

# Jo Ann Mendelson

## EDUCATION

California State University, Los Angeles  
Masters of Fine Arts in Performance for Television, Film and Theatre, *magna cum laude*

May 2018

Loyola Marymount University  
Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Performance, *magna cum laude*

May 2008

## EXPERIENCE

### **Adjunct Professor**

August 2018 – Present

*Loyola Marymount University – Beginning Acting for Non-majors*

- Instruction of college undergrads in beginning level acting
- Introduce students to professional terminology and practices used in theatre and acting
- Create a safe, collaborative environment for both individual and ensemble based exercises
- Guide students through scene and monologue explorations based in the philosophies of Steven Wangh, Richard Boleslavsky, and Uta Hagen
- Encourage students to develop their own process-centric approach as opposed to a result-centric approach
- Lead students through explorations of the mechanics and techniques of performance

*Loyola Marymount University – Stage Combat*

- Instruction of college undergrads in beginning level Stage Combat in the disciplines of Unarmed Combat, Quarterstaff, and Rapier & Dagger
- Lead students through the development of safe and consistent techniques to create the illusion of violence
- Assist students in creating fully realized performances
- The majority of students who complete this course are also awarded recognition as Actor Combatants by the Dueling Arts International governing body

### **Guest Artist Instructor & Fight Choreographer**

September 2018 – present

*Milken Community Schools*

- Previous productions include *Peter & the Starcatcher* and *Bloody, Bloody Andrew Jackson*
- Introduction of basic stage combat techniques to students age 13-18
- Collaboration with Drama Program Director to create movement exercises and age- and ability-appropriate fight choreography
- Choreography and instruction in unarmed and armed techniques including two swashbuckling sword fights

### **Stage Combat Instructor**

May 2018 – March 2019

*Some Assembly Media, LLC's Weekend Warrior Workshop Series*

- Instruction of beginner performance techniques in a two-day intensive format
- Working in a co-teaching environment with an Apprentice Instructor
- All students who participated in the seminal Unarmed Combat workshop of this series earned recognition as Level One Actor Combatants from Dueling Arts International's governing body

## EXPERIENCE (continued)

### **Teaching Associate**

August 2017 – May 2018

*California State University, Los Angeles – Acting I, Acting II*

- Instruction of college undergrads in beginning level acting classes in both Drama and Comedy, respectively
- Create a safe, collaborative environment for both individual and ensemble based exercises
- Guide students through scene and monologue explorations based in the philosophies of Steven Wangh, Richard Boleslavsky, and Uta Hagen
- Encourage students to develop their own process-centric approach as opposed to a result-centric approach
- Work closely with supervising instructors to develop pedagogy and monitor the classroom environment

### **Graduate Assistant**

Fall 2017

*California State University, Los Angeles – Introduction to Drama*

- Assist lecturing professor with grading of written assignments for 90+ students
- Create deadline calendar and submission parameters for students
- Assist professor with proctoring of exams and other in-class responsibilities

### **Teaching Associate Trainee**

Spring 2016 – Spring 2017

*California State University, Los Angeles – Acting I, Acting II*

- Work closely with instructors to become well versed in class structure, classroom management, student support, and lesson planning
- Lead classroom exercises with Teacher supervision and feedback
- Provide grading and feedback on written and performed assignments

### **Company Member**

Spring 2012 – Spring 2015

*Los Angeles Repertory Theatre New Works Project*

- Instruct high school students in daily vocal and movement exercises
- Assist students in developing their own distinct voices as writers
- Direct students in originally written scenes and monologues
- Collaborate with fellow company members to tailor teaching strategies to each student's needs
- Experience working with marginalized students

### **Teacher's Assistant**

Summer 2008 – Spring 2018

- Assistant to Loyola Marymount University's Theatre Department co-chair
- Responsible for assisting Stage Combat instruction during the course of standard semester-length and accelerated courses with up to 22 students
- Assist in 3 different class modules:
  - Stage Combat Technique: covers unarmed, rapier and dagger, broadsword and quarterstaff techniques combined with text analysis of and practical application to both classical and contemporary drama
  - Renaissance Drama in Action: combines theatre history, text analysis of classical drama and the practical application of stage combat techniques to performances of these works
  - Commedia D'ell Arte and Shakespeare in Action: combines theatre history, text analysis of Shakespearean scripts and the practical application of stage combat techniques to performances of these works as interpreted through Commedia D'ell Arte characters.
- The majority of students who complete these courses are also awarded recognition as Actor Combatants by the Dueling Arts International governing body

### **Guest Artist Instructor**

May 2015 & May 2016

*The Stevenson School at Pebble Beach*

- Work with faculty to create presentations and performances which put Shakespearean texts into action
- Develop basic stage combat sword fighting workshops for grades 5-10
- Instruct students in age- and ability-appropriate stage combat techniques

### **EXPERIENCE (continued)**

#### **Guest Artist Instructor**

Spring 2013 & Spring 2014

*California State Thespian Festival*

- Invited to instruct stand-alone introductory workshops in stage combat for high school students selected from across the state of California as high level achievers in the performance arts.

