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Embracing the fire

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EMBRACING THE FIRE

by

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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 2018

Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor Paul Kalina

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Graduate College
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Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER'S THESIS

This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Cristina Goyeneche

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

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To my mother, for being a complete badass who isn't afraid to show me the power of expressing your truth.

To my father, for showing me that you can be assertive without losing your compassion for others.

To my brother, for being my best friend and one constant in a world filled with change.

“But you must never ever let them take
those flames from within your soul,
Instead, you must burn brighter than ever
because you are a Daughter of the Sun,
And you belong only to yourself, *not to this world.*”

Nikita Gill
For Girls Filled With Fire

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

The graduate school journey of how I discovered my process into being an actor and how I completely changed as a person. This thesis details my struggles, my successes, and my failures. It incorporates where I was, in my process, before graduate school, where it is now, and where I hope it will be one day.

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CHAPTER 1:

WHAT THE HELL WAS I THINKING

There used to be a time when I thought I knew exactly what I was doing. I had a process and it worked. It was simple: aim high and hurt yourself if need be in order to achieve the outcome that you want.

Growing up, I had an urge to be the best and if I wasn't, then I punished myself. I had to be better, because I owed my family that much. Therefore, grades were a priority. My parents are immigrants from Spain and Mexico, so the pressure to be academic was substantial. If you didn't do well in school, then you didn't do well. So, many memories that I have are typically tied to school. Some of these memories include sleepwalking through junior year of high school because I was taking all AP and honor's courses and yelling at my computer router at 3AM on the day an assignment was due because my internet had stopped working. As much as I thank them for wanting me to do well, the pressure led me on a path that I didn't necessarily want. Not only did that path manifest itself physically, one of the degrees I pursued in undergrad was of psychology, but eventually it led me on a mentally downward spiral.

Side note: I want to be clear, I do not blame my parents for the mental issues that arose in me. The pressures I put on myself to please them and make them proud did that, even though there was no need to. Who I was and am was more than enough to make them proud. Carrying on.

The speed bump

Back to my path: through years of needing to be better and feeling like I had no control, my major bumps in the road erupted. I developed an eating disorder at two

different points in my life. The first was the summer before my senior year of high school. It was after I had finished the year with a 4.5 GPA and pretty much a year with no sleep. I had decided to stay in town to get my undergraduate degree in psychology, even though I had been accepted into, what I thought was then, my dream school. I could lie and say it was mainly because I wanted to save my parents money, but it was actually mainly because I developed an incredibly messed up way of thinking about myself: if I never tried, then I could never fail. I would later hold on to this mantra for dear life through some portion of my time in graduate school, but more about that later. Along with this mentality, I also needed some kind of control in my life, hence the disorder. I restricted everything I ate and exercised until I was on the verge of passing out. Once my brother found out, I stopped, for a while, but the need for control and the critic that had emerged in my head didn't. Then sophomore year of college hit.

The mentality of never trying in an effort to never fail caused me to not care about my grades or my body. I ballooned to the heaviest I'd ever been, 221 pounds, and I just let life pass me by. I was scared of everything. So I needed to take control again. This time around, I became bulimic and in the process lost almost 100 pounds. I had control of what I ate, how much I ate, and how much I could eject from my body whenever I wanted. I lost weight quickly and the compliments kept pouring in, which fed the critic and monster in my mind. I didn't have to try and yet, I was succeeding in impressing people and getting their admiration. In my mind I wasn't failing and, ultimately, it took years for me to figure out that my messed up way of thinking was rooted in my greatest fear: failure.

The road to failure

If there is one thing that I'm taking away from graduate school, it is to be comfortable with failure and to let it happen to you, but it took me a long time to get there. When I came to the University of Iowa, I was almost three years deep into bulimia and more terrified than ever of failure. I was the first person in my family to be accepted to graduate school; failure wasn't an option. Putting this pressure on myself, but scared to even try to put the bulimia on full blast. My mentality forced me to be resistant to the work. It didn't allow me to connect, to really see what was happening in front of me. It didn't allow me to see my worth, and not only that, but the worth of others. There was a lot of pretending, a lot of lying, a lot of shoving the truth away, but my professors didn't give up on me or even go easy on me. They forced me to confront who I was and it wasn't until I honestly spoke, out loud, about my bulimia that I was able to confront the notion of failure. And not only confront, but accept the freedom that that road can lead to.

