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PLUNGERS AND PRODUCTIVITY:
A STUDENT'S SURVIVAL GUIDE TO MULTI-TASKING

By

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B.A. Florida State University, 2006

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment in the requirements
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts
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in the College of Arts and Humanities
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2009

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ABSTRACT

To be a fully functioning theatre practitioner, the developing student artist becomes equipped with a practical skill set that is ordinarily cultivated through formal training and study. Typically, organized study leads him/her to focus on a specific facet of the business: acting, directing, design, etc. However, students often develop a vast array of talents and skills within the profession and find themselves standing at a crossroads between what “kind” of artist to be; what singular aspect of the arts on which to focus. Why not do it all? For those students who “do it all”, there is an additional challenge: the artist who is a student immersed in daytime study and nighttime production obligations has to wear two caps. One is that of the learner and one is that of the employee, the producer, and perhaps even the teacher. When are these caps traded or are they both worn through all processes?

This thesis will reveal my creative and practical processes from two productions at the University of Central Florida for which I played on- and offstage roles: I worked as a Sound Designer and featured actor in Sophie Treadwell’s *Machinal*; I was the Vocal Director for *Urinetown: The Musical*, and also played Penelope Pennywise, a leading role. I will describe the challenges and successes of each project by examining the following evidence: my personal process with each piece, demonstrated through reflection and examples from the work; interviews with those involved in the productions as well as outside reviews and feedback; and research of each play. Research will include production history, intent of authors, and aspects that informed my work both onstage and off.

Did multi-tasking sacrifice the quality of my work for any of my delegated tasks? Did I enjoy more success in my progress in time management, the ability to solve problems, and

collaboration process with fellow artists, or in the actual on-stage products? What aspects of my training in my graduate program added to the quality of my work on these productions? Does being a multi-tasking artist help or hurt one's career in theatre?

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF MEDIA	ix
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF MUSICAL TERMS	xi
SECTION ONE: MACHINAL	1
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	2
CHAPTER TWO: GETTING TO KNOW THE MACHINE: PREPARATION	4
Research on Machinal	7
Initial Design Concepts	10
Casting	14
CHAPTER THREE: GRINDING THROUGH THE GEARS: PROCESS	17
Preparation as a Sound Designer	17
Initial Sound Design Presentation	17
Further Research and Creation of Tracks	18
Creating a Sound Plot	22
Preparation as an Actor	23
Episode One: The Office	26
Episode Two: At Home	32
Episode Three: Honeymoon	38
Episode Four: Maternal	39
Episode Five: Prohibited	40
Episode Six: Intimate	42
Episode Seven: Domestic	44
Episode Eight: The Law	48
Episode Nine: A Machine	51
CHAPTER FOUR: PROBLEMS WITH THE GEARS: PROBLEMS	57
Learning How to be a Sound Designer	57
Technical Rehearsals	61
CHAPTER FIVE: FACTORY UP AND RUNNING: PRODUCT	65
SECTION TWO: URINETOWN	68
CHAPTER SIX: TOO MUCH EXPOSITION: PREPARATION	69
Research on <i>Urinetown</i>	70
Reviewing the Score of <i>Urinetown</i> and the Role of Pennywise	73
Adjusting the Score	77
Analysis and Comparison of the <i>Urinetown</i> Score	84
CHAPTER SEVEN: RUN, VOCAL DIRECTOR, RUN! PROCESS	92
Casting	92
Preparation as a Music Director	94
Preparation of the Music Breakdown	96
CHAPTER EIGHT: PROBLEMS PLUNGING: PROBLEMS	101
The Re-notation of “It’s a Privilege to Pee”	102
Rehearsal Problems	104
CHAPTER NINE: A SUCCESSFUL FLUSH: PRODUCT	107
CHAPTER TEN: CONCLUSION	111

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW WITH BRITTNEY RENTSCHLER.....	114
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW WITH JULIA LISTENGARTEN	117
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW WITH TAD INGRAM.....	121
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR LEE	125
APPENDIX E: IRB PERMISSION FORM	129
APPENDIX F: KCACTF ADJUDICATION RESPONSE FOR MACHINAL.....	131
APPENDIX G: INK 19 REVIEW OF MACHINAL	136
APPENDIX H: SOURCES.....	138
REFERENCES	142

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Actor Script Excerpt, Episode One	25
Figure 2: Actor Script Excerpt: Episode Two.....	26
Figure 3: Amanda Wansa (The Stenographer), Episode One.....	28
Figure 4: Amanda Wansa (Mother) and Brittney Rentschler (Helen), Episode Two.....	32
Figure 5: Helen in Episode Four	40
Figure 6: Helen (Brittney Rentschler) and Richard Roe (Ryan Garcia).....	42
Figure 7: Set of <i>Machinal</i> with indicated speaker locations.....	47
Figure 8: Helen (Brittney Rentschler) and Husband (Kyle Crowder), Episode Seven	48
Figure 9: Episode Eight	49
Figure 10: Helen’s last moments with her mother, Episode Nine	52
Figure 11: Ruth Snyder, at the moment of her execution, December 17, 1927.....	53
Figure 12: Helen’s final moments, Episode Nine.....	55
Figure 13: Helen’s Execution (visual that corresponds with Media 18), Episode Nine.....	56
Figure 14: Sound Cue Plot, <i>Machinal</i> , UCF Conservatory Theater, March 2008.....	60
Figure 15: “It’s a Privilege To Pee”, <i>Urinetown</i> , mm. 65-79	78
Figure 16: “It’s a Privilege to Pee”, <i>Urinetown</i> , mm. 137 to 145 (Hollman 27).....	80
Figure 17: “It’s a Privilege To Pee”, <i>Urinetown</i> , re-notated, mm. 65-75.....	81
Figure 18: “It’s a Privilege to Pee", <i>Urinetown</i> , re-notated, mm. 137-147	81
Figure 19: Original “Why Did I Listen to that Man”, <i>Urinetown</i> , mm. 137-145.....	82
Figure 20: “I See a River,” <i>Urinetown</i> , mm. 107-114.....	86
Figure 21: “Run Freedom Run”, <i>Urinetown</i> , mm 61-82	87
Figure 22: “A New Argentina”, <i>Evita</i> , mm. 86 to 92	89
Figure 23: “Act One Finale, <i>Urinetown</i> , mm. 65-72	90
Figure 24: “It’s a Privilege to Pee,” <i>Urinetown</i> , mm. 179-180	103

LIST OF MEDIA

Media 1 “Idioteque,” Radiohead.....	18
Media 2: “Idioteque,” Vitamin String Quartet Tribute to Radiohead.....	18
Media 3: Amanda Wansa’s combination of Radiohead’s “Idioteque” and Vitamin String Quartet’s “Idioteque”	18
Media 4: Amanda Wansa’s combination of “Le Grande Tango” and <i>Hollywood Edge</i> sound effects.....	19
Media 5: Amanda Wansa’s combination of “Mental Strength” and “Rivi”	20
Media 6: Episode One Underscore, <i>Machinal</i> , UCF Conservatory Theatre	27
Media 7: Option One for Episode One Monologue.....	30
Media 8: Option Two for Episode One Monologue	30
Media 9: Option Three for Episode One Monologue	31
Media 10: Final Underscore for Episode One Monologue.....	31
Media 11: Transition from Episode One to Episode Two	37
Media 12: Episode Four Underscore, <i>Machinal</i> , UCF Conservatory Theater	39
Media 13: Episode Four Monologue Underscore, <i>Machinal</i> , UCF Conservatory Theatre	39
Media 14: “Cielito Lindo,” Solista Ensemble De Mexico, <i>World Music Mexico</i>	41
Media 15: Excerpt from “Oteño Porteño,” performed by Eroica Trio	44
Media 16: End of Episode Seven Underscore	48
Media 17: Underscore for end of Episode Eight	50
Media 18: Underscore for the end of Episode Nine	55
Media 19: “Why Did I Listen to that Man,” <i>Urinetown</i> , Original Broadway Cast	83
Media 20: “Why Did I Listen to that Man,” <i>Urinetown</i> , UCF Conservatory Theater	83
Media 21: Excerpt from “River Jordan”, <i>The Civil War</i> , Original Broadway Cast	85
Media 22: Excerpt from “Snuff That Girl,” <i>Urinetown</i> , Original Broadway Cast.....	88
Media 23: Excerpt from “Cool,” <i>West Side Story</i> , Original Broadway Cast.....	88
Media 24: Alto melody line of “Urinetown,” <i>Urinetown</i>	95
Media 25: “It’s a Privilege to Pee,” <i>Urinetown</i> , performed by Amanda Wansa	104
Media 26: Audio footage of “It’s a Privilege to Pee,” <i>Urinetown</i> , UCF Conservatory Theater	108
Media 27: “Run Freedom Run,” <i>Urinetown</i> , UCF Conservatory Theater	109
Media 28: “I See A River,” <i>Urinetown</i> , UCF Conservatory Theater	109

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Preliminary Music Breakdown, <i>Machinal</i> , UCF Conservatory Theater	22
Table 2: <i>Urinetown</i> Music Breakdown, prepared by Amanda Wansa	97

LIST OF MUSICAL TERMS

Staccato: “notes...decisively shortened in duration, thus clearly separated from the note following...light accent also implied” (Randel 630)

Leading Tone: “the seventh degree of the major and harmonic or ascending melodic minor scales...often leads or resolves to the tonic” (Randel 367)

SFX: a computer program known as an “audio compiler”: a program used to compile audio samples and make them ready for output and playback.

Marcato: “marked, stressed, emphasized, often with respect to a melody that is to be made prominent” (Randel 397)

Techno (music): electronic dance music that features fast tempos and sounds created by an electronic synthesizer.

Electronic music: “music produced, changed, or reproduced by electronic means...makes creative use of electronic equipment...consists either wholly or partially of sounds produced by electronic oscillators or synthesizers” (Randel 208)

Indie Rock: genre of music performed by artists who sign with independent record labels; characterized by a sound similar to but not matching what is popular or mainstream at the time of recording or release

Rest: “span of time in music where there is silence” (Randel 558)

Vocal marking: singing or speaking with reduced volume.

Double (vocal lines): “to perform or to specify the performance of the same note or notes by two parts, either at the same pitch level or in octaves.” (Randel 194)

a’capella: vocal music without instrumentation.

Fermata: “indication that a note should be prolonged beyond its normal duration” (Randel 226)

Riff: “a relaxed, tuneful phrase repeated over changing harmonies...may serve as accompaniment or melody” (Randel 563)

Re-mix: An electronic alteration of a previously recorded audio track.

Vamp: a musical phrase—often only one or two measures—that is repeated until a verbal or visual cue is given to continue with the score.

SECTION ONE: MACHINAL

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Jeff Blumenkrantz, Tina Fey, Susan Stroman, Mel Gibson, and William Shakespeare all have one thing in common. Jeff Blumenkrantz is a successful composer, music director, and actor, living as a member of the New York theatre community. Tina Fey is the writer and star of a popular television show called *30 Rock* on NBC after having spent many years as a writer and actor on *Saturday Night Live*. Susan Stroman is an accomplished director and choreographer of Broadway musicals such as *The Producers*, *Contact*, and the 2002 revival of *Oklahoma*. Mel Gibson is an Academy-Award® winning director, producer, and actor in Hollywood. William Shakespeare was a poet, playwright, and actor. All five of these artists are multi-taskers; each exploits his or her unique combination of talents and skills. The work of these five theatre practitioners is highly visible, representing a breed of other multi-talented artists working at regional theatres and educational institutions worldwide. These artists are capable of utilizing a vast range of skills. How does one become a multi-tasker? Beyond the acquisition of skills through training, practice, and experience, how does one learn to manage a career with multiple areas of responsibility?

My undergraduate training provided me with experience in multiple areas of the arts. I acquired skills in musical theatre, classical, and improvisational acting; ensemble singing, jazz singing, conducting, arranging music, accompanying, teaching (both music and theatre), working with stage combat, and other general theatre skills. When I entered graduate school at the University of Central Florida to obtain a masters degree in acting, I assumed that the focus of my time would be on performing. Within my first week of study, I discovered that, because of the skills I possessed, my time would be split in half between performance and music directing.

This thesis will serve as a reflection of two production processes at UCF for which I was assigned multiple responsibilities. For the UCF production of *Machinal* in the Spring of 2008, I served as Sound Designer and as an actor. This production took place during the academic year, adding to the amount of skills I would have to access, and obligations I would have to serve, on a daily basis for a period of four months. For the UCF production of *Urinetown* in the Summer of 2008, I served as Vocal Director and also played the role of Penelope Pennywise. I accepted the responsibilities for these shows with the understanding that I would be completing two jobs for each show, thereby improving my skills, and also assisting the theatre department by handling multiple responsibilities.

I understood that I would have to utilize multiple skills on a daily basis, but I had many questions that only experiencing the processes would answer: Will my work on a production team interfere with my preparation and process as an actor? Will the quality of either of my jobs be challenged by a lack of time for preparation? Will my professional and/or personal relationships be affected negatively due to my obligation to serve in a position of authority while also serving as a peer to fellow students professors alike? Will I be able to fulfill my responsibilities as a full-time student during the production process of *Machinal*? I began the process of working in both *Machinal* and *Urinetown* hoping to increase my skills as a music director and as an actor; and improve my skills in time management, patience, and interpersonal relationships.

This thesis will document the production processes, reflect upon my professional and personal growth, and can serve as a guide for any student artist who attempts to accept multiple responsibilities in the theatre.

CHAPTER TWO: GETTING TO KNOW THE MACHINE: PREPARATION

An excerpt from the published script of *Machinal*, by Sophie Treadwell:

EPISODE SIX: Intimate

Scene: a dark room.

Sounds: a hand organ; footbeats, of passing feet.

Characters:

MAN

YOUNG WOMAN

At rise: darkness. Nothing can be discerned. From the outside comes the sound of a hand organ, very faint, and the irregular rhythm of passing feet. The hand organ is playing "Cielito Lindo", that Spanish song that has been on every hand organ lately.

(Treadwell 45)

I began to read Sophie Treadwell's *Machinal* in the Summer of 2007, while I was performing in a production of the musical, *Cabaret*. *Machinal* had been announced on the list of shows for the UCF Conservatory Theatre's 2007-2008 season, and I was determined to read all the of material for this upcoming season to gauge where I could fit in terms of casting. I started reading this script in the dressing room at ten minutes until places, my costume and make-up already prepared. I continued reading whenever I came offstage and found myself anxious to get through my onstage scenes and get back to this enthralling script. I had finished the play by the time my performance was over and I was thoroughly impressed and excited at the prospect of becoming involved with this piece. I was particularly interested in Treadwell's use of specificity

with her description of the aural world of the play. The excerpt from the script above demonstrates some of this specificity and attention to aural description. She included specific notes on sound and music throughout the script, even starting the entire piece with an introduction that includes this statement: “Then there is, the use of many different sounds chosen primarily for their inherent emotional effect (steel riveting, a priest chanting, a Negro singing, jazz band, etc.), but contributing also to the creation of a background, an atmosphere” (Treadwell xi). She calls for at least ten “offstage voices” in this introduction, as well as a list of “Mechanical Offstage Sounds” and “Mechanical Onstage Sounds.”

Her dialogue created a musical symphony in my head: a collection of sounds, percussive and legato, that flowed from one movement to the next, all the while bringing forth the very real and jarring plot line. Treadwell provides an accurate description of *Machinal* in the published forward: “The Plot is the story of a woman who murders her husband—an ordinary young woman, any woman. The Plan is to tell this story by showing the different phases of life that the woman comes in contact with, and in none of which she finds any place, any peace....The story is told in nine scenes. In the dialogue of these scenes there is the attempt to catch the rhythm of our common city speech, its brassy sound, its trick of repetition, etc.” (Treadwell xi).

The following is an excerpt from the opening “Episode” (or scene) that depicts the mundane office life in which the main character, Helen, works. The repetition of spoken phrases creates a staccato (See List of Music Terms) round of percussive beats. There are certain words in a phrase that correspond with a word in the following phrase, as lines musically continue from one phrase to another with a leading tone (See List of Music Terms). Certain words in the following phrases serve as a “leading tone” to the next line.

JONES: Good morning, everybody.

TELEPHONE GIRL: Good morning.

FILING CLERK: Good morning.

ADDING CLERK: Good morning.

STENOGRAPHER: Good morning, Mr. J.

JONES: Miss A. isn't in yet?

TELEPHONE GIRL: Not yet, Mr. J.

FILING CLERK: Not yet.

ADDING CLERK: Not yet.

STENOGRAPHER: She's late.

JONES: I just wanted her to take a letter.

STENOGRAPHER: I'll take the letter.

JONES: One thing at a time and that done well.

ADDING CLERK (yessing): Done well.

(*Machinal*, Treadwell 4)

One can see (and hear, if read out loud) a rhythm in this excerpt. One could almost attribute each phrase to a particular type of drumbeat, with some that clearly break rhythm. I couldn't get these rhythms out of my mind, and so, when school resumed in the Fall of 2007, I conferred with Professor Julia Listengarten, slated director for *Machinal*. I told her that I had been reading *Machinal*, shared my love for the musical richness called for by the script, and inquired about her vision for sound design. We discussed the indication for a small jazz band and I shared my experience with jazz music and access to resources in that field. I asked her questions such as, "Do you plan to have live music?" "Are you going to audition for actor/musicians or separate musician positions?" She admitted that there hadn't been much

thought to these issues at the time and that her sound designer was going to be spread thin between other shows of the season and this piece. I offered my services. Professor Listengarten and I decided that the role I would fit best in this process would be as a “music consultant” with the possibility of being an “arranger” for the piece, if live music would be used. We agreed that I would attend preliminary design meetings and discussions in the Fall, for the production had been slated to open in March of 2008, with casting occurring in November of 2007 and rehearsals beginning in January of 2008.

Research on *Machinal*

Having studied Expressionism intermittently throughout my undergraduate and graduate training, I was aware of the social importance of the work of Sophie Treadwell. Treadwell’s career spanned some sixty years, with forays in journalism, education, and finally, theater. Born in 1885, Treadwell was a graduate of the University of California at Berkley and finished her first full length play, *Le Grand Prix*, in 1907, at the age of twenty-two. By 1920, she had written fifteen more plays and had worked as a writer for *The San Fransisco Bulletin* and *The New York American* (Dickey xiii). *Machinal* opened on Broadway in 1928 and by then, Treadwell had endured a nervous breakdown, a divorce, a trip to Mexico to cover the Mexican Revolution for the *New York Herald Tribune*, acting workshops with Richard Boleslavsky, and a number of days in attendance of the famous murder trials of Ruth Snyder and Judd Gray, on whom the story of *Machinal* is said to be loosely based (Dickey xiv). Treadwell endured a tumultuous family life and her relationships with her parents and lovers influenced her writing in major ways. She consistently wrote about a woman’s position in a patriarchal society, and many of the scenes in *Machinal* directly corresponded her personal experiences. Treadwell was a patient at St. Helena Sanatorium only six months her marriage to journalist William O’Connell McGeehan.

Additionally, it's been found in her writings that her father left her mother, leaving Treadwell's ideas of marriage to be bitter and skewed. In *Machinal*, the Protagonist that Treadwell created has a back-story similar to her own. Helen lives at home with her mother, but no father present, and she is admitted to a cold and emotionally sterile hospital immediately following a scene during which she accepts marriage to George H. Jones. The parallels are clear.

Treadwell also wrote in her journalism about social injustice towards women. She reported often on court cases, such as the murder trial of Elizabeth Blair Mohr, who was accused of conspiring to have her husband killed. This trial preceded that of Ruth Snyder. Treadwell often wrote about women freeing themselves from domestic situations in which they were restricted. Themes of female liberation can be found in much of her writing, not just in *Machinal*. When employed as a writer for the *San Francisco Bulliten*, Treadwell wrote an article called "How I Got My Husband and How I Lost Him: the Story of Jean Traig." Faced with an unhappy marriage and headed for bankruptcy, Traig begs her husband to buy her a typewriter and she learns to type and find herself her own job, freeing her from an obligation to her husband. "Sure enough, Jean types her way out of this loveless marriage and into a job that gives her both financial independence and self-respect" (Walker 212).

Many parallels have been drawn between Treadwell and the revolutionary Emma Goldman. In Goldman's "The Traffic in Women", she states, "Woman is reared as a sex commodity [thus one need not] be surprised if she becomes an easy prey to prostitution, or to any other form of a relationship which degrades her to the position of an object for mere sex gratification...It is the private dominion over things that condemns millions of people to be mere nonentities, living corpses without originality or power of initiative, human machines of flesh and blood, who pile up mountains of wealth for others and pay for it with gray, dull and

wretched existences for themselves” (Twayne 77). This all can be classified under the topic of “dehumanization.”

As the UCF production’s design process continued, the notion of a machine remained the centerpiece of the production team’s discussion and how each character would be a part of this machine, including Helen herself. How would Helen be a cog in this machine and how would her cog be different from the other characters (or pieces) onstage? This question would be raised continually throughout my sound design process. There are a number of times during Helen’s speeches, which often occur at the end of an episode, when she says “somebody, something…” and then is interrupted. Helen is constantly *cut off*, vocally. Her instrument is stifled. She becomes a part of the machine that is easily turned down, or turned off. She also cannot “breathe” in the subway (as she tells her Mother in Episode Two), she cannot “eat” in the hospital (Episode Four), and she loses her hair during the execution scene (Episode Nine)—all aspects of taking away her needs as a *human*, leading to dehumanization (Twayne 83).

