

Melissa Bencic

Musical Theatre

Melissa Bencic is thrilled to be back to her hometown and be a part of this festival! Melissa is originally from Edmonton and grew up in St. Albert where she spent her early years studying at Alberta College Conservatory of Music and performing with St. Albert Children's Theatre and Edmonton Opera. Melissa is the Founder/Owner and Artistic Director of Bravo Academy for the Performing Arts in Toronto (established in 2007) where she works extensively in developing innovative performing arts programs for young and emerging professional artists.

Melissa is active as a voice instructor, adjudicator, workshop clinician, producer, stage director and performer. For five years Melissa was part of the Vocal Faculty at Sheridan College in the Bachelor of Musical Theatre Honours Program teaching both private tutorials and Vocal Technique class .

Ms. Bencic holds a M.Mus. in Opera Performance from McGill, a B.Mus. in Opera Performance from UBC and studied Bel Canto Opera at Liceo Musicale "F. Manzano" in Treviso, Italy. Melissa has always been a crossover artist performing all styles of music and theatre. She has performed both nationally and internationally and has produced over 250 musicals and stage directed over 60 musicals and operas.

Melissa is also the Founder and Artistic Director of the inventive New Musical Theatre Intensives (NMTI) which is a specialized music theatre program designed to teach students contemporary music theatre skills through developing new Canadian musicals and working directly alongside the writers and top industry professionals. As part of the program Melissa has worked with some of Canada's leading musical theatre composers and has developed 7 new Canadian musicals including; *Going Under*, *Crack of Doom* (Toronto Fringe Patron's Pick 2022) *Super School and Drama 101* (Toronto Fringe Patron's Pick and Best Musical 2019). Melissa is deeply passionate about new Canadian musicals and specifically those for young artists, and loves to assist, produce and develop new musicals whenever she can. Recently, Melissa just stage directed *Legally Blonde the musical* and produced the new musical *Imaginary*.

Many of Melissa's students are professional working artists working internationally and nationally in musical theatre, opera, film and pop for major organizations such as Mirvish, Stratford Festival and Shaw Festival. She holds much experience teaching and working with artists of all ages in all styles of music. Melissa is a member and part of the Executive Committee of the Music Theatre Educators' Alliance (MTEA), MTEA Voice, MTEA New Works, National Alliance of Music Theatre, Theatre Ontario, Toronto Alliance of the Performing Arts (TAPA), Canadian Music Festival Adjudicators' Association (CMFAA) and the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS). Melissa loves adjudicating and working with young artists and is honoured to be part of the Alberta Music Festival Association.