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# The Director's Role in the Development of a New Play

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THE DIRECTOR'S ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW PLAY

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## Abstract

Over the course of May 2017 - February 2018, I examined the role of a theatre director in the development of a new play. The play that I directed was written by Brandon Adam, and is titled *Nice Jewish X*. We developed the play using three different forms of performances as guideposts and opportunities for feedback. The three forms of performance were a closed cold reading, a rehearsed open reading, and a fully staged and produced production. Over the course of this process, I worked closely with the playwright and helped facilitate his creative process, as well as explored what I could bring to a piece that was still in constant flux as I worked with actors and designers to bring the piece to life. Each draft of the play, and each step of the process, allowed me to explore how best to work with the playwright while working toward obtaining the most successful final product.

Most of my results came from looking back at the process in retrospect. I went through my notes and examined the experiences of myself and the rest of the production team. From this investigation I have been able to discern that the director's role in the development process is one of facilitation of the process, similarly to that of a midwife. The director is meant to usher the play into the world, however it is not their job to create the story or to do the work of the playwright. I find that in my own experience of this process I was mostly successful in this, but I can see the examples of my own oversight and lack of decision making that held the play back from developing even further.

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## The Director's Role in the Development of New Work

### **Introduction**

Every year countless new plays are written. Most will never come to fruition or even be read by anyone besides the playwright. Some, however, will be shown to the right person and begin the process of development from a rough script into a full-fledged theatrical production. Most theatre productions that happen in America are of plays that have been previously produced, in other words, these plays are not new, and the playwright has already finished and published them. The process of these kinds of productions is fairly straightforward. Some sort of company will license the play from a company and then hire a director and actors to put up the play for some period of time. These people will most likely never meet the playwright, and the text will not change; the play is at the mercy of the director. However when these kinds of plays were initially developed, the process was anything but straightforward. This is the kind of process I have investigated in my research and will discuss in this paper.

As a student of theatre directing, I have had to read many plays and direct scenes from them in class. However much of my work outside of class has consisted of working on new projects that are in development, or in other words unfinished. I have assisted directors on several workshops and readings in which I have observed a director work with a playwright (or in the case of musicals, a team of writers/composers) to come to the final product of the production or workshop. This relationship between director and playwright is incredibly difficult to define. While the writer(s) is (are) in charge of all textual aspects of the play, the director often has many opinions about the emotional shape of the play and the physical depictions of the script. While the director and

writer(s) have separate roles they often influence each other in what can often become a very tricky working relationship. Through my research I have learned that there is not an abundant amount of information on the subject of directing new works and the relationship between the playwright and director, so I am investigating how that relationship functions. I want to answer the question: What is the director's role in the development of a new play and how do they work with the playwright? I hope that in some way my findings can add to the conversation on this topic.

### **Literature Review**

Throughout my research I have concluded that there are no definitive texts on this subject, and a lack of resources that really focus on the idea of the director's role in the development of new plays. However, I went through many books that I have been assigned as textbooks for directing classes, as well as others, and I have found several references to this subject, but no elaborate explanations.

The seminal text on American theatre directing in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is *On Directing* by Harold Clurman, which has been assigned to me in multiple classes. Clurman directed dozens of new works, mostly through his company The Group Theatre. In his comprehensive book, he has a section called "Script Work with the Playwright." This section includes Clurman's musings on his experiences and those of his peers when working on new plays with the playwright. Clurman makes some very good points when talking about how to work with a playwright and the extent you can suggest cuts or changes in a script, and is very clear in stating that while "there might be divergent opinions...the decisions ultimately rest with the writer" (Clurman 44). I find this to be

mostly true, as the writer must be able to find his or her own voice. However, the director must have his or her own voice as well, and they must coexist together in the physical production of the play.

There are portions of *On Directing* that are fairly outdated, which also makes this text an unreliable source for this thesis. The world of theatre is always so rapidly shifting and the roles of theatre-makers (both dramatists and directors) are also shifting. A very recent example of this kind of shift is Paula Vogel's new play from last season, *Indecent*, that is billed as co-created with the director Rebecca Taichman. Taichman and Vogel collaborated very closely on this project. Taichman initially had the basic concept for the play and presented it to Vogel. As Vogel found her own way into the concept and began writing Vogel claimed that they "talked over every page that I wrote; she showed me things in her staging that opened up the play for me and vice versa" ("An Interview with the Playwright: Paula Vogel on INDECENT" 2016). I am not sure that Clurman would have necessarily approved or understood the instinct for Vogel and Taichman to collaborate so closely on the creation of this play, but in the end *Indecent* (while not receiving financial success) was extremely critically acclaimed and beloved, which proves that there is some merit to this unorthodox method.

