



Sammy Pontello

Actor || Voice, Text, & Dialect Coach || Teacher

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EDUCATIONAL SUMMARY

MFA Acting, University of Tennessee-Knoxville	2026
B.A. Theatre Studies & Creative Writing, University of Central Florida	2021

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

VOICE/TEXT/DIALECT DIRECTOR AND COACH

Freelance | 2023-Present

Collaborating with individual actors, productions and production teams, and in educational settings like high schools to use a craft-based approach to guiding actors to a personalized, authentically embodied, accessible connection with text as coach, director, or teacher of workshops. Duties include:

- Collaborating with actors on personalizing text work and image structuring in note sessions and private work sessions and coachings.
- Working with directors on how the language of the play is used and can guide character work.
- Guiding individuals/productions through the basics of healthy, effective voice use.
- Researching, compiling, and creating accent and dialect materials for actors and productions, including dialect breakdowns, audio guides, and target speaker databases.
- Private coaching of individual actors on voice/speech fundamentals, vocal health and wellness, Shakespeare/Verse, activating song lyrics, and accents and dialects.
- Teaching/creating workshops on voice and speech fundamentals, vocal health and wellness, text analysis and structuring, Shakespeare & Verse, and heightened text.

Current prepped dialect packages include: General American, Received Pronunciation, Scottish, Estuary, Cockney, East Tennessee, Irish, German, General New York, and European Spanish.

LITERARY FELLOW

Florida Studio Theatre | Sarasota, FL | 2022-2023

Assisted Mainstage, New Play Development, Cabaret, and Children's Theatre series from directorial, dramaturgical, and performance positions, as well as serving as a Teaching Artist in the Professional Theatre School.

- Extensive support in day-to-day operations of the Literary Department, working closely with the Literary Manager.
 - Main focuses included solicitation of new plays, identifying new titles to evaluate for production viability and dramaturging texts for playwrights, monitoring regional and

international trends in new plays, and providing tailored developmental feedback on a case by case basis to commissioned playwrights.

- Wrote multiple grants securing tens of thousands of dollars for new play development initiatives, including the NNPN Collaboration Grant and the Venturous Theatre Fellowship.
- Performed in FST's Mainstage and Cabaret series, as well as contributing to the New Play Development process as an actor.
- Directed in the Children's Theatre series for both touring and in-house productions.
- Teaching Artist: Taught and developed curriculum of playwriting and acting classes.
 - *Acting*: Script analysis, acting foundations, voice and speech work.
 - *Spoken Memoir*: Coaching the writing and performance of life stories for the stage.
 - *Playwriting*: Worked with students age 6-80 on various levels of playwriting.

NEW PLAY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE

Orlando Shakes | Orlando, FL | 2020

Assisted Director of New Play Development Cynthia White in evaluating plays in development for OST's annual PlayFest reading series, organizing submissions, corresponding with playwrights and agents, and suggesting viable considerations.

- Worked closely with Director of New Play Development Cynthia White to evaluate plays.
- Corresponded with agents and playwrights to field submissions to PlayFest, OST's annual festival of new works.
- Developed and maintained a matrix of submissions, evaluations, and correspondence.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

GUEST TEACHING ARTIST – *CBT Summer Acting Workshop | Knoxville, TN | July 2026*

Served as guest teaching artist specializing in voice, text, and dialect work. Worked with high school students and incoming college freshman. Duties included:

- Teaching and coaching audition technique and scene study, and preparing students to present selections for their final showcase.
- Leading daily warmups and teaching lessons on health and wellness for the performer.
- Teaching acting through song and musical theatre movement through working with students on "We Both Reached for the Gun" from *Chicago* as part of their final showcase.
- Offering a three day voice and speech intensive focusing on the fundamentals of Fitzmaurice Voicework and voice and text skills for the actor and singer.

GRADUATE INSTRUCTOR/GTA – *University of Tennessee-Knoxville | Knoxville, TN | 2024-26*

Classes taught/assistant taught include:

- THE220: Intro to Acting
Introduces undergraduate actors to acting and theatrical terminology and fundamentals of voice, movement, and acting, culminating in practical application of techniques covered on a student-chosen monologue. Special interest topics included devising practices, clown, and games.
- THE225: Intermediate Acting
Continues the foundational work established in THE220 by exposing undergraduate actors to scene work. This particular class was structured around the whole class engaging in scene study

of LaBute's *The Shape of Things*. This class was taken over a month before the end of the semester when the instructor of record needed to leave for a professional obligation.

