

Alumna takes the director's chair

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Preparing to pursue a directing MFA, Catherine Ann Taylor is gaining industry experience by working with Broadway investment and production company Red Spear Productions. (Photo by Virginia Kluiters)

Rather than standing in the spotlight onstage, Catherine Ann Taylor prefers to helm plays from the director's chair.

The Columbia, South Carolina, native discovered her passion for being behind the scenes when she directed her first show for her high school senior project.

"I decided to try directing," said the 2016 [School of Liberal Arts](#) graduate. "There was a play called *Jerry Finnegan's Sister* that I saw during a weekend theater competition. I loved it and thought, 'I want to direct this play.'"

As a Tulane student, Taylor was mentored by then-faculty member Dmitry Troyanovsky, who encouraged her to become a theatre and English double major.

“I think I caught his eye because few students wanted to direct,” she said.

After graduating in May 2016, Taylor remained in New Orleans to rehearse a remount of *Jerry Finnegans Sister* with 2016 School of Liberal Arts graduates Haley Nemeth and John Berner during the summer. The trio traveled to the [Edinburgh Fringe Festival](#) in Scotland that August, where Taylor produced the show.

“It’s a huge festival with more than 3,000 shows. It was a theater lover’s dream,” she said.

Taylor has since moved to New York to turn her passion for directing into a career.

In April 2018, she directed a short play called *Grim Reaper* as part of a production competition hosted at the [Manhattan Repertory Theatre](#), an Off-Off-Broadway space located near Times Square.

Taylor is also gaining industry experience by working on social media marketing with Broadway investment and production company [Red Spear Productions](#), which has produced more than 100 New York shows, including 2017 Tony nominees *The Great Comet of 1812* and *Bandstand*.

“It’s great to get a handle on how the finances of Broadway and Off-Broadway work. Behind the scenes, it’s a lot of emails and spreadsheets just like in any other industry,” she said. “I’ve also learned how important marketing is and what a huge chunk of your budget goes towards it.”

Taylor hopes to connect with other New York-based Tulane alumni who are working in the field and to spend this year directing as much as possible in preparation to pursue a directing MFA.

Editor's note: This article appeared first in the June 2018 issue of [Tulane magazine](#).

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