

A Journey of Self-Discovery and New Beginnings  
Directing *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and a reflection on  
an undergraduate career well-spent.

A Major Qualifying Project

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WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

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Degree of Bachelor of Science

In Humanities and Arts: Drama/Theatre

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**ADVISOR:**

Professor Susan Vick, WPI

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# Abstract

I completed my Humanities and Arts Drama/Theatre MQP by taking on the role of Director for the B-Term 2015 production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. In order to complete my portfolio of work, I created an illustrated timeline of my experiences in undergraduate theatre at WPI. The Drama/Theatre courses and practical ISPs I took prior to this culminating project gave me a solid foundation in the study of Theatre.

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# Acknowledgements

I would like to personally thank all of the individuals who made this MQP possible.

To Professor Susan Vick: Thank you for guiding me and believing in me when I did not, for challenging me, and for seeing my potential and allowing me the honor of directing the B'15 Humanities and Arts and Masque production. I feel like my life is more serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude thanks to your teaching.

To Erika Hanlan: Thank you for your ever-present and continued support, for the time you commit to every show that comes through the Little Theatre, and for your valuable insights into the production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. I have learned so much from you over the years, and you have taught me many valuable life lessons that I don't think I could have learned anywhere else.

To my cast: You made this show everything I could have ever dreamed and more. Growing alongside you with every rehearsal was a joy. I couldn't have asked for a more wonderful group of actors.

To my exec team and crew: Thank you for sticking by me and always going the extra mile to ensure this production lived up to its full potential. I am so proud to have worked with each and every single one of you.

To all of the members of Masque, VOX, and Alpha Psi Omega: Thank you for all of the time and care you put into the work you do, and for making my time in WPI theatre a truly unforgettable experience.

To my first directors, Ms. Peters and Mr. Wulf: Thank you for casting me in *Seussical the Musical* and getting me over my stage fright! I would never have realized my passion for theatre had you not seen it in me and ignited it.

# Executive Summary

I think that one of the biggest ironies of my life up to this point is that I was too frightened to set foot on a stage until my senior year of high school. Looking at where I am today and everything I've done both on stage and off, I feel like I was born to be in the theatre. When I think back to that first opening night and remember how scared and nervous I was to go onstage, I realize just how far I've really come.

When I first arrived at WPI, I had no idea that after what felt like the four shortest years of my life I would have become a part of the most beautiful community of people I have ever known. Now, as a senior, I am a member of Alpha Psi Omega, I have served on the officer board of Masque, and I have worked on more shows than I can count. I now consider myself to be a well-rounded thespian, with knowledge both of on- and off-stage procedures. I cannot believe how much I've grown, both as a professional and as a person.

When it came time to decide what to do for my MQP, I was at a complete loss. I knew that in order to complete such a large and important project I would have to do more than I had ever done before in any of my previous roles. I wanted to push myself out of my comfort zone, but I didn't know how, until I sat down with Susan to discuss my prospects. Before I realized what I was saying, I asked her if she had chosen a director for the next year's B-Term show. I had never directed before, and I didn't have a clue where to begin, but clearly something was telling me it was time.

I still remember what she said to me after considering and accepting me for the position. She sat me down and told me, "I think it's time we did *Earnest*." I couldn't believe it. I was going to get a chance to direct Oscar Wilde's most famous work? It gave me goosebumps. From the moment we decided on the play, my head was filled with wild dreams of Oscar Wilde's

England: the colors and clothing, the mannerisms and oddities – I couldn't wait to get started. At the same time, I was completely terrified. In time, however, I was able to move past my anxiety. Each day of the production was a learning experience for me, and while I stumbled sometimes, as is inevitable when you are learning something new, I succeeded in the end.

The experience of directing *The Importance of Being Earnest* as a first-time director was one that I wouldn't trade for anything else in the world. It was inspiring and amazingly fun, and, best of all, it was a challenge. To be the figurehead of a production like *Earnest*, to ensure its success with every bit of energy I had, made B-Term 2015 the best term of my WPI undergraduate career. I could not be more proud of how the production turned out.

## An Explanation of this Project

I would like to quickly explore the nature of this particular MQP. I am an artist above all else: my passion lies in design and visual brilliance. While I enjoy writing, the idea of writing one more paper was not one I particularly relished. So, I've done away with the essay portion of this MQP. Instead, I have compiled an illustrated timeline of my journey through my undergraduate career in WPI theatre, starting with my first term as a freshman and culminating with the accomplishment that was the essence of this MQP: directing *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Is that the end of my WPI theatre career? Definitely not. But it was the climax, at least academically speaking.

