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## A brief beginning

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A BRIEF BEGINNING

by

Ronald Decio McGhee Jr.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Master of Fine Arts  
degree in Theatre Arts in the  
Graduate College of  
The University of Iowa

May 2015

Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor John Cameron

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Graduate College  
The University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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MASTER'S THESIS

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This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Ronald Decio McGhee Jr.

has been approved by the Examining Committee for  
the thesis requirement for the Master of fine Arts degree  
in Theatre Arts at the May 2015 graduation.

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## **PUBLIC ABSTRACT**

As the reader, you have to imagine my pain and joy in sharing the complex simple motive behind the journey of living. It is a journey based in truth and spiritual progression. We risk our spirit and soul to reach beyond what we know of one another. We attempt to capture an essence of truth in a moment's time. It's a very big moment's time that lends itself to the viewer as infinity. For we, like the viewer, have much to learn and, perhaps, take in this journey. We bend time, place, and motive to find the ugliness of our species and the beauty of our world. With this "one-self", the collective, we search for our past, reveal our future, and capture our "beings" in a light called the stage. It is the essence of the living and dying.

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## I CALLED IT TRUTH

As of today, I'm feeling more and more that I can't understand theatre. Most of all I can't understand acting. I understand there is a lot of trial and error. I understand that not everything I throw out there is "golden" or "fits the bill". Sometimes my mood or emotion gets in the way of doing things, or my lack of breath hinders me from staying open to what I am hearing. There is always work to be done to improve. For example, I know that it is important to tell a story. The more specific you can make that story, or the more detail you can add to the build of the story, the juicier it is for the audience. I'm learning that you don't have to do a lot because everything you do on stage matters. It is more important to do something specific as opposed to doing a lot. You must listen and not cloud everything with unintentional movement. You must stay outside of yourself and know that you are enough and you don't have to be what you are not. You are what you are and then you are viewed as the character. When you let things in, the audience doesn't see you, they see the character, but it is you. The action you take to the outside world changes your character. Then, you make the action more specific by exploring different ways to do the action. The attitude you take towards what you are doing and the appropriateness of your action will either result in a comedic nature or a dramatic nature. For example, Comedy is the inappropriate response of action to the world. Drama is the appropriate response. I know to look for the organic approach by working in the moment. When something comes out of the moment and is more external to the given circumstances, it is more accepted by those watching it because it is present, and it's more immediate (they don't have to think about it). You want your audience to feel and experience, unless your intention is to get them to think. To get them to experience and

not think requires lots of specificity, hard work, and pure blissful fun. These are some of the things I know. There is a lot more that I don't know or have no awareness of at this time.

Right now I can say with an open heart I don't have a process. I don't have a consistent way of working that works for me because I'm still learning. I'm learning what goes on internally and externally with myself. I am finding how to approach acting in a fun way that has depth, clarity, and intention. I'm sure, on some level, I will always feel lost because things are constantly changing. How I experience life is constantly changing. My perception of theatre and my attitude towards it, are constantly changing. My focus constantly changes, sometimes by choice, and, a lot of the time, not by choice. I have a tendency to over complicate ideas at times. I get analytical which can be helpful, but, for the practicality of acting, it hinders me from expressing and finding the truth in a responsive way rather than an analytical thoughtful way. I have ways to escape that pattern, and that is what I will be discovering and explaining as I lay out the beginnings of my process.

I believe that theatre is life in a short 2 hours. My journey so far has been full of many twists and turns. I pretty much find a new discovery every day of my life that I can apply to my acting. If I took 5 minutes a day to write down that thing or things I discover I'd come up with 10 or 20 exciting new things on a daily basis. I had an opportunity to focus on doing that for 3 years. I learned my lesson, that to write what I am learning and actively staying attentive to it is the most essential part of being an actor. It is the only way I can make myself better. Acting is not hard and at the same time is the hardest thing you could ever choose to do. You work on one thing and then you work on another.

