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Killing the goose

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University of Iowa

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KILLING THE GOOSE

by

Catie Councill

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

May 2018

Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor Paul Kalina

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Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER'S THESIS

This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Catie Councill

has been approved by the Examining Committee for
the thesis requirement for the Master of Fine Arts degree
of Theatre Arts (Acting) at the May 2018 graduation.

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To my parents: John Mark and Tori, who love me so well and have made so many sacrifices for me throughout my life. Thank you for the wonder and the stories you shared with me. Thank you for supporting, cheering, and believing. You are embedded so deeply in my heart, and I love you both.

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And finally, this, and everything I do, is dedicated to my Creator, YHWH. The Source from whom I breathe, create, and find meaning. Thank you for calling me higher and deeper, and speaking hope to my heart in the midst of hopeless places.

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PUBLIC ABSTRACT

This statement of process parses out the techniques I utilize when creating a character for performance, specifically during the past three years of my graduate studies. By doing this it has helped me to identify and analyze my current approach to becoming a character. Within this paper I have identified the bedrock of my technique, and then examined how different techniques serve different styles of storytelling when approaching a character. It concludes with a statement on what I cherish about the craft of acting, as well as what I hope to continue to grow in.

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Preface

When I was little I didn't understand what acting was. I just knew I liked what I saw in the movies, plays, historical reenactments we watched as kids. My imagination would be caught up by the stories, and I vividly remember crying when visiting the battlefields where reenactments of the Revolutionary War were going on because I was empathizing with all the dying soldiers and their loved ones. I also recall the first night my Dad shared the film version of *My Fair Lady* with me, and how I went to bed that night giddy at the thought of being Eliza Doolittle. My parent's love of musicals helped me love storytelling through song, and I would sing at the top of my lungs to my brother's chagrin.

An avid reader, I would stay up late reading about Laura Ingles Wilder, or Anne of Green Gables, or Robin Hood and would spend the next day playing make-believe as one of those characters. I remember late night movies with my mom where she and I would watch *Little Women* and sob about Beth dying. I would get so into the stories that one family movie night we were watching *War and Peace*, and I ran out of the room because I couldn't handle the tension that was building with the heartbreak. As a child I was living in my imagination almost constantly, allowing myself to feel things and believe things without feeling self-conscious or strange.

When I hit puberty I began going to drama camps where I had fun learning about how to act. I would then come home and put on plays in my basement with my friends. I competed in home-school poetry competitions where I would do a performance piece of the poems in character and costumes. I joined a home-school Shakespeare club where I would joyfully put up scenes with my best friends for enthusiastic audiences. There was never a worry about whether or not I was doing it right, or if I was a right fit for a

character; I just put on the costumes, learned the lines, and enjoyed telling the stories with/for my friends and family.

And then my older brother left our home school and went to a real high school where they did musicals and Shakespeare. He did an audition and was cast as the Scarlet Pimpernel in the musical *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. I was thrilled and envious of him; and since my mom was the costumer for the production I volunteered to work on the costume crew curling hair, helping the actors get dressed, and living vicariously through their amazing experience. The Asheville Christian Academy's production of *The Scarlet Pimpernel* by Frank Wildhorn was a massive hit in our little community and my brother was the star each night where he got to pour out his heart on stage. It was then that I determined that I would also get a chance to perform in a story I desperately loved, portraying a character that I would love to inhabit- if only for a few hours a night.

The following fall I enrolled in the same high school as my brother, and when auditions rolled around for the musical: *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (one of my favorite musicals at that time), I confidently signed up for an audition slot and began to prepare a song that I would sing without accompaniment. The day of my audition arrived, and I was sick with a head cold, woefully unprepared, and scared out of my mind. My audition was a flop, and I ended up playing an elderly lady as part of the ensemble in the town scenes where my older brother was the lead, again.