I hope that the visual I have prepared for this project will do a better job of explaining what my time in WPI theatre has been for me better than anything I could put down on paper. Sometimes, actions speak louder than words, and I believe that this is one of those times.

# Appendix A: British Resource List

Below is a list of resources that I utilized while directing *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

These resources were shared with my cast to help them understand life in Victorian England, the essence of the British accent, and, most importantly, British humor.

## **British Humour**

- Fawlty Towers, starring John Cleese.
- Jeeves and Wooster, starring Hugh Laurie.
  - Based on a book called *The Inimitable Jeeves*.
- Monty Python's Flying Circus.
- Cabin Pressure, as written by John Finnemore and aired on BBC Radio.
- TIME Magazine: "The Difference Between American and British Humour," by Ricky Gervais
- Uncyclopedia: "British Humour," open source.

## **Accent Work**

- Audiobooks: J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, as read by Jim Dale.
- YouTube: "3 minutes to a proper British accent" with University of Alberta professor David Ley.

## **More Oscar Wilde**

- *Lady Windermere's Fan* (2014 film, starring Sarah Navratil)
- *An Ideal Husband* (1999 film, starring Cate Blanchett)



## Appendix B: Log of Hours Worked

<b>MONTH</b>	<b>HOURS</b>
March	10
April	10
May	10
June	10
July	10
August	20
September	22
October	77
November	85
December	18
January	15
February	18
March	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>310</b>

Appendix C: Photographs

















































## Appendix D: Play List

### Plays

Aeschylus	<i>The Oresteia</i>
Albee, Edward	<i>A Delicate Balance</i>
	<i>Fam and Yam</i>
	<i>The Sandbox</i>
	<i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolfe?</i>
	<i>The Zoo Story</i>
Anderson, Douglas	<i>The Beams are Creaking</i>
Anonymous	<i>Everyman</i>
	<i>The Second Shepherd's Play</i>
Aristophanes	<i>Lysistrata</i>
Barlow, Patrick (from John Buchanan and Alfred Hitchcock)	<i>The 39 Steps</i>
Beckett, Samuel	<i>Waiting for Godot</i>
Bellisario, Sebastian	<i>Golden</i>
Bernas, Ron	<i>A Little Murder Never Hurt Anybody</i>
Brecht, Bertolt	<i>The Threepenny Opera</i>
Broslawski, Casey	<i>Psych 117</i>
	<i>The Sixth Experiment</i>
Cafarelli, Emily	<i>OOPS I SMOKED CRACK AGAIN</i>
Carlson, Tofer	<i>Out of Time</i>
	<i>To Thine Spy Self Be True</i>
Chekhov, Anton	<i>The Seagull</i>
Collard, Jeffery	<i>Growing Pains</i>
Congdon, Constance	<i>Tales of the Lost Formicans</i>
Corwin, Daniel & Christian Roberts	<i>Pre-Planning</i>
Coward, Noël	<i>Blithe Spirit</i>
Cyganski, Nicholas C.	<i>Foxtrot Delta Romeo</i>
Euripides	<i>Medea</i>
Fletcher, Holly	<i>The Beacon</i>
	<i>New England Weather</i>
Giapoudzi, Despoina	<i>Red Hair</i>
Goethe	<i>Faust, Part One</i>
Haehnel, Alan	<i>A Simple Task</i>
Hansberry, Lorraine	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>
Healey, Shannon	<i>Repudiation</i>
Hellman, Lillian	<i>The Little Foxes</i>
	<i>Toys in the Attic</i>
Henley, Beth	<i>Crimes of the Heart</i>
Hewgley, Nicolás R. & Michael Goldman	<i>Exit</i>
Hwang, David Henry	<i>M. Butterfly</i>
Ibsen, Henrik	<i>A Doll's House</i>

