

A Director's Journey to the Conservatory Stage

A Major Qualifying Project Report

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by

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Table of Contents

Abstract	3
Directing Portfolio	4
Trusted Download	4
Bower Bird	5
Thirty-Six Situations	8
The Change	10
Six Characters in Search of an Author.....	11
On The Adaptation	11
Artistic Vision	12
Design Elements	12
On Casting.....	15
The Children.....	15
The Conservatory Experience	17
Essays.....	18
From Actor to Director.....	18
A Director's Role	20
Literature Review.....	22
Play List.....	23
Appendices.....	24

Appendix A:	Production Crew	24
Appendix B:	Cast List	25
Appendix C:	Summary of Hours.....	27
Appendix D:	Scenic Design: “Art and Design” by Elena Ainley	29
Appendix E:	Lighting Cues	31
Appendix F:	Instrument Schedule	32
Appendix G:	Costume Budget	35
Appendix H:	Poster Design	38
Appendix I:	Director’s Note	39
Appendix J:	Rehearsal Notes	40

Abstract

In November 2010, the WPI Department of Humanities and Arts and Masque presented *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, in a new translation by Robert Brustein, and adapted for the WPI stage by Ben LaVerriere. This MQP presents the experience of the director throughout the process of staging *Six Characters*, as well as a portfolio of prior work in directing. This project presents the work in narrative form, with photos, documents, and original designs from the production.

Directing Portfolio

Trusted Download

New Voices 26 provided me with my first chance at the directing experience. I expressed my desire to Dominic DiGiovanni, the author of *Trusted Download*, and he agreed to let me co-direct with Lindsey Lucier, an older student who had previous directing experience. I am forever grateful to Lindsey; she took on a mentoring role and really let me stretch myself as a director.

For a first directing experience, Cyberpunk was an intriguing genre. I really enjoyed the outrageous action and reveled in the intense moments of violence and insanity. I took advantage of lighting and sound, and was very pleased with the outcome, which received good reactions from our audiences.

Bower Bird

After New Voices, I was approached by Cara Marcy who was seeking a director for *Bower Bird*, a show she wanted to pitch as producer for MW Repertory Theatre Co.'s A-Term play. The play was written by a frequent New Voices playwright, Haz Harrower. I felt *very* important of course, and made sure to play hard-to-get while discussing the matter over lunch, all the time knowing I'd be accepting regardless. I did have some concerns which were voiced during that meeting, such as the set requirements and the flow of the play. It was a romantic comedy, and read to me very much like a screenplay, with frequent scene changes and a variety of locales. Cara presented an innovative set design which addressed the situation and I was confident we could pull it off.

I had never attended a voting meeting of MW Rep before, and was not sure what to expect. I was told to bring along friends, as anyone could vote and it was clearly the best strategy for winning. However, the lasting emotions I associate with the meeting are guilt and embarrassment, as the friends I brought were the only ones who were not very intimately involved in theatre at WPI. Needless to say, we won the vote and I was given my first chance at directing a feature-length show.

When auditions and casting were upon us, I decided to take a risk and cast freshmen in three of the four lead roles. They were all spectacular in audition, and had the look I wanted. Passing on more senior actors was difficult, and I certainly felt pressure to cast them, but everyone understood the value of giving young actors a great role to start on. Having been in the same situation just a year prior, I also understood the value of giving young actors great opportunities. My casting decisions also presented an interesting grouping of the actors, as there were a few roles which were small but hilarious. These were filled by more experienced actors

who were comfortable with each other, so that aspect was taken care of well and I could focus on the leads.

Romantic comedy had never been my genre of choice, but I took rather a liking to it by the end. I tried my best to stay true to the style while making it a bit more self-conscious, having the actors subtly recognizing the clichés and absurdities of the romantic comedy plot devices, which made them a bit more believable.



Figure 1: Bowerbird cast, showing the complete set, designed to represent the two doctors' offices as well as the an apartment level which was used for both apartments.



Figure 2: A speed date. Additional scenes were played in front of the set.



Figure 3: Both actors cast as female leads were freshmen.

Thirty-Six Situations

When New Voices 27 came along, I was pretty confident as a director, and set my sights on a challenging piece, *Thirty-Six Situations* by Ben LaVerriere. This was the first play I had directed which involved a layer of abstraction, with a great deal of flexibility in interpretation and presentation. It also had a very large cast, which would be difficult to manage during New Voices because so many people were performing multiple roles in the event.

I have included my initial pitch to the playwright below:

It seems implicit in the script that the 36 situations should be (although technically somewhat contiguous) independent and separate ones. The dialog styles and diction is changing at each junction to reflect the type of theatre which generally employs the situation being examined. I really want to make these distinctions clear and have each actor go through abrupt vocal changes and the like to reflect these changes. Most of the situations are quite melodramatic and lend themselves well to a Monty Python sketch style, an impression I got from the Narrator character as well (think John Cleese).

This play is obviously very fast-paced and high-energy, and I want to capture that without resorting to making it just loud and rushed. Instead I'm feeling a very engaging, dynamic staging that would focus on the Narrator's compelling lecture as he guides the audience through the various situations. I can see the Narrator practically hushing the audience and the actors as he describes the more subtle scenes.

Another important thing I wanted to address is the "meta" element of the play (I know it's not really meta. Props to you). I would definitely have a very clear lighting difference between the "reality" of the classroom and the "play" demonstrating the situations. When the Ringmaster brings us out of it, there would be a quick lighting change back, but soon the lights would start to slowly transition back to the "stage" as the two meld into one.

Overall, I want the play to be a thought-provoking as well as entertaining experience. I don't want to rush through and glaze over the situations because it's a really interesting subject which deserves proper attention.

I hope this helps,

Joel Sutherland

My pitch was received favorably and I was given the directing position. This experience forced me to consider many foundational aspects of the play before starting work, which was very helpful when faced with a large cast and limited rehearsal time which is a part of directing a festival play.

The Change

New Voices 28 was the first time I really started to view myself first and foremost as a director, rather than an actor. By this time, I already knew I would be directing the B-Term show in the following year, so I was excited to get in one more short play to hone my skills. *The Change* by Steven Vessella was perfect. I was given the opportunity to create a unique atmosphere, since the play consisted mainly of chants and song. It was during this time that I first started to see myself as a mentor to younger students in the play. I had always taken my directing roles seriously, but I had seen myself mostly as an actor in a “meta” role.

