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“Though She Be But Little She is Fierce”: Playing Hermia on the Virtual Stage

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“Though She Be But Little She is Fierce”: Playing Hermia on the Virtual Stage

by

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A Thesis
Submitted to the Honors College of
The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment
of Honors Requirements

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ABSTRACT

This thesis displays an undergraduate theatre performance student's process for portraying the character Hermia in the University of Southern Mississippi's Spring 2021 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The student completed a detailed script and character analysis, practiced specific vocal and movement techniques, and explored various choices in rehearsals in order to create a profound character that best fit the production.

Keywords: Theatre, Analysis, Vocal, Movement, Performing, Shakespeare

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INTRODUCTION

“Acting is not about being someone different. It’s finding the similarity in what’s different, then finding myself in there” (qtd. in Phoenix). This quote from actress, Meryl Streep, discourages a common misconception concerning acting. Many people think the goal of an actor is simply to become someone else. They are supposed to put themselves aside and step into the shoes of an entirely new person. However, that is an incorrect description of what an actor truly does. If an actor erases themselves completely from their performance, what the audience gets is a character that is untruthful and fake. If I took myself completely out of the role of Hermia from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, I would not be able to give an honest performance. If a performance is not honest, the audience will not be able to truly connect with the characters. It is the real-life experiences of an actor and how those experiences relate to the character they are portraying that makes their performance so unique and truthful. Every interpretation of a character is specific to the actor portraying them because every actor who portrays this character is seeing the character through their own eyes and with their own life experiences in mind. The question for actors is how do we find an understanding between our similarities and differences with a character in order to create an honest performance? The answer comes in the form of research. Through research, an actor is able to recognize and analyze the differences between ourselves and the character we are portraying. Research also helps us to find the similarities that may not seem as clear from simply reading the script. There are many ways an actor conducts this research, such as playwright and time period research, script and character analysis, and vocal and

movement technique investigation. This research creates a foundation for the actor, which they can then use to shape and build their character.

The play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was chosen for the University of Southern Mississippi's (USM) Spring 2021 season partly because it was what the world needed at the time. One of the primary themes of this show is the power of dreams and imagination. In a world that is plagued by the uncertainty revolving around COVID-19, a play that celebrates joy and love can have a significant impact on the people watching it. The play showcases how even through trial and uncertainty, love and happiness always persist. The show ran for four performances from April 15-18, 2021. As a junior Honors College student and theatre major (BFA in performance), my role in this production was not only to portray Hermia, but also to create a well-rounded character that supported the ideals of the show. This thesis provides my research and process on how I was able to combine my life and the imagined life of Hermia into a portrayal of the character that was honest and real. It contains elements of my research such as background research, analysis, technique application, and reflections on the rehearsal process and performances. It also examines how I was able to take a character written for a play in the 16th century and make her relatable to an audience watching it today.

CHAPTER I: RESEARCH

Authorship and Elizabethan Era

Comprehending the life of Shakespeare and what influenced him was essential to my understanding of the play. The first time I read the play, I kept coming back to the same question: “Why did Shakespeare write this?” By understanding why an author wrote a play, an actor or reader is able to better understand its importance, both overall and in the details. Two main elements of Shakespeare’s life that most influenced my portrayal of Hermia were the societal elements of when Shakespeare was writing and the way Shakespeare portrayed women in his literature. Understanding what was happening in Shakespeare’s world while he was writing allowed me to get a better perception of why this play and this character were important to Shakespeare. It helped me to discover why certain events happened in the show (especially events that would make no sense in today’s society) and why these events were so important to my specific character. The main elements of Shakespeare’s world that influenced him and my character were the importance of royalty/social class, the acceptance of the supernatural world, and the views of marriage. It is also important for me to look at how Shakespeare portrayed women in his literature, especially because it was vastly different from how women were often viewed in his society.

There is a lot of mystery surrounding the life of William Shakespeare, and this mystery begins at his birth. Though the specifics of Shakespeare’s birth are unknown, what is known is that he was born sometime in April of 1564. There is no record of Shakespeare’s actual birthday, but there is record of his baptism on April 26, 1564. His mother, Mary Arden, was the daughter of a well-established and significant landowning

family. His father, John Shakespeare, was a master of many trades and prominent member of council (Clemen vii). Being the eldest son of eight children, third eldest overall, and a member of an already respectable middle-class family, it is reasonable to assume that Shakespeare was able to receive a quality education. Elizabethan curriculum at this time emphasized Latin, particularly literature. Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway in November of 1582 and they had three children (Clemen viii). The first known record of publication of Shakespeare is from 1592, but it is believed that he had been writing before then. He wrote over one hundred poems and over thirty plays before his death on April 23, 1616 (Clemen x). Shakespeare wrote *A Midsummer Night's Dream* somewhere between 1595 and 1596, putting it in the early to middle stages of his writing career. The play was first published in 1600 but is believed to have been performed several times before then (Clemen xi). Since so much of Shakespeare's life is unclear, there is a great parallel between mystery in Shakespeare's actual life and the use of mystery in many of his plays, including *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. We may never know the absolute truth about Shakespeare, but we do know a lot about the time his plays were written.

Shakespeare was writing primarily during the Elizabethan era. During this era, many people found joy in watching art, as it provided a break from their daily lives. This desire for theatre life allowed for an awakening of the dramatic imagination. At the time Shakespeare was writing, the most important audience would be the upper middle class, as they were the ones who were funding the performances. Shakespeare was part of a company called the Lord Chamberlain's Men, which was an acting company funded by the Lord Chamberlain. The Lord Chamberlain was the person in charge of court

entertainments (“The Lord Chamberlain’s Men”). Upper-class audiences typically preferred romance and comedies, and if the upper-class liked it, then it was almost certain the rest of the audience would. Shakespeare knew this and used the importance of the royalty and upper-class audience in much of his writing. In *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Shakespeare uses the royal characters of Theseus, Hippolyta, Oberon, and Titania to both display the importance of royalty at that time and to appease his upper-class audience by giving them characters to whom they could relate. Many of Shakespeare’s characters (especially the royal ones) were influenced by characters from other pieces of literature that Shakespeare had read, which showcases how impactful Shakespeare’s education was on his writing. It is clear Shakespeare was using the world in which he was writing as inspiration. As one scholar points out, “the Peter Quince play has something of the relation to the nuptials of Theseus that Shakespeare’s play would have had to whatever occasion it was used for” (Frye 490). If Shakespeare included the importance of royalty in his writing (whether out of desire or out of necessity), it can be determined that other parts of his writing were inspired by the world in which he was writing as well.

Along with the importance of the upper-class, the belief in the supernatural was strong in Shakespeare’s culture. Many people believe Shakespeare used elements of the supernatural simply to advance the plot. What is important to remember about supernatural elements in Shakespeare’s writing is that the people of the Elizabethan era believed in the supernatural. This changed the entire dynamic of the fairies completely for me. The fairy world was not simply some dream or simple way to further the plot. If the people watching Shakespeare’s play believed in fairies, then it stands to reason that Hermia would have believed as well. Elizabethan people told many stories of the fairy

world, stories which inspired Shakespeare, as he based the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* off well-known stories of the fairy world. Fairies interacting and meddling with the life of humans would be a more common and rational thought for someone from Shakespeare's audience. While audiences today look at the supernatural elements of Shakespeare's plays as dreams or imagination, Shakespeare's audience and characters would have looked at them and thought of the warnings and stories they had been told of the fairy world (Hewitt 1-5).

When I realized just how much Shakespeare's time period influenced his writing, I began to look into what elements of his time period influenced how he created Hermia. The first element of Shakespeare's culture that might have had an impact on the writing of Hermia was the views of marriage during Shakespeare's lifetime. In the Elizabethan age, women were expected to marry, as they really had no other option. The idea of women working was incredibly taboo. Marriage was usually arranged by the families and was set up in a way where typically both families prospered from the engagement (Alchin). Women were essentially men's property. They were first forced to accept the man their father decided they would marry and then they were forced to obey their husband in every way. Refusal of marriage was considered disobedience to religion and was even sometimes considered a crime. Additionally, some women were considered witches if they did not marry, which provides another example of the Elizabethan era's fascination with the supernatural (Alchin). Hermia's marriage situation in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is almost identical to one a young woman might have found herself in during the Elizabethan era. She is being forced into a marriage she has no desire to be in and is accused of breaking the law for trying to make her own decisions. Having to

choose between spending her life as a servant to the church or losing her life altogether is a decision a young Elizabethan woman might have actually faced.

After looking at how women in Shakespeare's time were viewed, I found it incredibly interesting that he chose to portray Hermia, and several of the other female characters, the way he did. Hermia's strength and courage to go against male authority is one of her most important qualities. While her strength is shown throughout the script itself, an essay within the script we are using provides remarkable information to back up the role Shakespeare gives women in his comedies, especially *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Linda Bamber explains how the women in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (and many other comedies of Shakespeare's) go from being the shrew to the comic heroine. Bamber explains,

the development of the feminine from the shrew to the comic heroine indicates a certain consciousness on the author's part of sexual politics; and it indicates a desire, at least, to create conditions of sexual equality within the drama even while reflecting the unequal conditions of men and women in the society at large.
(Bamber 131)

Hermia is the first female character in the play to defy the status quo of men being the authority figure and automatically knowing better than women. She does not try to act as a man after this defiance, but instead accepts the challenge ahead of her and decides to handle it her own way. Shakespeare blatantly decided to write Hermia this way, which means he at least had some political or social ideas of how women should be treated during this time. He combined what was expected of women with what he personally thought of women to create the story of Hermia.

Setting

My research only started with Shakespeare and his time period. There was another period I needed to understand in order to fully create my portrayal of Hermia. That period was the setting of our production of the play. While we decided that the time period our production would be set in was essentially time less, we took a lot of inspiration from 1890s Athens (specifically 1897). By 1897, Greece was an independent state and Athens was the capital of the Greek kingdom (Behrends and Kohlrausch 130). Greece had been going through an extreme period of growth and development since the 1830s. Greece trying to find its own place in the world led to a focus on development in architecture and infrastructure (Behrends and Kohlrausch 133). Another important event that happened right before our play is set was Greece hosting the first international modern Olympics. This had a major impact on Greece, as the games, “succeeded in placing modern Greece back on the pedestal of antiquity – a reimagined antiquity to be sure, a product of the waning nineteenth century” (Behrends and Kohlrausch 138). This knowledge of the time period influences much of how my character acts and thinks. The country she is in is currently full of pride and changes, which impacts her desire to see change in her own circumstances and find pride within herself.

The life for women during this period was slightly different from that of when Shakespeare was writing, but not by too much. Just before 1890 in Greece, the middle-class women were beaming with hope there would be more acceptance for them. There was the so called “first wave” of the women’s movement, in which middle class women led the charge in demanding equality and better treatment for women. While this hope

was shattered by bankruptcy in the 1880s, the desire was still there. (Stamiris). Unlike the Elizabethan era, women were allowed some education, primarily in basic literature and the arts. While they were primarily trained in how to run a home, they at least now had some form of basic education (Stamiris). Women were still expected to marry and listen to their husbands. However, that fire for freedom never left, it was just delayed. Women in Greece did not receive the right to vote until 1952, but that right may never have been achieved without the initial desire for equality (Stamiris). This first wave of hope for women would definitely have impacted Hermia. She is a strong, independent woman who would have fully supported the push for equality. The first time the audience sees Hermia, she is speaking against unjust treatment she is receiving just because she is a woman. The first wave of hope combined with a basic knowledge of literature would be more than enough to persuade Hermia to stand up for herself. Hermia is knowledgeable about the world around her, even if that knowledge only came from basic literature or from what she has seen with her own eyes. She knows there is a chance for her to be more and to live the life she desires because of what she would have seen if she grew up in this time.

Themes and Current Challenges

Since we talked about how we did not want to place the show in a specific time period but instead make it timeless, I feel it is important for me to describe the state of the world when we performed the show and how that influenced my portrayal of Hermia. At the time we performed this production, the world was still in the midst of a global pandemic. COVID-19 had slowed down and there were several vaccinations that were

now available, but the world was still not ready to go back to what we considered normal. We knew before the show was even cast that it would be done almost entirely virtually. I will explain in more detail how this process and the pods worked in a later chapter. Essentially, our rehearsals would take place over Zoom and our performance would be livestreamed with each actor being in their own space (or pod) until the final act. This meant that until the final act of the show, the actors were not able to see their partner while they were performing. Not only were we dealing with the normal challenges that can come with doing a Shakespeare show, but now we were also dealing with the challenges of technology and not being able to see the person to whom we were talking. While it was nice to have one act where we were all in the same space, it was terrifying to think of how the other four acts would look and feel. Instead of focusing on elements of the production I could not control, I focused on elements of the show that impacted my character, such as the themes of the show. I wanted to see how these themes could shape my character and make her relatable to a 21st century audience.

It is impossible to list only one theme of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. We talked about several themes as a company in relation to our production of the show. The three themes that impacted my portrayal of Hermia the most were the power of the imagination, the power of dreams, and the power of love. The most important theme in my opinion is the power of imagination. This show is full of imagination, both for the characters and the audience. Imagination is the theme that encompasses all the other themes of the show. When talking about the themes of the show, our director encouraged us to turn to a book called *The Meaning of Shakespeare, Volume One*. In this book, the author states, "Dream, play, love, art. Surely it is no coincidence that these four

‘subjects’ which are here interwoven with such consummate polyphony represent the four main aspects under which imagination reveals itself in human life” (Goddard 78). In a world filled with fear and uncertainty, there is a tendency for people to turn to their imagination to escape the world they are living in and instead create the world they desire. They draw upon their imagination to bring the happiness and joy their current world may not be able to provide at the time. One of the main roles of theatre is to provide an escape from the outside world through the power of imagination. By doing this play that relies so much on dramatic and human imagination, we are encouraging our audience to imagine. Imagination influences everything we do. So often we forget about our imagination or think that it makes us childish; when instead, it is the very thing that propels us forward. If Hermia had not been able to imagine a life with Lysander, she never would have tried to run away with him. It is only because she believed in the power of imagination that she was able to go after her desires.

