

MORE THAN AN ACTOR:
DISCOVERING
THE
INNER-
WORKINGS
OF THE
THEATRE

BY ROSIE CORR

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Written and Executed Summer 2021. Supported by Pomona College's RAISE program (Remote Alternative Independent Summer Experience), specifically the Aubrey H. & Eileen J. Seed Student Research Fund. This book compiles many of my favorite takeaways from a variety of artists. I would like to emphasize that their ideas are their own creative property, and that I am simply synthesizing and compiling my favorite lessons, to help other college students like myself.

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Dedicated to The Arts. No one in this book would have gotten to where they are without art guiding them down their path.

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1.

TIPS, THOUGHTS, AND REALIZATIONS

WHAT IS THIS BOOK?

When I started this summer project, I honestly wasn't sure what the final result would be. I knew that I had a lot of amazing people I wanted to talk to, and a wide variety of theatre-related books on my reading list, so I just dove in. It wasn't until I found myself taking pages and pages of notes on each resource I accessed that I realized there was only one way to coherently compile and share all of my findings. And thus, this book was born.

For me, this book has become something that I will continually look back on. It is a written-out and organized compilation of some of my favorite theatre-related lessons I have ever learned. But, as you will notice, it spans a very wide range of the theatrical world, from running a nonprofit to hanging stage lights to directing. That is where the title comes in: "More than an Actor: Discovering the Inner-Workings of the Theatre." Because, at its basis, that is what this project is.

As an acting-focused theatre major, in a performance-focused theatre department, I have gotten a lot of amazing acting training, acting career advice, and more. And, as difficult as it may be, most of us generally understand the path to an acting career: get your training, get an agent, audition and audition and audition, get cast, repeat (with plenty of possible twists and turns along the way). But there are so many more people involved in creating theatre than the actors. And often, their paths are less linear. The more I thought about this, the more questions I had. How do you become an Artistic Director—do you start as an actor? Director? Producer? What about a Company Manager, and how is it different from a General Manager? What are Intimacy Directors, and what exactly do they do? All these questions, and more, drove me to start down this gigantic rabbit hole of theatre research.

And the more I learned, the more I wanted to know. What I have realized along the way is just how community-driven the theatre world is. Which is yet another reason this project became so important to me! Theatre is all about empathy, and what better way to empathize with your team than to do some research, and understand what it is like to be in their position? This is especially important to me as someone who has recently entered the world of directing; as a director, you are constantly leading. So many people depend on you, and look up to you. I strive to be a compassionate and empathetic leader, and this project has helped me to do just that. I cannot wait to get back to live, in-person theatre, and use all of the skills I have learned this summer.

And finally, a quick disclaimer. While the topics in this book do cover a wide range of the theatre industry, they do

not, in any way, shape, or form, represent all of it. Sadly, the summer was only so long, and I could not cover every topic I hoped to. So, I focused on what drew me in most. For me, this was choreography, direction, lighting, theatrical intimacy and consent-informed rehearsal spaces, and education, as well as the pathways to positions like Producer, Artistic Director, Treasurer, Company Manager, and General Manager. If given more time, or in a continuation of this project, I would have loved to dive more deeply into stage management, costumes, sound design, theatre finances, marketing, and so much more. But there's always next summer.

With that, I hope you enjoy this book and find some takeaways in the lessons I've learned. I could not have done this without the amazing artists and creators who donated their time and wisdom to share with me, or without the support of Pomona's RAISE program, specifically The Aubrey H. & Eileen J. Seed Student Research Fund. Thank you so much for making this book possible.

MY TOP 10 DOS AND DON'TS

Throughout this project, there were some common threads, as well as some pieces of advice that just really jumped out at me, which I wanted to highlight here.

DO:

1. **Trust Yourself.** Art will always be subjective to some extent, no matter what facet you're a part of, so start learning to trust yourself and follow your instincts now.
2. **Self-Identify.** No one is going to come along and officially proclaim that you are a Director, or Actor, or Producer, or whatever it is you want to become. So just start calling yourself one, and everyone else will follow.
3. **Ask Questions.** Always ask, because there is no harm in a question. Ask for opportunities, ask for advice, ask for ideas. The theatre is an amazing community, and you'll often be pleasantly surprised by the answer.
4. **Get Busy and Stay Busy.** Until you physically have more projects than you can handle, say yes. You'll make connections, learn more, and build up your resume to prepare for that one perfect project to eventually show up.
5. **Center Compassion.** Compassion and consent need to be at the center of the work you are doing, now and always. The theatre world has not always been this way,

but we are changing for the better and it is a necessity to keep improving.

6. **Keep Learning.** There is always more to learn, especially in the theatre. Learn about other people's jobs too. You never know when you might save the day by knowing how to run a light board or a box office.

7. **Focus On the Art.** People in drama can be...dramatic. And working in the arts is by no means your standard 9 to 5. So when life gets stressful, hours get long, or the drama comes out, always try to recenter yourself by focusing on the reason you are there in the first place: the art.

8. **Constantly Create.** If there isn't an opportunity for you right now, create one. If you are stuck in a job that is inhibiting your creativity, keep creating on the side. Your artistry will only develop with passion and practice.

9. **Make Friends.** In the theatre, you don't really network. You make friends. And friends end up trusting each other, and calling each other when they need help on a new project. You never know when your new friend could be the next Lin-Manuel Miranda. But remember, the theatre is about community. Really treat these connections as friendships, not networking.

10. **Work on Your Resume.** If you are really keeping busy and constantly creating, it is important to keep track of all the projects you are working on. Because you will have that bad day where you feel like you haven't done anything, and it is important to have that list of all the

things you've done. And, it helps you update your resume depending on what position you are going for.

DON'T:

1. Try to Be the Smartest in the Room. At least, not as a director. This was the biggest piece of advice I got about high-powered artistic leadership positions. You don't need to have all the ideas. You need to be able to facilitate the sharing of ideas, and discern which ones are the good ones.
2. Ignore Boundaries. The theatre has tried to 'push actor's boundaries' for far too long. You don't need to break boundaries to create art.
3. Turn Down Understudy or Assistant Jobs. They might seem less glamorous, but these are the jobs that, if you do a good job, are usually the easiest ticket into your next position. This is where you prove that you can be trusted and relied upon.
4. Ignore Other's Ideas. Just because you might have the most "power" in the room based on position does not mean all ideas should be yours. Use the creativity in the room to your advantage, and make sure everyone's voice is heard.
5. Forget the Safety Cable!! This one is in honor of Janelle Asti, Pomona's Master Electrician, who has been such an important mentor for me. This is the number one rule of hanging anything up in the theatre—lights, sound equipment, etc. Anything that is in the air should always

have a safety cable attached to whatever you are connecting it to. It is always better safe than sorry.

6. Be Mean. In the theatre community, reputation is everything. If you are mean or disrespectful, it will get around, and it will come back to haunt you. Cherish the preciousness of this community.

7. Overlook Children's Programs. This is actually my own piece of advice. So many people see education and working with children's theatre as a side job or a way to earn extra cash, but it is really so much more than that. Children are brutally honest, and perhaps the best critics to help you really improve your teaching and directing style.

8. Think NYC is the Only Option. You don't need to go to NYC to have a rewarding career in theatre; there are theatre communities everywhere. So many of my interviews focused on the amazing, and often overlooked, live theatre in Los Angeles. I also made connections at home, and realized what a strong network of artists lived right here, in the East Bay Area.

9. Forget About Yourself. You are the most important to take care of. So, if you ever need to take a break from it all, just know that the theatre will still be waiting for you when you get back.

10. Lose Hope. You really never know when that rejection or missed opportunity will actually lead you right to the perfect position all along. When one door closes, another opens.

MY PROCESS

As stated earlier, I began this project without knowing what the final project would be. So, I wanted to share a bit of the process of how that emerged.

I began the summer by creating a list of everything I thought could be useful to read, watch, or experience in order to expand my knowledge of the theatre industry this summer. This included a long list of people I had some sort of connection or introduction to, that I wanted to interview. It also had a long book list, and list of general topics I wanted to cover.

As I looked at this list, I realized that I also had a plethora of lessons already floating around in my head that deserved to be included as well. So, I added a list of people who I had already had informational interviews with, and a list of some of the lessons I had learned working in student theatre.

Once these lists were created, I dove in. I had a few weeks at the beginning of summer, before any of my teaching or directing opportunities began, where I had nothing to do. So I just started reading. I am so grateful to the public library system, and the ability to put books on hold and have them delivered to your local library, because I went through a lot of them. As I read, I took bullet point notes of my favorite parts, and my notes document quickly got longer and longer. This part of summer was also when I was able to take some fantastic virtual dance classes, from renowned New York performers and studios. And, I began my many informational interviews, taking way too many notes on those as well.

After a few weeks of constant reading, interviewing, and dancing, I had already obtained a large mass of data. And that is when my directing and teaching opportunities began. At the end of each day, I would jot down any firsthand lessons I had learned. And, at the same time, I continued reading and interviewing in my off-hours, constantly collecting more data.

Somewhere between mid-June and mid-July, I realized I had way too much data for any poster or presentation, and decided that I should write a book. So I kept collecting all of my bullet pointed notes. And then, at the end of July, I realized I had over 25 pages of single-spaced notes written, and that I better start writing if I wanted this book to actually exist.

So, I started working section by section. I would choose one segment, and work on creating a small introduction and expanding my incoherent bullet points into organized and cohesive thoughts. I continued this until I had gotten through all my notes (which was no easy task, especially since I continued to add more notes even during the writing process), and then I put it all in a book format. At this point, I edited the styling, fonts, and color scheme. And now, we are here. A completed book, which is about twice as long as I expected it to be. A book that I am very proud of, and will refer back to for many years to come. And most of all, a book that I hope will pique the interest of all of you, and provide guidance and advice to other theatre-lovers like me.

2.

THE BOOKS

A DIRECTOR PREPARES BY ANNE BOGART

This is known as one of the most famous books on directing, and was published in 2001. While I definitely enjoyed it and gained a lot from it, there were also certain things in it that did not quite sit right with me, reading it now in 2021, two decades after its publication. I actually thought that the moments of discomfort I had were some of the most meaningful parts of reading this book, because they meant that I was finding my directorial voice, and thus able to discern the directing choices and mentalities that I liked from those that I didn't. This book is organized into seven main essays with different themes, which are Violence, Memory, Terror, Eroticism, Stereotype, Embarrassment, and Resistance. For this section, I am organizing my thoughts into two sections: the sections I found most helpful, and the sections that raised more questions for me.

SECTIONS, TIPS, AND MOMENTS I LOVE:

- From the very first page, Bogart talks about facing “the challenge of decisiveness and articulation in my daily

life." I loved this concept of taking directing with you in each moment. One of the biggest challenges in directing is trusting yourself and allowing yourself to be decisive, while also making sure that each choice clearly articulates and illustrates the decisions you are making. But really, we should all be living like this all the time, and that is exactly what Bogart recommends.

- You cannot take over someone else's company with new ideas, you have to start from scratch. This particularly resonated with me because I do often envision myself becoming an Artistic Director, and I think it is important to acknowledge how difficult it can be to change traditions and processes in a place with a well-established tradition, even when that tradition is not serving them well.
- Each play holds a question, and you know it is a relevant play when that question haunts you. This can be a fantastic way to decide if a project is right for you to direct.
- Bogart also declares, on page 36, that the "great tragedy of the American stage is the actor who assumes, thanks to our gross misunderstanding of Stanislavsky, 'If I feel it, the audience will feel it.'" Stanislavsky is upheld as such a pillar of Western theatre, yet we misunderstand many of his lessons. (To hear more about my thoughts on Stanislavsky's seminal text, *An Actor Prepares*, see page 36.)
- She also covered the difference between static art and kinetic art. So many people strive for kinetic art: art that

moves you. They want audiences to experience catharsis and be moved. Bogart, instead, looks for static art: art that will stop you cold in your tracks.

- Attention is a tension. You want to create that tension and underlying sense of pull in everything you do—it should never just feel easy.
- Stereotypes will always exist. But, rather than ignoring them, you can combat them by putting a fire under them, and causing them to constantly be questioned. This can not only be deeply impactful, but it allows creation through the transformation of tradition, rather than the necessity of constant newness and innovation.
- As a director, you can and usually should set the form and action, and then allow freedom within the emotion, rather than trying to dictate the specificity of emotions.
- “You cannot create results; you can only create the conditions in which something might happen” (Bogart 124). To me, this is both terrifying and freeing. It is nerve-wracking to feel that sense of powerlessness in knowing that you can never ‘create results.’ But at the same time, it is so freeing to know that once you set up all the proper conditions, sometimes all you need to do is wait and listen. Bogart then goes on to explain that rehearsal is about listening, not forcing things to happen. She emphasizes the importance of creating space for an actor to do their work. Sometimes, this can be achieved by focusing on the things surrounding an actor, rather than pouring so much energy directly into them. She says that “to enter paradise you have to go through the back

door” (Bogart 128). Basically, you need to get out of your own way.

- She also focuses a lot on the idea of resistance, and the fact that you will always need to work through resistance. Obstacles create transformation. Often, when it comes too easily, it isn’t always “art.” (Although personally, I think it can often become a very elitist situation when someone is deciding what does or does not qualify as art.)
- There are no problems, only situations. I thought this was a great outlook to have, because the theatre can often be a stressful place, and each show can run into a lot of ‘problems.’ But if we think of them as situations, not only do we avoid the negativity and stress, but we create more opportunities for art and inspiration.
- Lastly, allow yourself to not know the answer. As the leader, this can feel impossible, but sometimes the best skill is being able to say ‘I do not know, but we will experiment and play until we get there.’

