

James T. Washburn

he/him

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Dramatists Guild Associate Member #103964

Education

Degree

BFA in Original Works | cum laude | Cornish College of the Arts, Class of 2020

History & Theory: Ryan Hartigan, Guillaume Tourniare

Text Analysis: Timothy Piggee

Shakespeare: Annie Lareau

Playwriting: Elizabeth Heffron, A. Rey Pamatmat

Directing: Kathleen Collins, Katjana Vadeboncoeur, Desdemona Chiang

Musical Writing & Development: Katherine Strohmaier

Viewpoints & Auto Cours: Sheila Daniels

Independent Coursework

Language

Polish | June 2024 - present

Instructor: Dr. Christina Manetti

Writing Courses

“Go I Know Not Where: Writing with Slavic Magic Tales” Course | Jul 2023

Instructor: Shankar Narayan

“Ancestors Calling: Divining the Family Narrative” Workshop | Jul 2023

Instructor: Darien Gee

“Writing Historical Fiction” Course | Jan - Feb 2023

Instructor: Elise Hooper

Folk Dance

Video Portfolio

- [Folk Dance Reel](#)
- [2025 Performances](#)

Membership

Syrena Seattle Polish Folk Dance Ensemble | PFDA
Featured Soloist (singing & dance)

Trainings & Workshops

Masterclass: Podlasie, Sącz, & Łowicz | 2025
PFDA, instr. Marcin Bochenek, Dominika Bodziony, Rafał Wróbel, Ania Czupryn (biały głos)
Eastern Kraków Workshop | 2024
PFDA, instr. Wiesława Hazuka
Oberek/Kujawiak Workshop | 2024
PFDA, instr. Maciej Smusz

Selected Performances

New Day Northwest on King5 News | July 2025
Seattle Polish Festival | 2024 & 2025
Portland Polish Festival | 2024 & 2025
NW Ukrainian International Festival | 2024

Styles, by region

National

Polonez | Krakowiak

Łowicz

Oberek | Kujawiak | Klapok | Walczyk | Polka | Chodzony

Eastern Kraków

Warszawianka od Zaborowa | Warszawianka od Niecieczy | Polka Razówka | Kulawa Polka

Podlasie

Polka Przysiadana | Polka Galopka | Polka Drobna | Polka Trzęsionka | Polka Przechodona | Tupacz | Korobeczka | Zawierucha | Krzyżak Domanicki

Lachy Sądeckie (Nowy Sącz)

Surok | Krakowioki | Polka z Noki | Tramelpolka | Walc Wolny

Śląsk

Trojak | Rehtor | Gołąbek | Koziery

Dramaturgical, Written, & Devised Work

Prose Fiction & Poetry

Persephonai: An Analysis in Verse and Movement

A comparative analysis of the rites and hymns associated with the cult of Demeter and modern retellings of the Persephone myth, presented as a chapbook/script following dual narratives of the ancient and modern Persephones. The piece argues that Persephone's lasting appeal is due to her character acting as an avatar of the women telling the story; her motivations and circumstances change as the issues women face evolve.

- Hugo House Fellowship project

Sealed with Honey

An immersive epistolary novel following the experiences of Queer artists in the Victorian era. The characters' letters were sent to readers through the mail, allowing them to experience the story in real-time.

- Kickstarter "Project We Love" and "Featured Publishing Project" July 2021
- Read by an audience of over 300 during its year-long immersive run

Selected Plays

Arthuriana: Arthurian Legends for a New Age [composer Kyle Morrow]

An exploration of Arthurian legends, addressing themes of religious repression and purity culture through a modern Queer lens. Story devised by the Magpie Ensemble, with my guidance as dramaturg, script writer, and director.

- Production - Magpie Artists' Ensemble & Theatre Off Jackson - 2025

Fable: Tales from Another World [co-writer Kyle Morrow]

An immersive experience exploring the nature, forms, and evolution of folklore and oral culture. Performances included recitations of new folktales inspired by Slavic, Celtic, and Filipino traditions, as well as an interactive performance inviting audience members to share stories with an actor who retold them from memory over the course of the night, demonstrating the changes to oral culture over time. I created the concept, wrote the original folk tales, and handled dramaturgical research, as well as directing the performers.

- Production - Magpie Artists' Ensemble & Theatre Off Jackson - 2024

Achilles & Patroclus

A nonlinear retelling of a portion of the *Iliad*, with additional scenes imagining the early stages of the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus. Originally commissioned by Seattle Opera.