Another important theme that goes hand in hand with imagination is the power of dreams. Our dreams are what give us hope; and in a time when hope seems so scarce, it is important to show that hope is still there in our dreams. This show is called *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, so there has to be some importance in the use of dreams. Most of the action of the play occurs at night, along with most of the complications occurring while people are dreaming. Hermia is definitely someone who believes in the power of dreams. Combine this belief in dreams with her strength to defy the status quo, and it is no wonder she decides to pursue the life she dreams about. Hermia dreams of a life with Lysander. She dreams of a life where she can be her own person. She dreams of a life where she can make her own decisions. However, she does not just dream, she actually

goes after what she dreams. Performing in a show that encourages people to follow their dreams in a time where dreams are often forgotten is incredibly motivating.

The final theme that is incredibly important to my character in particular is the power of love. Every decision Hermia makes is based on love. Hermia first decides to run off with Lysander because the love she has for him is so true. Hermia still pursues Lysander after he insults and denies his love for her because she loves him and knows deep down, he still loves her. She stands up to the Duke not only out of love for Lysander, but also out of love for herself and her beliefs. Everything she does comes back to love. Not only does this show highlight the importance of love, but also the necessity of it. Love is a necessity in today's world now more than ever. In times such as these when there is so much pain and fear, it is necessary that we turn to those we love for protection and comfort. We find hope and joy in the people we love. Hermia does the same thing. Her world is turned upside down when the Duke gives her the choice of a life of abstinence or death. In order to cope with this drastic change in her life, Hermia turns to the one thing she can trust: love. By combining the importance of imagination, dreams, and love, I am able to understand what drives Hermia.

CHAPTER II: SCRIPT ANALYSIS

After reading the script a couple of times and completing my preliminary research on the playwright and time period, my next step is to complete a detailed script analysis. My script analysis is made up of two techniques. The first technique is taken from Michael Shurtleff's book, *Audition*. In this book, Shurtleff introduces twelve guideposts that are used to help an actor specify choices, find the importance of a scene, and create a deeper connection to the character and the play overall. This technique is so helpful to me especially for lines that seem unimportant at first glance. With these guideposts in mind, I can have a better idea of why my character is saying the things they are. Not only are these guideposts helpful for scenes when my character is speaking, they are also helpful for scenes when my character is primarily listening. They help me to figure out why it is important for my character to be in the conversation even if she is only listening. What is my character gaining from this conversation? Why is this important to me and my journey? The following is a short summary of each of the guideposts:

Guidepost #1: Relationship

According to Shurtleff, the most important part of acting is the relationships (33). What is my relationship with the other people in the scene? This is both in a literal sense (e.g., mother, sister, boyfriend, best friend, etc.) and in a deeper sense (e.g., caretaker, enemy, protector, etc.). Along with the literal relationship, it is important to highlight the feelings a character has towards their relationships. Do I enjoy this relationship or is something missing? Where is the love in this relationship? How I actually feel about the relationship is as important, if not more important, than the type of relationship itself.

Guidepost #2: Conflict

What am I fighting for? There has to be some motivation for an actor in order to make an active choice in how to portray a scene. Shurtleff claims that conflict is the primary driving force in any production (42). In order to heighten and find this conflict, an actor can ask themselves questions such as: Who is in my way of what I'm fighting for? How do I fight for what I want? What is also important is finding different ways to fight. This variety of ways to get what I want is called actions. These actions are verbs that help the actor activate their fight. Some examples of actions are to defy, to adore, and to scold.

Guidepost #3: Moment Before

There is always something that happens before a scene starts. Shurtleff calls this the moment before (67). What happened just before this scene started that made me need to enter right now? Where am I at in my journey?

Guidepost #4: Humor

According to Shurtleff, humor is not about being funny (74). Instead, it is about finding those moments despite the absurdities of life that make you want to keep going. It is finding the joy in the midst of sorrow. There is always humor in life, even during the darkest times. In fact, the need for humor is often greater in those darker moments.

Guidepost #5: Opposites

Life is full of opposites and the theatre is no different. In life, humans are complex individuals who can experience both hate and love, happiness and despair. In theatre, characters also have this array of opposing emotions. If there is a scene of characters professing their hate for one another, there is bound to also be some love in it as well. This extremity of emotions is what creates conflict, which Shurtleff describes is why opposites are what an audience finds so entertaining (77). It provides variety, which provides conflict, which provides drama, which provides interest.

Guidepost #6: Discoveries

What is new? There is always something new in a scene, even if it has been done over and over again. There is always something that can be discovered. Shurtleff states that these discoveries are what drive the action (81). Actions are motivated by the decisions that are being made. A discovery is made and an action is the response to this discovery. Discoveries can come from something said or something done. This is why it is so important to be attentive in a scene. If you miss a discovery, you have missed the action.

Guidepost #7: Communication and Competition

Communication is key. It is not important enough for you to feel something on the inside, your partner must understand what you are feeling. Shurtleff describes communication as involving give and take (87). The sender of a message must make sure it is clear and make sure the receiver obtained it. On the other hand, the receiver must make sure they understand the message and make it known they obtained the message. Is

what I am saying having an impact on my partner? Communication deals primarily with the idea of changing the person you are talking to out of understanding (what we would consider in everyday life to be a conversation) while competition is more along the lines of I am right and you are wrong so you should change (what we would consider in everyday life to be an argument). What makes a performance so interesting is the actor's need to compete. You have to change your partner. It is your job to change them.

Guidepost #8: Importance

This is not everyday life. The stakes have to be high in order for it to be entertaining. According to Shurtleff, the stakes can be raised more when you find yourself in the scene (92). Personalize the scene so that you can see where the importance lies. Find the unusual in a scene and heighten it. Everything must be at the maximum importance. If it does not seem important, make it important.

Guidepost #9: Find the Events

An event is what happens in a play and these events create change. Change creates action and interest for the audience. Shurtleff makes it clear that a play cannot stand still (105). What is different in this scene? What has changed? Move forward.

Guidepost #10: Place

Where are you? How do you feel about where you are? Is this somewhere I feel comfortable or am I out of my element? What is around me that can impact what I want?

The actual physical place itself is only half the importance according to Shurtleff (114). The rest of the importance comes from how this place impacts me.

Guidepost #11: Game Playing and Role Playing

Taking on a role is sincere work. It is not a way of escaping reality but is instead a way of dealing with it. What game am I playing in this moment and what role am I taking on to play it? Your role impacts how you interact with the people around you and the tactics you use to get what you want according to Shurtleff (117). For example, the way an adult asks their child an intense question is different from how they would ask another adult an intense question.

Guidepost #12: Mystery and Secret

There is always something we do not know about another person, no matter how deep our relationship is with them. Shurtleff challenges the actor to create something that only you know (131). None of the other characters know it. There is something about you that is so important, you refuse to tell anyone else.

These guideposts can be applied anywhere in a script. The other technique that I use in my script analysis was created by Konstantin Stanislavski. This method involved dividing a scene and the use of objectives and tactics. The script can be divided into three sections. The first are called French scenes. These scenes occur whenever a character enters or exits. The second is called units. A unit is when there is a major shift in conversation. The third is called beats. Beats are smaller shifts within a unit and usually

occur with a change of action. In my script analysis, French scenes are represented with three lines, units with two lines, and beats with one line. There is also the use of objectives and tactics. Objectives are the overall goals or intentions, and tactics are the actions used to get this objective. In my script analysis, the objectives are upper-case, and the tactics are written underneath them.

In this section, I will provide part of my own script analysis. Something that I noticed when doing my script analysis for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is how Hermia's tactics tend to be more "masculine" in nature when she is not alone with Lysander. However, when she is alone with Lysander or is dealing with Lysander in general, her tactics are more "feminine" in nature. For me, this showed just how open, vulnerable, and true she is willing to be with Lysander. She is willing to lay down her guard and be herself because of their love. By viewing these images, you will see the lines breaking up my script (as I mentioned when talking about the Stanislavski method). You will also see my objectives and tactics listed on the sides of the page. Finally, you will see moments where I found use of guideposts squared throughout the script.

6 A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM 1.1.

Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.^o
Thrice-blessèd they that master so their blood,
75 To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
But earthlier happy is the rose distilled,^o
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.

80 **Hermia**, So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
Ere I will yield my virgin patent^o up
Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

Theseus. Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon—

85 The sealing day betwixt my love and me,
For everlasting bond of fellowship—
Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father's will,
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would,
Or on Diana's altar to protest
90 For aye austerity and single life.

Demetrius. Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander,
yield
Thy crazèd title^o to my certain right.

Lysander. You have her father's love, Demetrius;
Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.

95 *Egeus*. Scornful Lysander! True, he hath my love,
And what is mine my love shall render him.
And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do estate unto^o Demetrius.

100 *Lysander*. I am, my lord, as well derived as he,
As well possessed;^o my love is more than his;
My fortunes every way as fairly ranked
(If not with vantage^o) as Demetrius';
And, which is more than all these boasts can be,

73 moon i.e., Diana, goddess of chastity 76 distilled made into perfumes 80 patent privilege 92 crazèd title flawed claim 98 estate unto settle upon 100 As well possessed as rich 102 If not with vantage if not better

PRESSURE
Implore,
Press

role-play

Conflict

1.1. A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM 7

I am beloved of beauteous Hermia.
Why should not I then prosecute my right?
105 Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,^o
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
Upon this spotted^o and inconstant man. 110

Theseus. I must confess that I have heard so much,
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof.

But, being overfull of self-affairs,
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;
And come, Egeus. You shall go with me;
I have some private schooling for you both.
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
To fit your fancies to your father's will;
Or else the law of Athens yields you up—
Which by no means we may extenuate— 120
To death, or to a vow of single life.
Come, my Hippolyta. What cheer, my love?
Demetrius and Egeus, go along.
[Must employ you in some business
Against^o our nuptial, and confer with you
Of something nearly^o that concerns yourselves.] 125

Egeus. With duty and desire we follow you.

Exeunt [all but Lysander and Hermia].

Lysander. How now, my love! Why is your cheek so pale?
How chance^o the roses there do fade so fast?

130 **Hermia**, Belike^o for want of rain, which I could well
[Beteem^o them from the tempest of my eyes.]

Lysander. Ay me! For aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,

106 to his head in his teeth 110 spotted i.e., morally stained 125 Against in preparation for 126 nearly closely 129 How chance how does it come that 130 Belike perhaps 131 Beteem bring forth

moment before

HUG
Embrace,
Hold

8 A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM 1.1.

The course of true love never did run smooth; *Humor*
135 But, either it was different in blood—

Hermia. O cross! Too-high-to-be-enthralled-to-low!

Lysander. Or else misgraffed° in respect of years—

Hermia. O spite! Too-old-to-be-engaged-to-young!

Lysander. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends—

140 *Hermia.* O hell! To choose love by another's eyes!

Lysander. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentary° as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,
145 Brief as the lightning in the collied° night,
That, in a spleen,° unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say "Behold!"
The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
So quick bright things come to confusion.

150 *Hermia.* If then true lovers have been ever crossed,
It stands as an edict in destiny;

Then let us teach our trial-patience,° *relationship*

Because it is a customary cross;

155 As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,
Wishes and tears, poor Fancy's° followers.

Lysander. A good persuasion.° Therefore, hear me,
Hermia.

I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child.
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues,
And she respects me as her only son.

160 There, gentle *Hermia*, may I marry thee,
And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me, then,

137 misgraffed ill matched, misgraffed 143 momentary momentary,
passing 145 collied blackened 146 spleen flash 152 teach our
trial patience i.e., teach ourselves to be patient 155 Fancy's Love's
156 persuasion principle

1.1. A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM 9

Steal forth thy father's house tomorrow night;
And in the wood, a league without the town,
165 Where I did meet thee once with *Helena*,
To do observance to a morn of May,
There will I stay for thee.

Hermia. My good *Lysander*!

I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,
By his best arrow with the golden head,
170 By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
And by that fire which burned the Carthage
queen,

When the false Trojan under sail was seen,
By all the vows that ever men have broke,
175 In number more than ever women spoke,
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
Tomorrow truly will I meet with thee.

Lysander. Keep promise, love. Look, here comes
Helena.

Enter *Helena*.

Hermia. God speed fair *Helena*! Whither away? 180

Helena. Call you me fair? That fair again unsay.
Demetrius loves your fair.° O happy fair!
Your eyes are lodestars,° and your tongue's sweet
air°
More tunable than lark to shepherd's ear,
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear. 185
Sickness is catching. O, were favor° so,
Yours would I catch, fair *Hermia*, ere I go;
My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,

170 arrow with the golden head (Cupid's gold-headed arrows caused
love, the leaden ones dislike) 173 Carthage queen Dido (who
burned herself on a funeral pyre when the Trojan Aeneas left her)
182 fair beauty 183 lodestars guiding stars 183 air music
186 favor looks

ENTERTAIN
Delight,
Host

ENCOURAGE
enhearten
motivate

REASSURE
Assure,
Comfort,
Hearten

Secret

ACKNOWLEDGE
Address,
Greet

10 A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM 1.1.
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.

190 Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,^o
The rest I'd give to be to you translated.^o
O, teach me how you look, and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart!

Hermia. I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

Helena. O that your frowns would teach my smiles
such skill!

Hermia. I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

Helena. O that my prayers could such affection move!

Hermia. The more I hate, the more he follows me.

Helena. The more I love, the more he hateth me.

200 *Hermia.* His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

Helena. None, but your beauty: would that fault were mine!

Hermia. Take comfort. He no more shall see my face;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.

205 ~~Before the time I did Lysander see,~~
Seemed Athens as a paradise to me,
O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,
That he hath turned a heaven unto a hell!