CHAPTER 2: WHAT EVEN IS ACTING

My manifesto

Before I can even begin to talk about how I prepare for a role, or my process, I have to bring up my manifesto. I'm going to be honest, I never thought about what acting was to me before graduate school. Never thought about what I thought was "good" acting, what kind I wanted to do, etc. It wasn't until my second year of grad school in my Grotowski class where, for an assignment, we had to write what acting was for us, what we hoped our acting would become, what we thought good acting was. Mine is constantly changing, just as my process does, so here are the basics.

My beginning

I think it's crucial to always remember where you came from and especially where your love from something came from, so here's my start. I didn't get into acting until my junior year of high school when every other elective I was interested in were filled up. I was stuck in drama one for my third period class and I was completely terrified. I liked to be hidden; I hated speaking in front of people, let alone performing in front of them. Our first assignment was to find a song that told a story and perform it as a speech. The song I chose was Carrie Underwood's "Don't Forget to Remember Me" and as I waited to perform that on the third day of class, I was shaking. I was incredibly nervous and I was positive that this performance could only end badly. I went up on stage and for, what seemed like the first time in my life, everything clicked. I fell in love. The honesty of the piece is what I loved. I connected to the piece in a way that I had never experienced before and I was able to share that with others. I'd never thought that I would be comfortable with being on a stage. Back then, in high school, acting became my

outlet. I was, surprisingly, able to hide behind characters. I could pretend to be someone else, because I didn't really like being myself. This insecurity forced me to have a very naïve definition of acting. This narrow thinking of what acting was continued all the way until I got into grad school and then my mind just exploded open.

My now

There's a lot to say about what acting is to me now, so let me try to organize those thoughts for not only the people reading this, but for myself. Very recently, I was speaking to a professor of mine that I greatly admire and he told me that when I first came to grad school, I was pretending to be an actress and that now I am one. And that's where my thoughts about acting are now. That's what I think my opinion of "good" acting is. It's not pretending to be someone else, it's about doing. It's about bringing yourself completely to a character in order to tell their story, but playing it truthfully by actively pursuing what they are trying to obtain. Acting is no longer a selfish way to escape the real world, it is my opportunity to tell people's stories. It's my chance to give those who don't have a voice, a voice. It is my job to let go of my ego and make the priority someone and something else. To me, 'good' acting is when a person pursues what their character wants with no judgement attached to it. They pursue the honesty of what that person needs, even if the audience or an outside eye considers it vile because people can be vile sometimes. You release these parts of yourself, that you keep hidden away, that's what I think good acting is.

My future

I want to release the vile aspects of myself into my characters', when it calls for it. I want to let go of my ego much more and I want to be raw and ugly. I still have a wall up where I don't like to be seen as ugly, still have this need for the audience to like me, but I want my acting to take me to places where that doesn't matter. Acting isn't supposed to be pretty, it's supposed to be real and by not allowing myself to express fully because of some weird insecurity, then I am not fully committing to my character and speaking their truth. That's where I want my acting to go. To let go of boundaries that I've tied to myself.

CHAPTER 3: MY NONEXISTENT PROCESS BEFORE GRAD SCHOOL

This should be a very short chapter because I didn't really have a process before graduate school. Like I said earlier, I was pretending to be an actress so there was no thought or heart put into my characters. I would memorize lines and blocking and then emote. That's what I thought acting was and that's what I did. I literally tried to cry on stage whenever I got the chance.

I was lazy, scatter brained, and not specific. Before, I used to do the basics. I would start with the memorization of my lines. My memorization would include memorizing my lines with a pattern and expectations of how to say things or act things out. This would cause me to have the scene played out in my head already when I would get into rehearsals. I didn't allow myself any freedom. Not only that, but I depended on a director way too much. When I had a director that wouldn't tell me what they wanted in every scene, I would become very heady and frustrated. With my first role in graduate school, Santa Lucina in *Love Me Tender, Che Guevara*, I tried so hard to break my patterns of memorization and the need to rely on my director, but I failed and I know now that that's ok. Even though I bombed in that part, that's where my process began to slowly change. On some successful days, I was able to let go of expectation and play.

