



For Immediate Release

Piven Theatre Workshop

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Piven Theatre Workshop announces their virtual classroom, where both adult students and youth students from 3rd grade through 12th grade can learn from our master teaching artists. After a successful transition to online classes this spring, we are committed to offering even more opportunities for our community this summer. We believe in the power of connection and community-building afforded by theatre classes, and we recognize that this spirit of collaboration is needed now more than ever.

Invigorate your natural sense of play and open your imagination. Take risks with the support of your ensemble. Communicate truthfully and whole-heartedly, on screen and off. Registration is available online ([Online Registrations](#)), as well as additional information about our online classes and our virtual youth capstone, The Resilience Project ([Piven Homepage](#))

Curious about how our work translates to the mini proscenium of your laptop screen? Check out our collaboration with Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre in their #staycreative series, where we team up to bring you free theatre videos like [this gibberish translation game](#). Follow the [Piven Theatre Workshop Facebook page](#) and the [Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre Facebook page](#) to see them all!

Adult and youth summer classes are listed below. Please feel free to email info@piventheatre.org or ghemme@piventheatre.org or call (847)866-6597 with any questions you may have!

As you consider joining us this summer, please check out some of the feedback from parents during our spring online session:

“Please keep these going! Seriously, it’s making a HUGE difference in his life right now and I am forever grateful.”

“Thank you for running these virtual classes. They are the highlight of my daughter's week.”

“[My daughter] has really enjoyed her classes and they’ve been invaluable for her to feel connected to the friends she’s made.”

Adult Online Offerings for Summer 2020

6 weeks of classes. 1 night per week.

Improvisation, Games & Risk Taking

Zip Zap Zoom... We want to do more than just approximate our on-site classes for the virtual stage. We want to play with the technology and the new opportunities it gives us to be creative. How can we think of our little Zoom rectangle as a mini stage? How can we build community when we’re in living rooms across the country?

As always, this class allows students to discover the Piven Technique by learning theatre games & improvisation in a fun, supportive, ensemble-based environment. This class is perfect for all students looking to discover & re-discover their impulsive creativity through our work.

Tuesdays 7:00-8:30pm

\$175

Improv and Storytelling Showcase

Take your work from the classroom to the online stage! Working with a senior Piven instructor, students learn how Piven's signature improvisation exercises and theatre games can be used to create dynamic storytelling performances. The program culminates with students taking the virtual stage to share their stories in a format decided by the class.

Mondays, 7pm-8:30pm

\$200

On-Camera Technique: Auditioning for Film and Television

Actors need to know how to self-tape now more than ever. Practice your audition technique and learn the skills that set on-camera work apart from the theatrical auditioning process. A senior Piven teacher will prepare students to audition for everything from one-liners to series regular to feature film auditions. Students will learn exercises to become comfortable in front of the camera and work with scenes pulled from a variety of films and shows shot in the Chicagoland area.

Wednesdays, 7:00-8:30pm

\$200

Online Youth Classes – Summer 2020

July 6th – August 14th

6 Week Classes for Youth Students

3rd, 4th, and 5th Grade

Theatre Games and Story Theatre

Come play with us! Learn the games that form the core of the legendary Piven training method. In this class, students will learn to build ensemble, explore improvisation, and adapt and perform stories. We can guarantee that you'll never see freeze tag the same way again! For new and returning students.

Choose one of the following, or register for more than one to make your own intensive.

Mondays & Wednesdays 10:00-11:00am

OR

Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:00-11:00am

\$200

6th-8th Grade

6th, 7th, & 8th Grade Improv, Story, and Scene Study

Use the fun and impulsive play of improvisation to create lively characters and realistic relationships. Students will rehearse scenes and work with their scene partners and memorize their lines under the guidance of Piven's teaching staff.

Choose one of the following, or register for more than one to make your own intensive.

Mondays & Wednesdays 10:00-11:30am

OR

Tuesdays & Thursday 10:00-11:30am

\$250

High School Improvisation and Scene Study

In this class students will explore improvisation as a tool for the actor. This is a great class for high school students new to Piven and for experienced actors who want to expand their improv skills. Students will use games to build ensemble, explore improvisation, and adapt and perform stories. Students will also to apply their improvisation to scene work and begin creating new works and adaptations developed by the ensemble.