Lysander. Helen, to you our minds we will unfold.
Tomorrow night, when Phoebe^o doth behold
210 Her silver visage in the wat'ry glass,
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,
A time that lovers' flights doth still^o conceal,
Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

215 *Hermia.* And in the wood, where often you and I
Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet.

190 bated excepted 191 translated transformed 209 Phoebe the moon 212 still always

1.1. A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM 11

And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and stranger companies.^o
Farewell, sweet playfellow, I pray thou for us;
220 And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!
Keep word, Lysander. We must starve our sight
From lovers' food till tomorrow deep midnight.

Lysander. I will, my Hermia. *Exit Hermia.*

Helena, adieu.

As you on him, Demetrius dote on you!

Exit Lysander.

Helena. How happy some o'er other some^o can be!

Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
He will not know what all but he do know.
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
230 So I, admiring of his qualities.

Things base and vile, holding no quantity,^o
Love can transpose to form and dignity.
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,
And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.

235 Nor hath Love's mind of any judgment taste;
Wings, and no eyes, figure^o unheedy haste:
And therefore is Love said to be a child,
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.

240 As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,
So the boy Love is perjured everywhere.
For ere Demetrius looked on Hermia's eyne,^o
He hailed down oaths that he was only mine;
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
245 So he dissolved, and show'rs of oaths did melt.

I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight.
Then to the wood will he tomorrow night
Pursue her; and for this intelligence^o

219 stranger companies the company of strangers 226 some o'er other some some in comparison with others 232 holding no quantity having no proportion (therefore unattractive) 237 figure symbolize 242 eyne eyes 248 intelligence piece of news

ASSURE
Convince,
Persuade

COMFORT
Calm

EXCITE
Astonish,
Uplift

CHAPTER III: CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Upon completing my script analysis, I then begin looking deeper into the character to make them well-rounded through character analysis. While script analysis and character analysis can seem very similar, the purpose of the two analyses are very different. Script analysis is focused on a character's intentions and tactics. It helps an actor to understand why an actor says or does something. Character analysis on the other hand focuses on the actual building of the person. It helps with figuring out how the character holds themselves or the way they speak to others. Script analysis is why a character does something and character analysis is how a character does something. The technique that I use for my character analysis was created by Uta Hagen. Hagen's technique involves answering nine questions. What is most important about these questions is to answer them with as much detail as possible in order to have a strong foundation to rely on. Hagen's questions are as follows:

- Who am I? – This question explores detailed aspects of the character including name, age, opinions, beliefs, physical traits, education, and fears.
- What time is it? – This question investigates the day, month, year, and time along with why these are significant to the story.
- Where am I? – This question examines the city, state, country, room, or any other specific details of where a scene takes place.
- What surrounds me? – This question inspects what is happening in the world around the character, including objects, people, and weather.

- What are the given circumstances? – This question considers the past (what has already happened), the present (what is happening now) and the future (what is going to happen).
- What are my relationships? – This question observes relationships I have with other characters in an emotional sense.
- What do I want? – This question studies what I want and how it changes over the production.
- What is in my way? – This question assesses the obstacles that are in the way of what my overall objective is.
- What do I do to get what I want? – This question considers what actions and tactics I use to get my overall objective.

Uta Hagen’s nine questions provide a strong basis for actors to begin their preparation (Uta Hagen 152-191). I also include a few personal touches to my character analysis, including a CDAS, an “in search of” statement, a secret, and a list of strengths and weaknesses. A CDAS is a Character Dramatic Action Statement, which is a statement of essential action for the character throughout the entire play. The statement is typically written in the form of a “to do” statement, such as “to choose happiness.” While the stakes and motivation of a character can change, this statement is of the essential action of the character and does not change. This statement is what the character goes back to constantly throughout the show. Everything that character does is in an effort to complete the CDAS. An “in search of” statement is essentially a statement related to the seven chakras (main energy centers) and which one my character is in search of. The first chakra is the crown (very top of the head) and represents a search for higher power. The

second chakra is the head and represents a search for knowledge. The third chakra is the throat and represents a search for communication. The fourth chakra is the heart and represents a search for love. The fifth chakra is the stomach and represents a search for power. The sixth chakra is the groin and represents a search for sex. The final chakra is the root (just below the groin) and represents a search for survival.

These seven chakras and the “in search of” statement can also help with the beginning of physical work as it relates to where the core strength of the character is found. Using chakras allows an actor to utilize the body, mind, and energy in order to think in different perspectives (Harba). The secret that I list in my character analysis has to do with the guideposts from the previous chapter. It is something that I do not tell the other performers in the production. Finally, the strengths and weaknesses that I list are the primary strengths and weaknesses that I can play on and come back to throughout the production.

Final Analysis

Show: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Character: Hermia

Themes most important to my character: Power of love, imagination, and dreams

CDAS: to fight for the life I dream about

In search of: Survival (including the survival of love) and power

Strengths: logical decisions, connecting with others, innovative planning, inspirational, openly shares thoughts and opinions

Weaknesses: impatient, difficulty listening to authority

Secret: Lysander and I have spoken of marriage numerous times. No one knows the real reason I have waited to marry Lysander, even though he has asked me before now, is because I really want my family (especially my mother) at the wedding. I only said yes this time because I truly saw no other way.

Who am I?

My name is Hermia. I was born and raised in the city of Athens. I am almost sixteen years old, but people tell me that I am very mature for my age. I am short for my age, but that does not hinder me. I am incredibly strong willed and determined and I know strength is measured in more ways than just size. My mother's name is Egea. My father is almost always out of town on work, so we rarely see him. I have grown up around the idea of following tradition and I have always hated it. I want to live a life on my own and make decisions about my own happiness. I have an amazing friend named Helena that I share most of my secrets with. I have the love of my life, Lysander, who is the only person I feel I can truly be myself around. My truest fear is that I will never be able to live my own life and that I will lose the life I have dreamed of, most importantly that I will lose Lysander. I fear I will always be controlled and that I will never be able to be the person I truly am. I am a well-rounded young lady. I love learning things, so even once my education ended, I did everything I could to continue to learn more about the world around me. I absolutely love nature and the idea of magic that surrounds it. I feel that beauty on the inside is more important than beauty on the outside. I know the town often talks of my beauty, but I truly believe and hope that they care most about my inner

beauty than outer. I also have a very youthful energy in the way that I love and the way that I explore my surroundings.

What time is it?

The play happens within three days in late April/early May. These days are important because May 1st is May Day, which explains the highlight on celebration throughout the play.

Act 1 – Scene 1: late morning April 29

Act 2 – Scene 2: beginning of sunset the next day April 30

Act 3 – Scene 2: late in the night April 30

Act 4 – Scene 1: dawn the next day May 1

Act 5 – Scene 1: late in the evening after the wedding May 1

Where am I?

Act 1 - Scene 1: The Palace of Theseus

Act 2 – Scene 2: Athens Woods

Act 3 – Scene 2: Athens Woods

Act 4 – Scene 1: Athens Woods

Act 5 – Scene 1: The Palace of Theseus

Overall Setting: Athens in a time period that is not specific but is inspired by 1897

What surrounds me?

- A society who believes I am my parents' property. It does not matter what I wish, it only matters what my parents want, and the law agrees.
- My love, Lysander, and the only person I feel comfortable being myself around.
- A friend in love with my suitor (a person I would gladly give up).
- A woods full of magical creatures and hope. It is the only thing separating me from a world that would allow me to be the person I truly want to be and live the life I truly want.
- A1S1: I am surrounded by the most beautiful gardens I have ever seen. If I was not so concerned with what my mother was about to talk to Theseus about, I would be surveying the garden. I have seen the gardens from afar but have never been there in person. There are nice benches to sit on and enjoy the beauty of the garden. The weather is absolutely beautiful, not a cloud in the sky and a nice breeze. I can see the palace from the garden, and it is by far the most extravagant building in our city.
- A2S2: I am surrounded by a beautiful forest at the very beginning of dusk. It is starting to get dark, but I can still see where I am going with ease. The forest to most can feel very plain but to me it is a place I am very fond of and have spent a lot of time in. It is colder than it was earlier, but not so cold that it is unbearable.
- A3S2: The forest is now very dark and feels more like a place I do not know. There is so much confusion happening, and I am in a part of the forest that I am not familiar with. The wind blows colder and there is a fog throughout the forest that is clouding my vision and my thoughts.
- A4S1: I am still in a part of the forest I am not quite familiar with, however, it is early in the morning so I can see more clearly. I have just been awoken surprisingly by

the Duke, Hippolyta, my mother, and the Duke's hunting party. The weather is a little warmer and the fog has lifted.

- A5S1: I am in another outdoor part of the palace that has been decorated for the wedding festivities. There are lights everywhere and a beautiful archway decorated with flowers. The moon is clearly visible over the palace and there is a nice breeze providing comfort once again.

What are the given circumstances?

The given circumstances are that I am in love with Lysander, but my mother would rather me marry Demetrius for financial gain. I am willing to go against my mother's wishes, but she uses the law of Athens and the Duke against me. I decide to run away with Lysander in order to pursue the life I dream for myself. We run into a lot of mishaps in the woods, but at the end of the day, I am willing to go through anything if it means I get the chance to live the life I desire for myself and Lysander.

What are my relationships?

Lysander: I am whole-heartedly in love with Lysander. He is the only person I truly feel comfortable around. He knows all of my secrets and I feel that I am able to be vulnerable around him. I trust him with my life and would rather die than live without him. I find inspiration in him. He brings out the best parts of me and I feel as if we are soulmates.

Helena: Helena has been my best friend since we were little. I have shared many secrets with her, but I do not share as much as I tell Lysander. She speaks of my beauty, but I

find her more beautiful than myself. I spent so much time with Helena before I met Lysander and I truly do think of her as a sister.

Demetrius: Demetrius is my suitor. I do not hate Demetrius, but I do not love him. I feel that he stands for everything I am against. He cares more about himself, tradition, and the “deal” between our families than about me. I also know his past with Helena and cannot forgive him for hurting her.

Theseus: Theseus is the Duke of Athens. I respect him as the ruler of our city, but I do not worship him. I do not think my life should be put in his hands, or in anyone’s hands for that matter. I can tell that he wants to help me and feels bad for me. I appreciate his advice and him at least giving me an option, but I had hoped he would use his power to help me.

Hippolyta: I can see how much Theseus loves Hippolyta and I look up to her. I wonder if she was ever put in a similar circumstance that I was. She gives me hope knowing that she got her happy ending.

Egea: Egea is my mother. I do not have the best relationship with her, but I do love her. She thinks she knows what is best for me, but she is too based in tradition to know what I truly need. She is the main reason I hate tradition.

Puck: Puck is the mischievous fairy who simultaneously caused my problems in the woods and solved my life’s problem.

Titania, Oberon, and the fairies: I read stories about them as a child and was always fascinated. They are the reason I spent so much time in the woods. I loved everything about them and have always wondered if I would ever see them. I desire to live as free of a life as they do.

Bottom and the performers: They are the entertainment after our wedding. They are not the best performers, but I find joy in them and the story they are telling.

What do I want?

I want to make my own decisions. I want to love who I love. I want to live a life that I choose. I want to be seen as more than my parents' property. I want to marry Lysander and have a life where I can be myself.

What is in my way?

My mother and the law are keeping me from marrying Lysander. The society I live in keeps me from making my own decisions. Throughout our journey in the forest, Demetrius and the fairies (primarily Puck) keep complicating things.

What do I do to get what I want?

I run away with Lysander. I take a chance and put my life on the line in order to get the life I want. I use my own strength to go after the life I have dreamed so long about. I will not allow a law to take away the life I desire and the love I have found.

Inspirational Images

A part of my personal character analysis involves finding inspirational images. Since I am a visual learner, these images allow to me have a better understanding of my character's inner thought and emotions. These images often provide me with inspiration

for choices of intentions and tactics. Each image helps me visualize a different aspect of my character, which I will explain underneath.



Figure 1
(Simmons)

Art inspired by the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and my character. This is a direct example of inspiration from the play portrayed in another form of art.



Figure 2
(Cole)

The power and importance of dreams. I believe in my dreams, and I will do whatever it takes to follow them.



Figure 3
(Hultberg)

Beauty in strength. Strength is beauty. Inner beauty is just as beautiful if not more beautiful than outside beauty.



Figure 4
(Aurora)

Women can be anything. They can be strong and have emotions. They can be kind and still have boundaries. They are powerful because they are full of contradictions. I am proud to be a woman.



Figure 5
(Wall)

Love. True love. My love for Lysander is true. We are soulmates. Our love is full of color, imagination, and joy.



Figure 6
(Hughes)

Magic is real. I believe in the fairy world and all the stories I have read. The forrest is their home and they are beautiful.

CHAPTER IV: CREATING A VOCAL AND PHYSICAL LIFE

Vocal Exploration

Along with textual exploration, an actor must also explore how that character fits in their body, both through their voice and through their body. The first exploration I will be discussing is my vocal exploration. The technique that I used in order to create the vocal life of Hermia was Lessac Kinesensic Training. This training by Arthur Lessac studies the voice and its relation to the human body. The voice and the body are connected and by studying vocal life through this frame, an actor is able to gain a complete and almost transcendent approach to the human voice.

There are three primary vocal energies studied through Lessac are buoyancy, potency, and radiancy. Buoyancy is when the body feels as if it were full of oxygen or lighter than air. There are three types of buoyancy: rising buoyancy (feels like a helium balloon), floating buoyancy (feels like a sailboat on a calm sea), and settling-down buoyancy (feels like a leaf gently floating towards the Earth) (Lessac 204). Potency is when the body feels energized and supported, almost like a full body yawn. It provides a feeling of power through expansion, flexibility, and extension (Lessac 205). Radiancy is when the body feels super charged, almost like childhood energy or an internal jitterbug. There is an internal spark creating a vibrant and staccato energy (Lessac 205).