Machinal enjoyed financial success and positive response from the public when it premiered in 1928 with both audiences and critics. This success comments on the universality of an appreciation for feminist views when expressed through a creative outlet. Additional productions of *Machinal* have also found success in terms of production response, in decades after, showing the overlap of identical issues and their importance in society, seeing as audiences in different geographical regions in different decades have related to this piece. Interestingly enough, after the Nineteenth Amendment was passed in 1920, giving women the right to vote and enhancing the encouragement of women to explore careers outside of the home, the pendulum of women’s roles in society has swung back and forth since. This has moved from the rise of the iconic American family, with the housewife staying home in the 1950s, to the free

love movement of the 1960s. At the same time, with the development of household technologies, there have been periods in American society in the 20th Century during which being a housewife seemed desirable (Gewirtz 102). It would appear that although Treadwell was aiming for an Expressionist effect with her language—vague and rhythmically focused with distinct patterns and sentence fragments—she avoided putting a “period” on the style of language; therefore, it has been a pertinent revival in venues and time periods since the play was written. Utilizing a specific style with the piece allows it to live in this genre, enabling all of the designers to build their designs within the realm of the Expressionist style, which exists in a timeless setting, instead of being caged to a specific time period. Reading about the universal appeal of the piece inspired me to explore infinite musical possibilities. I knew this list of infinite musical genres would be narrowed by the other designers’ input and concepts so that we could agree on specific decisions. But this wasn’t a piece that had to take place in a specific town in a specific year; this would unleash the ability to create metaphors with design and expand on the specific design notes given.

Initial Design Concepts

Treadwell indicates in her script the use of some specific instruments that include a hand organ and a small jazz band. It was the jazz band that initially sparked my interest. Having the music education that I had, and embracing my affinity toward learning new instruments, I initially suggested the following services to Professor Listengarten (the director): I would find samples of jazz music, both instrumental and vocal, that we appreciated and felt suited the play. Then, if we cast live musicians, I would arrange the music to underscore the action. The idea of live instruments being present as pieces of the machine excited us, just as the live dialogue in the play would serve as “music” in its own right. Similarly, I developed the idea of having live

sound effects coming from the “machine” that would be embodied by the set and actors through their dialogue and physical action. This would provide the live, visceral attack on the audience’s senses and they would be able to not only hear but also *feel* the music in battle with the sounds of the machine. The following quote provides an apt description of the design aspects of “Expressionism” that influenced concept development: “These works typically featured some common characteristics. Above all, they attempted to reject representation of surface reality in favor of a depiction of inner, subjective states of emotion and experience. Visual and emotional qualities often featured an element of distortion, exaggeration, or suggestive symbolism, frequently achieving dream-like or nightmarish quality to the action....Music and sound effects helped communicate the varying emotional states of the play’s focal characters, sometimes being used as substitutes for words and action” (Murphy 70).

Before design meetings were scheduled, Professor Listengarten invited me to a graduate class she was teaching in which most of the *Machinal* designers were enrolled. We started having concept discussions that provided a casual forum in which to share ideas and research. It was in these meetings that my concept started to develop: we would use one musical instrument or instrument family to represent Helen. This instrument would then be overwhelmed by the “sounds of the machine.” This wouldn’t necessarily confine us to “jazz,” since it was agreed that we weren’t working entirely in the realm of music from the 1920s, but were going to allow music from that decade to influence the design in terms of costumes and prop design. Professor Listengarten put forth a concept that would be repeated and resonate through the rehearsal process and production: the image of Helen as a lily (the flower) in a meat-grinder. We made a list of instruments that we could use to *symbolize* Helen, and I played some recorded samples. Included in the samples was a piece called “Oteño Porteño,” composed by Astor Piazzolla,

played by the Eroíca Trio. I played a section of it that I heard specifically for Episode Six that features Helen and her Spanish lover, but the reaction from the room was unanimous that Helen would be a stringed instrument, focusing mainly around the sound of a violin. I suggested that the violin could be layered with electronic sounds and mechanical noises, whether instrumental or purely from sound effect. We might even cast musicians to play stringed instruments onstage to provide stark contrast to the live mechanical sounds that would come from practical noises created by set pieces and actors. Heidi Flemming, the set designer, offered ideas of an all-metal set from which individual pieces—beds, chairs, desks, switchboards—would produce a symphony of noise, like a living machine. I agreed with Flemming’s ideas, knowing that there are hundreds of string quartet tributes to popular artists that can be easily contrasted with the current electronic versions in addition to the infinite realm of Classical music that has the ability to evoke high emotional response. We could attack the senses of both actors and audience by reeling them in with a beautiful solo violin caprice, and then crush their nostalgia with a rivet or disturbing crank, satisfying the auditory experience of the “lily in a meat-grinder.”

In the midst of these discussions, we also agreed that since the focus of the aural world would be on stringed and mechanical instruments, the use of a live band would be eliminated. At this point, we were still considering a live solo string player, if one became available within the cast or those who auditioned, but we wouldn’t rely on this need, since most of the musical tracks would be pre-recorded. This led into a discussion between the director and myself regarding my role in this design process since I was becoming more of a “sound designer” for the piece. This would increase my amount of my responsibilities and having this role would take up a more considerable amount of my time. I didn’t mind this promotion because: A. I was so passionate about the material, B. The music would have to be created by editing a multitude of

tracks together—a skill that I had with sound editing, and C. the appointed “sound designer” had a number of outside obligations. We agreed that I would create the music tracks by editing sound bytes together of chosen stringed tracks with electronic and mechanical music; the faculty sound designer would do all of the technical work. I had no experience with the program SFX® (See List of Music Terms), the computer program into which cues are written and also runs the sound for the show; nor had I ever worked with technical sound sources, including the set-up of speakers and equipment. As of mid-November, my title changed from “Musical Consultant” to “Associate Sound Designer.”

When the decision was made that live music would be minimal or non-existent, I had the inspiration to attack the audience’s senses through the equipment sounds. I tried to create a physical auditory experience in the space using the help of the show’s set designer, Heidi Flemming. *Machinal* was to be staged in our “Black Box” Theater, which seats about seventy patrons and is the smaller of the university’s two spaces. As the set designer further developed the design into a two story metal machine with pipes, grating, and mechanical surprises from every angle, I considered the idea of diverting from the conventional sound design of placing the sound source (speakers) above the audience in a cluster, and placing them within the set and around the audience. Martin Wooten, a faculty collaborator, agreed that we could place subwoofer speakers underneath the audience as well as practical smaller speakers in the set. Additionally, the props master and I agreed to find materials that could make audible noises; things that could be banged, dropped, clinked, and clanked. The aural world started to erupt into a combination of music from every direction, live “pings” and “pangs”, spoken word serving as the verbal orchestra, and additional sounds from the industrial world outside of the theatre’s walls.

Treadwell's script also calls for voiceovers. The origin of these voices was discussed throughout the rehearsal process: Who is actually speaking? Should the voices be live? Are the voices coming from the machine or from Helen's own mind? It was agreed that the voices would be pre-recorded primarily because each time that they were heard, they would signify some other origin. It was determined that Professor Wooton would record the actors cast from the piece and I would edit the voices into the sound bytes that we needed. The timing and placement of these vocal recordings would all be specified and perfected in tech, when we could designate a specific speaker, or set of speakers, from which the voice(s) would come from.

Casting

Auditions were held for the Spring shows, *Machinal* and *Parade*, a musical by Jason Robert Brown, during the second week of November, 2007. I was already a member of the *Machinal* production team, but it had been agreed upon between both shows' directors and my program advisor that this position would have no affect, positive or negative, on my casting. Wherever I was cast would determine the time management of both this job and that of my work onstage. I was cast in *Machinal* as "Woman Two". This casting as "Woman Two" would mean that I would play the "Stenographer" in Episode One, the "Mother" in Episodes Two and Nine, and the "Waitress" (a non-speaking role) in Episode Five. In the script, there are mere indications of characters, which could presumably require a cast of thirty-one. There are thirty-one characters in the show. However, Professor Listengarten and the assistant director condensed the cast to ten people to cover thirty-one roles, and one of those actors—playing Helen—would play that role only, leaving the other nine actors to cover thirty roles. The creation of these tracks were done with great care, as I sat through many of the discussions of how each track possessed a through-line from character to character. A "track" in the world of

acting is a term that refers to the grouping of numerous characters that one actor plays. For example, my acting “track” included three female roles: the mother, stenographer, and waitress. These tracks were created long before casting so that actors could be seen in different roles and still fit into their appropriate track. The casting and creation of these tracks would affect the costumes, the unification between characters, the, lighting, and musical choices.

Of the cast of ten, half were graduate students and the other half, upper classmen from the undergraduate program. Four of the five graduate students (including myself) had been classmates for almost two years and were very comfortable in a rehearsal room with each other. We could feel other actors’ vocal rhythms and patterns of movement and read each other’s instincts. All of the other cast members had worked with one or many of us before. Professor Listengarten assembled a seasoned and trained group of actors who were ready to not only take risks and explore in the rehearsal space, but who would be willing to have open-ended discussions about the piece and what we would try to say with it.

I now had two roles to play in *Machinal*. My role on the production team was growing larger by the day, as the sound and music became more important to our concept of the piece. Now that I had been chosen as a member of the cast while also maintaining a full-time graduate student schedule during the day, many questions began to arise. Will my preparation as an actor for this show suffer as I delve deeper into the research for and creation of the music? Will my coursework and grades suffer as my time to do work outside of class due to rehearsal obligations becomes minimal? Will my stress levels be raised to a point that begins to affect my colleagues and my relationships with them? Four cast members were my classmates as well. We would be spending up to three or four hours a day in class together, then moving into the rehearsal and performance space. During this semester, I would also be teaching a university class on Stage

Speech and Voice to BA Theatre majors at eight o'clock in the morning, three days a week. Positively thinking, how were all of these activities and experiences going to enrich each other? What could I bring from one studio to the next? All of these questions would be answered in the following months; some to my delight and some to my dismay. I eagerly accepted both "roles" knowing that I would be able to manage my time. I knew that although there would be stressful moments, I could use my free time during the month of December, before we began rehearsals, to prepare as much as possible by memorizing my lines as an actor and compiling options of music as an "associate sound designer." Director Julia Listengarten said, when interviewed a few months after our production process, "For your personality, multitasking is something that inspires you, that pushes you as a person, so that you're not bored; whereas, someone else who would try to multi-task would fall apart" (APPENDIX B). Her confidence empowered me to move ahead with my preparation.

CHAPTER THREE: GRINDING THROUGH THE GEARS: PROCESS

Preparation as a Sound Designer

In the preliminary design sessions, the production team settled on stringed instruments to serve as the metaphoric representation of the character of Helen, known as “The Young Woman” in Treadwell’s *Machinal*. With this in mind, I explored pieces from my favorite collection of stringed music: *The Vitamin String Quartet’s Tribute to Radiohead*. Radiohead is the name of an “indie rock” (See List of Music Terms) band that emerged onto the American music scene in the 1990s, whose music features the use of both acoustic instruments and electronic sounds. Their music is characterized by dissonant chords (often voiced close together), with mostly slower tempos in minor keys. The Vitamin String Quartet is a music group that re-arranges the music of popular artists and records them using only stringed instruments. They explore numerous techniques that use their stringed instruments to compensate for the family of instruments featured in the “original” versions of Radiohead’s music. For example, to replicate a moment in the original music that contains a large use of percussion and staccato dynamics (See List of Music Terms), the cellist executes sharp pizzicato (See List of Music Terms) strikes to his strings while the violinist plays the legato vocal lines (See List of Music Terms). This music is lovely because it evokes high emotional response, inherent in both the natural vibrations of stringed instruments and the dissonant harmonies of Radiohead’s music.

Initial Sound Design Presentation

I presented my first sound design example at a production meeting on Wednesday, October 4th, 2007. This meeting occurred before casting and before any sound design decisions were confirmed. It was the first time I shared musical ideas with the production team in anticipation of their approval. Using an audio editing program called GarageBand®, I

electronically superimposed the following tracks, one atop the other: Radiohead’s “Ideoteque” and Vitamin String Quartet’s “Ideoteque”. The concept was that the two songs were competing with each other, the string version representing the character Helen’s purity and grace, and the original Radiohead version representing the “Machine” that exists in the world of the play.

The following is a sample of the original Radiohead version:

“Ideoteque” by Radiohead

Media 1 “Ideoteque,” Radiohead

The following is a sample of the String Quartet Tribute version:

“Ideoteque” by Vitamin String Quartet

Media 2: “Ideoteque,” Vitamin String Quartet Tribute to Radiohead

The following is my combination of the two, which I presented at the second design meeting for *Machinal*.

“Ideoteque” combination

Media 3: Amanda Wansa’s combination of Radiohead’s “Ideoteque” and Vitamin String Quartet’s “Ideoteque”

The production team approved of the sample that I created (featured above) and its aural representation of the aforementioned concept of the battle between Helen and the “Machine.” A discussion began among designers regarding the different genres of music I could research in order to find the mechanical sounds to represent this play’s machine. The genres of “techno” and “electronic” music (See List of Music Terms) were suggested by production team members. I explored and sampled other string quartet tributes to popular music artists, in particular, those artists whose music contained electronic elements.

Further Research and Creation of Tracks

Throughout the months of October, November, and December of 2007, I devoted time to searching for music samples using all of the music resources to which I had access: the university library, my personal audio music library, the internet, music search engines such as iTunes® and the music libraries of colleagues. I searched for music with stringed instruments as well as electronic music. I searched for music that I could combine or distort, all the while keeping the script of the play in mind and the emotional moments that needed to be highlighted through the support of music. I discovered a band called Massive Attack. Like Radiohead, the music of Massive Attack uses electronic percussion sounds and dissonant chord structures to create a dark tone to their pieces. I also discovered *The Vitamin String Quartet Tribute to Massive Attack*. It paralleled my discoveries with Radiohead and the corresponding string versions of their music.

The following is another audio example I presented to the production team in November of 2007. I created it with GarageBand® by layering an Astor Piazzolla tango (played by renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma) with a techno remix of a song called “Mental Strength.”

[Combination of “Le Grande Tango” and “Hollywood Edge”](#)

Media 4: Amanda Wansa’s combination of “Le Grande Tango” and *Hollywood Edge* sound effects

The rhythms of the two separate tracks in this audio sample do match in terms of syncopation and rhythmic harmony. That was the intent. I wasn’t setting music to specific scene transitions from the play at that point in the process, but instead creating a set of samples to present to Professor Listengarten as general sound design concepts. I was using this preparation time to compile a vast list of music samples to refer to throughout my process. My list of potential selections ranged from Bach cello suites to sound effects of ratchets and air drills. The list also included a collection of Bach cello suites, performed by Yo-Yo Ma; a collection of

Brahms Piano Quartets, performed by Isaac Stern, Leonard Rose, and Eugene Istomin; a collection of solo violin works of Luciano Berio from an album entitled, *Duetti, etc.*; a collection of Paganini Caprices, performed by Itzhak Perlman; Astor Piazzolla tangos, performed by Yo-Yo Ma; the String Quartet Tribute to Radiohead, the String Quartet to Massive Attack, a collection of re-mixed (See List of Music Terms) jazz pieces from an album entitled *Re: Jazz, Re: Mix*, a collection of John Coltrane jazz pieces, Radiohead and Massive Attack albums, as well as a collection of sound effects from a large compilation called *Hollywood Edge*. *Hollywood Edge* is a set of one hundred compact discs with thousands of sound effects that range from single door slams to six-minute tracks of ambient noise that replicates the auditory world of a busy hospital. I discovered factory sounds within this compilation, which I decided could be used not only as practical sound effects in the show, but also as percussive instrumentation I could layer with other sound effects and instrumental music to create underscoring audio tracks and scene transition music.

The following is a sample of my first attempt to meld a solo violin piece with mechanical sounds that I meticulously merged electronically. I attempted to edit sound effects, and, using fading techniques, place them at appropriate moments to correspond with the rhythm of the violin piece and sound as if one is listening to one recording, not two layered atop one another. The violin piece is an excerpt from a Luciano Berio violin solo piece entitled “Rivi” and the electronic sounds are excerpts from a piece of “electronic noise” called “Piece Electroique”:

Combination “Mental Strength” and “Rivi”

Media 5: Amanda Wansa’s combination of “Mental Strength” and “Rivi”

This sample exemplifies the beginning of my journey as a student of sound design. I edited pieces of sound with an unorganized manner, justifying my choices with the idea of

adhering to an Expressionist ideal of the sounds occurring in a random manner. I discovered that the creation of these tracks would require more specific editing. By listening to the samples of string music that I compiled, I found I could improve my editing skills by increasing my level of articulation so that the music that would satisfy the style of the piece as well as create a sound pleasing to the listener.

At that point in the process, after making attempts at audio editing, I had not only made improvements on my skills, but also began to understand what kind of audio tracks the director preferred. I studied the script, looking for every moment where music might be appropriate, made note of those moments in the script, and compiled a list of possible sound bytes to support those moments.

Creating a Sound Plot

The following chart is the first document I created to plan the music selections for *Machinal*:

Table 1: Preliminary Music Breakdown, *Machinal*, UCF Conservatory Theater

Location	Format	Style/Description	Notes
Pre-Show	Tracks	Viola/Mechanical	
Into Ep. 1	Tracks/Live sounds from actors	Viola-Mechanical-Live sounds	
Out of Ep. 1 – Into Ep. 2	Pure track into modified radio track	Viola under monologue into distortion from “radio”	Should come from a sound source in set (from “radio”)
*Ep. 2	Track (radio), Live voices	Strings (distorted), voices	Voices, as indicated in script; Perhaps the entire scene is underscored, bringing up music at the end for transition
Ep. 2 into Ep. 3	Track (pure)	Strings	Abrupt cut of music upon 1 st lines or actor cue
*Ep. 3	Track (radio)	Strings/Mechanical	*perhaps husband turns on music during scene and comes up for transition
Ep.3 into Ep. 4	Track	Mechanical into live sounds	*live sounds from actors for hospital
*Ep. 4	Track and Live sounds	Mechanical	*Sounds come in under Helen’s monologue (p. 30-31)
Ep. 4 into Ep. 5	Track (juke box)	Mechanical to Violin	
Ep. 5	Tracks (juke box)	Various	Characters will physically ‘change’ the music in the bar
Ep. 5-Ep.6	Live Music	Viola (Cielito Lindo)	Waitress will play live
Ep.6	Track (possibly recorded live)	Viola (Cielito Lindo)	Theme will reoccur when Man teaches Helen song
Ep. 6 to Ep. 7	Track	Viola – Mechanical	Viola will distort and be abruptly cut upon dialogue
Ep. 7 to Ep. 8	Track/Live or recorded	Viola and voices to Voices and Mechanical	Cacophony of sound; some live, some recorded
Ep. 8 to Ep. 9	Track, Live Voices	Aggressive strings, voices	Music/voices build and fade into solely Priest’s voice.
Out of Ep. 9	Track, Live Voices	Mechanical, String, Voices	Cacophony into last line.

The first column indicates where in the script the sound cue would occur. The script of *Machinal* is broken down into “Episodes,” not scenes. Therefore, “Ep.2 into Ep.3” indicates the scene transition from Episode Two into Episode Three (or the second scene into the third scene). The second column indicates the type of sound cue—more specifically, if the sound was going to be a “track,” or pre-recorded piece of music, live voices, indicated by dialogue in the script, or live music, played by a musician or actor-musician. In the column, “Styles/Description”, I indicated whether the cue called for a musical or mechanical track. The fourth column indicates notes I took regarding the sound samples, indicating primarily where they could start, stop,

increase or decrease in volume, or simple notes on the kind of tracks that I would want to use. I used this chart to prepare for the rehearsal process, during which I would narrow my selections for each audio cue by consulting with Professor Listengarten and the actors on what kind of sounds or music would best fit each transition. As I was also an actor cast in the show, the idea of choosing every single music cue was exciting to me because different music choices, that I had the power to choose, would inform my emotions as a character. I had the power to choose what music would be most effective in the process. I anticipated a hindrance might be that while in rehearsal as an actor I would be distracted by the technical needs of the scene, inhibiting my freedom to focus on my acting. I would find this to be a challenge in my preparation and rehearsal process.

Preparation as an Actor

Due to my commitments to the musical production of this play, I had completed a great deal of research about *Machinal*, Sophie Treadwell, and Expressionism; therefore, when I entered the process as an actor, I had a deeper understanding of the piece as a whole from a sound designer's point of view. I had been cast in the following roles: the Stenographer of Episode One, the Mother of Episode Two and Nine, and the Waitress of Episode Five. In her book *Expressionism and Modernism in America*, Julia A. Walker states that the other characters who populate Helen's world are "types" that exist to define her relation to the rest of the world and the structures that they represent, be it the institution of marriage (George H. Jones), the obligation to parental care (the Mother), or the mundane civility of the business world, as exemplified by all other characters in the office of Episode One, the hospital of Episode Four, the courtroom of Episode Eight, and the prison of Episode Nine (Walker 47). I immediately began my process as an actor by "scoring" my script: identifying acting beats, assigning objectives to

each line of dialogue and action, and building attributes for my characters based on the clues within the text. My graduate acting training at UCF has provided me with a wide range of techniques, full of a vast number of ways with which to approach a text and create a character, from the vocal scoring techniques of Arthur Lessac to the guided principles of movement based on the teachings of Jacques Lecoq in movement training. This part of the process was particularly exciting for me, for I was able to abandon the intellectual side of research that I had to reference for my sound design process and utilize the tools that I had been learning on a daily basis in the classroom.

Using a combination of techniques, I took my script and analyzed each page of my characters' dialogues into a chart. I bound my script so that the dialogue would be on the right side of the page and my notes would be on the left. The left page would have three columns: Notes, Objective, and Blocking. Then, as I read through the script, I would draw a horizontal line across both pages to indicate a change in thought, a change in beat, or a change in objective, based on the text and—once in rehearsal—the action.


