

Meet the Music Theatre - Performance Faculty

Janet Venn-Jackson

**Professor of Music Theatre
Program Coordinator**



Janet Venn-Jackson has enjoyed an extensive and successful teaching and choreographic career spanning over 30 years. Her ongoing commitment to professional development and remaining current with today's dance industry has Janet judging dance events across North America as well as attending workshops and conventions. She is also the Principal of the ADAPT Teacher's Training Program in Canada. She has contributed to and edited one of the major tap teaching encyclopedias in North America, which remains widely in use today.

Janet has choreographed for such major corporations as Quaker Oats and Mattel Toys and even a half time show for the NFL in a game between the Dallas Cowboys and the Buffalo Bills. A professional dancer herself, Janet has performed in over 50 CBC, Global TV and live performances including the ACTRA and Juno Awards and the Tommy Hunter Show.

Janet has choreographed many of the College's musical theatre productions over the past several years including *42nd Street*, *Anything Goes*, *Les Misérables* and *Crazy For You* (2014).

Patrick Burwell

Professor of Music Theatre



Patrick is a proud member of CAEA, AFM, and ACTRA, and has enjoyed a successful professional career spanning 20 years. He has worked as an actor, director, musical director, arranger, producer, and writer at theatres from Victoria to Charlottetown in more than 90 productions.

As a director, musical director and arranger, his credits include the Dora nominated original Canadian musical hit *Top Gun! The Musical* (Factory Theatre), *The Jungle Book*, *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Elf: The Musical* (Canadian premiere), *Legally Blonde* (Neptune Theatre), *Leader of the Pack*, *Swing!* (Drayton Entertainment), *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (Canadian Tour), *Billy Bishop Goes to War*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *A Closer Walk with Patsy Cline*, *The Buddy Holly Story* (Sudbury Theatre Centre), *Emily* (TIFT), over twenty shows as resident musical director for Norwegian Cruise Lines (including co-productions with Cameron Mackintosh and Andrew Lloyd Webber), and seven productions of *Forever Plaid*.

As an actor, Patrick has played leading roles in such shows as *2 Pianos, 4 Hands* (Richard), *Glorious!* (Cosme McMoon), *Forever Plaid* (Frankie), *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* (Man 1), *Into the Woods* (Cinderella's Prince), *Billy Bishop Goes to War* (Narrator), *Baby* (Danny), *A Grand Night for Singing* (Jason), *Cinderella* (Prince Charming), *The Buddy Holly Story* (Norman Petty), *Dads in Bondage* (Joey), as well as touring internationally with industrial shows and cruise lines.

Over the span of his career, Patrick has worked in commercials, television, and the recording studio both as a producer/arranger as well as a performer on a variety of

projects, including many years of writing and arranging for commercial industrial shows for a variety of corporate clients.

Patrick has written and arranged new Canadian works for both cabaret (over 25 shows) and at the Toronto Fringe, including *Waiting for Trudeau*, and *Nursery School Musical*, both of which were critics' picks and awarded the 'Best of Fringe'. Patrick remains active in the profession, and continues to write and arrange, with several projects in development.

Christopher Coyea

Professor of Music Theatre



Christopher Coyea received his Bachelor of Music Degree from Wilfrid Laurier University, and did post-graduate work in Opera Performance. Chris has established a well deserved international artistic reputation as a performer in Opera and in concert and was an award winner in the prestigious Lauritz Melchior Heldentenor Competition in New York City.

As a member of the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble, he has appeared in numerous productions, including *Salome*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Queen of Spades*, *Carmen*, *Wozzeck* and *The Tales of Hoffmann*. After leaving the Ensemble, he performed with the Toronto, Winnipeg, Victoria and Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestras, as well as Orchestra London and the Hamilton Philharmonic. He has sung in the company of such singers as Dame Joan Sutherland, Placido Domingo, Carol Vaness, Dolores Ziegler, Ben Hepner and Richard Margison, just to name a few.

His European engagements include Canio in *Pagliacci*, Kaspar in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and Tenor Soloist in Haydn's *The Creation*, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, Saint-Saens' *Oratorio de Noel*, Beethoven's *Christus am Oelberge*, Mozart's *Requiem* and Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*. Chris was also featured in a nation wide German tour of *Carmen* in 2003. Recent North American appearances include *The Taming of the Shrew* with Pacific Opera Victoria and Tenor Soloist in *A Salute to Vienna* in Montreal, Hamilton, Melbourne and St. Petersburg.

Mr. Coyea has musically directed many shows at St. Lawrence College most recently including *Les Misérables*, *Anything Goes* and *The Mikado*.

Deanna Cormier

Faculty



Deanna has trained extensively in Ballet, Tap, Jazz, Modern, Contemporary and Acro. She is a certified RAD Ballet, ADAPT Jazz and Tap and ADTA Acro Teacher. She has completed her Advanced 2 and Grade 8 Ballet Examination (RAD) and Pre-Advanced Jazz and Tap Examinations (ADAPT). Deanna has completed her Benesh Movement Notation certification through the RAD. Deanna has taught at various studios and schools in Ottawa, providing exceptional dance training to students of all ages and abilities. She has been teaching dance at SLC since 2010. Deanna has travelled to New Hampshire and Arizona to teach summer intensive programs. Her choreography at dance competitions has received various high score and special awards. She has received numerous personal awards at competitions across North America, including Miss Teen CanDance, Footloose Dancer of the Year and ADA Dancer of the Year. Over the course of her training she has performed with Ballet Jörgens The Nutcracker and was a member of the CFL Ottawa Renegades Dance Team. She is currently working with MindLeaps, a not-for-profit organisation staffed by dance instructors, educators, social workers, counsellors and administrators, all dedicated to building a bridge to education and positive livelihoods through dance for students in 5 African countries. Dance is a passion, which Deanna loves to share with aspiring students in an encouraging and educational way!

