

LAURA BERNAS

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New Orleans, LA

THEATRICAL PRODUCTION

Company Member (Creator/Performer AND Artistic/Executive Management)

2019-2022

Building Company Theater, Syracuse, NY

- Directed Building Company Theater's first online production *Re: Constructing America*
- Create and perform in original theatrical works based on physical, improv, & theater of the oppressed theatrical techniques
- Attribute expertise in systems analysis, artistic creation, organizational management, and community engagement
- Investigate artistic and business practices for alignment to mission, core values, and future visioning
- Address gaps in structures of company functioning
- Research opportunities for artistic and business development
- Identify areas for growth in audience engagement and connect us with potential producing partners
- Streamline online storage systems and communications
- Recommend changes to digital marketing strategies
- Lead online devising and rehearsing
- Offer welcoming and inclusive spaces for theatrical engagement on diverse and controversial topics
- Create an atmosphere open to questioning, interrogation, joyous expression, and consistent communication
- Support colleagues' artistic and managerial growth by enacting empathic and service-oriented leadership styles

Sound Designer

2018

Breadcrumbs Productions' *Unearthing Mary Bixby*, Syracuse, NY

- Created design elements through participation with performers using spoken word, instrumentation, and popular music
- Collaborated with director and performers to brainstorm and distill auditory vision for creative work
- Delivered on deadlines and goals in accordance with production schedule

Assistant Director

2016

The Anthropologists' *No Man's Land* (Workshop), New York, NY

- Charted rehearsal progress and key directorial notes while supporting stage management
- Supported director in clarifying vision for performance
- Submitted detailed notes on rehearsals and artistic meetings
- Assisted artistic and technical staff to systemize workflow for productive rehearsals

Assistant Stage Manager

2016

David Lang's *The Public Domain*, Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, New York, NY

- Assured communication between ASMs and SMs regarding performer inquiries and concerns
- Connected performers with appropriate cues facilitating smooth performance
- Tended to the needs of 500+ performers in large-scale rehearsal rooms

Casting Assistant

2015

Miranda Theatre Company's *Snow Orchid*, Cherry Lane Theatre, New York, NY

- Connected performers auditioning to director and producer ensuring collaborative and welcoming environment
- Contributed to discussions of acting technique, ensemble creation, and aesthetic vision
- Tailored communication style to needs of executive team

Artistic Intern

2012

New York Neo-Futurists, New York, NY

- Wrote digital communications and maintained company record keeping
- Contributed creatively to rehearsal processes and communicated company vision in the digital space
- Learned budgetary, development, and small-ensemble management practices

Props Artisan & Production Technical Crew

2010-2013

Scene Shop, Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, NY

- Completed props fabrication for large and small scale university productions in accordance with designer requests and production schedules
- Built and did scenic painting for set design and production elements
- Trained in basic carpentry, electrical, welding, textiles, set and props design, and set and props fabrication

FILM PRODUCTION

Art Department Buyer, *The Binge*

2019

American High Productions, Syracuse, NY

Props & Set Dec In-House Organizer

2019

American High Productions, Syracuse, NY

Art Department Buyer, *The Night House*

2019

Anton & Phantom Four Films, Syracuse, NY

Casting Director, *Borderline*

2015

NYFA, New York, NY

Script Supervisor, *The Last 15 Minutes*

2015

American High Productions, Syracuse, NY

TEACHING ARTIST

Teaching Artist

2021-Present

Young Audiences Louisiana, New Orleans, LA

- Private coach middle and high school students in text, movement, and voice work for the actor
- Guide students in the creation of original dramatic text
- Prepare students for professional rehearsal and performance settings
- Expand knowledge of theatrical and performance canon

Teaching Artist

2018

John Robert Powers, Syracuse, NY

- Dispensed knowledge on acting, movement, and voice techniques to children ages 5-18
- Provided safe space to work on monologues, songs, and improv sketches
- Ensured the teaching of foundational acting techniques through improvisational group games, individual artistic explorations, and partner improvisation
- Advised students on creating practical steps towards education and career goals
- Encouraged freedom of expression and creative risk-taking

Teaching Artist

2016

Dramatic Adventure Theatre, Mloka, Tanzania

- Coached elementary and middle school children in the development of basic playwrighting skills
- Educated groups of 10-12 children in the methods and forms of western improv traditions as they relate to East African communication styles
- Prepared students to be in front of an audience for the first time and present original theatrical material
- Communicated fundamentals of theater writing teaching to primarily non-English speaking students

Teaching Artist

2012

Sarah Lawrence College, Theater Outreach Program, Bronxville, NY

- Created weekly theater arts curriculum for middle school students at the Graham School, Yonkers, NY
- Adapted theater arts curriculum to the needs of middle school children with developmental and behavioral special needs requirements
- Progressed students from being unable to present their ideas in public through to public performance for teachers and classmates
- Expanded students' abilities to communicate with one another, create shared ideas together, and develop a personal sense of artistic voice