MOMENTS THAT PROVOKE QUESTIONS:

- As I got deeper into each section, I found moments and pieces to hold onto and cherish, which have been explained above. But, on a more basic level, I often felt that the framework and ways in which these concepts were presented were problematic. They may have been accepted twenty years ago, but they did not sit well with me.

— There was one essay which was entitled “Memory.” The main idea was to call on one’s ancestral roots in order to discover new ways to move, while in actuality the movements are actually deeply old and rooted in tradition, often subconscious. Bogart discusses wanting to feel active memory connection to past generations and ancestral connections, because “Culture is shared experience” (Bogart 29). While there is nothing inherently wrong in this, the way that Bogart, a white American woman, described this concept felt a bit like fetishization to me. It felt like she was fetishizing minorities and people of color in her infatuation with their ancestral roots. At times, it even felt like she longed to have experienced historical and intergenerational trauma so that she could create art with it, which felt very privileged to me.

— A similar theme appeared in the essay entitled “Eroticism.” While a lot of the ideas ended up being useful, such as the difference between static and kinetic art, it felt like a very insensitive word choice that insinuated a lot of negativity, especially being so close in conversation with the Memory chapter, which, as stated above, often felt like it bordered on fetishization.

— In the Violence essay, there was a lot of focus on the concepts of creative destruction, and the need for decisiveness and assertiveness. I completely agree with these ideas, and think they are deeply important in directing and creation. What felt unnecessary to me was the constant use of violent language. Especially coming from a female director, I found it concerning to be forced to equate female decisiveness and assertiveness with

violence. Decisiveness is not violence, and I believe that we should not feel like we must resort to violence.

— The essay that raised the most questions for me, and also felt like it held the least number of useful tools, was *Terror*. I simply do not agree that art needs to come from terror; I think a level of safety and comfort is important. I believe that Bogart's intent was to emphasize that art should be constantly risk-taking, constantly pushing the envelope. But that is not how it came across. In all honesty, this chapter felt deeply intertwined with the "traumatized/struggling artist" trope, which I feel that the artistic community is trying to grow past. We should no longer traumatize ourselves to create art for others.

— The *Embarrassment* essay held similar themes to *Terror* for me; Bogart explained that embarrassment needs to be encountered in the creation of art. While I think that this can be true, I also feel that for some people it can hold you back and really prevent you from fully expressing yourself. I do agree that you need to be willing to face embarrassment, but I question the fact that it is a necessity to creation.

MAINLY ON DIRECTING BY ARTHUR LAURENTS

This was definitely one of my favorite books I read for this project. Laurents was a famous playwright and director for many years, writing the original script for "Gypsy," and then directing the Broadway revival, in addition to the Broadway revival of "West Side Story," and the original production of "La Cage Aux Folles." He also worked on countless other plays and musicals throughout his career. The biggest thing that drew me to this book was Laurents' insistence on giving musicals the proper weight and

table work allotted to a traditional play. This is something that I agree with deeply and was actually the subject of my final presentation in my Theatre Theory, Criticism, and Praxis course with Dr. Joyce Lu, so I was delighted to see that such a prominent figure in the theatre world had written a whole book on it.

LESSONS FROM LAURENTS:

- Everything that a director needs to be driven from the material (the script/ written text). You shouldn't just make up what you want to make it fun or pretty, let the material decide.
- The text of musicals has the same weight as the text of a play and deserves it. "Everything stems from the basic material" (Laurents 14). Musicals are not often given this kind of respect; so many are seen as mindless entertainment, so Laurents' choice to take this strong of a stance is quite revolutionary.
- When doing a revival of an iconic musical, no one ever wants to recreate or duplicate an exact moment from the original production. But, in reality, no matter for hard you try, it is impossible to exactly recreate these moments. Furthermore, it can be important to maintain these moments because otherwise audiences may become distracted wondering where that iconic moment is: that moment that made the musical originally great. That distraction can actually detract from them appreciating what is new and exciting in this production.

- “Believe in the actors you cast. If they’re not being as good as you thought they’d be, assume it’s your fault and find the way to get to them” (Laurents 27). It is a director’s job to get through to their actors, and make them the best they can be. Don’t give up on your actors; you cast them because you saw something great, and it is your job to find it again.
- Always continue to examine why a song is in the show. Not the text of it, but why it is really there. It is common to analyze the lyrics of a song, and decide what they mean in the context of that number. But what makes the show special is when you truly understand and justify why each song is in the show, and why the musical couldn’t go on without it.
- Acting didn’t used to be a priority in musicals. They were just for ‘musical comedy.’ But now, acting is valued and Laurents wanted it to be his top priority. In directing the revival of *Gypsy*, he said that “This wasn’t going to be a musical where anyone came on stage without a life” (Laurents 56). He also said to look for the play hidden beneath the show; basically, even a show that feels superfluous, should have meaning behind the words.
- Sometimes, you need to add meaning to songs that were not even intended to have meaning. In 1959, when Laurents wrote *Gypsy*, there were many songs that were literally just meant to be comedy. Their point was just to get a laugh and entertain. But in Laurents’ new philosophy, that wouldn’t work anymore. So, he completely reframed them, without changing a single word. The strippers in “Gotta Get a Gimmick” now sang

to Louise instead of to the audience, changing a raunchy dance number into an ironic and bittersweet piece of advice. “Together Wherever We Go” was bolstered with emotion and personal connection, changing from a vaudeville number to a meaningful song about the fleetingness of family.

- You need to have table reads and table rehearsals in musical theatre. That is where the acting comes from—sitting around a table, dissecting the script together. Once you are on your feet learning choreography, it is often too late. Importance of table rehearsals in musical theatre
- Make sure to really get on the same page with your choreographer about the story you are telling. Many choreographers make musical *comedy*, not musical *theatre*, because they are not used to working with actors in the same way they are used to working with dancers, so sometimes the storytelling can take a backseat to the dancing. Use clear communication to avoid this.
- A director directs in order “to produce theatre that gives the audience an experience only theatre can--moves them, excites and entertains, illuminates, and always makes them want to see more theatre” (Laurents 175). If your show isn’t doing this, take a step back and figure out what you can tweak, so that it does.

STAGING SEX BY CHELSEA PAGE

Similar to the Heartland online course (Page 79), this is a textbook, or perhaps the textbook, on Theatrical Intimacy. For more of a definition on Theatrical Intimacy, please refer to my learnings from the Heartland course mentioned above. I was lucky

enough to read an excerpt of this book last semester, in my Theatre Theory course, and was instantly intrigued. Within five minutes of our class discussion, and all the horror stories everyone had to share about awkward stage kisses and intimate scenes, the necessity of intimacy coordination became instantly apparent. This was another one of my absolute favorite books from this project, and in an ideal world I would assign it as a required reading to anyone who wants to direct. While this book will not instantly turn you into a professional Intimacy Director, the best practices and concepts provided are a necessity for any safe rehearsal space, and for anyone who may find themselves within the power hierarchy of the theatre.

WHAT AND WHY:

- Theatrical intimacy should always be built around consent and boundaries. It should be staged and choreographed thoroughly; the staging should never be on the actors, and it should be specific enough for a stage manager to notate it and help rehearse it.
- People need protocol! Setting clear protocol and boundaries from the beginning allows all team members to refer to them in times of question, or point to them when they are broken.
- Heightened states affect cognition. This means that when rehearsing an intimate or intense scene, an actor's cognition will not be the same as their usual state. Thus, under the pressure, they may allow boundaries to be crossed that they would have preferred to keep private. Or, on the more "positive" end, they might have so much chemistry with their partner that they go further than

what the director wanted, which may not be correct for the character arc in that show. That is why it is so important to have specific and notated intimacy choreography that everyone can refer to, keep consistent, and clearly state their boundaries.

HOW TO—TIPS FOR ANY SHOW:

- Always model good behavior. Follow the protocol that you set. As a director, and therefore as the most powerful person in the room, abusing your power can be dangerously easy. Stay within the protocol, always.
- Consent, as always, requires an enthusiastic and uncoerced yes. This is true in all aspects of life: theatre and beyond.
 - A great exercise/game to practice with this is the 'no game.' Basically, you take turns being the person who asks questions, and everyone is welcomed and invited to answer with a firm no. For example: “Would you like to put this shoe on your head?” “No!” As the game progresses, you are welcome to give the players more serious questions, as well as the choice to say yes or no.
- Desexualize the language. This can be a very difficult concept to get use to, but once you get comfortable with it, it can make a huge difference in the rehearsal room. Basically, instead of using sexualized language, such as “groping” or “grinding,” you desexualize the language and used movement and choreography oriented terms; instead of giving an actor a direction to grope another

actor in the scene, which can be triggering, you could direct them to seek muscle level contact between their hand and their partner's torso, and when they have made that contact to alternate on a 2 count between squeezing, moving their hand, and releasing. The specifics of this type of language will be covered below.

- Choreography creates boundaries. If the choreography does not include touching the breast of another actor, then there is absolutely no reason that that actor's breast should be touched. And, if an uncomfortable or unsafe situation occurred where that actor's breast was touched, it would be very clear for anyone involved that that touch was not part of the choreography.

- Make sure the entire cast and team understands the importance of boundary work and desexualization. For any intimacy work that will be necessary in the show, make sure this is clear to everyone at the audition and/or before they take the position. No one should be caught off-guard.

- Never ever step in to demonstrate an intimacy scene with an actor. As a director, that is completely inappropriate since you are on such different levels of power.

BOUNDARIES

- Boundaries are perfect exactly where they are. This is such an important concept that it deserves to be repeated: boundaries are perfect exactly where they are, and none of these exercises should be used to try and stretch or

extend anyone's boundaries. And also, if boundaries do change along the way, that is perfectly normal and should be fully embraced. Below are three important terms to use to set boundaries in the rehearsal space.

- **Button:** The Button word is a word that can be said at any time, no questions asked, and will allow everything to pause for a moment. It does not have to be the word Button, but should be something that will be unique enough that everyone will realize it is being said. It also should be a neutral word; words like “stop” or “hold” are often seen in the theatre as being frustrating or an intrusion. Button is neutral and can be used to pause anything that is uncomfortable, ask a question, or anything else that might be necessary. Below are two exercises to practice using Button.

- **Simon Says:** When an action is prefaced by the phrase Simon Says, an actor has 2 options: to do it, or to return to neutral and say Button. When it is not prefaced with Simon Says, the actors remain neutral. Giving this agency of choice, to use Button instead of simply obeying Simon, will help actors begin to feel more comfortable using it.

- **Yes/The Circle Game:** Participants stand in a circle. Normally, a random Participant A will gesture or say the name of Participant B. Participant B will say Yes, and Participant A will walk towards B's position in the circle. Participant B will do the same to Participant C, C will say Yes, and B will begin towards C's space. In this version, participants have the option of saying Yes, or simply

saying Button and staying put. Again, this allows the practice of not automatically giving in or saying yes.

- Fences: Fences can be used to visualize boundaries more physically, and are often more useful in protecting those boundaries. For example, instead of saying that the front of your chest is off-limits, you would simply say that you have a fence around the front of your chest. This visualization often makes it easier to remember where the boundaries begin and end. Remember, we are focusing on desexualizing language. So instead of breasts or another slang word, we might use “front of upper chest,” and instead of bottom we might use “back of pelvis.”

- We will explore fences more deeply in the full boundary practice described below, but it is always helpful to have both parties verbalize the fences.

- Gates: These are situations where fences may be opened in a specific circumstance. For example, you may have a fence around your front upper chest. But, you may also be comfortable with hugging an actor onstage. In this situation, you would both ask and discuss if you were comfortable opening your front-of-body gates to create contact in the form of a hug. This does not invalidate your fence, but simply creates a gate for certain situations.

- The full Boundary Practice can be found in Pace’s book on pages 25-29. I would highly recommend reading or obtaining your own copy. But basically, it has 3 main steps:

- First, with partners neutrally facing each other, Partner A uses their hands to touch their own body, and show Partner B with where they are comfortable being touched.
- Second, Partner A asks to take Partner B’s hands. If they say yes, Partner A takes their hands, and guides them along A’s body, showing the same places that are comfortable being touched. If Partner B says no, they will simply trail their hands in a path directly following A’s hands.
- Third, Partner B names the fences they saw, and Partner A confirms them, and adds any details that may be necessary. Example: “I saw a fence around your upper thighs.”
- Once this is complete, the partners switch and repeat the process.

SPECIFIC ADVICE FOR STAGING THEATRICAL INTIMACY:

- You can and should always use a high five as a placeholder for a kiss up until whatever date you discuss with your actors, and it is always an option when needed. The high five can still follow the choreography by using the same level of touch, tempo, and intention, but it provides added comfort. Additionally, if an actor is ever not feeling well, or just feeling more uncomfortable in rehearsal that day, they can easily switch to the high five for that rehearsal without causing any awkwardness or disruption.

– De-roling!! This is so important in avoiding drama and maintaining strong cast dynamics, as well as avoiding possible showmances. This is when, at the end of a rehearsal, or throughout if necessary, the actor speaks plainly to their scene partner and de-roles.

– Example: ‘In this scene, as this character, I am in love with you and passionately kissing you to show my euphoria in finally getting to hold you. But as an actor, I am doing my choreography. I am Opening and Closing distance between our bodies. I am varying tempos. I am using different levels of touch. I am acting the story of the playwright, not acting as my self.’

– This can be used for much more intense scenes as well, especially anything that involves abuse or could create trauma, as a reassurance that it is not real and that they would never do any of those things in real life.