Notes	Objective	Blocking	Script Excerpt
Refocus - get back to job!	work impress conquer	continue	STENOGRAPHER. Well - pretty near all. TELEPHONE GIRL. What number do you want? Wrong number. Hello - hello - George H. Jones Company. Hello, hello - STENOGRAPHER. Memorandum - situation Mr. Smith - at a conference OK -
	instigate aggrandize self	gives in	ADDING CLERK. 125 - 83 1/4 - 22 - 909 - 34 - 1/8 - 7859. FILING CLERK. Report - R. Sales - S. Trade - T. TELEPHONE GIRL. Shh - I was Mr. J. - P. No. Miss A. she's in yer - I'll tell her, Mr. J. Just the minute she gets in.
	work impress	engage	STENOGRAPHER. She's late again, huh? TELEPHONE GIRL. Out with her swastika last night, huh? FILING CLERK. Hot dog. ADDING CLERK. She ain't got a swastika. STENOGRAPHER. How do you know? ADDING CLERK. I know. FILING CLERK. Hot dog. ADDING CLERK. She lives alone with her mother.
Pattern: 	prove brag	"I do" fantasy in step	TELEPHONE GIRL. Spring 1937? Hello - Spring 1935. Spring 1936. Spring 1937? 18 1/2! Wrong number! Hello! Hello! STENOGRAPHER. Director's meeting room. Please respect card. FILING CLERK. Shipments - Sales - Subscribers - S. ADDING CLERK. She doesn't belong in my office.
	pry gossip manipulate	look!	TELEPHONE GIRL. Who does? STENOGRAPHER. I do. ADDING CLERK. You do it! FILING CLERK. Hot dog! TELEPHONE GIRL. Hello - hello - George H. Jones Company - Hello - hello - STENOGRAPHER. I'm meddler. She's meddler! FILING CLERK. She's in. First. TELEPHONE GIRL. She's got J. got it. STENOGRAPHER. Using TELEPHONE GIRL. Using my setting. FILING CLERK. Hot dog.

Figure 1: Actor Script Excerpt, Episode One

The notes that appear on the furthest right side of the page were made in the rehearsal process when Professor Listengarten discussed with the actors of Episode One the importance of ensemble acting and objective. We actors divided the entire scene into emotional sections that served as a roadmap for each of us. These sections created different atmospheres of work and play within the world of the office scene. This exercise helped the actors to establish when their characters were working in the office and when they were socializing. Visual representation helps me as an actor because I look at my script like a score of music or like notes on a page. The horizontal lines separating the acting beats serve as musical rests (See List of Music Terms) and the columns separate the following categories: objectives, blocking, and other nuances added in the “notes” column.

The following page is an excerpt from my *Machinal* script from Episode Two, in which I portrayed Helen’s Mother:

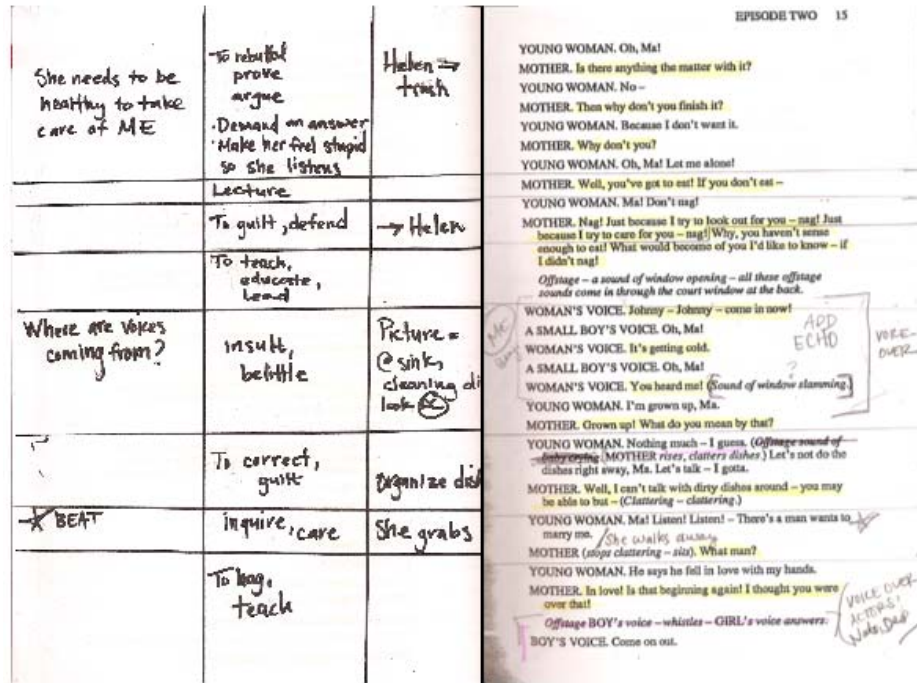


Figure 2: Actor Script Excerpt: Episode Two

In this excerpt there are notes about voice-overs on the furthest right side of the page. These notes are my “sound” notes, which were highlighted in pink, whilst my actor lines and actions were highlighted in yellow. Having a second script as a sound designer for this production proved to be a challenge; therefore, I used a single script with different color markings to indicate “actor” or “sound designer” notes. The following text outlines my journey as a sound designer *and* as an actor by discussing each of the nine Episodes, or scenes.

Episode One: The Office

“Scene: an office: a switchboard, filing cabinet, adding machine, typewriter and table, manifold machine” (Treadwell 1)

The underscore of Episode One calls for “Sounds: office machines: typewriters, adding machine, manifold, telephone bells, buzzers.” I agreed with the set designer and Professor Listengarten that some of these sounds could be created by the four office workers onstage in the

scene—the stenographer, the filing clerk, the adding clerk, and the telephone operator. The set designer in turn agreed to find props that could make audible noises and the director agreed to stage the scene so that the actors would make practical noises with their bodies, props, and set pieces. To add to the ambiance of the scene, I created a track of underscoring to accompany the scene that would create the world of a mundane office workspace:

EPISODE ONE UNDERSCORE

Media 6: Episode One Underscore, *Machinal*, UCF Conservatory Theatre

As the rehearsal process began, Professor Listengarten decided that the underscore would cease upon the entrance of Mr. Jones, the authority figure and boss of the office in which the characters work. It would resume upon his exit, signifying the halting of the “machine” upon his command. Helen, the young woman, would contrast this aural world of jagged edges and sharp tones with her fluid text, and bring humanity and reason to the scene with realistic dialogue.

When rehearsals started, Professor Listengarten made sure that the group of actors in the first scene—portraying the stenographer, adding clerk, filing clerk, and telephone operator—were aware of the significance of the rhythm of the dialogue and the importance of how the four actors needed to work as an ensemble, or a machine. As a sound designer, I provided ambient noise for the underscoring of the entire scene, but it was up to the actors to create the practical noises and create a rhythm to every movement, ranging from the sound of my stenographer’s heeled shoes walking across the floor to the clicks made by my typewriter, attached by a harness to my neck:



Figure 3: Amanda Wansa (The Stenographer), Episode One

In rehearsals, Professor Listengarten indicated that she wanted each character to have a routine of movement that would be repeated throughout the scene. I, as the Stenographer, was assigned to create a path that I repeatedly walked throughout the stage. I could act only within the constraints of that physical path. I had to motivate my character's choice to stay on that path and why my character—whom I named Enid—never strayed from it. The Stenographer is an efficient office worker, constantly threatened by the possibility of a co-worker, namely an aloof one like Helen, challenging her reputation as the most favored worker in the office. Her dialogue is short and sarcastic when speaking socially, droll when speaking in the work environment, reciting aloud her typed information as she marches around the office. Being the sound designer

while being the actor in this role gave me a dual awareness of my aural effect on the work. This was both positive and negative for my rehearsal process. There were many times I had trouble finding motivation for my character's incomplete sentences and repetitive phrases. I also would become frustrated with other actors and their inattentiveness to the aural rhythm of the dialogue. My consciousness as a sound designer interfered with my consciousness as an actor. Likewise, sometimes Professor Listengarten would ask me to be aware of the sound in the scene and make adjustments after its rehearsal run, whilst rehearsing it as an actor. This was often challenging, but I think a wonderful learning experience, for I found that I could not drive the rhythm of the scene as one single actor. I was also improving this fault in daily graduate coursework. I had to separate my sound designer and actor rehearsal processes that I could trust my colleagues as an actor, then be able to emphasize to them, as a sound designer, the significance of the rhythm of the scene and the sounds that they created with their shoes, their voices, their breaths, and their physical actions. The dialogue in this scene and its delivery was extremely important; therefore, the group of actors in this scene practiced these lines daily, even after the production opened, to keep the pace and energy high. The mundane and staccato rhythm of our dialogue produced dramatic contrast with Helen's entrance and vocal habits, having a strong affect on the high-speed office life of the scene. Walker, when discussing *Machinal*, states that "compared to her co-workers, who sort, file, add, subtract, answer, patch, transcribe, and type with hurried efficiency, [Helen] is the antithesis of a Taylorized employee...at once a source for their entertainment and a rival for their advancement, the Young Woman stands outside this office community. Alone, apart, she does not fit the role she has been assigned" (Walker 216). This is reflected in the original sound concept that the fluid sounds of a violin do not fit amongst the clamor of a machine.

During Episode One, Helen’s boss, George H. Jones, proposes marriage to the protagonist, and the Episode ends with Helen directly addressing the audience with a monologue. In the UCF production, the rest of the actors exited the stage; this was the first of three monologues that the character of Helen would convey to the audience in the style of “stream of consciousness.” When one speaks in stream of consciousness, there are no complete sentences, just fragments; similarly, thoughts can jump from one to the other without a connection thought or phrase. This style of speaking creates a mood, and while it may convey important information about the character or plot, the dialogue is rarely directed at a specific character or group of characters. This style of speaking is “thinking aloud.”

For these monologues, I wanted to give Helen underscore to motivate her emotional journey and create the manic mental world in which she lived, trapped the “machine” of the play. Treadwell said, in relation to these monologues, she wanted to create an overpowering stage effect “by accentuation and distortion...and by the quickening of still secret places, in the consciousness of the audience, especially as women” (Dickey 75).

As an actor, I am highly motivated by musical underscore. American society of this generation is primarily familiar with motion pictures as a common form of entertainment, and musical underscoring often aids in provoking emotion. I presented the following pieces to the actress playing Helen during the rehearsal process, so she could rehearse the text with each one and she and Professor Listengarten could choose which I would use.

[Episode One Monologue Option One](#)

Media 7: Option One for Episode One Monologue

[Episode One Monologue Option Two](#)

Media 8: Option Two for Episode One Monologue

[Episode One Monologue Option Three](#)

Media 9: Option Three for Episode One Monologue

I then took Listengarten's preferred track, which had an original running time of two minutes, and electronically layered the same track with itself to create a cacophonous five-minute track to underscore the following text:

“Young Woman: Marry me—wants to marry me—George H. Jones—George H. Jones and Company—Mrs. George H. Jones—Mrs. George H. Jones. Madame—marry—do you take this man to be your wedded husband—I do—to love honor and to love—kisses—no—I can't—George H. Jones—How would you like to marry me—What do you say? —Why Mr. Jones I—“ (Treadwell 11). This text continues for another thirty lines, and was underscored by the following audio:

[Episode One Final Monologue](#)

Media 10: Final Underscore for Episode One Monologue

In an interview conducted with the actress that played Helen—Brittney Rentschler—after the production closed, she said, “my favorite thing was that I was initially very nervous about my long monologues and you came in and played me selections that you had already decided on and narrowed down; let me and Julia listen and asked, ‘which moved you more’ – although it was ultimately Julia’s decision, I felt, as an actor, I was given underscoring that helped me move through a difficult piece of text – I was grateful for that” (APPENDIX A)

The transition into Episode Two, a scene between Helen and her mother, consisted of the audio sampled in Media 10 melded with the sounds of a machine, signifying the transport of Helen from one part of the machine to another: from work to home.

Episode Two: At Home

The scene opens with the Young Woman and her mother holding a mundane conversation about dinner:

YOUNG WOMAN: Ma—I want to talk to you.

MOTHER: Aren't you eating a potato?

YOUNG WOMAN: No.

MOTHER: Why not?

YOUNG WOMAN: I don't want one.

MOTHER: That's no reason. Here! Take one.

YOUNG WOMAN: I don't want it.

MOTHER: Potatoes go with stew—here!

(Treadwell 14)



Figure 4: Amanda Wansa (Mother) and Brittney Rentschler (Helen), Episode Two

Professor Listengarten and I agreed that the transition from Episode One to Two did not need music—the harsh aural juxtaposition of the heavy machines into the silence, and then into

the simple sound of dialogue in the form of short phrases would create a sense of emptiness for Helen. We agreed that this “home” world of hers would lack the Romanticism the play reveals to her later in Episodes Five and Six, upon the introduction of the young man who becomes her lover. This empty aural world would accompany Helen’s Episodes with her husband, George H. Jones: Episodes Three and Six. In her article, “Sophie Treadwell’s Play *Machinal*: Strategies of Reception and Interpretation,” Kornelia Tancheva comments that Helen is “desperately and unsuccessfully trying to escape an environment that reduces everyone else to a mere extension of a machine” (Tancheva 101). Within the scene, offstage voices other than Helen’s and her mother’s are heard—Treadwell inserts a series of vignettes to interject the action of the scene. The origin of the voices is unclear in the text: whether they are actual human voices, coming from adjacent apartments or the world outside of the Helen’s home, or if they are voices in Helen’s head. Professor Listengarten and I agreed this question didn’t need to be answered. It was a question the audience could ponder.

In terms of sound design, Professor Listengarten assigned the voices to very specific actors and we recorded those actors as voice-overs. For example, Professor Listengarten assigned the actress playing the Mother—in this instance, me—along with the actor playing the Husband (George H. Jones) to the following interjection that follows a heated moment in the onstage argument that occurs between Helen and her mother:

YOUNG WOMAN: All women get married, don’t they?

MOTHER: Nonsense!

YOUNG WOMAN: You got married, didn’t you?

MOTHER: Yes, I did!

Offstage voices

WOMAN'S VOICE: Where you going?

MAN'S VOICE: Out.

WOMAN'S VOICE: You were out last night.

MAN'S VOICE: Was I?

WOMAN'S VOICE: You're always going out.

MAN'S VOICE: Am I?

WOMAN'S VOICE: Where you going?

MAN'S VOICE: Out.

End of offstage voices. (Treadwell 16)

The audience would see the characters of Helen and Mother having this conversation about marriage, and then hear the offstage confrontation with the voices of the Mother and George H. Jones. Professor Listengarten and I perceived this might create ambiguity regarding the origin of these voices, which was our intention in setting the voice-overs in this manner. These interjections fit perfectly into the Expressionist style that Treadwell intended when writing the piece. This style calls for elements of distortion and fragmented sequence, often creating a dream-like or nightmarish effect on what seems like or what starts out to be a scene rooted in Naturalism (Dickey 70). Similar to Treadwell's creation of Helen's stream of consciousness monologues, she uses these interjections to appeal to the sub-consciousness of the audience. Treadwell has been praised by her creative attempts to combine European Expressionist style—in this case, the non-linear dialogue changes with these interruptions—with domestic American Realism—the actual two-person scene occurring onstage in this Episode (Dickey 77). Another take on the justification for Treadwell's insertion of these interludes comes from Julia A. Walker in her book, *Expressionism and Modernism in America*: “Treadwell counterpoints the play's

verbal, vocal, and pantomimic languages to express the spiritual disharmony that leads her central character to murder her husband” (Walker 13).

The voices were recorded, and when the company moved into the performance space for technical rehearsals, Professor Listengarten and I set the sound levels so that each conversation would come from a different set of speakers placed in different physical locations on the set.

As an actor, this was my most challenging scene. Due to my awareness of the characters serving as cogs in the machine, I had a difficult time differentiating between the acting moments that lived in Naturalism and those that lived in Expressionism in this scene. We rehearsed it often and Professor Listengarten always had notes on speech patterns of the scene, for it was very difficult to find a rhythm. It seemed as though Treadwell wrote the characters’ lines to sound a specific way, but if delivered in the cold machine-like style, they did not make sense in the world of Realism. I had difficulty during rehearsals trading my sound designer hat (I use the term “hat” to refer to the mindset that I would use at any given moment, often trading between the “hats” of sound designer or actor) and my actor hat, especially when working on this scene. This scene required a large amount of focus and listening skills from both myself and the actress playing Helen. When I was distracted by my awareness of sound design, I became frustrated, and this would divert my focus within the rehearsal. In a post-production interview, I asked the actress playing Helen, “Do you feel that my process as an actor was affected negatively by having another production task?” She replied, “Yes...I do...[I’m thinking] of the time when we were working the mom scene and Julia had asked you a question about sound...I think you had just had a production meeting right before rehearsal...and then Patrick asked you to do something as an actor in the scene or change a choice...the actual words out of your mouth were “I’m sorry I have on another hat right now...I don’t have my acting hat on...” Because you had

so many to wear that I felt that it was frustrating for you to just be an actor and make choices and switch gears so fast...because you had so much else to do. So yes, I would say I saw the frustration and the negative impact it may have had on you in that way” (APPENDIX A).

In retrospect, I am aware that some of these more frustrating rehearsals came to be because I had limited time in one day to attend classes, complete homework for classes, and still edit music for *Machinal*. This sacrificed time that would have been spent devoted to character development as an actor. Rentschler also said, in reference to the negative side of multi-tasking, “This wasn’t your only job because you were a student and teacher and had lots of other responsibilities. If this was the professional world and you were just acting and sound designing, or acting and musical directing, you would have been absolutely fine. I think that would’ve eliminating anything negative about the process because really, the only negative came from the frustration with all the responsibilities that you had all at once” (APPENDIX A).

Treadwell indicates her concept for the transition from Episode Two to Three in the script. Helen and her Mother engage in a heated argument over marriage and Helen’s reluctance to accept George H. Jones’ proposal, when the mother forces her into finishing the dishes—a task they had been accomplishing throughout the scene—and she apologizes to her mother indirectly through allowing to her rest and listen to music:

MOTHER: You’re the flesh of my flesh and—

YOUNG WOMAN: I know, Ma. I know.

MOTHER: And—

YOUNG WOMAN: You rest, now, Ma—you rest—

MOTHER (Struggling): I got to do the dishes.

YOUNG WOMAN: I’ll do the dishes—you listen to the music, Ma—I’ll do the dishes.

(Treadwell 20)

Professor Listengarten and I made an conscious choice to ignore Treadwell’s indication in the script that music should be present underneath this entire scene; an onstage prop radio was added to the scene, and upon Helen’s line, “You listen to the music, Ma,” she turned on this radio to calm her mother down. This decision was made in a rehearsal in which I was serving as the actor in the scene and Professor Listengarten addressed the sound needs of the scene. This was an instance where my dual role as sound designer and actor proved to be helpful. I also noted we would need an onstage practical source for sound in Episode Five at the bar. The set piece that served as a kitchen counter in Episode Two also served as the bar in Episode Five, so a small prop radio was an appropriate addition to the set and a vital piece of information for both scenes so that the music chosen by the sound designer could be justified by the actor—both roles being fulfilled by the same person.

The following audio clip served as the “Mother’s Song” that was layered with mechanical sounds to create the transition into the awkward silence of Episode Three: The Honeymoon.

[TRANSITION FROM EPISODE ONE TO TWO](#)

Media 11: Transition from Episode One to Episode Two

Episode Three: Honeymoon

Episode Three was one of five episodes in which I did not act, thus I was able to focus solely on sound. This fact benefited me in technical rehearsals, when I could devote my time to focusing on the sound and not have to literally run back and forth between the stage and the soundboard.

Episode Three is a scene between Helen and George H. Jones depicting their honeymoon. Awkward in nature, with neither character exhibiting real interest of a romantic involvement, the dialogue consists of trivial, rambling statements from the “Husband” (George H. Jones) and short, emotionally absent remarks from the “Young Woman” (Helen). Although Treadwell indicates in the text a desire for music to underscore this scene, writing, “Sounds: a small jazz band (violin, piano, saxophone—very dim, at first, then louder)” (Treadwell 21) I felt that the mechanical noises should serve only as the transition in and out of the scene. Remaining within the confines of the production team’s discussions in terms of concept, music livens Helen and helped the actress playing that role to use stringed underscore to find comfort. This was evident in Episode One with the monologue underscore. Episode Three is devoid of any positive emotion for Helen, for she is trapped in a different part of the machine, a part separate from her life with her mother or her life with work. Any freedom that Helen finds throughout the course of the play’s journey, supported by the aural experience, must be stifled in Episode Three in order to provide contrast between her moments of content and moments of entrapment. In conclusion, the only sounds associated with Episode Three were the transition of mechanical noises into the scene and the mechanical noises, melded with ambient hospital noises, to transition into Episode Four: the hospital where Helen gives birth to an unwanted daughter.

Episode Four: Maternal

Like Episode Three, Episode Four presents another section of the machine—of Helen’s world—in which she is trapped and that provokes no positive feelings or thoughts from her. I underscored the entire scene with an unsettling combination of hospital sounds that included the low hiss of a respirator and the incessant beeping of a heart monitor. The goal of this sound effect was to provide the ambiance of the scene needed to create the world of a hospital and also make the audience uneasy. Sounds would interrupt the action and be set at audio levels that would interfere with the audience’s ability to hear the dialogue.

The following audio clip is an example of that underscore:

[EPISODE FOUR](#)

Media 12: Episode Four Underscore, *Machinal*, UCF Conservatory Theater

Similar to Episode One, Episode Four ends with another monologue from Helen. I offered Rentschler three pieces of solo violin music to rehearse with to aide in my selection of underscore. Professor Listengarten, Rentschler, and I then chose the most appropriate piece to underscore her Episode Four monologue:

[EPISODE FOUR MONO UNDERSCORE](#)

Media 13: Episode Four Monologue Underscore, *Machinal*, UCF Conservatory Theatre

Media 13 accompanied the following portion of the script:

“Let me alone—let me alone—let me alone—I’ve submitted to enough—I won’t submit to any more—crawl off—crawl off in the dark—Vixen crawled under the bed—way back in the corner under the bed—they were all drowned—puppies don’t go to heaven –[etc]” (Treadwell 30)



Figure 5: Helen in Episode Four

Episode Five: Prohibited

Episode Five is the scene in which Helen is brought to a bar by the Telephone Girl from Episode One, where she meets the “Young Man,” later identified in the play as Richard Roe, with whom she becomes romantically involved with. The bar is inhabited by three groups of people: a young couple, who had conceived a child, discussing the debate of abortion, an older man courting a younger man in a vignette that explores homosexuality and pedophilia, and the conversation between Helen, the Telephone Girl, the Young Man, and his friend “First Man.” Each of these three sets of people was set in their own area on a specific area onstage while the Waiter (played by myself) skulked between, refilling drinks and making non-verbal comment on the action. The focus of the audience had been designed by Treadwell to shift between all three scenes occurring simultaneously onstage, eventually concentrating on the scene between Helen and the Young Man. Treadwell’s script notes indicate, “Sound: Electric piano.” Professor

Listengarten and I had discussed a number of options regarding the music in the scene: first, I could play an instrument onstage. Since Helen's primary instrument had been designated as a stringed instrument, I borrowed a viola from a colleague and started learning how to play the instrument. There is direct reference in the script, in Episode Six, to the playing of the Spanish folk song, "Cielito Lindo," written by Quirino Mendoza y Cortés in the 1800s (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cielito_Lindo). I thought it would serve as an effective transition to have an actor play that song live onstage at the end of Episode Five and then, using a recorded version of "Cielito Lindo," drown out the live instrument for the scene shift. That track would then fade to underscore Episode Six—a romantic interlude between Helen and the Young Man at a speakeasy. I taught myself to play viola and learned "Cielito Lindo."

