



**JOEY BANKS**

DIRECTOR

PRODUCTION PORTFOLIO



## a little bit about me

I am a native of Austin, TX, and have been working in theatre for the past twenty years as an actor, director, writer, and educator for students of all ages.

I received my Master of Fine Arts from Illinois State University with a focus in Classical Acting and Civic Engagement and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Southwestern University with a focus in Acting. I have performed professionally with the California Theatre Center, TheatreWorks, Austin Playhouse, ZACH Theatre, Austin Shakespeare, and the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, as well as multiple regional and local theaters in the Austin, Chicago, and San Francisco areas.

I am also a member of Actors Equity, a resident company member of Austin Playhouse and Doctuh Mistuh Productions, and the Artistic Director of Haymaker Players, a new works collective based out of Austin focused on telling original stories and community-based interview theatre. While working out of Austin as an actor and director, I've been honored to have earned multiple B. Iden Payne and Austin Critics Table awards/nominations.

*Joey Banks*



# SELECTED WORKS

2013-2021



**ZILKER**  
THEATRE PRODUCTIONS

PROUDLY PRESENTS

# LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

Music by  
Alan Menken

Book & Lyrics by  
Howard Ashton

Based on the film by Roger  
Corman with Screenplay by  
Charles Griffith

This production  
has been generously  
underwritten by  
the Pierce Family Foundation  
and the Cannata Family.

Little Shop of Horrors is presented  
through special arrangement with  
Music Theatre International (MTI).  
All authorized performance  
materials are also supplied by MTI.  
[www.MTIShows.com](http://www.MTIShows.com)

*Free Admission, Reservations required!*

# little shop of horrors

I was contracted in 2020 to direct a production of "Mamma Mia!" for Zilker Theatre, Austin's longest running theatre company. The show was cast and pre-production was in full-swing, but, unfortunately, the world stopped. We had to cancel our summer 2020 musical, but we knew, going into 2021, we couldn't cancel again. I went back to the drawing board and settled on a safe, outdoor, small-cast production of "Little Shop."  
Conceptually, I wanted to create a monochromatic set that resembled the black and white creature features of the 1950s and then as the plot grew break forth with a neon awakening. We opened on July 8th, 2021 and it was the first theatrical production of its scale in over a year. **SUMMER 2021**





LITTLE  
WOMEN

# little women

How do our relationships form us? This was my central question I was posing to the audience as I staged the musical version of "Little Women" at Southwestern University in the Spring of 2020. The source material is so rich and the characters are so well-known that I wanted to focus on spectacle second and relationships first. I worked to create a fragmented design that was part memory play and part imaginarium. The movement and transitions were stylized so that the March Family would take center stage. There is such an incredible beauty in the simplicity of family and I wanted the actors to focus on the sincerity of the moments in our lives that stick with us. **SPRING 2020**





# HEATHERS

THE MUSICAL



# heathers

I will admit: I love a dark rock musical. My conceptual conceit with my production of "Heathers" was to create a neon-gothic suburbia. I wanted skewed perspectives (angles you'd only see in a nightmare), vivid colors and imagery, and a feeling that as the show went on the entire world was degrading. Teenagers take to darkness. Why is that? It was important for us to entertain the audience with spectacle without losing the fact that "Heathers," the movie, originally came out in a world that wasn't plagued with school shooting after school shooting, so I wanted to be sensitive to the fact that while there was a lot of tongue in cheek in the script, we couldn't lose sight of the gravity of the moments. **SPRING 2019**



B R I G H T



S T A A R



A NEW  
MUSICAL

# bright star

I think one look at the photos below will tell you when and during what worldwide crisis this production took place. When the pandemic hit, those of us on faculty at Southwestern University had to decide how we would stage a musical knowing that we couldn't be closer than 6 feet apart, couldn't be indoors, and would have to be masked at all time. I found a concert production of "Bright Star" that seemed to fit the bill and we built a wooden stage out on the football field. It was absolutely a difficult season (actors were COVID tested once a week!), but the experience was thrilling. Everyone came together, everyone collaborated, and we put up a product that was optimistic, full of levity, and brought the community out for a night under the stars. **SPRING 2021**