– Using Boundaries can help discipline the Boundary Breakers. If you see anything occur, or if a concern is brought to you, follow these four steps:

– Document the discussion, and the specific boundary cross that has occurred

– Run through your boundary practices again to remind everyone of our boundary work

– If the situation occurs more than once, it is completely not okay and as a director you must make

this clear. In some situations, this may be the case even without a repeat situation.

— For apologies, use the four-part apology structure. First, name what you did. Second, apologize—genuinely. Third, thank the person for bringing it to your attention. And lastly, articulate what you will change in order to move forward with accountability.

CHELSEA PACE'S 10 INGREDIENTS FOR STAGING INTIMACY:

To properly understand the usage of each of these tools, you really need to read Pace's book firsthand. But, the general idea is that any intimate scene will be some choreographed combination of these elements, scripted down to every touch. You can combine them in any way that you want.

1. **Opening and Closing Distance:** You can open and close distance between anything—a hand and a body, two bodies, a pelvis and a chair. You can open or close distance once, slowly, or you can do it repeatedly.
2. **Levels of Touch: Skin, Muscle, and Bone.** A skin-level touch is a touch that is so light and powdery, it just barely grazes the surface. A muscle-level touch is more grounded and strongly connected, as if you were trying to touch their muscles rather than just their skin. And, a bone-level touch has the most pressure and is the deepest level of touch, as if you could touch their bones through the skin.

3. Tempo and Counts: For tempo, you can count aloud until everyone gets a sense of internal tempo, and then ascribe counts. For example, you could ask them to close the distance between their bodies over a five-count. This also gives stage managers and the actors something to write down in their notes and keep track of, so they can easily refer and refresh.

4. Shapes: After you have added the basics, you can ascribe different shapes to the movement, such as an arc/curve, an angle/line, or a figure eight. For example: close the distance between your hand and your partner's upper back in a 2 count, and then repeatedly create 4-count figure eights on their back.

5. Destination: These should always be based on boundaries, and should dictate a starting and ending destination. For example, beginning at the shoulder, use a skin-level touch and 6 counts to arrive at the wrist.

6. Eye Contact: Actors are always seeking or avoiding eye contact. The choreography can also include having actors seek or avoid eye contact with certain parts of their body. For example, one actor may be seeking eye contact with the other's lips.

7. Visible Power Shifts: These should be visual physical shifts to differentiate power hierarchy, not just a difference attitude. To create a shift, actors must take or give power. In simulated intercourse scenes, it is especially important to avoid using the names of sexual positions, and instead tell the actors when and where

you would like a visible power shift. The actors then have the agency to portray this power shift in whatever way feels comfortable, rather than the awkwardness of trying to portray a specific position, or perhaps being asked to portray a position that they are unfamiliar with.

8. **Breath and Sound:** This is another level to add in. You should direct when and where you want audible breath and sound, and even provide specifics such as what consonant or vowel you would like the sound to be on. More advanced actors may make choices on their own that can then be notated and recreated.

9. **Gravity and Weight:** Instead of asking them to lean on each other, ask them to feel increased weight of gravity within their body, or within a certain part of their body.

10. **Kissing:** For an actual kiss, it should almost always be closed mouth with no tongue, unless it very specifically calls for something else. You want to use all of these tools to direct the kiss, especially tools 1-3. If the kiss looks awkward, a direction to close distance with the chin can often make it look better.

You can also let advanced actors create their own moment with these tools, and then use these terms to document and tweak as needed. Once you have all of these ingredients at your disposal, you can combine them into different recipes for any kind of theatrical intimacy.

AN ACTOR PREPARES BY CONSTANTIN STANISLAVSKY

This is quite possibly the most famous book on acting, at least in Western acting. It was published in 1936, and sat on my desk for a long time, as I eyed it with dread. When I actually started reading it, I was overall pleasantly surprised. It was definitely much more engaging than expected. At the same time, I honestly think that I could have gained all of the same lessons in ¼ of the page length. Additionally, most of the lessons were things that I have already learned in acting classes; it is very interesting that so many acting classes still follow the methodology of a Russian acting teacher in the early 1900s. The other interesting thing was that so many people hold up Stanislavsky as being this father of acting, with this being his most famous book, but the whole book was just diary entries from his experience as a beginning acting student under the tutelage of a seasoned director. So really, all the lessons in this book, are from his director Tortsov, not himself.

LESSONS AND REALIZATIONS:

- Within the first chapter, I was already seeing signs that although the acting technique may still be very present in our world today, its presentation was outdated in many ways. This was revealed to me when the entire first chapter was Stanislavsky talking about his project for acting class, where he got to be any character he wanted to be, and he spent at least 10 pages talking about how excited he was to do blackface and transform into Othello. Once I realized that many of these exercises would need to be taken with a grain of salt, I was able to much more easily look past them, and instead focus on the acting lessons that the text had to offer. Some of my favorites are listed below.

— The “Magic If”: This is one I had heard about a lot before. At its basis, it is acting by imagining if you were in that situation—‘what if this happened?’ However, in reading this text, I started to understand its true power. By using the “if,” we are not forcing anyone to believe us. Instead of forcing an audience to see a play as truth, you are extending an invitation to them, to consider the if: what if this was true? This is much more palatable and inviting, and in turn allows both the actors and the audience to connect much more deeply with the imaginary.

— ‘Not acting’ is always more intriguing than acting. When you are sitting in a chair pursuing a real objective, such as trying to massage and relieve your feet from pain after a long day, and audience will be much more engaged than if you sit in a chair and try to ‘act’ your pain, and work to show how badly your feet hurt and how much you must show your need to sit in the chair.

— This was one of the first introductions to a theme that continued throughout the text: the importance of giving everything a reason and motivation. These motivations are referred to as objectives and, in the Stanislavsky technique, are the central way to propel the story forward.

— Continuing the theme of objectives, it emphasizes the importance of an objective that is a verb and not a noun. This is because noun objectives quickly turn into overacting, and a need to show something to an audience. A verb objective is an action that can continuously be pursued, and act as a driving force behind everything.

- An objective reveals the importance of not acting out certain emotions or just acting in general, but really leaning into the specific given circumstances and reason why a character does something in a specific play. This is how we add specificity and artistry to our work.
- This leads us into super-objectives, which are described as overarching objectives for the entire drama. They are the driving force that should be in the background of everything in the show and should, in some way, influence every action and emotion that occurs within the play.
- However, he also emphasizes the importance of keeping objectives and units (smaller segments within an objective) fully motivated. When first presented with the concept of objectives, it can be easy to go overboard, and start creating all sorts of fun and exciting objectives to play within your character. But, objectives should not come from the actor's desire to have fun. They should have motivation and solid reasoning within the text, and should support the super-objective.
- You should always be careful when rehearsing with a mirror. This is a bad habit of mine that stems from many years of dance training, and the desire to want to be able to see myself and self-critique in real time. However, this "teaches you to watch the outside, not the inside."
- You need to believe in the purpose of any gesture you do, and only use the movements and muscles necessary for that gesture, without superfluous movement. This will

keep your performance pure, but it will also help stop you from falling into the pitfalls of stereotypical gesturing, and come up with gestures that are authentic to your specific character, in that moment in time.

— Another idea I found interesting was the idea of practicing ‘solitude in public,’ and feeling comfortable within that. Many roles call for an actor to be completely isolated and solitary, and this can be a difficult feeling to capture onstage in front of a full audience of people. Thus, practicing this specific concept was very interesting to me, and seemed like something that could be very useful.

— One of the most controversial Stanislavsky techniques is the concept of emotion and sense memories. This technique tells actors to call upon past emotional or sensory experiences and allow their body to remember those sensations, in order to portray a certain role. This has come under fire because, in certain roles, it can become incredibly re-traumatizing. However, there are also many theatre theorists who say we have translated Stanislavsky’s intent completely wrong, as it was originally written in Russian, and in doing so we have created this possibly traumatic technique. In reading this text, I definitely saw both sides of the argument. Additionally, it did focus more on recalling the physical and sensory experience, rather than the emotional state, which sounds slightly healthier to me but could still be very triggering.

THEATRE GAMES FOR REHEARSAL: A DIRECTOR'S HANDBOOK BY VIOLA SPOLIN

This was one of those books that I randomly checked out from the theatre section of the library and was shocked at how useful it was. I am a strong proponent of libraries and borrowing books, rather than buying them for yourself, but this was a book that felt valuable enough to me to add to my own collection, and keep it on hand for the years to come.

FAVORITE LESSONS:

- First, understand why we play Theatre Games. It is because playing produces authentic presence, rather than letting the brain get in the way of our learning. This is something that I learned about in Professor Jessie Mills' theatre course as well; it is the same reason that toddlers learn and develop so much more quickly than college students—we learn much faster through play than through lecture.
- Theatre Games also get rid of the “How am I doing?” fear. In acting, it is very easy to second guess your performance, and be constantly wanting to check in or get reassurance that you are doing well. Games allow us to let go of that anxiety, because it doesn't matter if you do well or not—it is just play. And, practicing this act of letting go allows us to do so in our daily life.
- We must continually ask: should we play more? Can we play more? How can we play more? This allows us to keep pushing ourselves deeper into the realm of play, and

consequently gaining more and more from each experience.

- Each of Spolin's games includes a focus and a purpose. The purpose is for the leader, not the players. For example, the purpose may be to "create off-balance moments" (more on that later), while the focus is simply to not get stuck in the center of the circle. To truly play the game to the best of everyone's ability, the players should only know the focus while playing. This keeps them firmly in the realm of play, rather than wandering into the intellectual questioning of if they are fulfilling the purpose.

- When evaluating game performance as a group, rather than classifying anything as "good" or "bad," this allows you to use the much more neutral descriptors "focus" or "off-focus." A well-focused game will keep all players keenly engaged on the focus of the game, and an off-focus game will not.

- While some of the games have fairly obvious purposes, others may look silly or childish at first glance. In these games, the purpose is often to create and encounter "off-balance moments." This continuous exposure to off-balance moments, or what others might label as tricky or difficult situations, provides a constant opportunity for spontaneity, in a low-stakes environment. Being exposed to so much low-stakes spontaneity will, in turn, prepare actors for those onstage, much higher stakes, spontaneous moments, and will trigger thoughts of excitement and play rather than fear.

- If you do get your hands on a copy of this book, check out page 10; this was one of the pages that really made me want to buy it. It just had such fantastic tips of different things to self-evaluate as a director, especially the importance of always pouring energy into your ensemble.

FAVORITE GAMES

These are some of my favorite games of the summer that I pulled from Spolin's book. Granted, I spent the summer working with primarily ages 5-18 at that amateur level, so these games are a bit more tailored for that. I honestly think they are incredibly fun and useful at any level, but Spolin's book also has many games that would have been much too advanced for my students, but could be incredibly useful to professional actors.

- Kitty Wants a Corner: In this game there is one person who is in the center of the circle—this person is “kitty,” and their entire focus is on getting out of the center. Everyone else is forming their circle, and their entire focus is on switching spots with someone else to get to a different spot in the circle. To play this game, Kitty goes around to each person saying “Kitty wants a corner.” Each circle member will then respond “Go ask my next door neighbor.” Simultaneously, all of the neighbors are seeking silent eye contact with each other across the circle. When they have locked eyes and nonverbally communicated that they would like to switch, they quickly run across the circle and switch spots. During this process, they will either make it across safely, or Kitty may beat them there. If Kitty beats one of them to the circle, Kitty will then take the

open spot, and whoever's spot was stolen will now be the Kitty. There is no winner of this game; it continues until the leader stops it.

- Gibberish (Selling): This game is very simple. Everyone is speaking in their own gibberish (any improvised, nonsensical language), and everyone desperately wants to sell something. They then form pairs until they can convince their partner to buy their wares, and then they move on to someone else. There is no winning or losing at all in this game. Instead, especially since this one can feel quite silly, it is all about fully committing to the gameplay.
- Stage Picture: This is a great game to work on spatial awareness. All players will be moving about the space, and whenever the director says “Stage Picture!” they will all freeze in a way to ensure their bodies can be seen by the director. This can be an important game for the director to help coach and offer suggestions, or even for the players to take turns being the director, so they can see what the stage picture looks like.
- Play Ball: This is another simple game. All that happens is that the players are playing ball. Throwing, catching, running for it, tackling for it. Except, there is no ball—It is an imaginary ball. Again, this can feel silly, but is all about fully committing to gameplay.
- Mirror: In this game, two players will face each other and exactly mirror each other's movements. This is a great exercise in bodily awareness. As a director, you can coach the players to make sure that they are

not interpreting their partner's movement in a new way, but striving to exactly mirror and replicate it.

— What Started the Motion/Secret Leader: In this game, you will have everyone sitting in a circle. You will then select one Guesser. The Guesser must leave the circle, and leave the room or close their eyes. The director will then choose the Secret Leader. The Secret Leader will start some sort of motion, and the rest of the group will copy it (such as patting their lap, or tapping their shoulder). The Guesser will then return, and try to guess who the Secret Leader is, or who started the motion. The Secret Leader must also switch the motion regularly throughout the game. The rest of the participants must continue to copy the Secret Leader, but in a way that is not obvious (not directly looking at them, not drawing attention to them). The Guesser will have three chances to guess before the Secret Leader is revealed. You can repeat this process as many times as you desire.

— Some other favorites are Zip Zap Zop and Boppity Bop Bop Bop, which were not taken directly from Spolin's book, but were deeply influenced by it. These are very popular games, and can be easily accessed by doing a quick google search online.

3.