My imaginary world came crashing down through talking with the other students about talent. The idea of talent was a new concept for someone who had never really looked deeply into what it took to become a professional actor. I had no comprehension that one would discover if they had natural talent (or not), and then use the techniques of acting to hone the talent they possessed, or grow what they did not. This was mind boggling for me because I just thought that if you loved acting, you should be able to do it. However I discovered that in this world there were measurements of talent, rules to

abide, and a lot of other talented people who were after the same roles I wanted. This reality jolted me out of my imaginary world, and made me more self-conscious about my skill set. But, instead of giving up it caused me to focus on trying to improve, work harder, and be more dramatic. This point of view landed me character roles that I gave character voices, and bodily adjustments in order to try and satisfy whatever the director was telling me to do. Reflecting back on this beginning, I can see now it was a bunch of externals and playing of a mood, with little substance.

It wasn't until my senior year of high school that I encountered a role that would require me to give myself to it. It was Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and I couldn't pull my usual tricks to create the character and land the role. I remember reading the lines, and thinking "no one can identify with Beatrice the way you do." This was a thought I hadn't had before, and it was a brave thought for seventeen year old who doubted her worth. However, in that moment, right before I went into the room to read Beatrice's "What fire is in my ears?" speech for the directors Pete and Maggie Edens, I remember resolving to just bring myself to the character, and to enjoy it.

Spending the last few months of my high school experience working with the Edens on truthfully bringing myself to the character of Beatrice was transformative and empowering. It wasn't anything I had ever done when creating a character since I had gotten into theatre. Pete and Maggie worked with me on living truthfully under Beatrice's given circumstances, encouraged me to make her words my own, and when we finally performed it for an audience I felt like I was truly present.

It wasn't until years later, when I was depressed with the path I was on and regretting that I ever stopped acting; that I remembered the joy and freedom I felt playing my version of Beatrice. And when I went looking for memories of that happiness, I came upon Uta Hagen's book *A Challenge for the Actor* that Maggie had given me as a gift on my last show of *Much Ado*. I opened the front cover and found something inscribed there

that I hadn't seen before: "Yours is a talent that won't be denied. I wait in expectation of all you will obtain."

Chapter One: Discovering Blocks

When Emma Thompson was working on the set of the film *Sense & Sensibility* she kept a diary about the stresses of being the producer, screenwriter, and Elinor Dashwood. In that diary, after a particularly trying day, and not feeling up to the task of shooting a pivotal, emotional scene she wrote in her diary that she had, “No time, no concentration, no light and all sorts of emotional difficulty.” This is how I feel about my process of acting: there never seems to be enough time, concentration, or light, and there is always emotional difficulties. These can be called blocks, or resistance, to doing the work of creating the character, and I think they are representative of what I have personally discovered that keeps me back from the freedom of creating a character. Blocks can be framed in a negative light, or they can be seen as something to be curious about. I personally think that my blocks tell a lot about me because they contain within them a problem, and a solution. They hold within them resistance and freedom. Here are a few that I want to highlight in regards to my process of building a character:

No time: I never feel as if I have enough time to work on creating a character. I don't give myself the time to make specific choices, and then when I am in rehearsal I don't have the time on stage (or film) to think through the thoughts, and play specific tactics all the way to their end. A big thing I realized in these three years is that my process needs time, whether that is literally taking time to work, or taking time during rehearsal to discover how to bridge from one moment to the next. When I allow myself to take time my process becomes specific, non-presentational, and dropped in.

No concentration: Sometimes the chatter in my mind makes it difficult for me to concentrate on the moment to moment. This is often expressed in my acting through unfinished impulses that I generate quickly and on the spot. On the one hand, having a wealth of impulses and instincts is a great strength, but on the other hand, if there is no concentration they become cluttered and unspecific, causing me to get agitated and

confused. This is why a big part of my process involves a focus on meditation and breath. When I connect to the breath, and reconnect with the why of what I am doing, then I can concentrate and make great character choices that are based off of the other person, and the motivations of my character. The meditation helps me to discipline my mind to being present in the moment, and focused on the task at hand. Both of these tools help me clarify my work moving forward.

No light: Sometimes I lose the joy in the work, and I have realized that this can be a giant block to my creation of the character. When I find joy in the work, I am open with the others that I am collaborating with, I feel at peace with myself and my choices, and I feel free to trust that my work is good. When I don't find the joy in the work, I get into the mindset of self-criticism and comparison. Then I am trying to prove my worth, my merit, and my talent, I begin to measure myself against others, which steals the joy from creating. I have found that finding the play, and doing the self-work of examining my heart and believing in my own self-worth factors heavily into my work as an actor. When I invest in this, then I am a more confident, open, joyful collaborator and actor.