Eugène Ionesco	<i>The Chairs</i>
	<i>Exit the King</i>
Kalidasa	<i>Shakuntala</i>
Kelly, Tim (from Lewis Carroll)	<i>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland</i>
King, Louisa	<i>Barbecue Chicken Pizza</i>
Kiyotsugu Kan'ami, Kanze	<i>Matsukazi</i>
Kushner, Tony	<i>Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Times</i>
Lawrence, Jerome & Robert Edwin Lee	<i>Inherit the Wind</i>
Letts, Tracy	<i>August: Osage County</i>
Loehle, Victoria	<i>Are There Trees in Heaven?</i>
	<i>The Rower</i>
Lorca, Garcia	<i>The Shoemaker's Prodigious Wife</i>
Maitland, Ian & Mark Swanson	<i>Glass Adam's Day Off</i>
Mamet, David	<i>American Buffalo</i>
	<i>Glengarry Glen Ross</i>
	<i>Race</i>
	<i>Speed-the-Plow</i>
	<i>The Woods</i>
Marlowe, Christopher	<i>Doctor Faustus</i>
Medeiros, Nicholas	<i>Me, Moi-Même, and I</i>
	<i>Quantum Madness</i>
Miller, Arthur	<i>All My Sons</i>
	<i>The Crucible</i>
	<i>Death of a Salesman</i>
Miller, Arthur (from Henrik Ibsen)	<i>An Enemy of the People</i>
Moliere	<i>Tartuffe</i>
Murray, Dan	<i>Fur Heaven's Sake</i>
Murvihill, Dolan	<i>I'll See You Tomorrow</i>
Norris, Bruce	<i>Clybourne Park</i>
O'Casey	<i>The Shadow of a Gunman</i>
O'Neill, Eugene	<i>Anna Christie</i>
	<i>Long Day's Journey Into Night</i>
	<i>A Moon for the Misbegotten</i>
Pinter, Harold	<i>The Room</i>
Pirandello, Luigi	<i>Six Characters in Search of an Author</i>
Putzke, Hunter	<i>Three Ways from Here</i>
Rock, Alex	<i>Grave Intentions</i>
Ross Miller, Chelsea	<i>In Times Like These, I Choose Love</i>
Rostand, Edmund	<i>Cyrano de Bergerac</i>
Ruhl, Sarah	<i>Eurydice</i>
Sarte	<i>Dirty Hands</i>
Shakespeare, William	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>
	<i>As You Like It</i>

	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>
	<i>Coriolanus</i>
	<i>Hamlet</i>
	<i>Henry IV: Part I</i>
	<i>Henry V</i>
	<i>Julius Caesar</i>
	<i>King Lear</i>
	<i>Love's Labors Lost</i>
	<i>Macbeth</i>
	<i>Measure for Measure</i>
	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>
	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>
	<i>Othello</i>
	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
	<i>The Tempest</i>
	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>
Shaw, Bernard	<i>Saint Joan</i>
Shepherd, Sam	<i>True West</i>
Sibley, Katelyne	<i>Tea Time</i>
Simpson, Angela	<i>Overkill</i>
Sinn Nachtrieb, Peter	<i>boom</i>
Smith, Andrew	<i>Color the Sky Orange</i>
	<i>A Promise</i>
Sophocles	<i>Oedipus</i>
Stanway, Kimberly	<i>Silence Speaks for Me</i>
Stoppard, Tom	<i>15-Minute Hamlet</i>
	<i>The Real Inspector Hound</i>
Strindberg, Gaugust	<i>Miss Julie</i>
Swanson, Mark	<i>The Apathy Fairy</i>
Synge	<i>The Playboy of the Western World</i>
Teatum, Samuel	<i>War Stories</i>
Valdez, Luis	<i>Zoot Suit and Other Plays</i>
Vogel, Paula	<i>How I Learned to Drive</i>
Wedekind, Frank	<i>The Awakening of Spring</i>
Wilde, Oscar	<i>An Ideal Husband</i>
	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>
	<i>Lady Windermere's Fan</i>
	<i>A Woman of No Importance</i>
Wilder, Thorton	<i>Our Town</i>
Williams, Tennessee	<i>Cat on a Hot Tin Roof</i>
	<i>The Glass Menagerie</i>
	<i>The Rose Tattoo</i>
	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>

Wilson, August	<i>Fences</i>
Yeats	<i>Cathleen no Houlihan</i>
Zacarias, Karen	<i>Legacy of Light</i>
Zager, James (from William Shakespeare)	<i>The Shakespeare Project</i>

## Musicals

*Alice in Wonderland*  
*Anything Goes*  
*Avenue Q*  
*Cats*  
*Charlotte's Web*  
*Chicago*  
*Fela!*  
*Grease*  
*Guys and Dolls*  
*H.M.S. Pinafore*  
*Hedwig and the Angry Inch*  
*I Love You Because*  
*Into the Woods*  
*Jekyll & Hyde*  
*Jesus Christ Superstar*  
*The King and I*  
*Les Misérables*  
*The Lion King*  
*Mary Poppins*  
*The Mikado*  
*Man of La Mancha*  
*Next to Normal*  
*The Pajama Game*  
*The Phantom of the Opera*  
*Pirates of Penzance*  
*Oklahoma!*  
*On the Way: The Musical*  
*Once on this Island*  
*Rent*  
*Seussical!: The Musical*  
*The Sound of Music*  
*South Pacific*  
*Wicked*  
*The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*