Lessac training not only helps with creating a vocal life for a character, but also with developing a healthy vocal life for a performer. The techniques and energies (NRG) found in this training help with projection, vocal health, and pronunciation, skills vital for a performer to maintain a healthy voice. Lessac teaches what is known as the Vocal Trinity, which consists of Consonant NRG, Tonal NRG, and Structural NRG.

Consonant NRG focuses on exactly what you would think of: consonants. When consonants are lost in communication, speech becomes ineffective and we cannot get the true meaning of what we are trying to say across. By comparing consonants to instruments, an actor is able to form a better understanding and bring a new clarity to their pronunciation (Lessac 69). Tonal NRG focuses on the awareness of the physical sensation of vocal vibrations and using them to our advantage to create a nice tone. The three major resonating areas for this practice are the hard palate at the upper gum ridge (including teeth), the nasal bone (including cheekbones), and the forehead. By combining these three major resonating areas and focusing air that uses a forward facial posture, the Y-buzz and Y+-buzz are produced. This technique is designed to help protect the voice against strain and to help with overall projection (Lessac 124). While consonant NRG focused on consonants, structural NRG focuses on vowels. Structural NRG indicates the mold, shape, and size of the human voice (Lessac 160).

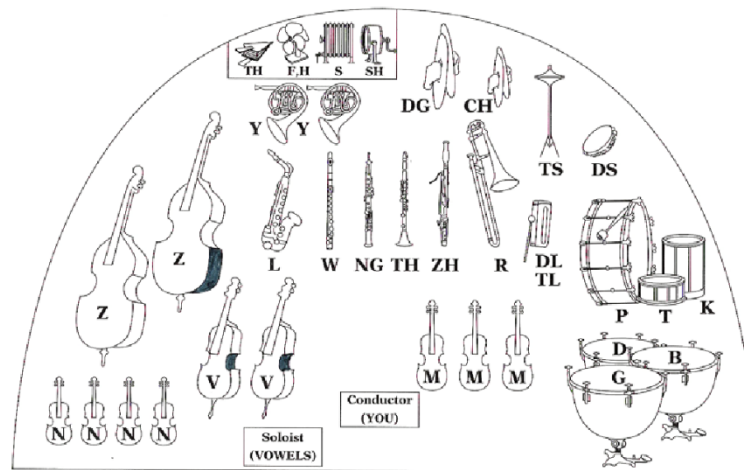


Figure 7
(Lessac 70) – Consonant Orchestra

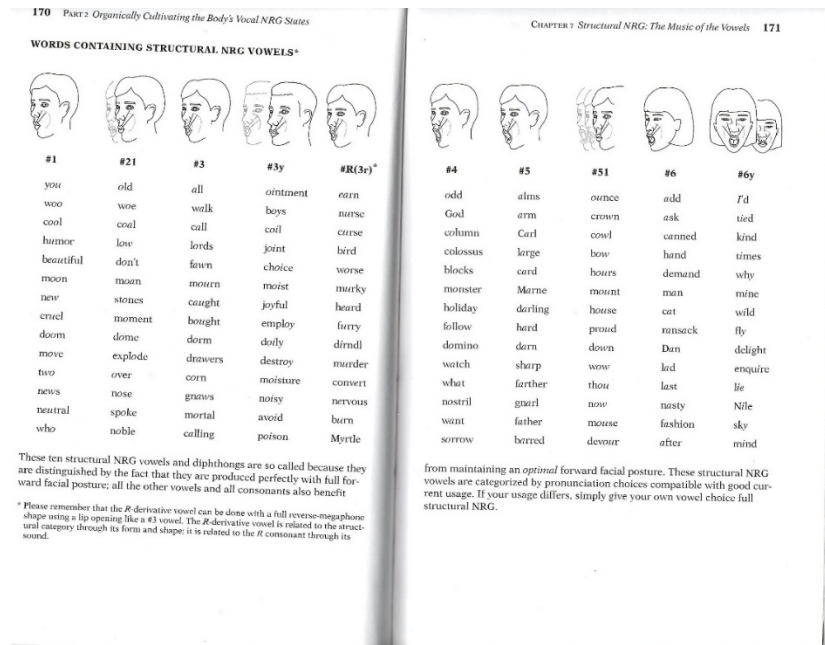


Figure 8
(Lessac 170-171) – Structural NGR

With a healthy understanding of this training and the tools desirable for keeping my voice healthy, I began to explore and create the vocal life of Hermia. By combining this technique, exploration in rehearsals, and interactions with other characters, I began to develop a good grasp of how Hermia used her voice. While I used all three energies, I found that Hermia primarily shifted between potency and radiancy. Potency was used primarily in moments when Hermia was standing up for herself and what she wanted or when she was going against the traditions of society. For example, the first act is full of moments in which I am primarily using potency because this is when Hermia is defying an ancient Athens law and is speaking her mind in front of the Duke and her mother. Potency is used to provide the strength needed behind the voice and the character. Radiancy was the other primary energy I used, and it was mainly found in moments with Lysander. Radiancy was a helpful way of portraying Hermia's youthfulness. While she

has such mature strength, she is still a teenager. By using radiancy, I was able to portray that sense of childlike wonder and youthful energy. Even in moments of anger with Lysander and Helena, radiancy was used to create the vocal life of a teenage argument. Buoyancy was still used as a secondary energy with both, but it was used primarily to compliment the other two energies.

I also focused heavily on my consonant and tonal NRG. With the production being livestreamed, it was more important than ever that my speech be clear and projected. The audience was not sitting right in front of me and I did not know what their audio situation was. If they are already having trouble with audio through technology, I could not add to the problem by allowing my speech to be sloppy. I focused heavily on consonant NRG to make sure everything I said was crisp and clear. I relied on tonal NRG to help me project clearly while also maintaining a healthy voice able to do four shows.

Movement Exploration

As I was developing and exploring the vocal life of Hermia, I was also exploring her physical life. I am an actor who focuses on physicality and movement, so this was a part of the process I looked forward to the most. Hermia is a teenage, middle to high class girl living in Athens. She would not move in the exact way that I would move in my day-to-day life. I used two techniques to discover the physical life of Hermia: The Expressive Actor Technique and Laban. The Expressive Actor Technique was created by Michael Lugering and is what I used to help create the basis of Hermia's physical life. Laban is a technique created by Rudolf Laban and helped to heighten the emotional states of Hermia physically.

The first technique I will discuss is my work with The Expressive Actor Technique. The expressive action that this technique discusses is essentially, “any physical action that embodies a thought or feeling” (Lugering 19). The action is flexible yet structured and is driven by the thought and feeling behind it. This technique focuses on action not as accidental and unconscious movement, but instead as adaptable and organized shifts. The shifts are made up of numerous sensory properties, which are divided into ten categories that encompass both extremes of the spectrum:

Energy: Charged → Release

- “Degree of physical and psychological vitality and power present in the body” (Lugering 43).
- Charged = high energy (intense)
- Release = low energy (calm)

Orientation: Contact → Withdrawn

- “Directional force that motivates the action of the individual in the environment” (Lugering 44).
- Contact = strong outward/external alignment (looking up/confident)
- Withdrawn = strong inward/internal alignment (looking down/shy)

Size: Expand → Contract

- “Physical range or volume of a movement” (Lugering 44).
- Expanded = stretching and extending the body (taking up as much space as possible)
- Contract = bending and retreating the body (taking up as little space as possible)

Progression: Center → Peripheral

- “The sequence or pathway of movement through the body” (Lugering 44).
- Center = moving with the center of the body leading (directness)
- Peripheral = moving with anything but the center of the body leading (wondering)

Flow: Free → Bound

- “Degree of resistance that the body experiences while moving” (Lugering 45).
- Free = instinctive and effective (body is almost floating)
- Bound = inefficient and tough (as if body is wrapped in chains/unbearably heavy)

Along with these major properties, there are also ten minor properties that impact the conditions/environments of movement (Lugering 38):

Control: Stable → Unstable

- the stability of an expressive action

Direction: Direct → Indirect

- the directional quality of an expressive action

Focus: Sharp → Diffused

- the visual intensity of an expressive action

Speed: Fast → Slow

- the tempo of an expressive action

Weight: Heavy → Light

- the heaviness of an expressive action

The second technique I used in my exploration of physicality was Laban. Laban is a method for envisioning and deciphering human movement. Laban experiments with three different efforts (time, space, and weight) and the variations of combining them.

These various combinations lead to eight qualities that can be used to accurately describe

and portray human movement (Sagovsky and Ewan). I was learning about the Laban technique in an advanced movement class I was taking while in rehearsals for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I was able to experiment with this new technique and see exercises I learned through classwork translate to the application on stage.

Laban Effort	Time	Space	Weight
Gliding	Sustained	Direct	Light
Pressing	Sustained	Direct	Strong
Floating	Sustained	Indirect	Light
Wringing	Sustained	Indirect	Strong
Dabbing	Quick	Direct	Light
Punching	Quick	Direct	Strong
Flicking	Quick	Indirect	Light
Slashing	Quick	Indirect	Strong

Figure 9
(Ewan)

One important note about physicality is that though you may live in a primary property or effort, all are necessary for creating variety and well-roundedness. Since I already had a foundation in The Expressive Actor Technique, I created my foundation for Hermia's physical life in this technique. I found that she lived in a different primary property when she was alone with Lysander than when she was with other characters. This was extremely helpful for me, as I had a goal to make it clear the shift between how Hermia acted around Lysander and how she acted around other people. As explained earlier, Hermia has her guard up when she is around other people. When she is alone with Lysander, however, the walls are broken down and she can be her true self. I wanted this shift to be extremely clear, and I found it happening through her physicality. When

Hermia was defending herself or was around anyone other than just Lysander, I found her physicality to be very Charged and Center. Typically, when she was not alone with Lysander, she felt as if she was having to defend herself. As a response, her physicality was very high energy and intensity (Charged). I also found the inclination that she was forcing herself to seem confident in physical nature, which caused me to play with the property of Contact. Hermia's social class also influenced the way she carried herself. Since Hermia was from an upper-middle class family and often found herself in situations where she would be speaking to royalty, her posture would be very straight and proper. I was able to highlight these aspects of her social class by using Center and the minor property of stable.

In moments when Hermia was alone with Lysander and she did not have to worry so much about societal expectations, her physicality lived more in Free. Her physical life around Lysander was much lighter, almost as if she was floating. She also saw much of her life to be an adventure with Lysander, which allowed her to be more energetic and excited (more of what you would imagine a teenager to be like). She was able to take up as much room as she wanted (Expanded) and genuinely enjoy herself. In exploring physicality, I made another discovery. After the events of the forest, Hermia went through another physical change. Now that she had the life she had fought for, she was able to be her true self around everyone, not just Lysander. In the final act of the play, Hermia lived in Release. Everything that was holding her back had been destroyed and just as her true self had been released, her physicality was also Release.

Physical study can also help with anchoring down and presenting a character's age. For example, since Hermia is a younger character with a lot of energy and

excitement, most of her movements were lighter and quicker. Using these movement properties, I was able to make movement decisions that were appropriate to her age. Another character I played (Miss Tesman in Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabbler*) was the age of 63. Since she was an older lady, it would make no sense for her movements to be very quick and light like Hermia's movements would be. Instead, her movements would be slower and more sustained. Her movement was grounded more in the Laban techniques of Glide and Wring, whereas Hermia's movement would play more into Punch or Float

With the basis of Hermia's physicality in place, I was then able to play with Laban to add to the emotional physicality and variety. Some of Hermia's strongest emotions displayed in this production were anger, fear, and happiness. Hermia's anger lives primarily in Press and Punch, the difference being with whom she was angry. When Hermia's anger is directed towards society and those of a higher-class, she lives primarily in Press. Her anger is sustained, direct, and strong. However, when she is angry at her friends and her love, her anger lives in Punch. Her anger is quick, direct, and strong. Hermia's fear lives in Wring and Flick. Her fear goes back and forth between time and weight, but the space of her fear is always indirect. This constant sense of indirectness in fear helped me realize Hermia was the kind of person who is fearful when she does not understand something. Hermia's happiness lives in Glide and Float. Her happiness is always light, as she does not feel the weight of society around her in these moments. By combining these two techniques, I was able to discover where Hermia lived in my body and create a well-rounded character both physically and vocally.

CHAPTER V: UNPACKING SHAKESPEARE

There is often a disconnect between Shakespeare's writing and the audience of today because the language is so different. It is not always easy to interpret what Shakespeare is writing. The audience may not have to do as much work "interpreting" because they can typically understand what Shakespeare was trying to say by watching the actors. On the other hand, it is critical for performers to understand what Shakespeare was aiming at in order to provide a clear depiction for the audience. Part of my work in understanding Hermia came from dissecting Shakespeare's writing using *Freeing Shakespeare's Voice* by Kristin Linklater. In this book, Linklater approaches Shakespeare's writing through two different lenses: the content and the form.

The first step in studying Shakespeare according to Linklater is through the context. In this sense, content refers to the language Shakespeare uses. The two most important aspects of language that I focused on were the mechanics of a sentence and figures of speech. When studying Shakespeare, it is important to understand why Shakespeare writes how he does. It is not enough to say he wrote in the style of his time period. An actor must figure out what that language means. To understand Shakespeare, an actor must understand how he creates a sentence. The first step is looking into the vowels and consonants. According to Linklater, "To a certain extent, vowels can be seen as the emotional component in word-construction and the consonants as the intellectual component" (Linklater 15). Vowels in Shakespeare often are used to create a more poetic sense and almost the feeling of a song. On the other hand, consonants are used to provide urgency, intelligence, and power. Through word construction, we can get a feeling for the emotion behind what Shakespeare is writing.