[CIELITO LINDO](#)

Media 14: "Cielito Lindo," Solista Ensemble De Mexico, *World Music Mexico*

The process of learning a new instrument, especially while continuing to carry a full course load as a graduate student, design the rest of the audio tracks for the show, and continue to prepare as an actor, was both taxing and exciting. Most of my time during the day was dedicated to class work, and my evenings were spent in rehearsal for *Machinal*. I had to learn and practice this instrument in what little time remained. Professor Listengarten expressed, after blocking Episode Five and running the show in rehearsals, that it was awkward to have only one moment of live music in the show. She also established that she wanted an intermission to take place after Episode Five. This transition from live music to recorded music became obsolete and inconsistent with the rest of the aural world created by that point in the process. As a designer, I agreed with her. In spite of the time that I dedicated to learning an instrument, the piece was cut, which was disappointing to me as an actor.

We also ruled out the possibility of playing an on-stage piano due to budget constraints and the impracticality of having a piano as a part of the set. I simplified the entire sound design of the scene by having three instrumental jazz tracks fade into one another, providing the ambiance to support the scene. I committed many hours to exploring options for this small section of the show. In the end, the final design was one that could have been created with only a couple of hours of selecting and editing pre-recorded music. This experience necessitated a compromise between my two jobs, because whatever decisions Professor Listengarten and I made regarding the sound affected one or both of my jobs in positive and negative ways. For the final product, she and I chose the design that was best for the show.

Episode Six: Intimate



Figure 6: Helen (Brittney Rentschler) and Richard Roe (Ryan Garcia)

Episode Six contained the only specific music reference in the entire dialogue of the play. Helen hears music playing outside of the room she occupies with the Man, Richard Roe, and

asks him what's being played. He responds, "Cielito Lindo," a Spanish folk-song that means "Little Heaven." I knew the song and looked for a version that featured stringed instruments. This audio sample (Media 14) served as a recurring theme for the show—a musical motif for Helen's liberation. I used it as a recurring theme in the second half of the show within audio montages of music that. I would distort this track and layer it with multiple pieces to disturb Helen (and the audience) and create an auditory experience that reflected Expressionism.

Episode Six is the only episode where the character of Helen displays attributes of Naturalism. Her sentences are coherent and complete, her thoughts are honest and directed at her scene partner (not to herself or to the audience), and her emotions are evoked logically (Walker 106). The Man is one character with whom Helen chooses to interact with, insinuating that he isn't a part of the machine that she otherwise avoids. The music of this scene consists of the track of "Cielito Lindo" as well "Oteño Porteño"—the piece that I chose to underscore a passionate moment between Helen and her mysterious lover:

WOMAN: Well—goodbye.

MAN: Aren't you forgetting something? (Rises.)

She looks toward him, then throws her head slowly back, lifts her right arm—this gesture that is in so many statues of women—Volupte. He comes out of the shadow, puts his arm around her, and kisses her. Her head and arm go further back—then she brings her arm around with a wide encircling gesture, her hand closes over his head, her fingers spread. Her fingers are protective, clutching. When he releases her, her eyes are shining with tears. She turns away. She looks back at him—and the room—and her eyes fasten on the lily.

WOMAN: Can I have that?

MAN: Sure—why not?

She takes it—goes. As she opens the door, the music is louder.

WOMAN: Goodbye. And—(*hesitates*) And—thank you.

(Treadwell 52)

OTENO CUT

Media 15: Excerpt from “Oteño Porteño,” performed by Eroíca Trio

“Oteño Porteño” is an Astor Piazzolla tango, played by The Eroíca Trio in this recording. I mixed this sample with an assortment of mechanical noises to create the transition that led Helen back to the horror of the machine in Episode Seven: Domestic.

Episode Seven: Domestic

Episode Seven is the scene between Helen and George H. Jones during which the painful redundancy of her loveless marriage drives Helen to murder her husband. It reflects the inciting action of the murder trial of Ruth Snyder (about whom this play is believed to be based). The audio transition leading into this scene consisted of select mechanical noises that fade into the same awkward silence that initiates Episode Three, also a scene between Helen and her husband. The end of this scene presented the most difficult music cue for me to execute. In the scene preceding this one, the Man—also known as the Lover, or Richard Roe—talks about his plans to go to Mexico, his homeland; his words echo in Helen’s head in Episode Seven as she attempts to ignore the ramblings of her husband. On stage, the husband is reading aloud, from the newspaper, a story about a revolution below the Rio Grande, in Mexico. This incites a mental breakdown for Helen, represented by voice-overs indicated in the script. The cacophony of voices culminate in her crying out as the scene shifts to the courtroom scene of her trial for her husband’s murder.

[Husband] resumes reading his paper. YOUNG WOMAN sits, staring ahead of her. The music of the hand organ sounds off very dimly, playing “Cielito Lindo.” Voices begin to sing it—“ay-ay-ay-ay”—and then the words—the music and voices get louder.

THE VOICE OF HER LOVER: They were a bunch of banditos—bandits you know—holding me there—what was I to do—I had to get free—didn’t I? I had to get free—

VOICES: Free—free—free—

LOVER: I filled an empty bottle with small stones—

VOICES: Stones—stones—precious stones—millstones—stones—stones—millstones

LOVER: Just a bottle with small stones.

VOICES: Stones—stones—small stones

LOVER: You only need a bottle with small stones.

VOICES: Stones—stones—small stones—

VOICE OF A HUCKSTER: Stones for sale—stones—stones—small stones—precious stones—

VOICES: Stones—stones—precious stones—

LOVER: Had to get free, didn’t I? Free?

VOICES: Free? Free?

LOVER: Quien sabe? (*Translation: who knows?*) Who knows?

VOICES: Who’d know? Who’d know? Who’d know?

HUCKSTER: Stones—stones—small stones—big stones—millstones—cold stones—head stones—

VOICES: Head stones—head stones—head stones.

The music—the voices—mingle—increase—the YOUNG WOMAN flies from her chair and cries out in terror.

YOUNG WOMAN: Oh! Oh!

(Treadwell 59)

Professor Listengarten and I decided that these voices would be recorded and set as voice-overs. It was clear that these voices were figments of Helen's imagination, but we wanted to create a dream-like effect with this section to make the audience as uncomfortable as possible. As an actor, I wanted to help Rentschler in motivating her need to scream out (and, in the hypothetical world of the play, murder her husband). The more disturbing this sound cue, the more urgent Helen's need to escape this distorted world would be. Additionally, the audience would be able to empathize with her. Much of the documentation regarding the trial of Ruth Snyder discusses her motive and not her guilt. There was no question that she killed her husband; the question was if the motive was self-defense. Snyder pleaded for clemency in the last days leading up to her execution in 1927, but was denied (MacKellar 283). This establishes one of the main controversies of this play: whether or not the audience should empathize with Helen even though she murdered her husband. I recognized this moment as an opportunity for me, as a sound designer, to manipulate the audience's viewpoint regarding the debate that this murder incites. The cue had to create an uncomfortable environment of insanity for the audience, yet make logical sense with the events that had already taken place.

There were four major steps to creating this cue: recording the actors' voices, splicing and editing their voices into individual audio tracks for each spoken phrase, creating a main rehearsal track by layering all the tracks together, and inputting tracks into the theater's playback system in technical rehearsals. One of the key aspects of my sound design revolved around the placement of speakers throughout the theatre; this enabled me to bounce the sound around the space, like a round of whispers.



Figure 7: Set of *Machinal* with indicated speaker locations

I wanted to create the effect of the voices moving or as if each voice was coming from a specific location in the dream-like quality that I desired. Therefore, each spoken line would have to be input into the sound program in the theatre and played through a different set of speakers, with each cue set at a different volume and echo level. However, the “rehearsal track” had to be one audio track with all of the pieces edited together because, in rehearsal, only one sound source – a compact disc playback device – was being used to simulate this cue. Many sound designers would not have taken the time to create that rehearsal track. Had I not created the track, the

actors who spoke the voice-overs would have had to been present for many rehearsals in order to speak their lines aloud. Being an actor and knowing how vital it is to start working with as many technical elements as possible early in the rehearsal process, I created the following track to play in Episode Seven for the dialogue excerpt on page forty-four of this chapter:

[STONES](#)

Media 16: End of Episode Seven Underscore



Figure 8: Helen (Brittney Rentschler) and Husband (Kyle Crowder), Episode Seven

In Media Sample 16, the “Cielito Lindo” theme recurs underneath all of the dialogue, launching Helen into the nightmare that induces her moment of rage upon her husband. The distortion of pitch and tempo also adds to this underlying theme. This theme would recur two more times before the end of the play to remind Helen of the one “Episode” in her journey that symbolized freedom. This transition led into the trial scene of Helen’s husband’s murder.

Episode Eight: The Law



Figure 9: Episode Eight

In Episode Eight, Helen faces trial for the murder of her husband, George H. Jones. I had to create three sets of voice-overs to represent reporters commenting on the trial to the public outside of the courtroom. As with the editing process of the major nightmare cue of Episode Seven, there was a three-part process to creating these cues: recording voices, editing the voices, and layering them into single tracks. This process took a significant amount of time, and scheduling was often dependent on the availability of the other actors and the resident sound designer. Due to scheduling conflicts and time constraints, this aspect of my job became stressful at times.

The final cue of Episode Eight was very similar to that of Episode Seven—a nightmarish sound cue that is heard only in Helen’s head. However, in this episode, the nightmare sequence occurred while the Lawyer for Prosecution read a deposition incriminating Helen to her crime. It is here that the symbolism of “Cielito Lindo” joined with the underscore from Helen’s monologues formed a cacophonous symphony in Helen’s mind as the judge pronounces her

death sentence. Although I was not playing the role of Helen, I put myself in that actress' mindset and picked the combination of tracks that would terrorize this character most: the few pieces in which she found solace and refuge, layered with the unpleasing sounds of the industrial machines:

OUT OF TRIAL

Media 17: Underscore for end of Episode Eight

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION: ...That from the first day we met until I departed for Mexico in the Fall, the said Helen Jones was almost a daily visitor to my room where we continued to—

YOUNG WOMAN: No! No! (*moans.*)

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION: What is it, Mrs. Jones—what is it?

YOUNG WOMAN: Don't read any more! No more!

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION: Why not!

YOUNG WOMAN: I did it! I did it! I did it!

LAWYER FOR PROSECUTION: You confess?

YOUNG WOMAN: Yes, I did it!

LAWYER FOR DEFENSE: I object, your Honor.

JUDGE: You confess you killed your husband?

YOUNG WOMAN: I put him out of the way—yes.

JUDGE: Why?

YOUNG WOMAN: To be free.

JUDGE: To be free? Is that the only reason?

YOUNG WOMAN: Yes.

JUDGE: If you just wanted to be free—why didn't you divorce him?

YOUNG WOMAN: Oh I couldn't do that! I couldn't hurt him like that!

Burst of laughter from all in the court. The YOUNG WOMAN stares out at them, and then seems to go rigid.

(Treadwell 76)

Episode Nine: A Machine

Helen is in prison, where prison guards and barbers prepare her for execution. This is the last phase of Helen's journey; the final chamber of the machine. In his book, *Sophie Treadwell: A Research and Production Sourcebook*, Jerry Dickey discusses the relation of Helen's plight to that of Ruth Snyder and her murder trial. He reviews the different Episodes and identifies them each as "the different phases of life that the woman comes in contact with, and in none of which she finds any place, any peace" (Dickey 73). He describes the last scene as the Young Woman's last attempt to "[plead] with her mother to communicate the details of her life, and the social forces dictating behavior for all women, to her daughter" (Dickey 74). This Episode marked the first return of my character—the Mother—since Episode Five. For most of the second half of the show, I was backstage. In rehearsal, this afforded me time to work on elements of sound and technical needs. However, once the production opened, my duties as sound designer had been fulfilled, and that time was devoted to maintaining my character. When I did re-enter stage as the Mother, I had to do so in a heightened emotional state

Enter the MOTHER. She comes along the passageway and stops before the bars.

YOUNG WOMAN: *(recoiling)* Who's that woman?

JAILER: Your mother.

MATRON: Your mother.

YOUNG WOMAN: She's a stranger—take her away—she's a stranger.

JAILER: She's come to say goodbye to you—

MATRON: To say goodbye

YOUNG WOMAN: But she's never known me—never known me—ever (*To the Mother*). Go away! You're a stranger! Stranger! Stranger! (*Mother turns and starts away. Reaching out her hands to her*) Oh Mother! Mother! (*They embrace through the bars.*)

(Treadwell 81)

Helen and I did not embrace. I entered from an upper platform and this scene, in which my character remained silent but emotionally and physically engaged, occurred with yards of tension separating us. That moment occurred with no underscoring, and that silence was effective in generating an emotional response from the audience.

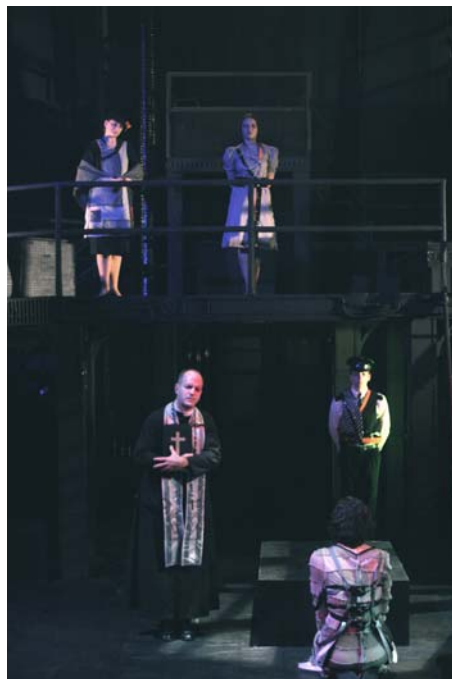


Figure 10: Helen's last moments with her mother, Episode Nine

There are numerous points of Expressionist symbolism in this scene: a Priest reads Helen her last rites, whose prayer we hear as she is led to the execution platform; a pair of barbers enter

and cut off her hair—the last shred of femininity she holds dear even when stripped of her material things and her place in society; a fellow prisoner sings a Negro spiritual—another being to whom Helen relates, condemned and screaming for some kind of salvation; and finally, a set of voice-overs of radio reporters explaining, in fragments, the events of the trial, commenting on the events at hand and having the last word on Helen’s case to the world. The Ruth Snyder case attracted over one hundred and fifty reporters in 1927, creating a “media frenzy,” and caused the story to be documented from multiple viewpoints. My research yielded a photo of Snyder taken at the moment of her death and printed for the public the day afterwards. Seeing this intimate photo published in multiple sources as representation of the case indicates that there was little compassion from the media or support from the public surrounding her case (Dickey 71).



Figure 11: Ruth Snyder, at the moment of her execution, December 17, 1927

The replication of this death scene was important to me as both a sound designer and an actor. I wanted to portray the character appropriately in this scene as a part of the machine—not steal focus from Helen but to serve her as best I could by remaining emotionally available to

her and exploring all of the layers of our characters' potential relationship between Mother and Daughter on the day of execution. As a sound designer, I wanted to encourage the audience to sympathize with Helen, and opened the scene with a mournful Negro spiritual that Treadwell calls for in the script. I ended it with another nightmare sound sequence that combined layers of each "phase" of Helen's journey. This cue included "Cielito Lindo," Helen's monologue underscore tracks from Episodes One and Four, the underscore to her love scene with Richard Roe, and finally, all of the sounds of the machine. The effect was that of an abrasive sound of mechanical crushing as Helen, on her death scaffold, utters, for the last time, "Somebody, some..." A final noise from the machine drowned out her voice and she disappeared in billowing of smoke fog (which created the effect of being incinerated by the machine). The sounds of violins erupted, which symbolized her desire to ascend to heaven. This sound cue took a great deal of time to perfect, for I wanted to create an intense emotional moment that would be different for each audience member. I wanted the audience to empathize with Helen as the legato string instrument underscore motivated her to accept her final journey to the scaffold. I wanted them to be disturbed by being aurally attacked by the sounds of the machine, loudly clanking from the speakers above, behind, and in front of them. I wanted them to become enraged and bothered by the continual interruption of the reporters' voices spouting phrases of ignorance and showing a lack of compassion and emotional connection. Above all, I wanted the audience to understand that they were being immersed into Helen's world of uncomfortable confinement and her desire to find release, which the final sound of the machine would allow them to do. Treadwell said of the final moment of execution, "it is a deliverance bought at the cost of her soul in that it is a machine representing the regulatory forces of oppression" (Walker 230). There are many actions in this story that do not take place onstage: the marriage of George

H. Jones and Helen, the physical relations between Helen and Richard Roe, Helen's interactions with her child, or Helen's time in prison. The scenes that are visible to the audience are specifically chosen by Treadwell to be seen for a reason. It was my responsibility, and the responsibility of fellow designers to make manifest the world that Treadwell created with her dialogue and minimal stage descriptions and directions.

FINAL EPISODE

Media 18: Underscore for the end of Episode Nine



Figure 12: Helen's final moments, Episode Nine



Figure 13: Helen's Execution (visual that corresponds with Media 18), Episode Nine

CHAPTER FOUR: PROBLEMS WITH THE GEARS: PROBLEMS

Learning How to be a Sound Designer

I possess a Bachelors of Arts degree in Music from Florida State University with an emphasis in Voice. This training provided me with tools enabling me to read music, teach music to others, transcribe music by ear, arrange pieces of published music to sound slightly different, and write music for live instruments. Additionally, during the course of my undergraduate studies, I took various music technology courses in which I was introduced to audio editing programs such as GarageBand®, Sony Vegas®, SoundForge®, and Adobe Audition®, as well as music composition programs like Finale® and Sibelius®. These classes featured basic knowledge of programs so that one could further their own education by experimentation and further usage: no more than two weeks were spent with each program. I did not come into the *Machinal* production process having advanced audio editing knowledge or the ability to “write” cues into a sound execution program like SFX®; however, I left with more knowledge than I thought I had the time to obtain.

Initially, I had anticipated that my role in this production process would be “Music Consultant.” I would select music, arrange live music (if needed), teach live music to performers, or perform that music myself. Professor Listengarten and I acknowledged that my expertise in multiple facets of music would enhance the production in a unique way. As time progressed and decisions were made in production meetings, the responsibility of editing pre-recorded music superceded the task of arranging live music. I accepted this responsibility hoping that it would improve the editing skills I possessed; in order to succeed, I would research, experiment, and consult those colleagues with more expertise.

Once the rehearsal process began, Listengarten and I met with the faculty sound designer, Martin Wooten. I acknowledged my limited experience with the technical process of sound design: inputting cues into the theater's system, speaker set-up, adjusting volume levels for multiple sound sources, and anything that would involve a cable, plug, or soundboard with multiple knobs and equalizing faders. Wooten gave me full responsibility to create—through research, selection, and editing—the audio tracks for the show. I would then provide him a compact disk containing the musical tracks for the show; he would then execute all of the aforementioned tasks involved with the creation of the show's aural world. My title changed from "Music Consultant" to "Associate Sound Designer."

Machinal was scheduled to move from the rehearsal space to the theater on Tuesday, February 5th, and begin technical rehearsals, incorporating all technical elements—lights, set, props, and sound—on Friday, February 8th for a February 14th, 2008 opening. Professor Wooten was scheduled to attend an out of town conference Wednesday, February 6th, through Sunday, February 10th. He would miss the scheduled technical rehearsals. At UCF, the technical rehearsal process sets and synchronizes all of the technical elements of the show with the entire cast and crew present over a number of days. Following the technical process, there is a full run of the show with costumes and all technical elements in place. Since Professor Wooten was going to miss the process, he assured me that a student assistant would handle all of his technical responsibilities. This would allow me to remove my sound designer "hat" February 8th and assume full responsibility as an actor.

As February 5th approached, I had not been contacted by Professor Wooten's assistant regarding our review of my sound design and the coordination of entering cues into the theatre's

sound program, SFX®. We were to meet and discuss the numerous sound cues to be entered so she would have an understanding of the auditory needs of the show.

