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Big Acts to Follow



By Richard Pietras |

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Patrick Sabongui Shares His Diverse Acting Talents With His Students.

It has been a busy start to 2025 for Assistant Professor of Theater Patrick Sabongui, who has also been the head of the college's [B.F.A. Acting Program](#) since September 2020.

Sabongui is an accomplished actor, director, and producer who has acted in *The Flash* (CW), *Homeland* (Showtime), *Shameless* (Showtime), *300* (WB), and more than 150 other significant film and television projects.

Sabongui recently added two more prominent roles to his résumé. He is starring in the NBC show *The Hunting Party*, which premieres on February 3, and in the moving film *Between Borders*, about Armenian refugees, which premiered on January 26.

Sabongui shared what it is like to juggle teaching at Brooklyn College with his career and what he has learned from his journey.





What brought you to Brooklyn College?

Alongside my work as a professional actor, stunt performer, and theater-maker, I've always cherished the teaching and mentorship components of my career. I love being in a learning environment that is fueled by enthusiasm for new knowledge. I'm also invigorated by the next generation of storytellers, inspired by their energy and ideas. I'm driven by creating and facilitating opportunities for emerging artists who may have historically been denied them. Brooklyn is the ideal canvas for the intersection of my interests—so close to Manhattan, chock full of international influence, and true cutting-edge style. Our students are the most richly diverse and promising in the nation.

You were born in Montreal to Egyptian immigrants. Did that influence your acting projects? If so, how?

My upbringing had a huge impact on not only my craft and my work but on my perspective on life. Acting—perhaps more than most paths—demands that we know ourselves and interpret the world around us through our unique lens. Being



raised in Canada to immigrants from the Arab world who were victims of religious persecution informs my understanding of society and how I fit into it. If the function of art and narratives is to hold up a mirror to humanity, then I believe it's my duty as an artist to tell my side of the story.

What got you into acting?

Ultimately,
I think it
was being
part of a



In his latest role, Patrick Sabongui portrays CIA agent Jacob Hassani in *The Hunting Party*. The show premieres on NBC February 3. He has also acted in *The Flash* (CW), *Homeland* (Showtime), *Shameless* (Showtime), *300* (WB) and over 150 other film and television projects.

community that brings people together. I love gathering people in a space to celebrate or acknowledge an event or story, or to mark an occasion. I loved deejaying and emceeing school dances, weddings, and random parties when I was young. I loved producing the school talent show, hosting it, and then jumping into a dance number or sketch. I've always

been comfortable with public speaking or campaigning for student government, and I came out of the box with a level of comfort with self-expression.



I've also practiced traditional martial arts since I was 8 years old, which has empowered me with confidence and fluency in physical expressiveness. When I encountered Shakespeare in a literature class in CEGEP (Quebec's intermediary step between high school and college), I believed the pieces were in place for me to step into my theater-maker identity. Vanier College, my CEGEP at the time, had never put on a classical play, so I founded a student club, produced a production, and co-directed and starred in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as my first-ever adventure in theater. I never turned back from there.

I remember this vague sense of FOMO [fear of missing out] when adults used to ask me, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" I am so enamored with life and the world, and I was afraid of committing to one career or lifestyle. In acting, I think I've found a way to step into an infinite number of careers and characters. It's the most effective way for me to experience as much of this universe as possible.

You are involved in two big projects now, one on television, *The Hunting Party*, and the other a film, *Between Borders*. How do those work experiences differ, and what advice do you give students interested in one or the other, or both?



Just to add a third dimension to that list, I was in Minnesota at this time last year doing a play called <<Art>>, by Yasmina Reza at the Guthrie Theater, directed by Kimberly Senior, who recently joined the faculty in the Department of Theater.



Assistant Professor of Theater Patrick Sabongui in the film, *Between Borders*, which premiered on January 26. The film about Armenian refugees tells the story of the Petrosyan family and their flight from Baku, Azerbaijan in the late 1980s.



The advice I'd give to students interested in working in any of these fields is to apply to the B.F.A. Acting Program at Brooklyn College! Aside from that, I'd say my advice is twofold: One, think of yourself as an artist first, and two, cultivate a work ethic that enables you to adapt your artistry to any medium.



At its core, acting requires us to have a clear point of view, to be in touch with our inner life, and to be informed about the world around us. At the same time, actors must sharpen the tools for embodying a story: voice, movement, text analysis, and collaboration. By cultivating all the aspects of the craft, we have the raw materials to construct a performance that tells the story in any format: film, television, or theater.

Then there's the professional pursuit that takes an unreasonable amount of hustle and grind: persistence, dedication, and rhino-like thick skin.

What is your favorite part about teaching at Brooklyn College?

Absolutely the students! They are from so many different backgrounds and lived experiences, they are so committed, and they're all making big sacrifices to commit to the rigor of our curriculum. They're curious, they're ambitious, and they're dreamers. Through their eyes, I fall in love with the world all over again. They show up full of ideas and energy



and are ready to play. I also love the initiative they take,
spearheading work outside of the classroom and seeking
opportunities for collaboration across programs.





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