Mondays & Wednesdays 1:00-2:30pm

\$250

High School Monologue and Audition Technique for Stage and On-Camera Performance

Explore adapting our ensemble-driven technique to the art of performing solo. This workshop is the perfect opportunity for high school students to develop their monologue skills and get a leg up on their next audition for school productions, professional theatres, and conservatory or college programs. Self-taped auditions are the new norm, and this class will prepare you to tailor your performance for on-camera presentations.

Tuesdays, 1:00-2:30pm

\$200

Broadway Song

for 7th-12th Graders

Sing your heart out! Prepare a new song or breathe new life into your repertoire with expert music instruction and Piven technique-informed training.

Thursdays, 1:00-2:30pm

\$250

Four-week Advanced Offering for High School

July 6th to July 31st

Writing and Performance Institute for High School

We are looking for passionate students who have a message they want to share with the world. Work with a team of master Piven teachers and industry professionals to create an original performance piece in our most advanced summer youth offering. Develop an array of skillsets as you fine-tune both your writing and your performance capabilities.

Because of the ensemble-based nature of this program, students must be accepted by application to register and any absences must be approved prior to acceptance into the program. Applications available for

download below. Students who have previously applied to and have been accepted to the Advanced Summer Conservatory are automatically accepted into this offering.

This program will culminate in a web-based performance crafted by the ensemble.

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
for 4 weeks
2:30-4:30pm
\$500

Specialty Classes

4th-8th Grade

Hip Hop with Eldridge

Enjoy high-energy, fun-filled hip hop warm-ups each morning. Learn new choreography each week and see how your skills blossom!

Monday through Friday, 9:00-9:45am
Each week of July

Sign up for one week or for all four!
\$80 per week; ask about drop-in session availability

5th-8th Grade

D&D plus Piven Technique

Enter the universe of D&D with a unique Piven twist. Use improvisation training and character building to make your D&D world come to life, under the instruction of a Master Teacher who moonlights as a Dungeon Master. All experience levels welcome! Let us know if you have any questions about this new offering.

Mondays, 6:30-8:30pm
Six weeks, July 6th – August 11th
\$ 225

Our Piven Teaching Artists include...

Robin Chaplik. Robin is a Joseph Jefferson Award-winning playwright, actor, director, and educator. Recent performance credits include THE ADMISSION (Silk Road Rising) and DEAD MAN WALKING (Piven Theatre). Ms. Chaplik won a Joseph Jefferson Award for her play ROSA LUBLIN (Piven Theatre) and was also honored for its direction (“One of the 10-Best Productions of the Year” – Pioneer Press). Other favorite directing projects include Julia Pascal’s THE DYBBUK and Cynthia Ozick’s THE SHAWL (College of DuPage), John Patrick Shanley’s THE BIG FUNK (Joseph Jefferson Nomination) for Clock Productions, THE ILLUSION (Joseph Jefferson Recommendation) for Piven Theatre, and the critically acclaimed COOL SHOES (Collaboraction Sketchbook Festival). Ms. Chaplik has worked with numerous other theatres in Chicago and New York including Chicago Dramatists, Greenhouse Theatre, Chimera, Lumina, Steppenwolf, Collaboraction, Redmoon,

Lookingglass, Strawdog, Raven, Fox Theatricals, Footsteps, Babes with Blades, Center Theater, and 12th Street Repertory. Ms. Chaplik was a long-time Resident Artist with Steppenwolf Theatre Company's Steppenwolf For Young Adults, where her innovative work was featured on CPS-TV's Chicago Educator and in The National Council of Teachers' English Journal. She teaches and lectures nationally. As a Viewpoints practitioner trained by its founders, Anne Bogart and Mary Overlie, Ms. Chaplik brings this acclaimed training to both teen and adult actors at Piven Theatre Workshop. She holds a B.F.A. From New York University's Tisch School of the Arts (Experimental Theater Wing). Ms. Chaplik is an alumna of Piven Theatre's renowned Young People's Company.

Rebecca McNamara. Rebecca draws constant inspiration from the work at Piven, where joyous exploration develops skills for building exceptional humans. At Piven she is a teacher-collaborator with the Piven Prison Project in Cook County Jail and co-coach of the PEEP improv ensemble. She has directed for both Performance Project and the Young People's Company and has taught the Advanced Performance Ensemble and the High School Performance Lab. Rebecca has trained with the Lincoln Center in aesthetic education and leadership in arts education. Her own artistic theatrical work has been seen both locally and nationally including at Second City (Chicago), the Lincoln Center (New York) and the Kennedy Center (Washington D.C.). She is a collaborating artist with the Chicago based community engagement organization Opera-Matic.