Opera Edition [composer Erika Meyer]

- Production - Lowbrow Opera Collective & 18th+Union - 2023
- Commission & Staged Reading - Seattle Opera - 2021

Play Edition

- Production - Northwestern University - 2025
- Production - Marymount Manhattan - 2022
- Production - New College of Florida - 2022
- Workshop - Magpie Artists' Ensemble - 2022

BriarRose [arranger Jae Kinsman]

An original fairytale musical drawing on folklore from Germanic, Celtic, and Slavic traditions. Melodies were taken from Irish Trad music, with base character archetypes from Grimms fairytales. I wrote the script, handled dramaturgical research, and directed.

- Production - Theatre Off Jackson & Magpie Artists' Ensemble - 2023
- Production - Cornish College of the Arts - 2020 (COVID cancelled)
- Workshop - Copious Love - 2019

Rust: A Ghost Story [composer Clover Balbirona]

A medieval revenge thriller featuring Shakespearian archetypes, exploring feminist and Queer themes in Shakespeare's works. I did dramaturgical research, wrote the script, and directed the most recent workshop.

- Workshop - Magpie Artists' Ensemble & 18th+Union - 2022

The Myth Cycle

An exploration of popular Greek myths through a modern Queer lens. Stories devised by the Magpie Ensemble, with my guidance as dramaturg, script writer, and director.

- Web Series - Magpie Artists' Ensemble - 2021

Publications

How to make your theatre production trans inclusive - GLAAD amp.

Healthcare loophole allows employers to deny coverage - GLAAD amp.

Honors, Awards, & Fellowships

Seattle Public Library Eulalie and Carlo Scandiuzzi Writer-in-Residence | 2025

Awarded access to the private writers' room and one-on-one support from genealogical and historical specialists at the Seattle Library for my bilingual narrative chapbook, *mówiliśmy po polsku, once*.

4Culture Sustained Support Grant | 2025-2028

Granted yearly awards totaling \$45,000 to support the creation of new works by my company, Magpie Artists' Ensemble.

Seattle Office of Arts & Culture smART Ventures Grant | 2023

Granted the highest possible sum to support the premier of my original folktale musical, *BriarRose*, produced by Magpie Artists' Ensemble and Theatre Off Jackson.

Hugo House Fellowship | 2022-2023

Selected to receive a year of support, mentorship, and education in order to complete experimental script/poetry chapbook and historical research project *Persephonai: An Analysis in Verse and Movement*.

Shunpike's Studio @ 2+U | 2022-2023

Awarded one year of studio space by Shunpike in order to continue developing *The Myth Cycle* play trilogy and rehearse *BriarRose*.

Jane Lang Davis Creation Lab | 2020-2021

Mentor: Tazewell Thompson

Selected as a member of the inaugural cohort for Seattle Opera's original works program, during which I wrote the libretto for the short chamber opera *Achilles + Patroclus*, with music by Erika Meyer.

GLAAD Campus Ambassador | 2017-2020

Selected as a member of the GLAAD Campus Ambassador program representing Cornish College of the Arts. The position included organizing queer students on campus, working with GLAAD on various social media campaigns to increase representation and acceptance of queer people, trainings on writing for the media, and publishing articles on various advocacy topics.

In Other Words | 2018

A draft of *BriarRose* was chosen for the first edition of Cornish College of the Arts' student work showcase highlighting promising works in progress. This involved a staged reading, inclusion of pages in a public display, and publication in an anthology.

Professional Experience

Magpie Artists' Ensemble | Founding Artistic Director | 2021-Present

My work as Artistic Director includes choosing projects/season planning, coordinating project schedules, tracking finances, handling communication with venues and artists, grant writing, and running marketing campaigns. As Resident Director, Playwright, and Dramaturg, my specialty is in projects based in history, folklore, and mythology, generally through the lenses of Queer and Feminist Theory.

Teaching Assistant | Cornish College of the Arts | 2017

Assisted faculty member Elizabeth Heffron in her Intro to Playwriting class - handled administrative tasks, led in-class discussions, and gave feedback on assignments.

DEI Training & Transgender Advocate | 2017-2020

Developed and led seminars for college faculty on the experiences and access needs of trans theatre artists and how to make productions and classrooms gender inclusive. My seminar was eventually adapted into a short presentation for student groups and professional theatre rehearsal processes.

Guest Lecturer | Bellevue & Seattle School Districts | 2013-2020

Coordinated and led panels on queer identities and experiences for high school health classes. I served as a panelist starting in 2013, and acted as moderator from 2016-2020. Lectures included presenting basic vocabulary, sharing personal narratives, and fielding questions from groups of 20-90 high school sophomores.

Bellevue Teen Productions | Founding Artistic Director | 2015-16

Co-founded an intersectional all-teen company whose mission was to offer roles to student performers who were often denied opportunities by high school theatre programs due to their minority status. The company produced a gender- and racially-diverse production of *Les Misérables*, followed by a queer, genderbent production of *Camelot*, under my direction.