This play was my first directing experience with a musical element. The play featured a rhythmic chant of “Make Money Money” by The Man, which is echoed by the dreary masses until challenged by “The Revolutionary” spouting more substantial goals and ideals. The biggest initial hurdle was dealing with the limited experience of the actors in the area of music. A great deal of time was spent outside of rehearsal working on rhythms, something I hardly expected to do as a play director. This element also provided new freedom for me while determining the look and feel of the play. I worked through many iterations of rhythm and cadence before settling on the final sound, a hard pounding chant reinforced by the beat of The Man’s staff.

Six Characters in Search of an Author



On The Adaptation

The script we used was an adaptation by Ben LaVerriere of the Robert Brustein adaptation of Luigi Pirandello's play *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. In the original, the play was set in a contemporary theatre, with members of Brustein's own company performing one of his other plays. Brustein determined that to stay truest to its original intended effect, *Six Characters* had to be adapted to fit the company performing it. LaVerriere took that concept and adapted the show for the Little Theatre, and for a cast of WPI students presumably working on a New Voices play.

Handling an adapted work presented unique challenges and opportunities for me. Having access to the adapter, who also served as dramaturg, was a fantastic resource, and helped to quickly resolve questions regarding the script or the interpretation of his or Pirandello's words.

Artistic Vision

Design Elements



Figure 4: The completed stage, bare before a performance.

The set design was based on the paintings of Salvador Dali, and expressed among other things the motif of the manipulation of time. This complemented the anachronisms of Pirandello's characters in the modern theatre, and tied in with the play being rehearsed by the company, *Stopping Time*, itself of course being the same reference.

The use of lighting to set the characters apart has been used widely in productions of the play. The way we implemented this was to have the actions of the characters subtly impact the

lighting in the theatre, a reflection of their special status as raw theatre themselves. The effects began small but by the climax of the action were quite profound.



Figure 5: The Characters are bathed in a special light, which sets them apart from the Company. The question of the difference is central to the theory of the play.

Costuming for the characters was done as a modest version of the typical method. The characters arrived in black, and facial features were accentuated with makeup to reinforce their prevailing emotions. Members of the cast were attired in typical modern dress, as they were essentially “playing themselves” or something close to it.



Figure 6: Members of the Company interact with lighting fixtures, raising questions about the lines between the reality inside and outside the confines of the play.

The ending was a very interesting problem in this play. The variant written by Ben was quite different from Pirandello's original, but he remained open to changes and interpretations. I toyed with a number of alternatives and was never totally convinced that our final decision was ideal. The staging of the final scene was important in conveying the nature of the Characters, whether they are real or merely illusions. The scene which was performed, in which an apparition of the character's costumes was quickly shown before a blackout, left the question largely unanswered, which was consistent with Ben's desires but came across as confusing to many in the audience.

On Casting

The casting for this show was by far the most delicate I had experienced. Several roles required a great deal of talent and work to develop. I was also presented with a very large and talented body of actors who auditioned. I was forced to make some difficult decisions, and present some very talented actors with less prominent roles than they deserved. In one case, it was met with much grace and understanding, but it also presented me with one of the most difficult situations of my career when two actors withdrew after being cast as members of the company. I reacted initially with understanding, but I was eventually convinced that such action was not tolerable among those who care about the art of theatre. This taught me something about myself: I was too lenient when it came to things which really mattered. I tried for the rest of the production to make sure to keep the best interests of the play before my personal sensibilities.

A unique aspect of this adapted play was that the lines written for the company were not assigned to individuals, as the individuals had not yet been cast. I was given the task of doing the assignments, which is a pleasure the director is rarely afforded. This process gave me the opportunity to play a large part in the development of characters before even starting rehearsal. With the goodwill of the adapter, of course, I was able to forge consistent characters and personalities, matching the abilities of my actors with the plot requirements of the play.

The Children

Another rare aspect I had to handle was the inclusion of two child characters in the show. With the help of several contacts, I tried to find children who could fill the silent yet dramatic roles. Below is an example of a letter I used when searching for actors:

Hello,

Thank you so much for helping us out in this. I am directing a play at WPI titled *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. It is a well-established international play which has been adapted for our theater. The roles we need are a boy aged 11-14 and a girl aged 7-10. The roles are silent, but they involve a lot of stage time and some intense scenes. The characters they represent are part of a tragedy. At the climax of the play, the girl is depicted accidentally drowning in a pond and the boy shooting himself with a revolver. There are also some adult themes in the play and some profanity, but nothing explicit or particularly shocking. I understand that this can be unsettling when asking parents to allow their kids to do this, but this is a very important and profound piece of art which will be an amazing experience for the children. I have attached the script if anyone needs to look it over.

As for time commitments, the children would need to be present from 6:00 until 10:00 or possibly 11:00 from Monday Nov. 15th through Saturday Nov. 20th. The performances are Nov. 18th-20th.

Thank you so much for your help,

Joel Sutherland

Letters were sent to contacts at local schools and church groups, as well as to WPI faculty and staff. However, we were unable to secure children in time for the show, so we went to plan B. I recruited an experienced alumna who could look the part of the boy to appear in that role and we replaced the little girl with a doll, which was not difficult as the girl was always being held by one character or another.



Figure 7: *The Little Girl and the Boy*, shown with the Stepdaughter.

The Conservatory Experience

The edifice of the Conservatory provided me with a great deal of support throughout the process. I received substantial artistic support from Professor Vick and from the contributions of Dominic DiGiovanni and Steven Vessella, prior Conservatory directors. I was also provided a large budget along with high expectations and responsibilities. The B-Term show, which was directed by Susan Vick for decades, became well known for showcasing hit plays. Coupled with the success of the Conservatory directors before me, there was a lot to be expected of me. I found the environment to be at times overwhelming, but as a whole a productive one. The added aura of importance lent weight to our work in the theatre.

Essays

Looking back at my directing experiences, I have learned a great deal about work and art in the theatre. My journey, as any artistic journey, has been unique. In the following essays, I will share my personal transition from actor to director, and present what I have learned regarding the role of the director in live theatre.