JULY 12 - AUGUST 4


# ANNIE

BOOK BY  
THOMAS MEEHAN

MUSIC BY  
CHARLES STROUSE

LYRICS BY  
MARTIN CHARNIN

ORIGINAL BROADWAY PRODUCTION DIRECTED BY  
MARTIN CHARNIN

A stylized, geometric illustration of the New York City skyline. It features several skyscrapers in shades of grey and black, with the Statue of Liberty on the right side. The background is a gradient of orange and yellow, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The entire scene is framed by a white border with decorative corner elements.

BASED ON "LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE"<sup>®</sup>  
BY PERMISSION OF TRIBUNE CONTENT AGENCY, LLC

DIRECTED BY  
JOEY BANKS

MUSIC DIRECTED BY  
SUSAN FINNIGAN

CHOREOGRAPHED BY  
CHRISTOPHER SHIN

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# annie

When I was contracted to direct TexARTS summer musical production of "Annie," I felt like I was taking on a bit of a challenge. The theater is an Equity house, but boy was it small for a musical the size of "Annie." I was blessed to have a very talented group of kids audition (and one very well-behaved dog) and we were able to streamline the design to fit well under our parameters. One of my goals with the show was to really heighten the comedy. After all, the space we were in was so intimate that it felt like we could really get away with some impressive bits. We came in well-under budget and the show was extended as it was selling very well with repeat audience members. **SUMMER 2019**





A FUNNY  
THING  
HAPPENED  
ON THE WAY  
TO THE FORUM



# a funny thing happened on the way to the forum

When I joined the faculty of Southwestern University in 2017, I was asked to direct their spring musical. At this time, the department didn't have many strong singers, so it was very important to me to play to our strengths and put up something visually appealing to attract recruits for the following year. I decided to do a true "golden age" musical so the actors could understand what it felt like to perform something a bit less modern. Conceptually, the design takes its influences from a 1960s Vegas Strip production, complete with foam wigs and chasing lightbulb effects. In the end, the students rose to the occasion and delivered. **SPRING 2017**



HAYMAKER PLAYERS PRESENTS

# TAIL END CHARLIE

A PLAY BY  
JOEY BANKS

AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 8  
TRINITY STREET PLAYHOUSE

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4TH FLOOR FBC

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT  
[FACEBOOK.COM/HAYMAYPLAY](https://www.facebook.com/haymayplay)

BOX OFFICE - 425.717.2142



# tail end charlie

I founded a new works theatre company in Austin, TX in the fall of 2019 called Haymaker Players. Our goal was to produce new works and community focused projects in order to boost the voices of those whose stories are often overlooked. For our inaugural production, I wrote an original dramatic thriller, *Tail End Charlie*, which was well-received and successful enough for us to begin work on a brand new Austin-centric story that we hope to produce in the near future. It has always been my belief that theatres survival in the 21st century relies on practitioners wearing multiple hats: performers, directors, writers, designers, producers, etc. We need to set our students up for various forms of success. **FALL 2019**





**ASSASSINS**

# assassins

While completing my graduate studies in Illinois, I directed an ISU production of Sondheim's *Assassins*. Conceptually, we built the design around the impending 2016 election. The set was constructed to resemble a debate stage and we used several forms of multimedia (projections, edited video clips, short films) to bolster production value in a small black box space. The musical is one of my favorites: darkly comedic but with meaty scenes for young actors to chew on. **SPRING 2015**





NEXT  
THING  
YOU  
KNOW

# next thing you know

While I was acting and directing in the Chicago area, I directed a production of *Next Thing You Know* at Steel Beam Theatre. We built the show out to resemble a live recording of a 90s era sitcom complete with laugh tracks and green screen transition effects. Chicago theatre's black box/storefront production culture is unique in that it requires the director to block around some unique sight line issues due to the variety of stages in the area. The show isn't well known, but the music was compelling. **SPRING 2016**