Emotional difficulties: One of the greatest blocks to my process of creating a character is my self-destructive fear. It has the power to greatly effect my emotions and mind, and can cause me to feel isolated and alone. However, connecting to my characters through what they fear is a great tool that I have discovered, and feels very empowering. Also, softening into the vulnerability of expressing my fears and hopes sets me free to release the affect of emotions when working on a character, and can be a great success. But in order to keep this healthy, I have learned that I need to journal, go to therapy, and take care of my mental, physical, and emotional health in order to be open to the process of building a character.

All of these blocks that I have discovered while I have been here have been super enlightening when I approach my acting process, because I am able to diagnose the

things that get in my way of creating. When one arises, I am able to deal with it head on instead of feeling confused as to what is causing resistance to creating. This self-awareness I believe is the bedrock to my process of an actor, and clears the way for what work needs to come next.

Chapter Two: Killing the Goose

“I have been smug and willfully ignorant. I’ve cultivated a deliberate reluctance to investigate my own method of working because I’m afraid of killing the goose. I’m afraid if I parse it I won’t be able to do it anymore.” (Meryl Streep)

It is difficult, as an artist, to demystify what it is that you do, without making it idyllic or self-hating, so I will attempt to be clear about how I proceed when approaching a character in a play. I will do this by setting aside my reluctance to investigate, and will instead replace it with curiosity. How do I create a character at this point in my career? I will parse it out this way: I will start with the general things I do for every character, and then I will specify the techniques I utilize for particular characters. I do this because I believe that “the key to storytelling is that from the outset the actor must understand that her task is to bring dramatic works to life. Accepting who she is and where she is in her evolution as a human being, she amasses a set of tools. She then uses these tools in service to the range of texts that she seeks to interpret. What is necessary is to understand the job at hand. The actor has to know the specific demands of the story being told and how she can invest herself in the process.” (*Storytelling*, Mark Rafael)

The first thing I do when I approach a character is to get a clear picture of who they are, and what kind of world they live in. The way I begin this process is reading the play a number of times in order to clarify references that the playwright is utilizing to flesh out the world of the character as if I am a detective, or an anthropologist. In order to connect with the character I need to understand her background, I really enjoy unearthing details about the character, what her world is like, who she surrounds herself with, what she loves, what she is seeking, and how she languages herself.

When I was working on the role of Sonia in Christopher Durang’s play *Vanya, Sonia, Masha, and Spike* I read the play multiple times before the first rehearsal, doing research on references to Chekhov, Maggie Smith and *California Suite*, and the area of

Philadelphia where the play takes place. I feel that my research on Sonia was specific because I wasn't only looking for symbolism and meaning and motifs in the play, I was looking for clues to build my character. My character analysis was focused on who she is, how others see her, and how her relationships with her siblings and dead adoptive parents shaped her. I found this very helpful to understand what she might fear, and hope for in regards to her future. What I discovered by parsing this out is that seeking details within the script about the character I am creating is integral to my process.

Specific analysis of the script comes next, which becomes my roadmap when building a character, and helps me to enter rehearsal with specific and simple choices that can be adapted depending on what is discovered with the other actors, and the director. When I worked on Sonia I started with her super-objective for the play, and this helped me map out her through-line of action. Then I was able to clarify what she wanted from the other characters, and broke the through line down into units of action within scenes. This clarified my actions, and helped me start finding tactics that I could utilize. This time my preparation helped me to make the tactics even more specific through attaching adjectives to them. I found this to be a useful, and effective tool in communicating with the director, my fellow actors, it helped me make choices that I could fully commit to, and it clarified for me who she was, and therefore how I could identify with her. This realization cemented this process as a tool in my actor toolbox, which I can apply to any project that might need it. I kept a journal for my discoveries, for entries at the ends of rehearsals and performances, for my character analysis, and for any inspiration or images I would find that would speak to the character, plus the notes I received from the director.

