

# Broadway Theatre Project Vibed With A Full House Of Talented Faculty And Students

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- [Broadway Theatre](#) Project opened at the School Of The Arts - University Of South Florida on June 19th to the delight of a talented and excited group of apprentices who had auditioned to be part of the exclusive BTP program this year.

Hoping for careers in [musical](#) theatre the students spent 12 hour days for 10 days straight, training under the guidance of extraordinary mentors.

Broadway Theatre Project, a program described by Playbill as "the world's most prestigious musical theatre arts education program for high school and college students" is under the guidance of President and Co-Artistic Director Debra McWaters. McWaters was selected to

work with Ann Reinking, the co-founder and first artistic director of BTP. Debra worked on choreographing "Chicago-The Musical" on Broadway, around the U.S. and abroad. She was selected to do the same on the Broadway hit "Fosse " where she was mentored by Ann Reinking and Gwen Verdon.

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"Over all, we couldn't be happier with the success of BTP's first year since Covid" exclaims McWaters."

*Debra McWaters, President and Co-Artistic Director of BTP*

McWaters has developed the Broadway Theatre Project to be recognized as one of the most successful, deep-rooted and enduring programs for musical theatre education in the United States.

Juilliard graduate and Co-Artistic Director, Herman Payne met McWaters while on the International tour of 'Fosse'.

Payne has danced on Broadway with Michael Jackson and Mariah Carey just to name a few. He is a brilliant teacher and choreographer and is an invaluable asset to BTP.



Debra McWaters President of Broadway Theatre Project

BTP's Executive Director Blake Cohely is the Director of Student admissions at The New Orleans Center for Creative Arts. Cohely is not only an award winning educator, but also carries an impressive history of performing national Broadway tours as well as directing and choreographing with a variety of theatre groups.

The three outstanding professionals contributed to a most successful and well-organized program this year called "Shaping The Artist". They were also joined by four very talented alums who are now artists and teachers:

Tucker Tab-DeGregory, program director, Merrick Henry, co-company manager, Taliek Hill, co-company manager and Alexander LaPlante, music director.

Tucker Tab-DeGregory is a choreographer, director, an educator, and is an associate member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society. In addition, Tucker has served as assistant art director for Broadway Theatre Project, a faculty member of St. Andrew's School of Boca Raton, director of theatre and chair of the arts department at Canterbury School of Florida.

Merrick Henry is a recent recipient of the Triple Threat Award at the Applause Rising Talent Showcase in Los Angeles

2022. He is also a TAMY Award winning actor and has been nominated for a DASH award as well. He is currently working on a brand new EP due out in 2024 and cannot wait to share his latest work through his songs.

Taliek Antonio Hill, also known by his stage name Tahj Pomare, is a multi-hyphenated artist who has played several iconic roles such as Amos in a 20th anniversary arrangement of Chicago at BTP, Shrek and Usnavi from The Heights. He is a unique blend of pop, soul, banging beats and Broadway. His influences go from Gene Kelly to Broadway.



Broadway Theatre Project



Brenda Braxton

As an experienced musical director, conductor and arranger on the regional circuit, Alexander LaPlant brings insight, joy and a sharp youthful eye to performance and production teams alike. Former BTP alumni, Alex went on to Emerson College, where he received a BFA in Musical Theatre.

The project opened with Ann Morrison- an American actress best known for her Broadway debut as Mary Flynn in the Sondheim/Furth musical Merrily We Roll Along. Morrison taught acting classes and performed her one woman show for the BTP apprentices giving them an insight into the world of acting.

Brenda Braxton, best known for her performances in Broadway musicals, and her Tony Award nomination for Best Featured Actress in Smokey Joe's Cafe, wowed the attendees with her knowledge as a singer, choreographer and stage director, and her exquisite approach to voice training. Her show was dynamic, filled with story-telling. Many were songs sung from the many different shows she had been in, making her easily relatable. Braxton is also a TV Actor.

Broadway Theatre Project was thrilled to have had dancer/choreographer Ian Eastwood training the apprentices with his engineered system of exact movement and storytelling through dance and choreography. His intricate hip-hop, poppin' and unique steps were turned into a masterful choreography for the students. Eastwood, who recently appeared in Jung Kook's BTS dance videos of 'Standing Here With You' has been choreographing at a high level since he was a very young man and is known as a world class choreographer, teacher, producer and dancer. He was an outstanding addition to BTP this year.

Carmit Bachar of The Pussycat Dolls was a sizzling sensation with her choreography sessions. Bachar taught the students the combination of jazz, modern, acting and voice that comprise all that went into learning the Pussycat Dolls huge hit comeback song- 'React'.

Carmit was certainly both moving and insightful in her Q&A session about show business.

The apprentices were wowed by her one woman show, and joined in with her singing the hit



Former Pussycat Dolls' Carmit Bachar



Michael Orland

song "Don't Cha".

Scott Wojcik, owner of Wojcik Casting Team that does full service for casting theatre around the country as well as tours and all forms of talent-based entertainment presented an invaluable session as he educated the BTP students on the in's and outs of being cast in shows. Wojcik's expertise opened the eyes of the apprentices and gave them solid information for their future.

Broadway Theatre Project hosted Michael Rodriguez to "Shaping The Artist" this year. Michael, owner and head of talent at The Roster Agency is known for cultivating Broadway's up and coming stars and is well established in TV/Film on both coasts. Rodriguez's clients can be seen in theatres all over the world as well as on Broadway. Rodriguez, along with Scott Wojcik worked together from a casting director's and talent agent's point of view with the apprentices in mock auditions and gave them invaluable information needed to move forward in a musical theatre career.

Eric Jordan Young spoke seriously to the BTP students about the different directions their training can take them. Young is the founder of EnJoY! Production Group. Eric Jordan Young is a producer, director, choreographer, entertainer, playwright and songwriter on TV, Broadway, Off-Broadway, Regionally, on National Tours and also possesses Symphonic credits. He is the Assistant Professor of Theatre at Long Island University.

Michael Orland was a huge highlight of the Broadway Theatre Project. Orland gave each apprentice a one-on-one singing/coaching lesson ending the evening with an open mike session which the apprentices participated in to the delight of their friends, family members and faculty.

Orland brought the group of students together to create a portion of the show filled with solo's, duets, trios and quartets that thoroughly entertained the audience .

Michael Orland is a pianist, arranger, vocal coach and was the assistant musical director and vocal coach on American Idol for 16 seasons.

"Over all, we couldn't be happier with the success of BTP's first year since Covid" exclaims McWaters. "We had more kids than we originally had planned on and the caliber of talent was really amazing! We designed the program to be a small, boutique project. Due to the excellent talent level, we took several more students than planned. Next year is already in the planning stages and after seeing the success of this year's "Shaping The Artist" program, we can hardly wait ! "

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Broadway Theatre Project's mission is to further develop the key disciplines of musical theatre, including acting, voice and dance, and the many facets of each, as well as, the critical life skills

necessary to prepare students to work in the world of professional theatre. Emphasis is not only placed on the individual art forms but also on the collaborative creation of art. Broadway Theatre Project endeavors to provide educational excellence and mold a creative, collaborative, well-rounded, mentally well-balanced, professional, musical theatre arts performer.

The Project feels that it is imperative to expose the apprentices to the many Broadway Theatre professionals who grace our stage, including creatives and casting people and all of those that work in front of and behind the curtain.

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