Clurman also worked mostly in the world of shows having a pre-Broadway tryout of a new show in a regional theater outside of NYC, and then opening on Broadway (or in many cases in his time opening directly on Broadway). These circumstances come with high pressure stakes to make sure that the show goes well, which meant not taking chances on shows that were not finished. Clurman uses a quote from a fellow prominent 20<sup>th</sup> century director Elia Kazan: "If you aren't willing to go ahead with the direction of a

script in its unrevised and perhaps still imperfect state then you had best not do it at all” (Clurman 44). This suggests that the prominent directors of that period were not interested in the development process of scripts, but more so the practical production aspects of them. However, much of this line of thinking has changed since Clurman and Kazan were directing in the 1950s and 60s, and as new play development has grown this model has been left behind.

In the book *How to Read a Play: Script Analysis for Directors*, author Damon Kiely interviewed dozens of prominent, currently working directors and talked to them about how they approach a script that they are going to direct. In these interviews he talked to director Leigh Silverman, who has almost exclusively directed new works. Silverman, he says, typically “works on new plays during developmental workshops—rehearsal processes with actors that focus on rewriting the play rather than creating a final performance,” (Kiely 42). This notion of workshop productions that are specifically for developing work that are in progress is a modern contrast to the kind of finalized work that Clurman did. Silverman also explains that some of her best collaborations are when she has differing opinions of what the play is about than the playwright does (Kiely 40). This line of reasoning that a director can be a creative collaborator on the journey of a script is definitely where I see myself personally fitting into the world of new work development.

## **Methodology**

For this thesis, I produced and directed several stages of development of a new play. The play is titled *Nice Jewish X* and was written by fellow honors student Brandon



Adam. *Nice Jewish X* is about a young college graduate who moves back to his suburban Jewish neighborhood in search of a connection with his roots, but must first come to terms with how his past actions have affected the relationships he left behind.

I wanted to take this piece of theater from its inception and carry it through a full production of sorts. This would include a closed reading, and open reading, and a fully staged workshop production. The process began in May 2017 when I first approached Brandon Adam and essentially commissioned him to write a play. We had a conversation about our personal theatrical tastes and themes we were both interested in, however the concept and themes of the play were completely up to him. He spent the summer writing the initial draft of this play and on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 he sent me the first draft of *Nice Jewish X*. After reading the first draft, Brandon and I spoke on the phone and I gave him my honest feedback, and first impressions of the story and the text. From there we planned on a closed cold reading of the first draft.

The cold reading was held on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. A cold reading is when the script is read aloud by actors who have not previously read the script before and a closed reading is when just members of a creative team listen to the script read aloud by actors while all sitting around a table. The purposes of these kinds of readings are to get a feel for the basic shape of the play and how well it comes across to the creative team members. We also spoke to the actors and asked them about their first impressions of the script as well. We did not audition actors for the cold reading; we simply invited four actors (one for each role in the play) who generally fit the basic description of the characters. The actors we used were all students from Pace University School of Performing Arts (Josh Lerner, Elly Silberstein, Chance Kester, and Cassy Pogensky).

We obtained a great deal of feedback from this cold closed reading. Brandon and I took many notes during the reading. My notes (appendix I) went scene by scene and I took note of lines that jumped out to me, the events of the scenes, things that did not make sense to me, as well as general reactions to different moments. Afterwards we asked the actors to share their general impression of the show, then to share if they had any questions about the piece or specific moments that might have been confusing or unclear, and then we ended up in a conversation about the main themes of the piece and the universal nature of the themes.

After the cold closed reading Brandon and I discussed what we learned, and Brandon informed me of the aspects of the play and the events/characters/themes he felt that he wanted to change, cut, and rearrange. We then set another deadline for the next draft and prepared for an invited open reading that we scheduled on November 18<sup>th</sup>. Usually an open reading has much more people than a closed reading, and is much more presentational. It allows the creative team to see how a sample audience might react to a piece. We invited roughly 30 people and had twenty-two in attendance. The audience included mostly performing arts students (actors, directors, and writers mostly) as well as a few faculty members. We also changed the casting of the lead role because of schedule conflicts, so the cast for the reading consisted of Cory Shanbom, Elly Silberstein, Chance Kester, and Cassy Pogensky. The greatest change from the closed reading to the open reading is that we spent a week rehearsing the play and doing table work with the script before we presented it in front of an audience.

