

## Jeff Kuhl, Harris Academy of the Arts



**Harris Academy of the Arts** is committed to excellent instruction of diverse art disciplines in an encouraging atmosphere that spurs creativity and increasing skill. Their courses provide unique options for students of all ages, skill levels, learning styles, instruments and schedules whether it be ensembles, private lessons or group classes. **Jeff Kuhl** is a Vocal, Piano and Theatre Instructor at Harris Academy of the Arts.



**How did you get started in the business?** – After leaving Nebraska and UNL with degrees in Theatre Performance and Music Education, I spent the next 20+ years performing professionally on the musical theatre stages of Chicago and around the country.

**What is the biggest challenge you've faced professionally?** – Wondering if I had the talent to work in the big time venues of Chicago professional theatre, but I had to find out. After working as a theatre musical director in Ft. Wayne, IN, I decided it was time. Within two years I was a member of Actors Equity in New York and working with the best talent on the Chicago theatre scene. I was hooked.

**What has been your most important achievement professionally?** – Winning Chicago's Tony Award for a production of Grand Hotel. Their version of the Tony Award is coincidentally called the Jeff Award.

**Tell us a little about your family.** – I was born and raised in Nebraska and come from a family of 13. I returned to Lincoln when my parents passed away. Since I had been traveling for such a long time, I felt a need to reconnect to my home and get to know my siblings better. It has been a choice I am happy I made. I've also gotten to know myself much better.

**What do you see as one of the biggest turning points in your life?** – Meeting Vicki Harris is right up there. I was looking for a way to keep my performing skills sharp and when I saw the opportunity to join Harris Academy as a vocal coach, I somehow knew I was in the right place. Vicki has this wonderful quality of believing in others and being positive, which was exactly what I needed. I've had many great experiences as a performer and I'm so thankful for that, but being back in Lincoln has settled me in a way I'd not expected and given me a new strength that I never knew was there.

**What is the most unique or interesting thing about you that most people probably don't know?** – That I've performed with about 33 unbelievable symphonies in the US and Canada, or maybe that I taught ballroom dance for a while.

**What is the best piece of advice you've ever received?** – One of my favorite pieces of advice is a quote I read

years ago: “Do the thing you think you cannot do.”

**If you had a theme song, what would it be?** – There are so many songs I love, so I suppose it would be any song that makes your heart feel twice its size. “Over The Rainbow” is one of the best songs ever written in my opinion; it’s a favorite of mine.

**If you could choose any other profession to be successful in, what would it be?** – A surgeon.

**If you could have dinner with one famous person from the past or present, who would it be?** – Past: Benjamin Franklin. I think he most embodies his time, and it would be fascinating to talk with him. Present: George Clooney or Stephen Spielberg, I like their drive.

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