

Craig Bierko

[Wikipedia](#)

Interview: Actor Craig Bierko

John: What sticks out to me, when I look over your impressive career, is the range of your work. You've done it all (drama, comedy, action, science fiction, musicals, etc.), and you've done it very well. Is there a particular genre you prefer performing in more than the others?

Craig: I don't prefer one genre, no. If I had to choose one, I'd probably choose improvisation. I studied theatre at Northwestern University. Beautiful state-of-the-art facilities, by day performing scene work by all the great playwrights in class, by night if I wasn't rehearsing a production, there was always something to see on campus or downtown. Steppenwolf was very big, The Remains Theatre Company – The Goodman, of course. And I was drawn to almost none of it. I wasn't worried – but I envied the passion I saw in other performers. I just hadn't developed as a human being enough to relate to the emotional life of anyone older than twenty.

Some actors – like [Harry Lennox](#) who's "Cooper" on the The Blacklist – Harry had this voice – he'd be down to earth, hilarious Harry one moment, then he'd walk out on stage and be a king. I can admire a gift like that without feeling competitive or envious. But, like I said, I did envy the passion I'd see all around me. I just wasn't drawn to playing characters I didn't understand.

My second year, I auditioned for a campus improv group – The Mee-Ow Show. Totally separate from the theatre program – it was such a funny, hip group. We wrote the show so all the parts we played were comfortable fits – and the feeling of being onstage with a whip smart group that have your back – we previewed in a shack and performed a few weeks in a lecture hall. It was electric. And a revelation for me, a genuine sea change – I realized that my passion was actively creating onstage, I started to allow myself into my work.

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The Mee-Ow Show, which began in the mid-1970s as a rebellion, celebrates a half-century as a campus institution and launching pad for comedic stars.