

BRIAN BYUNGKOO AHN, SDC

STAGE DIRECTOR/ TENOR/ PLAYWRIGHT/ THEATRE EDUCATOR

EDUCATION

M.F.A. in Theatre Directing

School of Theatre, Film and Television, University of California, Los Angeles, 2000

B.A. in Theatre Directing

Dongguk University, Seoul, Korea, 1996

Diploma in Voice

Konzervator Brno (Brno National Conservatory of Music), Brno, Czech Republic, 2014

Professional Studies Diploma in Opera Vocal Performance

Accademia Musicale “G. Donizetti”, Milan, Italy, 2013

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION

Board Director/Resident Artist, La MaMa ETC, New York, NY, 2002 - Present

Serving as a board member to advise the Artistic Director and administration staff of the non-for-profit organization.

Approving La MaMa’s annual budget, audit reports, and material business decisions.

Serving on committees of task forces and taking on special assignments such as 30 Million Dollar Capital Campaign and fundraising.

Board Director, Gwangju City Cultural Foundation, Gwangju, Korea, 2020 - Present

Serving as a board member of a regional cultural foundation in the City of Gwangju.

Artistic Director/Co-Founder, Singing Actors Repertory Company, Seoul, Korea, 2013 - Present

A performing Arts company dedicated to music-oriented theatre productions. Produced and directed 9 productions performed at venues in Korea, Italy, Germany, and the US since founded in 2013.

Resident Artist, La MaMa Umbria International, Spoleto, Italy, 1995 - Present

Participating in theatrical productions and workshops as a performer during summer La MaMa Umbria Summer Seasons.

On site staff for La MaMa Umbria Directors’ Symposium.

Artistic Assistant, Long Beach Opera, Long Beach Opera, CA, 2000 - 2002

Assisted the Artistic Director, Michael Milenski at Long Beach Opera, and productions.

SDC Full Member, Stage Director and Choreographers Society, USA

NATS Full Member, National Association of Teachers of Singing, USA

AWARDS/GRANTS

Arts Council Korea Grant

Awarded for the UK tour of *13 Fruitcakes*, 2020
Received USD 90,000

ACC Taiwan Virtual Exchange Program

Asian Cultural Council
Received USD 20,000 for multi-cultural virtual theatre project, for which 3 artists in 3 countries collaborate.

The Trust for Mutual Understanding Grant

Awarded for the world premiere of the opera, *The Doctor* in Czech Republic, 2002

The MAMPIST Awards

Samsung Foundation of Culture
Awarded to exceptional young artists for their graduate studies.
Received USD 140,000 for graduate study at UCLA, 1996

TEACHING

Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Performing Arts, Hongik University, Korea, 2015 - 2020

Directing I, II, III (Graduate Level)

Theatre Scene Workshop (Graduate Level)

Acting I, II, III (Graduate Level)

Musical Writing Workshop (Graduate Level)

Musical Production (Graduate Level)

Musical Repertoire (Graduate Level)

Script Analysis (Undergraduate Level)

Musical Theatre Scene Workshop (Undergraduate Level)

Musical Production (Undergraduate Level)

Acting I, II, III (Undergraduate Level)

Directed and advised on student productions of *Company*, *A Joke*, *Sleepy*, *The Doctor*, *The Witch*, *The Organ in My Heart*, *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *Urinetown*, *The Spitfire Grill*, *Tick Tick...Boom!*, and many students new works.

Adjunct Professor, Theater /Acting Departments, Seoul Institute of the Arts, Korea, 2012 - 2015

Directing I

Directing II

Theatre Scene Workshop

Musical Theatre Scene Workshop

Advanced Acting

Intermediate Acting

Basic Acting

Adjunct Professor, School of Theater, Dongguk University, Seoul, Korea: 2012- 2015

Musical Theatre Acting I

Musical Theatre Acting II

Advanced Acting

Adjunct Professor, Theatre Department/Grad School of the Arts, Kookmin University, Seoul, Korea, 2012- 2014

Musical Ensemble

Directing/Choreography Workshop

Rehearsal Project

Audition Workshop

Theatre Workshop

Directed and advised on student productions of *Company*, *A Joke*, *Sleepy*, *The Doctor*, and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*