While the cold reading brought out the initial instincts of the actors, table work (the process of the director reading and discussing the text with the actors in order to

make decisions about the circumstances of the characters, and to define the relationships and events in the text) allowed for me as the director, to start interpreting the text alongside the actors. The process was incredibly collaborative with the actors because the open-ended nature of the text allowed a lot of room to make our own decisions about the background of the characters, what they might be trying to accomplish in each scene, and how they might deal with the different situations. We read and discussed each scene over the course of the four rehearsals and ended the rehearsal process by reading through the entire script. I took extensive notes at this last read through similar to the notes I took during the cold reading (appendix II). Brandon was not at most of these rehearsals, not because we did not think he should be there, but because he had prior commitments. He came to one rehearsal and the final read through before the presentation. Having Brandon in on those conversations was incredibly valuable because he was able to answer questions that we had, and based on our conversations in rehearsal Brandon rewrote parts of several scenes right before the presentation. We distributed the new script pages to the actors right before the reading and quickly talked through the changes with them, but we did not read through them as a group before the audience presentation. For the audience presentation we set the actors on one side of the room in a line of chairs and when their character was in the scene the actor would step up and stand at a music stand with their script to read. The audience was set up in rows facing the actors in a very traditional, presentational, and proscenium arrangement.

The initial reactions from the audience during the performance were very positive. I always found the story and script to be very special and worthwhile, but it was nice to have those feelings reaffirmed by an audience. During the presentation I again took notes

of my reactions, thoughts, and questions (appendix III). I also took note of larger questions that I wanted to ask the audience afterwards. After the reading, we invited the audience to stay for a feedback session. I led the audience feedback session myself with Brandon by my side, as well as the actors. I structured the feedback session into three parts: inviting the audience to share moments of the performance that had significant impact or meaning to them, then Brandon and myself asked the audience larger questions that we had, and then we invited the audience to ask us questions that we sometimes answered and sometimes chose not to. The questions that we asked the audience included “did you find that you were interested in following the protagonist,” “was the grandfather’s death clear,” and “what was your experience of the play as a Jewish person versus a non-Jewish person” (appendix IV). Between Brandon and I, we garnered an overwhelming amount of feedback notes from both this feedback session and private conversations with our peers and friends.

The next step of the development process became a fully staged and produced production of the play in a kind of workshop form. Between the invited reading and this full production was where the most amount of script changes came. Over winter break, as I worked on producing the show (casting, fundraising, securing a venue, etc.), Brandon worked on rewriting the script to clear up issues like lack of interest in the protagonist, unclear character relationships, overabundance of exposition, and lack of clarity of the protagonist’s main desire.

Brandon and I had many phone conversations during this period of time before we started rehearsals. We ended up falling into process where Brandon would change some integral part of the show (the background of the protagonist, or part of the

relationship of two characters) and he would see how integrating that one change affected the rest of the show in a domino effect. Then he would send me that draft, or part of a draft, and then we would discuss how we think the change impacted the story/themes/general impact. An example of a major change that kept happening was what the protagonist studied in college. Initially (and for the first two readings) the protagonist was an acting student, but over the course of these drafts he studied playwriting, then religious studies, and finally we settled on communications. Other points of change were additions and cutting of characters, change to character relationships, and additions and cutting of new scenes.

As Brandon worked on the script for the full production, I secured the actors (for this production we cast Nick Jeffs, Elly Silberstein, Christian Flaherty, and Katrin Nugent), the stage manager, the design team, and set the production calendar. We had four weeks of rehearsals scheduled with about 3 to 4 rehearsals a week. During these rehearsals we started the first week with table work, the second and third weeks with staging and the fourth week with scene work and then we moved into the space. At the same time as rehearsals I was also working with the design team to figure out the physical world of the show and what it looked and sounded like (appendix V). We performed the piece five times at a theatre space in midtown called TheatreLab NYC, to 153 people over the five performances. During each performance Brandon and I took note of the different kinds of reactions the audiences had at different moments and we have both spoken to many people about their in depth reactions and thoughts on the piece.

## Results and Discussion

I have worked on several workshops and readings of new plays and musicals as an assistant director, writer, actor, and producer, but I have never directed anything to this scale before, so every step was a learning moment for me. Looking back, I see where I have made mistakes, however I have also grown to understand the working relationship of the director and playwright so much more intimately, as well as how an extensive development and feedback process can affect the a piece.