- **THE331: Group Singing**
Introductory level singing instruction for undergraduate actors in a group setting. Incorporates aspects of Voice & Speech practices, Bel Canto, and musical theatre, and toggles between a studio exploration of performing songs from the MT canon and a more abstract examination of the technique of singing.
- **THE336: Voice & Speech for the Actor**
*Introduces undergraduate actors to fundamental Voice & Speech skills through engagement with, amongst other modalities, Knight-Thompson Speechwork, Fitzmaurice Voicework, and practical application of these skills and tools on selections from John Barton's *The Greeks*.*

Outside of teaching in the classroom, monologue/audition coaching, career prep/professional practices coaching, Shakespeare coaching, and Voice & Speech workshops were offered to undergraduate theatre majors outside of normal course work.

TEACHING ARTIST – Texas Shakespeare Festival | Kilgore, TX | 2024

Taught alongside other Core Acting Company members who supported TSF's annual Teen Acting Intensive.

- **Intro to Voice & Text:** Through the lens of Shakespeare's verse, students were exposed to the fundamentals of speech work, scansion, and image work. Individual verse pieces from Shakespeare's canon were coached for practical application of these skills.
- **Vocal Health and Wellness for the Actor:** Using a warm up sequence based on Linklater, Fitzmaurice, and Knight-Thompson voice and speech work, young actors were introduced to major tenets of maintaining a healthy, efficient, easeful use of the actor's instrument onstage.

TEACHING ARTIST – Florida Studio Theatre | Sarasota, FL | 2022-2023

Taught and developed curriculum for performance and playwrighting classes, each class averaging 8-12 students in an age range of mid-20s to late 80's. Also worked with students K-12 on drop in Write-A-Play workshops.

- **Spoken Memoir:** Through exploration of the fundamental tools of playwriting, devising, and performance, students devise a 15-20 minute solo performance piece using stories from their lives. It's a little bit memoir, a little bit one-person show, and a little bit the ancient art of telling stories around a campfire.
- **Acting Foundations:** Explores the foundations of acting – voice & speech, movement, text analysis, use of self, and basic common theatre terminology. Classwork includes monologue work, scene work, Linklater-based voice work, and improv/games to introduce students to acting for the stage.
- **Write-A-Play:** A year-round arts integration program providing students with the example, the inspiration, and the skills to write their own original plays. Developed by FST Director-at-Large Kate Alexander from Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed and elements of narrative improv, this workshop series focuses on devising stories in real time with student audiences, using their suggestions to influence and guide a story using actors and a narrator/director live.

TOURING ACTOR/TEACHING ARTIST – Florida Studio Theatre | Sarasota, FL | 2021-2022

Toured Central and South Florida as a touring TYA actor, teaching playwriting workshops to children who attended shows after at schools and community centers based on Kate Alexander's "Write-a-Play" curriculum. During the pandemic, additional virtual workshops were held in Scotland and Israel.

- **Write-A-Play:** A year-round arts integration program providing students with the example, the inspiration, and the skills to write their own original plays. Developed by FST Director-at-Large Kate Alexander from Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed and elements of narrative improv, this workshop series focuses on devising stories in real time with student audiences, using their suggestions to influence and guide a story using actors and a narrator/director live.

WORKSHOPS & DROP-INS

Full workshop descriptions available on request. Where a course number is indicated, workshop was held at invitation of instructor of record to work with students during normal class time.

Structuring Your Breath: An Introduction to Fitzmaurice Voicework

CBT Summer Acting Workshop || Knoxville, TN || July 2026

A Voice & Speech Checklist – Tools for Tackling Text & Speaking and Singing Skillfully

CBT Summer Acting Workshop || Knoxville, TN || July 2026

Tackling Text – Voice & Speech Tools for Actors & Singers with *Hamilton*, *Wicked*, and More!

The Marquee Awards - Workshop Series || Knoxville, TN || May 2026

Applied Animal Work – The Octopus Warm-Up

University of Tennessee – THE521: Graduate Studies in Acting || Knoxville, TN || April 2026

The Substance of the Text: Our Ancestral Relationship to Sound

University of Tennessee – THE326: Voice & Speech for the Actor || Knoxville, TN || March 2026

The Musical Theatre Audition & Self-Tape Technique

University of Tennessee – Undergraduate Workshop || Knoxville, TN || December 2025

Acting Through Song

University of Tennessee – THE331: Group Singing || Knoxville, TN || October 2025

Voice & Text Fundamentals with Shakespeare's Verse

Great River Shakespeare Festival – Teen Acting Intensive || Winona, MN || July 2025