However, this isn't a tool that I utilize for every character. When I was performing a clown Entrée for Paul Kalina's class in clown, I boiled it down to a super objective for my clown character, which was: victory. I then clarified the smaller objectives beat by beat that my character wanted from the other clown in my piece, or the audience, in order to gain victory. These objectives included things like attention,

affirmation, submission, etc. This analysis helped clarify the primal needs of my clown, making my choices more childlike, and less fraught with psychological issues that some other characters in plays might experience.

Once I create a clear picture of what my character wants, then I actively daydream about what the character hopes for, as well as what they fear most. I find fear to be a great motivator, as well as a great unifier. If I don't understand what the character fears, I will only be playing at the character because they will always stay one dimensional to me. Fear helps me understand their vulnerability, and thereby I can relate to them. It also helps me to understand how that fear might motivate the actions they take in the story. This allows me to enter into the psychology of the character, and live truthfully under their circumstances.

Once I am able to identify with them through what they fear, then I want to better understand what they hope for as well. Hope can actually be quite a fearful thing, because it sets you up to be vulnerable, to be rejected, to care too much, and to have your heart hurt. All the characters I create guard themselves from pain, but they also have moments when they put their hearts out there in order to go after the thing they have dreamed about. Sometimes it ends well for them and I get to experience their euphoria at obtaining their dreams. But, sometimes it ends in destruction, and I get to experience the heartbreak at losing their dreams. Both extremes are relatable to me, so part of my process is to find those connections because I find that I resonate most with characters who are self-destructive, who feel too much, and who are misunderstood or misread by society.

An example of my process aiding me in connection is when I played Gloria Mitchell in *By the Way, Meet Vera Star*. I was struggling to find my way into identifying with her. I had done research on her, on the world of the play, and was so caught up in these given circumstances that I was just playing a hollow shell of an interpretation of what I thought a starlet in the 1930s would be like. I was so worried about what my dialect sounded like, how I moved as the character, and with being beautiful, that I didn't

do the specific work of connecting on her fears and hopes. It wasn't until I was having a weepy conversation with my friend (and fellow actor) Emily Dunlop, that I had an awakening. Emily reminded me of the fact that the actors we admire approach the characters they create by seeking to identify with them. These actors use their own imagination, their own idiosyncrasies, and their own vulnerability to serve the character. After this conversation, I went back into rehearsal with a fresh perspective, playfulness, and vulnerability; and things began to open up. By reconnecting with my process of connecting with hopes and fears, I was able to recognize that Gloria fears being seen by Hollywood as fat, old, and a sham; therefore she wears a social mask that is pretty difficult to see behind, in an attempt to control the narrative. I also realized that in her personal relationship with her cousin, Vera Stark, she fears rejection, and the loss of affection, all things that I can relate with. She hopes to be loved and adored all her life, and to get this big role in the upcoming film; something I would like, too.

Once I accomplished this part of my process, I began to play with her physicality. How does this character live in my body? I worked with the externals of the Given Circumstances (her costume, wig, and physical state), and I utilized the given circumstances of her being orphaned, and coming from a poorer African-American home in New York. Perhaps she had been babied by her Granny, and taken care of by Vera all her life. If that was the case, then maybe in private she is comfortable being herself and not constricted by the mask of America's Little Sweetie Pie. So physically, when she is in private with Vera, she is more tomboyish, silly, and crass. Gloria lumps on the couch, slumps into chairs, and drags herself around the room in private. But in public she puts on the mask of the starlet who is all pulled together, ladylike, and (when needed) sensual. Discovering these physical differences both physically and vocally made this character a lot of fun to play with, and informed a lot about her psychological world.

However, sometimes the physicality comes from a simple bodily adjustment, or from the essence of something else like an element or a mammal. I found this to be true

when doing *James and the Giant Peach* in Paul Kalina's storytelling class. There were only three of us who were telling this story, and therefore we had to play a lot of characters. When working on creating the characters I played I didn't worry as much about the psychology, but instead used the given circumstances about the character to guide me. Aunt Sponge had a belly, and was very cockney and mean; whereas Miss Spider lived in the vertical with the exception of the bum, which stuck out to depict her abdomen. I also used a French accent to signify where she was from, and also that she was a more flirtatious and sweet character. This was the extent of the analysis I put into these characters because the process of telling this story was different, and so was the style.