The production team had a “Paper Tech” scheduled for Friday, February 8th. During a “paper tech,” all of the designers meet with stage management and share their design plots so that the stage manager can prepare a prompt book. Once technical elements are added, the stage manager is responsible for calling every cue. In order to be prepared for this process, the sound cues need to be written into the SFX® program whereupon the cue is named by a letter in alphabetical order (for example, “A,” “B,”...”Y,” “Z,” “AA,” “BB,” etc.). The sound designer adjusts the rest of the details in technical rehearsal (volume levels, starting and stopping points, fades, etc.). My sound “plot” for the show is shown on the following page:

Cue #	NAME	CUE LINE/ETC	Pg
A.00	PRESHOW		1
B.00	CURTAIN SPEECH		1
C.00	Prologue		1
D.00	Cross fade: Prologue to Ep 1	Actors in Place	1
E.00	Fade OUT for Jones' entrance	"Going and Coming"	3
F.00	Fade up Ep 1 underscore	"The early worm..."	5
G.00	Fade OUT for Jones' entrance	"That letter done"	10
H.00	Fade up Ep 1 underscore	"he's hewing"	10
I.00	Cross fade Ep 1 under to MONOLOGUE	"do you take..."	11
J.00	MONOLOGUE to Transition to 2	"can I ma?"	12
K.00	Fade OUT Transition to 2	*mom places chair	13
L.00	MA AND SON V.O.	"if I didn't nag"	15
M.00	I CANT V.O.	"I thought you...over that"	15
N.00	GOING OUT V.O.	"yes, I did"	16
O.00	SILLY KISS V.O.	"about all that"	17
P.00	EP 2 Music	Helen hits cart	19
Q.00	Cross Fade to Transition to 3	"if you...craziest..."	20
R.00	Fade OUT Transition to 3	Actors set	21
S.00	Transition to Episode 4	"nothing to cry about" (2)	26
T.00	Fade DOWN Ep 4	Actors set	27
U.00	Cross Fade to MONOLOGUE	"submitted to enough"	30
V.00	Cross Fade to Transition to 5	"there were eight"	31
W.00	Fade DOWN for Ep. 5	"I'm going to beat it"	32
X.00	Cross Fade to "Sentimental Mood"	"thanks, I like these"	35
Y.00	Cross Fade to "Brown Book"	"but are you lover"	40
Z.00	Fade out "Brown Book"	Lover and Helen EXIT	44
AA.00	Cielito Lindo into Intermission	"The usual"	44
AB.00	Cross Fade to Intermission	house lights	44
AC.00	Cross Fade to Cielito Lindo	house to half	45
AD.00	Fade DOWN Cielito Lindo	Actors set	45
AE.00	Fade OUT Cielito Lindo	"little heaven"	46
AF.00	Oteno under Kiss	Helen Drops Jacket	51
AG.00	Fade DOWN Oteno	End of Kiss	52
AH.00	Cross Fade to Transition to 7	Helen's exit	52
AI.00	Fade OUT Transition to 7	Actors set	53
AJ.00	Creepy Cielito	"All Free"	58
AK.00	Voiceovers - on AUTOFOLLOW	"All Free"	58
AL.00	Fade Creepy Cielito	Hit of Judge's gavel	60
AM.00	"The defense sprang..."	Take the witness	61
AN.00	Laughter	"Six years!"	62
AO.00	Laughter	"And what did Mr. Jones"	65
AP.00	"The accused woman"	"All?"	66
AQ.00	"Under the heavy artillery"	No...	73
AR.00	Out of Trial	"in the matter..."	75
AS.00	Laughter	"hurt him like that"	75
AT.00	"I did it, woman cries"	"Courts adjourned"	76
AU.00	Cross Fade Trial to Prison Voice	Desiree crosses D-Center	76
AV.00	Fade Prison Voice	"Stop That Nigga Yellin"	78
AW.00	AIRPLANE	"trust in God"	80
AW.5	FADE OUT AIRPLANE	"hear his engine"	80
AX.00	Final Sequence Music	Guards drag Helen	81
AY.00	Reporter V.O. - TIME	St. Gabriel	82
AZ.00	Reporter VO - LITTLE	Blessed orders of holy...	82
BA.00	Reporter VO - WORK	Pray for us (1)	82
BB.00	Reporter VO - LIPS	"spare us, oh lord"	82
BC.00	Reporter VO - HAIR	"from anger and hatred:"	83
BD.00	Reporter VO - THERE	"thou wouldst pardon us"	83
BE.00	Cross Fade Final Seq. to Final CRASH	Somebody...	83
BF.00	Fade OUT Final CRASH	"Christ have mercy" (2)	83
BG.00	POST-SHOW/CURTAIN CALL	Lights up	83

Figure 14: Sound Cue Plot, *Machinal*, UCF Conservatory Theater, March 2008

In order for this chart to be prepared, cues had to be sketched into SFX®. I had a meeting scheduled with the sound assistant on Wednesday, February 6th to review these cues so that she could enter them into the system. A number of factors made this process frustrating for me: the assistant was thirty minutes late to our meeting, she had never received a copy of the script, and she had no intention of being present for the technical weekend of cue-to-cue rehearsals, nor was she informed that she would be responsible for covering Professor Wooten's responsibilities. Therefore, during that abbreviated meeting, the assistant taught me how to use SFX® so that I could edit the cues myself. By default, I now had to serve as "sound designer" as going to have to wear two hats during the remainder of this process. I feared that my growing responsibilities for the production would further compromise my responsibilities as a full time student. I felt obligated to complete the remainder of the sound design responsibilities so as not to jeopardize the quality of the final product. I took the responsibility and with limited guidance from the sound assistant from time to time, I entered all of the sound cues into SFX® and set volume levels. This process took a number of hours during the technical process that detracted from my preparation as an actor.

Technical Rehearsals

The first technical rehearsal, a "dry tech" rehearsal (running technical elements without actors), occurred on Saturday, February 9th beginning at nine o'clock in the morning. The production crew was scheduled to run through technical elements in preparation for the full "Cue-to-cue" process with actors at one o'clock in the afternoon. I arrived at the theater, after having stayed at the theatre late the night before perfecting the sound levels of cues and editing fades, to find that all of the edits that I had made were not appearing on the sound board computer. Two of the eight channels (speakers) on the set were not functioning on the set; therefore, all of the volume

levels that I had set had not been saved. The hours of preparation were for naught and I was forced to address the problem during the time I was supposed to be working as an actor. My frustration was great and my patience low. I felt powerless as a student who did not have the knowledge or time to fix the problems single-handedly, nor enough authority to assign the blame on a faculty member or fellow student. The issue was finally resolved, but not without additional time and effort on my part.

During the Tuesday night dress rehearsal, the sound levels were not executed as I had programmed them. I was acting in the show, so I could not address the problem. It was determined after the rehearsal there was a problem with the sound system; Professor Wooten's solution was to replace the entire soundboard. I would now have to come to the theatre prior to the final dress rehearsal and adjust the audio levels for the third time. I completed the process with just enough time to "switch hats" and prepare as an actor for the rehearsal. The accumulative effect of challenges began to have a negative effect on my attitude on and off stage. I learned to exercise patience and understanding for the schedules and priorities of others so that I could complete my work in a professional manner.

I spent the majority of technical rehearsals splitting my time between my acting work editing sound cues. Simultaneously, I would work on class-work in what time remained. Brittney Rentschler commented on these moments in a post-production interview that I held with her regarding the process. I asked her to discuss how the positive and negative effects of my to multi-tasking affected her to which she replied, "I think the negative time—just like anytime you're working with an actor and they get frustrated—its hard to figure out how to navigate through...its like driving a stick-shift and you're not sure how to switch the gears yet...it was a little bumpy...there were good and bad sides to it. For example, something went wrong in dress

rehearsal and you would have to leave the stage, go up to the sound board in costume, and fix something as “Mom”, then come back and have to jump right back into the scene” (APPENDIX A). Professor Listengarten also commented on this stressful time when describing the effectiveness of my process: “As an actor...once we got to tech week I think it got a little crazy when you were torn because the technical elements – support – wasn’t there and that forced you to work extra hard. I guess what happened – which we could’ve predicted, could’ve not – was that we should’ve anticipated this knowing the other people involved. We should have come up with a more stricter schedule going into tech...maybe having an assistant who was more read on the material” (APPENDIX B). The preceding comment addressed my concerns and formulated potential solutions to future challenges that I might face. Both Professor Listengarten and Rentschler expressed their complete confidence on my ability to multi-task, but concern for placing that amount of responsibility on one person, regardless of level of ability. Professor Listengarten emphasized, “What I learned about this experience was that there has to be more confidence in schedules, attention to detail, proper assistance – or a competent assistant who is more part of the process, not just part of the tech process – so that when you have to be onstage, you have to be onstage; therefore, whatever negotiations took place, they would take place after rehearsal and we could hypothetically stay after and talk so you can put on your sound designer hat” (APPENDIX B).

The question is not whether or not one is capable of multi-tasking, it is whether or not he or she is capable of establishing boundaries of responsibility and delegating responsibilities to others when necessary. The technical rehearsals of *Machinal* illuminated the necessity for serious consideration of time management. I neglected to give myself ample time in order to complete the multiple tasks at hand. I neglected to consider my emotional health and patience,

for the drive to complete every task (ranging from line memorization to the perfection of audio levels) became a higher priority than matters of personal need. As my patience diminished, so too did my level of confidence in the quality of my work, thereby causing me to question my desire to participate in the theatrical process. In spite of my concerns, the audience response to the product was more positive than I could've anticipated.

CHAPTER FIVE: FACTORY UP AND RUNNING: PRODUCT

After working on *Machinal* as a sound designer for four months and as an actor for two months, I faced the inevitable opening night on Thursday, February 14th, 2008. The performance was sold out and audience response was overwhelmingly. I felt more nervous as a sound designer than as an actor on that night. I felt that I had control of my world as an actor, yet had no control over what was happening with the sound equipment and the execution of cues. As the run progressed, I accepted that I had completed my job as sound designer, while the responsibility as an actor was the sole task at hand. The production was reviewed by a respondent as a part of the Kennedy Center American Collegiate Theatre Festival (KCACTF): a competition in which university professors visit and respond to other university productions. There is a feedback session between the respondent, actors, and production team that results in a written response. It was gratifying to hear the respondent's positive feedback regarding the sound design that I had worked so hard to create:

“I must start with Amanda Wansa's sound design. Amanda was also an actress in the show, and composed one of the most thrilling, enchanting, haunting, and unsettling scores for a play that I have ever heard. During the talkback I had the chance to interview Amanda and discover some of her trade secrets, all of which indicated that this young woman had spent just as many hours researching, composing, and digitally editing this score as she did researching and rehearsing her characters, if not more. From my entrance into the theatre, I was floored by the sound design. After seating myself, I was impressed by the use of music incorporating stringed instruments such as the cello and violin which were playing songs with a slight enough dissonance to inform the audience member that these were not classical pieces, but modern ones. I later found out from Amanda that the music was taken from string quartet tribute albums and I

absolutely adored how the tension inherent in the playing of stringed music symbolically represented the struggle that was about to take place on stage. The pre-show music did not allow the audience to relax into their seats and become complacent, it kept a dark and sinister edge that was not threatening, but not lulling either. The sound design continued through the use of effects played consistently, loudly, and repetitiously throughout each scene, but never all throughout each scene. Sounds of gears, bells, whistles, etc.; all very mechanical, were put forth from speakers in the rafters, on the set, and, much to my delight, under the audience and in the house as well, which brought the Artaudian experience home very well. The music throughout each scene was effective and kept the tenor that it did during the pre-show throughout, always subtly foreshadowing things and events to come, but never lulling and never threatening” (APPENDIX F).

There was only one review published of *Machinal*, and although the article was a mere four hundred and fifty-five words, my work as a sound designer was acknowledged: “This creepy, claustrophobic show relies on fascist fashion and a cold industrial soundtrack to emphasize Helen’s despair. She seeks freedom, but that requires a bit of cash, and all she collects as we go along is more and more baggage...“Machinal” is a meaty, thought provoking drama..” (APPENDIX G)

The reviewer acknowledged my work as an actor, in a statement that served as testament that I fulfilled my role in the show: “The word ‘stifled’ comes up more than once, and both [Helen’s] husband and her mother (Amanda Wansa) are the types that can praise you in one breath, and make you feel like used whale poop in the next” (<http://blogs.ink19.com/archikulture/2008/02/18/machinal>). I was recognized more for my “offstage efforts” as a sound designer than as my more visible role “onstage” as an actor.

Receiving positive recognition as a sound designer was more satisfying than many compliments of positive feedback regarding my work as an actor.

The closing of this show was bittersweet. The process was stressful, yet *Machinal* contains material that resonates with me. By opening night, I had learned how to use two new computer programs effectively and had learned many lessons about time management when take on multiple roles in the future. There were many occasions during this production process when a task was requested of me beyond the scope of my original responsibilities. My goal was to be efficient and professional at all time; having a constant desire to impress my colleagues and professors often had a negative on my daily demeanor. In a professional situation, one's reputation as a working artist can be affected by one or two incidences. A positive or negative experience can sway the opinions of others' opinions of ones' level of professionalism. At the outset of the *Machinal* process, I thought that merely having the skill sets needed to complete the tasks—the ability to choose and edit audio tracks, create a soundtrack, and create a character onstage simultaneously—was going to create a predictable process with a positive outcome. By the end of the process, I realized that the improvement of one's relationship and management skills might be tantamount to development of practical skills.

SECTION TWO: URINETOWN

CHAPTER SIX: TOO MUCH EXPOSITION: PREPARATION

In November of 2007, my third semester of graduate school, Professor Brotherton called me into his office from the hallway. I had worked with Professor Brotherton, a faculty member at the UCF Conservatory Theatre, the previous summer as an actor and a music director and we had built a stable working relationship. Professor Brotherton, who adorns an excited glow when his artistic wheels start to turn, frantically motioned for me to come in, close the door, and sit to hear a proposition. He asked, “Have you heard of the musical, *Urinetown*?” “Have I *heard* of it?” I replied. Not only had I *heard* of this satirical blockbuster that made Broadway history in 2001, featuring a libretto full of political satire and a complex score to match, but I had been a big fan of. He shared with me that *Urinetown* would be UCF’s summer musical and it would be directed by David Lee, the UCF professor who opened dozens of doors for me by casting me upon my arrival two semesters prior. Professor Brotherton offered me the job of vocal director and the coveted role of Penelope Pennywise. I paused with trepidation, for I was well aware of the vocal acrobatics required of the role; not to mention the intense job of music directing a cast of 20-30, then turning around to belt songs as an actor on a daily basis. The job offer would also include music directing and arranging a summer showcase: a job that would require the use of my free time. This would be time that would be devoted to readying my body and voice for the role; also time that would be devoted to much needed sleep throughout the process. However, the financial compensation was high and the show was one that I loved since the moment I heard the cast recording when it came out in 2002. Professor Brotherton also conveyed that my return as a music director would be a pivotal factor in whether he returned as artistic director. I was extremely flattered and honored. There are few shows that I would be so excited to do; few roles

such as Ms. Pennywise that I feel as charged to play; and few scores that have as much excitement as this one for both a singer and a music director.

Research on *Urinetown*

Urinetown: The Musical is a Brechtian-style satire that emerged from the New York Fringe Festival in 1999 and opened on Broadway in 2001. It was slated to open on September 13th, 2001—two days after terrorists flew two planes in New York’s World Trade Centers and sent the New York theatre scene, and the rest of the country, into a state of chaos. Fortunately, *Urinetown* did go on to “formally” open on Broadway on September 20th, 2008 and starred Nancy Opel as Penelope Pennywise, Jeff McCarthy as Officer Lockstock, Hunter Foster as Bobby Strong, and Jennifer Laura Thompson as Hope Cladwell. It also garnered three Tony Awards ® (with nine nominations), including the award for “Best Book for a Musical” and “Best Original Score of a Musical.” Additionally, it gained nine Drama Desk nominations (“Urinetown”). *Urinetown* is a musical that laughs at itself for being a musical. In every scene, there are references both in the spoken lines of the libretto and the melodic lines in the score that directly parody other musicals. This musical teases and honors the art of musical theater. It allows the audience to laugh *at* the ridiculous suspensions of disbelief that this art form forces upon them while relishing the tender moments and developing an opinion about the world before them. Mark Hollman and Greg Kotis—the show’s creators—claim that it is also “a grand, ridiculous reflection of the world as we know it to be, complete with rich and poor, the powerful and the powerless, a government controlled by industry and an industry that exists apart from and above us all” (Hollmann XII). UCF production’s director, David Lee, used the term “homage” many times in the rehearsal period. In short, every movement, every word, and every note, became an “homage” to some character, some phrase, or some melodic motif in the grand

canon of what is known as “American Musical Theatre.” According to interviews and resources quoting the show’s creators, that’s how they want it to be interpreted by directors.

While researching *Urinetown* and exploring an extensive array of articles and books on the piece, I kept returning to the libretto of *Urinetown* itself as a main source. The actual book contains a 27-page introduction by Hollmann and Kotis that chronicles the journey of *Urinetown* from an idea that Hollmann conjured (while waiting in line to use a public bathroom in Europe) to the Broadway opening that almost did not happen. As a theatre artist who was just starting her professional career when the creation of *Urinetown* was happening, I had no idea the amount of trepidation that the creators had in finding a way to get this musical produced. In a musical theatre age of revivals and shows that re-create movies and known stories, an *original* musical, or even original *idea* of a musical is rare and often hard to market, even to eager theatre producers. As a composer, even my ideas are often based on a story already told. But *Urinetown* presents a unique story with characters never heard of before. Each character parodies archetypes of previously created characters, but as Hollmann and Kotis would ask in this day and age, “what character wouldn’t?” They claim that nothing is really original, as do their support system of artists, the Neo-Futurists.

Mark Hollmann and Greg Kotis started working together in the late 1980s with a group in Chicago called the Cardiff Giant Theatre Company. With improvisation as the cornerstone, the Cardiff Giant Theatre Company had an ensemble of theatre artists who would build full-length shows, both musical and non-musical, as well as produce weekly improvisational shows in the greater Chicago area. After Kotis and Hollman parted ways, Kotis—who would become *Urinetown*’s composer—played for an avant-guard art-rock band called Maestro Subgum, and learned an array of styles, and, more importantly for his composition skills, discovered how to

create music to comment on a spectrum of issues. He claims that playing with this band “broadened his viewpoint,” forcing him to reference topics of foreign and sometimes uncomfortable nature (Hollmann XXIX). Learning about all this only inspired me more as a music director when peeling apart and teaching this piece to my actors. This allowed me to understand what motivated Kotis to take the composition risks that he has with this score. Typically, a composer strives for unity and originality, while Kotis finds unity in the fact that every song is a parody of a specific style, and, in some cases, a specific song or composer. He took a risk in parodying his predecessors by attempting to show his originality through his wit, not necessarily through his ability to come up with new melodic material or styles. Understanding the background of the feel of the music would come into play as a performer in the piece in order to give the material the raw aggressiveness that some of the music requires. This translates into musical dynamics and specificity of language.

While Kotis was developing his avant-guard career, Hollmann had devoted his time to the Chicago group, The Neo-Futurists. These artists served as some of the original actors for *Urinetown*, some of them kept for the Broadway run. Hollmann and Kotis received over one hundred rejection letters from theatres that they had requested to take a chance on producing their show. They were turned down repeatedly and finally found one option—to put the show up at the New York Fringe Festival. After its run at the New York Fringe, the show was marketed to multiple producers. Even when positive word spread, the show was rejected multiple times by power-possessive producers, but eventually found its way to Dodger Theatricals (currently, a successful production company on the Broadway and Off-Broadway scene). Each time the show was mounted, the cast changed. By the time that *Urinetown* opened up on Broadway, the cast was mixed with leading players and unknown actors from the New York theatre scene. What is

relevant from my research is that this show had a journey. This journey started with artists who multi-task and who put this show together with a church organ in a basement, not in a 42nd Street studio with a team of corporate musical arrangers and movie producers orchestrating every move. Some Broadway musicals produced in the twenty-first century develop in that commercially driven way. *Urinetown* came from a crop of artists operate in a unique and stimulating. This was a driving force behind my decision to accept this job offer.

Reviewing the Score of *Urinetown* and the Role of Pennywise

After Professor Brotherton's short meeting with me, I began to study my personal copy of the *Urinetown* score. I did as much research as I could on the piece to examine how much Pennywise is present onstage and if I could physically handle the role while stepping out to vocal direct. Professor Brotherton had assured me I would not be alone on the musical team. He was planning to hire Jason Whitehead as our accompanist and musical director who would lead the band when the show opened. Jason is an artist I trust and with whom I love working, so I knew I would be part of a wonderful team. I also requested that we hire an understudy for me—someone that we could trust to learn the material to step in for rehearsals when I needed to be at the piano or podium to work as a vocal director, and to cover when my vocal fatigue would get the best of me whilst multi-tasking. This request proved to be a valid one even in our early weeks of rehearsal.

I learned there would be faculty hired as guest artists acting onstage and working with us offstage. These specific faculty members were former teachers of mine and would now be under my musical direction. While I might have been intimidated, this prospect excited me because it would be my first opportunity to mold an ensemble of professional actors—seasoned and new—and work alongside these colleagues who had been training me to be a professional for the past

two years. Additionally, I love comedy. I believe everybody has the right to make fun of each other and themselves. But I'm also interested in sending valuable messages to the audience through the art, and, in my opinion, this piece projects a number of messages to its viewers.

After I agreed to work as actor and music director, I had to start my preparation. I asked myself the following questions: Do I start my preparation as a music director or an actor? Will these preparations occur simultaneously? I sat down with my full score, a pencil, and the Original Broadway Cast recording. Before I addressed the “whys” and “hows” of dissecting and learning the musical score, I decided to try the “what.” This allowed me to develop a new love for this piece all over again, and especially to see the words and deceptively complicated harmonies on page while hearing voices live the world through my headphones. It is a helpful tool as a musician or even an actor-singer to take the time to listen to a recording *and* study the sheet music to be immersed in both the audio and visual experience. This process exposes individual performers' decisions, for a musician can see a note on a page and hear a tune from a music playback device and determine if what's coming out of the speaker corresponds with the note on the page. Many notes in the *Urinetown* score don't match the notes sung, or recorded, on the Original Broadway Cast. Rhythmic liberties were certainly taken by Nancy Opel in “It's a Privilege to Pee” while Hunter Foster (Bobby) embellished or deviated completely from the melody in “Run, Freedom, Run.” The “whys” of this observation were brought out in my further research. The original production at the New York Fringe had a “triple threat” at the helm with a director who also choreographed and music directed (Hollmann XVI). Once the show mounted multiple readings and potential workshops with interested producers, it found a home Off-Broadway with Dodger Theatricals and presented a new cast. Hollmann claims that during the preparation for this mounting, “characters were discovered, gags were discovered, the

show was choreographed, orchestrated, and altogether ‘Broadway-fied’ (XXIII). The show went from having one upright piano in a Lower East Side garage at the Fringe to a full orchestra at the Henry Miller theatre. This will change a score—evolve a score to what is seen in the “published” version; some alterations coming from the composer, some from the director or musical director, and some from the original actors.