From Actor to Director

The scene: La Serna High School, opening night of *Amadeus*. A sixteen-year-old Salieri adjusts his turban and robe, concealing the 18th-Century get-up underneath. He anxiously paces backstage, preparing for the most ambitious performance of his life. The director walks in with a stack of programs, and the actors, excited for something to distract them from the impending event, snatch their copies. Salieri quickly stops the director. “Hey why am I also listed as Assistant Director?”

That memory of this scene still makes me blush a little. Throughout my acting experience, I’ve never been able to shake my desire to direct and it has gotten me in trouble from time to time. During the production of *Amadeus*, I took a great interest in the artistic direction of the show. Luckily, my director liked what he heard and decided not to shut me down. When I arrived at WPI, I knew I wouldn’t get away with backseat directing and wanted to direct my own show as soon as possible.

In my experiences as an actor, I discovered a lot of things that “worked” for me. I devised techniques for managing my vocal behaviors, and I found favorite spots to plant in the Little Theatre. By the time I started directing, I had a good sense of how I liked to act, and was interested in communicating those techniques as well as discovering what the actors can bring.

The real project was discerning the most useful things to communicate to my actors. My initial approach was fairly hands-off. As a freshman director in New Voices 26, I did not feel particularly qualified to direct, and I was fortunate enough to have a very talented cast.

As a director, I have taken many lessons from my acting experiences. Having been in the position myself, I acknowledge that actors often have important and useful contributions to the artistic development of the play as a whole, not just within the confines of a directorially-decreed stereotyped character. The great struggle has been finding a balance between allowing the actors freedom, and maintaining a consistent vision and presentation. I have found most actors to respond well to this style, and accept my “final word” when it is necessary. Any initial fears I entertained about losing control by giving actors too much freedom were found to be baseless.

It is of course foolish to assume that all actors will be like I am when acting, so it is important that a director recognizes the learning style of each actor and acts accordingly. Some actors will flourish when given free rein, but others prefer to be told what to do. Observing the characteristics of each actor has been an important part of my process as a director, and my experiences as an actor have helped me do that. There is a unique relationship found among a group of actors in a play. The nature of the shared experience draws people together, but all too often there can emerge a combative mentality between the actors and the director. I try my best to become “one of them” as much as is reasonable. For centuries, there were no explicit single directors of plays, and that role was often filled by a senior actor. That is the tradition I would like to uphold.

A Director's Role

The role of the director is a relatively recent phenomenon in the world of theatre, and the expectations and capabilities of the director are wide-ranging. When I first began directing, a great deal of time and effort went into determining what exactly the most useful role was for me to perform. Should I focus on imposing a very specific artistic aim, providing continuity which would be unattainable without a director? Or should I instead serve as a facilitator for the artistic contributions of the actors? How much power should I hand to my designers? These are not trivial questions, and they are in the domain of the Director to decide.

Over the course of my directing, I settled in to a comfortable blend of high-level conceptual direction and very specific notes for actors and designers. I made sure to communicate the ideas clearly ahead of time, and inform the actors when their performance was inconsistent with the overall desired effect. I always encouraged the actors to vary their performances, testing out new ways of expressing their lines and living their characters. I believe this has been a productive method, and actors have responded well to it.

A useful technique I decided to implement for *Six Characters* was a sort of “literature discussion” with the actors early in the rehearsal process. I always found classroom discussions to be of enormous help in properly understanding a complex play and wanted to preserve that in the production setting. The sessions we had were very well-received by the actors and helped to iron out conceptual errors and misunderstandings. In retrospect, I am surprised that this is not done explicitly with more regularity, at least in plays in which I have been a part. It is something I always desired as an actor and was finally able to provide as a director.

The director also is responsible for the mood and the motivation for the play. This is a very delicate task, especially when dealing with challenging literature. I am in awe of the capabilities of past conservatory directors and their powers to inspire, and I hoped to live up to their examples. Late in the production period, when there is little room for substantial changes, the most important thing a director can do it to create an atmosphere which allows the performers to thrive. This has been a difficult concept for me to grasp, and I can recall several instances when I have forgotten this in frantic moments. It is always very tempting to try to tweak every little thing before the curtain but there is a very real danger of getting in the way of the actors being able to perform their best.

The role of the director can take on many forms, but the fundamental goal is to provide those elements which need a single, definitive voice. Many times, the most useful thing a director can do is to simply *make decisions*, vitally important for reaching the inflexible publication deadline. The director also must facilitate congruity among the different roles, as no single actor can fully exempt himself from his or her role and see it from the outside. Finally, the director must take care of all the things which distract the performers from their work, overseeing the design and execution of technical and organizational aspects of the production. This also includes the maintenance of an environment of civility during the production process, in order that the necessary business can be accomplished effectively.

Literature Review

To prepare for this experience, I reviewed selected essays from *Directors on Directing: A Source Book to the Modern Theater* by Ed. Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy (Rev. ed. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1963), including “The Emergence of the Director” by Helen Krich Chinoy. These readings provided me with an overview of the theoretical development of the role of the director in modern theatre. The current incarnation of the director is a relatively recent one, born in order to bring a cohesive voice and vision to the dynamic and chaotic world of the theatre. These essays looked at the needs of the theatre which required a director to fulfill, which helped me to understand what I needed to do in order to be the best director I could be.

In my coursework at WPI, I have studied and critiqued many plays, which helped prepare me for approaching *Six Characters*. These courses include:

- EN1221 - Intro To Drama: Theatre on Page and on Stage
- EN2221 – American Drama
- EN2222 – Theatre Workshop
- EN3222 – Forms in World Drama
- EN3223 – Forms in Modern Drama

These courses provided both variety and depth to my exposure to the dramatic literature, and helped provide a foundation for my directing work. In addition to the handful of plays studied in each class, we often used additional textbook material. Of particular utility was *Technical Theatre for Nontechnical People* (Campbell, Drew, and Kis Knekt. New York: Allworth, 1999. Print) which gave me a better understanding of the elements of theatre not always understood by those who primarily act or direct.