There are two sides to every part of anything you will ever learn in your attempt to learn how to act. These two sides, or poles, are open ended. They stretch and pull you from side to side. They make you want to quit and then inspire you all over again. The two poles have many different names. Between those two poles is where you are, and you are infinity. You can never ever stick to one side or the other for too long, but you have to reach for both. Sometimes you have to let go of one to pick yourself up, but then you have to reach again to find it. Without the poles there is no conflict, and so, without the poles there is no drama. I will give the poles names—they are form and content. They are you and the character. They are night and day. They are opposites. When it comes down to it acting is all about practice. The only thing you can do is do it over and over again. You push to find something new that you can keep or discard. Along the way you find things you are good at and things you are not so good at, in fact, things you are terrible at. Acting is the trials of life and death and the journey you take. You try to make yourself better where you are weak and continue to capitalize on your strengths.

#### WITHIN REASON

Given circumstances are who, what, when, where, and why of a play. They are the base foundation of what is needed to play on stage. If I have them, there are many things to play. I will never be able to be bored with the given circumstances. One part of the given circumstances can make three more pop up, giving me four things to play with. They help to make choices. If a choice is made and is not part of the given circumstances, then I cannot tell which play I am in. The story will make less sense than it could.

The given circumstances ground everything that is in the play. What do I mean by grounding? A solidification of reality, what makes sense, a deepening of truth, and a reason for being there is what grounded means. They go hand and hand with imagination. They are the story. Using them in my work is how I make things specific. If I don't know what they are it's difficult to know what to do. They tell me what to do. They give the freedom to play. I almost don't have to worry about anything after I figure them out and play around with them. They give me a guideline to follow. I can make more decisions about how they can be played. I can use my imagination to get a deeper sense of them.

When it comes down to it, given circumstances are the most essential to the process of doing a production. This is strange because I never thought that before. I thought they tied me down. That's because I didn't want to give over to them. They seemed to limit what I could do. That is a true statement, but it's not in a bad way. They limit you so that you have somewhere to go. It creates more freedom for me to not think so much during the play. It gives me specifics to focus on inside my imagination and in the actual tangible world. For example, if my "where" is in a jail cell, then I have to ask questions about this jail cell. How big is the cell? How small is the cell? Is the floor hard? What's it made of? Is it dark? Do I have a light? Is there puke there from past people being in there? If so, what does it smell like in there? Are the walls stained? What colors are the wall? Are there other cells nearby? Can I here others, or am I alone? When I start piecing all of this together it gives me so much to play with. It also gives me feelings. It connects me to something of substance. It calls upon my imagination to create things that stir me up. It puts me in the world of the play. Asking those questions and then asking

more questions only makes my work more specific. It gives me a map or guide of what I'm doing there and helps me stay present in a world that is made up.

Continuing to ask questions can give a lot of nuance to playing on stage. I think it takes time to build a world and so doing it with an active imagination helps. I think a lot of this starts with saying it out loud, then writing it down, and then following with physically walking through the world. I am beginning to understand I need to do this without the words of the text first. Text can be put in later. This takes a lot of time but I think it's just like learning lines. Doing it every day for like an hour and building it slow will make it more impactful. That is building the given circumstances. I think living in the circumstances in an imaginative and tangible way is what needs to happen. The context of the scene is highly important to know. We all live within a contextual world full of stuff. People, objects, architecture, colors, styles, fixtures, and time- the list goes on and on. Fusing these two poles together, the tangible and the imaginative, make acting a never ending roller coaster ride.

A predetermined notion of creativity can lead the actor astray. Basically, if you don't pay attention to the circumstances given, it's hard to know what you need to do. Actors can become insecure with what it means to be creative and start to make things up, but not within the context of what's been given. This can be very clever and even entertaining to watch, but it's not the story written. There are other works that you can do that allow you to create from scratch. Even then there are rules that are in place. Following the rules allows more specific creativity. However, once you can follow them and practice them enough, you can start to break them. I understand playing the

circumstances can be literal and it can be abstract, but it must come from the material. It must come from the structure that exists this allows for more specific discovery.