Joanne Underwood. Joanne is one of our senior acting teachers, directors and actors. She has taught a variety of classes at Piven, from games and improvisation for nine year olds to professional classes for adults. In addition she has given workshops at schools and theaters around Chicago including Lifeline Theatre, Roosevelt University, and Columbia College. She has acted widely at local theaters including Raven, greasy joan, and Piven where she appeared as Cordelia in *King Lear* starring Byrne Piven and Florina in *Mad Forest* (which won the 2003 After Dark Award for Best Ensemble). She has studied acting with the Moscow Art Theatre, Shakespeare & Company, and the Chicago Shakespeare Company. Most recently, she appeared as Olenka in Joyce Piven's lab production of "The Darling." When not onstage, Joanne is a psychotherapist with a private practice in Evanston.

Christie Chiles Twillie. Christie is a Chicago based Music Director/Pianist. Regional Theatre credits include Skylight Music Theatre's "Five Guys Named Moe." Recent credits are A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder, Shrek, Side Show, The Last Five Years, Spring Awakening, Lippa's Wild Party, Cabaret, A Little Night Music, Sweeney Todd, Jesus Christ Superstar. Christie earned her a BTA nomination for 'Best Music Direction for her original score for 'Yellowman,' and she was a Broadway World Finalist for 'Best Music Direction' for Big Fish: The Musical. Among her favorite credits are composing the original score for In The Red & Brown Water (Northwestern University); scoring the short film, 'Alone' and serving as a judge for Underscore Theatre's Musical Theatre Festival. Christie's Bachelor and Masters studies were in Piano Performance at West Virginia University. She also has a minor in dance from WVU and is a member of the Chicago Federation of Musicians.

Lynn Baber. Lynn has been working on-camera since the 80s, specializing in comedy, looking the way she does, and a really finely tuned deadpan. Recent commercials include working with NBA star Steph Curry (made him laugh) and a former student, which isn't all that unusual because she spent 19 summers as the Theatre Arts Division Director for Northwestern University's National High School Institute (the "Cherub" program); and many years teaching for that program. When she's not booking film, tv or commercial work, she is consulting/coaching actors for auditions; and high school students for college admission, with specialization in headshots, resumes and monologues (both selection and coaching). She is also a freelance casting director for Chicago theatre. Loves working with everyone at Piven.

Donna Osowski. Donna is one of our senior acting teachers, having taught classes in games, story and improvisation to children and adults. She has directed a variety of fairytales and literary pieces for the Performance Project at Piven for 9 years. She most recently appeared on the Piven stage in Dead Man Walking, staged readings of Far Away and To the Lighthouse, and she has performed in the Piven Improv series Anytime Anywhere. Other

credits include *Jewish Stories* (Piven) and *Summer and Smoke* (The Den Theatre). She has a degree in theatre from Illinois State University.

Aayisha Gold . Aayisha has been appearing in roles onstage and on camera since appearing in *Candyman* (1992) at the age of six. She earned her BA from the Columbia College (Chicago) Theater Program in 2013. She has trained with Joyce Piven since 2003 at her Piven Theatre Workshop. She won the Black Theater Alliance's Phylcia Rashad Award for Most Promising Actress in 2017, for the title role in 'A Hedda Gabler' (Red Tape Theatre). Aayisha has appeared on the Piven stage in roles such as Sasha in the late Sheldon Patinkin's adaptation of 'Ivanov', and multiple roles in the 'The Good Doctor' as well as in Tim Robbins' exclusive adaptation of 'Dead Man Walking'. Other roles include Bianca in 'The Taming of the Shrew' and the Lady in Yellow in 'For Colored Girls ...' (Fleetwood-Jourdain Theater), and Kate in 'Good People' (Steel Beam Theater).

A strong advocate of independent and equitable film, Aayisha has played leads in various independently produced features including 'The Fourth Meeting', 'Altered', 'Hogtown', and 'Get A Job'. She has concurrently appeared in commercial and voice-over roles, as well as a principal role on *Chicago P.D.* (NBC).

Aayisha is an instructor at 'Off the Street Club' in Garfield Park and is a teacher at Piven Theatre Workshop. In her downtime, she enjoys writing, chess, and is still trying to master the violin. She is proudly represented by Big Mouth Talent.