Mary Ellis

Faculty



Mary has worked extensively as an actor, director, and teacher for many years. Most recently she directed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for *A Company of Fools*, and Ian Tamblyn's musical play *A Summer...A Fair* for Theatre Wakefield. She also directed the highly acclaimed one-woman show *The Elephant Girls*, which continues to tour extensively in Canada, and has toured abroad to the Edinburgh Festival, London, Dublin, and Brighton. Other directing credits include *Bridge to the Past* (Theatre Wakefield), *The End of Civilization*, and *Blackbird* (Third Wall).

Her many acting credits include *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre* (*A Company of Fools*), *Vanya and Sonia* and *Masha and Spike* (Plosive Productions), *Angel Square* (Great Canadian Theatre Company), *God of Carnage* (Third Wall Theatre), *Circle Mirror Transformation* (GCTC), and *Doubt* (Gladstone Theatre).

She has garnered several awards and nominations for her work, including the Prix Rideau Award for Outstanding Direction for *The Elephant Girls*, and the Capital Critics Award for Best production for *Blackbird*.

Mary has taught and directed numerous productions at Algonquin College, and currently teaches at The Acting Company in Ottawa.

Chad McNamara

Faculty



Mr. McNamara is a triple threat talent that brings a wealth of current, industry experience to our College. He has received both Juno and Gemini Award nominations and has worked in theatre, film, television and voice over projects.

His theatre acting credits include *Mamma Mia* (Mirvish), *Doodlebops Live* (CBC), *High School Musical* (Drayton), *Hairspray* (Stage West), *Legally Blonde* (Drayton) and *Damn Yankees* (Drayton). Chad is also a very successful choreographer working for Drayton Entertainment, Stage West, Neptune Theatre and many others. Recent television work includes *Bomb Girls*, *The Ron James Show*, and *The Today Show* (NBC). He has also taught at many prestigious schools including the Etobicoke School of the Arts. Mr. McNamara was the Director and Choreographer of St. Lawrence College's production of *Legally Blonde* in 2015 and the Associate Director and Choreographer of St. Lawrence College's production of *9 to 5* in 2016.

Philip Pace

Philip has been an artist educator for over 15 years. He has taught for the Stratford Festival, Ontario Arts Council, and most recently for the Toronto District School Board.

Philip has worked as a performer with the Stratford Festival (2 seasons), Blyth Festival, and Canadian Opera Company. He most recently travelled to Mozambique, Africa, to work with Shakespeare Link Canada on a production of *The Winter's Tale* performed by an international cast in English and Portuguese.

Philip's many acting credits include *My Fair Lady*, *Gigi*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Stratford Festival), *King Lear*, *As You Like It* (Colorado Shakespeare

Festival), Annie, Grease, Oklahoma! (Montana Summer Theatre), The Tempest (Nipissing Stage Company and Tour), Forever Plaid (Canadian Tour), Kilt (New Stages Peterborough), Romeo & Juliet (ShakespeareWorks), and Shakespeare Abridged (US National Tour).

Philip holds a Bachelor of Arts from McGill University and a Bachelor of Education from York University. He is a graduate of the Stratford Festival's Conservatory for Classical Theatre Training and the 2-year Professional Music Theatre Program at Circle in the Square in New York City.

In addition to his course load at St Lawrence College, Philip most recently directed and conceived a new project entitled The R & J/West Side Story Project for our students.

Erin Puttee

Faculty



Erin Puttee is a music educator, voice teacher, and vocal coach. She holds a Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance and a Master of Arts in Musicology from the University of Ottawa. To augment her classical training, Erin has pursued further study of vocal pedagogy for Contemporary Commercial Music styles. Most notably, Erin has completed training in Somatic Voicework™ The LoVetri Method. Developed by voice pedagogue Jeanie LoVetri, this functional approach to voice training, rooted in voice science, "conditions the muscles of the vocal mechanism, over time, indirectly, through exercises, to respond automatically." [Click here for more information about Somatic Voicework™.](#)

Erin is a member of the Ontario Registered Music Teachers' Association (ORMTA), the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Association (CFMTA), the American Federation of Musicians (AFM) and the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS).

Erin is active in the vocal pedagogy community and stays up-to-date with current advancements in the field of voice. Routinely attending conferences, courses and workshops throughout Canada and the United States, she brings this extensive knowledge into the voice studio in order to meet the changing needs of her students. It is her goal to work with students to make their instrument the most free, healthy, expressive and capable that it can be.

Erin has been teaching in the Music Theatre- Performance Program since 2013 and has musically directed a staged reading of 'Nine,' New Faces 2015, as well as playing keyboard for several SLC productions and TIP's production of 'Into the Woods.'