## IMAGINATION

I was always thinking, what is wrong with me why am I coming up with this, always thinking I was messed up in the head. The truth is I'm not messed up—the more I allow this ability to imagine things, and not think anything of them, the more I don't analyze what is happening with me, the more fun I have playing roles. I have to stretch this creative side of me. This suggests one of my main weaknesses is myself. Analyzing is my enemy. Imagination is a very powerful tool in acting for me. It allows you to feel things in circumstances that are made up. You make up the feelings not in a thoughtful way of deciding how you feel but in an imaginative way. I think going in this path makes my work full of endless possibilities and it's a healthier way to act. The key is to play imaginatively. I struggled forever in trying to understand something that wasn't important to understand. To know in theatre is to feel. (Stanislavsky)

## DO IT AGAIN

My process is very simple. I build characters in layers. Then, I forget about doing the layer and trust that it will be present, or at least some part of what I have done will be there. The first thing I do is read the play for fun. Every time I approach a role, I choose not to know anything about the character. This is my first layer. I think it's easier to come from a not knowing place and learn what they do know. If I assume they know everything from the beginning then there is less to discover—I know that in theatre it's

all about discovery. Read the play. You have to read the play to know what is going on, plus this is what you are doing. So, reading it is first, before any type of research, thought, or knowledge about the play. It's important that I just read it and enjoy the parts I like. It's nice to remember them as fun parts because they later turn into not such fun. Then they become fun again, hopefully. I read for enjoyment, even if I don't understand the play, which I never do at first.

Then I start memorizing. Nothing will get done until I memorize the words. Without trying to find any sort of way of saying them I will begin to memorize immediately. I work on my body and voice so that they support the text, but without the text I have nothing to support. That's if it's a text based show. The way I like to memorize is do it over and over again. No special remedy to this. Spending 10 to 20 minutes a day memorizing sections of the text heightens my connection to the text and helps to put it in my memory. I like to do things intellectually at first because it helps to have it. I say intellectually because I'm not putting movement to what I am doing. I am only memorizing the pattern of the words and trying to figure out what I am saying as I do so.

Then, I have to break away from having the text memorized in a robot fashion. I start moving my body and saying the text. The text should start to align with my body. For example, if I bounce, then the text will be informed by the movement, and so it begins to shake up how I have learned the text before. I do this so that I can begin to have a psycho-physical relationship to the text. I continue memorizing, doing it a billion times with different movements, and make sure I'm not getting too specific on the movement. I kind of see how my body wants to react and what feels good with the words that I am speaking. I pin point an area where I am being affected the most. This takes a lot of time

and dedication. It's like shooting lay ups or free throws in basketball. I go with my first impulse and then I see if I like something better. Or I continue with my first impulse and see how it changes. This is all to get connected to the words physically and emotionally. By doing this, I will be experiencing the words rather than just saying them. Then, I go into rehearsal and I don't have to think about the lines. I have a billion ways in which I can play the text.

Then, I enhance the text with adding more breath. I find that breath allows you to speak the text with more ease. This is not to make it sound pretty, but to make sure the audience will hear my words. This takes a lot of practice, and the more I work on voice floor work, the easier this will be, and so it's important to do. I begin to find the consonants and vowels that are hit the most, and this tells me more about how the character will move and speak. Without making a clear choice, this is how I start to play with the text. In the beginning it's better to keep exploring rather than getting stuck with one way of playing. I can always just pick something if need be.

The analysis is the next part. Now that I have the text memorized, and that's something I keep working on. I never stop playing with the text. I can go back and read the text for some information regarding my character. The analysis helps to base my choices in the text. Once this is done, I know where I can go with the circumstances given. This connects my imagination to the world and character in a very specific way. Choices start to be made and the work on memorizing the text helps to support this work. Doing both together strengthen my performance so that I don't have to think of what to do—I know what to do from the character's point of view on impulse.

The next thing I do is play with what I have in rehearsal. I don't work off anyone I just say the words, no intention or anything behind them. Usually, there is so much going on in the beginning of rehearsal that it's a good time just to let the words be said and take my time. Then I slowly start implementing what I have worked on. I take my time and by doing so, more ideas influence how I play rather than my own independent work. I still have to move to the directors blocking and play off my cast mates. Doing that goes with doing the circumstance, but also, makes the work really fun because I never know what I will do. I keep working to memorize and strengthen my connection to the character and the choices I have made. Alongside of that I work off my partners and listen to direction.