Keeping these pieces of information in mind after completing my perusal of the score with a “music director” cap on, I metaphorically took it off for a moment and put my “actor” cap on. This exercise would become familiar to me throughout this process, for this was similar to my experience with *Machinal* earlier that year. I went through and made separate copies of my Pennywise music, placed it in a separate divider of my folder, and took out a pencil. As I listened and marked (See List of Music Terms) through vocally, I had the realization that I would be doing what those artists from the original cast have already done to this piece—changing it. There was no way that I could physically sing some of the notes in Pennywise’s “anthem”, *It’s a Privilege to Pee*, multiple times a week, let alone multiple times a day in rehearsal. I took my Pennywise pieces to my voice teacher and she recommended I change it and re-iterate to the director and artistic director that I would not, under any circumstance, accept this role without reserving the right to change, to re-notate, some of the notes that Pennywise sings. I would do so using my musical skill so that only a select few audience members who were familiar with the music would recognize the alterations in the music. I was to also establish that I wouldn’t hide this fact. Later in the process, I extended that option to other actors to establish an environment of fairness.

I was nervous at the idea of beginning a music rehearsal as the music director and establishing that I would be changing my own vocal lines as an actor. This also gave rise to

additional questions: Who would be monitoring the quality of my work? Is the cast going to be resentful that I, their fellow actor, would be giving them vocal notes whilst changing the written score for myself? Can I lead a cast through a four-hour music rehearsal and then perform my Pennywise material? These questions began to plague me. I went immediately to Professor Brotherton and conveyed my concerns. His response was that he would do everything he could to aid in my preparation and make my life as easy as possible so that I could accomplish both jobs. We agreed that we would cast an understudy who would be expected to learn the part and be able to step in during rehearsals so that I could step out and do my second job as Vocal Director. Typically, depending on the director, understudies come from the ensemble of a musical and are expected to become familiar with the part—but rarely is their level of preparedness is tested. It is done as more of a precaution, whereas in this case, an understudy’s competency in the role would be crucial. Professor Brotherton and I further agreed it would be established that the show’s music director, who would serve as rehearsal accompanist and then conductor during the run would also be responsible for giving me notes. As for the notation changes, I was told that my presence onstage was desired and that I would have leisure to adjust the music as I needed to be able to perform the role in a healthy manner. I felt that being honest about my vocal abilities and sharing all of my concerns would be best for everyone, even if it made me uncomfortable to admit that I could not “do it all” with ease. This didn’t take all of the pressure off, for I certainly felt it throughout the process, but it did reassure me I could adjust as an artist and that I wouldn’t face a high level of judgment from Professor Lee or other production team members regarding slight music changes. I agreed to accept the role of Pennywise and to serve as Vocal Director for this production of *Urinetown* and by January 2008 it had been

decided that I would complete both of these tasks the following summer as well as and serve as musical director/arranger for the summer showcase.

Adjusting the Score

Once I had secured the job of playing Pennywise and Vocal Directing, I turned to my voice teacher for assistance. My weekly spring lessons became less about technique and more about how to vocally execute the songs of Pennywise. My focus on preparation would begin as an actor. Then I would tackle the task of preparation as a musical director. First came the task of re-notating “It’s a Privilege to Pee.” Figure 15 is an example of the phrases within the song with which I was not vocally comfortable:

PENNY

pee! The po - li - ti - cians in their wis - dom saw that there should

63

PENNY

be a law. The po - li - ti - cians taxed the toi - lets, and made il - le - gal

69

PENNY

pu - blic ur - i - na - tion, and de - fe - ca - tion.

75

Figure 15: “It’s a Privilege To Pee”, *Urinetown*, mm. 65-79

My vocal health was such that the E-flat 5 in measure 65 was and is completely obtainable but with two restrictions: 1. not in the belt, almost scream-like quality that Ms. Opel of the original cast album executes the note (which is what most familiar listeners are used to hearing) and 2. not multiple times a week, let alone a day (as in rehearsal, when musical lines are sung over and over again in a single rehearsal). This logic continues into the remainder of

the vocal line from measures 65 through 74. The same melodic line of the bridge appears again in measures 137 through 147, as seen on the following page:

135

PENNY
pee! The good Lord made us so we'd piss each day, un - till we

WOMEN
pee! Ah Ah

MEN

Maestoso *mp* *Colla Voce*

141

PENNY
piss a-way! The good Lord made sure that what goes in men must soon come

WOMEN
Ah Ah In men

MEN

Maestoso *ff* *Glissando*

8^{va}

Figure 16: "It's a Privilege to Pee", *Urinetown*, mm. 137 to 145 (Hollman 27)

My vocal teacher and I set out to create an alternative melody line with notes existing in the chords that would reflect the same dramatic intention. We devised this new notation.

Alto

The po - li - ti - cians in their wis dom saw that there should be a law.

A

The po - li - ti - cians taxed the toi - lets and made il - le - gal...

Figure 17: “It’s a Privilege To Pee”, *Urinetown*, re-notated, mm. 65-75

Alto

The good Lord made it so we piss each day, Un-til we piss a-way

A

The good Lord made sure that what goes in men, must soon come out a-gain...

Figure 18: “It’s a Privilege to Pee”, *Urinetown*, re-notated, mm. 137-147

I stated that this would be a “Plan B” notation for the days that I would be vocally tired. Fortunately, as I would learn, my coach suggested that this be “Plan A.” She recommended that I go into rehearsals intending to sing this notation as opposed to the original. Therefore, I would not disappoint the cast and myself on the days that I could not sing the original notation. This fact would be established from the first day of rehearsal to all involved. This idea was justified by the hope that the majority of the audience would be unfamiliar with the original music. If an audience member were to be familiar with the original notation, they would see the re-notation as a creative choice. Similarly, there is a vocal line of Pennywise’s in the sextet, “Why Did I Listen to That Man?” that I felt uncomfortable with producing on a daily basis:

HOPE
PENNY
BOBBY
BARREL
FIPP
LOCK

Ah
Ah

Why did I lis-ten to my heart? I heard its call and made this re-vo-lu-tion start.

There's no trial or ju-ry. No - thing to dis -

Hah hah

THAT'S ONE INTERPRETATION
Tuti A A A A

There's no trial or ju-ry. No - thing to dis -

HOPE
PENNY
BOBBY
BARREL
FIPP
LOCK

Ah
Ah

So let the thronk take up my song, make Clad-well see that he is wrong! Why did I lis - ten to my heart hah, hah, hah, hah, hah.

cuss. Now the law is speak - ing through us. hah hah hah hah hah hah

hah hah

cuss. Now the law is speak - ing through us. hah hah hah hah hah hah

Eb/G Gm C7

Figure 19: Original “Why Did I Listen to that Man”, *Urinetown*, mm. 137-145

This section of music has six vocal lines, and the Pennywise line doubles (See List of Music Terms) the Hope vocal line in measures 137 to 145. As Pennywise, I decided to sing these measures an octave down from what was written. While this created an easier vocal line for me to sing, it also provided middle voicing and more tonal depth to the chords of these measures.

Below is an audio sample of measures 137 through 145 of “Why Did I Listen To That Man” as sung by the Original Broadway Cast (with Nancy Opel as Pennywise). Media 20 is a recording of the same section of measures from the UCF production of *Urinetown*. The difference is almost undistinguishable to one without musical training, but the notation change would allow me to maintain a vocally healthier rehearsal and performance process.

[OBC, “Why Did I Listen”](#)

Media 19: “Why Did I Listen to that Man,” *Urinetown*, Original Broadway Cast

[UCF, “Why Did I Listen”](#)

Media 20: “Why Did I Listen to that Man,” *Urinetown*, UCF Conservatory Theater

The rest of the score would be sung as written. I found that I would only need to change a total of twenty-seven measures throughout the entire score in order to sufficiently vocally survive as an actor whilst vocal directing.

As I continued to prepare for this role as an actor, I found that much of the work that I spent re-notating music would contribute to my preparation as a vocal director. My research on the show would provide general knowledge about the world of the play and the conception of its parts, both musical and non-musical, that could inform both my character as an actor and my molding of the ensemble as a vocal director. This paralleled my process with *Machinal* in that my research for a particular job often informed my alternate position. Much of the research I

found on *Urinetown* was commentary on the origins of the music; additionally, that research was both informative as an actor *and* music director.

Analysis and Comparison of the *Urinetown* Score

By listening to the Original Broadway Cast album of *Urinetown* and examining the score, I began to draw parallels between the styles of songs in *Urinetown* and many other musical theatre pieces. Kotis and Hollman share some of their artistic inspirations in the “Introduction” section of the *Urinetown* libretto. Hollman, in regard to “It’s a Privilege To Pee,” claims, “It was an angry, pained, an unapologetic march in the tradition of Brecht-Weill. There was Ms. Pennywise laying down the law to the downtrodden, screaming the truth as she knew it, an absurdist Brechtian anti-heroine.” (Hollman XIII) Additionally, he comments, “It reminded me of a song from [*The Threepenny Opera*]...the song was “Der Morgenchoral des Peachum” (“The Morning Hymn of Peachum”), Mr. Peachum’s wake-up call to his company of beggars...Weill set with a craftily repetitive melody and droning accompaniment (XXX)”

Hollman states, “Like Ms. Pennywise, Peachum is delivering the message that all is not right in the world, and as he does, we understand that he would rather deliver this message than hear it himself...the stark, unapologetically dim worldview of Peachum helped me believe that Penny’s song was possible. In both cases, it is the singer’s righteous duty to tell the truth as they see it, and to lay down the law, hard” (XXXI). Discovering direct comments from the composer helped my preparation as an actor. Hollman draws a direct parallel to a character that I could study (Peachum) in order to prepare for Pennywise and world that she lives in—a world reflective of the setting of *The Threepenny Opera*. As a music director, I turned to Weill’s musical scores for influences to affect what kind of sound I wanted to mold from my singers.

Hollman continues to explain in his libretto notes that solely using the Weill and Brecht style of music would give him a “limited” palate; therefore, he searched elsewhere for musical inspiration and started to use whatever “seemed appropriate for musically dramatizing” the remaining songs. This led to the expansive interpretation that *Urinetown* score exhibits, commenting on the world of music of multiple genres, not just musical theatre. The inspiration for the Finale of the show, “I See A River”, came from Hollman’s background as a Lutheran church organist. “Run, Freedom, Run” is written in the style of “gospel,” evident through his usage of blocked chords and spaced out harmonies. Hollman claims that he directly referenced musical theatre numbers from *Guys and Dolls* and *The Civil War*. This fact interested me, for I had just completed arranging music for a production of August Wilson’s *The Piano Lesson*; therefore, the gospel and spiritual musical characteristics were fresh in my mind. However, when arranging for *The Piano Lesson*, I never turned to musical theatre pieces of this genre as reference; I turned to actual gospel and spiritual recordings, and there are differences. I had to acknowledge that Hollman’s music is a comment on the musical theatre interpretations of these genres of music. The actors would have to be aware that the music of *Urinetown* comments on other genres. In order to create a very distinct and recognizable sound with “Run, Freedom, Run” and “I See A River,” I referenced the following audio track:

[River Jordan, *The Civil War*](#)

Media 21: Excerpt from “River Jordan”, *The Civil War*, Original Broadway Cast

A part of the preparation process for a music director of a musical consists of finding sound clips to use as examples or as guidelines for molding a type of sound. In rehearsal, I said to actors, “I need a fuller sound from you...more like what you hear in the original recording of ‘Sit Down You’re Rocking the Boat.’ Can you emulate that sound?” These are analogies that I

would be prepared to use if I could not create a sound merely through communicating technical musical terms to the actors.

Both of these pieces (“River” and “Run”) would be ones I anticipated to spend the most rehearsal time on due to their thick harmonies in four and six parts. Both pieces contain *a’capella* sections (See List of Musical Terms) that would require more music rehearsal than others, with an emphasis on blend and balance.

The image shows a musical score for the song "I See a River" from the musical *Urinetown*. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It features three vocal parts: Bobby Cladwell, Others, and Hope. The lyrics are: "We see a riv - er, flow - ing for free - dom, We see a riv - er, just in view." and "You see a riv - er, flow - ing for free - dom, You see a riv - er straight and true." The score includes a piano accompaniment and a bass line. The page number 111 is visible at the bottom left.

Figure 20: “I See a River,” *Urinetown*, mm. 107-114

W Free-dom run a-way!
way!
Free-dom run a-way!
Free-dom run a-way!
That free-dom sun

M
70
Free-dom run a-way!

W
Three - Four!
A tempo
- (that free-dom sun) will shine some day!
Til then, you bet-ter

M
75

W
Run, free-dom, run!

M
run, run-a free-dom run, Free-dom run a-way!

W
Free-dom run a-way!

M
Run free-dom, run, Run, free-dom, run!
Free-dom run a-way,

M
61

W
Free-dom run a-way!
My friends, you have to run, run-a, run-a, run, Free-dom, run-a.

M
66

Figure 21: "Run Freedom Run", *Urinetown*, mm 61-82

As an actor, I would be performing in “I See A River” so I prepared to rely on Jason Whitehead’s ear to maintain the integrity of vocal balance. This would be true for the following songs: “Urinetown”, “Act One Finale”, “We’re Not Sorry”, and “Why Did I Listen to that Man?”

Each song in this score has a unique life and style to it containing many musical theatre references within. “Mister Cladwell,” an homage from the staff of the Urine Good Company to their fearless leader, reflects a classic Follies-esque feel to it. It contains a repetitive pattern in the bass-line, unison vocal lines, and a “cake-walk” finish. This provides stark contrast to “Snuff That Girl,” a direct parody of the song, “Cool,” from *West Side Story*. “Snuff” uses percussive finger-snaps, a whispered vocal quality, and an array of tight, dissonant harmonies that directly parallel Bernstein’s music. These harmonies create a challenge for singers but satisfaction for listeners:

[“Snuff That Girl”, Original Broadway Cast](#)

Media 22: Excerpt from “Snuff That Girl,” *Urinetown*, Original Broadway Cast

[“Cool,” *West Side Story*](#)

Media 23: Excerpt from “Cool,” *West Side Story*, Original Broadway Cast

Note the use of sharp percussion and finger snaps as instrumentation, as well as distinct syncopation of accents. They tend to not fall on the beat but anywhere around it, providing an air of tension and an array of percussive movement options for the choreographer.

Hollman’s “Act One Finale” honors Finales and Act One closing songs from numerous scores of musical theatre, with musical references to *Les Miserables* and *Evita*. Like the act one finale of *Evita*, “A New Argentina”, this finale offers a 12/8 tempo with a march-like feel—more specifically, a specific rhythmic pattern as seen in the following figure:

Handwritten musical score for "A New Argentina" from the musical Evita. The score is written on four systems of staves, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are: "NEW AR-GEN-TI-NA! THE CHAINS OF THE MAS-SES UN-TIED. NEW AR-GEN-TI-NA! THE VOICE OF THE PEOP-LE CAN-NOT BE AND WILL NOT BE AND MUST NOT BE DE-NIED! THERE-A-". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. There are handwritten annotations in the margins, including "TIPS" and "V.S. (to 130)". The page number "141" is written at the bottom center, and "V.S. (to 130)" is written at the bottom right. The copyright notice "ASCAP 12-402" is visible at the bottom left.

120 (ALL:)

121

122

NEW AR-GEN-TI-NA! THE CHAINS OF THE MAS-SES UN-TIED.

TIPS

V.S. (to 130)

123

124

125

NEW AR-GEN-TI-NA! THE VOICE OF THE PEOP-LE CAN-NOT BE AND

V.S. (to 130)

126

127

128 (Percu!)

WILL NOT BE AND MUST NOT BE DE-NIED! THERE-A-

ASCAP 12-402

141

V.S. (to 130)

Figure 22: "A New Argentina", Evita, mm. 86 to 92

Note the resemblance, not only in meter but rhythmic pattern, in *Urinetown*'s "Act One Finale":

wrong. Mis - ter Strong, you and your So - cial - is - tic throng! If the peo - ple pee for free, they'll push the

Tutti
secco

65 8^{va}

CLADWELL

sys - tem to the brink! If to - day there's spil - lage, tell us how to - mor - row till not stink! If it's

68 (8^{va})

you and me now, Mis - ter Strong, which one of us will blink? I say it's you, Mis - ter Strong, for on the

71

Figure 23: "Act One Finale, *Urinetown*, mm. 65-72

Finding the musical parallels with other musical scores allows me, when teaching as a music director, to make analogies and provide reference for my actors so that my vocabulary with them isn't limited to technical terms. Being able to communicate with different terms is like being able to speak different languages with actors. If I would be working with musicians, I would probably use a more technical vocabulary; however, with actors, I prepared to use a more casual form of communication—more empirical than holistic.

The studying of the *Urinetown* score served as a part of my preparation. The process began with casting. The casting of a musical is difficult because the musical director, director, and choreographer have to agree on casting the artists who can sing, dance, and act equally well. Since this would be a professional production, budget would also be an issue. Before auditions, I was informed that each actor's age and seniority level would affect their salary: the younger members of the company would be paid less. This meant that, in order to meet budgetary estimates, I wouldn't be able to cast all of the upperclassmen who potentially had more experience and training. I was prepared to negotiate with our artistic director to find a balance between the more experienced singers and those who the company could afford to hire. This provided a new experience for me: negotiating with a professional director, artistic director, and choreographer over casting; choosing first, second, and third choices; and making sure that I, as a vocal director, would have a sufficient blend of voices for each voice part to create my ensemble.

CHAPTER SEVEN: RUN, VOCAL DIRECTOR, RUN! PROCESSS

Casting

My experience as the music director for *Urinetown* was not the first time I was to have a hand in casting a group of my colleagues, some of which were my age and even my level of study in school. However, this would be my first time as a music director having already been cast in a leading role in the musical. Also, this would be the first time that financial considerations were involved. Another factor was that there was another show in the summer season that had to be cast with the same actors that we chose for *Urinetown*. It was established that not only would there be a negotiation process between director, music director, and choreographer as to what actors would fill our individual needs, but who would fit into the equations of the entire season's needs both talent-wise and monetarily.

As a student among faculty, I decided to simply focus on my job as a music director by taking notes on the voices that were competent to handle certain roles and vocal parts and I would provide input to the director and artistic director. We first had a round of "general" auditions in which actors were to prepare sixteen bars of music from two contrasting vocal pieces as well as a short monologue to showcase their talent in a three-minute audition time slot. From these auditions, we narrowed our search to callbacks during which I would teach excerpts of music from the show to the appropriate actors in respect to characters they were called back for. They would learn the music and sing it for us in order for me to hear their voice in the role. David Lee, the director, would also have actors read scenes and monologues to examine their acting choices in the roles. It was during this second half of the audition process that I was

thankful for my own pre-casting, for I would have not enjoyed having to compete with fellow actors for roles in the same audition environment that I would have to run as a music director.

I found that previous experience as a vocal director at UCF not only eased my trepidation of leading a group of my peers confidently and efficiently, but also established that I was a professional and knew how to run an audition. Since I had worked with many of these students before, either in production processes or classrooms as a leader, they were responsive to my direction in the auditions and eager to work hard and do a good job. I also realized that my experience with audition processes in which my skills have been tested has made me a better music director in audition situations. I tried my hardest to be cognizant of the range of learning styles when it came to teaching the music and to create a professional, yet easy-going atmosphere. I understand how auditioning can cause anxiety for an actor and an intimidating environment can sometimes inhibit the best performance. I encouraged my actors to take risks and to not sing anything that they couldn't sing every day through rehearsals and performances. So often, actors will push their voices in an audition situation to obtain the job, then not possess the stamina to sustain the rehearsal and performance period with that same material.

After two days of auditions and numerous negotiations, the director, choreographer, artistic director, I agreed on a "first choice" cast and a "second choice" cast. The second choices had to be created in the event that our "first choice" candidates refused our offers. This negotiation process was a big learning experience for me, for I had to weigh what variables would be effected by giving up the "best vocalists" in return for having well-rounded artists to complete both casts. As an actor, I would want the most versatile cast to play with onstage and create the characters to tell the story, as well as execute the choreographer's vision. As a music director, I wanted the strongest voices and the most experienced musicians so that my teaching

job would not be as stressful. Fortunately, the decisions made were a compromise of all of these factors. I acknowledged that any actor could be taught music in one way or another but not every actor could fit the mold of the role.

Preparation as a Music Director

My next task, while the casting offers were being made and contracts negotiated over a course of days, was to start recording vocal lines from the group numbers. In doing this, I sat down to focus on group musical numbers and recognize whether they were broken down into two, four, six, or eight harmonies. It is rare that an actor can listen to a cast recording and hear a single vocal line in six or eight-part harmony, let alone designate if it is theirs. Doing this ahead of time would save me a lot of effort during the production process that I would need to devote to my duties as an actor. I wouldn't be able to designate who would sing certain lines until casting was solidified, but I could work ahead and make recordings. I had found in a number of music directing jobs prior to this one that the pre-recording services that I provide as a music director serve as a major help to actors when learning their harmonies. That serves the greater good of not wasting my time in rehearsal playing through individual lines of notation. Modern technology also makes this process easier. I could, using a voice recording device, sit at a piano in my own home or at school in a private studio, play through vocal parts, and record them on separate tracks; upload the tracks to my computer; then, upon an actor's request, email the file for he or she to keep in their computer's music player or personal audio playback system (for example, an mp3 playback device or audio CD). Doing this also allows me to skip around within the track because I would do a live recording, prefacing each line played with a description of it vocally.

For example, the name of a track would be, “Urinetown Alto.” I would start at measure 90, designate a tempo, and play through the line. Then I would preface vocally that we skip ahead to the next time the altos break into their own harmony line and play through that line. An audio example of the aforementioned track is embedded below:

[“Urinetown Alto”](#)

Media 24: Alto melody line of “Urinetown,” *Urinetown*

This allows an actor, when learning their vocal line, to start, rewind, skip ahead, and stop their tape to work on a specific section or run through the entire piece that they sing to ensure the learning of these notes. This doesn’t waste any other cast members’ time, my time, or the time of my rehearsal accompanist, for I put the responsibility on the actor. I provide them with a tool that most music directors do not. Although this process was time consuming, it saved time for the group and reduced my potential frustration with individuals in music rehearsals. I conducted a post-mortem interview with Tad Ingram, an Equity performer who played Caldwell Cladwell in our production. Tad has dozens of years of professional experience with a resume that includes Broadway and major regional credits. He has worked with an array of professional music directors with various techniques, so I felt that his feedback would be most helpful. In reference to my preparation techniques, he commented, “From a broader perspective, I felt and discovered that the music was deceptively more difficult than might be perceived by the casual listener. This challenge was taken up by the musical director who broke apart the score and taught it according to what she felt might require more time for the company to digest and own. She came to work with a strategy and stuck to it” (APPENDIX G).