It is also important to examine the verbs Shakespeare uses. More often than not, actors can use the verbs Shakespeare places in a sentence as a chance for physical comedy. Shakespeare often used specific verbs because they acted as stage directions for the actor. For example, when Hermia is arguing with Helena, Shakespeare writes “Let me come to her”. The verb “come” acts as a stage direction in which Hermia would go towards Helena. If Shakespeare has a character using verbs such as “creeping”, “climbing”, or “dancing”, these words give the actor options for physicality. The audience in Shakespeare’s days were used to relying on large gestures in order to understand a production. Taking advantage of Shakespeare’s verbs and providing those gestures bring an actor one step closer to understanding what he was writing and being able to communicate it to an audience.

Punctuation is also important in understanding Shakespeare. Typically, punctuation, especially commas, is a sign of when to breathe. Each form of punctuation in Shakespeare has its own meaning. A full-stop, which would be a period, question mark, or exclamation mark, implies the end of a full thought. A semi-colon implies the next thought is a rushing of emotion based on the thought previously stated. A colon implies the next thought is more articulate, which is typically used in an argument or to make a character appear to be wittier. It is important that an actor does not ignore the punctuation Shakespeare uses, as it is always used for a specific purpose.

Another key important to understanding the language of Shakespeare is figures of speech. Shakespeare is known for extravagant use of different figures of speech but understanding why Shakespeare uses these figures of speech is important for an actor to be able to accurately convey his writing. The figures of speech that I found most

important to focus on were alliteration and assonance, onomatopoeia and personification, similes and metaphors, repetition, antithesis, and the ladder.

Alliteration (repetition of consonant sounds) and assonance (repetition of vowel sounds) are often used by Shakespeare to establish a particular emotion. According to Linklater, “Most often, the repetition reveals and re-engenders some form of anger, contempt, sarcasm, or mockery” (81). For example, when Helena finds out about Hermia and Lysander’s plans to run away, Shakespeare uses alliteration:

“For ere Demetrius looked on Hermia’s eyne,
He hailed down oaths that he was only mine;
And when this haile some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolved, and show’rs of oaths did melt.”

This repetition of “h” is an indication that she is sobbing and possibly hyperventilating. Shakespeare uses alliteration to give an actor a clue as to the emotional state or intelligence of their character.

Onomatopoeia (words that imitate the sound of their meaning) is similar to Shakespeare’s use of vowels in that it provides opportunities for actor to display vocal comedy. For example, if Shakespeare uses words such as “murmur,” “hum,” or “whispers,” it would be an indication to the actor to say those lines quietly and in the style of these words. Similar to onomatopoeia, personification (applying a human characteristic to something nonhuman) can also be used to display physical or vocal comedy. It can also be used to help an actor or audience get a better understanding of a comparison Shakespeare is making.

Similes (a comparison of two or more things using the words “like” or “as”) and metaphors (a comparison of two or more things without using the words “like” or “as”) are extremely common in Shakespeare’s writing. They can help an actor better understand a comparison Shakespeare is making. They can also help an actor to better determine the stakes of a situation or the importance of the subject matter they are discussing.

Repetition (repeating something that has already been written) is used by Shakespeare in order to highlight the importance of something. Shakespeare uses repetition to get the audience’s attention, which means an actor must also pay attention to it. For example, when Hermia is confronting Demetrius in Act III, Shakespeare repeats words such as “slain,” “murder,” and “kill.” This indicates to the actor how much Hermia feels about Demetrius in that moment and how much she believes it. This also indicates to the audience that this accusation is important to the story.

Antithesis (placing things that are the exact opposite together) is another technique commonly used by Shakespeare. An example of antithesis can be seen when Hermia says, “I give him curses, yet he gives me love”. Curses and love are opposites, but Shakespeare puts them together here to show the extremes between Hermia and Demetrius’ views of each other. Antithesis has many usages, such as creating emotional extremity, sharpening an argument, or displaying wit through an extreme counterpoint. According to Linklater, “In acting terms this means that the most important element in the playing of the scene is listening” (85). The characters do not know that they are speaking in antithesis, but the actors do. It is the job of the actor to make it seem as if this use of antithesis is in a response to hearing and feeling the opposites. It is also up to an actor to determine the extremity or purpose of a given antithesis by listening. Antithesis

is often used to create a build in a scene. By continuing to play with these opposites (which draws the audience's attention), emphasis is being placed on the scene. The audience knows that what the two characters are talking about right now is very important.

The ladder is essentially just what it sounds like. According to Linklater, "The ladder starts with a statement or an image or a feeling which is capped by one that outdoes the first, and then another and another rising to the top climactic rung of the ladder" (95). An example of ladder in Shakespeare can be seen when Hermia is talking to Lysander in Act I:

"I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,
By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
By all the vows that ever men have broke,
In number more than ever women spoke,"

The ladder is typically used to build intensity and stakes. Hermia is using the ladder in her promise to Lysander. She starts by swearing by something strong then continues to swear by something stronger and stronger. This ladder is an example of Hermia's love and devotion to Lysander growing and growing in intensity. The ladder often leads to an increase in volume, pitch, or pace. This is typically determined by the actor and their partner. For this example, I found myself increasing my pace as to show Hermia's excitement in saying her promise to Lysander. To highlight this excitement, my partner spoke his line almost immediately after I finished which helped the build even more.

Once you understand the content of Shakespeare, you can then begin to look at the form. In this context, form refers to the structural aspects of Shakespeare's writing. To study Shakespeare's form, one must understand the concepts of scansion, the flow of rhyme, and the difference between verse and prose. Scansion is essentially determining the rhythm within a line. As it is commonly known, Shakespeare typically wrote in iambic pentameter, or blank verse. An iamb is a two-syllable package in the pattern of unstressed-stressed, and a pentameter is a line of verse that consists of five metric feet. Essentially, iambic pentameter is a line of verse consisting of five metric feet (10 syllables) that follows the pattern unstressed-stressed the entire line. A famous example of iambic pentameter is:

“Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?”

This line includes ten syllables and follows the pattern of unstressed-stressed syllables. There are a few irregularities. These irregularities are important to understand, as they each have a different purpose.

Elision: When there are eleven syllables in a line of verse instead of ten, an actor can use an elision to help. An elision is the act of leaving out a syllable from a word. Example:

Titania: [Hath rot][ted ere] [his youth] [attain'd] [a beard.]

Feminine Ending: A feminine ending occurs when there is a line of iambic pentameter with an extra unstressed syllable at the end. This typically indicates that the character is trying to make a decision or is questioning something. Example:

[Since night] [you loved] [me yet] [since night] [you left] [me]

Trochee: A trochee is a two-syllable package that follows the pattern stressed-unstressed. It is essentially the exact opposite of iambic, and it can be found at the beginning, middle,

or end of a sentence. This can be used to highlight an importance to the line of verse.

Example:

Hermia: [Between] [our sta][tures; she] [hath urged] [her height]

Anapest: An anapest is a three-syllable package with the pattern unstressed-unstressed-stressed. This is another tactic that can be used for making an eleven-syllable line into a ten-syllable line. Example:

Lysander: [That, in] [a flash], [unfolds] [both hea][ven and earth,]

Dactyl: A dactyl is a three-syllable package with the pattern stressed-unstressed-unstressed. It is essentially the opposite of an anapest. This is another tactic that can be used for making an eleven-syllable line into a ten-syllable line. Example:

Hermia: [Am not] [I Hermia?] [Are not] [you Ly][sander?]

Spondee: A spondee is a two-syllable package with the pattern stressed-stressed. It is used to bring attention to specific words or phrases in a line of verse. It is typically used at the beginning of a line in order to bring attention. Example:

Hermia: [Hate me!] [Wherefore?] [O me!] [What news] [my love!]

Pyrrhic: A pyrrhic is a two-syllable foot with the pattern unstressed-unstressed. A pyrrhic is typically used with another irregularity (such as a spondee) to make other words in a line of verse seem more important. Example:

Hermia: [I un][derstand] [not what] [you mean] [by this.]

Shared Lines: Shared lines of verse are when one line of iambic pentameter are split between two or more characters. These are typically signaled in a script by an indentation of the line. When this happens, the characters are meant to speak right after the other. The

first actor speaks and when their part of the shared lines end, the other character sharing the line immediately starts their line. This creates a sense of urgency within the dialogue.

Example:

Hermia: [Do you] [not jest]

Lysander: [yes sooth,] [and so] [do you.]

Shakespeare is also known for his rhyming, but that is not always the case in his earliest plays. With *A Midsummer Night's Dream* being one of Shakespeare's older works, the use of rhyme is quite prevalent. The most important thing to remember regarding rhyme is to go with the flow of the rhythm instead of trying to force the rhyme to stick out. The audience will hear the rhyme on their own. It is an actor's job to let the rhyme feel natural and a part of the verse they are speaking.

Finally, it is important for an actor to understand the difference between verse and prose. Verse is what we typically think of when we think of Shakespeare. Verse has a distinct rhythm, which for Shakespeare is typically iambic pentameter. Prose, on the other hand, does not have a rhythm. It is what we would typically consider our day-to-day speech. Verse and prose also look differently from each other. Verse looks similar to typically poetry, with indentions and line breaks. Prose looks more like what we would see in a novel or story. Shakespeare uses each for different reasons. Typically, verse is used by members of the upper-class and for moments of heightened emotion and imagination. Prose is instead used by members of the lower-class and for moments of comedy and domestic conversation (Linklater 174). Being able to recognize the

difference between verse and prose allows an actor to gain considerable insight on their character or on the climate of the situation their character is currently in.

The following is an example of my application of Linklater technique on my script for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

Figurative Language Key:

Verb: boxed

Punctuation: circled

Alliteration: underline repeated consonant sound

Assonance: circle repeated vowel sound

Onomatopoeia: zigzag under the word

Repetition: "R"

Simile: ()

Antithesis: connecting the words with dashes

Ladder: drawing a ladder in the margin

The course of true love never did run smooth;
 135 But, either it was different in blood—

ENTERTAIN
 Delight,
 Host

Hermia. O cross! Too high to be enthralled to low!

Lysander. Or else misgraffed^o in respect of years—

Hermia. O spite! Too old to be engaged to young!

140 **Hermia.** O hell! To choose love by another's eyes!

Lysander. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
 War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
 Making it momentary^o as a sound,
 Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,

145 **Hermia.** Brief as the lightning in the collied^o night,
 That, in a spleen,^o unfolds both heaven and earth,
 And ere a man hath power to say "Behold!"
 The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
 So quick bright things come to confusion.

ENCOURAGE
 enhearten,
 motivate

150 **Hermia.** If then true lovers have been ever crossed,
 It stands as an edict in destiny!

Then let us teach our trial-patience,^o

Because it is a customary cross,

155 **Lysander.** As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,
 Wishes and tears, poor Fancy's^o followers!

Lysander. A good persuasion.^o Therefore, hear me,
 Hermia.

I have a widow aunt, a dowager
 Of great revenue, and she hath no child.

160 From Athens is her house remote seven leagues,
 And she respects me as her only son.

There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee,
 And to that place the sharp Athenian law

Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me, then,

137 misgraffed ill matched, misgraffed 143 momentary momentary,
 passing 145 collied blackened 146 spleen flash 152 teach our
 trial patience i.e., teach ourselves to be patient 155 Fancy's Love's
 156 persuasion principle

Steal forth thy father's house tomorrow night;
 And in the wood, a league without the town,
 165 Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
 To do observance to a morn of May,
 There will I stay for thee.

Hermia. My good Lysander!

I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,
 170 By his best arrow with the golden head,^o

By the simplicity of Venus' doves,^o

By that which knitteth^o souls and prospers loves,^o

And by that fire which burned the Carthage
 queen,^o

175 When the false Trojan under sail was seen,
 By all the vows that ever men have broke,^o

In number more than ever women spoke,^o

In that same place thou hast appointed me,^o

Tomorrow truly will I meet with thee.

Lysander. Keep promise, love. Look, here comes
 Helena.

REASSURE
 Assure,
 Comfort,
 Hearten

Enter Helena.

Hermia. God speed fair Helena! Whither away?^o 180

Helena. Call you me fair? That fair again unsay.

Demetrius loves your fair.^o O happy fair!

Your eyes are lodestars,^o and your tongue's sweet
 air^o

185 More tunable than lark to shepherd's ear,
 When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.

Sickness is catching. O, were favor^o so,

Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;

My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,

ACKNOWLEDGE
 Address,
 Greet

170 arrow with the golden head (Cupid's gold-headed arrows caused
 love, the leaden ones dislike) 173 Carthage queen Dido (who
 burned herself on a funeral pyre when the Trojan Aeneas left her)
 182 fair beauty 183 lodestars guiding stars 183 air music
 186 favor looks

Scansion Key:

SL: Shared Line

S: Spondee

T: Trochee

D: Dactyl

F: Feminine Ending

u = unstressed
/ = stressed
| = syllable foot

50 A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM 3.2

255 Lysander. If thou say so, withdraw and prove it too.

Demetrius. Quick, come!

SL Hermia. Lysander, where'to tends all this?

Lysander. Away, you Ethiop!°

Demetrius. No, no; he'll
Seem to break loose; take on as° you would follow,
But yet come not: you are a tame man, go!

Lysander. Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! Vile thing,
260 let loose,
Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent!

DISBELIEF
Mistrust

Hermia. Why are you grown so rude! What change is
this,
Sweet love?!

SL Lysander. Thy love! Out, tawny Tartar, out!
Out, loathed med'cine! O hated potion, hence!

SL Hermia. Do you not jest?!

265 Helena. Yes, sooth; and so do you.

Lysander. Demetrius, I will keep my word° with thee.

Demetrius. I would I had your bond, for I perceive
A weak bond holds you. I'll not trust your word.

Lysander. What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill
her dead?

270 Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so.

WAKEN
Provoke,
Stir

Hermia. What, can you do me greater harm than
hate?!