After physicality sometimes I need more fodder for the imagination, and the world of the character. So, I begin looking for images that inspire me, or listen to music that helps me get into character. Sometimes I create a journal, or a Pinterest board, or a playlist on Spotify. Sometimes I will identify specific scents that helps me into the mindset of the character, or textures that remind me of a sense memory. Sometimes I associate my character with an animal, or an inanimate object, or an element, or a season; and then utilize Grotowski's "As If" to find the locomotion of that essence, what is it's sound, and what is its motivation for living. Depending on the demands of the character, I may also spend time getting the words deep in my body, so that I can play around during rehearsal, by exploring extremities of expression (both physically and vocally) for each word spoken. I find this sort of work fleshes out the character even more because it helps me to have a visceral response to the words that are accomplishing their action. Finally, I may utilize different leads for my character depending on what I know about them. Do they lead from the head, or the groin? How might that adjust their perspective of the world? This sort of exploration really engages me and helps me feel the connections, and differences in my own body.

When I get to rehearsal, the biggest thing I have learned about my process is to connect with my scene partners, and to be responsive to them. I keep this consistent no matter what character I am working on. I ask myself if I could be listening more, or observing more, or playing more with the other actor. I know that my performance is not as authentic and present as it can be when I am connected and working off of the other person. This collaboration between humans is part of why I love acting, and it is the part of my process that I value the most. I also really enjoy working with a director who is observant, present, and thoughtful. Then we can have meaningful dialogues about the character, about choices, about what they are seeing from the audience's point of view. I find collaboration to be super fulfilling when working with a wonderful director, and it is part of my process of crafting a character. This is also around the time when we are beginning to use props, to think about costumes, and to explore the space. I find taking my time during these rehearsals to add these elements to the world of the play, or film, to be exhilarating. I think this is because it finally fills out the imaginary part of the play, and brings to life things that up until that point we had only been miming, or being mindful of. Now this part of the process only occurs when it is a production that has the budget for it, otherwise I keep utilizing my imagination to fill out the blanks.

When performances begin that means that my process now includes the audience. It's a difficult part of the process for me because I don't want to be focused on pleasing them, but I also want to collaborate and share with them, so it can be very difficult or easy depending on the style of the play. If the play has a strict fourth wall, then all I get from the audience is energy, sound, and an occasional catch of my eye of someone I know. I find my process is best served in this style of a play to stay with what my character is doing, where they are in their minds, and just work off my scene partners and forget that the audience is there. For this I utilize Sanford Meisner's technique of preparation before I come on stage, so that I come in full of the moment before of my character. A lot of times I utilize a substitution from my life so that it affects me, usually

people I love like my family and husband, and it can be very moving. I did this effectively when playing Sonia during *Vanya, Sonia, Masha, and Spike* because I would utilize the fear of losing my family. However, I don't use this technique on every character I play, because not all of them need an in depth emotional prep.

However, if it is a style of performance that drops the fourth wall and allows me to directly address, or see the audience, my process changes. A great example of this is when performing Shakespeare because he wanted the characters to process and commune with the audience. This takes a different level of concentration for me because I have to be so fully committed to the world of the play that I can play with the audience without self-consciousness. This takes vulnerability, and can be very gut wrenching, but a great part of the process because then things really open up and surprise me.

This reminds me of performing clown because everything is shared with the audience. I remember in Will Goblirsch's and my clown Entrée we had our event be a Jenga game that we played with our tongues, and we never knew who would win. When my clown won, I remember sharing that win with the audience and how I was caught up by the joy of it all, and began to cry when I received the applause and joy that the audience was giving me. This is an example of how I can't plan and control this part, instead the only thing I can do is try to remain open and receptive to it.

The final thing that I currently find about my process of building a character is that I ruminate about my character a lot in and out of rehearsal and performance, and even after I have stopped working on her. I deepen my work on the character when I allow myself time for this, and utilize it. It makes my work more meaningful. I am never satisfied with the place I have gotten with a character, I like to keep deepening and working on her because once I do that character stays with me for a long time, and I am enriched by the work I have done to identify with someone who is different than me, but strangely kin.