THE INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW WITH BENNETT CALE

Bennett is a long-time family friend, who also introduced me to Jim Gardia, who is interviewed later in this chapter. Bennett is now a highly successful Financial Advisor, who started out as an actor with a full plan to pursue theatre. In my conversation with Bennett, I wanted to hear about this switch, and what he would advise to a student like myself.

HIS JOURNEY:

- Bennett went to college in New York at Columbia, before they had a major theatre program, and was an English major. While in school, he did a lot of a cappella, and also auditioned and worked in commercials on the side. He ended up paying for college with his commercial work.
- While in college, he was part of a production called *Starmites*, which began off-Broadway and then eventually went to Broadway for a short run, where he was in the original cast. The show got nominated for 6 Tony awards!
- In New York, all this success came very quickly to him, and he felt that he had conquered the theatre, so he decided to move to LA. Looking back, he says this was

his mistake; he moved to LA for the fame rather than his passion for theatre, and that was where he went wrong.

- Once in LA, he did some film and television work, but did not have the same success he did in New York. So, he started working in some of the other aspects of the theatre, and did a lot of box office work and worked as a treasurer in Beverly Hills.
- At this point, he felt more ready to settle down and was interested in this financial side, so he started pursuing the investment world, went to UCLA for an additional degree, and is now an extremely successful financial advisor with Morgan Stanley.
 - At this point in his career, he says he is much more intellectually stimulated and fulfilled in his current job than he would be if he continued to work as a treasurer or financial manager in the theatre. And, he still gets to do it all! He and his family are highly artistic people, and he often performs in community theatre with his wife.

HIS ADVICE

- The theatre is a profession of love, and everyone there is passionate about what they do. They also love the community, and most artists are so willing to connect with you and help connect you to other people.
- Now is the time to go for it in the theatre industry. As a college student and recent graduate, you have the least to lose. You can always settle down and switch to an office job later, if you feel it is necessary down the line, because

the theatre will always give you skills that are applicable to anything. But there will probably not be another time in your life where you can this freely start something.

- Find the people you admire, and make a list of them. From there, figure out how to work with them. If you have them written down as a goal, you will eventually get there.
- Look into graduate programs! They are fun, and you get to perform, but you also will become very close with an incredibly talented cohort of artists, who will really be going places. Those could become your lifelong connections.
- Connections are key. Stay in touch with them!
- Let yourself have fun. Fun is so much more important than we make it out to be.

INTERVIEW WITH EMMA CANALESE

Emma Canalese is a New York-based Director/Choreographer and instructor of Acting, Dance, and Pilates. She has a multitude of directing and choreography projects on her resume, both professional and educational. They range from New York to Florida to Australia. I was lucky enough to be connected with Emma Canalese through Christina Hurtado-Pierson's Theatre History class, where we interviewed an industry professional to help inspire us along our career paths. This interview with Emma is actually from May 2020, making it the very first piece of this project. It was incredibly impactful, and I am so happy to be able to add it to this book, which I am now compiling over a year later, to be able to share her wisdom with all of you.

HER JOURNEY:

- Emma began as a dancer. She got a dance degree at The Western Australian Academy of the Performing Arts. However, by the time that she got to the end of her degree, she decided she wanted to act as well, and fully jumped into it. She has always done her own work and been a big proponent of self-producing, and entering the acting world only furthered that passion.
- She was always drawn to both the directing/ choreographing and performing. Part of the reason that she became drawn to choreography and being a creator was because she realized she wouldn't like the submissiveness of dance; she figured she would get in too many arguments with Artistic Directors along the way, so she wanted to become one instead.
- More recently, she has worked on musical theatre projects, but at first that was not her interest. She was much more interested in experimental theatre, dance theatre, and the intersection between contemporary dance and physical theatre.

HER ADVICE:

- If you find yourself drawn to both creating and performing, really listen to your heart for each show. If there is a role that you are so drawn to that it makes you too sad to be behind the scenes instead of onstage, don't direct that project. Audition for it! Another way she

discerns this difference is that she wakes up in the morning with a new project her imagination has dreamed of creating, rather than a new role she wants to play.

- Just do it. Go for it. There is no one pathway to directing, so just create and perform all at once, and anything else that falls into your pathway.
- Make sure that when you are assisting, you really allow people to get to know you and your artistry as well. You want to be seen as someone who can be trusted to move up and become a director. You can't only be the helpful assistant. **You don't want to get stuck always being the assistant director.**
- Don't 'protect' a career that doesn't exist yet. Say yes to projects and do them. Down the road, you can start specifying your brand and honing in on projects that specifically fall into your vision. The very beginning of your career is not the time to do that.
- Get your work up on YouTube, so you have a portfolio ready to show people!
- Find people you can collaborate with; you really can't do it all. Being a director-choreographer can be really hard, and there are a lot of different levels to deal with. Sometimes a project is so big you need help. Make sure you have the people that you can trust.
- As a director, your idea is not always going to be the best idea in the room. Canalese told me that when she is directing, "if [an actor has] an idea and it's better [than mine] we're gonna do that, because why not?" With this

outlook, the team ends up with something better than any individual could create. As a director, you do have to make the final decision, but you should be open and excited to hear ideas. It can be a relief to have other people there to help you. A thousand things are happening, and sometimes you just need someone to deal with a certain section.

— She says that even now, after being a fully established Director-Choreographer, she still always walks into a room feeling like “Oh my god, I don't know what I'm doing. They're gonna find out I'm a fraud.” But, you just need to do it, put the impostor syndrome aside, and “not be afraid to f*** up.” You have to get comfortable with failing, because that's where you learn the most. You need to learn to say “I have an idea, I don't know if this is gonna work. Let's just try it.” It is play, you're experimenting and playing. Nothing has to be right or good.

— She transfers this skill to playwriting as well. She says to herself “let's just write the bad version of this.” It gives you somewhere to start, and then you know what doesn't work. And it gives you a good structure.

— Lastly, some of my favorite quotes were “Throw yourself into the scary” and the “Worst thing that happens is it doesn't work.”

INTERVIEW WITH TIM DANG

I was lucky enough to work under Tim Dang's direction my freshman year at Pomona, in his production of “Pippin.” I am so thankful for Tim's willingness to be a resource and mentor beyond

that initial experience. He was the Artistic Director of East West Players for many years. He has directed all over the world, worked as an actor and voice actor for a wide array of TV, movies, and video games, and has served on the board of the LA Stage Alliance.

HIS JOURNEY:

- Tim started his journey by graduating from the University of Southern California's theatre conservatory program, with a B.F.A. He began as an actor, and quickly became an activist for bringing more People of Color into the theatre.
- He actually began directing so that he could have the creative authority and leadership opportunity to get POC into those roles. He then joined a theatre company and said that he just started observing everything, from the Excel spreadsheets to the liability and health insurance. This wide array of theatrical knowledge became vital in his future positions, where he was doing many roles at once.
- Eventually, he ended up at East West Players, where he stayed for decades, becoming the Artistic Director and a huge influence on the Los Angeles theatre community, specifically when it comes to uplifting Asian voices.

ADVICE FOR ASPIRING DIRECTORS:

- Keep record of the projects you have directed, and keep an archive of easily accessible clips for your directing reel. When you are starting out, even self-directed work is okay.

- For internships, look into the LA County Department of Arts Internships, as well as the directing programs through ABC Disney and Fox Talent Development. These are all fantastic programs for aspiring directors.
- Look into joining the SDC: the Society of Directors and Choreographers. It has a much lower membership fee than similar groups for actors, and offers paid internships and observerships. These opportunities are paid for by grants, which means the theatre company itself doesn't need to pay for them. They allow you to get into the rehearsal room, and fully observe the work of professional directors.
- Start small, and ask everywhere! If you want to do a small project, ask a local business if you can direct a commercial for them. You end up with something on your reel, and they end up grateful for the free publicity. And then, that business is a relationship you have, and is part of your network. If it is a restaurant or coffee shop, you never know when you might need some free or discounted food for cast members; make those connections!
- There is no specific school to become an Artistic Director. You really just need to gain a lot of experience in different sectors of the theatre, and eventually end up in the right place at the right time. It will also be key to have a specific vision, one which matches the mission of the theatre you will work for.
 - You want to have a certain passion that people are looking for—a specific stamp you can put on a show.

And then, you need to be able to share that vision in a way that can be marketed and attract donations and investors.

INTERVIEW WITH JIM GARDIA

Jim Gardia is one of those lucky and amazing connections—a best friend of a very close family friend, who I am so grateful to have been connected to. He is definitely someone who has not had a linear path in theatre, so I was particularly interested to hear about all the positions he fell into along the way. He has served in many impressive positions in many different theatre companies: perhaps most notably as the Executive Director of Broadway by the Bay.

HIS JOURNEY:

- Jim Gardia grew up in Los Angeles, performing in children's theatre. When he went to college, he actually wanted to be a professional swim coach. But along the way, he learned ASL, fell in love with it, and became an interpreter. This brought him to Forum Theatre, where he worked for a while as an interpreter in the theatre.
- After that, he also started working in the nearby box office in Los Angeles. Then, he moved to the East Coast and didn't do any theatre for seven years; but, something pulled him back to Los Angeles and to the theatre.
- When he returned, he became the treasurer of the Canon Theatricals Box Office. Subsequently, he took over as company manager and then eventually as general manager. Within a small company like Canon, he says that the best thing you can do is keep your eyes open and be constantly learning, until your predecessor teaches you

any specifics or intricacies you may need for your new position. He mentioned Joan Styne as being a fantastic mentor in producing shows, and someone who taught him to run non-profit theatres as if they were commercial ones, rather than succumbing to many of the pitfalls of non-profit companies.

- Next, he became a freelancer was working as a General Manager on all sorts of different shows, including the chance to work with Donna McKechnie (one of my Broadway idols), on the show “Follies.”
- After some of this freelance work, he moved to being the Executive Director at Broadway by the Bay from 2008-2012, at which point he went back to freelance work for more flexibility and to experience a wider variety of projects.

TIPS AND EXPLAINING THE DIFFERENCES IN POSITIONS:

We all know what an actor is, but when it comes to a Treasurer versus Company Manager versus General Manager, it can get confusing. Luckily, Jim explained these different positions very articulately, throwing in some more invaluable advice along the way.

- Company Manager versus General Manager
 - In Jim’s words, the Company Manager is the person that “holds the actors’ hands.” They are the overseer of the company, and manage all the contracts and needs of the actors.

- On the other hand, a General Manager is in charge of the books and box office. This is a much more umbrella-type position, often serving as the eyes and ears of the producer.
 - Additionally, the General Manager of a specific show can have a very similar role to the Managing Director of a specific theatre company. Depending on the situation, you often have one or the other. These positions often negotiate the contracts with the unions.
- Producers in Non-Profit versus Commercial
 - As a producer in a nonprofit theatre, you are not usually the one needing to raise all the money, because the Board and Development sector is completely focused on soliciting donations and funding for shows
 - However, as a producer in a for-profit or commercial theatre, you often are in charge of raising a lot of money, because it is a much more inherent part of your position.
- Don't overlook the theatre scene in Los Angeles. It is easy to get dissuaded by the large focus on Film and Television, but Jim actually loves producing live theatre in L.A. He says it is much more of a theatre town than people give it credit for.
- Trust yourself and trust your instincts. For a long time, Jim wanted to be an actor as well. But after moving back to LA, he said that he just didn't have it in him anymore to keep auditioning. Trust these instincts, and allow the

other facets of theatre to intrigue you and pull you back in.

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN PENNINGTON

John Pennington is the Coordinator of Dance and Associate Professor of Theatre and Dance at Pomona College. He is also the artistic director of Pennington Dance Group. Pennington is an absolutely amazing and beloved professor, his modern dance classes filling up instantly. He was also one of the first people I interacted with when I visited Pomona. As a random prospective student, he saw me walking around the dance building and invited me into his office, and talked to me for twenty minutes about Pomona and all the advice he had about applying. I remember being blown away by his sage wisdom, and this interview was no different.

HIS JOURNEY:

- John Pennington started in theatre in high school, and didn't start taking "real dance classes" until his senior year of high school. He then started at Northwestern's musical theatre program for college. However, he realized how much he loved to specialize in theatre and dance, and also realized that the extensive General Education courses at Northwestern would not allow him to specialize as much as he wanted to, so he transferred to California Institute of the Arts as an acting major. While at CalArts, he realized how deeply he had fallen in love with dance, and switched from an acting major to a dance major.
- After finishing college, he spent some time dancing and singing at Disneyland and Six Flags. He moved to New York for a while and was always auditioning, and

then eventually moved back to Los Angeles. At that point, he got in to the Lewitsky dance company and danced professionally for 15 years.

— During all these years of auditioning and working different musical theatre gigs, he was waiting tables, doing odd jobs, and all sorts of other things. At this time was when he realized just how important understudy and assistant positions can be; even if they start unpaid, the people who do a good job in them always seem to end up hearing back and getting a full position later on: “It’s not always the most talented person that gets the job, it is the person that the director knows will show up.”

— Something that interested me was how Pennington decided to pick dance over musical theatre, because this is a question I have struggled with in my own artistic journey. Part of his reasoning was that he knew he had a decent voice, but he said that he couldn’t sing at the Broadway level. And, in a similar vein, he knew he wanted to be able to “go deep” as an artist; in musical theatre, he didn’t think he would make it past being a chorus boy, and he knew that wouldn’t be artistically fulfilling enough. But most of all, his first big dancing position, at the Lewitsky company, was absolutely amazing; it gave stability, healthcare, opportunities to travel, and of course, the chance to perform and get paid for it!

— This opportunity with the Lewitsky company also provided training in education—in becoming a dance educator. This ended up being invaluable to Pennington, who is now one of the most passionate educators I know.