Play List

Acted	Balderston, John	Berkeley Square
	Carlson, Tofer	A Letter Unsent
	Carmichael, Fred	Any Number Can Die
	Harrower, Haz	Walt and Wilde
	Kaufman, Moises	Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde
	Medeiros, Nicholas	All the Truth
	Miller, Arthur	The Crucible
	Mosel, Tad	All the Way Home
	Rahman, Aishah	Mojo and the Sayso
	Royal, Bert V.	Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead
	Sedaris, David and Amy	The Book of Liz
	Shakespeare, William	A Midsummer Night's Dream
		Antony and Cleopatra
		Henry IV, Part I
		Romeo and Juliet
	Shaffer, Peter	Amadeus
	Shepard, Sam	Curse of the Starving Class
	Stoppard, Tom	On the Razzle
Directed	DiGiovanni, Dominic	Trusted Download
	Harrower, Haz	Bower Bird
	LaVerriere, Ben	Thirty-Six Situations
	Pirandello, Luigi	Six Characters in Search of an Author
	Shaffer, Peter	Amadeus (Assistant Director)
	Vessella, Steven	The Change
Seen Live	Albee, Edward	Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolfe?
	Auburn, David	Proof
	Hwang, Henry David	Yellow Face
	Jacobs, Michael	Impressionism
	Kaufman, Moises	The Laramie Project
	Lindsay-Abaire, David	Rabbit Hole
	Mamet, David	American Buffalo
	Martin, Steve	The Underpants
	Rose, Reginald	Twelve Angry Men
	Stoppard, Tom	Rock 'n' Roll

Appendices

Appendix A: Production Crew

Director	Joel Sutherland
Producer	Tristan Spoor
Dramaturg	Ben LaVerriere
Academic Director	Susan Vick
Director of Theatre Technology	Erika A. Stone
Stage Manager	Cody Schultz
Assistant Stage Manager	Sebastian Bellisario
	Adriana Martinez-Betancourt
House Manager	Tofer Carlson
Run Crew Chief	Derrick Brown
Lighting Designer	RJ LaMura
Set Designer	Elena Ainley
Sound Designer	Bob Connick
Wardrobe/Make-Up Designer	Angela Simpson
Mentor to Wardrobe/Make-Up	Megan Faulkner
Properties Manager	Ian G. Hawkes
Master Carpenter	Brian Joseph
Master Electrician	Marco Villar
	Jason Rosenman

Mentor to Set	Patrick Crowe
Publicity Manager	Michael Riggieri
Assistant Publicity	Alex Rock
Technical Director	Patrick Crowe
Graphic Designer	Alex Rock
Light Board Operator	Marco Villar
Sound Board Operator	Taymon Beal
House Ushers	Megan Faulkner
	Angela Wood

Appendix B: Cast List

The Characters

Father	Bryan Rickard
Mother	Anika Blodgett
Son	Alex Rock
Stepdaughter	Laura Fischer
Madame Pace	Monolina Binny
Boy	Carol Wood

The Company

Director	Steven Vessella
Lighting Designer	Hunter Putzke
Stage Manager	Tony Guerra
Actors	Joey Chipman

Andrew Smith

Alex Geyster

Marissa Norton

Sarah Beth Johnson

Giovanna Olson

Appendix C: Summary of Hours

Date	Hours	Activity
8/30/2010	3	Reading first draft of the script
8/31/2010	1	Advisor Meeting
9/7/2010	1	Advisor Meeting
9/9/2010	3	Directors on Directing
9/14/2010	1	Advisor Meeting
9/15/2010	2	Meeting with Designers
9/18/2010	2	Script Discussion w/ Ben
9/19/2010	1	Meeting with Designers
9/20/2010	3	Directors on Directing
9/21/2010	1	Advisor Meeting
9/25/2010	3	Directors on Directing
9/28/2010	1	Advisor Meeting
10/1/2010	2	Reading next draft of the script
10/4/2010	5	Theatre Faire
10/5/2010	1	Advisor Meeting
10/6/2010	4	Auditions
10/7/2010	4	Auditions
10/8/2010	3	Callbacks
10/9/2010	2	Casting
10/12/2010	1	Advisor Meeting
10/24/2010	1	Rehearsal Prep
10/25/2010	2	Rehearsal
10/27/2010	1	Rehearsal Prep
10/28/2010	2	Rehearsal
10/31/2010	1	Rehearsal Prep
11/1/2010	2	Rehearsal
11/1/2010	1	Rehearsal Prep
11/2/2010	2	Rehearsal
11/4/2010	1	Rehearsal Prep
11/5/2010	3	Rehearsal
11/6/2010	1	Advisor Meeting
11/7/2010	1	Rehearsal Prep
11/8/2010	2	Rehearsal
11/8/2010	1	Rehearsal Prep
11/9/2010	2	Rehearsal
11/10/2010	1	Rehearsal Prep
11/11/2010	2	Rehearsal
11/11/2010	1	Rehearsal Prep
11/12/2010	1	Advisor Meeting
11/12/2010	3	Rehearsal

11/13/2010	1	Rehearsal Prep
11/14/2010	4	Line Through/Costume Check
11/15/2010	6	Tech Rehearsal
11/16/2010	6	Tech Rehearsal
11/17/2010	6	Preview
11/18/2010	5	Show
11/19/2010	1	Advisor Meeting
11/19/2010	5	Show
11/20/2010	6	Show + strike
11/26/2010	1	Advisor Meeting
11/29/2010	2	Portfolio Work
12/3/2010	1	Advisor Meeting
12/5/2010	2	Portfolio Work
12/7/2010	1	Advisor Meeting
12/8/2010	2	Portfolio Work
12/10/2010	1	Advisor Meeting
12/13/2010	5	Assigning company lines
1/20/2011	1	Advisor Meeting
1/20/2011	2	Portfolio Work
1/25/2011	1	Advisor Meeting
1/29/2011	3	Portfolio Work
2/1/2011	1	Advisor Meeting
2/3/2011	3	Essay writing
2/4/2011	2	Essay writing
2/8/2011	1	Advisor Meeting
2/10/2011	3	Portfolio Work
2/14/2011	1	Advisor Meeting
2/20/2011	3	Portfolio Work
2/22/2011	1	Advisor Meeting
2/24/2011	2	Portfolio Work
3/1/2011	2	Assembling Photographs
3/3/2011	2	Assembling Design Documents

Total:

158

Appendix D: Scenic Design: “Art and Design” by Elena Ainley



Figure 8: Concept Art

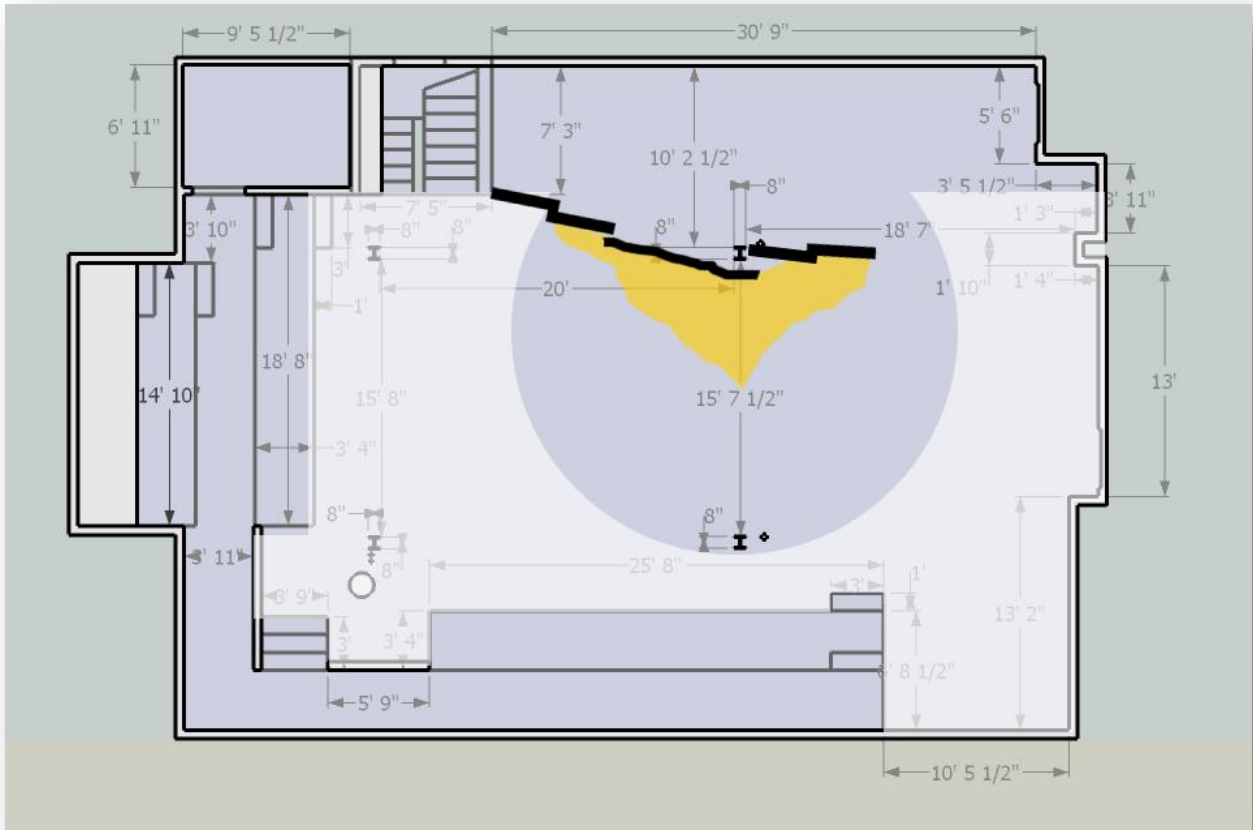


Figure 9: Floor Plan

Appendix E: Lighting Cues

cue number	page	what it does	programmed?	timed?
1	preshow	preshow	programmed	timed
2	2	house to half		
3	2	fake wash	programmed	timed
3.5	2	restore	programmed	timed
4	5	wash	programmed	timed
5	6	highlight char	programmed	timed
5.5	6	drop char light	programmed	timed
6	10	highlight char	programmed	timed
6.1		restore	programmed	timed
6.9	12	follows into 7	programmed	timed
7	12	shaken	programmed	timed
8	13	restore	programmed	timed
10.5		house wash for intermission	programmed	timed
11	30	programming during intermission	programmed	timed
11.1		on shawl being set		
11.2	38	dressings	programmed	timed
12	38	madame pace	programmed	timed
12.1	follow	madame pace	programmed	timed
13	40	lights outside madame pace	programmed	timed
14	43	pace out		
15	44	intimate + anika light	programmed	timed
16	45	fade intimate	programmed	timed
16.1	51	wash	programmed	timed
16.2	56	intimate + anika light	programmed	timed
17	56	blackout	programmed	timed
18	57	restore	programmed	timed
19	60	night garden	programmed	timed
19.1	6	pool		
20	68	drowning	programmed	timed
21	68	suicide	programmed	timed

22	70	flicker back on		programmed	timed
23	71	blackout		programmed	timed
24	71	backlight		programmed	timed
25	72	fade		programmed	timed

Appendix F: Instrument Schedule

instrument	channel number	submaster	type	dimmer number	color	purpose
1	1	1	fresnel	6	clear	house lights over audience
2	1	1	fresnel	6	clear	house lights over audience
3	2	1	fresnel	37	clear	house lights over audience
4	2	1	fresnel	37	clear	house lights over audience
5	3	1	fresnel	67	clear	house lights over audience
6	3	1	fresnel	67	clear	house lights over audience
7	4	1	fresnel		clear	house lights over audience
8	11	2	fresnel	13	clear	"house lights" on stage
9	11	2	fresnel	13	clear	"house lights" on stage
10	12	2	fresnel	49	clear	"house lights" on stage
11	13	2	fresnel	66	clear	"house lights" on stage
12	14	2	fresnel	65	clear	"house lights" on stage
13	15	2	fresnel	13	clear	"house lights" on stage
14	15	2	fresnel	19	clear	"house lights" on stage
15	16	2	fresnel	48	clear	"house lights" on stage
16	16	2	fresnel	48	clear	"house lights" on stage
17	17	2	fresnel	70	clear	"house lights" on stage
18	21	3	S4 36	56	R50	madame pace
19	22	3	S4 36	17	R357	madame pace
20	23	3	S4 36	20	R50	madame pace
21	24	3	S4 36	43	R357	madame pace
22	31	4	fresnel	5	R24	intense light south
23	32	4	fresnel	21	R24	intense light south
24	33	4	fresnel	45	R24	intense light south
25	34	9	fresnel	44	R54	House Lights
26	31	4	fresnel	5	R24	intense light south
27	32	4	fresnel	21	R24	intense light south
28	33	4	fresnel	45	R24	intense light south
29	34	9	fresnel	44	R54	House Lights
30	41	5	fresnel	22	R47	intense light north