Adjunct Professor, School of Theater, Dongguk University, Seoul, Korea: 2012- 2015

Musical Theatre Acting I

Musical Theatre Acting II

Advanced Acting

Adjunct Professor, Musical Theater Department, Howon University, Seoul, Korea, 2012- 2015

Musical Scene Workshop I

Musical Scene Workshop II

Musical Production

Guest Artist, School of Music, California State University, Long Beach, CA, 2000-2002

Directed fully staged student productions of *Dido and Aeneas*, *La Calisto*, *Der Schauspieldirektor*, and *Opera Scene Gala*

Adjunct Professor, Graduate School of Music, Chongshin University, Los Angeles, CA, 2002

Opera Workshop

WORKSHOP/MASTERCLASS

William Jewell College, Liberty, MO, 2014

Theater Workshop: Shakespearean Acting Applying Traditional Korean Story Telling, Korean Movement and Asian Aesthetics.

Opera Master Class: Dramatic interpretation and Expression of Songs and Arias in Operas and Musicals.

DIRECTING

* World Premiers

The Marriage of Pi Galho*

The National Theatre, Seoul, Korea, 2021

Director

New operatic work based on the *Marriage of Figaro*.

Production of "Singing Actors Repertory Company" sponsored by "Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture".

13 Fruitcakes

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, UK, 2021

Director/Writer/Producer

Official Selection for the Korean Season at The Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Streamed online for 3 weeks due to Covid-19.

13 Fruitcakes

Korea Queer Film Festival, Seoul, Korea, 2021

Director/Writer/Producer

“Special Selection” for the Korea Queer Film Festival 2021 as a feature film.

Myungyeh, the Musical

Paju Civic Arts Center, Paju, Korea 2020

Director

A new Korean contemporary musical theatre.

Production of Paju Civic Arts Company.

1828, Yeon Kyung Dang*

National Gugak Center, Seoul, Korea 2020

Director/Writer

Korean Traditional Court Dance Production by the National Traditional Arts Company of Korea.

Recreation of Dance Manuscript by Prince Hyomyung Dating Back to 1828.

13 Fruitcakes

Seoul International Performing Arts Festival; ARKO Arts Theatre of Korea, Seoul, Korea 2020

Director/Writer/Producer

Official Selection for the SPAF. Experimental LGBTQ Musical Theatre. Production co-produced by “La MaMa ETC” and “Singing Actors Repertory Company”.

13 Fruitcakes

Baekam Art Hall, Seoul, Korea 2019

Director/Writer/Producer

Experimental LGBTQ Musical Theatre Production Co-Produced by “La MaMa ETC” and “Singing Actors Repertory Company”.

13 Fruitcakes*

La MaMa ETC, New York, New York 2019

Director/Writer/Producer

Experimental LGBTQ Musical Theatre Production Co-Produced by “La MaMa ETC” and “Singing Actors Repertory Company” as part of La MaMa’s *Stonewall 50*.

To You at the Speed of Light

JTN Theatre, Seoul, Korea, 2018

Director/Co-Writer

New musical theatre production by “Lucky Blue Company”.

Three Women, Admitted

Munhak Civic Theatre, Incheon, Korea, 2018

Director/Co-Writer/Co-Producer

Experimental Opera based on La Boheme, La Traviata, and La Madama Butterfly.

Production of “Singing Actors Repertory Company” invited by the City of Incheon.

Tre Donne, Ammesse

La Mama Spoleto Open, Italy, 2017

Director/Co-Writer/Co-Producer

Experimental Opera based on La Boheme, La Traviata, and La Madama Butterfly.

Production of “Singing Actors Repertory Company”.

Three Women, Admitted

The National Theatre, Seoul, Korea, 2017

Director/Writer/Co-Producer

Experimental Opera based on La Bohème, La Traviata, and La Madama Butterfly.

Production of “Singing Actors Repertory Company”

Voyage: Musical Vignettes

HamburgerSprechwerk, Hamburg, Germany, 2017

Director/Writer/Production Designer/Performer/Co-Producer

Featuring “The Cole Laptop Ensemble”.