In retrospect the cold closed reading offered feedback in a contained way that was incredibly beneficial, because it opened up an honest and intimate conversation between several artists. It was much more difficult to sift through the feedback from the open reading because it was so much more sporadic and opinionated, and I think that hindered the creative process in a way because Brandon and I were still figuring out what this piece was, and I am not sure we were quite ready to present the play to that large of an audience yet. I think a lot of the script would have made more improvements sooner if Brandon had been able to be in all of the rehearsals for the open reading. I felt very secure having him in the room during table work rehearsals because the play was still in such a state of flux it was much easier and productive to be able to ask him questions about the characters or situations because then he could either choose to define them if he wanted to, or let said question be up to interpretation. When he was in the room, the rehearsal conversations prompted him to want to clear up things that were confusing or inconsistent, or he would discover something he had not thought of. More of this kind of working would have pushed the piece further along in a shorter amount of time. My goal was always to investigate the play and having Brandon in the room allowed the

investigation to go further than just me alone with the cast. In a way, the entire world of the play existed in Brandon's head, so it was inherently more productive to mine that source than to shoot in the dark as we brought the piece to life. In my own future work, I think I will try to keep the playwright in the room as much as possible for rehearsals for readings like this one. This point of the development process is crucial because it is the best time to experiment with new text. The pages do not have to be finished and set for a developmental reading, so the playwright can have free reign to try out new material to the very last moment, and when the playwright is in the room they can be much more easily prompted to make adjustments to the work. Especially with such a low-stakes reading, I think we would have been much more productive with that reading if Brandon and I had been able to work more closely together during those early table work rehearsals.

During the time in between the open reading and the full production Brandon and I had many phone conversations. Many times on these calls, I found that what was needed from me was to remind Brandon to write the play for himself and to keep from getting bogged down by the copious amounts of feedback he got from the reading. I still gave my honest thoughts on the drafts, and even sometimes brainstormed some ideas. For instance the communications major idea was something that I casually suggested during one of our discussions and it stuck with Brandon so much that he developed it into a major thematic point of the play. However, a large part of my job at this point was trying to facilitate Brandon's creative process by helping him get back to the reason why he wrote the play, and reminding him that he only needs to take the feedback that he deems as necessary for his vision of the play.

An aspect of putting up the full production of the show that surprised me was the casting process. Casting the piece brought us so much new understanding of how the text functioned. Brandon's writing style is very textual and the humor is very much rooted in the words and rhythms. While we held auditions and callbacks, we had a difficult time finding actors that could deliver the text in an authentic way and still find the humor in it. While the play is not exactly a comedy there is still very dry and humorous text, and it became very clear that not just any actors could handle that kind of humor. While it was arduous to keep searching for new actors after our initial auditions and callbacks, each callback was incredibly valuable for me to understand how to direct this text and adjust actors for these scenes. I think it integrally added to our understanding of the way the piece worked.

Something that I think I realized too late was that you cannot rush the development of a play. I do not think we were quite ready to put on a full production when we did. I started to change my own frame of mind midway through the rehearsals for the full production by thinking of the production more as a fully produced workshop of sorts, meaning that the play was still a work in progress. However, I did not really have the play advertised as such, nor did I really share that sentiment with the cast and creative team. I absolutely think that the piece needed and still needs more time; fortunately I know that Brandon shares the same point of view.

## **Conclusions**

The word that I think most accurately reflects the director's role in the development of a new play is facilitation. While a director can make suggestions and give



honest critical feedback to the playwright, he or she cannot alter the text in anyway. It is not the director's play; it is the playwrights. The director must act as the midwife to the birth of the piece. The director gets a say in how the play enters the world, but at the end of the day it does not belong to the director. I found this to be most true during those long phone conversations with Brandon after the invited reading. I realized that the most important thing I could do was to provide Brandon with support and space to do his work, and to trust him in his own process.

Brandon and I both know that this process has only been the first leg of the journey for *Nice Jewish X*, and that we will continue to work on the piece because we both believe it is not yet finished. Brandon is planning on taking time over the summer to do some extensive rewrites based on everything we've learned, and we are hoping to have another reading of the piece by the end of the summer. I am looking forward to using what I learned from this process and leading with it for the next leg of this endeavor, as well as new creative projects I work on in the future.

