

JENNIFER BARNHART

www.jenniferbarnhart.com

EDUCATION

BFA in Acting, Concentration in Puppet Arts — University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT
Graduated *magna cum laude*, University Scholar Distinction

PROFILE

Charismatic, engaging speaker with a scholarly background in the history of puppetry and its use as a theatrical medium.

Performance coach of various styles of puppet arts, with a concentration in the manipulation of hand-and-rod (or 'Muppet-style') puppets.

Original Cast Member of the multiple Tony Award-winning Broadway Musical ***Avenue Q***, having performed in it for its entire six-year run on Broadway (2003-2009).

Emmy-nominated Muppeteer on *Sesame Street* for twenty+ seasons (2002-Present; Principal Performer for **Zoe**, 2014-Present), as well as principal puppeteer for *Julie's Greenroom* (with Julie Andrews, 2016), *Between the Lions* (2000-2010), *Helpsters* (2019-2021), *Johnny and the Sprites* (2005-2007), *Lomax: the Hound of Music* (2008) and other children's educational television programs.

LECTURING & COACHING

Adjunct Professor

Spring 2018

Wagner College, Staten Island, New York

- Taught "Puppetry in Theory and Practice," a survey class that introduced students to various forms and traditions of puppetry, both historical and contemporary, domestic and international.
- Assigned reading and writing assignments, including critiques of filmed theatrical productions that featured puppetry.
- Led students in construction of simple puppets of various types, including shadow, marionette, and masks.
- Introduced students to hand-and-rod, moving-mouth style puppet performance (with set of practice puppets, already fabricated).
- Led students in manipulation techniques and exercises for all forms studied.
- Assigned short performances for the students (solo and group) in each form.

Guest Artist & Workshop Leader

Spring 2017

Shababa Network Summit, 92nd Street Y, New York

- Co-led a workshop entitled "Communicating with Character: Puppets as Effective Tools for Outreach"
- Demonstrated and taught manipulation skills to 80-100 participants, including international educators, facilitators, rabbis and counselors.
- Discussed methods for community-building and outreach through the use of puppets.

Guest Artist & Coach**Fall 2016***Wagner College, Staten Island, New York*

- Taught manipulation skills of hand-and-rod puppets, in preparation of the student production of *Avenue Q*, directed by Ryan Gibbs.
- Coached students in rehearsal and in tech run-throughs.
- Gave an Academic and Cultural Enrichment Lecture to the Theatre & Speech Department on the role of puppetry in theatre, referencing different cultural traditions and history.

Instructor & Coach**Summer 2015***Gateway Center for Performing Arts, St. Louis, Missouri*

- Taught manipulation skills, coached actors in rehearsal for the student production of *Avenue Q*.
- Hosted and spoke at the annual gala for GCPA.
- Coordinated several puppet-related donation items for the silent auction.

Remote Coach**Summer 2014***Olney Theatre Center, Olney, Maryland*

- Skype-coached the production of *Avenue Q* at this professional theatre.
- Created videos with additional manipulation techniques and educational content.
- Submitted emailed notes on performance after viewing video samples of scenework and songs.

Guest Artist & Coach**Fall 2013***University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah*

- Guest Artist for the Musical Theatre Performance (MTP) Majors in 2013.
- Conducted two master classes; one on making a life in the theatre, and one on puppetry as an art form and theatrical/narrative device.
- Consulted in fittings of puppets designed by the Costume Design Professor.
- Gave a hands-on demonstration and coaching of hand-and-rod performance, in preparation of the student production of *Avenue Q*.

University of South Dakota Theatre Department**Fall 2011**

- Puppet Coach/Consultant for their 2011 production of *Avenue Q*, conducted Skype sessions to teach students manipulation skills.
- Examined videotaped rehearsal footage and gave written notes to the director via email.
- Met via Skype weekly for one-on-one coaching as well as group instruction.

Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Montgomery, Alabama**Fall 2011**

- Gave a master class to Acting Interns
- Lectured interns on the various functions of puppetry throughout history and in various world cultures, focusing on the language of symbolism as a theatrical device.
- Presented slides and video clips to support the lecture.
- Gave a hands-on demonstration and coaching of hand-and-rod performance, using puppets from *Avenue Q*.

New England Theatre Conference Convention, New Haven, CT**Fall 2010**

- Symposium Speaker in at the NETC Convention in 2010, presenting *The Language of the Puppet in Contemporary Theatre, or: 'What's That Puppet Doing in My Play?'*
- Lectured on the use of puppetry as a storytelling device in theatre, touching upon world cultures and symbolism, including its growing presence in contemporary theatre.
- Presented slides and video clips to support the lecture.
- Gave a hands-on demonstration and coaching of hand-and-rod performance, using puppets from *Avenue Q*.

Lincoln Center's Meet the Artist Series**Fall 2007**

- Lectured high school students from various backgrounds on the use of puppetry and its direct applicability to the success of *Avenue Q*.
- Gave a hands-on demonstration and coaching of hand-and-rod performance, using puppets from *Avenue Q*.

Puppet Captain/Performance Coach, Avenue Q**Winter 2004 - Spring 2005**

- Taught actors hand-and-rod manipulation techniques to perform in the Broadway and touring companies of the Tony Award-winning musical in 2005.
- Maintained performance quality through notes sessions and individual coaching.

AWARDS

- 2004 Outer Critics Circle Award: *Special Award for Outstanding Ensemble Performance and Puppet Artistry*
- 2008 University of Connecticut's *40 Under 40 Outstanding Alumni*

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Screen Actors Guild/American Federation of Television & Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA)
- Actors Equity Association (AEA)
- Director's Guild of America (DGA)
- Puppeteers of America
- Board Member, The Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry, Storrs, CT
- Board Member and Secretary, the Connecticut Chapter of the American Parkinson's Disease Association (APDA)

COMPETENCIES & INTERESTS

- Fluent in Microsoft Word, Proficient in PowerPoint
- Experienced copy editor
- Music: singing, playing ukulele
- Swimming, snorkeling, scuba diving, cycling, hiking, running
- Crafts: making jewelry, paper-crafts

Performance resume as an actor/puppeteer available upon request.

Directing resume available upon request.

References available upon request.