He said that one of the most important tools he gained was questioning: How do I teach this? Why do I teach this? Is it important to teach this? This has led him to teach all sorts of things, from modern dance classes to teaching athletes the mechanics of movement, to help them jump higher.

HIS ADVICE:

- Constantly ask yourself, how are other people creating? Step into other's shoes
- The art form is always bigger than you, when you feel stuck remember to just respect and appreciate the art, and it will all fall into place.
- A lot of choreographers want an assistant, but they might not always be able to pay for it. Reach out and say that you want to learn; you don't know how to do things until you see how they're done, and, once you have, "people want to work with people who want to work." Hard work pays off!
- You should have different resumes for different jobs. Rearrange your resume so that the most relevant things for that position are featured.
- Start learning early about when to walk away from an abusive situation or something that takes advantage of you. People shouldn't be yelling and screaming in rehearsal. Learn to understand where that line is; some directors may work with a loud voice, but there is a line that should not be crossed.

- All artists should start therapy. It helps you manage your own emotions and worries without getting bogged down and rising to the drama levels that may be present in the rehearsal room. Keep the art as the focal point, and keep everyone focused on the work. As a leader, your job is to funnel everyone back towards the work when there is drama.
- Theatre doesn't always have an age limit in the way that dance sometimes does, so you can always go back to it. If this helps you in the decision between dance and theatre, use it!
- Reputation is everything and people talk--you need to be a good person to work with. He has friends who specifically call in people they have worked with before, because they need someone they can count on, and don't always have the space to risk it.
- Learn to count music! Especially as an actor; find a music for actors class, and learn to hear the tempo and rhythm, and be able to count the beats. Learn to read music, or at least be able to hear it really well.
- Kindness goes a long way.
- Choreography and directing are all about imagination, inspiration, and asking "what if?" These are things that are deeply within your subconscious, and you can discover them by getting a 360 degree view of the world around you; look at museums, art, sculpture, and any other forms of creativity.

- Keep your style versatile; most Broadway choreographers had modern dance training, like the famous Agnes de Mille.
- In composition, choreography, and art classes, you can learn useful tools like understanding the canvas, foreground, background, vanishing point, spacing, and music. You can develop skills in space design, motion design, and floor design. But the creativity, and the artistry—that is something that you can't learn. So keep developing your artistry with the world around you, because you won't discover it in a lecture hall.

INTERVIEW WITH JANELLE PORTMAN (FORMERLY JANELLE DOTE)

I was lucky enough to get to work extensively with Janelle Portman this year, both as her student and dance captain in Pomona College's Musical Theatre Performance Course, and as a dancer in Little Women. I am so glad I got to interview her for this project, because her confidence and charisma is infectious, and her smile lights up the Zoom Room. Janelle has performed in Regional Theatres all across the country, as well as in the original cast, as both a performer and assistant dance captain, in Broadway's "Allegiance: A New Musical." To learn more about Janelle, visit <http://janelledote.com>. I was specifically interested in Janelle's path to Broadway and path back to Los Angeles, along with everything that happened in between!

HER JOURNEY:

- Janelle started with Visual Arts when she was young, and did not begin dancing seriously until, high school,

with her school's dance drill team. She also did not perform in her first musical until high school, where she did "Fame," fueled by her passion for storytelling.

— She went to UCLA to continue her studies with a program in Theatre Arts; while she did not get accepted into UCLA's Musical Theatre program, her Theatre Arts degree still allowed her to pursue serious dance training, as well as exploring all the elements of theatre. She loved the emphasis the program had on storytelling—one of her favorite ballet teachers would ask the class to decide, every day, "what color they were dancing" that day. She worked on Ballet in the mornings, and Hip Hop / Jazz Funk at night, and soon got a commercial agent as an undergraduate student.

— Using her visual arts background, she actually became deeply engrossed in costume design, and designed a show as a senior project, but along the way she realized that her heart was really in performing.

— One of Janelle's biggest pieces of advice was just about putting yourself out there, and making friends. This ended up working out well for her, and right out of college she happened to end up in the right place at the right time, and got cast at the Geffen, one of the most famous regional theatres in the country.

— Janelle also said that one of her best places to meet people and network was at Crunch Gym in West LA. But, she said that the most important part of networking is not treating it like networking; you really need to treat it as

cultivating friends and relationships, and the projects will grow out of that. People trust their friends.

— After a while in Los Angeles, she decided that she did want to try living in New York for a while, where she ended up booking “Allegiance.” Janelle described “Allegiance” as being a deeply fulfilling and almost spiritual experience for her. But afterwards, she realized that she no longer wanted to be part of the audition circuit, auditioning constantly and moving from one show to the next. She thinks that this is partially because no other show had the same pull and passion for her as “Allegiance” did.

— A little bit of her Broadway experience with Allegiance: It was amazing! It was such a unique show, with a lot of people making their Broadway debuts, and a fantastic director who treated it with such compassion. He treated everything and everyone with such love and care. Additionally, something that made this unique was it being Janelle’s first experience of doing previews for a show and seeing how much the show was changing each day, and the speed that the actors needed to work in order to keep up with it. But she also said that the caliber of professionalism and intense organization was such an incredible experience, as was the chance to get to perform a single show that many times, and continue finessing and refining it every single day. This is one of the reasons that Janelle has always gravitated toward live theatre over film and television, because theatre provides that discovery and exploration time with the work.

- Bonus: What does it mean to be an Assistant Dance Captain? Broadway shows usually have one dance captain onstage and one offstage. As an Assistant Dance Captain, Janelle had to make quick last minute decisions, such as deciding who has to go onstage for who, and fixing other last minute crises. On a rehearsal day, her job included notating all formations, and knowing all intricacies and counts so that she could help understudies or anyone else who might need to go in for a role.
- Since then, Janelle has moved back to Los Angeles, and continued to dance and perform, as well as teach and choreograph.

OTHER TIPS FROM JANELLE

- Learn from Broadway swings—if there is a rehearsal room or hallway where you can hear the show, use that time and space to choose one track and practice running the whole show in that performer's track. Then the next night, try another one!
- Shoutout to Rob Marshall! Janelle recommends him as an incredible director and choreographer, who knows what he wants, and who she has learned a lot from
- Her favorite way to learn about becoming a choreographer is by working with other choreographers, observing how they work, and gleaning off of their confidence

- Another great way to make connections with a certain choreographer who you really admire is to take classes a lot with them, slowly build up a relationship, and eventually you may get invited to work with them on their gigs and projects
- Remember, people see the energy you use, and the way you develop. Continue to meet people and keep expanding your network, and they will see the energy that you are fueled from
- You'll go through cycles where you want to be a creator and cycles where you want to be a performer, and that's okay and normal. Redefining for yourself is great!
- Loving the hard work and tediousness of rehearsals is special and can really help you, not everyone is like that. So if you love that side of it, stick with it.
- Shannon Lewis is another amazing person to take classes from, and she works at Broadway Dance Center in NYC (which is currently still offering virtual classes as well).

INTERVIEW WITH RODERICK MENZIES – SPEED MENTORSHIP WITH CTG'S GOING PRO CAREER EVENT

I was so lucky to get to attend CTG's annual "Going Pro" career fair this year, although it was virtual. I got to participate in a 20 minute 'speed-mentorship' with Roderick Menzies, and truly gained invaluable wisdom from those twenty minutes. Rod Menzies has held a variety of impressive positions over his career, including being an actor of many lead roles (especially Shakespeare) in the LA area, a professor at AMDA, an Artistic

Director at Ensemble Studio Theatre, and a dialect and acting coach. Our conversation was specifically about his path to becoming an Artistic Director, and what advice he had for a student like me.

FAVORITE TAKEAWAYS:

- For Menzies, the first step into Artistic Direction was simply through connections and being in the right place at the right time. He was an actor, had done a ton of theatre, and happened to have a connection who thought he would be perfect for the job. And, the rest just developed naturally. Below are some of the biggest lessons he has for aspiring Artistic Directors.
- You can never be overqualified for Artistic Directing. It is a demanding, deeply multi-faceted position. Anything and everything you do will be valuable experience in the long run.
- Artistic Directors in smaller theatre companies are always fundraising, so be ready for this if it is the route you are going for. That said, experience in different philanthropy and development departments can also be useful.
- It is possible to live in both the acting and directing worlds. You do not need to completely give up one for the other; you can continue to do both. This was reassuring to me, as someone who feels very torn between the two worlds.

- For him, directing is much harder than acting, because there is so much resting on you. You need to be able to stay calm and stay creative under pressure.
- Allow yourself to get deep into the interpretive side of directing. This allows you to feel all the work and directorial vision on your end, without relying too much on the actors. This is a valuable skill because it will mean that you can create an amazing product no matter what situation is thrown at you.
- You always want everyone to feel invested. You never have to be the smartest person in the room, and you never should be the single stakeholder. Achieving this state is all about making everyone else feel comfortable, and able to share their ideas. Which, in turn, helps you, because you don't need to be the only one generating ideas. You end up as a diplomat, creating order between all the ideas in the room.
- You need a very clear vision and framework, so that you can guide the designers in the right direction. This is an important step in making sure they still get agency and artistic freedom over their own design, while making sure it fits in with the directorial vision that you have for the show.
- Self-identify! Let people know you are interested in Artistic Directing! They will be excited about it, and the connections will come.
- An Artistic Director job position is almost impossible to write, because of all the different responsibilities it

covers. An internship or observership is a great way to begin to get close to that type of role.

- You can always start your own theatre company and be the Artistic Director of it! A lot of great theatre companies really do start that way. You can also always be interning or doing something else, while also starting your own theatre company. The most successful theatre people are always staying very busy.

INTERVIEW WITH GREGORY RAE

Gregory Rae is a Harvey Mudd alumnus and Broadway award-winning producer. He is another person that I was lucky enough to be connected with through Christina Hurtado-Pierson's Theatre History course. He has produced many shows, including "Allegiance" (see Janelle Portman's interview for more information on that show), as well as "The Play That Goes Wrong," and "Kinky Boots."

HIS JOURNEY:

- Gregory graduated from Harvey Mudd and went straight into engineering, where he was a software engineer at Google for many years. But he had always been drawn to the theatre, as well as to supporting LGBT communities and political work.
- While he was working as an engineer, he actually got involved producing some videos and publicity pieces for a variety of political groups interested in advocating for the LGBT community.

- Along the way, he was at some different events and made friends with the people who were producing and reviving *The Normal Heart*, about the HIV / AIDS crisis in New York City. The story was so important to him to tell, he knew he had to be a part of it. Before he knew it, they were asking him to invest in the production and become one of the producers.
- After this, he realized he had a passion for this type of work, so he continued to produce shows. He now has connections with investors all over the world, who he will contact when starting a new show.
- Part of the way that he learned how to produce was with the help of his business partner at Martian Entertainment, Carl White, who was a General Manager for many years, and learned the ins and outs of producing through his connections to the producers of *Wicked* and *Chicago*.
- Additionally, his years of experience on the board at Harvey Mudd, where he worked closely with the Development office, helped him cultivate the money philosophy he uses as a producer.

HIS ADVICE:

- Raising money is an important part of being a producer, so get comfortable being able to ask for money. And get comfortable with the answer being no.
 - You need to cultivate a long relationship with investors and make it feel like a friendship, where you truly care.

- You want to find investors who care about your cause and message, so that it is an easy yes.
- Working in the development sector of nonprofits can be a great way to learn and build experience in this way.
- There are 2 main kinds of producers: financing producers and lead producers. They then hire General Managers or Executive Producers, who help make more of the day to day decisions.
- The General Manager is the person who really runs the business side of the theatre. If the Lead Producer is the CEO, the General Manager is the CFO or COO.
 - General Manager positions often have internships, where you can work with them.
- The way to find capital is by finding more financing producers, and offering them a piece of the pie. This includes Playbill recognition, tickets to opening night premiere parties, a cut of the profit (if the show does well enough to have this), and more.
 - If you are a Creative or Lead Producer, it is your job to convince these Financing Producers that you will be an effective leader who can lead the show to success.
- If you are aiming for Broadway, you need a professional route, which will include hiring a Broadway General Manager.
- For Gregory, his job often takes him on the road, traveling, and seeing theatre all over the place. This is so

that he can maintain relationships with investors—there is a lot of wining and dining involved. Be prepared for this if you are a producer who works heavily on the financial side of things.

— Pro Tip: Low level theatrical professions don't usually pay well. So, the more internships and lower level experience you can do as a student, the better off you will be when you graduate, because it is more likely that you could start at a higher entry level.

INTERVIEW WITH ANN WAREHAM

Ann Wareham is the Artistic Director of Laguna Playhouse, and, prior to that, worked as an Associate Producer at Center Theatre Group (CTG), for thirty years. She was a fantastic person to talk to, and another connection brought to me by Jim Gardia—it really is all about reaching out to your network! I absolutely loved talking to Ann and hope that we can take a theatre department trip to go see some theatre at Laguna Playhouse.

HER JOURNEY:

— In college, she did not study theatre; she has her degree in liberal arts Organizational Leadership, from CSU Northridge. Simultaneously, she was working as an usher at the Ahmanson and many other big LA theatres. At the time, all those usher positions were reserved for students, so she began to create a community network of students like herself.

— This led her to some fantastic opportunities producing and putting on theatre over the summer while in college.

When she graduated, she actually started out working in the Public Relations department of the Ahmanson.