When it comes to listening to my partners on stage, I had never really done that before. I would listen for my cue and show the audience that I was listening while actually tricking myself into thinking that I was listening. I had that skill down pat. During *Che*, I found myself having moments where I was listening to my partner, but then when I realized this in that moment, I immediately stopped listening and scrambled

back into my head. When I was listening, I would actually be surprised by my partner and to what was actually happening around me on stage. For example, there was one rehearsal where the lamp on the desk just fell off during a scene and while I would usually just pick it up and try to act as if nothing happened, I actually incorporated it into the scene and it was fun. During this first year, I started incorporating what was actually happening in front of me into my process and I think that's an important aspect of my process now.

When I was actually listening, I found myself being less bored on stage, which I think is really funny. I must've been a very selfish actor if I was getting bored on stage. It's a clear indication of the fact that I didn't care what the other person was doing and how I was just pretending to act, pretending to do. In the past, when I worked with someone I didn't get along with, I attempted to avoid connecting with them onstage and thus put the work second to my own desires. There will always be people you don't get completely along with, but sometimes they play your love interest so it's your job serve your character by living fully in their given circumstances.

Speaking of given circumstances, I never really focused on that or analyzed my script to figure out what my character wanted. I was very much one of those people that went with the flow and that caused me to play a lot of generality. I did this with Santa Lucina. I played her very generally and didn't treat her as a person first or at all. I had no idea what she wanted, what she was trying to get from others. And before, I would blame my director and say things like "we never even talked about objectives" when, in reality, it is your job as the actor to know what your character wants, not the director. They're there to guide you, not spoon feed you.

Moment before and preparation. I can honestly say that I have never really worked on that either. I have worked on preparation in the aspect of warming up my body before a show, but not the thought process of my character before they entered a scene. I was very much an actor that would get into character on stage. I wouldn't come onto the stage full with what just happened to my character. There was no continuation that the character had a life outside of what was shown on stage. I didn't do this with Santa Lucina either. I would run lines while offstage because I was very lazy and didn't learn my lines as soon as possible, so that was always a chip on my shoulder. Messing up my lines was something I always feared, again failure, so instead of being in the moment and preparing for the scene with prep and my moment before, I was in my head about my lines. It put me in a rigid place where instead of letting my partner affect me, I was just concentrated on not messing up my lines.

Other aspects of myself that I never really paid attention to was the physicality of my character and my voice. Because I didn't know acting actually took work, those are areas that I never really even focused on and that is so strange to say. Obviously you have to work on those aspects when it comes to acting, because you are not the character. So you have to find where the character lives in your body and how they move. I never did that and therefore I was pretty much always me on stage. When it comes to my voice, I never worked on that either. I've been blessed with an extremely loud voice, so vocal warmups were never a priority for me, but that's my ego talking. You should always work on articulation and resonance and even breath as your warmup and as part of your technique because it's incredibly vital. It's part of how your characters communicate and if you make it harder for them to communicate, then you're not giving them any justice.

The lack of effort in my process before grad school and during the first year enforced the mindset that if I never tried then I could never fail. And yet here I was, failing constantly. It wasn't until the end of my first year and all throughout my second year of graduate school where my process finally emerged and my fire exploded.

CHAPTER 4:

MY FIRE

My process now

It's really hard to boil down the process in which I approach a character into one certain way because you shouldn't approach two different characters the same way and yet, there are some things you should always do. These are some of the basic things that I do.

First, I read the play several times. At least two or three times before I try to memorize it. I want to clearly understand what is happening in the play before I try to understand what is happening with my character. Next, I write down the words or phrases or references that I don't know or understand. Whether I'm the one who says it or not because if my character is responding to something that's said and I as the actor have no idea what it means, then I can't respond truthfully as my character. Once I've looked up the items that I don't know or understand, I write down what my character says about themselves and what other characters say about my character. I think it's important to notice what the other characters in the world of the play think about the character you play because it'll give you a bigger understanding of who your character is. For example, I had a character who other characters called a snake, which gives me as the actor insight into my character. After that, I figure out what relationships the characters have with one another. Who knows who, when people meet, whether they like or dislike each other, etc. Doing all of this makes the world and the given circumstances much more real to me and during my time in grad school I've discovered that the more real I can make my given circumstances and the more personal I can make them, then I give myself much more freedom to risk and play and try new things at rehearsal.