**Guest Artist Instructor**

Spring 2013 – Summer 2014

*Crespi Carmelite Catholic High School*

- Work with faculty to direct extracurricular drama performances
- Instruct students in age- and ability-appropriate stage techniques for acting and stage combat
- Developed specialty workshop focused on integration of stage combat with Shakespearean text analysis

**CERTIFICATIONS & UNION AFFILIATIONS**

**SAG-AFTRA** - *Union Performer since 2013*

**Dueling Arts International** - *Full Instructor since 2019*

**Dueling Arts International** - *Associate Instructor - 2013*

**Dueling Arts International** - *Intermediate Actor Combatant in all disciplines - 2013*

**Dueling Arts International** - *Beginner Actor Combatant in all disciplines - 2008*

**ADDITIONAL TRAINING**

Intimacy Directors International Workshop	Tonia Sina, 2018
Cal State LA Teachers Professional Development Workshop	Stephen Wangh, 2018
Dueling Arts International Fight Director Workshop	Gregory Hoffman, 2016
Advanced Acting Studio for Theatre	Barry Gordon, 2016
Advanced Scene Study & Character Development	Steve Rodriguez, 2008-2015
Foundations of Commercial Acting	Killian Commercial Acting, 2015
Audition Technique for Television and Film	Meg Mormon & Sunny Boling, 2015
Improvisation 101, 201, & 301	The Upright Citizens Brigade, 2011-2012

**AWARDS AND HONORS**

Nominee for Best Featured Actress in a Comedy or Musical	Valley Theatre Awards	Long Joan Silver, 2017
Irene Ryan Nomination	The Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival	A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, 2016
Hollywood Foreign Press Scholarship	California State University, Los Angeles	January 2016

**ACTING EXPERIENCE: Theatre**

The Lady Demands Satisfaction	Duchess Theodosia Pepperston (lead)	LOFT Ensemble, 2018
Othello	Bianca (Supporting)	Shakespeare on the Bluff, 2018
The Dead Guy	Christy, Security Guard, Sheila, Woman #1 (supporting)	Cal State LA & Hollywood Fringe Festival, 2018
Holy, Seductive Dance	Newscaster (supporting)	Cal State LA, 2017
Long Joan Silver	Long Joan Silver (lead), Jennifer Gunn (supporting)	LOFT Ensemble, 2017
King Lear	Reagan (supporting)	LOFT Ensemble, 2016
A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum	Marcus Lycus (supporting)	Cal State LA, 2016
A Midsummer Night's Dream	Titania (lead)	LOFT Ensemble, 2015
Take My Life, Please	Officer Banana (supporting)	The Tavern Rakes, 2014
Geeks VS Zombies	Alex (supporting)	Seat of Your Pants Productions, 2012
Workout Warriors	Fasha (lead)	New Beginnings One Act Festival, 2010
All My Friends	Lauren (supporting)	The Underground Theatre, 2009
Angry Young Women In Low Rise Jeans with High Class Issues	Sarah (supporting)	The Hollywood Fight Club, 2009
A Christmas Carol	Mrs. Fezziwig, Belle, Mrs. Cratchit (supporting)	Will and Company, 2008
The Caucus Race	The Existentialist (lead)	Veritas Theatre Ensemble, 2008
A Winter's Tale	Perdita (understudy)	Loyola Marymount University, 2008
The Duchess of Malfi	Grisolan/Pescara (supporting)	Loyola Marymount University, 2008
The Rocky Horror Show	Janet Weiss (lead)	Loyola Marymount University, 2007
A Piece of My Heart	LeeAnn (lead)	The Del Rey Players, 2007
Henry IV, part one	Poins/The Douglas (supporting)	Loyola Marymount University, 2006
House of Blue Leaves	Bananas (lead)	The Del Rey Players, 2006
Dead Man Walking	Mrs. Delacroix (supporting)	LMU and The Actor's Gang, 2005
Cry Havoc	Sadie (supporting)	Loyola Marymount University, 2005

**ACTING EXPERIENCE: Film**

Club Vida	Vida (lead)	Cal State LA student film, dir. Moses Isreal Gurerro
Cigarette Girl	Valerie (lead)	Cal State LA student film, dir. Janet Miller
Corner Store Blues	Charlie (lead)	Cal State LA student film, dir. Moses Isreal Gurerro
I Love You, But...	Daniella (lead)	independent, dir. Orchid Cameron, 2014
Wonderland	White Rabbit (lead)	independent, dir. Samantha Sciotti, 2014
Mason Jar	Megan King (lead)	Chapman School of Film, 2013
Tutor	Beth(lead)	Chapman School of Film, 2013
Scene of the Crime	Zoe Dawes (lead)	independent, dir. Andre Wiggins, 2010
First Impressions	Girl (lead)	Brooks Film Institute, 2008