Knight-Thompson Speechwork: The 4P's – An Approach to Dialect Work

The Marquee Awards – Workshop Series || Knoxville, TN || May 2025

Devising Practices: A Physical Approach to Discovering Character

University of Tennessee – THE220: Intro to Acting || Knoxville, TN || April 2025

Voice & Text Tools with Heightened Texts

University of Tennessee – THE326: Voice & Speech for the Actor || Knoxville, TN || April 2025

Voice & Text Tools for the Singing Actor

Seymour High School – Workshop Series || Seymour, TN || February 2025

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

University of Tennessee-Knoxville

MFA Acting – 2026

University of Central Florida

B.A. Theatre Studies – 2021

Acting	<i>Shakespeare, American Classics & Contemporary, etc.</i>	Jed Diamond, Shinnerrie Jackson, Jeb Burris, Vivian Majkowski
Text Analysis	<i>Shakespeare, Contemporary, New Works</i>	Katie Cunningham, Jeb Burris
Voice	<i>Linklater, Fitzmaurice, Berry, Rodenburg, Knight-Thompson</i>	Katie Cunningham, Carol Mayo Jenkins, Vivian Majkowski, Terry Weber
Movement	<i>Laban, Michael Chekhov, Alexander, Masks, Clown, Animal Work, Commedia dell'arte, Physical Ensemble</i>	Jeb Burris, Casey Sams, Tarah Flanagan, Christopher Niess, Jed Diamond
Singing	<i>Contemporary Musical Theatre, Legit Musical Theatre, Opera</i>	David Crawford, Jim Brown, Thomas Potter
Master Classes	<i>Shakespeare, Clown, Acting on Film, Theatre of the Oppressed</i>	John Douglas Thompson, Zach Fine, Peter Allen Stone, Devin Shackett, Melissa Maxwell, Geo Britto

SKILLS

- **Voice & Speech:** Linklater, Fitzmaurice, Knight-Thompson, Rodenburg, Berry, Nelson, Dialects, Text structuring & analysis, Acting the Song, IPA.
- **Voice, Text, and Dialects:** Voice/Text/Dialect Direction & Coaching. Current prepped dialect packages include: General American, Received Pronunciation, Scottish, Estuary, Cockney, East Tennessee, Irish, German, General New York, and European Spanish.
- **Shakespeare:** Verse, Text analysis, Image structuring, Voice, Movement.
- **Text Analysis:** Shakespeare, Restoration, Comedy, Image structuring, Rhetoric for the Actor.
- **Movement:** Laban, Alexander, Mask, Clown, Animal Work, Chekhov's Psychological Gesture, Physical Ensemble.
- **Audition Technique:** Theatrical, New Works/Readings/Workshops, TV/Film, Voiceover, Self-tapes.
- **Directing:** TYA/touring, Voice/Text/Dialects, New Works/Readings/Workshops, Student Works, Individual Coaching, Solo Performance, Devising, Commedia/Narrative Improv.
- **Devising:** Solo Performance, Student Works, Spoken Memoir, Poetry in Performance.
- **Improvisation:** 8+ years professional experience includes games, short/long form, narrative improv, and directing narrative improv.
- **Teaching/Workshops:** Voice & Speech, Dialects, Shakespeare, Script/Text Analysis, Solo Performance, Devising, Spoken Memoir, Audition Technique, Self-Tape Technique, Acting, Voice & Speech Tools for the Singing Actor.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Clarence Brown Career Development Award – University of Tennessee-Knoxville – 2026

Denise Halbach Performance Scholar – SETC – 2025

Emily Mahan Faust Graduate Fellow – University of Tennessee-Knoxville – 2024, 2025