Works Cited

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Appendix

I. Notes from the cold closed reading

Thesis 9/30

Cold Read

I - beginning is a blast of millennial Jewish pop culture.

- Top 10 things I use to describe myself
- Matthew's morbidity
- What does Matthew want?
- Scene 1 is about revealing all surface level facets of Matthews.
- I'm searching for action in Scene 1
- is it to get out?
- How did M and his gf break up? How did it affect him?
- What in scene 1 is for the characters and what is for the audience?
- Using culture for your own means
- The date comes out of nowhere.
- Isaac's want isn't the most clear, he's more of a device than a real person.
- Watching Matthew explain NYC to Maya is a great moment for an American, NYC audience.
- Scene 2, Maya's want is super clear, Matthew's could be clearer, but ~~the~~ his vague nature is also central to the story.
- How comfortable is Matthew with lying how good at it is he? or is Maya ~~just~~ especially susceptible to believe his lies?
- US vs the world

(Cont)

III - What about Maya made Matthew so easily want to go on another date?

- "The family" as a character
- The short length of the scene is jarring, so what does that mean?

IV - Going back to the past is def a major theme, it is realized more in each scene so far.

- "little global family"
- Moments where Matthew rejects Judaism w/ Maya in little ways.
- Many ideas of Maya
- "I'm not saying that to guilt you"
- everyone says that to Matthew
- The ghosts of your Hebrew elementary school secrets, getting things off of your chest, speaking your mind.
- The transitional moments at ends of scenes are great

V - Hannah has no friends

- "I'm dating Maya" big deal
- Searching for things to say.
- Is this a relationship he backed out?
- Is this just another shitty thing Matthew did?
- I think Hannah might be the opposite of Cassie
- The dare thing is very John Hughes.

VI - Matthew is way overcompensating because guilt?

- Matthew is so fake
- why didn't he just call his grand father?

VII - so much tension, secrets spilling

- Is Hannah also at services?

VIII - What does it mean that we don't see or hear Grandpa?

IX - Maya drops the bomb for the audience

- why don't we see Maya and Hannah together?
- instead of convenient plot devices of Maya knowing.
- "could you forget" I'm crying!
- "because you're nice" wild, love it.
- great monologue
- I'm so invested
- we are forever changed.

X - where does being a streamer fit in

- thematically
- love ending at the beginning, but he's def changed.

(Cont) feedback

Cassie - related to all of the characters.

- feels a part of the community
- wants to know more about her background

Eilly - appreciated sharing her Jewish w/ non Jewish but felt things were missing

- looking for someone to push her into being more Jewish

Chazee - found the comfortable back and forth with the brothers

- Enlightening to Jewish culture, inside look
- struggles clear to non Jewish audience

Josh - firm grasp on Jewish ambivalence

- labels of what kind of Jew you are, cool that this play was exploring this
- relationships were strong and made switching easier
- Jewish guilt
- Bickering quality is so real

CS

Cassie - significance of Hannah?

- she was so equal to him and never hated.

Eilly - interesting that Hannah brings up how its too easy to date a Jewish guy

- it skips so much of this getting to know you.

Josh - not fully sure where the change of liking Maya Judaism is.

- what has the philosophy of giving in to Judaism mean for Matthew.

- The Grand father is so instantly relatable, the hierarchy and the Holocaust survivor is so so real

- It's a maturity thing, of going back to Judaism in stead of resenting back to Judaism
- The clash of not wanting to get involved w/ Judaism, but wanting to know your grand father or dating that girl.

## II. Notes from the final read-through in rehearsals for the open reading

Thesis rehearsal - final Reading 11/17

- 1) - What's happening at the top?  
- Isaac is listing years, be clear about it  
- What is hooking us in to the beginning?  
- Why should we care about Mat's journey?  
- VisNap in a few weeks? we find out in one.  
- I don't understand the convo and how it follows.  
- What if he was just coming home?  
- Isaac has a mission w/ the convo.
- 2) - Why tomorrow night? Why does Mat say yes?  
- Matt is performing his Judaism?  
- The news paper line.  
- Fuck moment should be 2x larger
- 3) Isaac should have more opinions.
- 4) - Convo line sticks out too  
- May, how do you feel about Mat's survey answers?  
- You're not reading about report May, you're explaining your research.  
- What was that like? genuine intrigue May?  
- Work the kiss moment  
- The kisses feel like interruptions in convo, rather than the other way around

- 5) - The importance of bringing up Hannah Wise
- 6) - What are the purposes of the jokes Isaac?  
- Bathroom excuse is kind of lame  
- H, don't ~~like~~ live how you felt then live now.  
- H, past to present tense switch is important  
- Pressures of Public Space!
- 8) - H, always being aware of it is direct callback to Mat  
- H, where is the hidden agenda?
- 9) - Cuddle from the top
- 10) - transition, May putting block (eat an w/ son)  
- (could you forget) last ditch effort
- 11) - Why does Isaac come clean in that moment?  
- hugging thing could be more prevalent throughout play, all moment is so sweet!  
- Visa moment comes out of nowhere.