Chapter Three: Embracing Hope

In her book, *A Challenge for the Actor*, Uta Hagen says, “I believe it takes an unshakeable desire to be an actor together with a need to express what one has sensed and felt in the concrete terms of the characters with whom one will identify on stage, and an insatiable curiosity about the human condition” (xiii).

What I know about acting is this: the only thing you have to offer is yourself. If someone can grasp that, there is a lot of freedom in that place, because it is there that joy and surprise live, and play is able to abound. The actors that I admire exemplify this in their work, actors who include: Emma Thompson, Emma Stone, Sally Hawkins, Meryl Streep, Glenn Close, Sally Fields, Melissa McCarthy to name a few. They are vulnerable because they allow their uniqueness to be used. They also utilize their imagination and empathy to advocate for their character’s desires, and they create worlds in which they are unflinchingly resolute in being unapologetically raw real in their humanity. They bring themselves to the work, and then set aside the parts that do not serve the story; which opens up the floodgates of the rest.

What keeps me coming back to acting is the understanding I experience when I recognize that I am not isolated in the way that I feel. To me, acting is uncovering why we do what we do, and it helps us discover the depths and lengths to which we are willing to go when pursuing what we want. Augusto Boal in his book *The Rainbow of Desire* speaks of this interior life of humanity as something that, “each of us has, within her, everything that all other men, all other women have; Eros and Thanatos. We have loyalty and treachery, courage and cowardice, bravery and fear. We desire life and death, for ourselves and for others. We have within us such a wealth of possibilities! And we know so little of it, so little about what we have, and almost nothing about what we are” (35).

He goes on to say that, “Characters in plays are sick people: and it is for this reason we love theatre. Actors search the depths of the soul and the infinity of the metaphysical. Their personalities, a picture of health and sanity, go looking in their persons for sick people and demons” (36-37). This is why acting can be a place of freedom for me because it is cathartic. My psychologist, Dr. Janet Shepherd, uses Internal Family Systems therapy with me, which has allowed me to embrace and recognize that I am made up of many parts. There is a warrior part of me, there is a numbing part of me. There is a little girl part of me, and there is a know-it-all part of me. And all of my parts deserve to be accepted, heard, and loved. I think this is a great way to think about taking on a character that may require me to use my sicker, darker parts of myself.

By allowing myself to be “sick” for a time, I get to explore what it would be like (on stage or screen) to live in a world, a body, or a mentality that is not mine; and to do it as truthfully as I can. In *The Art of Theatre*, Sarah Bernhardt says that, “little by little, I identified with my character. I dressed her with great care and would leave my Sarah Bernhardt in a corner of the dressing room: I made my Sarah Bernhardt into a spectator of my new ‘self’; and I went on stage to suffer, cry, laugh, love, unaware of what the ‘I’ of my ‘other self’ was doing up in my dressing room” (204). This is my understanding of what acting should be not only from the brief moments when I have experienced it, but from being able to watch some of the greats do it for me. It is a setting aside of parts of yourself, in service of the part that will be telling the story for the audience, and therefore inviting that audience to suffer, cry, laugh, love and being in the moment with you as all of you go on the journey. This is a gift to the world, because it helps humanity with empathy, catharsis, and reflection. I believe that I can share in this work because I bring a lot of heart and play to my characters. And I know that when I am prepared, when I give myself time and space to create, concentrate, and live in the truth that my heart can be utilized for the character I am playing. During my time in graduate school there have been characters I have played where I felt myself free in the work, using my eccentricities

to serve the character, and playing with the other actors to build a story that others might identify with. And this is something I want to continue to do.

My process to build a character is the same process that I utilize in my own life: seek understanding. Why do I do the things I do? What does it feel like to live out my dreams or my nightmares? What would it be like to say the things I'm afraid to say? If I am honest this can be a really difficult thing to do: to live truthfully under imaginary circumstances, to work off another person, and to bring myself fully to the work. Sometimes I can do it, sometimes I fail: but I like a challenge. Like the female Japanese Mountaineer, Junko Tabei, said: "There was never a question in my mind that I wanted to climb that mountain. No matter what other people said." And she was the first woman to reach the summit of Mount Everest. So, I'll follow her lead and climb my personal Mount Everest no matter how many times I am told no, because I want to do the work of acting with bravery and joy, no matter what comes my way.