Hate me! Wherefore? O me! What news, my love!
Am not I Hermia? Are not you Lysander?
(I am) as fair now as I was erewhile.°

Hermia = Dactyl

257 Ethiop blackamoor (brunette) 258 take on as make a fuss
as if 265 sooth truly 266 my word my promise to fight with you
274 erewhile a little while ago

3.2 A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM 51

Since night you loved me; yet since night you left
me. 275

Why, then you left me—O! the gods forbid!—
If I earnest, shall I say?

SL Lysander. Ay, by my life!
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt;
Be certain, nothing truer. 'Tis no jest
That I do hate thee, and love Helena!

Hermia. O me! You juggler! You canker blossom!
You thief of love! What, have you come by night
And stol'n my love's heart from him?

SL Helena. Fine, i' faith!
Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
Fie, fie! You counterfeit, you puppet, you!

Hermia. Puppet? Why so? Ay, that way goes the
garpe.
Now I perceive that she hath made compare°
290 (Between our statures, she hath urged her height,
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevailed with him,
And are you grown so high in his esteem,
Because I am so dwarfish and so low? I'll
295 How low am I, thou painted maypole? Speak!
How low am I? I am not yet so low,
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

CONDEMN
Blame,
Convict

Helena. I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me. I was never curst;
300 I have no gift at all in shrewishness;
I am a right maid° for my cowardice.
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,

275 Since night since the beginning of this night 282 canker blossom
dog rose (or possibly worm that cankers the blossom) 290 compare
comparison 300 curst quarrelsome 302 right maid true young
woman

CHAPTER VI: THE VIRTUAL STAGE

Most of the discoveries and final developments of a character come from actual rehearsals. It is the interactions between the directors, designers, and other actors that help to fully round out a character. In order to retain the discoveries and insights found in rehearsals, an actor will take notes on the rehearsal process in the form of rehearsal logs. In order to fully understand the rehearsal logs in the appendix, I need to explain what our virtual format was like. The majority of rehearsals took place over Zoom, but the actual performance was an entirely new setting.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the big question surrounding the theatre community was how do we keep creating live theatre? When we realized the hope of a perfect return to normal was unrealistic, we began thinking of how we could return to making live theatre while also keeping each other safe. Through a lot of research and several accounts of trial and error, USM Theatre came up with a plan to create safe in-person theatre. Led by the scenic design team at USM, the Hartwig Theatre was converted into a space consisting of ten “pods” in which the actors could perform. Each pod was a safe space for actors to individually perform in. Three of the walls and the floor consisted of green screens. The fourth wall was used for the monitors, camera, and lighting. The actors were free to perform in their own space in front of the green screens and could interact with other actors through the webcam and computer in their pod. The actors were then placed in the same virtual world by the compositing designer. All other aspects of the traditional theatre experience were also included. Costumes, lights, and sound were all combined with a 3D rendered set in order to create a “live” virtual performance. The end result seen by the audience (who were watching via livestream)

was a production that looked similar to a typical theatre production. All the actors were real and seen on the same set at the same time, but none of the actors were in the same space. It was as if watching a movie scene that was being recorded live.

While the technology was amazing and allowed for the return of “live” theatre, there were struggles that came along with it. From an actor’s point of view, the primary difficulty came from the fact we were never able to see our scene partner. We were performing intense and emotional scenes to a piece of tape on a green screen wall. It created a new challenge to the idea of having to stay in a scene. It was really a good reminder for an actor of how important it is to listen to your scene partner. Since we were not able to see our partners, we had to rely on what we could hear. Another struggle that came with not being in the same space as a scene partner was that there was no possibility for physical touch. There are many times in a scene when an actor might use physical touch to emphasize something in a scene. For example, when a character is having a conversation with another character they are in love with, actors may decide to hold hands in order to highlight this love more to an audience. Without being able to physically show things to the audience, actors had to rely on vocal choices and individual expressions. All of the struggles that came from performing virtual theatre were gladly accepted knowing that in exchange, live theatre was beginning to return.

In the appendices, I have included rehearsal logs (Appendix B), pod photos (Appendix C), and production photos (Appendix D). These rehearsal logs are where I dictated my personal discoveries, challenges, and successes from the rehearsal process. It is an incredibly helpful and organized way to analyze everything that was happening during the rehearsal process. The pod photos show what the pods looked like and give an

idea to what the actor was seeing during their performance. The production photos are a glimpse into the final product. They are a good way to understand what the audience saw.

CONCLUSION

There are many emotions that come with closing a show. There is the joy that comes from having people see a project you have been working so hard on for months. There is the sadness that comes from never being in the same space with the same people working on the same production ever again. There is the anxiety of what comes next and if my performance was actually a good one. All of these emotions were ones I felt when I finished my time as Hermia. However, there was one emotion that was stronger than the others and that was pride. I was proud of myself for performing in my first Shakespeare show and learning how to understand the language of Shakespeare. I was proud of myself for playing an ingénue for the first time, a character type I never imagined I would get the opportunity to play. The most satisfaction came from the fact that I was able to take this ingénue character and prove that she had strength as well as femininity. While I take immense pride in the work I did on portraying Hermia, there are aspects of my performance I felt were stronger than others, and parts of my performance I wish I could change.

There are several aspects of my performance that I felt read very well. One of my major goals with creating this character was presenting clear shifts. My favorite part of script analysis is figuring out beat and unit shifts. I wanted to take the idea of shifts one step further in my overall performance. I feel like I was able to accomplish this very well. I feel that I was able to provide clear distinction between moments of passion and moments of anger. There were clear relationships being built between myself and other characters despite us not being able to see each other during the performances. These relationships allowed there to be distinct differences in how my character acted amongst

other characters. I also felt that I was able to reach a new level of vulnerability with this character that I had not been able to reach with past characters I have played. I allowed myself to fall into her emotions and not be afraid to show them to full extremes. I wanted to show her in all dimensions as someone who is generous but also in need.

I know my weakest moments of my performance came from my vocal life. Vocal work has always been the most difficult part of the process for me. Typically, an actor will either be stronger in vocal or movement work and I tend to be stronger with movement. If I had more time with the role, I would work on making her youth clearer, especially through her vocal life. My voice is naturally very grounded and mature, so I was often given the note of remembering Hermia's youthfulness and age. As someone who has been told I am far more mature than most people my age, I had a hard time taking that maturity down a few levels when portraying Hermia. While Hermia was dealing with very mature situations, the way she reacted to them could have been more spontaneous and unsure. With more time, I would have worked on vocally reacting in the moment and putting more youth in her voice. I do not mean I would have made her voice higher or put on some sort of character voice, but instead I would find moments for vocalization that showed just how young she truly is.

Looking towards the future, I am excited to continue to grow in the techniques I have already learned and the techniques I am going to learn. I hope I continue my love for analysis and for having a deeper understanding of my character. I want to challenge myself to find connections and hidden jewels of the text that would not be as obvious to others. I hope to continue to grow in my physical and vocal exploration. I have discovered during my collegiate theatre experience that I have a strong preference for

movement based work. I love using my body to tell a story. I love challenging myself physically as a performer, whether it be through physical comedy, stage combat, or just creating a physical life of a character unlike myself. I want to challenge myself to find more joy in my vocal work. Though it may not be where my preference lies, I want to improve my vocal skills. I want to find more diversity in my vocal choices for each character I play. Overall, I believe that this experience has challenged me and pushed me to become a more well-rounded performer.

As a young artist, I am constantly filled with questions. Questioning what will come next for me, if I am doing enough as an artist, or if my work is able to inspire others. Looking back at this experience, one thing I know for a fact is that I am constantly growing as an artist. When I began performing, my prep work consisted of simply highlighting and memorizing lines. Now I have found a process for script analysis and character analysis that help me to create a well-rounded character in a way I never thought possible. I am able to find moments of true discovery, vulnerability, secrecy, and so much more. I believe I am growing the most physically and vocally. I used to find myself getting stuck in a routine once I got halfway through a rehearsal process. Now I find myself exploring and trying new things vocally and physically up until the final moments. I am hopeful young artists in the future can look at my process and know anything is possible with the right amount of innovation, imagination, and determination. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a story of hope, beauty, and wonder; qualities still desperately needed in the world today. I am so honored to have been able to tell Hermia's story, even on a virtual stage. This process taught me I need to value my ideas and myself more. I need to always remember that just like Hermia, though I be but little, I am fierce.

APPENDIX A: PROGRAM INFORMATION

Artistic Production Team

Director	Louis Rackoff	Faculty
Assistant Director	Blake Waters	Graduate Student
Scenic Designer	Stephen Judd	Faculty
Scenic Designer	Aline Toloto Machado	Graduate Student
Compositor	Jennifer Glass	Graduate Student
Costume Designer	Theresa Bush	Faculty
Masks Designer	Rebecca Earehart	Graduate Student
Hair/Makeup Designer	Madison Queen	Graduate Student
Lighting Designer	Craig Dettman	Faculty
Lighting Designer	Katy Baronich	Graduate Student
Sound Designer	Tristan King	Graduate Student
Dramaturgy	Cayson Miles	Undergraduate Student
Stage Manager	Kathryn Quarterman	Undergraduate Student
Assistant Stage Manager	Abigail Johnson	Undergraduate Student
Assistant Stage Manager	Rachael Tucker	Undergraduate Student

Cast

Theseus	Kevin Rains	Graduate Student
Hippolyta	Camille Colley	Undergraduate Student
Lysander	Cody Elsensohn	Undergraduate Student
Hermia	Taylor Alleman	Undergraduate Student
Helena	Shakiah Johnson	Graduate Student
Demetrius	Nate Jones	Undergraduate Student
Egeus (Egea)	Bethany Hartfield	Undergraduate Student
Philostrate	Carrie Sullivan	Undergraduate Student
Oberon	Detalion Dixon	Graduate Student
Titania	Makallen Kelley	Undergraduate Student
Puck	Cody Alexander	Graduate Student
Peter (Petra) Quince	Rakaela Thompson	Undergraduate Student
Nick Bottom	Travis Ascione	Graduate Student
Francis Flute	Everett Brown	Undergraduate Student
Tom Snout	Carter Lischen	Undergraduate Student
Robin Starveling	Camila Salas	Undergraduate Student
Snug	Jessi King	Undergraduate Student

