

R. Michael Gros, MFA, SDC
Associate Professor
Co-Chair

Courses Taught at SBCC

Beginning Acting
Intermediate Acting A
Intermediate Acting B
Advanced Acting
Acting Shakespeare
Directing
Development of Drama: Greeks to Renaissance
Development of Drama: Restoration to Contemporary
Development of Drama: Musical Theatre

Biography

A California native, Michael, spent his youth hanging out at the beach and playing baseball... until his high school English teacher took the class to see the seminal Peter Brook production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. While Michael still visited the beach on occasion, his dreams of playing on baseball diamonds rapidly transformed to theatrical playing spaces.

Michael, a member of the professional theatre directors union (SDC), is the Co-Artistic Director of PlayFest Santa Barbara (www.playfestsantabarbara.org), a company dedicated to the development of new plays, playwrights and audiences. He joined the Santa Barbara City College faculty in 2010 and currently serves as an associate professor, Co-Chair of the SBCC Theatre Arts Department, and resident faculty director for its affiliated producing wing, the Theatre Group at SBCC. For Theatre Group he has directed *Other Desert Cities*, *Proof*, *The Music Man*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, *Bus Stop*, *Ten Red Kings* (world premiere), *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Ground* (west coast premiere), *Present Laughter* (multiple *Indy Awards* including for direction), and *Light Up the Sky*. For the SBCC Theatre Department he has directed *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Trojan Barbie*, *Tartuffe*, and *Almost, Maine*.

Prior to his move to Santa Barbara, he was on the faculty as a resident director at Kansas State University, the only NAST accredited university theatre program in Kansas. In addition to his faculty directing assignments, he taught graduate seminars in directing, Greek and Roman theatre, and professionalism. He also taught undergraduate acting classes. Michael directed *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Guys*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs* at K-State. He directed *The Fifth of July* as a guest director at Oklahoma State University and *Keeping Up Make Believe* at the William Inge Festival 24-Hour plays.

Michael served as Artistic Director for six seasons (2000 - 2006) with PCPA Theaterfest (www.pcpa.org), a resident professional theatre company producing up to twelve major productions annually in three venues in two cities (Solvang and Santa Maria, CA). The resident company included up to eight professional actors and multiple designers on seasonal contracts. At PCPA he produced and/or directed 70 Equity productions including multiple world and west coast premieres as well as commissioning new works, and producing numerous regional educational outreach tours. Among the world premieres were Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope*, the Hip, Cool and Swinging production of *The Wildest!!!* based on the music of Louis Prima and Keely Smith, and commissioned adaptations and translations of *Little Women* and Goldoni's *A Servant of Two Masters*. The west coast premiere of Rebecca Gilman's *Boy Gets Girl* was produced at PCPA under Michael's creative leadership.

Michael is also an arts consultant in the areas of leadership, planning, production and programming, and has served as an advisor to the Board of Directors and as interim Executive Director for the Clark Center for the Performing Arts in Arroyo Grande, CA. Over the past 20+ years, Michael has presented numerous seminars on leadership and arts management through the United States Institute for Theatre Technology Leadership Academy. He regularly speaks on arts advocacy and arts education topics to civic, social, and professional organizations. He was an invited participant in Theatre Communication Group's New Artistic Leaders Institute and *New Works, New Ways* Forum. He is a regularly invited professional participant at the Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors theatre of Louisville. Michael was an invited participant at Scandinavia on Stage, an international convocation of producers, directors and writers, exploring trends in contemporary Scandinavian theatre. He is proud of serving as a Board member of USITT (2010-2013), and for the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, is a past representative (Chair) for the directing focus group.

Michael has worked professionally at the Utah Shakespearean Festival, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, South Coast Repertory Theatre and the Center Theatre Group. He has participated in the creation of plays in venues as diverse as 99-seat Equity Waiver theatre, corporate events, and religious pageants in the Crystal Cathedral.

Serving as the Associate Dean for Allan Hancock College, he was responsible for the professional training conservatory wing of the Pacific Conservatory of Performing Arts (PCPA). As both Artistic Director and Associate Dean, Michael was directly engaged in leading multiple endowment and equipment funding campaigns and helped to raise more than \$2 million annually. At the time of his departure, PCPA had an astonishingly favorable general public rating of 99% (with 1% having no opinion or awareness of the company) as determined in a professional survey conducted for Allan Hancock College prior to its successful \$185 million facilities bond campaign.

Michael has served on statewide arts grant panels in Kansas and regional panels in California. While teaching in Akron, Ohio (at The University of Akron), he participated in the statewide Arts Advocacy Day. He was a reader for the National Endowment for the Arts playwrights-in-residence grant and for the Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival undergraduate playwriting award. In California, he served as an Alameda County and a City of Fremont Arts Commissioner. Michael was the marketing coordinator for the Historic Downtown Torrance Festival, helping the Chamber of Commerce double the size of the festival within two years of his service. Michael is a regular participant in numerous arts advocacy activities and arts in education programs at the local and state levels with experience in California, Kansas and Ohio.

Additional academic leadership includes serving as the Dean of Fine, Performing and Language Arts at Ohlone College. While there, Michael worked closely with BOORA Architects (www.boora.com) on the \$22 million Gary Soren Smith Center for the Performing Arts (http://www2.ohlone.edu/org/smith_ctr/) and design and renovation of the Ohlone Recital Hall. Michael was directly involved in "asks" that raised external programming funds including a six figure naming award) and began the public presenting program of touring professional artists. He also produced the grand opening celebration of the Smith Center featuring Academy Award winning actor, Tom Hanks.

Michael has taught arts administration as the coordinator of the graduate program at The University of Akron, Ohio. He has taught a wide variety of performance and/or production courses at Santa Barbara City College, Kansas State University, California Institute of the Arts, California State University Northridge, Allan Hancock College and El Camino College. At ECC he directed plays, served as the production manager for the South Bay Center for the Arts (presenting more than 400 events annually in three venues ranging from a 148 seat recital hall to a 2,000 seat auditorium) and was the resident technical director for the Department of Theatre and Dance.

In 2005, Michael was one of 48 persons selected worldwide to receive a residency fellowship in non-profit arts leadership at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business Center for Social Innovation. This "by invitation only" program was presented in partnership with National Arts Strategies. He earned his MFA in directing from the University of California at Irvine, studying with Robert Cohen, Keith Fowler, Ian Bernard, William Needles (Stratford Shakespeare Festival) and Brewster Mason (Royal Shakespeare Company) among others. He earned his BA in theatre, Magna Cum Laude, at the University of California Los Angeles. He studied with Mel Helstein, Michael Gordon (Group Theatre), Gary Gardner, Richard Rose, and Carl Mueller among others. He earned an AA degree from El Camino College where he studied with Howard Banks (Colorado Shakespeare Festival), William Buck, and Charles Turner.

Michael was elected by the Directing Focus Group of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) to serve as conference planner (for two years) followed by a two-year term as Chair (Representative) and a two-year term as Immediate Past Chair of the DFG. He served as Management Commissioner and Southern California Section Chair for the United States Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT). In addition to ATHE and USITT, he is, or has been, a member of Theatre Communications Group, California Presenters, Association of Arts Administration Educators, Western Alliance of Arts Administrators, Association of Performing Arts Presenters and the Association of California Community College Administrators.