#### THE END: THE BEGINNING OF THE SECRET

I'm going to be really honest with myself. I Feel like I'm a strong actor. I have a nice resonate voice and I move well. I have a really good sense of imagination and playfulness. I have worked really hard to understand terminology so that I can understand how to change my performance in specific ways. I feel I am better at drama and will be amazing at it when I stop judging myself. Comedy is not my strength. I play cool too often and for any progress to happen I have to release my affect more in everyday life. I have been trying to do so but it's still my weakness. I also am not a good reader. I listen well but my biggest enemy once again is judgment. I have to continue to look past what I think should happen and respond truthfully in the moment.

What you are about to experience is a lengthy explanation of what I think a good actor is and does and how to go about doing it. It will be explained with many complex ideas, which I myself do not completely understand, and I believe that I will never fully understand them. It will come in parts. First I will say a phrase or idea that I learned then I will explain that Idea or phrase.

I think the ability to feel on your feet makes a good actor- to go with a moment that you haven't investigated before. It's like when I'm writing right now. I write in order to figure out the next moment in time. I write in the current moment inventing my life. It's creative in nature because I don't know what I'm going to come up with until I come up with it. In order to come up with anything I must do it. That's what a great actor understands that they must do. There is a sense of coming up with ideas and exploring in thought what you could possibly do. I think that can be helpful but it loses the surprise of the moment. A great actor feels it and does it, whatever it may be.

Empathy makes you a good actor. I think you have to open yourself up to other people's lives and what they are going through. You have to be honest with yourself about what makes sense, work on the things that don't make sense, and continue to hone in on the things that do make sense. I find myself being so full of emotion that I almost can't think.

I need my intellect to write when I write with emotion, but if the emotion takes over too much, I can't actually make thoughts. I have to be active in the moment as an actor fishing out what feels good for the context of a scene. Usually, when I don't want to do something, it means I am butting up against strong emotion of something I don't understand or something I put away long ago and don't want to share with the world.

Right now, in this very moment, I'm getting overwhelmed by how much I don't know. How I can't articulate what is happening around me. I look into my computer, and all I can see is this masked figure—a ball of emotion, something that is awkward and doesn't make any sense, but something that I love to look at.

I do a lot of work trying to focus on the other. All of the training I have received has had a lot of focus on being vulnerable to those around you, lending yourself to them or opening yourself up to them. So, without a doubt, I use the other to help me through any scene or performance that I do. I refer to phrases such as “staying in the moment.” I stay in the moment trying to react off of whatever my partner gives me. They happen to always be giving me something. That is something I have learned—there is always something to be reactive to. If it's not words, it's in the body language, or the audience, or what you hear or see. I have tried to limit the amount of tricks and habits that I have. Doing regular voice and body work helps to improve efficiency in my work. So I move with more ease and specificity, then I can speak with ease and efficiency. I memorize the lines and then I stick to my partner like glue. I have learned to open my body up to being more specific in reaction to others. It's listening with my whole body. All the work I play with now is more feeling based than intellectual, although both are important in theatre—“feeling is knowing.”(Stanislavsky)

### *State of play*

State of play is like when football players are on the field playing football. They know the given circumstances of the game, and they know their super objective is to win the game. They know that their objective on offence is to reach the end zone and on defense to stop the other team from reaching the end zone. It's all laid out very simple if they

want their objective and truly want it. It puts them in a state of play. It heightens everything for them. They see really clearly, they are focused, and they can feel the crowd pushing them forward. Everything is on the line. They are in the state of play. That is what your objective does for you—it puts you in a state of play. It's what drives you through the scene. It's what causes you to get emotional because you believe that you want, that one thing, and will stop at nothing to get it. It turns you on, gets your body fully engaged, and makes you really present because all you can feel is that thing you want. This is how you help yourself become more emotionally available, and choosing an objective within the play can ignite you. This is not intellectual at all. The objective shouldn't be like book work. It should be something that falls in line with the play but also excites the actor. This makes acting really athletic and purely physical with no need for picking and choosing how to say lines. In fact, in mask class, we learned how to be in the state. A neutral state of pure energy where you are full of this energy, but you are just a being with as much energy and momentum as possible without telling a story. If you can harness the energy, then you can pick an objective, and it gets you there faster. So, even if your objective doesn't excite you, you have a way to be full on stage and use other techniques to find specificity.

