

Jana Lee Stubbs

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How did you get involved with New Play Project?

I was taking an acting class my freshman year, and Katherine Gee was in my class. She told us about their performance and I went and saw it—it was *A New Leaf*—and then she told us about auditions for *Beneath the Surface*. I wanted to audition but I had to work, so I emailed New Play Project to ask if there was a different time I could audition. They didn't check their email until after they'd already cast all of the shows.

I went through kind of the same thing for the next show—I had to work during auditions, but James Goldberg and I went through this really long email conversation back and forth about when I could come audition at a different time and such, and eventually I just said, "Okay, I'll come audition on my fifteen-minute break," and he said, "Okay, just let us know who you are when you get here and we'll let you come in and audition really quick." Then I got the times wrong for the auditions—I showed up an hour early. But James and Matt actually happened to be there, so I auditioned for them, amazingly I got cast, and I've been doing stuff with New Play Project ever since. It's been about a year and a half now.

What all have you done, as far as acting, directing, that sort of thing? Which do you like the most?

I've acted, assistant directed, and directed. And now I'm the events coordinator. My general preference has always been acting, but I'm enjoying directing. It's new to me, but I'm going to be a theatre teacher, so it's good. I enjoy it, but I prefer acting. I just love being on stage and being able to interact with the other actors. I think a lot of it is being able to get up on stage and be in the moment and be able to be nervous before, and then after the show be like, "Yeah!"

What has your experience with NPP been like?

It's been a lot of fun. I really enjoy New Play Project. I know I need to get out and do other things, but it's



hard for me because I love New Play Project so much. I love the people. And I've gotten to be really good friends with most of the people within New Play Project. I enjoy working with them and they help me a lot.

It's been a great experience for me because they don't necessarily have the biggest budget around, and they work with what they have, and they're working within an LDS setting.

As a theatre teacher, I know that's going to help me a lot—I can see what they've done with the little that they've had, in this area and setting, if that makes sense. So it's been really helpful, it's been an eye-opener for me, and all in all I've really enjoyed it.

How do you see New Play Project and your experience with NPP affecting you as a theatre teacher?

Like I said, I think it'll be really helpful. It's helped me get into directing, which has kind of been one of the things that's been scary for me—the idea of directing. I think that's part of the reason I love acting because I can get up on stage and have someone else tell me what to do. But it's helped me learn to be more observant and more assertive.

James coaches me a lot and he says, "Okay, if you're going to be a theatre teacher, this is stuff you need to fix, this is stuff you're doing well." Hopefully it'll help me be a more effective teacher. ■