- From there, she moved on to an advertising job. She also worked with a Hollywood agent for a year, then returned to the theatre and worked in General Management.
- It was at this time that she became Gordon Davidson's assistant, and began her thirty year career development at CTG, which she loved. Eventually, in 2011, a position opened up for an Artistic Director at the Laguna Playhouse, and she knew she could do it really well. So, she took the position, and the rest is history.

ADVICE AND REFLECTIONS ON ARTISTIC DIRECTION:

- The path to becoming an Artistic Director often involves doing all the other jobs first. You need to get used to just rolling up your sleeves and getting the job done.
- Allow your career to happen organically; the tools will continue to develop all along the way.
- In Ann's case, she is not a director. She came to Artistic Directing through producing and general management, which is something a lot of people are doing now.
 - When you have an Artistic Director who isn't directing, you never lose them to the rehearsal room. They continue to do their job year-round.

- This also means that the Artistic Director does not become biased and try to produce a great show for themselves to direct, but instead are just focused on creating the best season for the community.
- For Ann, her favorite creative part of the job is putting together the best possible creative team. This includes having a lot of input on casting; this is something she knows she does well, and can help guarantee a much stronger season for the theatre.
- Laguna Playhouse considers itself to be a ‘professional theatre,’ rather than a ‘community theatre,’ because they hire union professionals and do not have open auditions / volunteer roles. However, they pride themselves on being a theatre of the community, and constantly keeping the community’s interests and needs in mind.
- Use your summers, and just ask! The college students who are home for the summer and just show up to the Playhouse asking if they can run a spotlight are often the ones who get jobs later on.
- Her biggest piece of advice: keep your eyes on the big picture. “The pressure of leadership is a privilege, and the more pressure you feel to lead, the greater your opportunities can be. You need to get inside of everyone else’s head and understand that they are approaching the work differently from you.” The power to lead is a privilege, use it wisely.
- This also means constantly remembering that it is not your job to do it alone. It takes a village, and you

must constantly be pushing for all voices to be heard.

4.

THE COURSES

CREATIVITY IN CHOREOGRAPHY WITH PARRIS GOEBEL (MASTERCLASS)

This year, MasterClass had a deal for college students, where you could receive one year of free access for \$1. Luckily, I had signed up for this promotion and was able to use this to my advantage in this RAISE project. I was able to take this virtual on-demand course from an award-winning choreography, Parris Goebel, who has worked with artists including Ariana Grande, Justin Bieber, Rihanna, Nicki Minaj, Janet Jackson, and many more.

GENERAL PIECES OF ADVICE:

- Understand who you are, and what you're about. Your style is only yours, and that is what will take you far. This means that you should give all the details you can give, because that is what will separate your work from anyone else's work.
- Make sure to protect your brand and protect your magic. Don't give it to everyone else for free, keep your identity and brand strong.
- Find trust with the creative spirit within you!! You are the creator of your work.

- Nourish your creative spirit in your everyday life, by continuing to experience art
- Create a dreamboard / write down your dreams, and create haven: a space you can call your own and inspire yourself
- Once you create a strong connection to a song by listening over and over, you can much more easily freestyle to the music and use that as a jumping off point for choreography
- You can start with a base and then add layers and continue building. The “wow factor” will come eventually; it doesn’t need to be jaw-dropping on the first day you start.
- Learn who inspires you and learn how you move, so that you can run with it.
- Follow your instincts rather than fads, because trends change so fast and you never know when you could be the person who starts one. There is power in not knowing what is “cool” to the public, because you can create it for yourself
- Grasp on what makes you special, because it lets you stop comparing yourself. Just focus on outdoing your own work, rather than outdoing someone else.
- Uplift and empower your team, because otherwise your projects will never look good because your team will not be fully committed

CHOREOGRAPHY TECHNIQUES:

Basic Formations

— Something that often helps clean a formation is making sure everyone's feet are pointing the same direction within a shape. Additionally, she says that in any formation, your direct opposite dancer should match your height, skill, and energy level whenever possible. Below are some formation ideas that Parris recommends.

- V (two diagonals that come to a point, can be concave or convex)
- Line (she recommends standing in height order, to create a more even illusion)
- Diagonal (can come from either direction, height order)
- Cluster (can easily be used in a reveal or in-between formations)
- Circle
- Three line Offset (three lines, slightly offset so that all dancers have a 'window' to be seen)

Dynamics

— Parris explains the importance of giving yourself time and space to play around with different dynamics to see what fits the piece best. She emphasizes the importance of

freedom, exploration, and play with the dancers. Below are three main ways to influence dynamics.

- Levels can be used to create dynamics, especially when levels are switched. Levels usually refer to height, and low versus high movement.
- Transitions can be used to finesse dynamic and create a new tone as you transition between sections of the piece.

Transition Techniques

- These can be used to add visual interest in moments where the dance may transition sections, or switch formations. Below are some of Parris's favorites.
 - **Curtain Effect:** This is achieved by opening up to reveal more dancers and simultaneously filling in the back. Eye contact and focus can pull attention and energy to the center, where the new dancers emerge from the 'curtain.' Additionally, the curtain group can be choreographed facing upstage so that they add shape and texture without detracting energy from the new center dancers.
 - **Surprise Effect:** This is a unique way to reveal the featured artist or dancer. There can be different surprise effects, but one example is everyone suddenly dropping down except the showcased performer, who remains on a high level.
 - **Mirror Effect:** This is where you take the core dancers' movement, and have the entering dancers mirror the movement to make a really smooth and

seamless transition. Mirroring is a term used in dance for reversing which direction the movement is done: for example, switching from using the left foot to the right foot.

- Cloning Effect: For this effect, dancers in a straight line or in the back pop out, and make it almost look like the group is cloning itself as each one emerges.

ADDITIONAL TECHNIQUE-FOCUSED ADVICE:

- Try Line-by-Line cleaning, where the choreographer simply works with one line or group at a time, to make sure each section is fully in-sync, before adding on more layers.

- Don't forget about Detail Cleaning/Positioning for each part of the body, including: head angle, level, feet angles, hands. This should be followed by Texture Cleaning. In this, you will give the dance moves a feeling / texture / color, by explaining different textures throughout the piece, or explaining how you want the audience to feel or react.

- Great Self-Confidence Exercise: Have dancers maintain eye contact with themselves in the mirror while listening to the music, creating confidence and comfortability to use your face and see yourself in the mirror.

- Working with (Singing) Artists: Research how they already move, especially for non-dancers, and work on finding their groove and choreographing specific to their

style. If you do it right, you can make any of them look like dancers, even if they don't identify that way.

- If shooting for a music video, use your phone camera to practice with and experiment with different angles, so you can create a mock-up video, or video storyboard.

HEARTLAND INTIMACY DESIGN AND TRAINING: WHAT IS THEATRICAL INTIMACY?

This was a free self-guided virtual course provided by Heartland Intimacy Design and Training, and is available for anyone to take. Upon completion, you are able to register and purchase the training materials for their complete course and certification. Through this program, I learned the deep importance of being trained on Theatrical Intimacy, and the necessary protection, comfort, and professionalism for everyone involved.

DEFINITIONS OF INTIMACY:

Theatrical Intimacy: The planned staging of intimate or sexually violent moments for performance. Theatrical Intimacy includes the 4 following categories: physical intimacy, emotional intimacy, nudity, and sexual and violence.

- Physical Intimacy consists of any and all kissing, touching, hugging, implied sex, or solo intimacy. Physical intimacy can be romantic, familial, or platonic; ideally, all of these should be staged by someone who has had intimacy design training, with, of course, more necessity for an Intimacy Designer in more intimate moments.

- Emotional Intimacy consists of vulnerability, chemistry, falling in love, deep personal truths, and much more. These will usually be covered by the show's director, but further emphasizes the fact that all directors should have some level of intimacy design training, as emotional intimacy is present in the majority of performances.
- Nudity should be handled by an Intimacy Designer whenever possible, whether it is literal or implied.
- Sexual violence is clearly not intimacy, but should be structured by an intimacy specialist, due to the trauma it can trigger or even cause, if staged incorrectly.

DIFFERENT NAMES AND SPECIALISTS:

- Intimacy Specialist: This is the broadest term, and can be a practitioner/scholar/researcher with expertise. They can hold various other positions.
- Intimacy Consultant: This person does not personally stage the intimacy, but instead offers suggestions and best practices as necessary.
- Intimacy Director: This person takes responsibility for the emotional safety of all. They carry more weight and responsibility than a choreographer, and must always advocate for the safety and comfort of the ensemble.
- Intimacy Choreographer/Designer: This is a practitioner who collaborates with the rest of the team to stage moments of theatrical intimacy, but may not carry as much directorial responsibility.

- Intimacy Coordinator: This position is specific to film and television, and this term is not used as often in live theatre. They advocate for actors, and it is of the utmost importance that they implement proper protocols and best practices.

WHY ARE INTIMACY SPECIALISTS IMPORTANT?

- They advocate for actors, who are low in hierarchy and may feel uncomfortable standing up for themselves or voicing boundaries with a traditional director or producer, because of the power that they hold.
- Intimacy Specialists also hold boundary-breakers accountable. By setting clear boundaries and protocols from the beginning, it is easy to see when these boundaries are broken and make sure that they are enforced.
- And of course, as stated above, they provide consent based protocols and boundaries, so that everyone has a common language.

LIGHTING TECHNOLOGY WITH MAEANN ROSS

I was lucky enough that our very own MaeAnn Ross, who is a Post MFA Fellow at Pomona College, graciously gave me access to the prerecorded video lectures from her Lighting Technology Course. I am so grateful to both her and Janelle Asti for creating these fantastic videos, because after taking this course I feel so much more prepared to return to my job as a theatrical lighting technician at Pomona!

LIGHTING BASICS:

- The main functions of lighting include: Visibility, Environment, Image, Mood, Style, Form (are you sculpting your subject in a visually interesting way?), Defining space, Focus (if you can't see them, you can't hear them! Direct the focus.), and Pacing
- We can also focus on how to control direction, intensity, form, color, movement, quality, change
- The primary colors of light are red, green, and blue, as opposed to pigmented colors, where the primaries are cyan, yellow, and magenta.
- Electricity is obviously integral to lighting, and below are some important electricity basics:
 - Voltage: this is the amount of electricity shooting through, measured in volts, and is measured between 2 distinct points
 - Current: this is how fast the electricity is moving, and is measured in amps
 - Resistance: this is how much any given material reduces electricity flow. Measured in ohms, and thinner conductors have higher resistance
 - Wattage: amount of power the device consumes, measured in watts
 - Circuits: these have different types and include simple, series, and parallel

- Grounding Wire: a safe path for electricity to flow out, if need be

LIGHTING INSTRUMENTATION:

- Anything that goes in the air needs to have a safety cable on it. Nothing should ever be hung up in the theatre without having a safety cable anchoring it to the building, as protection in case it were to fall.
- You should never touch glass on halogen lamps because the oil of your fingers will disrupt the heat dispersion and cause it to explode--if you touch, clean it with an alcohol wipe. Basic rule: don't touch the glass of a light!
- Par and Fresnel Lights: used to create a general wash of light across the stage
 - Fresnel was invented first. They have an F and S stand for flood and spot, which allows you to move the lamp back and forth, closer and further from lens.
 - Par has a lens on the inside. The number that is referred to with the name is the radius of lens--a common light is "Par 64." A miniature Par, sometimes called a birdie is "Par 20."
- Source Four: This is another common light. It has a barrel and a lens, while pars only have the lens. It also has shutters to condense the light, and the barrels can be switched out very easily.

- Smaller degree number for the barrel means a smaller beam size. You almost always want to use a 19 degree for front light or lighting specific actors, and you can use a 5 or 10 degree for follow spots, which are much more condensed.
- Parnell: This is similar to a basic Par, in that it creates a wash. If you look at the back of the light where the tail is, it will be a Parnell if there is a knob; if not, it is a Parnell. A Parnell also has a stippled lens, and is generally used to color the floor, back, window effects, washes, mood--not lighting the people themselves.
- Colorado: This is what is known as an “intelligent light,” because it has color and a motor which moves it in and out
- Barn Doors: These are a lighting accessory which goes on the gel frame of a Par, and can close in to what size is wanted, although not as precisely as shuttering.
- Top Hat/Half Hat: Another accessory that can be used on pars, if they’re the right size, for similar effect to narrow down the light into a more precise beam.
- Beam Angle: This is the angle from the light where intensity has fallen to $>50\%$
- Field Angle: This is the angle from the light where intensity has fallen to $>10\%$
- Edison Cord: Official name for a normal household plug, which we try to not use for theatrical lighting.

- Stage Pin Connector: This has 3 pins and the female side goes into the light. It is versatile and can generally handle more power than Edison.
- Stage Pin with Blue Powercon: This has a locking mechanism and goes to LED lights. LEDs need to constantly have power, and this prevents them from accidentally getting unplugged.
- Breakout/Soca (short for Socapex): Basically a mega-connector, which breaks out into 6 stage pin connectors. You never want to drop a soca onto the group, because it is very delicate.
- 5 Pin Cable: Used primarily for newer LED lights. The female end goes into the light, male into carrier.
- 3 Pin Cable: This is an XLR cable, which used to be used for old LED lights, but now is used mainly for audio. You often need adapters if you do use it for lights.
- Dimmer Card: This is inserted into a dimmer rack, and has breaker switches. It is made of lots of copper and magnets. There is a dimmer switch which allows dimming to occur, or a constant switch that will keep it at 100. A dimmer card usually holds 3 lights.
- Power Distro: This is similar to the dimmer cards, but it is a rolling rack instead of going to a wall. Remember, green wires are always grounding, white is neutral, and black, red, and blue are hot!

