

Guest artist Paul Riopelle joins the Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival this season for the fourth time. In addition to sharing his knowledge and experience onstage with our students for nearly a hundred hours, he plans to offer a free workshop in September for students on building their theatrical careers.

He titles his workshop, *The Next Step: Bridging the Gap: Between College and Career*. It will take the form of a discussion about the different ways he has found for young actors to enter the profession, regardless of whether they seek work in film, on television, on stage or elsewhere. Riopelle will discuss topics such as the value of internships, apprentice programs, children's theatre tours and other touring work, community theatre programs, Masters' degree programs, founding an independent theatre company, and moving to a larger market like New York or Chicago. "I want to impress upon students," he remarked, "that it's not always the best option to move to New York and try to break into the business straight out of school, without some other experiences and background under their belt."

A graduate of the Classical Studio program at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy, Paul has appeared in lead roles Off-Broadway and at theatres throughout New York. Regionally, he has worked at several of the nation's classical companies, such as the Michigan Shakespeare Festival, Utah Shakespearean Festival, the National Shakespeare Company and others. Paul recently completed the Broadway First National Tour of *The Drowsy Chaperone*. (His proudest moment remains working closely with his hero, Dustin Hoffman, while serving as his stand-in on the film, *Stranger Than Fiction*.)

The workshop will be offered Thursday night, September 22, from 6 - 8 p.m. in SRoom 1506 of the Performing Arts Center, on GVSU's Allendale campus.