31	42	5	fresnel	50	R47	intense light north
32	43	5	fresnel	61	R47	intense light north
33	44	9	fresnel	69	R33	House Lights
34	41	5	fresnel	22	R47	intense light north
35	45	5	fresnel	47	R47	intense light north
36	43	5	fresnel	61	R47	intense light north
37	44	9	fresnel	69	R33	House Lights
38	28	10	S4 36	59	clear	character backlight entrance
39	29	10	S4 36	55	clear	character backlight entrance
40			celedor			character frontlight entrance/exit
41	49	6	S4 50	18	R05	backlight area 1
42	50	6	S4 50	15	R05	backlight area 2
43	51	6	S4 50	60	R05	backlight area 3
44	52	6	S4 50	57	R05	backlight area 4
45	53	6	S4 50	12	R05	backlight area 5
46	54	6	S4 50	14	R05	backlight area 6
47	55	6	S4 50	52	R05	backlight area 7
48	56	6	S4 50	62	R05	backlight area 8
49	57	6	S4 50	28	R05	backlight area 9
50	58	6	S4 50	58	R05	backlight area 10
73	59	6	S4 50	8	R05	backlight area 11
74	60	6	S4 50	7	R05	backlight area 12
51	89	7	S4 50	4	R54	SR light area 1
52	90	7	S4 50	16	R54	SR light area 2
53	91	7	S4 50	24	R54	SR light area 3
54	92	7	S4 50	53	R54	SR light area 4
55	93	7	S4 50	3	R54	SR light area 5
56	94	7	S4 50	26	R54	SR light area 6
57	95	7	S4 50	38	R54	SR light area 7
58	96	7	S4 50	41	R54	SR light area 8
59	97	7	S4 50	1	R54	SR light area 9
60	98	7	S4 50	68	R54	SR light area 10
75	99	7	S4 50	2	R54	SR light area 11
76	100	7	S4 50	35	R54	SR light area 12
61	69	8	S4 50	27	R33	SL light area 1
62	70	8	S4 50	51	R33	SL light area 2
63	71	8	S4 50	54	R33	SL light area 3

64	72	8	S4 50	63	R33	SL light area 4
65	73	8	S4 50	25	R33	SL light area 5
66	74	8	S4 50	23	R33	SL light area 6
67	75	8	S4 50	40	R33	SL light area 7
68	76	8	S4 50	46	R33	SL light area 8
69	77	8	S4 50	34	R33	SL light area 9
70	78	8	S4 50	72	R33	SL light area 10
77	79	8	S4 50	39	R33	SL light area 11
78	80	8	S4 50	36	R33	SL light area 12
71	27	11	S4 36	42	R27	dramatic light on I beam
72	25	3	S4 36	64	clear	madame pace entrance backlight
house lights		12				
79	110	color				
80	111	color				
	112	color				
	113	color				
	114	color				
	115	color				
	116	color				
	117	power				

Appendix G: Costume Budget

	Item	Options	Final Costume Status	Cost	
Father	Shirt	Brick	acquired	\$ -	
	Jacket	Fred	acquired	\$ -	
	Pants	Brick one copy, Fred	acquired	\$ -	
	Shoes	Brick one copy	acquired	\$ -	
	Socks	Brick one copy	acquired	\$ -	
Mother	Dress	Walmart	Purchased	\$ 26.00	
	Shawl/sweater	Kohls	Purchased	\$ 49.98	
	Nylons	Walmart	Purchased	\$ 9.00	
	Veil	Halloween Outlet	Purchased	\$ 29.98	
	Shoes	Anika	acquired	\$ -	
	Purse	Walmart	Purchased	\$ 24.00	\$ 138.96
Son	Shirt	Fred, Walmart	acquired/ purchased	\$ 17.00	
	Pants	Fred	2 Pairs	\$ -	
	Shoes	Fred	acquired	\$ -	
	Socks	Fred	acquired	\$ -	
	Red scarf	Walmart	Purchased	\$ 10.00	
	Ties	Walmart	Purchased	\$ 20.00	\$ 47.00
Stepdaughter	Dress	Target	Purchased	\$ 55.98	
	Shawl	Kohls	Purchased	\$ 36.00	
	Shoes	Walmart	Purchased	\$ 18.87	
	Nylons		Purchased	\$ 6.00	\$ 116.85
Boy (Carol)	Pants	Target	Purchased	\$ 12.99	

	Long sleeve shirt/polo	Old Navy	Purchased	\$ 19.00	
	Shoes	Carol		\$ -	
	Hat	Target	Purchased	\$ 14.99	
	boob wraps	Target	Purchased	\$ 7.77	\$ 54.75
Girl (Puppet)	Dress	Walmart	Purchased	\$ 18.00	
	Shirt	Kohls	Purchased	\$ 7.00	
	Tights	Walmart	Purchased	\$ 3.66	
	Shoes	Target	Purchased	\$ 12.99	
	Bow for hair	Target	Purchased	\$ 9.99	
	Pacifier	Price Chopper	Purchased	\$ 2.99	
	hat	Walmart	Purchased	\$ 6.00	
	Scarf	Walmart	Purchased	\$ 7.00	\$ 67.63
Madam Pace	Red wig	Halloween Outlet	Purchased	\$ 18.98	
	Red robe	Kohls	Purchased	\$ 32.00	
	purple dress	Gap	Purchased	\$ 34.50	
	Shawls/boa	Halloween Outlet	Purchased	\$ 9.99	
	Red heels	Millbury	Purchased	\$ 29.00	
	Costume Jewelry	Walmart	Purchased	\$ 18.00	
		Kohls	Purchased	\$ 9.60	
	Cigarette holder	Halloween Outlet	Purchased	\$ 3.99	\$ 156.06
Actors	Scarf	Target	Purchased	\$ 12.99	Tax:
	costume for rack	Halloween Outlet	Purchased	\$	\$