After clarifying the world for myself, I try to memorize my lines as quickly as I can and as monotone as I can. I've discovered that the more time I have the script out of my hand, the more I am able to play and respond off of my partner. So, I'll work with the script in hand and once a scene is blocked, I will do what I can to be completely memorized for the next time I rehearse the scene. I also try to memorize my lines in a monotone method so I don't start anticipating how I think a line should be said. It forces me to listen to my partner and respond off of what they are actually doing.

Next, I analyze my script and try to figure out what my character wants in a scene, their objective. I give myself several options to explore at rehearsals and I stick with the one that I feel more passionate about and that goes with the intentions of the playwright. It's important to discover and figure out what your character wants in a scene because acting is all about being active. The pursuit of your objective makes you active because you need to know when you've obtained what you've wanted, this is called your action. With every objective, you must have an action. I see it as the proof that you've gotten your objective. Your scene partner must do or say something that tells you you've gotten your objective. If you're not being active, then you're just emoting a mood and that can become so incredibly boring. It's more exciting to watch someone become frustrated because they're not getting what they want than someone just appearing to be frustrated.

After all that is done and I'm in rehearsal, then I just pursue what I want and I play. I play with my character's physicality, what part of their body they lead from, whether that changes from scene to scene, and I fully pursue what I want while responding to the world that I've discovered. These are all things that I do with every

single character, but with the two favorite characters that I've portrayed, I did a few extra things.

None of this would've happened without the technique that I've been acquiring during my time here at the university. During each year of graduate school, we are given tools to help us get into our character in a way that helps us bring more truth to them. Here's some of mine.

The technique

Now that I know how important physicality and voice are for a character, those are things that I work on a daily basis. To add flexibility to my spine, I do something that's called undulations. The best way I can describe undulations are as a slow body roll, where you attempt to feel every vertebrae of your spine. You can do this in a forward motion, side motion, and backward motion. I like to play with all three. It helps me release tension, surprisingly, and it's a good reminder in that it tells me there are so many areas of my body that I can play with on stage. I do these every day because they're foundational and it's important to keep a strong foundational base in all of your work. Another thing that I like to do almost every day is lie down on a dowel. What? I know right, but it helps so much. I have a dowel that I've had since my first year here and I place it on the floor, vertically, and line my spine onto it and then release as much tension as I can. After I do that for about fifteen minutes, I stand up and place my feet on the dowel. I'd never heard of doing this before grad school and I'm so thankful for these techniques. The dowel has a strange effect of making me feel more grounded and the more grounded I am as a person, the more grounded I can be in my character. After I do all this, I incorporate some sun salutations into my technique. For those that don't know,

sun salutations are a yogic exercise. I do about three of these, two times a day. I have found that not only does it relax me and makes me warm and ready, but it also helps me connect to my breath, which is incredibly important as an actor.

The breath is a crucial part of my technique as an actor and most of the tools I use to focus on my breath have come from my voice classes. To start, I like to drape over something called a zafu. A zafu is a slightly hard version of a pillow. I place the zafu a little under my shoulder blades and I just lay there. This helps my chest to expand and my solar plexus to breathe. In my time here at grad school, my solar plexus has been a huge cause for discomfort. The years of bulimia has caused that area to be tight, so jump on anything I can do to loosen it up. I drape over my zafu or about fifteen minutes and try to release as much as I can any excess tension that may be building up. After that, I do a few tremors. Tremors are when you make a part of your body pulsate or vibrate without causing tension to any other part of your body. The reason I do this is because it's a great way to connect to my breath and connect to the chaos that is happening within me. Your breathing pattern completely changes when you do this and it's nice to add some text on top of it to get rid of any patterns that you may have acquired. The one that I do every day is called the 'open book' tremor. The way you do this tremor is by placing your zafu right about where your tailbone sits and bringing both your legs to your chest. It's important to remember to not start the tremor until every tension is completely released. Once I've let go of most of my tension, I flex my feet and slowly start to push up from my knees until I start to tremor. Once I've started trembling, I stay in it until I can't take it anymore. The reason why I like this tremor so much is that not only does it help me connect to my breath in a way I never have before, but it also causes my psoas to release,