HOW TO PHYSICALLY HANG, FOCUS, AND STRIKE THE LIGHTS:

— Hanging a Light: First, you take the light and make sure the opening of the C clamp and the light's tail are both facing you, with the back of the C-clamp touching the bar you are attaching to. You then finger-tighten the bolt until it won't move, and then add a $\frac{1}{4}$ turn with the wrench for security. To finish up, you attach the safety cable, unwind the tail, open the shutters, and point in the general direction the light will go in. The rest will be finished during Focus.

— **It is important that you don't tie the tail!** You will want to tie the cable to the bar by tying around the adapter / plug, rather than the tail itself, which greatly reduces flexibility and will make Focus much more difficult.

— Focusing a Light: To sharpen the light, loosen the knob and slide the barrel forward until you see the blue line edge. You will then be instructed by the designer to use the shutters to cut the light. It is important to remember that cutting the edges in will be opposite to what you see onstage; if the designer wants to cut in the left side of the beam, you use the right shutter. You can also angle shutters. Additionally, there is a bolt underneath, which allows you to grab the barrel and rotate it around, and then tighten it again. To add a gel, you simply loosen the gel clip and slide the gel in. A Barn Door will be slid into this slot as well. If you are focusing a Parnell, it is best to twist the knob and start at the tightest light option, and then open back out at the instruction of the designer.

— Pro Tip: Stay vocal! If you say 'working' when you are working on adjusting the light, you will likely be

met with a lot more patience than if you stay silent, leaving everyone down in the theatre to wonder if you are even doing anything.

- **Flagging a Light:** This means waving your hand in front of the light to more clearly show which one it is to a designer during focus
- **Strike the Lights:** Start by unplugging and removing all accessories, like gels and gobos. Then, push the barrel and shutters in all the way, and straighten the angles. Wrap the tail around the light, detach and wrap the safety cable, loosen the C-clamp, and take down the light.
- **Places We Hang Lights:** Booms (poles on the sides), Ladders, Catwalks (up high), Electrics (get lowered down and brought back up), Torm (boom/ladder mashup), Tension Grid, and Scenic Integration/Practicals and Props
- **The Lighting Design Paperwork:** Includes overhead plot/top view/plan view, and it is important to include scale so you know how far apart to hang lights. It will include the dimmer number and channel number, as well as the unit number, which is the number of units per pipe. Gobos and irises are labelled as well. You might also see an Instrument Schedule, which is in spreadsheet form and organized by pipe. It includes color, gobo, type, dimmer #, channel #, and is ordered by unit number to help out the electricians.

PATCHING

Patching is the way that we connect different lights or different parts of lights together.

Hard Patching: This is when you physically plug it in and ‘hard patch’ them together, using the circuit number to know which dimmer you plug into.

Soft Patching/Programming: This is when you program the lights to patch them together; you will need a ‘lighting puck’ which allows the lights to talk to the console. Within the console and programming capabilities, there are many different tabs and tools.

- **Live Table:** This will be one of the available tabs. Each cell represents a light or channel, and when a light is on, the level it is at will be shown in its respective cell.
- **Cue Sheet:** This generates a list of each of your lighting cues, which you can then label
- **Virtual Keyboard:** If you are working on a computer instead of a lighting board, this virtual keyboard has all the buttons that would be on an actual lighting board
- **Color Mixing Window:** This is used for LED lights, and will allow you to use a color wheel to mix and select the appropriate color for your LED lights.

How to Soft Patch: First, select the channel number that you want. Then, select the dimmer number you need, label it in a way that makes sense or is notated on your paperwork, and then turn it on to whatever percentage you want. You do not want the channel and dimmer number to be the same, because this can get very confusing.

Parking LEDs: LED lights need constant full power, even when they are seemingly 'off.' To ensure this, you will park the LED dimmer at full. This is done by typing the address number, clicking "@ Full," clicking "Park," and then pressing enter. You also may need to go to the manufacture tab to enter in what kind of light it is, and which lighting universe it is from.

BASIC PROGRAMMING

- Each cell shown in the lighting software is a lighting channel. If you want to control multiple lights at a time you can select as many as you like in the live table, and at the bottom it shows the current cue. The next tab shows your list of cues, and then there is also a Patching/Parking tab. There will also be a color picking or mixing tab for LED lights.
- You can make groups and focus palettes, if you want to batch edit a lot of things at once. This could help if you wanted to change the color of all of your LEDs at once, or turn off all your front lights at the same time.
- Pressing "Go" will play the next cue, including however long it may take to gradually switch into it. Pressing "Shift Next" will just switch to the look of the next cue, without the transition time, and can be helpful to designers in a cue to cue, to make things move faster.
- There is also an option called "Rem Dim," which quickly turns off all lights other than the one you are in the middle of working on, so you can easily focus on whatever you need to see with that light and then instantly bring the rest of the lights back in.

- Another trick is adding a delay to the cue. This will create a delay that occurs after you have hit Go, but before the cue actually begins, which can be helpful when trying to switch light cues at the same time you are switching sound cues.

5.

THE EXPERIENCES

ASSISTANT DIRECTING AT BERKELEY PLAYHOUSE YOUTHSTAGE

This summer, I got the amazing opportunity to Assistant Direct at Berkeley Playhouse's YouthStage program, assisting the amazing Weston Scott in directing "CATS," with ages 11-18. Berkeley Playhouse is a well-known theatre in the Bay Area, known for its fabulous Professional MainStage productions, as well as its Theatre Arts Education. Additionally, I was able to utilize my dance background and ended up being a co-choreographer for the production as well.

THE PROCESS

- The process began with a few different production team meetings, designer meetings, and training sessions. These included the full staff of the Berkeley Playhouse, and it was such a great opportunity to get to observe all these professionals at work.
- Once the program began, we had 5 weeks total, Monday-Friday, from 9-3. The first day was full of icebreakers and games, the second day was auditions, and by the third day we were cast and began rehearsing. At the end of the 5 weeks, we had two performances.

- There was definitely a learning curve in this process, especially with getting to know the students and gaining their trust. But we all became friends very quickly, and by the end they were begging me to come back next semester.

LESSONS FROM WESTON SCOTT:

I cannot even explain how grateful I am to Wes for being such a great mentor and director. I learned so much from him, and am so thankful for the opportunities he gave me to spread my own wings and create. Here are some of my favorite things I learned.

- Precision is beautiful, and is not too much to ask. Wes's directing style includes a lot of precise unison movements, such as everyone turning their heads at the exact same moment, at the exact same angle. With a group of rowdy pre-teens and teenagers, asking for this level of precision seemed impossible to me. But Wes stuck with it, always directing with compassion and grace, and, to my surprise, they started to get it. Over the weeks of rehearsal, the students truly learned how to embrace and take advantage of this precision.
- You don't need to be strict or intense to yield good results. For so much of my life, it seemed like the best youth and high school theatre programs were the ones with cutthroat directors. With Wes I learned that maintaining kindness and giving consistent notes is sometimes all you need. He didn't resort to any sort of 'scare tactics' (for example: "We open in one week, and you don't want this to look messy onstage"), and in return, the cast fully trusted and respected him, and consistently brought their best. I believe this was partially

due to the fact that the positivity prevented a lot of discouragement and burnout.

- Storytelling is always the answer. Actors should never just stand somewhere because it looks good; absolutely every choice in the show should further the storytelling. This means that if you ever feel lost, you can just return to the story you are trying to tell. And oftentimes, you can call on the cast to ask how a specific moment may support the storytelling, as a learning opportunity.

- Scheduling is key. We had 5 weeks. For Wes, that meant that Week 1 was community building, auditions, and familiarizing everyone with the script. Week 2 was Act 1. Week 3 was Act 2. Week 4 was clean-up and anything that was leftover. And Week 5 was dedicated to just getting used to the stage and costumes, and performing. This ended up being incredibly helpful, and meant that by the time we got to the final week, all the students were fully confident in the show, and were not learning anything last minute. And for us, it meant a much more relaxed tech week.

- Partake in the fun. Whether this is making jokes with the cast, participating in our weekly dress-up days, or playing games, I honestly believe that Wes's willingness to have fun and embrace fun was what brought this show such great success.

LESSONS I DISCOVERED FOR MYSELF:

- As an assistant, you can still take charge. The first few days I held back, because I was afraid to overstep my position as an Assistant Director. Once I got over this fear

and started fully voicing my thoughts and taking charge, the process became so much more fun and valuable.

- Unison dancing is not always the answer. No matter what cast you work with, you will always have a variety of dance levels. And there is absolutely nothing wrong with giving a few featured dancers more advanced choreography, and providing more basic movements for everyone else. This adds texture and often creates some of the most exciting dance moments.

- You need to be able to pivot your teaching strategy. There are so many different learning styles, and it is important to learn how to read each student so that you can help them create their best performance possible. For example, some students wanted to learn the choreography and practice it over and over as soon as they learned it. Other students wanted to learn it briefly, and then allow themselves time to absorb it and practice at home before going into too much detail.

- Overall, I learned that directing and choreographing for youth is something I am truly passionate about. It will never be the same as being onstage myself; but, there is something so rewarding about seeing those students get onstage and joyously perform something I created, as well as how passionate they all are about improving and doing their best.

TEACHING YOUTH CAMP AT I CAN DO THAT PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

This was not an easy job; being a Teaching Artist at week-long summer camps is incredibly different from directing a full-length show, or even teaching a longer program. I Can Do That Performing Arts Center is a local theatre company in my hometown; I began with them as a student when they opened in my freshman year of high school. Since then, they have expanded into a full Performing Arts Center, and I have become a part of the Teaching Team!

WHAT I DID:

- Each week of camp had a theme, like Disney Musicals or Historical Musicals. Within that, there were anywhere from 1-3 summer camps running simultaneously, divided into the following age groups: 5-6, 7-9, 9-12, and 13-18.
- The weeks that had 3 camps at once meant that teachers were switching between age groups every 1.5 to 2 hours, to provide the campers with as much variety as possible. The weeks that only had one camp at a time gave teachers a longer opportunity to work with each group, often teaching 3 or 4 hour chunks at a time.
- As a Teaching Artist, I was fully on my own for designing age-appropriate curriculum. I had a weekly theme, and I had a daily focus, such as Dance/Games or Dance/Art, but otherwise I was responsible for coming up with my own lesson plans.

- My lesson plans included everything I wanted to work on with that age group, from introductions and rule-setting, to any games and warm-ups, to specific dances I choreographed to teach them, to costume design and improv workshops.
- The more I taught, the less written planning I needed to do, and the more I was able to just trust my instincts, read the energy of the room, and decide what would be most valuable in that moment.

TAKEAWAYS:

- Little kids are much more capable than most people give them credit for, if you encourage them to rise to occasion. Honestly, this went for the older students too. If you tell them that they can do it, whether it is learning a song, dance, game, or just being quiet, they usually will.
- A great tip I learned, especially with the 5-6 year old group, is using “I need” statements. Instead of “stop running,” or “can you stop running,” you can say “I need you to use your walking feet.” This age group is so used to hearing (and ignoring) things they can’t do, they respond much better to positive statements asking them to *do* something instead of *not do*.
- A room full of crazy / chaotic / loud energy is not lost forever. Often, you can walk into a room of chaotic and misbehaving kids and feel like you either need to give in to it, or use more strict discipline to stop it. For me, the most effective option was neither. Instead, ask them to take deep breaths together, do a few affirmations, remind them of how much you believe in them, and explain how

much fun you can all have if everyone is focused on the same goal. This trick has completely flipped many rooms full of children.

- Most of all, trust yourself. If you have confidence and trust in yourself, and consistently strive to treat everyone with compassion and understanding, it is bound to go well.

ORGANIZING A MINI-PRODUCTION OF A CHORUS LINE

In 2019, right after I graduated high school, I was lucky enough to perform my dream role in my favorite musical: Cassie, in “A Chorus Line.” This was a production with I Can Do That, where I am now a teaching artist. This summer, as a celebration of our gradual return to live theatre, I gathered my friends and old castmates, and we staged a mini-revival of our production of “A Chorus Line,” in I Can Do That’s new studio space.

THE PROCESS:

- Back in 2019, this production was directed by Jarusha Ariel and Shayna Ronen, the co-founders of I Can Do That. This summer, one of my friends proposed a *Chorus Line* revival to Jarusha as a joke, and everyone suddenly became very excited about it. However, it was an incredibly busy summer and it became clear that our original directors were now too busy running their full-time business and Performing Arts Center to do a project like this, so I took it upon myself.

- In organizing this production, I began by rewatching all the videos and rehearsal footage I could find of our 2019 production. I took note of which numbers would be

fun to select for this mini-revival, and began notating all the stage formations.

- Then, I took our old script, cut the sections we no longer needed, and figured out how to best redistribute the lines of the few actors who could not join us, while still preserving the integrity of the story, and making sure that each redistributed line still made sense when spoken by the new character.
- I also went on a long search through many, many boxes of costumes, to find the costumes we wore in 2019. I also rented the iconic *Chorus Line* golden top hats from a local theatre rental facility, and organized show dates and rehearsal times.
- Once all the pieces began falling into place, I led rehearsals, beginning with a warmup and then helping everyone relearn the choreography, harmonies, and formations, while also providing notes and adjustments.
- About a week before the show, we realized our studio flooring was much too slippery, and I did a deep dive into figuring out how to borrow or rent Marley dance flooring in the Bay Area. I ended up borrowing 12 individual pieces, which were each like oversized yoga mats, and taping them all together to create a full dance flooring.
- Lastly, I was in charge of COVID protocol. Since our full cast was vaccinated, and this was before the widespread arrival of the Delta variant, we were able to have the cast unmasked while performing to a limited-capacity, and masked, audience.