Annotated Bibliography of Roles

Global Express 2015

A staged reading of works from the writers of the International Writing Program '15,
University of Iowa

Directed by: Eric Forsythe

Stage Manager: Katie McLaughlin and Gwynneth Forsythe

Cast: Emelia Asiedu, Marina Bergenstock, Matthias Blake, Catie Councill, Ari Craven,
Holly Grum, Zach Twardowski

Location/Date: Theatre B, September 17, 2015

Arcadia

By Tom Stoppard

Directed by: Ariel Francoeur

Stage Managed by: Sam Paradis, Lindsay Warnick (ASM)

Designers: Nic Wilson,

Costumes: Megan A. Petkewec; Barbara J. Croy; Bonnie Jenkins,

Production Staff: Bryon Winn; Robert Durham, Ojin Kwon, Rick Loula, Kaitlin
Younger, Melissa L. Turner

Cast: Ari Craven, Miles Gatrell, William Goblersh, Greg Walker, Elyse Fisher, Hunter
Melkin, Connett Crogan, Taylor Edelle Stuart, Caitlin Rose Edwards

Role: Hannah Jarvis

Location, Dates: E.C. Mabie Theatre

Food and Fadwa

By Lameece Issaq and Jacob Kader

Directed by: Marina Bergenstock

Music Director: Frankie Rose

Dramaturg: Alison Ruth

Stage Managed by: Nathan Brauner, Fiona Zachel (ASM)

Designers: Kevin Dudley, Christian Santiago, Joshua Hinden, Hoejeong Joanne Yoo,
Rob Bergenstock, Jenny Nutting-Kelchen, Hiram Alexander Orozco

Costumes: Megan A. Petkewec; Barbara J. Croy; Bonnie Jenkins

Dialect Coach: Kris Danford, Sambit Misra (Asst. Dialect Coach)

Production Staff: Bryon Winn, Robert Durham, Ojin Kwon, Rick Loula, Kaitlin
Younger, Melissa L. Turner

Cast: Catie Councill, Tempestt Ferrar, Holly Grum, Randryck Lewis, Natalie Lurowist,
Sambit Misra, Zach Twardowski

Role: Fadwa Faranesh

Location, Dates: David Thayer Theatre, February 4-13, 2016

Quiz Out (A Staged Reading as part of the New Play Festival 2016)

By Margot Connolly

Directed by Alison Ruth

Cast: Rachel Bennett, Lukas Brasherfons, Elena Bruess, Chris Byrne, Catie Councill,
Nicole Gabrione, Will Goblirsch, Marda Rude, Greg Walker

Role: Aunt Kate

Global Express 2016

A staged reading of works from the writers of the International Writing Program '16,
University of Iowa

Directed by: Eric Forsythe

Stage Manager: Gwyneth Forsythe

Designers: Gwyneth Forsythe

Cast: Hannah Adamson, Emelia Asiedu, Catie Councill, William Goblersch, Cristina Goyenche, Skyler Matthias, Zach Twardowski

Location/Date: Theatre B, September 15, 2016

Vanya, Sonia, Masha, and Spike

By Christopher Durang

Directed by: Eric Forsythe

Stage Managed by: Lindsay Warnick, Merric Bower (ASM)

Designers: Alex Casillas, Skyler Matthias, David Thayer, Hoejeong Yoo, Wade Hampton, Hayley Ryan, Ali Filipovich

Costumes: Megan A. Petkewec; Barbara J. Croy; Bonnie Jenkins,

Production Staff: Bryon Winn, Robert Durham, Ojin Kwon, Rick Loula, Kaitlin Younger, Melissa L. Turner

Cast: Emelia Asiedu, Catie Councill, Elyse Fisher, Miles Gatrell, McKenna Goodman, Zach Twardowski

Role: Sonia

Location, Dates: David Thayer Theatre, November 10-19, 2016

Mr. Burns, a post-electric play

By: Anne Washburn, Score by Michael Friedman, Lyrics by Anne Washburn

Directed by: Tlaloc Rivas

Stage Managed by: Katie McGlaughlin, Aubrey Near & Nic Steffes (ASMs)

