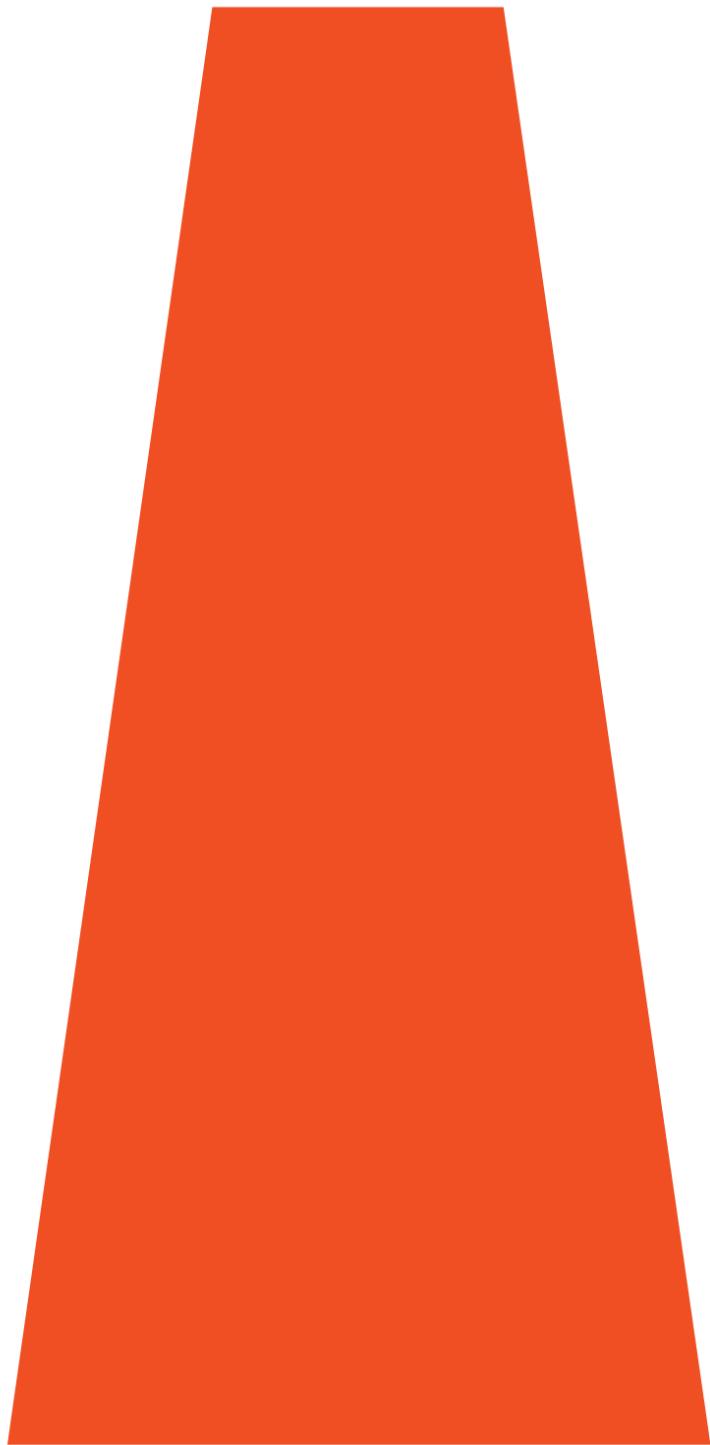
Atlantic Theater Company & Atlantic Acting School



Founded as an ensemble of impassioned student artists in 1985, Atlantic Theater Company has grown into a powerhouse off-Broadway company. We challenge, inspire, and awaken audiences with truthful storytelling presented across our two venues, the Linda Gross Theater and the intimate Stage 2 black-box. As a producer of compelling new works, we are committed to championing the stories from new and established artists alike, amplifying the voices of emerging playwrights through our deeply collaborative programs and initiatives.

At Atlantic, our aim is singular—to empower simple and honest storytelling that fosters greater understanding of our shared world. We are a family of artists dedicated to exploring essential truths onstage, be it a show at Atlantic Theater Company or a class at Atlantic Acting School. As a producer, presenter, and educator of theater, we are driven by the belief that theater can challenge and transform our ways of thinking and urge us to reflect on our role in society. From our Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning productions to our community-based education programs, we are committed to uncovering and celebrating the stories of our varied human existence.

At Atlantic Acting School, we equip our students with the physical, emotional, and tactical tools of acting to discover their truths, and prepare them for success beyond our doors. From our full-time and evening conservatories to our NYU Tisch studio, and our after-school and summer programs for kids and teens, our immersive, learn-by-doing approach is central to an Atlantic Acting education. We have mentored and trained outstanding artists for more than 30 years. No matter their age or background, our students learn to break through their creative comfort zones in service to bringing essential human stories to life.



LINDA GROSS THEATER: 336 W 20th St. New York, NY, 10011 | ATLANTIC STAGE 2: 330 W 16th St. New York, NY, 10011 | ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES & ATLANTIC ACTING SCHOOL: 76 Ninth Ave., Suite 313, New York, NY 10011 | ATLANTICTHEATER.ORG