which is another aspect of my body that is incredibly tight. My solar plexus and my psoas are aspects of myself that I need to work on constantly, so I'm glad that I have tools that I can apply to my technique that will help release those. The reason why it's so important to have those released is so that there is a clear channel in which my breath can pass through my body so that my character's wants and needs can be fully expressed. Thought comes from breath, so anything I can do to make it easier for my character, and for myself, the better. After I tremor for a bit, I work on my resonance and articulation last. I roll off of the zafu onto my side and I work my way into child's pose, which is where your legs are bent at the knees and your forehead touches the floor. I do some humming in this position and try to place the humming at different areas of my face: my mouth, my nose, my forehead, etc. After that, I start releasing vowel sounds and try to make them as direct as possible. This causes me to place all my vocalizations forward, where the placement should be. If you've ever heard someone in a stage show place their voice in their throat, it's hard to understand them. Next I get up on my feet and do some tongue twisters, things that force me to articulate and place my voice forward.

I do all of this every day throughout the day. I've discovered over my time here that being an actor is a lot of work and that your process and technique is constantly changing. These things have become so engrained in me that it's hard to even consider it a technique anymore. It's just a part of my daily routine. The technique that I do every day is something that I want to expand on as I move forward in this profession. It's helped me improve bounds and leaps since being in graduate school and I can only imagine where it can take me once I add more to it. So now that I've talked a bit about

the technique that I work on every day, let me talk about two of the characters that contributed from this technique full force.

Pargeia

During the second semester of my second year in graduate school I was cast in a show called *Welcome to Thebes* as a powerhouse of a woman named Pargeia. She was one of the antagonists of the show and it was my first time playing one. Before this, I had been cast as people who you were supposed to root for and who were what some people would see as kind. I had never been cast as a woman who was the “bad guy” and especially never one who used sex appeal as a weapon. In that scene, I had to connect to my power source, i.e. my vagina. I had never had a role this difficult. I’m a person who had never really used sex appeal to get her away, at least not up until this point. There’s power in knowing that you have something that no one can obtain and that’s how she walked through life. She knew she was a strong, confident, smart, woman and I had to privilege of figuring out where that lived in my body to express her truthfully, and in the process, unleash a side of me that I didn’t know existed.

So, I learned a lot from this woman and my process with her grew in a way I didn’t think it would. Once I did very extensive research with her, I did additional fun things such as creating two different music playlists: one of music I think she would listen to and that described her and then a second that I think went with each scene and where her mindset for those scenes were.

All this was fine and dandy, but because Pargeia was such a complicated character and one much different from myself, the final step was a physical

transformation. Before Pargeia, I had never really changed my appearance for a role. I was asked to cut my hair for this role. Now, I know that doesn't sound like a big deal, but for a girl who would hide behind her hair, that was a super big deal. I was asked to cut my hair incredibly short. Power cut short. Think Isabella Rossellini short. I was told that I could wear a wig if I wasn't comfortable enough to do it, but I fell in love with this woman through all my research and discovery so I owed her at least that much, so I cut my hair the shortest it's ever been. Obviously, I cried immediately after. But something changed inside of me and with my process. The physical transformation made me feel brave and exposed, which is exactly what Pargeia was all about. Even though some may consider her the villain, everything she was doing was coming from a place of bravery in an effort to regain what her family had lost and she had moments where she would expose how scared and vulnerable she really was because of this. I could relate to her in a way I hadn't before and that caused me to dress like her at rehearsals. I never thought that dressing like your character before the first costume day would help, but it completely changed her movements and my process. Because of her, my process now includes me bringing in articles of clothing that make me feel like my character. Again, this is something that brings me freedom and with Pargeia, she was truly alive with my haircut and the dress that I wore for rehearsals. She made it hard to ignore the flames that were burning in me and I thank her every day for that. She made me realize the power that I have inside and the drive that I have to go after what I want with full force, which led me to my assigned role.