### *Relaxation*

The actor needs to learn relaxation so they are not tense on stage. Tension can be strength and using it is valuable, but not so much for acting. You need tension, but only to a degree. Most importantly you need to be able to have choice when you are using it and when you are not using it. So I use a variety of techniques to reduce tension on stage.

What is relaxation good for?

1. Safety—the less tense you are, the less likely you are to hurt yourself physically and vocally. Also, I would like to point out the longevity of a career. It might be ok for a novice actor to be tense and do some crazy stunts, or to have one minute of a good performance. However, if you don't relax your muscles and stretch them out, you could injure yourself and not be able to keep doing all your stunts. Also, having a lot of shows, I'm sure, is much more stressful than just two weekends.
2. The voice and body need to be expressive, and it's harder to release and receive feelings when they are tense. Staying relaxed allows your breath to move freely and express what the character needs expressed in a simple way with more ease than it would be being tense.
3. It keeps you focused on what's important in the moment. In other words, it makes you more present and open to what may happen in theatre. Every night is different and so if you are too nervous and can't ground yourself, you miss moments, or things can spiral out of control. For me personally, I have to breathe and keep grounded or my breath internally gets shallow and it becomes very hard to see and react to my surrounding, which pulls me out of the play completely.

Relaxation is a fundamental tool and practice that I have in my process to make me a fully rounded actor. The better I get at doing it, the more insightful it becomes to all of my work. The more I relax, the more open I can become to the world around me, which gives me more power over my craft. Diligent and consistent practice, I believe, separates a good actor from a great actor.

## *Breath*

It's important to refer to breath after talking about relaxation. My journey with breath is a wonky one. Breath is often taken for granted. It's the power of life. Without it we would croak. So, when you're trying to bring life to a stage, one of the most important things to do is breathe. It literally is what keeps you alive. If I go up to my head and get angry, it's usually a sign for me that I'm not breathing. The breath controls everything. It controls the external and the internal. It's how you know if someone is lying. It's how you know a person at all. The hard part about it is what you do about it. Well, you give it attention. Give your breath focus and allow it to do what it wants to do. The freer your breath is the freer you are.

1. It allows for relaxation to occur so that you can ground yourself and be open to what is happening to you and around you.
2. It gives you sensations. It moves the emotion through your body.
3. It is how you allow sound to be carried through large spaces.
4. It does the work for you because when you see something and you breathe it in, it travels through your entire body. Then it releases for you. One of my main battles when I got to grad school was not releasing the affect. Well, I learned how to do it, and I'm getting better at doing so through the use of breath. You will be the most present person on stage sometimes if you just breathe. You can literally see what is going on with someone when they aren't speaking. I saw a performance here at the University of Iowa. It was a devised piece referred to as the mask piece. What I learned about the breath is that it amplifies your voice and body, making you seen more and heard more on stage. It gives you more size and space

when it flows through your entire body. This takes a lot of practice because you have to focus on that individual task of breathing so that you can gain more control of it. It's a tool to help magnify life and that's exactly what I saw in that show.

5. It connects you to your partner and opens you to what they are feeling. You want to be open to them and without agenda so that in rehearsal you can find different ways to play a scene, which can give the play new life every night. When audience members come see the performance, it's the first time for them, and it's the first time for you. The breath makes this possible. It's one of the tools that make this possible. It's a big one though. I think because its unpredictable and it can take me by surprise if I let it. It keeps everything grounded, but also gives you a range of emotional life for your character.