# Appendix E: Theatre Resume

**School Address:**  
100 Institute Rd.  
WPI Mailbox #948  
01609

**MAEVE MCCLUSKEY**  
maeve.mccluskey@gmail.com  
wpi.edu/~mmcluskey  
617-460-7956

**Permanent Address:**  
66 Hall Avenue  
Watertown, MA  
02472

**EDUCATION:** **Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), Worcester, MA**  
**Bachelor of Science in Interactive Media and Game Development with Concentration in Art & Bachelor of Science in Humanities and Arts: Drama/Theatre, GPA 3.61, May 2016**

**Watertown High School (WHS), Watertown, MA**  
**High School Diploma, GPA 4.0, June 2012**

**Related Coursework:**  
Intro to Drama: Theatre on the Page and Stage, Theatre Workshop, Shakespeare in the Age of Elizabeth, American Drama, Modern Drama, Humanities and Arts Practicum, Humanities and Arts Major Qualifying Project

**SKILLS:** **Computer – Administrative:** Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Apple Pages, Keynote, Numbers  
**Computer – Artistic:** Adobe Photoshop, Autodesk 3ds Max, Maya, Reaper  
**Computer – Other Applications:** WinSCP  
**Programming Languages:** HTML, CSS, Python  
**Theatre:** Acting, Backstage Management, Booth Operation, Directing, Graphic Design, Playwriting, Projection Design, Publicity Management, Scenic Design, Stage Management

**RELEVANT PROJECT EXPERIENCE:** **Humanities and Arts (HUA) Practicum, Drama/Theatre, March-May 2014**  
**Playing Watson to a Madman: Acting in *New Voices 32***  
Assembled a report, including a journal, on the experience of acting in *New Voices 32*, the longest-running collegiate original work theatre festival in the country. Specifically, acted in the show *Repudiation*, written by Shannon Healey, a fellow WPI student. Attended rehearsals, production meetings, cue-to-cue, and tech previews. Performed for four consecutive nights as part of the larger festival, containing nine works in total.

**HUA Major Qualifying Project (MQP), Drama/Theatre, August 2015-March 2016\***  
**Directing *The Importance of Being Earnest***  
I completed my Humanities and Arts Drama/Theatre MQP by taking on the role of Director for the B-Term 2015 production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. In order to complete my portfolio of work, I created an illustrated timeline of my experiences in undergraduate theatre at WPI. The Drama/Theatre courses and practical ISPs I took prior to this culminating project gave me a solid foundation in the study of Theatre.  
\*Projected date of completion

**PAST THEATRE EXPERIENCE – OFF-STAGE:** **Educational, Worcester Polytechnic Institute**  
*Exit the King*, Graphic Designer, Masque, February 2016  
*The Importance of Being Earnest*, Director, Masque, November 2015  
*The Real Inspector Hound*, Sound Designer, Masque, October 2015  
*Eurydice*, Sound Designer, Masque, February 2015  
*Avenue Q*, Graphic Designer, VOX, January 2015  
*An Enemy of the People*, Co-Publicity Manager, Masque, November 2014  
*The Beams are Creaking*, Graphic Designer, Masque, September 2014

*Unsung Broadway*, Graphic Designer, VOX, April 2014  
*New Voices 32: The Global Wish Fulfillment Agency*, Playwright, Masque, April 2014  
*New Voices 32*, Projection Designer, Masque, April 2014  
*boom*, Graphic Designer, Masque, February 2014  
*The 39 Steps*, Assistant Scenic Designer, M.W. Rep, January 2014  
*The 39 Steps*, Scenic Crew, M.W. Rep, January 2014  
*Inherit the Wind*, Scenic Crew, Masque, November 2013  
*The Awakening of Spring*, Stage Manager/Assistant Director, M.W. Rep, September 2013  
*A Little Murder Never Hurt Anybody*, Stage Manager, M.W. Rep Sunburns, July 2013  
*A Simple Task*, Teaching Assistant, WPI Frontiers Summer Program, July 2013  
*New Voices 31: Out of Time*, Stage Manager, Masque, April 2013  
*Crimes of the Heart*, Sound Board Operator, Masque, February 2013  
*Crimes of the Heart*, Scenic Crew, Masque, February 2013  
*The Comedy of Errors*, Graphic Designer, Masque, November 2012  
*The Comedy of Errors*, Scenic Crew, Masque, November 2012