NON-PROFIT

Programs Director

2022-Present

Kinship Senior Center, New Orleans, LA

- Serve the elders of my community with dignity, love, empathy, and respect at all times while resolving conflicts and creating compassionate pathways of communication
- Run all scheduling, program development, and facilitation of programs for the center
- Create a wide variety of programming to suit the needs and desires of people 62+ across mental, physical, emotional, artistic, and spiritual aspects of human life
- Train and Assess all volunteers, while coordinating the delivery of objectives and goals set out by Executive Director for programmatic advancement and excellence in our field
- Track and report necessary data to maintain local and state funding i.e. nutrition reports, attendance, and member participation with timely delivery to Parish director for Council on Aging
- Keep abreast of trends in elder care and needs, best standards and practices, and innovations in the field
- Research and network with community partners, creating new and sustainable partnerships across membership, programming, and funding
- Continuously growing new membership base and programmatic expansion-currently up 30% from start of year
- Advance Kinship's presence in the immediate community, statewide, and nationally through targeted digital outreach and copywriting
- Create and implement short, medium, and long term goals for programs division with beyond average success rate in implementation and results
- Collaborate with teammates on visioning for center expansion and exceptional development through regular strategic meetings and analysis

Advisory Board Member

2022-Present

No Dream Deferred, We Will Dream: New Works Festival 2023, New Orleans, LA

- Collaborate on strategy for event planning, artistic mission and vision, artistic development, best standards and practices, expectations, and goal setting for large-scale, multi-month theater festival
- Review and judge on artistic submission panel, selecting main talent for festival
- Engage in collective visioning and discovering how this festival intersects with, and expands, current industry standards and practices across multiple factors
- Network and leverage current and past partnerships to develop and grow outreach and awareness of the festival, boosting attendees, sponsors, and artistic/thought partners
- Investigate current needs of the theatrical field, putting forth ideas and goals of how to elevate BIPOC artists and creators, locally and globally

Subject Matter Contributor

2022

Americans for the Arts, Strategic Realignment Process, Virtual Consulting

- Brainstormed and created analysis of new futures for the structure, enactment, and impact of the arts in America
- Worked on analyzing mission, vision, and outreach strategic campaigns to better understand the function of Americans for the Arts now and how the organization can change for the better in future

- Collaborated with key partners and other contributors to dissect current industry needs, flaws, failures, triumphs, and areas for growth
- Thought leader and partner on key questions related to organizational development, change, and transformation of Americans for the Arts and the state of the arts in America at large
- Represented the arts as a field as a key thought contributor in this strategic realignment process

Organizational & QI Strategist | Research & Development Manager | Head Writer 2017-2018

Himalayan Institute Humanitarian Project, Honesdale, PA and Kumbo, Cameroon

- Initially hired as *Fundraising Assistant*, transitioned to organization-wide responsibilities within months of hiring
- Analyzed organizational workflow, development sources, and communications strategies
- Assessed the ability to produce short, medium, and long-term goals against current organizational practices
- Created new company goals alongside managing director in alignment with new visioning
- Researched new donors, liaised with fundraising partners, and wrote multi-sized grant applications
- Designed, instructed, and implemented a large-scale, quality improvement project for public health division in Kumbo, Cameroon serving a region of 320,000 people tracking public health data
- Authored annual reports, marketing brochures, blog posts, social media, and online communications concerning company business and Cameroonian/African women's health and business, economics, literacy and education, and public policy
- Executed and collaborated in team building seminars and company management/culture workshops

Lead Copywriter 2017-2018

Moka Origins, Honesdale, PA and Kumbo, Cameroon

- Developed and honed company voice and style through marketing and branding copywriting across all products alongside CEO
- Created targeted narratives and language solidifying brand niche in public market
- Synthesized company mission and vision into long and short form branding language, cohesive across all digital and physical mediums
- Wrote, proofed, and edited product, web, social media, and blog copy

ACTING

Professional Actor 2013-Present

Theater and Film, International

VOLUNTEERING

- Green Light New Orleans, Environmentalism, New Orleans, LA 2021-Present
- America Talks, Civic Dialogue, Virtual & National, 2021-Present

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Member @ Theatre Communications Group 2020-Present
- Member @ The Downtown Writer's Center, Syracuse, NY 2018-2021
- Festival Participant, Syracuse Inaugural Dance Festival, Syracuse, NY 2019
- Festival Participant, Zanzibar International Arts & Film Festival, Zanzibar, Tanzania 2016
- Festival Participant, Capital Fringe Festival, Washington D.C. 2014
- Member, Sarah Lawrence College Theater Outreach Program, Bronxville, NY 2012

EDUCATION

MFA in Professional Acting, Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, Bristol, England

Certificate in Acting, Moscow Art Theater School/Eugene O'Neill National Theatre Institute, Moscow, Russia

Bachelor of Liberal Arts, Performing Arts, Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, NY