

# Laura Ekstrand

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## WORK EXPERIENCE

**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**, (Co-Founder) Vivid Stage (formerly Dreamcatcher Repertory Theatre), Summit, NJ, 1995-present  
Responsible for all aspects of producing a growing professional theatre company. Designs budget with Treasurer and Business Manager, selects season of new and recently produced plays, hires artistic and technical staffs, casts actors, plans and carries out fundraising initiatives, writes grants and develops press and public relations materials. Works with 10-member Board of Trustees on all aspects of company administration and strategic planning. Implements educational/internship component, giving high school and college students hands-on experience in professional production.

**ADJUNT PROFESSOR, THEATRE**, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Florham Park, NJ, 2021-present  
Created syllabus for and instructs Directing 1 and Advanced Acting 2 for undergraduate students in the Theatre Program. Courses consist of both academic reading and writing and practical applications of theatre technique. Students include both majors and non-majors in the Theatre Program.

**EDUCATION DIRECTOR**, Vivid Dreamers, Vivid Stage, Summit, NJ, 1998-present  
Designs and oversees summer theatre training program for young performers that includes classes in scene study, voice, dance, Shakespeare, commercial technique, improvisational comedy, playwriting, filmmaking, and stage combat. Hires teachers, enrolls students, and teaches in program.

**PUBLIC SPEAKING COACH**, Private Coaching, 2019-present  
Creates and provides public speaking training and coaching to professionals of all ages and at all career stages. Through in-person or online sessions, improves focus and clarity, personalizing subject matter and connecting with an audience of any size.

**MONOLOGUE AND AUDITION COACH**, 1998 – present  
Works privately with students ranging in age from child through adult, preparing material for school auditions, college admission auditions, and professional auditions. Assists in finding appropriate audition pieces, directs actors, and advises on personal presentation and supporting materials.

**DRAMA DIRECTOR**, Summit High School: Summit, NJ, 1997-2000  
Directed and choreographed students in dramatic and musical productions, and supervised student production of one-acts. Responsible for coordinating publicity, design staff, and student crews. Created workshop program with professional master teachers in subjects such as directing, improv, on-camera performance and audition skills. Researched and drafted curriculum for full-time drama program, which was subsequently implemented.

**ACTING INSTRUCTOR**, Montclair State University - Gifted and Talented Youth Program, Montclair, NJ, 1996-1997  
Taught acting to academically gifted and talented teenage students. Curriculum included the Atlantic Theatre Company's methods of scene analysis and actor preparation, student-written scenes and monologues, and visits to professional play rehearsal and production. Class culminated in showing of scenes to members of program.

**DIRECTOR/ACTING INSTRUCTOR**, Performers Theatre Workshop: Livingston, NJ, 1995-1997  
Directed productions of *Godspell* and *Sondheim Tonight!* with advanced student group. Taught Acting and Song Interpretation to children and teenagers in pre-professional program. Covered acting skills and scene analysis, improvisation and vocal production. Consulted on production of *Ain't Misbehavin'*.

**CASTING ASSISTANT/ASSOCIATE**, Billy Hopkins Casting: New York, NY, 1992-1994  
Consulted with directors/producers on ideas for roles and production concepts. Scheduled and ran auditions for feature films, television commercials, and music videos. Negotiated contracts with agents, acted as reader and video camera operator. Performed administrative tasks such as billing and organizing casting files.

**EDUCATION:** Yale University, B.A. in Theatre Studies; Sarah Lawrence College, M.F.A. in Theatre

**SKILLS AND INTERESTS:** Playwriting \* Singing \* Dance \* Yoga Instructor \* Basic French, Spanish

**DIRECTOR (Representative Sample)**

**VIVID STAGE (FORMERLY DREAMCATCHER REPERTORY THEATRE):**

SOFT ANIMALS (world premiere)  
TWIRL (world premiere)  
HOLIDAY BITES  
DEAD AND BURIED  
CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION  
EVERY BRILLIANT THING  
THINGS BEING WHAT THEY ARE  
THE HOW AND THE WHY  
THE ELECTRIC BABY  
THE MOST DESERVING  
100 YEARS (world premiere)  
THE LANGUAGE ARCHIVE  
RX  
BLOOD: A COMEDY  
NEXT FALL  
DISTRACTED  
THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS  
MELANCHOLY PLAY  
PRIDE'S CROSSING

**Not I: 50th Anniversary at Assumption University**

Waiting for Godot (staged reading)

**GEN Z MEDIA (Voice Directing - Podcasts)**

THE WEIRDNESS  
YOUNG BEN FRANKLIN

*-Acting and Playwriting resumes upon request-*