Along with the haircut and the clothing, another physical transformation that occurred was my posture and how I carried myself. I, as Cristina, tend to have a slight

concaving of the heart when I feel the weight of the world on my shoulders. It's how I hide. Well, Pargeia doesn't hide. She puts everything forward because everything is on the line. This woman led with her vagina, but her heart and mind were still present because she loved her family and she was a clear strategist. Therefore, she carried herself upright, she walked with her head high and lifted from the crown of her head and whenever she moved, her whole body moved forward. It was exhausting and if you're doing the work well and being true to your character, you should be exhausted after every performance. One issue that I found kept arising because of this posture was that I was adding unnecessary tension at my power source. I would clench so hard to keep the posture that it wasn't allowing me to connect to my breath. So while I was doing my prep before I would step on stage, I would squat and just breathed until I fully released. I found that this gave me much more freedom to play and reminded me about the power that Pargeia had. I miss her so much and I am so grateful that she taught me vulnerability doesn't make you weak.

Dean Wreen

When the season for our third year was released, I was a little disappointed. I didn't have any interest in two of them, I can't sing to save my life, and two of them I had never heard of. Because I wasn't interested in two of them, I turned to the two that I didn't know and read them to see which of the two had a role that I might be interested in. When I finished reading *Seven Homeless Mammoths Wander New England*, I knew that I had to be in this show. Not only had I not been in a comedic show in forever, but I was absolutely in love with the story of three women who help each other overcome an aspect of life that we can't ignore: death and the concept of inevitable change. Again, not

only was I in love with the story, but there was one character in particular who I needed to play: Dean Wreen. I related to her so incredibly much and saw my journey of grad school through her. She was so scared of change, she needed constant control, she would hide behind work or run away from her problems when she was scared and through Greer and Andromeda's help, she comes to terms that she can't control the outcome of situations, but she doesn't have to be alone when they do change. That is what I went through in the three years that I have been at this university. I needed to play her, she was literally the culmination of my journey here. So I listened to my fire and I fought for her and I'm so glad that I got her. I did every aspect of my process that I did with Pargeia with her, but I also added mediation into my process for Dean. She talked so much, her mind was constantly working and I had never had a character like that. I needed to center myself much more than I've had to in the past because if I didn't, I would drive myself insane trying to deal with her thought process. Nevertheless, she was a challenge because I had never related to a character so much as I had with her, which made it incredibly hard to let her go. She didn't so much change my process as she changed me. She made me more open, more willing and accepting to change. And even though change is inevitable and it's scary, I'm ready to dive head first into it.

CHAPTER 5:

REBIRTH

Corny title for a chapter, I know, but it's true. I'm a completely different person than I was when I started grad school, in every aspect of the word. I now have a process as an actress and I acknowledge that it will constantly be changing. Just like I as a person will constantly be changing. Not only do I know these two will always be changing, but I want them to change. I don't want to be stagnant. I still want to be better, but for myself. Not because I feel like I owe it to someone or because I feel like I'll be a failure if I don't. I want to fail, I want to experience, I want to grow.

That being said, there is so much growth that still needs to happen for me once I leave Iowa. I still have these barriers that don't let me fully commit to a character. These insecurities of being judged or seen as unappealing. Going forward, I want my work to help me get passed that. I want to be able to be given a character and say whole heartedly, I can do this. Even though my work has improved dramatically over my time here at Iowa, I'm still riddled with insecurities about if I'm portraying a character 'right'. And there's no such thing as right, there's only truth.