Thesis Content Consultant: Monica Hayes

APPENDIX B: REHEARSAL LOGS

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 2/22/2021	Time: 6:30pm – 10:30pm
		Location: Zoom
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night’s Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction/Discussion of characters and play/Read through script with cast 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The discussion of the play and characters helped me gain a much better insight into the world of the play. • The read through brought me so much joy and excitement! I found so much inspiration and cannot wait to start playing with different ideas. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to figure out what exactly my character wants and what her energy is like in each scene 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 2/23/2021	Time: 6:30pm
	Location: Zoom	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 2/23/2021	Time: 6:30pm – 10:30pm
		Location: Zoom
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finished read through of the script with cast • Began text and character work for Act 1, Scene 1 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something that really stood out to me during the end of the read through was the idea that sometimes you have to lose something to know how much you love it (valuing Lysander more once I get him back) • The characters in Scene 1 are actually very respectful of my character. The first time I read it I thought they were harsh to her, but after the text work I have found they are more respectful than anything else. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I really want to focus on the imagery in what I am saying and why those images are in the lines 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 2/25/2021	Time: 6:30pm
	Location: Zoom	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 2/25/2021	Time: 6:30pm – 10:30pm
		Location: Zoom
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish text and character work for Act 1, Scene 1 • Text and character work for Act 2, Scene 2 and Act 3, Scene 2 • I am so excited to work on the lover's quarrel! Just reading it was so exciting and I can tell the energy is going to be high. 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know spontaneity is going to be a big part of this show, which is something I can sometimes struggle with. I need to remember to play the scenes as if I had never heard the lines before. My character makes a lot of realizations in the show, especially once she is in the forest with him. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for the changes in love that happen. 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 3/1/2021	Time: 8:20pm
	Location: Zoom	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 3/1/2021	Time: 8:20pm – 10:00pm
		Location: Zoom
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text and character work for Act IV, Scene 1 and Act V • Tonight was one of the more relaxing nights but it was so fun! 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I keep wondering how much the “dream” really impacted me. Do I look at Lysander differently now or do I think it was more of a dream than reality? • What a CULTURE SHOCK for my mom when she sees me sleeping next to Lysander. I can't imagine the conversation we had the next time we were alone together. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't forget to keep the energy up even in scenes where I'm not speaking as much! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 3/2/2021	Time: 6:30pm
	Location: Zoom	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 3/2/2021	Time: 6:30pm – 10:00pm
	Location: Zoom	
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text and character work for Act V, Act I, and Act II • Every time we rehearse Act V there is so much joy! I love getting to see the work my fellow actors have put into this scene, and I love seeing the way the play parallels what happens between Lysander and I 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know my mother is going to talk to the Duke about me and Lysander in Act I but I have no idea about the death threat. That makes it certain I have no good option in Act I. I need to make sure the stakes are high enough in this scene. • I think I may never see Helena again after our scene together in Act I, which means it is super important for me to get her believe I never wanted Demetrius. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find the balance between thinking about what I am going to say before I say it and the spontaneity of the scene. 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 3/9/2021	Time: 6:30pm
	Location: Zoom	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 3/9/2021	Time: 6:30pm – 10:00pm
	Location: Zoom	
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We sketched Act I, Scene I and Act 2, Scene 2!! • It was so nice to be moving in the scenes now! It helps bring so much more life into the character! • This was my first rehearsal back from a family emergency that happened, and I was really worried how I would feel during rehearsal. Once we started, I was so glad to be back. The cast and crew were incredibly understanding and welcomed me back so lovingly. 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VIRTUAL BLOCKING IS DIFFICULT! It got a lot better after Act I but initially, it was extremely hard. At least this means once we are done blocking, I'll be able to get the script out of my hand, which I know will make me so much more confident. • I really want to work on getting inspiration off of the other characters I am in a scene with but it's a little more difficult with it over zoom. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find how much movement I need in each Act! • Work on the more technical aspects of the language so I can feel more confident once I have the script out of my hand! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 3/10/2021	Time: 8:30pm
	Location: Zoom	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 3/10/2021	Time: 8:30pm – 10:00pm
	Location: Zoom	
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text review of Act III (lover's quarrel!!) • The energy and the stakes in this scene are the most extreme for me character, which makes this scene the most fun but also the most challenging for me. 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hermia's love for Lysander is absolutely sure, but because of the woods, her perspective becomes lost. • I need to remember to hold on to love (especially for Lysander) as long as possible. With the quarrel scene, it can be tempting to fall straight into anger and to lose the love at the beginning of the scene. I need to hold onto the hope and the strength of love, which will impact the dynamics of the scene to make them more interesting. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I really want to highlight the difference in my feelings for Demetrius and my feelings for Lysander. This is much easier to do when I am still mad at only Demetrius, but during the quarrel when they are both attacking me, I still want my feelings for the two to be distinct. 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 3/11/2021	Time: 8:00pm
	Location: Zoom	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 3/11/2021	Time: 8:00pm – 10:00pm
	Location: Zoom	
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sketched Act III • This scene has so much movement to it that it can be a little complicating to block over zoom, but it was so fun to experiment. • Just through sketching I could tell that I was able to display what my character wanted much clearer! 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for friendship in love can be seen the most between Helena and me. Despite everything that has happened, she still stands up for me to Lysander and to Demetrius. I think that's why I go after Helena at the end and not Lysander. Our sisterly love is so strong, and I would never want to leave her on a bad note. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quarrel scene is less formal than the others, so I want to work on being less formal in my vocal life, especially for this scene. 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 3/15/2021	Time: 6:30pm
	Location: Zoom	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 3/15/2021	Time: 6:30pm – 8:50pm
	Location: Zoom	
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We finished blocking Act III and ran it a few times. • I have been memorized for over a week, but this was the first rehearsal I didn't have the book in my hand since we had already blocked it. Not having the script in my hand felt so nice! 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think I'm in my head a little about playing the ending of the scene, which is in return making me play the end too much. I just need to relax and trust myself more. • There is so much that my character does not know and does not understand during the quarrel scene. I agree with everything Helena is saying I just don't understand what's happening and I have no idea why Lysander is acting the way he is. This is the first time Hermia has ever questioned her love for Lysander. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on vocal variety! (especially sounding more grounded when I am deeply in love) • Show the difference between thinking with my head at the beginning of the quarrel and with my heart at the end. 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 3/16/2021	Time: 6:30pm
	Location: Zoom	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 3/16/2021	Time: 6:30pm – 10:00pm
	Location: Zoom	
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We sketched Act IV and V and then reviewed Act I! • Act IV and V are relatively relaxing for my character as far as movement/blocking goes, but they are so much fun. I especially love Act V and gaining inspiration from my fellow actors in that scene. I'm finding a lot more connection with my partners from working on this scene. 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happens after I wake up in Act IV? What do I remember from the previous day and what do I think is a dream? • I think it's very interesting how Demetrius changes from my obstacle to my hero in the play. At the beginning he is keeping me from the life I want to live but I am free at the end of the play because of Demetrius and his admittance to loving Helena in Act IV. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's very hard for Hermia to leave Helena at the end of Act I. It's harder for her to leave Helena than it is to leave her family. I really want to make the strength of our friendship more present in order to show how difficult this is. 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 3/17/2021	Time: 8:30pm
	Location: Zoom	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 3/17/2021	Time: 8:30pm – 10:00pm
		Location: Zoom
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed Act III • I felt a lot better working through this scene and the informality of it. I feel like I found a difference between the formality at this point of the play than at the beginning. 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How dare Demetrius come onto me during Act III! This combined with my frustration of not getting answers from Demetrius plays into my anger and strength in the scene. It's harder to play this anger for me being over zoom and not in person, especially because I am someone who doesn't get angry easily. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work more with finding what I need and what I want from each scene 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 3/18/2021	Time: 8:20pm
	Location: Zoom	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 3/18/2021	Time: 8:30pm – 10:00pm
		Location: Zoom
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed Act II and Act III for the last time before our stumble thru! I really liked my vulnerability tonight! I think it was the best it's been so far! 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Something I really struggled with when I first accepted the role was the ideal that this character was known for her beauty (which is mentioned several times throughout the play) and I knew that I was not the traditional ideal of beauty, especially in relation to this character. Tonight, I finally felt I found the beauty of the character and myself and developed a lot more of her vivacious and feisty personality, which is what I think makes her so attractive to the other characters, not just her looks. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't stress about the stumble thru! Just relax and have fun with it! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 3/21/2021	Time: 6:50pm
	Location: Zoom	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 3/21/2021	Time: 6:50pm – 10:00pm
		Location: Zoom
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stumble thru of the entire show! • TONIGHT FELT SO GOOD! I found so many things I want to try and work on! • Some moments from tonight that really stood out to me as positive work: the transition in Act I from everyone to just Lysander and I, my scene with Lysander in the woods, playing with different emotions during the scene with Demetrius 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something I really discovered tonight was the breaks my character has throughout the show. Between the nightmare scene and my next scene with Lysander is a huge break that includes intermission, which helps with the feeling of being separated from my love. • I think the scene I have the most I want to work on is the beginning of Act I. I feel like I have a better handle on the scene, but I feel that I am still a bit too harsh towards the Duke. I also want to work on reacting more, especially since I cannot tell how it is currently reading with us being virtual. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions I have after the first stumble thru: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What do I hear before I enter the quarrel scene? ○ What do I do before my last line in Act III? ○ Was I on the level I needed to be for each scene? ○ Do I have a good enough grasp on the language for where we are in the process? 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 3/22/2021	Time: 6:30pm
	Location: Zoom	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 3/22/2021	Time: 6:00pm – 10:00pm
	Location: Zoom	
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked Act I – Act III • Before working each scene, we got notes on the stumble thru from the night before. Getting notes from the stumble thru really helped me get a better idea of where I am at in the process and gave me more ideas of how to shape my character. 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I had a big realization during my scene alone with Lysander in Act I. Lysander and I know that the love we know is real, but it is not until we are at the height of our truthfulness in love that allows us to decide to run away together. The actual thing that helps us make the decision is how true our love is for each other. • At the end of Act I, I am telling Helena of how I am going to meet Lysander in our old meeting place. To Helena, it could feel like I am replacing her. I don't think my character fully sees this and instead just sees it as taking the person I love to a place I already love because I shared it with a friend. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on the youthfulness of the character and how that gets the best of them! • Work on urgency in different parts of the show! • Support the endearments toward Lysander! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 3/24/2021	Time: 7:30pm
	Location: Zoom	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 3/24/2021	Time: 7:30pm – 10:00pm
	Location: Zoom	
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked Act III (lover's quarrel) • I felt so much better at the beginning of the quarrel when I am talking primarily to Lysander. I feel like I was finally able to fully display my intentions and the love I feel for Lysander. Starting off the scene with the right set also helped me with the rest of the scene! 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel like I struggled with the Demetrius and Hermia scene a little today. I definitely felt flat, especially at the beginning of the scene. I know that it will help to clarify the stakes of the scene. If Lysander is really gone and it is because of Demetrius, then that is something I can never forgive him for. There is so much personal loss at stake. • Lou mentioned something that really stuck with me today about the quarrel scene. With some people still trying to get off book, he brought up how there is no safety net in the lover's quarrel. Every character is putting their all into this scene without thinking that there's a chance they could be wrong. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember that energies can be corrected while others are giving speeches! • Just go for it! I've done the work now I just need to let go and experiment! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 3/25/2021	Time: 6:30pm
	Location: Zoom	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 3/25/2021	Time: 6:30pm – 9:30pm
		Location: Zoom
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked Act IV and Act V • These scenes are a little more relaxing for my character, so I took this rehearsal as a time to just enjoy myself and to admire the work of my other actors in the scene! 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is so much clarity for my character when she wakes up in Act IV. There is still some surprise, especially when Demetrius is the person who helps me get the life I've been fighting for. There is also a clear understanding made by the characters between Act IV and Act V. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find time to enjoy myself in every scene! Even in the ones that are heavy on my character! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 3/28/2021	Time: 6:30pm
	Location: Zoom	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 3/28/2021	Time: 6:30pm – 10:00pm
	Location: Zoom	
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We had our first run thru tonight! • I could definitely tell my energy was low tonight, so I was very hard on myself during this run. I know the run was still very good, but I was definitely in my head a lot of the night. I felt very stiff, both physically and emotionally. 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I played with the level of flirtation when I was alone with Lysander in Act II, and I really liked how it felt. • I also made a lot of discoveries in the beginning of Act III when I am alone with Demetrius. I played around with a more emotional reaction to the anger I was feeling, and it felt so much more natural. I also ended in a much stronger way than I normally do, which I really liked. • There were a lot of obstacles for me tonight since I was so in my head. I think the biggest obstacle with how stiff I was is that I was so self-conscious about my movement, and I made all of my vocalization too formal. I always reach a point in the process where I get in my head and start to doubt myself, so I'm not too upset. I just have to get over this hill and remember to relax. I think I will feel so much better once I get in the pods. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dial back the formality! • Loosen up! • Have fun! Don't forget my love for theatre! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 3/29/2021	Time: 6:30pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 3/29/2021	Time: 6:30pm – 10:00pm
		Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First rehearsal in the pods!! • It was a very slow process tonight. It was primarily just figuring out camera angles and where to mark certain standing points. I'm really excited to see how this will all look when it's put together! 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We didn't get to go through much of Act I tonight, but it was still so amazing to be in the same room as the rest of the cast! Even just seeing each other on the screens made our energy much stronger! It really made me realize how blessed I am to be able to do a show during this pandemic. It has been challenging, but it's nice to know that we're all figuring it out together. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the same energy as when we first saw each other! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 3/30/2021	Time: 6:30pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 3/30/2021	Time: 6:30pm – 10:00pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)	
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We composited Act I Scene I tonight. It's still a very long and slow process but I still enjoy it more than working on zoom! Compositing was essentially them taking the video footage from our pod and putting them into the OBS system in order to have all of us on one screen and make it look like we are in the same location. I finally feel like I found the right place emotionally for my conversation with the Duke. At the beginning of rehearsals, I could tell I was playing the scene too harsh and then there were times I felt I was playing too fearful. I finally felt like I found the perfect balance between my character's boldness to the Duke and the fear for her future. 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We've had a lot of issues with sound and different technical elements this rehearsal. There was a lot of stopping and starting, but everyone kept a positive attitude! Some people have worked in the pods before, but this is my first time so I am trying to enjoy every moment I can! 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust myself and the work I am doing! Don't focus so much on if I look okay and instead just feel the moment! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 3/31/2021	Time: 8:00pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 3/31/2021	Time: 8:00pm – 10:00pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)	
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We composited Act II tonight! There were still a lot of technical issues (especially audio) so there was a lot of just waiting around. I was scared that my energy would go down when having to wait, but when I did get to work, I was so excited and found that my energy was still high! I think it's definitely because we are all in the same place again! 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeing how close I am to Lysander during the scene really helped me feel more comfortable in my physicality. I also felt so much more comfortable during the nightmare scene. Seeing how it looked on the screen allowed me to get out of my head and gave me more freedom to go bigger like I had wanted. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go big and experiment! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 4/1/2021	Time: 8:00pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 4/1/2021	Time: 8:00pm – 10:00pm
		Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We started composing Act III tonight. We didn't get to do the full Act, but we did get to the scene with Demetrius and me. We all had a laugh today thanks to the OBS system. Somehow, we got tuned into a radio broadcast frequency so we could hear the news live while trying to rehearse. We all thought it was an April Fool's joke! 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We didn't get to do the scene much tonight, but I did feel like I am getting a better sense of distinguishing my personality around Lysander (my true personality) from that of the rest of the characters, especially Demetrius. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust yourself! Carry through on intentions! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 4/5/2021	Time: 6:30pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 4/5/2021	Time: 6:30pm – 8:00pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)	
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We went back and did a little more compositing on Act II tonight in order to fix some technical issues we had been having. 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Today was more of a technical day but I loved watching my fellow actors and getting inspiration from their work in the space. I love seeing how everyone is adapting to the new circumstances and finding ways to experiment in the space! 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay active in lines! Remember I have never said or heard these words before! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 4/6/2021	Time: 6:30pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 4/6/2021	Time: 6:30pm – 8:00pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)	
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We composited the rest of Act III and Act IV tonight! 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These two Acts are the most complicating composition wise. Act III has so much movement that sometimes I can forget where I need to look. Act IV also has the most people on the screen at one time so I'm never quite sure if I am looking at the right person or not. There was a lot going on today so I know I will get clarification, but it was a little confusing tonight. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let the process happen! Don't get too caught up in the technical aspects while we're still learning! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 4/7/2021	Time: 8:45pm
	Location: Tatum Theatre	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 4/7/2021	Time: 8:45pm – 10:00pm
		Location: Tatum Theatre
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We rehearsed on stage again! Act V of the show will be done completely in person in the Tatum Theatre, and we will all be socially distanced and in masks! There was so much light and joy in the company during rehearsal! Getting to act with our peers on the same stage again was such a dream come true. I'm not lying when I say I definitely teared up the first time we ran the scene. 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The joy that I felt for being back on stage performing is just a small example of the joy I know Hermia is feeling during this scene. I found so many moments to interact with the other actors during the scene even though we are socially distanced. Even though my character is sitting for the majority of the scene, I felt my physicality come to life and I was still able to keep the character interesting without drawing too much attention to myself. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the energy alive! Remember how I felt when we ran the scene together for the first time and keep that same feeling! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 4/8/2021	Time: 6:50pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)/ Tatum Theatre	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 4/8/2021	Time: 6:50pm – 10:00pm
		Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)/ Tatum Theatre
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We started rehearsal by running Act V again! I have definitely decided this is my favorite scene of the whole show. We then did a second run thru of the show! This one went a lot better than the first run thru for me! The energy was so much higher, the intentions were so much clearer, and the stakes were so much higher! 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was incredibly nervous about this run because I was scared to forget where I'm supposed to look in each scene. With us not being able to see the monitor I can never know if I am looking at the right person or not. I think I was a little too focused on looking at the right spot for the beginning, but I can definitely tell I loosened up after Act I. I really like the nightmare scene now. I felt very insecure doing it when I was at home, but now that I am in the pod and I have the space to fully explore and vary my vocal life, I feel much more secure. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember my character arc! Especially in accordance with my love for Lysander. 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 4/10/2021	Time: 9:00 am
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)/ Tatum Theatre	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 4/10/2021	Time: 9:00am – 6:00pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)/ Tatum Theatre	
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tech Day 1! 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was the hardest day of rehearsal I have had. I started out the morning fine, but I got my vaccine the day before and started to feel very weak and tired about an hour into rehearsal. Being under stage lights also didn't help. It was very difficult, but we got a lot done and I'm hopeful this will only last for the day. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take care of myself and get plenty of sleep! • Have a good warmup before the next rehearsal! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 4/11/2021	Time: 12:00 pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)/ Tatum Theatre	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 4/11/2021	Time: 12:00pm – 10:00pm
		Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)/ Tatum Theatre
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tech Day 2 and first dress rehearsal! • First time rehearsing in costumes, and it brought so much life! Getting in costume always helps me get into the mindset of a character! I felt so much more confident and like I had finally had that final push that sent me into the world of the character. 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other than a few audio issues, tonight went really well overall! I felt amazing about my character's arc and her journey! I can really see all the hard work coming together. • Tonight, I finally felt like I got the pacing of the show right. I especially felt like I got the urgency in the shared lines in the first scene. I felt like the language work really came through last night, especially when I have shared lines with Lysander. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find new life and opportunities with the costume! • Continue to experiment but also hold on to what worked! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 4/13/2021	Time: 6:00 pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)/ Tatum Theatre	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 4/13/2021	Time: 6:00pm – 11:00pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)/ Tatum Theatre	
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress Rehearsal #2 • I got some new costume pieces tonight, which was really fun to play with! • It's really starting to hit that we open the show in two days! This show means so much to me and I am so blessed to have had this adventure. This show provided so many firsts and I will never forget the experiences I had. 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My scene in Act II when I am alone with Lysander felt so organic tonight. I had made the decision early on that Hermia showed more of her feminine qualities when she was around Lysander because she trusted him enough to be vulnerable around him. This scene is the most I get to play with that aspect because it is just the two of them alone and they are in the most vulnerable place of the show. I love getting to play with how flirtatious she is and getting to share energy with Cody! 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savor the moment! • Note what needs work and celebrate the wins! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 4/14/2021	Time: 6:00 pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)/ Tatum Theatre	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 4/14/2021	Time: 6:00pm – 11:00pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)/ Tatum Theatre	
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Dress Rehearsal!! 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Today was a little difficult. I could tell I was in my head for this last dress, but I could also tell we all were a little tired and stressed. I could tell my nerves got to me a little during the lover's quarrel and I let my power drop a little. My favorite thing about this character is how strong she is. Strength in every character I play is important to me. I want to make sure the strength of this character is shown, especially when she is vulnerable and emotional. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breathe and trust myself, the rest of the cast and crew, and the tech! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 4/15/2021	Time: 6:30 pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)/ Tatum Theatre	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 4/15/2021	Time: 6:30pm – 10:00pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)/ Tatum Theatre	
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WE OPENED!! • KCACTF also watched tonight! 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening night went so well! I am extremely proud of this cast and the work we have done. I started out the show really strong in Act I. It's definitely the best I have felt about that scene in a long time. I felt that I finally was able to show how dire the stakes were for my character. I also felt I was able to show how much I wanted Helena to know the whole situation with Demetrius wasn't my fault. I think the love of the whole show was strong! 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to make discoveries and find the moments! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 4/16/2021	Time: 6:30 pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)/ Tatum Theatre	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 4/16/2021	Time: 6:30pm – 10:45pm
		Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)/ Tatum Theatre
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second night of sharing our show with the world! • KCACTF Response was tonight as well! Loved hearing what they had to say, and they really enjoyed our show! They particularly loved the technical elements of the show and the world that we created. They asked a lot of questions, especially about how we handled the virtual platform. 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were a lot of tech issues tonight and I could tell my energy was a little low. I warmed up before the show, but I think I need to do a more focused vocal warmup to really help. • I realized how powerful the nightmare scene is for my character and how much it shows the audience of my love for Lysander. I was always nervous of being too loud for that part, but that is what her love is like. Her love is loud, and scared, and wanting to be where it belongs. The nightmare is such a turning point for my character, and I appreciate it so much more than I used to. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend a little more time warming up! • Trust myself and her work! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 4/17/2021	Time: 6:30 pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)/ Tatum Theatre	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 4/17/2021	Time: 6:30pm – 11:30pm
		Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)/ Tatum Theatre
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another night sharing our show! • We had a major tech issue tonight and didn't start the show almost an hour later than we were supposed to, but it was the best energy we've had overall! There weren't any other tech issues once we went on! • Photocall was tonight after the show! 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The energy tonight was incredible! I don't know if it was from the adrenaline from the late start or what, but the energy was on fire! • I felt so strong during the lover's quarrel tonight. That scene is very fast paced but I took the time to slow down in some moments and it really helped with the dynamics of the character. I took the time I wasn't speaking to really show how my character felt and I just really enjoyed the overall energy of the scene! 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get some sleep! • Enjoy the moment and be in the moment! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: 4/18/2021	Time: 12:45 pm
	Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)/ Tatum Theatre	