Denise Halbach Performance Scholar – SETC – 2023

Irene Ryan Classical Acting Award – KCACTF Region IV – 2021

SELECTED THEATRE RESUME

ACTING CREDITS

Select Regional

<i>Cabaret</i>	Emcee	Clarence Brown Theatre	Halena Kays
<i>The Play That Goes Wrong</i>	Chris Bean	Clarence Brown Theatre	Hunter Foster
<i>A Christmas Carol</i> [^]	Ebenezer Scrooge	Clarence Brown Theatre	Patrick Lanczki
<i>Sense & Sensibility</i>	Colonel Brandon	Clarence Brown Theatre	Casey Sams
<i>I Love You, You're Perfect...</i>	Man #1	First Take Theatre Co.	Ethan Graham Roeder
<i>Knoxville</i>	Man at the Scene & Others, U/S Author	Clarence Brown Theatre	Josh Rhodes
<i>A Christmas Carol</i>	Bob Cratchit, U/S Scrooge	Clarence Brown Theatre	Patrick Lanczki
<i>Kinky Boots</i>	Richard Bailey/Paddington	Clarence Brown Theatre	Rusty Mowery
<i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>	Launce/Duke	Great River Shakespeare*	Katie Lupica
<i>Sweeney Todd</i>	Beadle Bamford, U/S Sweeney	Texas Shakespeare Festival	Whitney Branan
<i>Julius Caesar</i>	Decius Brutus	Texas Shakespeare Festival	Susan Felder
<i>Romeo & Juliet</i> [^]	U/S Lord Capulet, Prince (perf'd)	Great River Shakespeare	H. Adam Harris
<i>Comedy of Errors</i> [^]	U/S Antipholus of Eph/Syr, Egeon	Great River Shakespeare	Doug Scholz-Carlson
<i>Smoke & Mirrors</i>	U/S Hamilton, Sheriff (perf'd)	Florida Studio Theatre	Catherine Randazzo
<i>Playmakers: The Write Stuff</i> (tour)	Playmaker (Various roles)	Florida Studio Theatre	Kate Alexander

Workshops / Readings

<i>The Drolls</i> (Deborah Brevoort)	Magistrate Cowly	Florida Studio Theatre	Jason Cannon
<i>Gulliver's Travels</i> (Zach Fine)	Jonathan Swift	U. of Tennessee-Knoxville	Zach Fine
<i>Othello</i>	Cassio	U. of Tennessee-Knoxville	John Douglas Thompson
<i>The Secret Wisdom of Trees</i> (Christine Toy Johnson)	Noah	Florida Studio Theatre	Carolyn Michel
<i>Delilah</i> (Joe Sutton)	Scooter Payne	Clarence Brown Theatre	Will Pomerantz
<i>#GodHatesYou</i> (Emily Dendinger)	Rabbi Cohen	Theatre UCF/Pegasus PlayLab	Cynthia White
<i>The Suffragette's Murder</i> (Sandy Rustin)	Mr. Archibald Orton	Florida Studio Theatre	Carolyn Michel

Cabaret / Variety

<i>Laughing Matters, Vol. 6</i>	Featured Soloist, U/S Nick	Florida Studio Theatre	Richard Hopkins
<i>The '70s: More Than a Decade</i>	Male Swing (perf'd)	Florida Studio Theatre	Catherine Randazzo
<i>Deck the Halls</i>	Santa Claus	Florida Studio Theatre	Caroline Saldivar

VOICE/TEXT/DIALECT COACHING CREDITS

<i>Dial M for Murder</i>	Voice, Text, Dialect Director	Clarence Brown Theatre	Melissa Maxwell
<i>You Can't Take It With You</i>	Voice, Text, Dialect Director	Clarence Brown Theatre	Melissa Rain Anderson
<i>A Christmas Carol</i> (x2)	Voice, Text, Dialect Director	Clarence Brown Theatre	Patrick Lanczki
<i>A Christmas Carol</i>	Associate Voice, Text, Dialect Director under Katie Cunningham	Clarence Brown Theatre	Patrick Lanczki
<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>	Associate Voice/Text Director under Terry Weber	Great River Shakes	H. Adam Harris
<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	Associate Voice/Text Director under Terry Weber	Great River Shakes	Doug Scholz-Carlson
<i>Newsies</i>	Voice/Text/Dialect Coach	Seymour High School	Merritt Boling

DIRECTING CREDITS**Professional**

<i>The Last Acorn & Other Plays</i> *	Award-Winning Young Playwrights	Director	Florida Studio Theatre
<i>Seven Up: Award-Winning Plays</i> ±	Award-Winning Young Playwrights	Co-Director	Florida Studio Theatre
<i>Playmakers: The Write Way</i> *	Award-Winning Young Playwrights	Assist. Director	Florida Studio Theatre
<i>Murder on the Hogwarts Express</i>	Devised by the Company	Director/Deviser	Spitfire Theatre
<i>Misfortune</i>	Devised by the Company	Director/Deviser	Spitfire Theatre
<i>A Misfortunate Christmas</i>	Devised by the Company	Director/Deviser	Spitfire Theatre

Educational

<i>Address to the Jury</i>	Emma Goldman	Director/Adapter	University of Central Florida
<i>Still Life with Iris</i> ±	Steven Dietz	Director	Celebrate TYA!
<i>Cahoot!</i> °±	Jena Rashid	Director/Dramaturg	Celebrate TYA!
<i>Bravery & the Saboteur</i> °±	Andrew Lofredo	Director/Dramaturg	Celebrate TYA!
<i>The Dissolution of Dominic Boot</i> (live radio play)	Tom Stoppard	Director	University of Central Florida

* : Tour

± : Reading

° : New Play