

## Marty Johnson Bio

Marty Johnson knows what it takes to create.

He draws upon 15 years of experience as a director, teacher and playwright in the field of Theatre for Young Audiences to supervise all of iTheatrics' creative endeavors.

At iTheatrics, Marty supervises the creation of Music Theatre International's (MTI) educational product lines for drama students of all ages. He has worked with Stephen Schwartz on *Captain Louis Junior*, Al Larson, Tim Weil, and the Larson estate for *Rent School Edition*, Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty on *Ragtime School Edition*, Disney Theatrical Productions on Disney's *Beauty and the Beast Jr.* and Stephen Sondheim on *Sweeney Todd School Edition* to develop the musicals into stage versions for student performers. Marty has also written the corresponding teachers' guides for musicals including Disney's *High School Musical JR.*, *Seussical JR.*, Disney's *Alice in Wonderland JR.* and the soon-to-be-released *Captain Louie JR.*, *Sweeney Todd School Edition* and *RENT School Edition*.

Marty directs iTheatrics pilot productions of new titles. He directed the national tour production of *Frankly Ben*, which traveled to 50+ markets in the 2007/2008 season. Marty also oversees iTheatrics' professional development series for teachers and manages all of the company's student classes and workshops. He is the lead consultant for the Kennedy Center's "Musicals in our Schools" program, which brings students and teachers together to do theatre.

As Director of Education at North Shore Music Theatre (NSMT), one of the largest non-profit professional theaters in the country, Marty spearheaded unique and exciting opportunities for young artists. Under Marty's leadership, NSMT's educational theatre program became a leading model for regional theaters throughout the United States.

While at NSMT, Marty established the organization's Youth Performance Academy, a program offering Boston-area students aged 8-18 the unique opportunity to stage full-scale musicals and study with working professionals in the art of musical theater. He created the North Shore Music Theatre Children's Choir, which performs throughout the Boston area, and launched NSMT's creative play program, which inspires children age 4-6 to explore imagination, expression and individuality through song, movement, drama and the arts. Marty also brought the arts to the schools by starting NSMT's first touring program of professional actors. Eventually, the actors were performing in 40 schools a year, and Marty personally directed and/or produced 50 of these "truck" tours.

Marty's leadership of NSMT's partnership with MTI allowed his students to play an important role in the creation of musicals through pilot productions of new shows. NSMT's young theater artists performed the world premiere of *Ragtime School Edition* and were the first to showcase *Godspell Junior* and Disney's *Cinderella KIDS*. Marty personally directed NSMT's productions of *Honk! JR.*, *Into the Woods Junior*, Disney's *Aladdin JR.*, Disney's *Cinderella KIDS*, Disney's *The Jungle Book KIDS* and Roald Dahl's *Willy Wonka JR*. He also produced *Dear Edwina JR.*, *Once on This Island JR.* and *The Phantom Tollbooth JR.*

MTI was so impressed with his work that Marty was invited to join MTI Education full time in 2004 ... and then iTheatrics in 2006.

While at MTI Marty wrote materials for the teacher versions of the MacMillan/McGraw-Hill's "Spotlight on Music" textbook, which offers "bite-sized" Broadway musicals for classroom presentation in up to 60,000 schools nationwide. He spearheaded a program in association with the New York City Department of Education to create self-sustaining arts programs in New York City public schools without an existing arts program, which was sponsored by the Shubert Organization and MTI.

He was the Director of Education for Virginia Stage Company, which had great success touring two of his plays, *Africa Explains* and a critically acclaimed adaptation of *The Emperor's New Clothes* that combined sign language and the spoken word. Marty volunteers his expertise, time and energy each year to work with Express Yourself, an organization that involves mentally ill young people and youth at risk in arts collaborations with artists like The Blue Man Group and STOMP that are performed at Massachusetts' Wang Center for the Performing Arts. He also worked with Vermont Young Playwrights Festival, adapting high school students' original plays into 15-minute musicals.

Marty was the Director of Theater for Youth at Ohio's Karamu House ("joyful gathering" in Swahili), the oldest African-American cultural center in the country. He served as the Assistant Director of Education for the Berkshire Theatre Festival and General Manager for the North Carolina Theatre for Young People.

Marty currently serves on the board of Shifting Grounds Productions, which brings musical theater performances to children in hospitals. He was the chair of the Professional Network for the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, and served on the Executive Committee of Region One of the Kennedy Center/American College Theater Festival and on the board of the New England Theatre Conference. He has been a member of the Awards Committee for the Massachusetts Alliance of Arts Education.

Marty received an MFA in Theatre for Youth from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.