Another area where I want to grow is in my physicality, especially in the releasing of my psoas and solar plexus. Those are incredibly tight and still need a lot of work. I took a yoga course during my time here and that helped a lot, so I think incorporating more yoga into my daily technique will help me release those two. Even writing this now, I can't help but put a little judgement on myself because of the tightness that I have in those areas, but it's important to acknowledge where you need to improve without judgements, just facts. Which is another way I want my acting process to grow. Just state

where I need to improve and improve them, not judge them or my journey. I also want to learn more about what my body can do. I have grown to love physicality and I'm curious to see what limits I can push my body to on the stage. And what's still not working? My ability to look like a fool and present it as a gift. I really want to get better at that. I want to say to heck with it all to my ego, and just look foolish. It's where I've felt the most free and when I leave Iowa, that's the starting point for my ever changing process as an actor. To present myself, in all my foolish glory, as a gift and not an excuse.

ANNOTATED PERFORMANCE HISTORY

Seven Homeless Mammoths Wander New England

By Madeline George

University of Iowa Main Stage

Directed by Meredith Alexander

Assistant Director-Molly Winstead

Scenic Designer-Jess Fialko

Lighting Designer-Courtney Schmitz

Assistant Lighting Designer-Merric Bower

Sound Designer-Elin Dejus

Costume Designer- Akeem Celestine

Assistant Costume Designer- Zamora Simmons

Stage Manager-Marguerite Sugden

Assistant Stage Manager- Alexis Hinman

Cast: Elyse Fisher (Greer), Mackenzie Elsbecker (Andromeda), Art Borecca (The Caretaker), Ashlynn Dale (Early Man 1), Cristina Ranslem (Early Man 2)

Location- David Thayer Theatre

Dates-March 1st-March 10th 2018

Role: Dean Wreen-Lead

Bad things happen here

By Eric Marlin

University of Iowa Gallery Series

Directed by Lila Rachel Becker

Scenic Designer-Savanna Genskow

Lighting Designer-Courtney Gaston

Costume Designer-Savanna Genskow

Sound Designer- Bri Atwood

Stage Manager-Adam Koob

Cast: Molly Winstead (Citizen), Nicholas Grzesik (Soldier), Donovan Roberts (Soldier)

Location- Theatre B

Dates- Nov 2nd- Nov 5th 2018

Role: Citizen-Lead

Tough

By Margot Connolly

University of Iowa New Play festival

Directed by Alison Ruth

Scenic Designer-Skyler Matthias

Lighting Designer- Christian Hahn

Sound Designer-Christian Hahn

Fight Director- Lukas Brasherfons
Stage Manager- Nic Steffes
Assistant Stage Manager- Alexis Hinman
Cast: Holly Grum (Checa), Mackenzie Elsbecker (Shan), Rachel Bennett (Stef), Nicole Gabrione (Maddy), Amy Evans (Riley), Mckenna Goodman (Mina)

Location- David Thayer Theatre

Dates- May 2nd 2017

Role: Lorina-Supporting

Welcome to Thebes

By Moira Buffini

University of Iowa Main Stage

Directed by Paul Kalina

Scenic Designer-Skyler Matthias

Lighting Designer-Hoejeong J. Yoo

Sound Designer- Ted Brown

Costume Designer- Loyce Arthur

Assistant Costume Designer- Akeem Celestine

Fight Director- Lukas Brasherfons

Stage Manager- Samantha Paradis

Assistant Stage Manager-Ellen Kane

Cast: JaMaya Austin (Megaera), Zach Twardowski (Miletus), Sydney Speltz (Scud), Emelia Asiedu (Eurydice), Eli Jolley (Tydeus), Damitri Taylor (Haemon), Miriam Randolph (Antigone), Maya Bassuk (Ismene), Ash Pierce (Tiresias), Daly Tighe (Harmonia), Randryck Lewis (Polykleitos), Elyse Fisher (Aglea), Taylor Edelle Stuart (Thalia), Tempestt Farrar (Euphrosyne), Madeline Ascherl (Eunomia), Alyssa Boland (Bia), Hannah Adamson (Helia), Cristina Ranslem (Eris), Hunter Menken (Xenophanes), William Goblirsch (Theseus), Rob Siegrist (Phaex), Weiyi Zhang (Talthybia), Marc Saladino (Enyalios), Sterling Isler (Plautus), Rob Petrie (Ichnaea)