I made these recordings for most of the larger numbers that had complex harmonies. I planned to make recordings of solo pieces only upon request. Therefore, after teaching a piece in

music rehearsal to a large group, I would put out a sign-up sheet for actors to request vocal lines to be emailed to them and I would already have the files ready. When asked about the preparedness of the music for the show in relation to the amount of time it took me to complete the task of readying the cast musically, director David Lee said, “I felt that we had more than enough time...in some cases, too much time” (APPENDIX G).

Preparation of the Music Breakdown

Once casting was complete, I prepared my “Music Breakdown”-- a chart that indicates what musical numbers, organized by title and page number, are sung by what character. In a musical with an ensemble, it can often be confusing to chorus members to designate when they are onstage or offstage and whether they are singing or not. In this piece, ensemble members play two, sometimes three different characters: cops, UCG executives, and poor citizens. The director, choreographer, stage manager, and I had to sit down and make these designations so I could organize who would sing when ensuring a balance of vocal harmony at all times. Some other issues to take into account: who is dancing and cannot sing while executing certain moves; who enters and exits mid-song; and who could sing off-stage; and whether or not off-stage singers would be involved in a costume change. I decided that if there was a question of someone’s need to learn the music of a piece, I would teach it and they could always be removed from the number.

Table 2: Urinetown Music Breakdown, prepared by Amanda Wansa

URINETOWN 2008
MUSIC BREAKDOWN

	Bobby	Hope	Penrywise	Cladwell	Lockstock	Fipp	Barrell	McDuren	Little Sally	Becky Two Shoes	Scuzzy Sue	O.M. Strong	J. Strong	H.B. Harry	Tiny Tom	Billy Boy Bill	Robby Stockfish/Cop	Mrs. Millie/nurse/Cop	Dr. Billmauz/Cop/UGC	T. Farley (COP/poor/Ciad Exec. #1)	FINKEI ST EIK: Cladwell Sec/COP/poor	FISHER: Cladwell Ex/COP/poor
Urinetown	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Privilege to Pee		X								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P2P (Lockstock's Reprise)			X		X				X	X	X				X	X	X			X	X	X
Mister Cladwell		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cop Song			X			X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Follow Your Heart	X	X																				
Look At The Sky	X		X						X	X	X		X	X	X	X				X	X	X
Don't Be the Bunny		X	X	X			X	X	X						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Act One Finale	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
What is Urinetown?	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Snuff That Girl			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Run, Freedom, Run	X								X	X	X		X	X	X	X				X	X	X
Follow Your Heart Reprise		X																				
Why Did I Listen To that man?	X	X	X		X	X	X						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tell Her I Love Her	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
We're Not Sorry		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Not Sorry Reprise			X	X																		
I See A River	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

**PLEASE NOTE: THIS BREAKDOWN IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

VOICE PART BREAKDOWN

FOUR PART HARMONY:

SOPRANOS	Ashley Fisher Stephanie Lloyd Emily Bramblett C. Maggie Young Khristy Chamberlain
ALTOS	Kate Ingram Amanda Wansa Natalie Finkelstein Lacey Angerosa
TENORS	Tad Ingram Brock Yurich Terry Farley Michael Pettey Kyle Waggoner Ariosto Reyes
BASS	James Rinaldi Michael Kutner Kyle Adkins Benjamin Smith Ryan Garcia Nathan Smith Christopher Neiss

SIX PART HARMONY:

SOPRANOS	Ashley Fisher Stephanie Lloyd Emily Bramblett
MEZZOS	C. Maggie Young Khristy Chamberlain Natalie Finkelstein
ALTOS:	Kate Ingram Amanda Wansa Lacey Angerosa
TENORS	Brock Yurich Terry Farley Tad Ingram (Kyle Waggoner)
BARITONES:	Ariosto Reyes Benjamin Smith Michael Pettey Kyle Waggoner Nathan Smith
BASS	James Rinaldi Michael Kutner Kyle Adkins Ryan Garcia Christopher Neiss

The second part of the breakdown (Table 2) represents my allocation of vocal harmonies, which changed based on the number of harmonies for a given phrase of music. Providing this chart for the actors in advance enabled them to start to learn their music before I had to teach it in the first days of rehearsal.

In the actual music rehearsals, I found that creating my music breakdown proved to be an extremely helpful tool in organizing my singers and making an efficient music rehearsal schedule. For the first week of rehearsals (May 19th through May 25th, 2008), we focused primarily on music and choreography. From my previous experience in mounting musicals, I acknowledged that the actors would be better off familiarizing themselves with music before adding movement. The cast seemed at ease with my position as vocal director due to my past experience. Ingram made the following comments regarding our rehearsal process and his experience: “The attitude, preparation, and expectations of the musical director in this production were clear from day one, through to the end. It was not an easy score and the luxury of a prerecorded cast album for reference by musical director and actors was invaluable. I never saw or heard any scape-goating by the musical director and always saw a willingness by her to continue to work and develop problem areas for cast members, individually and collectively. It was a positive work environment at music rehearsals” (APPENDIX G). I offered the opportunity for actors to change certain vocal lines, if necessary, to suit their vocal needs. Ingram also commented on this luxury: “From a personal perspective, my feelings were mostly focused on my ability to sing what is essentially a base baritone role, and my concerns of doing the music justice as an aging tenor. I don’t know that I would have been cast in this role in a wholly professional venue... The fact that the musical director was a student was important in that I had to not “impose” my ideas on her, but rather remain collegial and take direction. I had

to hope that the student musical director would not be too restrictive as I knew I would have some choices to make which may be counter to her ideas. She possessed a very liberal sensibility and instilled a sense of trust in her actors” (APENDIX G).

Ingram also provided some negative feedback after the entire production was finished that I found valuable in hindsight. “If I have any comment that I could make with an intent to illuminate an area for further development by the musical director in future engagements, it would be this: I experienced some problems learning the music because of the dismantling of the score by the musical director, and then being taught the score (at times) from the end of a number, and moving backwards towards the top of the number. I don’t mean that we have to learn the score from the first number to the last, in order. I mean that I have problems with taking a particular number from the score and learning it in reverse...starting with the final chorus and moving backwards and ending with the top of the number as the last part of the song’s instruction. I believe this was done by the Music Director with the intent of isolating difficult sections for each of the parts, and aggressively tackling these sections right off the bat in our early rehearsals. I completely understand her intent but I, personally did not gain by, or find any benefit in, taking these sections of music out of order. I tend to want to learn a musical number progressively from its top to its resolution, and the transitions are generally the most difficult musical elements for me to “hear.” By dissecting a number and teaching it in a rearward moving progression (and not top to bottom) I found myself guessing and making wrong choices in my private work at home, which I then had to ‘unlearn’ in our next company rehearsal. This was clearly not an issue in the long run because sufficient attention to my problems was given at musical rehearsal calls. I merely make this observation in that I spent time away from rehearsal

trying to learn music that I had been taught beautifully, but out of sequence, and thus, left me to stitch together in a way that I hoped was correct.”

(APPENDIX C)

This response was illuminating. Since this method of deconstruction has been used by my teachers and choral directors of mine throughout my educational and professional career, I never thought to ask the actors if this aspect of my method would be beneficial. Throughout music rehearsals, I made it a point to ask what actors needed with questions like: “Do you need to hear a certain vocal line again?” “Do you want to sing through the song with everyone or just your part?” “Are there any problem spots?” If a music director imposes their way of learning music on a group of actors, there may be one or many who don’t work well in that manner. I try to provide my actors with tools to learn the music. Then I can mold their voices into the sounds I want to hear. Perhaps I overlooked this imposition and will know to ask in the future if it would be more beneficial to work from the beginning or the end of a piece.

Overall, I was very pleased with the execution of our music rehearsals. The problems that I encountered while multi-tasking during this job arose soon after this initial stage of the process, for it was then that I had to start rotating my “music director cap” with my “actor cap.”

CHAPTER EIGHT: PROBLEMS PLUNGING: PROBLEMS

The problems for me in this process began when I stepped into the role as Ms. Pennywise. Primarily, this occurred due to the fact that my voice had endured a week at the podium, speaking loudly to instruct a cast of twenty-five, as well as singing vocal lines either as correction to other singers or as an actor. Sometimes this lasted for up to eight hours of rehearsal in a day. There was even a day during which I had no voice whatsoever to rehearse my role, and my understudy had to replace me in the rehearsal. This was awkward because it was an early staging rehearsal for which it was essential for me to walk the blocking. Furthermore, my understudy was in the midst of learning her own blocking as a minor character in the scene. During most rehearsal processes, an understudy isn't called to cover a role until blocking is established and they can notate it for themselves. We were still in the creative stages of the process. The director ended up having me walk the blocking while my understudy shadowed me and sang the part. I felt embarrassed in front of the cast, even when they were all aware of the vocal undertaking that I had completed in the previous days. I felt incapable of doing my job. However, it was moments like these that ended up having a positive influence on the production value of my role. As an actor, I was frustrated and felt out of control of the situation, much like how Pennywise loses control over her power over the people in her world and the situation at hand. She establishes her power at the outset of the show and implores the Poor to see her perspective of the situation; therefore, she demands their respect and obedience to the law. She then loses her power with the uprising of Bobby Strong and the Poor and is forced into a position of humility and submission, where she becomes a part of a people instead serving as the puppeteer that controls them. David Lee brought this to my attention in our post-mortem

interview when I asked him his initial thoughts about my dual task as actor and music director: “I was very excited about Ms. Pennywise also being the music director because I thought it would be really great for your character. She is kind of the director in the play of the “Urine” place and she bosses everyone around and tells everyone what to do...so I thought that was going to be a kind of bonding thing for you and the company. It would be empowering for you as a character and as an actor” (APPENDIX D).

The Re-notation of “It’s a Privilege to Pee”

Another moment occurred in rehearsal that started as a “problem,” also arising from vocal concerns, but ended up being a revelation about how I was going to endow my responsibilities and how my vocal adjustments would create a unique and palpable interpretation on Pennywise. Until blocking rehearsals began, I had yet to specify what my re-notation choice would be in “It’s a Privilege to Pee” in the following measures, where the score indicates that Pennywise screams a ‘G’ with a fermata (See List of Music Terms) at the climax of the song. I had discussed with Professor Lee the possibility of doing a modern-pop riff (See List of Music Terms) in order to keep the comic effect of Pennywise’s assertion of power via her voice, yet save my voice and integrity from having to accomplish what I knew it could not. The notes of the riff never went higher than a ‘C.’ The following measures are a sample of that moment:

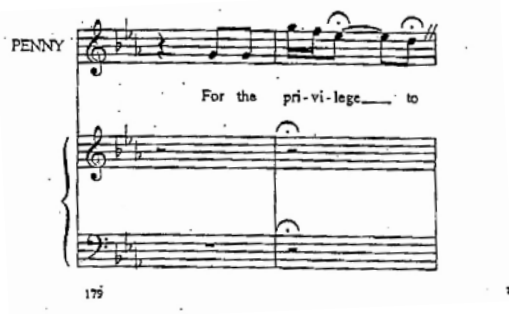


Figure 24: “It’s a Privilege to Pee,” *Urinetown*, mm. 179-180

I added my new riff into a rehearsal of the song with the full cast and creative team and it evoked the desired response from my colleagues. I added a section during which I mimicked the vocal quality of popular music artist Aaron Neville, as well as some melodic references to modern pop-based musicals such as *Dreamgirls* and *Legally Blonde*. Professor Lee felt the riff should be simplified and simply delivered from a more honest place; Pennywise should not know the comedy that lies within the absurdity of a pop riff occurring here as a tool of hers to belittle Old Man Strong and his actions, but execute the vocal move with serious intention. Here are Professor Lee’s comments on this moment:

“The [other] moment was when you were acting out of fear, feeling that the Pennywise song was out of your range, which we knew early on and addressed as a vocal issue...we knew we were going to have to do something interesting with it. Your first instinct, out of fear, was to make it comical and I felt that we worked beautifully together to get that to be really organic and real. Its tricky with *Urinetown* because its comical and yet its Brechtian so if you’re overly cheesy and inorganically comic, it comes off cheap. I actually thought the “germ” of your idea was just too silly and not legit enough and I felt that you did a great job working with me to steer

it in the right direction. Both in that singing moment and that acting moment I felt like you took the note at fifty percent at first and then realized that I wanted it deeper...less cheap...and that was really good” (APPENDIX D).

[“Pee”: mm.179-181, UCF Theatre](#)

Media 25: “It’s a Privilege to Pee,” *Urinetown*, performed by Amanda Wansa

This instance is an example of collaboration between music director, director, and actor. It so happens that I accounted for two-thirds of that equation, and I learned from it as a music director and an actor. I learned to negotiate and also find the solution to a problem that would work on multiple levels. I saved my voice from unnecessary strain, I conveyed the message of the moment within the play, I stayed within the music structure of the song, and I honored the concept of the director.

Rehearsal Problems

Another example of a problem occurred when we began runs in the rehearsal space and I had to juggle my roles as actor and music director. The issue was my having to give notes as a music director to fellow actors who were concurrently my peers as actors. I had trepidation about doing a run as an actor, receiving notes from the creative team as an actor, then, in turn, giving notes. Both Ingram and Lee commented on this aspect of the process in postmortem discussions. Professor Lee said, “Your commitment to what you were doing as an actor was stronger because you were working on the music and vice-versa. Not only because you were a graduate student or in a position of leadership so when you’re not doing that leadership role—when you’re acting—you “up” your commitment to the work as well as your professionalism. You’re setting an example for the students around you... I feel that one of the things I’ve learned through working with you is that it is ok to delegate. Its ok to delegate and trust once you’ve

given it to someone that's going to get the job done (APPENDIX D).” On this topic, Ingram commented, “From experience, I know that there always is a potential for issues in the note-giving sessions when fellow actors are giving them. This is usually, though, derivative of personality conflicts, in my opinion, and rarely due to the notes and/or directions themselves. As an older professional, I had utmost regard and respect for the notes given by the musical director because I knew they were generated from a perspective of making the music in the show cleaner, clearer, and optimally interesting. I recognize that some of the younger students in the show may have had issues because they may have felt that the musical director, being a fellow student, may have lacked sufficient clout to enforce any consequences for not following direction, but I never saw any instance of this. I believe this is because the musical director treated the company with courtesy and respect, had goals in mind, clearly enunciated these goals, and provided a reasonable threshold for each company member to achieve these goals. There simply was little or no reason for issues to arise of this nature (APPENDIX C).”

One problem with doing runs as an actor/music director is that this show contains an excessive number of vamps (See List of Musical Terms). Typically, a music director cues the cast an orchestra at the end of an underscoring vamp in order for the scene to continue. In the UCF rehearsal process, there were two rotating accompanists. One was consistently aware of the underscore needed to synchronize with the dialogue and action and adjusted on a nightly basis.. This particular accompanist had played for a production of *Urinetown* prior to this process and was familiar with its nuances. The other accompanist, however, needed a little more direction; and, since I couldn't provide that guidance while onstage, it was necessary from time to time to stop the rehearsal and make clarifications. This was stressful for me, as it diverted my attention as an actor and, additionally, took up valuable rehearsal time. Professor Lee had only positive

comments regarding my playing both roles during rehearsals: “It was very helpful to have you there. In relation to the rehearsals in which you were doing dual tasks...I felt that you were in control of what was happening and very “to the point” in your music direction.”

Once technical rehearsals began, I requested that Jason remain the primary accompanist to maintain the musical integrity of the show and make musical adjustments so that I could concentrate on acting. I did, however, give some vocal notes when actors deviated from some of the musical choices that we set. If I had not been present as an actor throughout the entire run of the show, some of these liberties might have gone unnoticed; but being present allowed me to assist Jason in maintaining the vocal mix.

Superficially, I was completing my tasks efficiently and presumably not creating a negative working atmosphere; however, internally, I was anxious to complete both tasks and wanted to fix everything artistic and technical at all times. This was stressful for me. There were many times when I would be “onstage” as Pennywise both in rehearsal and performance and hear a musical nuance that I wish I could correct or take a note about; yet, I couldn’t in that moment because of my role. The production was successful, yet exacted a toll on my personal expense.

CHAPTER NINE: A SUCCESSFUL FLUSH: PRODUCT

Urinetown opened at UCF on June 19th, 2008 on our main-stage. My voice remained healthy the entire run and I sang my re-notated pieces with no difficulty. I heard some negative commentary from peers in social situations who were familiar with the original Pennywise melodic lines; however, in this business, everything is subjective. I could have sung the music as written and probably had positive *and* negative feedback nonetheless. With my decisions, I preserved my vocal health and conveyed the story. I made a discovery late in the rehearsal process that also served as further justifications for my vocal decisions. Professor Lee gave us some actor notes in technical rehearsals that emphasized the need to return to the act of telling the story instead of telling the jokes. He stressed the political importance of our performing this piece in 2008. The Summer of 2008 saw some of the highest gas prices ever in America—an average high of almost four dollars per gallon; this summer was the beginning of an election campaign for which a record number of voters would turn out for the following November. Additionally, this summer found America still at war in the Middle East. In these precarious times, notions of corporate rule and unreasonable measures of control upon lower, middle, and upper class citizens are apparent in the plot of *Urinetown*; an environment that parallels the fears of Americans in 2008. Professor Lee implored us actors to allow the humanity and fear we felt to inform the creation of our characters and their world. I found that my notation changes in “It’s a Privilege to Pee” helped to *tell the story* behind the exposition of the show. The lyrics that Pennywise yells at the Poor during the measures that I had changed include, “The politicians with their wisdom saw that there should be a law. The politicians taxed the toilets and made illegal public urination and defecation...The good Lord made us so we piss each day until we

piss away. The good Lord made sure that what goes in men must soon come out again; so, you're no different, then, from lowly me." (Hollman 27). The first statement about the politicians is crucial; if this statement is being screamed on 'E's and 'G's, the audience is listening more to vocal acrobatics than to the exposition. Pennywise's statements claim that we are all the same, regardless of class, and that even the cogs in the political machine have to suffer the mess of a world in which these people live. These are two crucial messages I believe were better conveyed by my notation, because when sung in a mid-range with clarity and directed to the audience, the story was told with no distraction.

["It's a Privilege to Pee," UCF Theatre](#)

Media 26: Audio footage of "It's a Privilege to Pee," *Urinetown*, UCF Conservatory Theater

There were only two official reviews of the production. The following are some comments from an online arts review organization, *Ink 19*: "This is one of the finest meta-theatrical experiences you will ever have. Director Lee takes this self-referential musical and hangs tributes (or rip offs) of every major theatrical convention of the last century. 'What is *Urinetown*' looks like Act 2 of *Fiddler on the Roof*; the 'Act 1 Finale' is *Les Miserables* without the nasty head rolling, and 'Mr. Caldwell' might be a Cole Porter piece from the 30's. All of this makes for a hugely entertaining payoff with the brilliant choreography of Christopher Niess (doubling as Old Man Strong) and clever sets designed and lit by Vandy Wood and Bert Scott. The acting didn't miss the porcelain either... This *Urinetown* is a delight to look at, *listen to*, and even the shakedown at the Men's Room door adds to the festivity. (I used the guest biffy down by the Black Box, and Pennywise nearly called Lockstock on me.) This may be a college production, but it sparkles with the best professional shows I've seen in Central Florida."

The comment about the “shake-down” was a reference to the self-employed improvisational bit I adopted during intermission. I volunteered to stay in costume and character and approach patrons in the lobby near the restrooms to heckle them for money to use the facilities. This “bit” went over well and director approved the “bit” to continue through the run.

Musically, I was pleased. We achieved the effect that each song called for, covering the spectrum of the genres of gospel, jazz, and classic forms of musical theatre.

What follows is an audio example from the *a’capella* sections of “Run Freedom Run” and “I See A River” that we spent so much time on polishing our tight harmonies and blended timbre:

[“Run Freedom Run”, UCF *Urinetown*](#)

Media 27: “Run Freedom Run,” *Urinetown*, UCF Conservatory Theater

[“I See A River”, UCF *Urinetown*](#)

Media 28: “I See A River,” *Urinetown*, UCF Conservatory Theater

Regarding the experience, I learned that just because one is capable of accepting this caliber of professional challenge, one must first consider all of the potential problems; and even then, one should be wary. Being honest with Professors Brotherton and Lee with my vocal concerns led to the hiring of an understudy, a valuable resource throughout rehearsal. It provided me the opportunity to adjust a role to my needs and still produce the performance on the expected professional level.

The following comments are from Professor Lee regarding this experience in relation to the business of theatre: “I’m currently going into auditions for a [new production] and I would like to find an actor to actually play the “choirmaster” of the town and direct the singing in the show. I know going into the process that I can cast someone like that in the show because of my

experience with you...that the work is deeper, better, and more accomplished when an actor in the show is also working on the music because I feel like if you find someone as inspired and talented as you are you get double the quality of the work... as an artist, I've really been learning a lot about letting things go...not micromanaging every person, every moment... I learned very early on that if you're not going to have another skill to supplement your income as an artist, you better know how to do a number of things artistically. I try to act, write, direct, and have recently been working on New Play development skills and I think the more one person can do in the art field is ultimately more employable and a more rounded artist" (APPENDIX D).

Similarly, Tad Ingram said, "Interestingly, a person with less musical (acting and singing) ability may have had more negative issues with trying to be a performer AND a member of the production team, but in this case, the ability to multi-task and focus on giving exemplary effort each and every day, mitigated against the possible negative effects of doing both" (APPENDIX C).

CHAPTER TEN: CONCLUSION

“I don’t think that the ultimate product was sacrificed, but I do know that it was stressful for you and partially stressful for me because I saw you going through splitting your time.”