### *Warm up*

Hands down, you have to warm up your muscles, voice, and movement, and recall in your memory the things you train to do. Acting is a sport and so, without a proper warm up you will warm up during the game instead of already being ready for the game. This is important to get you in the spirit of whatever show you are doing. It gets you prepared to play. I find without warming up I try to get logical because logic can compensate for what I am about to do. This is false information. Without warming up and doing it specifically, you give yourself a huge disadvantage. You will do an ok job, maybe. But if you warm up, you are out of the amateur league. You can simply do more than those that do not warm up. You can affect them more because you are on the train not still in your bed dreading going to the station. Warming up helps relieve tension, gets you in the zone,

and eliminates all insecurity because you know you're going to do the best you can that day. Plus it just feels good to do, so why keep your body from doing what it needs to do. Warming up allows you to express your needs with even more need and less effort. Again, someone may have an awesome performance without doing this but that may be a onetime deal. Warming up allows for consistency and gives you the advantage of going out multiple nights doing this job as simply as drinking water. You don't have to try as hard because the pregame warm up brings you ready—all work is done and you can simply play. It also stretches your abilities past what you can do each time, making you better at doing them.

### *Senses*

Senses, along with your breath, are very powerful tools to use. It's essential to use them because we automatically recognize you as human because we can do those things. The senses allow you to be grounded in truth and allow you to toy around with what's happening in the moment. All lot of the actor's work is training the senses, heightening them so that they become more sensitive to the world around them. Being sensitive to the world means to be open to it. When you are open to it you can work inside of it. In any given play you are working in some kind of world that needs life, and you have to find your way to live inside of that world. The senses allow you to do so. They have memory, so if you trust them, they will do what you need them to do. They are how we experience and so when we experience on stage, the audience experiences with us.

### *Agenda*

This was a tricky subject to me—not having an agenda. I thought the agenda was like the objective, but I was wrong. You don't want an agenda, ever. The theatre is constantly

changing and morphing every time you go up to do something. If you have some kind of agenda, some plan or way you want things to go or think they should go, you miss out on opportunities. There are a billion choices to make in a moment, and the more you are open to them the more you can play multiple ones or pick and choice. This takes time to understand and, more importantly, feel out. Tons of practice and risk is required to learn to adapt to new circumstances each night yet tying it in to the circumstances of the play. This has to be done without thought because as soon as you are thinking it's you, you become the actor thinking what to do instead of the character. You have to feel what's worth dealing with at what time. The audience can be your guide in doing so. So listening to the moment but still having a need to be there is where acting gets difficult. You have to have purpose or you are in the pedestrian, meaning the circumstances aren't affecting you. The effect of the circumstances has to be released through you and so it's important not to get stuck on one thing or the other. The audience is also a part of the event taking place, so they change everything every time you do the play. You have to feel what they are giving you and give back to them. This cannot be done so easily. There are a lot of things to work with and if you are thinking about working with those things you are not doing it. Thus, it's important not to have an agenda. It will only bog you down, limit the truthful response you can have in the moment, and limit your objective instead of fueling your objective, which would give you purpose in the scene and causing there to be a give and take with you, your partner, and the audience.

### *Mask work*

Legendary mask work—okay, so here is what I have taken from it so far. It may not be right, but oh well. This is as open as I am to it. Mask work taught me this: your body tells

a story every day. In mask, we try to find the neutral. The neutral is full of everything. It has the possibility to tell any story. The neutral has potential energy moving throughout all space and filling the room. The way you get to the neutral is by releasing because blocks are where you hold tension, which tells your own story, and when you're playing a character, you need the possibility to drop your tension so it doesn't corrupt the characters tension. The way you do this is with the breath. So with this work I'm starting to learn how to release my body and energy into the space. It is difficult for me to do because I do feel it and it's highly emotional, and it's something I can't possibly understand in a logical sense, which is amazing. In theatre knowing is feeling, so the fact that this work forces me to do that is great. The problem I have is that I lose my breath because I want to hold on to whatever is coming. Well, to get to neutral, I need to do the opposite, so it just takes some time. I need to slow down and just let it come if it wants to come, invite it. It's a storm and it's all kinds of things I am unaware of, but it's good to go into. I even want to. It's just hard to know how still. It's difficult to explain, but I want it to come out but I don't know how it's going to come out, and I'm fine with that. It just won't do it. It's simple to do though, let the breath drop down and wait. Just let it try to go. That's where I am with the neutral. That work though will make me an amazing actor, I can feel it. I haven't begun to use it specifically yet, but I have a taste of it. It opened me up to the space and my body's relationship to the space and what it makes me feel when I make slight adjustment in my body. This says to me I have tapped into something that is ever changing and makes sense in the world of feeling things. The next step is to open my gaze so that I can be affected by things that are farther away, it's how you play with size. Some things I have noticed about that is that it stimulates different