Production of “Singing Actors Repertory Company”.

Voyage: Musical Vignettes

Kulturhaus ‘alte feuerwache’, Berlin, Germany, 2017

Director/Writer/Production Designer/Performer/Co-Producer

A Series of Musical Vignettes/mini operas with German Art Songs.

Featuring “The Cole Laptop Ensemble”.

Production of “Singing Actors Repertory Company”.

Dido and Aeneas, Admitted

The National Theatre of Korea, Seoul, Korea, 2016

Director/Co-Producer

Adaptation of an Opera by Henry Purcell.

Production of “Singing Actors Repertory Company”.

Nakrang

Bucheon Civic Stadium, Bucheon, Korea, 2015

Director

Circus musical theatre Production by “Bucheon Symphony Orchestra” and “Dongchun Circus Company”.

Days & Nights, Four Chekhovian Interludes

Seoul Chekhov Festival; Art Theatre Moon, Seoul, Korea, 2015

Director/Playwright

Four theatrical adaptations of A. Chekhov’s short stories.

Production of “Singing Actors Repertory Company”.

The Rite of Autumn: Rituals and Celebrations

Naru Centre for the Arts, Seoul, Korea, 2013

Director/Writer/Co-Producer

7 Musical Vignettes by Brian Byungkoo Ahn and Opera Music Gala.

Production of “Singing Actors Repertory Company”.

Brian Ahn’s 7 Musical Vignettes

Sungam Arts Centre, Seoul, Korea, 2013

Director/Music Director/Writer/Co-Producer

7 Musical Vignettes by Brian Byungkoo Ahn.

Production of “Singing Actors Repertory Company”

The Marry Widow

Naru Centre for the Arts, Seoul, Korea, 2013

Director

Production of “Kim Haknam Opera Company”

Voyage: Musical Vignettes*

La MaMa Spoleto Open, Spoleto Due Mondi Festival, Italy, 2013
Director/Writer/Production Designer/Performer/Co-Producer
The world premiere of the series of Musical Vignettes/Mini Opera with German art songs.
Production of “Singing Actors Repertory Company” featuring “The Cole Laptop Ensemble”.

Jonah*

The National Theatre of Korea, Seoul, Korea, 2013
Director/Performer/Co-Production Designer/Co-Producer
New oratorio by JY Choi
Production of “Singing Actors Repertory Company”

A Joke*

The National Theatre of Korea, Seoul, Korea, 2013
Director/Book/Lyrics/Co-Production Designer/Co-Producer
New musical theater composed by JY.
Production of “Singing Actors Repertory Company”.

Love and Dream, Painted with Songs*

The National Theatre of Korea, Seoul, Korea, 2013
Director/Writer/Production Designer/Co-Producer/Music Director
Opera/Musical Theater Gala and 3 New Musical Vignettes.
Production of “Singing Actors Repertory Company”.

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat

Kookmin Main Theatre, Seoul, Korea, 2012
Director
Production of Kookmin University Theatre Program.

Mozart Opera Highlights

The National Theatre of Korea, Seoul, Korea, 2012
Director
Korean Chamber Opera Company’s 4-hour excerpts from *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Zauberlote*.

Hamyul/Hamlet

La MaMa ETC, New York, NY, 2011
Director/Co-Writer/Co-Producer
Korean adaptation of William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*.

The Doctor

La MaMa ETC, New York, NY, 2009
Director/Writer
Chamber opera composed by Martin Herman based on Anton Chekhov’s short story of the same title.

A Joke

La MaMa ETC, New York, NY, 2009
Director/Writer
Musical composed by Younghun Lee based on Anton Chekhov’s short story of the same title.
Director-composer collaboration of new work development.

B-Alive*

La MaMa ETC, New York, NY, 2008

Director

A touring dance theatre production with world champion B-Boys and Hip-Hop dancers.

The Doctor*

The Music Now Prague Festival, Czech Republic

Director/Writer/Production Designer

New chamber opera composed by Martin Herman based on Anton Chekhov's short story of the same title.