**PAST THEATRE EXPERIENCE – ON-STAGE:**

**Educational**, Worcester Polytechnic Institute  
*How I Learned to Drive*, Actor (Li'l Bit), Masque, February 2016  
*The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, Actor ("Logainne SchwartzandGrubenierre"), VOX, January 2016  
*The Real Inspector Hound*, Actor ("Lady Cynthia Muldoon"), Masque, October 2015  
*Eurydice*, Actor ("Little Stone"), Masque, February 2015  
*Avenue Q*, Puppeteer ("Girl Bad Idea Bear," "Mrs. T," Trekkie arm), VOX, January 2015  
*An Enemy of the People*, Actor ("Catherine Stockmann"), Masque, November 2014  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Actor ("Hermia"), Shakespeare on the Quad, October 2014  
*The Beams are Creaking*, Actor ("Sabine Bonhoeffer," "Maria Van Wedemeyer," "General Brandt"), Masque, September 2014  
*New Voices 32: Repudiation*, Actor ("Jenny Walcott"), Masque, April 2014  
*Inherit the Wind*, Actor ("Mr. Bannister/Mr. Bollinger"), Masque, November 2013  
*New Voices 31: To Thine Spy Self Be True*, Actor ("Sam"), Masque, April 2013  
*Blithe Spirit*, Actor ("Ruth Condomine"), M.W. Rep, January 2013  
*Legacy of Light*, Actor ("Millie," "Pauline"), M.W. Rep, September 2012

**Educational**, Watertown High School  
*Seussical!: The Musical*, Actor ("Jojo"), May 2012

**RELEVANT EXPERIENCE:**

**Resource Librarian & Webmaster**, Drama/Theatre (D/T) Office, WPI, March 2013-present
 

- Assist students and program faculty with academic-related queries
- Keep D/T Office and Resource Library well-organized and up-to-date
- Maintain D/T website

**Drama/Theatre Teaching Assistant**, WPI Frontiers Summer Program, WPI, August 2013
 

- Taught campers technical theatre skills
- Assisted campers in putting on a production of *A Simple Task*, by Alan Haehnel

**ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE:**

**IMGD Digital Painting & Game Design Teaching Assistant**, WPI Frontiers & Launch Summer Programs, WPI, July-August 2015  
**Instructor**, iD Tech Camps, iD Tech, June-August 2014  
**Data Analysis Specialist**, Genzyme, June-August 2013

**ACTIVITIES:**        **Member, Induction Chair (D 2016)**, Alpha Psi Omega Theatre Honors Society, Rho Kappa Cast, WPI, April 2014-present  
                         **Member, Secretary (2013-2014), Vice President Publicity (2014-2015), Actor, Director, Graphic Designer, Playwright, Projection Designer, Sound Designer, Stage Manager**, Masque Theatre, WPI, August 2012-present  
                         **Member, Actor, Stage Manager, Graphic Designer, Scenic Designer**, M.W. Repertory Theatre Co., Etc., August 2012-April 2014  
                         **Member, Actor, Graphic Designer**, VOX Musical Theatre, WPI, August 2012-present  
                         **Member, Singer (Alto/Mezzo)**, Audiophiles Co-Ed A Cappella, WPI, January 2013-present  
                         **Member, Improv/Other Actor, Writer, Graphic Designer**, {Empty Set} Experimental Comedy, WPI, September 2013-present  
                         **Member, Actor**, Kilroy Sketch Comedy, WPI, January 2013-present

**HONORS:**            **Elected Induction Chair for D-2016 (March-April) Induction Class**, Rho Kappa Cast, Alpha Psi Omega, WPI, February 2016  
                         **Produced Playwright**, *New Voices* Festival, WPI, April 2014  
                         **Inductee**, Rho Kappa Cast, Alpha Psi Omega, WPI, April 2014  
                         **Induction Nominee**, Rho Kappa Cast, Alpha Psi Omega, WPI, March 2014  
                         **Elected Vice President Publicity for 2014-2015 Academic Year**, Masque, WPI, February 2014  
                         **Elected Secretary for 2013-2014 Academic Year**, Masque, WPI, February 2013



## Epilogue

I touched on the fact that although my WPI undergraduate theatre career climaxed with this MQP it was by no means the end. At the time I am writing this, I have just completed my final C-Term production in the Little Theatre, acting in the leading role of Li'l Bit in Paula Vogel's *How I Learned to Drive*. I am also preparing for *New Voices 34*, in which I will see my original play, *Here be PIRATES!* produced, serve as Graphic Designer, and act in a play which has yet to be determined. I intend to make my last term in theatre more than worth it, and to take all of the beautiful memories I have made at WPI out into the world with me. I am tremendously proud of how much I have grown, and I will always look back on this time of my life with incredible fondness.

“I’ve now realised for the first time in my life the vital Importance of Being Earnest.”

– Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*