feelings. That is the main difference in my body. When I reach my gaze out, it changes the relationship to what I'm feeling. So, I can't yet release it because it's so new and I don't know what it is yet, but I can feel it no matter how small. The bigger it is, the more it messes with how I breathe. I think it is joy but it's so weird that it won't come out. It's probably not just one thing, and it's so new that it shocks me that people live life so differently from me, and yet it's just as amazing. It taught me to limit my movement, but in doing so, the inside must keep moving forward. When you go faster on the outside you have to slow down on the inside. If you go faster on the inside, you have to slow down on the outside—its dynamic opposition. I use this tool to stretch out into space. This changes the size I can be on stage. Dynamic opposition allows for a suspension in time, which can toy with the audience, making your performance dynamic.

#### *Meisner*

I learned to be more active on top of what I am seeing. I also learned that there is more specificity than just “a shirt”. There are the buttons on a shirt, there are colors of a shirt, logos of a shirt. It is insane how closed off I was. I learned to see the others and let my pride go a little so that it wasn't a competition. I learned that by staying in the moment there is always something new to see that changes, and that feeds what you can do next. It keeps you connected and engaged. The specifics of each moment that you see presently gives you infinite possibility on stage.

#### *Grotowski*

I learned to go and just do it because every time I do it I will find something new. Jams were insane because I saw how much freedom I have to explore on stage. You have a couple of given circumstances without thinking about them but knowing you have to hit

those points you find your way to them. Its complete freedom and yet the guidelines allow you to play.

### *Period styles*

Some ground opened for me because it got me thinking about the whole stage as movement and not just my individual self. Also, in terms of seeing how people previously lived and how they live today got me open to the idea that the things I was seeing weren't false, they were just a different way than I am use to, and I have to meet that time period, but from a truthful place. It opened me to the idea of having masks. They are not lying, that's their truth and we need them based on our circumstance. Everyone has them, and they are just as truthful, but they reveal something that we want to appear as. In some ways we all use masks every day. We have the things we like to hold on to and play. We love our pain or sorrow. It taught me to use the whole thought instead of the line of text.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, in my acting, what is going to make me better and grow more is to be honest with myself and release the truth I feel in the moment. It may not always be right but I have to be getting closer to something of substance in doing so. I would like to end with a quote from Konstantin Stanislavsky that I find inspiring and where I would like my work to go. He writes,

“It is a mistake to think that artistic freedom means artistic license. That is the freedom of the fool. Who is freest of all? The man who has personally achieved independence, since that is won, not given. Independence that is given does not grant

freedom, since that can be very quickly lost. The man who frees himself with no outside help, who is more knowledgeable, more able, is fully self-reliant, and has his own opinions, who is ready for every trial and tribulation that is the man who is truly free. This is the actor who has felt the role better than the writer, analyzed the play better than the critic, studied the play better than the director, since no one else really knows his talent, his inner self, his expressive means, the actor who has developed a virtuoso technique, who has trained his body, voice and face, and who has understood the theory of art, painting, literature and everything else an actor needs to know, he is truly free.” (Stanislavski)

## MY ROLES

### *The Liar*

By David Ives; Adapted from the comedy by Pierre Corneille

University of Iowa Main Stage

Directed by	Eric Forsythe
Assistant Director	Marisa Ramos
Scenic Designer	Josh Christoffersen
Lighting Designer	Cassie Malmquist
Costume Designer	Angie Esposito
Stage Manager	Kelsey Petersen
Assistant Stage Manager	Bre Anna McNeill

Cast: Kevin Argus (Cliton), Ari Craven (Alcippe), Keyla McClure (Clarice), Allyson Malandra (Lucrece), Alex Philoon (Philiste), Christina Sullivan (Isabelle/Sabine), Nate Wasson (Geronte).

