IT STARTS HERE. Your preparation for entrance into the professional theatre as an actor, designer, technical direction, stage manager or other similar professions begins here.

The Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree program provides intensive preparation for professional careers on stage or behind the scenes. Mentored by faculty who represent the highest caliber training and professional experience, students are given the necessary tools to turn their passion for theatre into success on the professional stage.

Students in the BFA program are admitted by audition only (see Requirements below) and may specialize in one of the following emphases: Acting, Costume Design, Design & Production, Lighting Design, Musical Theatre, Scene Design, Stage Management, Technical Theatre

Why UMD

Why UMD?

Theater students at UMD connect with faculty on a level that is unprecedented in higher education. Not having to compete with graduate students for production opportunities, our graduates leave UMD with portfolios and resumes far more extensive than the average undergraduate student. We are dedicated to the training of excellent theater artists and productions that are acclaimed nationally and internationally.

The UMD Department of Theatre is actively involved in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. Since 1985, five UMD productions (two of those written by UMD students) have been chosen to perform at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as part of KCACFT, making UMD one of the most successful theatre departments in the nation. In seven of the last fifteen years, UMD actors have won the regional Irene Ryan acting scholarship and have gone on to perform in Washington, DC. In addition, KCACFT has also recognized a number of UMD student playwrights and designers for their artistic achievements with invitations to participate in the national festival.

At UMD, you will:

- explore practical training in various aspects of the performing arts while defining your own path towards a career within or beyond the professional theatre
- have the flexibility to take advanced academic courses across the university, to pursue interdisciplinary projects, and to explore study abroad opportunities
- enjoy a rich liberal arts approach to theatre as a fine art and cultural expression, as well as a business, which will prepare you for innumerable careers as well as graduate work in programs like arts management, dramaturgy, playwriting, directing, and education

Acquired Skills

Unique to a Theatre degree, students develop a vast variety of skills including:

- Creativity
- Critical thinking
- Public speaking
- Improving with feedback
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Project management
Career Possibilities

You can do ANYTHING with a Theatre B.F.A.! An education in Theatre shows employers you have creativity, communication skills, self-awareness, confidence, discipline, teamwork, experience, a cultivation of empathy -- skills that make you a strong candidate in ANY field!

Theatre students go on to careers as varied as Actor, Arts Administrator, Author, Dance Teacher, Director Entrepreneur, Exhibit Designer, Fashion Designer, Lighting Designer, Producer, Scenic Designer, Stage Manager, and Sound Editor, just to name a few!

Scholarships

Admission to Theatre programs is based upon standard UMD admission guidelines, with an audition required only for those seeking to pursue the B.F.A. program (see details below in Requirements).

All Theatre majors can compete for renewable talent-based scholarships by participating in the initial audition/interview, and several other scholarships are awarded each spring for continuing students.

Student Clubs

As a subsidiary of UMD’s Department of Theatre, Stage 2 Theatre Company works exclusively with UMD faculty, staff, and students to produce its own student-run theatrical season every academic year. Students comprise the Stage 2 Board of Directors and manage every aspect of production. Stage 2 is an excellent supplemental source of involvement particularly for non-Theatre majors and Theatre B.A. students.

USITT United States Institute for Theatre student chapter works to promote learning among peers and to support theatre design and technology on campus. USITT at UMD frequently supports students’ attendance to the USITT national conference, where students are exposed to new design elements, technologies and theories.

Attitudes Dance Association is currently one of the biggest student organizations on campus, with more than 100 members. It is a student-run group that welcomes anyone who is a student at UMD, College of St. Scholastica, or Lake Superior College; anyone who wants to dance! ADA gives dancers the opportunity to both perform and choreograph in an annual spring performance.

Requirements

Applicants interested in UMD Theatre’s B.F.A. program must complete an in-person audition/interview or portfolio review with UMD Theatre faculty, either in Minneapolis or Duluth. B.F.A. applicants must also apply and be accepted into the University of Minnesota Duluth before they can audition/interview for UMD Theatre’s B.F.A. program. (see APPLY link at left).

Complete audition/interview information.

All UMD Theatre majors are strongly encouraged to bring a laptop as specified on the School of Fine Arts page for Technology Requirements.

Graduate Report

Recent UMD Graduates Job Placement Data & Employers

Here’s a sampling of positions Theatre BFA grads have attained six months to one year after graduation.

- Stage Manager - Old Log Theatre, Excelsior, MN
- Actor - Self-employed, Minneapolis, MN
- Scene Shop Supervisor - Valleyfair, Entertainment Department, Shakopee, MN
- Actor - Artistry, Theater & Visual Arts, Bloomington, MN
- Troop Ensemble - Dinner Detective, Minneapolis, MN
For more data see the Theater BFA Graduate Follow-Up Report.
For ideas about Theater BFA and other majors visit Career & Internship Services.