

Stanford



Michael Rau

Assistant Professor of Theater and Performance Studies

Bio

BIO

Michael Rau is a live performance director specializing in new plays, opera, and digital media projects. He has directed projects internationally in Germany, the UK, Brazil, Ireland, Denmark, Mexico, Canada, Australia and the Czech Republic. He has created work in New York City at Lincoln Center, The Public Theater, PS122, HERE Arts Center, Ars Nova, The Bushwick Starr, The Brick, 59E59, 3LD, and Dixon Place. Regionally, his work has been seen the American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, MA, the Ann Arbor Summer Festival, and the Humana Festival at Actors Theater of Louisville. His work with composer Kate Soper has been performed at the Seattle Symphony, Smith College, and The New York Festival of Song at the Dimenna Center. He has developed new plays at the Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, Playwrights Realm and the Kennedy Center in Washington DC. His production of "temping" was selected by the Guardian and the Telegraph as one of the best productions of the 2022 and 2024 Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and the piece was featured twice in New York Times He is a recipient of a 2021 Artists + Machine Intelligence Research Award from Google, as well as fellowships from the Likhachev Foundation, the Kennedy Center, and the National New Play Network. He has been a resident artist at the Orchard Project, E|MERGE, and the Tribeca Performing Arts Center. Rau is a Forward/Story fellow and a speaker at Books in Browsers, Performing Robots and StoryCode. He is a fellow of the Akademie für Theater und Digitalität and a resident of Stochastic Labs. He has been an assistant director for Francesca Zambello, John Turturro, Robert Woodruff and associate director for Anne Bogart, Les Waters, and Ivo Van Hove. He is a New York Theater Workshop Usual Suspect and a member of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab. He is a graduate of Wesleyan University and received his MFA in Theater Directing from Columbia University. At Stanford, he is an affiliate faculty member with the Stanford Institute for Human Centered Artificial Intelligence.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Assistant Professor, Theater and Performance Studies

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Artistic Director, TAPS, (2018-2023)

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- BA, Wesleyan University , Theater (2005)
- MFA, Columbia University, School of the Arts , Theater Directing (2008)

LINKS

- Directing Portfolio: <http://michaelrau.com>

Research & Scholarship

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Technology and Education

CURRENT RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY INTERESTS

I am a live performance creator and director. I direct theater, musicals, opera, and I create digital media projects. I am always looking for new projects and interdisciplinary collaborations. I am interested in ways that technology can be used to tell stories, in virtual reality and games, and in live performance situations. I have created immersive theater pieces, and I enjoy working with new playwrights and writers to develop and shape their work.

Teaching

COURSES

2025-26

- Art in the Metropolis: ARTSINST 11Q, ARTSTUDI 11Q, ENGLISH 11Q, FILMEDIA 11Q, TAPS 11Q (Win)
- Projects in Performance: TAPS 376 (Aut)
- Theater Lab: Acting and Directing: TAPS 170B, TAPS 372 (Win)
- Theater and Performance Making: TAPS 101P, TAPS 371P (Aut)

2024-25

- Undergrad Performance Project: TAPS 122P (Win)

2023-24

- Projects in Performance: TAPS 376 (Aut)
- Theater and Performance Making: TAPS 101P, TAPS 371P (Aut)

2022-23

- Directing Workshop: The Actor-Director Dialogue: TAPS 170B, TAPS 372 (Spr)
- Introduction to Graduate Production: TAPS 335 (Spr)
- Main Stage Theater Project: TAPS 122M (Aut)
- Projects in Performance: TAPS 376 (Aut)
- Theater and Performance Making: TAPS 101P, TAPS 371P (Aut)
- Undergrad Performance Project: TAPS 122P (Win)

STANFORD ADVISEES

Doctoral (Program)

Sixtus Igbokwe, Fiona Selmi

Publications

PRESENTATIONS

- Storytelling with Code - RailsConf 2016
- Wolf 359 Presents Temping - StoryCode at Lincoln Center
- What Live Performance Can Teach Us About VR - Books in Browsers