Director-composer collaboration of new work development.

The Californian production was invited to Prague and Bruno in Czech Republic funded by Trust for Mutual Understanding.

Orlando*

Long Beach Opera-Downtown Opera, CA

Director/Co-Production Designer

Chamber opera composed by Martin Herman. The original story by Virginia Woolf.

Director-composer collaboration of new work development.

Consumer's Paradise*

Long Beach Opera-Downtown Opera, CA

Director/Co-Production Designer

Opera composed by William Houston.

Director-composer collaboration of new work development.

Dido & Aeneas

CSULB Opera, Long Beach, CA

Director

Fully-staged student opera production of California State University Opera Program.

Composed by H. Purcell.

Der Schauspieldirektor

CSULB Opera, Long Beach

Director

Fully-staged student opera production of California State University Opera Program.

Composed by W. A. Mozart.

Operatic Scene Highlights

CSULB Opera, Long Beach

Director

Various scenes from *La Rondine*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *La Traviata*, *Dialogue des Carmelites*, and *Cendrillon*.

Telephone

West Valley Opera Theater, Los Angeles, CA

Director/Production Designer

Opera composed by G.C. Menotti.

Coffee Cantata

West Valley Opera Theater, Los Angeles, CA

Director/Production Designer

Fully staged cantata by J. S. Bach.

Amahl & the Night Visitors

Opera California, Los Angeles, CA
Director/Production Designer
Full-stage opera production by G. C. Menotti.

La Calisto

CSULB Opera, Long Beach, CA
Director
Fully-staged student opera production of California State University Opera Program.
Composed by F. Cavalli.

Days & Nights*

UCLA, Los Angeles, CA
Director/Playwright
M.F.A. Thesis Production. Five theatrical adaptations of A. Chekhov's short stories.

The Fishbowl*

UCLA, Los Angeles, CA
Director
New Play Festival

The Hostage *

UCLA, Los Angeles, CA
Director
New Play Festival

Antigone

UCLA, Los Angeles, CA
Director

The Letter & 4 plays by S. Beckett

UCLA, Los Angeles, CA
Director/Playwright

Hamlet

UCLA, Los Angeles, CA
Director

Play

The National Theater of Korea, Seoul
Director/ Production Designer
Young Theater Festival

Cavalleria Rusticana

The National Theater of Korea, Seoul
Director/ Production Designer
Young Theater Festival

PLAYWRITING – PRODUCED

13 Fruitcakes*

Official Selection for the Korean Season at The Edinburgh Festival Fringe”. (Online), 2021
Special Selection for the Korea Queer Film Festival 2021 as a feature film. (Performance Video) 2021 Official Selection for the “Seoul International Performing Arts Festival”. ARKO Arts Theatre, 2020
Baekam Art Hall, Seoul, Korea, 2019
La MaMa ETC, New York, New York, 2019

Three Women, Admitted

Munhak Civic Theatre, Incheon, Korea, 2018
La Mama Spoleto Open, Italy, 2017
The National Theatre of Korea, 2017

Sleepy

Seoul Chekhov Festival; Art Theatre Moon, Seoul, Korea, 2015
Music Theatre Graduate Program, Kookmin University, Seoul, Korea, 2013
Libretto in English and Korean, music composed by Ok Kyun Kang

Voyage: Musical Vignettes*

HamburgerSprechwerk, Hamburg, Germany, 2017
Kulturhaus ‘alte feuerwache’, Berlin, Germany, 2017
Naru Centre for the Arts, Seoul, Korea, 2013
Sungam Arts Centre, Seoul, Korea, 2013
La MaMa Spoleto Open, Spoleto Due Mondi Festival, Italy, 2013
The National Theatre of Korea, Seoul, Korea, 2013

A Joke

Seoul Chekhov Festival; Art Theatre Moon, Seoul, Korea, 2015
Music Theatre Graduate Program, Kookmin University, Seoul, Korea, 2013
The National Theatre of Korea, Seoul, Korea, 2013
La MaMa ETC, New York, NY, 2009
Musical book and lyrics in English and Korean

Hamgul/Hamlet

La MaMa ETC, New York, NY, 2011

The Doctor

Seoul Chekhov Festival; Art Theatre Moon, Seoul, Korea, 2015
Music Theatre Graduate Program, Kookmin University, Seoul, Korea, 2013
La MaMa ETC, New York, NY, 2009
The Music Now Prague Festival, Czech Republic, 2002
Libretto in English and Korean, music composed by Martin Herman

ACTING

Il Corvo*

The Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy
Dir. Ellen Stewart
Played the lead, ‘Re Milo’ for the opening of the Venice Biennale.