Eldridge Shannon III. Eldridge has been involved with Piven Theatre Workshop since he was 19 years old. He started taking classes with Mikalina Rabinsky and has worked with every teacher from Ryan Kitley to Robin Chaplik to Joanne Underwood. He has even had the distinct honor of being able to take a workshop from Joyce Piven, herself. Eldridge started as an apprentice and continued that training for over a year before being promoted to an Assistant Teacher. Eldridge finds joy in being able to teach the next generation of Piven Students. He has been honored to work with various outreach programs with Piven such as, Off The Street Club and KidsRank. Eldridge has been involved with theatre since he was 10, and has trained with Amazing Grace Conservatory, Goodman Theatre, and still currently attends classes at Piven. Piven Theatre has become a home for Eldridge and he looks forward to his future with the Workshop.

Helen Knudsen . Helen found a warm home teaching at Piven in 2014, originally coming to Piven as an understudy in 2011. A lover of children's theatre, she founded Hatbox Theatre (formerly DIY Teen Theatre) in 2009, and has since taught and directed with Elmhurst Children's Theatre, Immaculate Conception Grade School, and York Community High School. Helen holds a BM in Vocal Performance from Roosevelt University (CCPA). Favorite credits: *Brigadoon* (Meg), *A Little Night Music* (Desirée), *Titanic* (Kate Mullins), *The Boys from Syracuse* (Courtesan), *Godspell*, *The Polar Express™ Train Ride*, and a recording for the new opera, *The Gift* (by Paul Herman). She loves Shakespeare, Harry Potter, and a good old-fashioned Golden Age musical.

Mikalina Rabinsky . Mikalina is a theater artist and teacher in the Chicago area who is forever grateful to Joyce and Byrne for her foundational training and artistic home. As a senior faculty member at the Piven Theatre since 1998, she has directed and adapted many shows with the Young People's Company and has taught both adults and children Improvisation, Story Theatre, Adaptation, Scene Study and Commedia dell'Arte. She also works in Puppetry, Mask and Found Objects. She has always emphasized collaboration with an ensemble to best make use of their unique voices to tell a story. Her work has been seen at Links Hall, The Conspiratorium, Peter Jones Gallery, The Ukrainian Institute of Art, Redmoon, Around the Coyote, Chicago's Her-Ra Festival, Heart of Gold, The Spare Room, Rhythm Night Club and Millennium Park. Some recent favorite endeavors include: Directing *Dead Man Walking* at Piven Theatre for The Quality of Mercy Project; performing with The Conspirators in the Commedia dell'Arte show, *The Resistible Rise of Herr Helmut Drumpf*; and participating with artists from around the country and world in a professional artistic intensive, *The Catapult*, through the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival.

Fiona Maxwell. Fiona began studying at the Piven Theatre Workshop when she was eleven, eventually becoming a member of Performance Project and Young People's Company. She has been an assistant

teacher for classes ranging in age from 4th grade through high school, focusing on story theatre, improv games, scene study, and storytelling. She has also assisted for Young People's Company, Advanced Performance Ensemble, and PEEP. In 2016, Fiona presented a one-person play on the Lab@Piven Series. She has told stories at Piven's Anytime/Anywhere Series, the Evanston Public Library's Annual Storytelling Festival, This Much Is True, Adventure StageChicago, and Do Not Submit. Fiona graduated from Northwestern University with a BA in History and Theatre and a module in Theatre for Young Audiences. She recently received an MA in History at the University of Chicago, where she is currently pursuing a PhD. Her academic research focuses on the history of oral and literary culture, specifically the origins of story-based drama. Fiona uses her storytelling skills to make history publicly accessible as a docent at the Center for Women's History and Leadership's Frances Willard House Museum. She recently received a grant from the UChicagoGRAD Global Impact Internship Program to fund a project exploring nineteenth-century women's public speaking and parlor performance.

Liz Bell. Liz has been with Piven Theatre since 1999, first as an eager student and now as a teacher and director of Performance Project and the Young People's Company, both of which she was honored to participate in as a student. Needless to say, Piven is her home. The Workshop's focus on connection to impulse and intuition, to the body, and to others through individual and ensemble-based play informs her work as an illustrator, designer, ballroom dance instructor, Shiatsu Massage practitioner, and facilitator of intuitive art-making workshops. All of which help her to empower students by encouraging them to take risks, find their unique voice and inherent gifts in a safe space.