**ACTING EXPERIENCE: Television**

Operation Repo (S6, Ep13)	supporting	TruTV, original air date 02/15/10
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**ACTING EXPERIENCE: New Media**

90's Sitcom Montage	Sam (lead)	sketch comedy episodic, Mouth Mouth Productions, 2012
Dating a Star Wars Nerd, Ep. 1	Girlfriend (lead)	sketch comedy episodic, Mouth Mouth Productions, 2012
Lady Wax	Host (lead)	sketch comedy episodic, Mouth Mouth Productions, 2011
For Now	Veronica (lead)	independent new media short, dir. Jordan Crompton, 2010
LAPD: Pregnant Detectives	Dead Girl (featured)	FunnyOrDie.com featured short, dir. Andrew DeYoung, 2009

**STAGE COMBAT EXPERIENCE: Performance for Theatre**

Long Joan Silver	unarmed and cutlass	LOFT Ensemble, 2017
King Lear	unarmed, dagger, and found object	LOFT Ensemble, 2016
Geeks VS Zombies	unarmed and baseball bat	Seat of Your Pants Productions, 2012
The Caucus Race	unarmed and found object	Veritas Theatre Ensemble, 2008
Workout Warriors	unarmed	New Beginnings One Act Festival, 2010
The Duchess of Malfi	fight captain, unarmed, found object, dagger	Loyola Marymount University, 2008
Henry IV, part one	broadsword and battle axe	Loyola Marymount University, 2006
House of Blue Leaves	unarmed	The Del Rey Players, 2006

**STAGE COMBAT EXPERIENCE: Performance for Film**

Mason Jar	unarmed techniques	Chapman School of Film, 2013
The Bronze Court	single rapier	Independent new media episodic, 2013
The Teen Titans Project	Broadsword	Independent new media episodic, 2013

## **STAGE COMBAT EXPERIENCE: Fight Direction**

Bloody, Bloody Andrew Jackson	Unarmed, found object, and melee-style fights	Milken Community School, 2019
The Lady Demands Satisfaction	smallsword, unarmed and found object fights; comedic violence	LOFT Ensemble, 2018
Peter and the Star Catcher	knife, cutlass and unarmed techniques	Milken Community School, 2018
Wolf Cub	stage falls and tumbling	McCadden Place Theatre, 2018
The Dead Guy	unarmed and found object techniques	Cal State LA, 2018
Romeo & Juliet	knife and unarmed techniques	LOFT Ensemble, 2018
Vengeance	unarmed and firearm techniques	LA 48 hour Film Festival, 2017
The Bachelors	unarmed and found object techniques	The Tavern Rakes, 2017
School For Wayward Girls	unarmed and found object techniques	LOFT Ensemble, 2017
Latina	various unarmed techniques	Cal State LA, 2016
Hello, Game of Thrones (parody online content)	unarmed, broadsword and found object techniques	Perfectly Serious Productions, 2016
Dracula: Blood Before Dawn	unarmed, small sword, dagger, double falcatta, staff, axe, and found object techniques, one-on-one and melee style fights	LOFT Ensemble, 2016
McCready	unarmed and found object techniques	Hollywood Fringe Festival, 2016
Star Wars: The Path Of Freedom	Lightsaber & unarmed techniques	Star Wars Fan Film Contest Submission, 2016
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest	unarmed combat techniques	LOFT Ensemble, 2015
Will You Save Them?	armed and unarmed combat techniques and blood effects	LOFT Ensemble, 2014
Friend of the Devil	two person swordfight (single rapier)	The Tavern Rakes, 2014
Hamlet	armed and unarmed combat techniques, two person swordfight (rapier and dagger)	LOFT Ensemble, 2014
Cahoots Macbeth	two person swordfight (broadsword)	Loyola Marymount University, 2014
The Bronze Court	two person swordfight (single rapier vs. small sword), consultation on two person fight (unarmed and single knife)	independent new media short, 2013

**STAGE COMBAT EXPERIENCE: Fight Direction (continued)**

The Teen Titans Project	two person swordfight (broadsword vs. double gladius)	independent new media episodic, 2013
Tea Time	group melee, unarmed and found object combat and stunts	Top 25 Doritos's Crash The Super Bowl contest entry, 2012
Moon Over Buffalo	two person swordfight (single rapier) and stunts	Crespi Carmelite High School, 2012
Pillow Man	armed (found object and firearm) and unarmed combat techniques and blood pack prosthetics	Back Gate Theatre Ensemble, 2010