In Monaco e la Figlia del Boia

Monte Amiata Festival, Siena, Italy
Dir. Ellen Stewart,
La MaMa Umbria International

La Redenzione*

La MaMa Umbria Festival, Spoleto, Italy
Dir. Ellen Stewart
La MaMa Umbria International, Spoleto, Italy

Axis Mundi*

La MaMa Umbria Festival, Spoleto, Italy
Dir. Moreen Fleming
La MaMa Umbria International

Jehanne*

La MaMa Umbria Festival, Spoleto, Italy
Dir. Moreen Fleming
La MaMa Umbria International

ADVANCED/SPECIALIZED TRAINING

Classical/Operatic Singing

Regina Renzowa Jürgens
Nikolov Bojidar
Dr. Natalie Limonick
Thomas Jones
Christian Sebek
Mark Nicolson
Dr. Jerry Doan

Speech / Voice Workshops

Kristin Linklater: Workshops on classical text, poetry and imagery.

Movement Workshops

Yoshi Oida: Workshops on movement (Peter Brook's long-term collaborator)
Paul Binnerts: Workshops on Real Time Theatre form and Brecht's Epic Theatre.
Nancy Gabor: Workshops on Joe Chaikin's Open Theatre and Stage Presence work (Chaikin's collaborator)
Erika Bilder: Workshops on stage combat.

Dance Workshops

Dr. Emma L. Thomas: Renaissance dance class.
Master Sen-Hei Hah: Workshops on Korean Traditional dance 'Salpuri'.
Master Inhyun Song: Workshops on Korean Traditional mask dance 'Bongsan Mask Dance' by the successor of National Treasure of Korea in Mask Dance.
Moreen Fleming: American Butoh dance.

Acting Workshops

Tom O'Horgan: Acting (Creator of *Hair*)

Puppetry Workshops

Theodora Skipttares: Puppets and puppet theatre.

ASSISTANTSHIPS/ INTERNSHIPS

La Khovantchina

Bastille Opera National de Paris, France
Dir. Andrei Serban
Directing Apprentice

I Capuletti e i Montecchi

Los Angeles Opera, CA
Internship

Beautiful Country

Cornerstone Theater, Los Angeles, CA
Dir. Chay Yew
Assistant Director

Geranos*

La Mama Umbria International, Spoleto, Italy
Dir. Andrea Pacciotto
Stage Manager

Euridice

Long Beach Opera & The Getty Center, CA
Dir. Isabelle Milenski
Assistant Director

Volo di Notte

Long Beach Opera, CA
Production Assistant

Il Tabarro

Long Beach Opera, CA
Production Assistant

BIBLIOGRAPHY

-13 Fruitcakes-

Haydn-Williams, Alex & Nina, Edfringereview.com UK (2021)

★★★★★

“The show is an education, as well as a delight.”

“Innovative piece.”

“The play gives us a futuristic glimpse into queer historical moments.”

Penn, Louise, LouReviews.com UK (2021)

★★★★★

“One of this year’s best Festival Fringe shows.”

“Multimedia gem.”

“A diverse and completely original show.”

“The text is rich, the stories full, the tone is one of love and celebration. It is a deeply moving and intense show.”

Fringe Biscuit Magazine, UK (2021)

★★★★

“A powerful, stirring & vibrant homage.”

“Mastery of the digital theatre medium. Definitely worth a look for those just starting out!”

Lombardi, Joe, “Hallelou! A musical celebration” Broadway World, New York, NY (2019)

“The style was frequently operatic and deeply emotional.”