Music Director: Jason Sifford

Dramaturg: Molly Winstead

Choreographer: Michael Sakamoto

Fight Choreographer: Lukas Brasherfons

Designers: Nic Wilson, Alex Casillas, Christian Hahn, Jacob Sikorski, Bonnie Jenkins, Brittany Dee Bodley, Lindsey Kuhn

Costumes: Megan A. Petkewec; Barbara J. Croy; Bonnie Jenkins

Production Staff: Bryon Winn, Robert Durham, Ojin Kwon, Rick Loula, Kaitlin Younger, Melissa L. Turner

Cast: Leela Bassuk, Will Callan, Catie Councill, Yannik Encarnacao, Miles Gatrell, Holly Grum, Natalie Lurowist, Greg Walker, Danny Whiskeyman, Rubina Vidal

Role: Colleen/Homer

Location, Dates: E,C Mabie Theatre, Feb 3-12, 2017

The Pirate Queen (as part of the University of Iowa New Play Festival '17)

By G.Flores

Directed by: Lukas Brasherfons

Dramaturg: Alison Ruth

Stage Managed: Aubrey Near, Adam Koob (ASM)

Designers: Nic Wilson, Ellen Kane, G. Flores, Hayley Ryan

Costumes: Megan A. Petkewec; Barbara J. Croy; Bonnie Jenkins,

Fight Choreogrpaer: Lukas Brasherfons

Production Staff: Bryon Winn, Robert Durham, Ojin Kwon, Rick Loula, Kaitlin Younger, Melissa L. Turner

Cast: Emelia Asiedu, Catie Councill, Caitlin Rose Edwards, Miles Gatrell, Marda Rude, Zach Twardowski, Rubina Vidal, Jessica Wade

Role: Kate

Location, Dates: David Thayer Theatre, May 5, 2017

Global Express 2017

A staged reading of works from the writers of the International Writing Program '17,
University of Iowa

Directed by: Eric Forsythe

Stage Manager: Brillian Qi'Bell

Designers: Gwyneth Forsythe

Cast: Catie Councill, Vinnie Dowd, Miles Gatrell, Cristina Goyenche, Holly Grum,
Tlaloc Rivas, Miriam Rudolph, Sage Spiker

Location/Date: Theatre B, September 14, 2017

By the Way, Meet Vera Stark

by Lynn Nottage

Directed by Tlaloc Rivas

Stage Manager(s): Samantha Paradis, Jacob Sikorski (ASM)

Designers: Jess Fialko, Alexander Michel, Wade Hampton, Ted Brown, Hayley Ryan,
Chelsea Regan

Costume: Megan A. Petkewec; Barbara J. Croy; Bonnie Jenkins

Dramaturg: Luke White, Clara Teynen

Dialect Coach: Greg Walker

Production Staff: Bryon Winn, Robert Durham, Ojin Kwon, Rick Loula, Kaitlin
Younger, Melissa L. Turner

Cast: Emelia Asiedu, Catie Councill, Tempestt Farrar, Eli Jolley, Randryck Lewis,
Miriam Randolph, Zach Twardowski

Role: Gloria Mitchell

Location, Dates: David Thayer Theatre February 1-10th, 2018

A Midsummer Night's Dream

by William Shakespeare

Directed by David Lee-Painter

Assistant Director: Hunter Menken

Dramturg: Morgan Grambo

Stage Manager(s): Ellen Kane, Brillian Qi'Bell

Designers: Cathy Parrott, Ted Brown, Wade Hampton, Nic Wilson, Lindsey Kuhn

Costume: Megan A. Petkewec; Barbara J. Croy; Bonnie Jenkins

Production Staff: Bryon Winn, Robert Durham, Ojin Kwon, Rick Loula, Kaitlin Younger, Melissa L. Turner

Cast: Catie Councill, Randryck Lewis, Will Goblirsch, Miles Gatrell, Greg Walker, Madi Voss, Vincent Doud, Nicole Gabrione, Jivani Rodriguez, Marquise Jackson, Will Callan, Leela Bassuk, Maya Bassuk, Ben Sulzberger, Marda Rude, Rob Petrie, Shelby Zukin, Gracey Murphy, Emmy Palmersheim

Role: Hippolyta, Titiana

Location, Dates: E.C. Mabie Theatre, April 20-28, 2018

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