Location- David Thayer Theatre

Dates- March 2nd- March 11th 2017

Role: Pargeia-Lead

Ghost Limb

By Marisela Trevino Orta

University of Iowa Gallery Series

Directed by John Cameron

Scenic Designer-Kenton Jones

Lighting Designer- Forrest Tallbull

Sound Designer- Wade Hampton

Costume Designer- Lindsey Kuhn

Stage Manager- Ash Pierce

Cast: William Goblirsch (Eugenio), Damitri Taylor (Javier), Brian Canchola (General), Vince Doud (Soldier 1), Claire Saskowski (Soldier 2), Lindsey Francisco (Madre), Johnathan Goldstein (Soldier 3)

Location- Theatre B

Dates- Nov 3rd- Nov 6th 2016

Role: Consuelo-Lead

Squeeze: A Motel Play

By Theresa Giacomasi

University of Iowa New Play Festival

Directed by Ariel Francoeur

Dramaturg- Alison Ruth

Assistant Director-David Freeman

Scenic Designer-Alex Casillas

Lighting Designer-Hoejeong J. Yoo

Costume Designer-Morgan Meier

Sound Designer-Ted Brown

Composer-Justin K. Comer

Violence Designer-Lukas Brasherfons

Choreographer- Taylor Edelle Stuart

Stage Manager- Nic Steffes

Assistant Stage Manager-Ellen Kane

Cast: Holly Grum (Jeanna), Anne Ogden (Andrea), Lindsey Francisco (Sangmi)

Location- Theatre B

Dates- May 2nd 2016

Role: Monica-Supporting

Iphigenia Crash Land Falls on the Neon Shell that was Once her Heart

By Caridad Svich

University of Iowa Main Stage

Directed by Mario El Caponi Mendoza

Associate Director- Alyssa Hitchcock

Assistant Director- Wade Hampton

Dramaturg- Madison Colquette

Assistant Dramaturg- Amanda Harwood

Scenic Designer-Alex Casillas

Lighting Designer- Lucas P. Ingram

Deputy Lighting Designer- Ellen Kane

Costume Designer-Angie Esposito

Assistant Costume Designer- Hayley Ryan

Sound Mixer- Andrew Stewart

Props Master-Christian Jay Santiago

Stage Manager-Alison Kochman

Assistant Stage Manager-Katy McGlaughlin

Assistant Stage Manager- Samantha Paradis

Cast: Maritza Pineda (Iphigenia), Caitlin Rose Edwards (Iphigenia), Sarah Gilbert (Iphigenia), Haley Courter (Achilles), Rob Petrie (Adolfo), Jessica Wade (Camilla), Julia-Kaye Rohlf (Violeta Imperial), Damitri Taylor (Fresa Girl 1), Hiram Alexander Orozco (Fresa Girl 2), Cristina Ranslem (Fresa Girl 3), Vince Doud (Solder X), Hannah Adamson (Virgin Puta), Adam Koob (General's Ass), Tim Mizones (Hermaphrodite Prince), Matt Schutz (Glass Eyed Man/Orestes), Lindsey Francisco (News Anchor), Bre Anna McNeil (Virtual MC), Alyssa Cokinis (Raver), Rachele Ekstrand (Raver), Cohen Lewis-Hill (Raver), Ash Pierce (Raver), Daly Tighe (Raver), Aimee Townsend (Raver), Shunhua Xing (Raver), Jacob Hicks (Mercenary), Skyler Matthias (Mercenary), Adam Monrreal (Mercenary), Ethan Seiser (Mercenary), Zachary Rigdon (Mercenary)

Location- David Thayer Theatre

Dates- March 3rd-March 12th 2016

Role: News Anchor-Supporting

Love Me Tender, Che Guevera

By David Freeman

University of Iowa Gallery Series

Directed by Hiram Alexander Orozco

Assistant Director- Alosha Robinson

Scenic Designer-Rich LeMay

Stage Manager- Rachele Ekstrand

Cast: Nate Hua (Diego), Liam Crawford (Houston), Jacob Prall (Pluto)

Location- Theatre B

Dates- Oct 1st- Oct 4th 2015

Role: Santa Lucina-Supporting

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Gill, Nikita. "For Girls Filled With Fire." *Thought Catalog*. 10 December 2015.
Thoughtcatalog.com. 2016.