TAKEAWAYS:

- Directing your peers is not easy. Directing while performing is also not easy. And in this production, I was navigating both of those things. The most helpful strategy I used to handle this was staying organized, being honest about everything we had to get done, and just staying confident in my ability to lead.
- I also learned that I am so much harder on myself as a performer than as a director. While I did occasionally second-guess my leadership abilities, I was constantly second-guessing and doubting my singing and dancing abilities within the performance. Funnily enough, I have been singing and dancing much longer than I have been directing, so you would think I would be more confident in myself. While this was very hard, it was useful to continue to separate the two, and not let my lack of performance confidence impede my directing.
 - Also, looking back, I wish I had treated myself with the same compassion that I treat others with as a director. When I am directing, I focus a lot on giving my actors constructive feedback as well as encouragement and love, and I do not think that I was giving myself enough of that.

LEARNING THEATRE ADMINISTRATIVE AND RECEPTION DUTIES

While working at I Can Do That, I would often take receptionist shifts, or help out in the administrative office, on days I did not have a full schedule of teaching. I learned a lot of tangible and

transferrable skills that I think will be incredibly useful in future positions.

WHAT I LEARNED:

— Answering the phone, and making calls, gets easier with practice. I have always hated talking on the phone; for some reason, it just stressed me out. But this summer, I learned to love answering phone calls from parents who had questions about our theatre classes and camps. I think something that helped is that I am passionate about the organization, so I was just so happy to share it with anyone who called.

— Pro Tip: When calling, start with “Hi, this is [Name] from [Business].” Starting with your name makes it feel more personal and stops them from thinking it is a solicitation call and hanging up. When answering, start with “[Business], this is [Name]. How can I help you?” Starting with the business name when answering the calls instantly assures the caller that they have called the correct number, rather than second guessing and thinking they called someone’s personal number.

— If you look attentive and welcoming, you will get more questions. Both in my experience sitting behind the receptionist desk and observing, it was very clear that an engaged and attentive receptionist was asked lots of questions, while a receptionist who was sitting back more and working on the computer caused a lot more hesitancy in question-asking. Since most questions are about classes and future enrollments, you want to always seem available to answer them, because it is likely you will

convince someone to sign up for a new class or audition for a show.

— Jackrabbit registration software, and any kind of class registration program, just takes practices. Jackrabbit is the website our center uses to handle all class and camp signups, and this summer I was trained on how to operate it. This included enrolling students, adding and removing them from waitlists, inputting payment options, adding new families' information, checking attendance, manually charging for classes, and more. In all honesty, none of this was very hard, and I do think that anyone could do it with a bit of practice. But the practice is the key part. There are a million different tabs and things to click on, and it definitely took me some time to be able to pull up the correct information quickly enough when someone called and had a question. But, practice makes perfect, so I continued to explore the software, especially outside of my shift hours, and soon I was able to retrieve any information almost instantaneously.

— Everyone should learn some graphic design basics. There is always a new little flyer or poster that needs to be made, whether it is an announcement of a new smoothie flavor, or a request to remain masked while in the building. Having enough basic graphic design skills to quickly complete these tasks and generate a nice product will make people very happy, and will just help everything run more efficiently.

— Overall, I really enjoyed working as a receptionist at I Can Do That, and I think that this kind of position could be a great side-job opportunity for me.

BEING A STUDENT ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AT POMONA COLLEGE

This is something I have been doing for almost two years now, but I definitely continued to advance my knowledge this past spring and summer, so I thought that the many lessons I have learned deserve a place in this book.

LESSONS AND ADVICE:

- In a college setting, strong organization and advance planning can often not feel like the norm. Don't let this discourage you, or make you want to slack off on organization. The organization and the planning will be the key to your success.
- Clear scheduling and calendaring, in a way that is compassionate towards everyone involved, is integral. Calendars are one of those things that really won't just 'fall into place.' But a clear and logical schedule can save a show, and make the impossible seem possible.
- Directing your peers is not easy. I try to separate the personal and professional when I can, leaving the personal socializing for before and after rehearsal, and maintaining professionalism during the rehearsal. But, of course, professionalism does not mean strict demands or a lack of compassion, in any way, shape, or form.
- Student Theatre deserves professional directing techniques and knowledge. Over the past year, I have learned a lot of techniques, both from firsthand observation, my readings, and Professor Jessie Mills'

amazing directing course. Every time that I have truly utilized these skills and brought my learnings into the rehearsal room, the results were phenomenal. Student actors respond very well to being treated, respected, and directed as professionals; this is what they deserve.

— There are so many more parts to the job than you expect. My roles as an Artistic Director have spanned the spectrum, from directing to graphic design to budgeting to grant writing to recruitment to scheduling and so much more. I truly do agree with the sentiment that virtually any job will help prepare you for Artistic Direction, because the position can cover so many different responsibilities. And that is exactly why I chose this RAISE project.

6.

THE REST

FOSSE DANCE CLASSES AT (VIRTUAL) STEPS ON BROADWAY

Bob Fosse is one of the most iconic and influential musical theatre choreographers of all time. Born in 1927, he lived right within the Golden Age of Broadway, and brought some incredible work. He was naturally a bit hunched over and pigeon-toed, but he used these setbacks in his choreography, creating a style that is incredibly recognizable, and still one of the most influential styles in the musical theatre world.

WHAT I DID:

- I was lucky enough to use my RAISE money to sign up for a few virtual dance classes. These classes were through Steps on Broadway, which is one of the most famous and popular musical theatre dance studios in NYC, in addition to Broadway Dance Center.
- These classes were offered through a program called the Verdon Fosse Legacy. This is a collection of artists who danced under the tutelage of Bob Fosse and his wife, another iconic dancer, Gwen Verdon. They are now teaching classes to help keep this legacy and style alive.

— The classes I took were with Alex Sanchez and Christine Colby. To learn more about them and about the Verdon Fosse legacy, visit www.verdonfosse.com.

ADVICE AND TAKEAWAYS:

— Make or find space that you feel confident in. I am lucky enough that the dance studio I work at goes unused in the mornings, so I was able to use a studio space for free. But you don't need a studio—people were dancing in their living rooms, garages, hallways, and more. Just make sure you clear as much space as you can.

— Wear something you feel confident in. On Zoom, it can be difficult to want to get dressed for dance class. But they really can see you; most teachers I've taken class from virtually have connected their Zoom to a TV screen, so they are seeing everyone much bigger. Dress the part, and it will help you feel more confident.

— Keep your camera on! I know it can feel weird or scary, but it makes the experience much more worthwhile. You never know when you might get a compliment or useful correction. I am not very confident in my kicks, but during one of these classes the teacher pointed me out from the whole class of over 20 fantastic dancers, and said that mine looked amazing. The little things really do help build your confidence.

— Be open to anything. In one of these classes, I learned actual Fosse repertoire: part of a piece called the Crunch Granola Suite. In another class, it was a Fosse-style combination that the teacher had created using his movement vocabulary, but with a different song. You

never quite know what to expect, so it is best to just be open and learn from whatever comes your way.

- The biggest takeaway I had from these classes was that Fosse really is all about the storytelling. It isn't just dance moves; each one has a full emotion behind it.
- Overall, I loved these classes and got so much more out of this virtual format than expected. I would highly recommend taking advantage of this opportunity while you still can; these are the kinds of classes you would normally have to live in New York City to take, and right now they can be taken by anyone in the world. Take advantage of that!

ARTISTIC LEADERSHIP AND FINDING YOUR OWN VOICE WITH CTG'S VIRTUAL LECTURE SERIES

This was part of an online Speaker Series orchestrated by LA's Center Theatre Group—one of the silver linings of the virtual world in this pandemic. While I was sadly unable to view this lecture live and ask questions in real-time of Artistic Directors Leslie Ishii and Jonathan Munoz-Proulx, I was so lucky to go into this series' archives and watch this pre-recorded piece. Below are some of the moments that really stuck out to me, that I plan to continue to hold onto and refer back to whenever I can.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:

- Read plays constantly. Get your hands on as many scripts as possible, and be constantly expanding the knowledge and breadth of theatre that lives in your brain.

- Listen to the community, especially in nonprofit theatres. Your job is to serve the public good, so really try to understand what the community wants, and not just what you want to produce. You should be hosting committees and taking suggestions.
- You are a facilitator. Your job is not to come up with the best idea in the room, but to facilitate the ones that are there.
- Try to align expensive shows and large payroll expenditures with the times your company is receiving grant money, so you are less worried about debt.
 - In this same vein, remember that you don't need to play into the fallacy that nonprofit companies must "zero out" each year. You can create a reserve. This allows you to "sustain thrivability." That is, you can continue to use this reserve when times are tough to allow your company to thrive, rather than just survive.
- Make time for people all day long, do admin work later. As an Artistic Director, you should really make an effort to leave as much time in your day as possible to make time for the people and artists around you, and save the administrative computer work for later on in the day.
- Choose seasons as a team, letting the sky be the limit and then narrowing down based on the producibility. Build theatre relationally, not transactionally. Just because you are a director and can just choose to do whatever play you want doesn't mean you should.

TIPS TO BUILD YOUR CONFIDENCE AS AN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:

- Own your artistry. You don't need to be anointed as an artist or creator. Just start by calling yourself one, and everyone else will follow. Just call yourself a director.
- Once you call yourself a director, use it! You can easily get free copies of brand new plays to peruse by letting them know you are an Artistic Director interested in the work, and just asking!
- Choose to believe that you can tell the story.
- Allow the story to humble you. We are experts in the craft, but we are not experts in all stories. Choose stories that speak to you, and don't squeeze into ones that don't fit.
- Have the audacity to ask questions! They dare you to ask!
- You don't need to know it all. In fact, you shouldn't. Information should not just be kept within one person; we are working to end gatekeeping in the theatre. We are decolonizing theatre, and we need to start decolonizing directing.
- Invite people in. Give yourself permission to be deciders together and ask how you can best serve the process. When you eliminate your ego from the equation, it will get easier.
- When you are early in your journey, it can be difficult to share the vision and give other people more space to

control it, because you feel like you need to prove your vision and establish that you are a “good director,” before you can let other people in. Recognize this instinct, and work through it when you can.

- Know when you are proud and trust it! Hold onto those moments

LABAN AND YATS MOVEMENT WORKSHOP

In my role as an Assistant Director for CATS at Berkeley Playhouse YouthStage, I was lucky enough to participate in a fantastic Laban/Yats Movement workshop led by the director Weston Scott.

BASICS:

- The Laban/Yats Movement styles have 3 main components. Each movement should be 1) heavy or light, 2) percussive or sustained, and 3) direct vs indirect
- These components can be combined into different types of movement, which are listed below. (H=Heavy, L=Light, P=Percussive, S=Sustained, D=Direct, I+Indirect)
 - HPD: Punch
 - HPI: Slash
 - HSD: Press
 - HSI: Wring
 - LPD: Dab
 - LPI: Flick

- LSD: Glide
- LSI: Float
- These movements can then be chosen based on what characteristics you may want to portray.
- They can be performed with as much or as little of your body as you want, or with a particular body part. For example, you don't need to punch with your hand—your chest may punch. Or, your whole body may flick.

TAKEAWAYS:

- This workshop was taught to the teenage students on their very first day of the theatre program. Originally, it seemed a little surprising to me to dive in with a more difficult concept such as this. However, it really seemed to break the ice between the students. Having everyone move together in unusual ways seemed to make them much more comfortable.
- I also found that teaching this at the beginning really gave it time to absorb and percolate with everyone, so by the time we were really blocking the show, these concepts felt solidified. We could ask the actors to add more heaviness to their movement, or to glide more, and it was incredibly helpful and much more specific than “look old and tired” or “look regal.”
- Overall, I think these movement tools are incredibly useful in helping with director specificity, rather than vague adjective-style directions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are so many people who made this book and project possible. First of all, I want to thank Pomona College and the RAISE program; my particularly project was generously funded by the Aubrey H. & Eileen J. Seed Student Research Fund. Additionally, I want to thank the theatre department, especially MaeAnn Ross and Janelle Asti, for helping provide resources in this project. I also want to thank all of the amazing artists who were interviewed for this project; thank you all for not only donating your time, but your incredible wisdom and hearts. To the authors of all of the books I read in my research, thank you for making your knowledge so readily accessible to the world. And again, thank you to the California public library system for making all of those books so easily accessible as well.

I also want to thank Weston Scott, Shayna Ronen, and Jarusha Ariel for providing me such valuable firsthand opportunities this summer. I learned so much assistant directing for Wes, and could not have asked for someone better to work and collaborate with. And I have to thank Shayna and Jarusha for providing me so many amazing opportunities at I Can Do That over the years, and for trusting me to be one of their main Teaching Artists this summer. I cannot imagine my life without ICDT.

Lastly, I want to thank my family. I would not even be at Pomona without their love and support. They have been there for me every step of the way, from watching me perform to listening to my long-winded tangents about theatre theory. I am so grateful for them.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rosie Corr is a Theatre and Economics double major at Pomona College, in Claremont, CA. She has been singing and dancing as long as she can remember, and spent a lot of her high school years onstage, in roles such as Fastrada (Pippin), Donna (Mamma Mia), and Cassie (A Chorus Line). Recently, she has taken a much deeper dive into the directing world, and has gotten the chance to direct for performers ages 7-22. She is also the founder and Artistic Director of the Claremont College's only musical theatre company, Spotlight Musical Theatre (@SpotlightMT on Facebook and Instagram). She learned so much this summer over the course of this project, and cannot wait to keep adding in lessons for years to come.