## III. Notes from the open reading performance

Thesis Reading

- 1) - Isaac's monologue should be in conversation of sorts w/ Mat.  
- in the staging  
- The convo is long for the bus station
- 2) - Second scene is interesting to watch, first not so much.  
- Mat is confident he is getting away w/ the act
- 3) - Scene doesn't land for me the same way the last draft did
- 4) - I want to work the research moment  
- "Do you wanna smoke..."  
- so awkward...  
- "You guys were inseparable"  
- why, how?  
- The kisses as a tactic actually like worked... interesting...
- 5) - Make sure the mentions of Hannah come through  
- "President of Hillel" (can go so big) Isaac
- 6) - Grant moment comes out of nowhere a bit  
- H's last name should be mentioned at first

- 5) - Did you want to follow Mat from the beginning?  
- Were you able to track Hannah?  
- How do you experience this play as a non-jew?  
- Was Grant father's death clear?  
7) - Hannah wouldn't admit defeat at any point  
- I don't believe Mat is as opening up to Judaism in this performance draft
- 8) - Hannah is coming across as a bitch I think.
- 9) - Does girlfriend line come out of nowhere?
- 10) - How does Mat know Hannah seen told May about the dare specifically?  
- I wish the fuckin May monologue  
- figure out the pacing
- 11) - Hug has so much payoff  
- trying up too many loose ends?

## IV. Notes from the audience feedback session after the open reading

impact)

- hug at beginning and end
- Ely's awkwardness
- Isaac's comedy
- beautiful dialogue
- original characters
- moment of the bet was clear writing incident
- Grandpa's guilt
- Maya cursing at the end?
- Maya weed moment?
- Grandpa's death
- constantly questioning line
- Hannah as this other and the pay off
- scene w/ 2 women
- Devise of 4 year story bookend

?'s

- Wanted to watch Mat fail
- Almost thought Maya would become protagonist
- wanted more of Mat's POV throughout play
- Mat's story was very telling not showing
- Became invested when Maya entered
- ~~and~~ Mat didn't seem to care so why should we
- His guilt could be deepened b/c he has a lack of protagonist desire

- fitting to see him through other ppl b/c he doesn't have a world
- wasn't given a chance to get on his side
- could be w/ falling in love w/ Maya more
- Didn't know why he didn't want to go to grandpa's in beginning
- lost investment in him
- what is he doing when he's not w/ his family?
- Was he incident really enough to keep him from his family?
- How is he physically unable to not call/see his grandparents
- as a manifestation of his guilt
- He wants to connect but doesn't know how?
- lack of desire for him to make art
- Non-Jewish wasn't a barrier, family themes were strong
- He changed and could be scared of them not accepting his change (Preston Fox)
- Maya was a large into Judaism

Audience ?'s

- The relationship about brothers at the top leads into story about family not necessarily Jewish
- Exploring Mat's otherness could highlight the divide w/ Grandpa
- Did not buy him calling home
- Maybe he could get a call?
- consistently confused by the Hebrew ritual relationships
- wasn't sure why Isaac told Hannah about bet
- What didn't he just tell Maya?

?'s

- How does him being at home work in relation to 'The Family'?
- Why does Mat care so much about the bet?
- Why orthodox?
- How does family relate to Maya and Hannah as well?
- too many Jewish buzz words
- Difficulty of people saying things
- ppl too articulate
- events were fairly on the nose
- wanted more visually rather than all so much dialogue
- so much expo in first scene

- Why does Hannah go about confronting Mat in that way?
- If the Grandfather's illness was so severe why didn't Isaac say anything?
- Why does his family put up w/ his shit?
- Mat needs some more redeeming quality.
- Needed clarity on Hannah and Mat's relationship.

V. Production Photos from the TheatreLab production of *Nice Jewish X*