Gillian Hemme. Gillian is a performer, writer, and director. She has studied at Grinnell College, Pacifica Graduate Institute, the National Theatre Institute, and Piven Theatre Workshop. Gillian has appeared on stage with Piven, The Moth, ten x9 Chicago, Literate Ape's Bughouse, Something Marvelous, Prop Theatre, Jubilee Theatre Collective, Prologue, the Chicago Fringe Festival, and the International Theatre Festival in Taiwan. She has also toured her solo performances, Mad Like Us and Clean Start. Her on-camera credits include Chicago Fire and Mind Games, and she is represented by Big Mouth Talent. At Piven, she is a co-teacher for PEEP (Piven Empowerment through Enrichment Program) classes for adults with neurological diversities, directs for Performance Project, and teaches story theatre for Conservatory. She teaches classes for and directs the EPIC ensemble at Cook County Jail, where she and an outstanding team of teachers develop original performances with an incredible group of women.

Susan Payne O'Brien. Susan is deeply influenced by the rich theatrical landscape of the Chicagoland area where she works and resides. She trained as a director and performer under Byrne and Joyce Piven. Drawing upon her twenty year tenure as a teacher, performer and director at Piven and upon her years as an actress and opera singer Susan creates inventive work for the theater and opera stage.

She is the founder and Artistic Director of Forte Chicago, an all female operatic company that devises new work pushing the boundaries of the female voice. Since Forte's launch in 2015 it has premiered five full length original devised shows exposing fresh audiences to the possibilities and delight of opera. Susan is passionate about bringing theatrical devising process to opera classrooms and has served on the directing and opera faculties of Roosevelt University, DePaul University and North Park University. She has directed, written and devised shows for The Piven Theater Lab, Black Cat Theater, 2nd Story, Links Hall, The Santa Fe Opera, The El Paso Opera, Artemesia, and the CUBE Ensemble.

Ryan Kitley. Ryan is proud to say he's been working with Piven since 1999. He's been working professionally as an actor, teacher, and voiceover talent for over 20 years. Favorite Chicago credits include Lettie (Victory Gardens), Romeo and Juliet (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre), Objects in the Mirror (Goodman), Support Group for Men (Goodman), Assassination Theater (MBC), Burn This (Shattered Globe), Transformations 2000 (Piven), The Big Funk (Clock Productions), Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (Shattered Globe), among others. Film credits include Dig Two Graves, Guidance, Kill Game, Miss March, Barbershop II, Soul Survivors, Soul Sessions. Television credits include Chicago PD, Chicago Fire, Boss, Empire, Detroit 1-8-7, Embeds, Other

People's Children, Turks, and Early Edition. Ryan holds an MFA in acting from The Theatre School at DePaul and is a proud member of AEA. For more info visit www.ryankitley.com.

Jennifer Green (Artistic Director) Jennifer has been a part of the Piven community for more than twenty-five years. Beginning as a student of Byrne and Joyce Piven, Jennifer became part of the Workshop faculty in 1993 teaching theatre games, improvisation, story theatre and scene study to both young people and adults. At Piven Theatre, Jennifer's professional directing credits include *Never in my Lifetime* (named one of the Top 10 Shows of the year by the Chicago Sun-Times), *Burn This* (Jeff Recommended), *Book of Days* (Chicago premiere), *Mad Forest* (After Dark Award: Best Ensemble), *Our Country's Good*, *Great Expectations* (world premiere), *Lady Chaplin and her Tramp* (world premiere), *Mad Dancers* (Chicago premiere), *Tusk Tusk* (Chicago premiere), and *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* (Jeff Recommended). Since 1997, she has been an adapter and director with Piven's acclaimed Young People's Company and currently curates Piven's Annual Lab Season of New Works. Other directorial credits include: *State and Madison: The Chicago Grid* with Theatre 7's Chicago Landmark Project, *Pangs of the Messiah* at Silk Road Theatre Project, *The End of Civilization as we Know it* for the Ripped Project with American Blues Theater, *Storybox* with the Chicago Improv Festival (assistant director), *For You Were a Stranger* at The Hothouse, *Orlando* (assistant director) at the Actor's Gang in Los Angeles. She is a Theatre Communications Group's New Generation Fellow, an adjunct faculty member of Northwestern University, and has been a teaching artist with Urban Gateways, the Illinois Arts Council, Marwen, DePaul University, and National-Louis University.