				39.99	2.63
	makeup	Target	Purchased	\$ 65.02	\$ 0.60
				\$	\$
			Total:	699.25	6.43
					\$
					4.69
					\$
					0.49
					\$
					14.84
			Total + Tax:	714.09	

Appendix H: Poster Design



Appendix I: Director's Note

After directing Ben LaVerriere's *Thirty-Six Situations*, and now this, I am resolved that he write *Two-Hundred Sixteen Props and Costumes for New Voices 29* so I can have the pleasure of handling another of his great plays (as well as driving the techies mad). But for now, I'm humbled to guide as magnificent and important a theatrical work as *Six Characters into our Little Theatre*. The show you will see tonight is exemplary of what I think drama ought to be: a mechanism to remove constraints and stimulate discourse, to cast doubt on unquestioned assumptions, and to remind us of the value and purpose of our expression. I hope you leave tonight caring just a little bit more about the bigger questions, about reality, and about art. I wish I could say more, but I won't spoil it for you. If any of you would like to discuss the topics presented in the play, feel free to grab me afterwards. I would be delighted.

This play is the third installment in WPI's Conservatory Directing project, the brainchild of Prof. Susan Vick, to whom I am eternally grateful for her faith in me. I am honored to stand in the shoes of Dominic DiGiovanni and Steven Vessella, both of whom have been great friends and mentors to me during my time at WPI. I would like to thank the above, as well as Riky Stone and my wonderful cast and crew for making this production possible.

Enjoy the show!

Joel Sutherland

Appendix J: Rehearsal Notes

Actor collaboration
Rehearsal Schedules
Theory/
Set
Script

Projection, projection

Courtish = flirty
Song + Dance
Actors project
Stepdaughter likes playing people
Your facts

Dramatic characters
Anika less confident, ~~with~~ ^{Luna} ~~much~~ more
Lugh is getting there
Brick Stower
Actor groupings
Giorgina leader

Per fantastic, but will be bigger
disgusting, cruel, heartbreaking

Steven - more frustrated, "metaphor"

Veracity

Tony clear out when Father goes to Steven

Stepdaughter more conniving

Characters stick together

"Profession merits" too strong; you're making a point
 far too blunt on coquettish more "drunk"?

Sony + Dance

Stepdaughter speech curve

can childish

"Words, words..."

"Set adrift..."

Geyster - projection

Get that laugh

Mother stay seated

Andrew makes a successful plot prediction

Son - top of 26, sympathetic to absurdity

Chosen for me

Mac to actors earlier

Act I

"Why don't you give me a chance..."
 Son - "Words, words, words."
 SD - Song + Dance scheduling w/ Ben
 Grandma - LOUDER
 Actors, hang out on benches at opening
 Everyone - Pre-empt your lines!

Staging of SD
 Linn - More dramatic, ostentatious, laugh
 "Vicious, vicious!"
 "Literary details and loud exposition"
 Brick - command the stage
 Andrew - Great! Now tone it down a bit!

Everyone - More dynamic

"legitimate"
 "He says"
 "His attitude"
 "That this is your mother too?"
 "Character like me!" Good!
 Song, on "I think they might..." faster!

Act II

Next time we're
playing "New Choice"!

Tony - Louder in general
Bitch - Don't be silly, be mature
"That woman"

Everyone - Walk w/ purpose, don't wander.
"So this flat has fucking clocks on it!"

Use the stage!
"Have a piece of sewing in your costume!"

More outrageous at the end, Madonna!

Brooke - The scene much better
Lynn - tie hair back?
Geyster - don't wander or slap your thighs
"Bitch..." to yourself
Marissa - not mean-spirited
"Terrific! That'll go down..."
Soap Opera
"Spiritual Suffering"

Lynn - Great energy. Keep it up!

Gram - get up to serve the Mother

FIGHT CALL

"famous backroom couch"

Further + Stepdaughter:

Brick: more stuffy, less loopy-goosey

"That woman"

"a big convertible... very comfortable"

more behind the screen

tighten up lines

"That woman"

"we're actors"

"Geyster - not condescending. Proud."

COSTUME - a hat for Marissa, a Target scarf for SBS

SD - not "happy" about doing the scene "dying"

"to me"

Brick - FASTER

"we can't follow."

SD - react more strongly to

find some garb cues for Pace

"means to be restless", "metaphor for what you..."

SD - more forward

Joey - don't worry about losing the circle

Brick - play to the audience more

Anter - quicker

SD - more "mad", more energy

Groom - much better volume

Anika - don't be so mobile in your chair

SD - more about the scene more (away from I, around him)

Son - louder, but great besides that

SD - "we came awfully close" more defensive

SD - more baby; "naked"

SD - the table is @ the I-beam

Father -

SD - "what a magnificent success you've achieved"

SD - Scamper/skip, "filling out"

SD - move him

SD - "when my father died..." Starting new segment

Andrew - "That you not..." lead-in

Father - "(crying out) No, just in time!"

F - "you'll see what a tremendous"

SD - folding arms = no good

Son - more energy on your big speech

SD - "Don't you know this is your mother too?"

Son - "My feelings?!"

Father - don't drop the energy!

SD - "Especially when it features..."

Groom - louder, better skipping

Chris for Steven
 "Set a drift..."
 "Son of a bitch!"
 "You don't know anything about it" angrier
 Mother - more
 SD - great great great
 "infuriatingly"
 Joey - joke

Steven - "Shut up"
 Luma - "very comfortable", etc. more engaged
 Grandma - audience
 Steven - help me out with the energy
 Steven - be w/ the actors when arguing about
 Gasping w/ FATHER
 Brick - huge let down when getting clothing
 Grandma - much louder, "lo mejo I can"
 Anika - attack: Not so fast/agile; Stumbling
 Steven - a bit too much on "are you listening..."
 Brick - remember what you're thinking
 Anika - too loud on "Oh God, God..."
 Luma - more impatient
 THE SCENE - more sultry, leading up, resist breaking the mood
 Steven - project on the line reading