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# laughter on the 23rd floor

When I returned to Austin in 2016, I accepted a contract to direct Neil Simon's *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* at City Theatre. Simon is prolific and most directors get a chance to dig into one of his works, so I wanted to really focus on casting a show with a group of actors who really clicked with one another. After all, we have seen Simon's work so often that the scripts can just lead to a feeling of constant facsmiles of the original. So, we wanted to set the show apart by assembling a top notch group of Austin comedians. It was a supremely funny undertaking. **WINTER 2016**





# directing process

## COLLABORATION

I pride myself on my ability to handle stressful situations and my primary focus when directing a show is creating a conducive, safe, and healthy environment for collaboration between producers, designers, actors, and crew alike. I am not arrogant enough to believe I have all of the answers, nor am I prideful enough to believe my answers are always correct.

## REHEARSALS

My rehearsals are always a safe space focused on creating a unique setting where artists can explore their process and character work. I spend more time working through the small moments to help better understand the larger ones and I want to encourage my actors to take bold choices that may shine a light on where they could use improvement. As an educator, I believe I have a duty to stretch my students out of their comfort zone and encourage them to take on new challenges and confront their insecurities about their acting abilities.

## TIME MANAGEMENT

While I move quickly in the rehearsal process, I do so with a plan always in hand. Before the first day of a new project, I have completed rough blocking and stage placement of the entire show in order to take advantage of every minute of rehearsal time. It is my belief that a director must prepare for a last minute confluence of problems and if you have taken advantage of every second earlier in the rehearsal process, you will be better prepared for when and if a crisis strikes.

## AUDITIONS

I have made it a personal mission of mine to be accessible and attentive to students questions and concerns about an audition process. I make it a personal duty of mine to carve out time to help workshop songs and/or monologues so that a student starts the audition process in a place of comfort. We all know this won't be the case when they enter the professional world, but this is their education, and I believe I can do them a great good by helping to explain the process before the big day. With this practice, I have seen students more prepared and better able to be a productive member of a cast.





# common topics

## **Open Casting**

I am a firm practitioner of open or non-traditional casting practices. I believe that all roles should be open to students of all races and genders unless the condition of the character or play speaks to the need of a different approach.

## **Acting Methods**

My focus is on instructing students in the methods of Stanislavski, Meisner, and Uta Hagen. In regards to voice and movement training, I incorporate facets of Linklater, Fitzmaurice, and Laban.

## **Research Focus**

My focus is currently in five specific areas:

- Civic engagement-based new works
- New musical workshops
- Primalcy based acting methods
- Shakespeare Behind Bars
- Public domain new works adaptations

## **Recruitment**

I am a passionate recruiter. I love nothing more than meeting with parents and incoming students to explain what our program can do for their training.

## **Diversity & Representation**

Personal awareness of privilege and history needs to govern how we move forward to a more inclusive environment for theatre practitioners, and so it has been a personal goal of mine to elevate POC and LGBTQ+ voices in the theatre community in my coursework. I incorporate scenes written by playwrights of every color and creed in order to create a tapestry of what is actually out there. Too often we only teach the "classics," but we forget the works that were lost to time due to completely inadequate representation. The best thing we can do to build a more inclusive community moving forward is to bring everyone to the table and to teach the next generation of theatre artists a diverse and varied set of dramatic works to ensure a conversation where everyone feels welcome to participate.



## other questions?

I am more than happy to expand on any of these topics or answer any further questions you may have about my methods and practices.

I've also included a link to my website if you'd be interested in taking a look at more photos of my productions or more of my work as an actor.

I'm excited to work together to create great works of theatre at your institution and I do hope I have the opportunity to sit down with you in person and explain why I believe I would be a valuable member of your faculty.

I'm looking forward to meeting you!

*Joey Banks*

### how to stay connected:



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