

Alumni Spotlight: Lance Rasmussen

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I graduated with my B.F.A. in Acting in 2014, and went on to receive my M.F.A. from LSU in 2017. I worked a great deal at the Swine Palace Theater, the Equity Theater associated with LSU, and have been acting at regional theaters ever since. My opportunities eventually lead me to Denver, CO, which has been my home for the past two years as I've worked in the Blackbox Repertory Company at the Arvada Center for the Arts. During my time here, I've also had the chance to work for the company which inspired me to become an actor, the Utah Shakespeare Festival, as well as time back in Logan working at the Lyric Rep, and the Piknik Theatre Company in Steamboat Springs, CO. I've also recently become a member of Actor's Equity, and am grateful for that opportunity to continue working. I've also been able to set up a home recording studio, and have begun self-producing audiobooks for audible.com. I'm currently based in Denver, and am actively looking for the next step in my own career.

Tell us more about the work that you're doing now? What is a typical day like for you these days?

A typical day for me at this point involves one or both of two things. Time spent in rehearsal, or time spent in the studio recording. I'm cast in a two shows of a three show repertory season, meaning I have a lot of flexibility in my schedule when not called to rehearsal. I have a lot of the "actor homework" to do in this process, so a chunk of my time is spent researching, memorizing, and doing the rest of the table-work to be ready for my roles. The season I'm working on in Arvada has a season of works written by women, which I'm extremely proud to be working on. I'm currently in *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and a new adaptation of *The Rover* by Afra Behn, called *Sin Street Social Club* by Jessica Austgen. Otherwise, when not working at the theater, I'm spending time at home working. I currently have two science fiction series that I'm recording for, and am always searching for more opportunities there.

How did your time in USU Theatre Arts help prepare you for the world? What skill or attribute would you say that without USU Theatre Arts you may not have obtained?

The USU Theatre Department provided the major catalyst to move my career forward. The acting program is one of the best undergraduate training programs in the nation, and I say this after having the chance to work with many, many different actors with varied backgrounds. I can cite several different precepts I learned that have been incredibly valuable to me during my life to this point. The first is work ethic; the drive to keep my nose to the grindstone and always be willing to work for what I want. That has been quality that I've tried to pursue more than any other, and I believe it has been the attribute that has set my work apart for many others I've encountered. USU also was key in building the foundation of my acting technique. It's an art-form that can be learned, and my instructors at USU were wonderful about both encouraging me and giving me the honest and needed feedback to both build me up and force me to stretch and grow withing my talent. To complete this, I learned to love what I do, and bring that joy to the process. Had I not learned those three things, I do not believe I would have warranted the opportunities that I've been lucky enough to receive since graduation. The combination of a love of the craft, a solid foundation technique, and a self-motivated discipline and work ethic is exactly what I look for when I have the chance to hire or work with other actors, and I give USU Theatre credit for instilling them in me. I can trace every opportunity I've been given to one of those three attributes.

What are some of your favorite memories during your time in the USU Theatre Arts program?

I've got quite a few incredibly cherished memories from USU. The first semester of my time there included Beginning Acting with Richie Call, which to this day holds some of my favorite moments on stage I've ever had. Later that same semester was our production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, done in concert with the Department of Music, which Richie directed, in which I played Bottom. Being part of the transition period when the Caine College of the Arts was founded and the hires were made to revamp the acting program was incredibly special. Having those new instructors come in and really begin forming my education.

Acting and scene study classes with Leslie (there's still days I wish I could go back to that room), working on plays with Adrienne, (*Candida* being a personal highlight). the Fusion Theater Project in its wildly different and wonderful iterations, and many, many others. I would be especially remiss if I didn't mention USU Football's 27-20 overtime victory over Utah in 2012, and as many games in the Spectrum as I could manage with the work load.

What advice would you give to a potential USU Theatre Arts student?

You're going to need to work, and you'll be working harder on it than on anything else you've likely ever done. There's a transition that will happen where the thing you did for fun in high school becomes the art-form you're going to pursue for your career. That can be a scary moment. You'll be asked to be honest with yourself about your strengths and weaknesses, and that can be very difficult. You'll meet the limits of your talent. But like any other art form, once you push past that and work through it, you'll emerge as well prepared and trained as any other student anywhere in the nation. You're receiving world quality education here. The faculty is going to be there every moment to supply you with the tools to succeed. Make sure your effort, dedication, and attitude aren't what prevent you from picking them up.

Finally, the world of theatre is about learning and studying the human condition. To do that, you need to be interested in things beyond theatre. Find friends outside the department to learn more about. Get hobbies and interests that force you to encounter situations you weren't familiar with before. Go to clubs, if you can. Go to the football and basketball games. You'll encounter moments and truths and experiences that will absolutely pay off in your career in the theater. Learning more about the world will only serve to make you a better human, and that in turn, will make you a better theatre artist.

Lance Rasmussen's website: <https://www.lanceras.com/>