Name: Taylor Alleman	Date: 4/18/2021	Time: 12:45pm – 4:00pm
		Location: Hartwig Theatre (Pods)/ Tatum Theatre
Selection and Author: A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare		
Rehearsal Actions/Activities/Accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We closed out show today. 		
Evaluation of Process/Discoveries/Obstacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Today was so sentimental. You could really tell we were all holding on to the moment and didn't want it to end. The show was so organic and felt like its own dream. I really enjoyed Act IV and V today. I really felt the growth I've made in both scenes since the very beginning. Act IV I felt like I was able to demonstrate the confusion of waking up from the dream but also the clarity once Demetrius admitted his feelings for Helena. I also felt so much magic in the final Act. That scene has always brought me so much joy and it was so hard to let it go. 		
Goals for Next Rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm done! Hermia was my first Shakespeare role, and I will always remember the magic I've felt playing her. I now have a special place in my heart for this role, this show, and this cast. It truly was a dream, and I can't wait to share my process through my thesis! 		

NEXT REHEARSAL	Date: -	Time: -
	Location: -	

APPENDIX C: POD PHOTOS

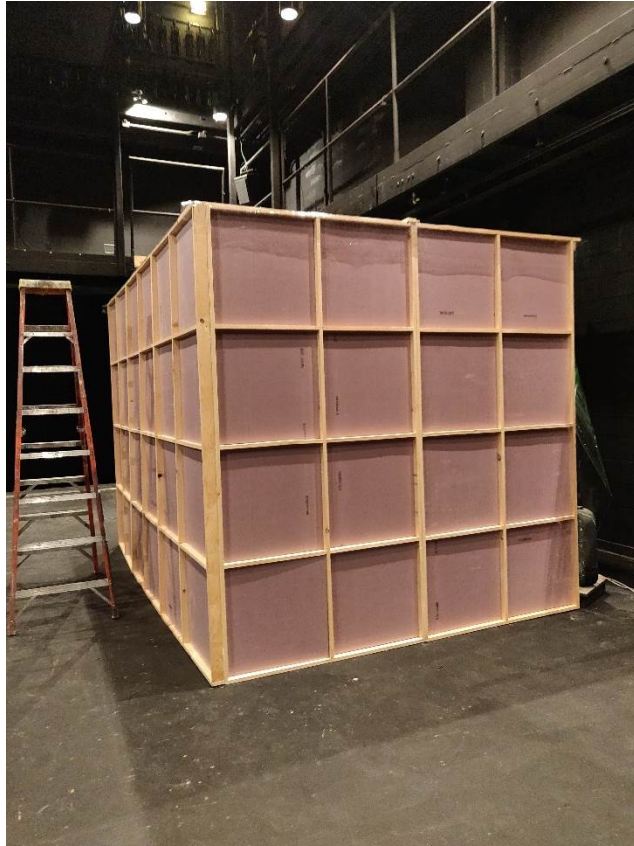


Figure 10
(Toloto)

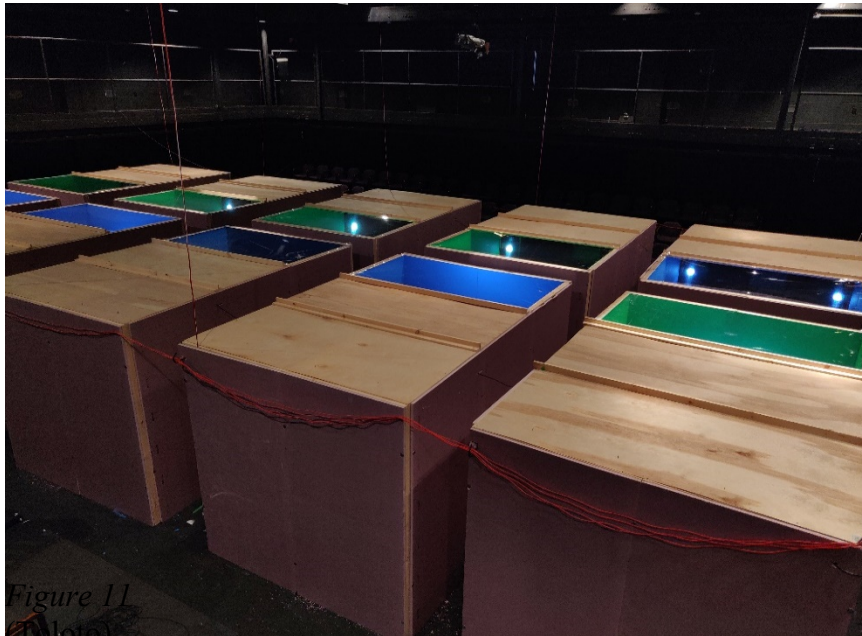


Figure 11
(Toloto)

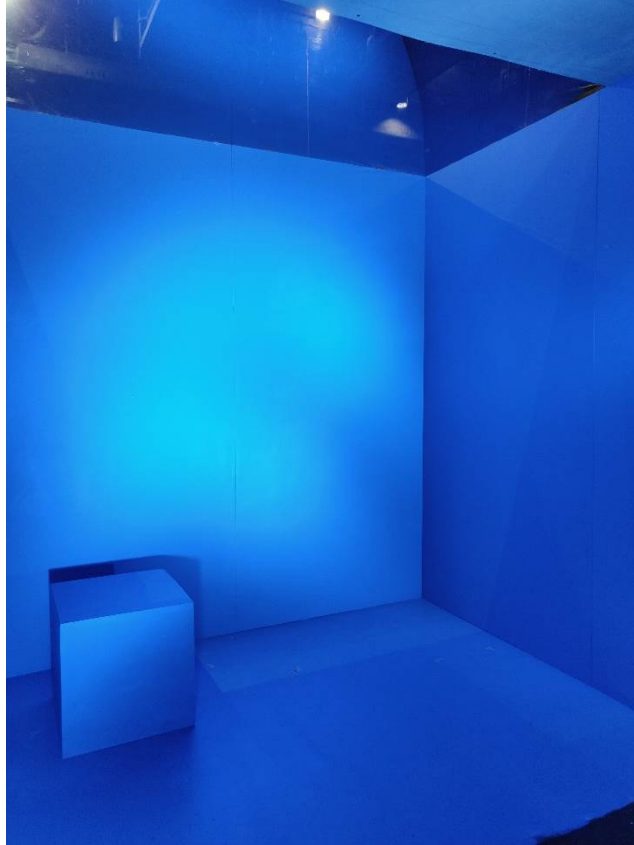


Figure 12
(Toloto)



Figure 13
(Johnson)

APPENDIX D: PRODUCTION PHOTOS



Figure 14
(Coley)



Figure 15
(Coley)



Figure 16
(Coley)

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Fig. 2. Cole, Andrea. "Moon Over Water." 2017. Acrylic.

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Fig. 3. Im Hultberg, Stella. "For No One." 2015. Sumi Ink, Watercolor, Crayon & Gesso

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Fig. 4. Aurora, Julia. "Two Sides of the Same Coin." 2011. Painting.

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Fig. 5. Wall, Josephine. "Love is in the Air." 2007. Painting.

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Fig. 6. Hughes, Edward Robert. "Midsummer Eve." 1908. Oil Painting.

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Fig. 8. Lessac, Arthur. *The Use and Training of the Human Voice: A Bio-Dynamic Approach to Vocal Life*. McGraw-Hill, 1997.

Fig. 9. Ewan, Vanessa, and Sagovsky, Kate. *Laban's Efforts in Action: A Movement Handbook for Actors with Online Video Resources*. United Kingdom, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018.

Fig. 10. Toloto, Aline. Photograph of USM Pods. 2020. Personal Photo.

Fig. 11. Toloto, Aline. Photograph of USM Pods. 2020. Personal Photo.

Fig. 12. Toloto, Aline. Photograph of USM Pods. 2020. Personal Photo.

Fig. 13. Johnson, Abigail. Photograph of USM Pods. 2020. Personal Photo.

Fig. 14. Coley, David. University of Southern Mississippi presents *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. 2021. Production Photo.

Fig. 15. Coley, David. University of Southern Mississippi presents *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. 2021. Production Photo.

Fig. 16. Coley, David. University of Southern Mississippi presents *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. 2021. Production Photo.