Location—E.C. Mabie Theatre

Dates—April 16<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Role: Dorante—Lead

The Designer

University of Iowa Gallery

Director and Writer	Mario El Caponi Mendoza
Scenic & Lighting Designer	Ray Ockenfels
Costume & Makeup Designer	Melissa L. Gilbert
Multimedia & Sound Designer	Mario El Caponi Mendoza
Assistant Director	Emma Genesen
Stage Manager	Dony Kim

Cast: Kylie Jansen (Pan), Alyssa Hitchcock (Designer A), Maritza Pineda (Designer B), Robert Seigrist (Designer C), Alosha Robinson (The Leader), Julia-Kaye Rohlf (Head of Security), John Whitney (New Jesus), Christina Sullivan (Face 1), Alyssa Cokinis (Face 2), Michael Hamlett (face 3), Tim Mizones (CYBER INTELLIGENCE), Katy Karas (THE ELECTRO TELECASTER)

Location- Theatre B

Dates: November 20-November 22 2014

Role: Head of Technology- ensemble

Speed of Light

University Of Iowa New Play

Playwright	Bella Poynton
Director	Ariel Francoeur
Dramaturg	Madison Colquette
Scenic Designer	Peggy Mead-Finizio
Costume Designer	Emily Bushá
Lighting Designer	Matt Carney
Sound Designer	Bri Atwood
Stage Manager	Joe Pray
Assistant Stage Manager	Dony Kim

Cast: Mayra Ecazin (Elizabeth Hinkler), Frey Pevensey (Nate Wasson), Tazmen Zandt (Chris Rangel), Kipling (Kip) Rakai (Ali Borchers), Nevik Kier (Frankie Rose III), Valki Oveyna (Melina) Neves

Location- David Thayer Theatre

Dates- Friday, May 9, 2014

Role: Ferrin Rubinowitz -supporting

*The Playwright*

University Of Iowa Directing Project

Director and writer                      Marion El Caponi Mendoza

Lighting Designer                         Kevin Dudley

Scenic Designer                          Lucas Ingram,

Costume Designer                         Jae Hee Kim and Angie Esposito

Cast: Connett Croghan, Kaleb Mains, Christopher Rangel, Ashley Sorensen

Location: Theatre B

Date: December 12-14 at 8:00 p.m.

My role: Playwright-lead

*For the Falls*

University of Iowa New Play

Playwright	Emily Dendinger
Director	Tlaloc Rivas
Scenic Designer	Kevin Loeffler
Costume Designer	Megan Rowley
Lighting Designer	Peggy Finizio
Sound Designer	Hiram Orozco
Stage Manager	Kristine Moffitt

Cast: Marion (Beth Kilmer), Veronica, (Jessie Traufler), Carl (Thomas Eslinger), Andrew (Chris Rangel), Dorothy (Kate Chindlund), Jack (Andrew Berger)

Location: David Thayer Theatre

Date: May 05, 2013

My Role: Eliot- ensemble

Out of the Pan, into the Fire

Written/ Created by: Steven Epp, Dominique Serrand and Nathan Keepers

University of Iowa Main stage

Director	Dominique Serrand
Scenic Designer	R. Eric Stone
Costume Designer	Jessica Fialko
Lighting Designer	Peggy Finizio
Sound Designer	Andrew Stewart
Puppet Designer	Josh Christofferson
Stage Manager	LeeAnn Yeckley

Cast: Thirteen (Scott Myers and Frankie Rose), Elsie (Elizabeth Hinkler and Melina Neves),

Stumfemutter (Regina Morones), Roland (Ari Craven), The Beauty and Spider (Aneisa Hicks)

Location: David Thayer Theatre

Date: Feb 07, 2013 to Feb 17, 2013

My Role: Angelo (lead)

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