

MFA candidate glides from Broadway stage to classroom

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Broadway veteran Justin Lee Miller will graduate at the 2017 Tulane University Unified Commencement ceremony. (Photo by Sally Asher)

Actor and playwright Justin Lee Miller was entertaining audiences last week in Bari, Italy, where he performed in *Porgy and Bess* at the Teatro Petruzzelli. Now he has returned to New Orleans for the [Unified Commencement Ceremony](#), where he will receive his master of fine arts degree in musical theater.

No stranger to the stage, Miller appeared in Broadway productions of *The Phantom of the Opera* in 2014 and *On the Town* in 2015. He has also sung with opera

companies throughout the United States and Europe.

He worked as a professional performer based in New York City for 15 years before deciding to move to New Orleans.

“I knew I wanted to live in New Orleans after having visited on several occasions. It has a unique culture. I guess you could say I was lured here by the classical and vernacular architecture,” he said.

After arriving at his new home, Miller decided to take on the MFA in musical theater program at Tulane, which he describes as “a self-directed degree program.”

“We worked with B. Michael Howard to design the coursework and projects around our specific talents and interests. Others in the program focused on choreography or conducting. Having come from the world of Broadway and opera, I tended to focus on teaching voice, directing and acting,” said Miller.

Now that he’s finished the program, Miller will turn his efforts to pursuing a teaching career in the field of musical theater. He said that he’ll particularly enjoy getting a chance to help young performers develop over time.

“I’m hoping to find a teaching position for the fall of 2017,” said Miller.

“Over the summer, I’m also going to the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis to do a new production of Stephen Sondheim’s Pulitzer Prize-winning musical *Sunday in the Park With George* about the work of the French pointillist painter Georges Seurat.”

The commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 20, will be [streamed live online](#). Follow Commencement 2017 on social media at #tulane17.

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— Justin Lee Miller, Class of 2017