“Patient theatergoers will be rewarded with a celebration of some of the best fruitcakes ever tasted.”

Bader, Eleanor, “13 Fruitcakes” THEASY, New York, NY (2019)

“Best Bet”

“A dazzling multi-media extravaganza celebrating LGBTQ lives throughout world history.”

“The production is exhilarating.”

“It’s a gender-bending, evocative, and emotionally resonant presentation.”

Shuman, Bob, “Byungkoo Ahn: 13 Fruitcakes” Stage Voices, New York, NY. (2019)

“Couture and dance en pointe, never decadently, and always with understated, impeccable taste!”

“He apparently finds LGBTQ+ love simply an alternate response to life.”

Peterson, Christopher “La Mama Presents 13 Fruitcakes” Onstage Blog, New York, NY. (2019)

“The universality was clear throughout the frequently operatic and heartbreaking scenes told only through the singing and silent acting of the top-notch ensemble.”

“Intense and intriguing, ‘13 Fruitcakes’ is a slice of history mixed with a poignant message and visual artistry of the continuum of universal queer oppression, deftly meant to be chewed on long after one leaves the theater.”

Teeco71, “A Beautiful Tribute to the Sad Reality of LGBTQ history” TEECO 71 Entertainment (2019)

“A beautiful time filled with music, colors, dancing, and history. It felt like a drag show mixed with an opera with a touch of Cirque du Soleil.”

-Voyage-

L.G., “Spoleto – Interessante Sperimentazione al Cantiere Oberdan.” Spoleto City Press, Spoleto, Italy (07/12/2013)

“The classical voices of opera singers mingle boldly with the voices altered by computer, annihilating time and fashions.”

“Past and present meet in a single dimension. The dreamlike journey, whether it is in the arms of the angels, on Mars or the Moon, or in the mind of man, does not matter.”

-Hamyul/Hamlet-

Jaworowski, Ken, “Hamlet as Eager Korean Prince.” The New York Times, New York, NY (06/28/2011)

“.....boy, is there intensity!”

“The play is beguiling to watch, a reinterpretation with a dark mind all its own.”

“Hamyul/Hamlet creates a delicious mood of menace.”

“Extended pauses carry great weight here, and the play-within-a-play scene is severe and frightening.”

Stiffler, Scott, “Sound and fury signifying something worth seeing.” The Villager, New York, NY (07/07/2011)

“Sound and fury signifying something worth seeing.”

“Korean ‘Hamlet’ casts shaman’s spell over Shakespeare’s long shadow.”

Montgomery, Mitch, “Hamyul/Hamlet” Back Stage, New York, NY. (06/27/2011)

“Ahn’s often gracefully marshaled production.”

Conway, Mitchell, “Hamyul/Hamlet.” NYTHEATRE.COM, New York, NY. (06/23/2011)

“A highly stylized adaptation of Hamlet.”

“Director Byungkoo Ahn delivers grace amidst formality.”

“The adaptation by Minsoo Ahn and Byungkoo Ahn is a clean, comprehensible cutting.”

Sommers, Michael, “Shakespeare’s Tragedy Undergoes a Stylized Asian Makeover.” New Jersey Newsroom, NJ. (06/28/2011)

“Shakespeare’s tragedy undergoes a stylized Asian makeover.”

“Writer-director Byungkoo Ahn boldly abridges the tragedy to its stark essentials.”

“This ‘Hamlet’ shows how Shakespeare’s tale can be effectively construed though the theater traditions of other cultures.”

Giardina, Henry, “Hamyul.” Bullett Media, New York, NY. (06/30/2011)

“*Hamyul* is, with its distillation of the big words and winding plot of the original, a strangely organic retelling, a production which seems to have distilled the wisdom of the story without getting rid of all that much excess. More art, less matter.”

Moore, Oscar, “Days and Nights.” Talk Entertainment, New York, NY. (09/22/09)

“The silhouetted forest as she sings Memories Are Sadder than Love is a piece of art. As are the songs.”

“Very fine production.”

REFERENCES

Prof. Martin Herman, Chair of Design

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Prof. Leon Wiebers, Professor of Costume Design

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