- Pre-show was great
- Actors - Bunch rather than line
- Monica - Don't go back too early
- Brick - don't shut out the NE bank
- Carol - terrible. All wrong. Start over from scratch. Too sexy
- Lana - More powerful stance
- Lana - Be "mad" between monologues
- Lana - Build up to "Son of a bitch!"
- Lana - Be more unreasonable
- Lana - The description of Pucc's eyes great
- Brick - Good "infuriatingly", etc. Good attitude throughout
- Practice quick transitions
- Actors - Don't talk during the "10 minutes"
- Lana - laugh practice after rehearsal
- Brick + Lana - Practice "filling out" conflict
- Lana - More primary post to flats
- Fred - Lumber, a bit more character
- Fred - Go over lines again. Make sure they're 100%

Act II

Andrew - louder on the laptop

Siguna - member of audience

Theory speech

Liam - Back to the audience during "that woman"

Monsieur - louder from the arrest

Brick - Not awkward enough

Brick - "Oh, you're m. making"

Andrew - louder on "Sultry line"

Everybody - LOUDER

Steven - "What's that supposed to mean?"

Arka - louder on the screen!

Jay - "The audience doesn't need jokes"

Andrew - Get you has right

Fred - Get out of the way during the crowding scene

Andrew - I flipped a line

Teach Week Day 1

Green lights?

Timing of Upvc show

Amber - Tim/ opening exchange

Less awkwardness with opening (Star, Andrea, Marissa)

Hit your spots!

Actress - Listen to Father more at the beginning

Geyster - LAUNDER

Lara - Come more

Lara - Watch for back to audience

Brick - "Why don't you give me a chance?"

Fred - "I'm not details" Scornful

Lara - "When my father died..."

Fred - Don't sit back down

Fred - "Me?" defensively

Fred - "Don't you know..."

Geyster - "A kid being given..."

Glenn - Cheat out at the end

Steven - "Ten Minutes"

Steven - Say "I think it's back there already"

Lara - Scene breakdown

Steven - hurt tie?

Brick - no bar

Lara - Kill the G-string tag

Marissa - Bottom of right shoe, and Lauder!

Lara - After piece is attacked,

Geyster - Shy?

Brick - Show presence?

Ben - change to 1 "What?"

Steven - "Which is this supposed to mean?"

Lights - Bring Brick's illusion speech

Fred's Scarf: too simple

Why for doll?

Bring Tony,
Set up the
pool lights

Geyster - Stop Fred

Amber -

After fight, overlapping don
Actress - get the idea in cut
center.

Actors - Mark up your scripts
 RT - "Build the cue" in multiple steps
 Angela - Easy hat
 Birch - Pants + jacket buttoned
 SD - More confident, mysterious
 Fred - Dress shoes
 Spoken type
 Tony - phone
 Fred pants
 Fix child doll limbs
 Purse hair for Birch
 "Projection piece"
 SD describing author

Hunter - NE Bank
 Light Cue programming
 Steven - clap, "strong characters"
 Angela - doll arms
 Alex - don't talk during Brick's speech
 Fred - STAY on feet
 Effects during Stepladder speech too much
 Juey - the setup on "You both really like" too much
 Lam - "Dying to play..", "It's absolutely hell!"
 Brick - "We think we understand..." ↓
 Brick - "Dying me into a constant..."
 RJ - All the character prompts fighting effects slower and more subtle
 Give me some NE lam
 Brick - "That was always your problem..."
 Lam - "...Cares to her without love"
 Brick - "motivation" too angry
 Andrew - "stop jrh" ~~cut~~ too slow
 Brick - "life and dream" never at Laura
 Placement of Mother's chair
 Speak @ Steven as he moves about the Theatre
 Fred - Try not to stand right in front of anybody
 Brick - pants color?
 Alex - leave door open
 Custom

Discuss Intermission

Tony - Go behind the stage earlier
 Actors - Give camera a sight line
 Lora - "I just don't see myself in you"
 Screen placement
 Day graded early. Sync cues!
 Blue Endorse.
 "Projection, please..." accent
 Lora - "No, can't, please..." Not so loud.
 Lora - Be more sympathetic in the scene
 We won't fiftuo on a step
 Go back to three "what's"
 Lora - It's still ringing in my ears
 "Thank you, Jack!"
 Andrew: after "in the garden", cross
~~the~~ Moonlight?
 Lora - face the audience
 "Pretends to be serious..."
 Carol - show gun
 "Not a fake" cue late, kill the effects
 Mac gun earlier

Steven - Come up earlier 2nd time?
 Blackout?
 Work on pre-show timing
 Hand out e-mail w/ changes!
 Russ - More melodramatic
 Marissa - Close the curtains!
 Laura - Build up on "Bastards" speech!
 Joey - Not so much Setups on "You look pretty alive to me"
 Laura - More open, comfortable pose
 Speed it up. Tighten those attractions.
 Fred - Don't fidget so much

Laura - laugh!
~~Dropped line - "Sept cannot play for itself"~~ Oh nm that WTS dropped
 Laura - "Projection?"
 Geppie - 3 "What?"s
 Geppie + SBJ - Stay in the scene
 Laura - garden grouch
 Brock - Scene where you stop Fred?
 Fred - You need to keep up the energy.
 Brock's line - lower

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5'9", 150lb, dark blonde hair, blue eyes

Acting, Worcester Polytechnic Institute 2007-2010

A Letter Unsent ("Matt")

Any Number Can Die ("Jack Regent")

Walt and Wilde ("Oscar Wilde")

Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde ("Douglas")

All the Truth ("Shadow")

The Crucible ("Rev. Hale")

Mojo and the Sayso ("Blood")

Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead ("CB")

The Book of Liz ("Nathaniel Brightbee")

Romeo and Juliet ("Friar Lawrence")

Curse of the Starving Class ("Wesley")

Carlson, Tofer

Carmichael, Fred

Harrower, Haz

Kaufman, Moises

Medeiros, Nicholas

Miller, Arthur

Rahman, Aishah

Royal, Bert V.

Sedaris, David and Amy

Shakespeare, William

Shepard, Sam

Directing, Worcester Polytechnic Institute 2008-2010

Trusted Download

Bower Bird

Thirty-Six Situations

Six Characters in Search of an Author

The Change

DiGiovanni, Dominic

Harrower, Haz

LaVerriere, Ben

Pirandello, Luigi

Vessella, Steven