– Professor Julia Listengarten (Appendix B)

“I feel like if you find someone as inspired and talented as you are you get double the quality of the work. Your commitment to what you were doing as an actor was stronger because you were working on the music and vice-versa.”

– Professor David Lee (Appendix D)

Working on *Machinal* and *Urinetown* in rapid succession forced me to improve my ability to multi-task. The questions that I posed as I began each rehearsal period were answered and I gained more insight than I had anticipated.

Will my work on a production team interfere with my preparation and process as an actor? My work as a music director interfered with my acting preparation in terms of time management, but did not compromise the final quality. After my frustration with acting preparation for *Machinal*, my preparation for *Urinetown* was more thorough, for I was now aware of the strain that multi-tasking would create on my schedule; therefore, I devoted more time to actor preparation before rehearsals began. While many rehearsals for *Machinal* were frustrating to me, the patience support of fellow actors and Professor Listengarten helped me to overcome the stress of dual responsibility.

Will the quality of either of my jobs be challenged by a lack of time for preparation? The quality of both shows was satisfactory by my standards; however, there were many points during each process at which I doubted a successful outcome. Although I spent a considerable amount of time researching and compiling audio samples to use for *Machinal*, I neglected to explore a more diverse range of musical libraries due to time constraints and deadlines. In the case of *Urinetown*, my work as Vocal Director enhanced the quality of the show's vocal sound. As a Vocal Director, I recognized my needs as an actor, and, by re-notating portions of the score, was able to fulfill both roles.

Will my professional and/or personal relationships be sacrificed due to my obligation to serve in a position of authority while serving as a member of a cast of fellow students and my graduate school professors? There were moments of tension (during both *Machinal* and *Urinetown*) between production team members, actors, and me due to the amount of stress that I faced due to multiple responsibilities. When vocally directing faculty members in *Urinetown*, I never felt my authority questioned, nor did I feel that I abused that authority. Tad Ingram, an Equity actor under my direction, commented, "The fact that the musical director was a student was important in that I had to not "impose" my ideas on her, but rather remain collegial and take direction. I had to hope that the student musical director would not be too restrictive as I knew I would have some choices to make which may be counter to her ideas. She possessed a very liberal sensibility and instilled a sense of trust in her actors" (Appendix C). The production team recognized my frustration with some of the problems that arose during technical rehearsals. I learned, throughout *Machinal* process, how to exercise patience, and the importance of thorough preparation to avoid any negative impacts on professional relationships.

Will I be able to fulfill my responsibilities as a full-time student during the production process of *Machinal*? My ability to complete my coursework for graduate classes was not impeded by my evening commitments to *Machinal*; however, preparation for class on a daily basis was. Frequently, I completed written assignments just before due dates, and my ability to rehearse performance pieces outside of class was limited. I was rarely motivated to work on class assignments due to my fatigue and resulting reluctance to meet any responsibility. This state of negativity further inspired me to prepare in advance for the *Urinetown* rehearsal process.

I would advise the student multi-tasker to embrace more than just the abilities needed to complete multiple jobs. One must take into account every detail of one's anticipated schedule and allow time to address all complications. One must also schedule appropriate preparation time all assignments. A student need be forthright in asking for assistance. I failed to ask others for help when I might have, assuming that I could handle any obstacles. I also made assumptions that others were working as diligently as I, and neglected clarify the delegation of responsibility. Nevertheless, one must understand the need for flexibility and patience. When mastering multiple jobs, professionalism, affability, and the ability to communicate are qualities that are tantamount to practical skill. I was extremely thankful for the opportunity to serve multiple roles for both of these production processes. The ability to be a part of a production process as a designer and actor gave me an incredible sense of attachment to each show and a fuller understanding of each piece. If a student is capable of accepting multiple responsibilities in one production while keeping his or her studies a priority, I highly recommend accepting the challenge, for the rewards of experience and creative output are invaluable.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW WITH BRITTNEY RENTSCHLER

Interview for Actor
University of Central Florida MFA Thesis Project
Amanda Wansa

Actor: These questions serve as an outline to this interview process. I greatly appreciate you taking the time to provide some feedback regarding my process/performance with your piece. I would love for you to be as specific as possible with your “answers” and elaborate to as much extent as you feel necessary. Additional comments are welcome and appreciated.

Actor Name: Brittney Rentschler
Production: Machinal
Year in school: 2nd year MFA Acting
Production Run Dates: March 2008

1. Did you have any initial thoughts regarding the knowledge of having a production team member as a fellow actor in this piece?
No...I didn't at all...it didn't bother me; I think it was because it was such an ensemble piece already and everyone was going to have their place. I think because I was onstage all the time and knowing that no one else had to do that...I figured everyone else would have to multi-task. It never occurred to me not to trust the ability for you to multitask. I think a lot of it had to do with the fact that as actors, we're not in production meetings. You weren't our "stage manager." So I already trusted you as an artist on the stage and then trusted you as a sound designer.
2. Did you have any particular feelings about the music of this piece from an actor standpoint?
Very positive- my favorite thing was that I was initially very nervous about my long monologues and you came in and played me selections that you had already decided on and narrowed down; let me and Julia listen and asked, "which moved you more" – although it was ultimately Julia's decision, I felt, as an actor, I was given underscoring that helped me move through a difficult piece of text – I was grateful for that. AND when we found a need for more music at the end, you found the Tori Amos piece, and came in and played a couple different versions...that was such a highly emotional experience for me as an actor...to have the option of what would underscore that was amazing.
3. Do you feel that my process as an actor was affected negatively by having another production task? What about the influence of having other obligations (school, other shows, etc.)?
Yes...I do...I remember when I read this question - I immediately thought of the time when we were working the mom scene and Julia had asked you a question about sound...I think you had just had a production meeting right before rehearsal...and then Patrick asked you to do something as an actor in the scene or change a choice...the actual words out of your mouth were "I'm sorry I have on another hat right now...I don't have my acting hat on..." because you had so many to wear that I felt that it was frustrating for you to just be an actor and make choices and switch gears so fast...because you had so much else to do. So yes, I would say I saw the frustration and the negative impact it may have had on you in that way.

4. Did my process have a positive or negative effect on your rehearsal process?
Positive and negative. Positive in the sense that I would say that as a designer, you had studied the show, as a director would, and you really knew the through-line of the piece. Most of the time, actors come to the piece only knowing their stuff, saying, "This is my character and this is how they fit into the show..." You had already thought about how everyone fits into the show and I think that was very helpful throughout the rehearsal process. I think the negative time—just like anytime you're working with an actor and they get frustrated—its hard to figure out how to navigate through it...its like driving a stick-shift and you're not sure how to switch the gears yet...it was a little bumpy...there were good and bad sides to it. For example, something went wrong in dress rehearsal and you would have to leave the stage, go up to the sound board in costume, and fix something as Mom, then coming back and having to jump right back into the scene.
5. Were there issues during the note-giving sessions by having a fellow actor on the production team?
I remember if the directing team could have divided your notes as an actor versus your sound design notes better. I thought it must be frustrating for you because we would be in the middle of acting notes and [the director] would throw out sound notes to you, I felt like that could've been addressed later...actually, that's stage management's job...to take down those random notes...so that's what I would say about that.
6. Are there any other comments, positive or negative that you would like to make regarding this production process and my work in it?
I think that there are two sides to it, positive and negative; but I think if you can find an actor with the focus and capability to do both because you have more investment in the piece because as a designer you look at the piece from different angles, you do more research, you can contribute more to the piece, and some of the best work that I've ever seen in theatre groups and they can't afford to hire separate designers...its very ensemble oriented. I think that adds something and focus is the key. I think if you have that focus, which you do...did...then you can do it, albeit frustrating because this wasn't your only job because you were a student and teacher and had lots of other responsibilities. If this was the professional world and you were just acting and sound designing, or acting and musical directing, you would have been absolutely fine. I think that would've eliminating anything negative about the process because really, the only negative came from the frustration with all the responsibilities that you had all at once. I think it absolutely helped the show to have someone who wasn't just coming on with just one angle on the show. You had multiple views and perspectives in your artistry.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW WITH JULIA LISTENGARTEN

Interview for Director
University of Central Florida MFA Thesis Project
Amanda Wansa

Director: These questions serve as an outline to this interview process. I greatly appreciate you taking the time to provide some feedback regarding my process/performance with your piece. I would love for you to be as specific as possible with your “answers” and elaborate to as much extent as you feel necessary. Additional comments are welcome and appreciated.

Director Name: Julia Listengarten
Faculty Title:
Production: Machinal
Dates of Production Run: March 2008

1. What was your initial expectation for having the same student serve as your Sound Designer/Music Director and an actor in this piece?

I didn't really think about it. It was a great, wonderful thing to have you as a part of my cast because you were part of the process, in rehearsals every night and understood where we were going. It served you as a sound designer...I'm not sure if it served you as an actor..that's a different question. But as a sound designer I think it served you. Its very different coming in as, say, a costume designer...she could come and sit through an hour of rehearsal and leave and she did a great job but wasn't nearly as involved as you. As an actor...once we got to tech week I think it got a little crazy when you were torn because the technical elements – support – wasn't there and that forced you to work extra hard. I guess what happened – which we could've predicted, could've not – was that we should've anticipated this knowing the other people involved. We should have come up with a stricter schedule going into tech. Maybe having an assistant who was more read on the material. I have had different assistant directors...some who sit like furniture...and then there was the gift of Patrick – who was so hands on, it was hard to designate who was in charge for you guys as actors

2. Do you feel like I listened enough to your vision as a director and that the sound/music fit the world of this play?

Yes...see, I think this is an interesting question – it depends on who you work with. I like being challenged because it pushes me to go further. If I work with someone that has a vision, I get excited to explore. When (another faculty designer) and I meet, we challenge each other. Yes, I have to come to the table with certain ideas; yes, I have to drive the process...if something goes wrong, its my responsibility; but at the same time, the process is a dialogue. I felt like you came to the table with ideas—you came up with the idea of having instrumental music as representation, you came up with strings and then we made choices. I remember meeting in January and making choices and that's a joy for me.

3. Did the finished product end up being similar to your initial design ideas?
See Question 5.

4. Was it helpful to have me there during rehearsals to mold the music or would you have preferred the process to happen differently?

To be politically correct – there are different processes with different sound designers – I’ve worked with those who provided original music composed for the shows I’ve directed and that was a lot of fun but we were well into the rehearsal process before they came in and added music and that came a little late.

5. Do you feel like enough time and energy was put into the creation of the music?

I was very pleased with the sound design of this show...I thought it was really good; I thought that there’s always a way to improve – if we did the show again or had more time things may be different; but the initial thoughts that I had actually worked out and we accomplished some of the initial impulses that we had.

In regards to the ideas of live music I think aesthetically, where the production was going, it would have not added to the atmosphere.

6. Do you feel like I was ill-prepared as an actor/singer due to time being spent on sound/music?

7. Did any of these potential issues slow down the rehearsal process?

I don’t think that the ultimate product was sacrificed but I do know that it was stressful for you and partially stressful for me because I saw you going through splitting your time. Particularly during the tech process. I know that having you as an actor and a part of the technical team was a gift but when we finally hit the stage was when things started to fall apart a little...but then came together again.

8. Can you describe what you thought this job was going to be like for me? As in, what was my job outline going into the process as compared to what I actually accomplished in terms of task?

9. What did you learn from this process in terms of having a production team member and a student as an actor?

What I learned about this experience was that there has to be more confidence in schedules, attention to detail, proper assistance – or a competent assistant who is more part of the process, not just part of the tech process – so that when you have to be onstage, you have to be onstage; therefore, whatever negotiations took place, they would take place after rehearsal and we could hypothetically stay after and talk so you can put on your sound designer hat.

10. Do you think this would be a good idea in a professional situation? Perhaps to save money or to have the best personnel?

Right now I’m working with designers...they’re kids...and I feel like I have to teach them how to look at the text...how to approach the textual layers...how to analyze the layers within the text....You had that background, coming from music training program and having that interest. That was something I came to appreciate because I don’t have it now.

11. Are there any other comments, positive or negative that you would like to make regarding this production process and my work in it?

For your personality, multitasking is something that inspires you, that pushes you as a person, so that you're not bored; whereas, someone else who would try to multi-task would fall apart.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW WITH TAD INGRAM

Interview for Actor
University of Central Florida MFA Thesis Project
Amanda Wansa

Actor: These questions serve as an outline to this interview process. I greatly appreciate you taking the time to provide some feedback regarding my process/performance with your piece. I would love for you to be as specific as possible with your “answers” and elaborate to as much extent as you feel necessary. Additional comments are welcome and appreciated.

Actor Name: Tad Ingram
Production: Urinetown
Position: Professional Equity Actor
Production Run Dates: June 2008

1. Did you have any initial thoughts regarding the knowledge of having a production team member as a fellow actor in this piece?
[No. This answer is mitigated by the knowledge that this show was being produced in a university setting, not a wholly professional production. When students actors and student technicians are being led by a student musical director, much is going to be learned, and all involved need to be able to make mistakes. I thought the opportunity to have a fellow actor as part of the production team made for a great learning opportunity for her. So, my thoughts were positive.]

2. Did you have any particular feelings about the music of this piece from an actor stand-point?
[From a personal perspective, my feelings were mostly focused on my ability to sing what is essentially a base baritone role, and my concerns of doing the music justice as an aging tenor. I don't know that I would have been cast in this role in a wholly professional venue. But, as a model for students, I was given my chance to fail or succeed along with them, which is the model all young people should be given. The fact that the musical director was a student was important in that I had to not “impose” my ideas on her, but rather remain collegial and take direction. I had to hope that the student musical director would not be too restrictive as I knew I would have some choices to make which may be counter to her ideas. She possessed a very liberal sensibility and instilled a sense of trust in her actors. From a broader perspective, I felt and discovered that the music was deceptively more difficult than might be perceived by the casual listener. This challenge was taken up by the musical director who broke apart the score and taught it according to what she felt might require more time for the company to digest and own. She came to work with a strategy and stuck to it. I do have a comment about the strategy that I will include in my response to the last question (#6) in this questionnaire.]

3. Do you feel that my process as an actor was affected negatively by having another production task? What about the influence of having other obligations (school, other shows, etc.)?
[Interestingly, a person with less musical (acting and singing) ability may have had more negative issues with trying to be a performer AND a member of the production team, but in this case, the ability to multi-task and focus on giving exemplary effort each and every day, mitigated against the possible negative effects of doing both.]

4. Did my process have a positive or negative effect on your rehearsal process? [*In all honesty, the negative effects on my rehearsal process were the result of sloppy stage direction, not musical direction. I not only felt that I had been taught the music, but that I could always ask for help, clarification, and practice from the musical director.*]
5. Were there issues during the note-giving sessions by having a fellow actor on the production team? [*From experience, I know that there always is a potential for issues in the note-giving sessions when fellow actors are giving them. This is usually, though, derivative of personality conflicts, in my opinion, and rarely due to the notes and/or directions themselves. As an older professional, I had utmost regard and respect for the notes given by the musical director because I knew they were generated from a perspective of making the music in the show cleaner, clearer, and optimally interesting. I recognize that some of the younger students in the show may have had issues because they may have felt that the musical director, being a fellow student, may have lacked sufficient clout to enforce any consequences for not following direction, but I never saw any instance of this. I believe this is because the musical director treated the company with courtesy and respect, had goals in mind, clearly enunciated these goals, and provided a reasonable threshold for each company member to achieve these goals. There simply was little or no reason for issues to arise of this nature.*]
6. Are there any other comments, positive or negative that you would like to make regarding this production process and my work in it? [*As I hope is clear, the attitude, preparation, and expectations of the musical director in this production were clear from day one, through to the end. It was not an easy score and the luxury of a prerecorded cast album for reference by musical director and actors was invaluable. I never saw or heard any scape-goating by the musical director and always saw a willingness by her to continue to work and develop problem areas for cast members, individually and collectively. It was a positive work environment at music rehearsals.*]

If I have any comment that I could make with an intent to illuminate an area for further development by the musical director in future engagements, it would be this: I experienced some problems learning the music because of the dismantling of the score by the musical director, and then being taught the score (at times) from the end of a number, and moving backwards towards the top of the number. (I don't mean that we have to learn the score from the first number to the last, in order. I mean that I have problems with taking a particular number from the score and learning it in reverse...starting with the final chorus and moving backwards and ending with the top of the number as the last part of the song's instruction. I believe this was done by the M.D. with the intent of isolating difficult sections for each of the parts, and aggressively tackling these sections right off the bat in our early rehearsals. I completely understand her intent but I, personally did not gain by, or find any benefit in, taking these sections of music out of order. I tend to want to learn a musical number progressively from its top to its resolution, and the transitions are generally the most difficult musical elements for me to "hear." By dissecting a number and teaching it in a rearward moving progression (and not top to bottom) I found myself guessing and making wrong choices in my private work at home, which I then had to "unlearn" in our next company rehearsal. This was clearly not an issue in the long run because sufficient attention to my problems was given at musical rehearsal calls. I merely make this observation in

that I spent time away from rehearsal trying to learn music that I had been taught beautifully, but out of sequence, and thus, left me to stitch together in a way that I hoped was correct...I was not always correct, ha ha.]

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR LEE

Interview for Directors
University of Central Florida MFA Thesis Project
Amanda Wansa

Director: These questions serve as an outline to this interview process. I greatly appreciate you taking the time to provide some feedback regarding my process/performance with your piece. I would love for you to be as specific as possible with your “answers” and elaborate to as much extent as you feel necessary. Additional comments are welcome and appreciated.

Director Name: David Lee
Faculty Title: Visiting Professor
Production: Urinetown
Dates of Production Run: June 2008

1. What was your initial expectation for having the same student serve as your Sound Designer/Music Director and an actor in this piece?

I was very excited about Ms. Pennywise also being the music director because I thought it would be really great for your character. She is kind of the director in the play of the “Urine” place and she bosses everyone around and tells everyone what to do...so I thought that was going to be a kind of bonding thing for you and the company. It would be empowering for you as a character and as an actor. I have worked with you before as a music director and actor in a play from Don Juan so I knew pretty much what to expect from the experience and I thought you did a really great job with it!

2. Do you feel like I listened enough to your vision as a director and that the sound/music fit the world of this play? *Yes.*

3. Did the finished product end up being similar to your initial design ideas?
Yes, completely.

4. Was it helpful to have me there during rehearsals to mold the music or would you have preferred the process to happen differently?

It was very helpful to have you there. In relation to the rehearsals in which you were doing dual tasks, we had an understudy and she could step in. I felt that you were in control of what was happening and very “to the point” in your music direction.

5. Do you feel like enough time and energy was put into the creation of the music?
I felt that we had more than enough time...in some cases, too much time.

6. Do you feel like I was ill-prepared as an actor/singer due to time being spent on sound/music?
I never thought that, ever.

7. Did any of these potential issues slow down the rehearsal process? *No.*

8. Can you describe what you thought this job was going to be like for me? As in, what was my job outline going into the process as compared to what I actually accomplished in terms of task?

Your job was to play Pennywise and vocal direct the show and you did both!

9. What did you learn from this process in terms of having a production team member and a student as an actor?

Its extremely helpful. I'm currently going into auditions for a production of Our Town this weekend and I would like to find an actor to actually play the "choirmaster" of the town and direct the singing in the show. I know going into the process that I can cast someone like that in the show because of my experience with you...that the work is deeper, better, and more accomplished when an actor in the show is also working on the music because I feel like if you find someone as inspired and talented as you are you get double the quality of the work. Your commitment to what you were doing as an actor was stronger because you were working on the music and vice-versa. Not only because you were a graduate student or in a position of leadership so when you're not doing that leadership role—when you're acting—you "up" your commitment to the work as well as your professionalism. You're setting an example for the students around you.

10. Do you think this would be a good idea in a professional situation? Perhaps to save money or to have the best personnel?

Absolutely.

11. Are there any other comments, positive or negative that you would like to make regarding this production process and my work in it?

What I like about our relationship when we work together is that we have this relaxed, almost comic personal relationship that's never inappropriate and what I like about working with you is that you really separate that in the room and you're very serious about what you're doing in the room as a performer. You had two moments where you were being "cheesy" and one of them was an acting moment and I kept trying to get you to make it more sincere and...you did...and I asked you to be even more sincere. The other moment was when you were acting out of fear, feeling that the Pennywise song was out of your range, which we knew early on and addressed as a vocal issue...we knew we were going to have to do something interesting with it. Your first instinct, out of fear, was to make it comical and I felt that we worked beautifully together to get that to be really organic and real. Its tricky with Urinetown because its comical and yet its Brechtian so if you're overly cheesy and inorganically comic, it comes off cheap. I actually thought the "germ" of your idea was just too silly and not legit enough and I felt that you did a great job working with me to steer it in the right direction. Both in that singing moment and that acting moment I felt like you took the note at fifty percent at first and then realized that I wanted it deeper...less cheap...and that was really good. I also worked with Ryan Garcia as an assistant director and an actor in the piece and I was very confident about going into that relationship because I had already had the experience with you in the capacity of "I'm going to be in the show and I'm also going to have a leadership role" and as an artist, I've really been learning a lot about letting things go...not micromanaging every person, every moment. I feel

that one of the things I've learned through working with you is that it is ok to delegate. Its ok to delegate and trust once you've given it to someone that's going to get the job done.

I learned very early on that if you're not going to have another skill to supplement your income as an artist, you better know how to do a number of things artistically. I try to act, write, direct, and have recently been working on New Play development skills and I think the more one person can do in the art field is ultimately more employable and a more rounded artist.

APPENDIX E: IRB PERMISSION FORM



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901, 407-882-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Not Research

From : UCF Institutional Review Board
FWA00000351, Exp. 6/24/11, IRB00001138

To : Amanda Wansa

Date : September 16, 2008

IRB Number: SBE-08-05796

Study Title: **Plungers, Pianos, and Productivity: A Student Artist's Survival Guide to Multi-tasking**

Dear Researcher:

After reviewing the materials that you have submitted, the UCF Institutional Review Board has determined that your project, "**Plungers, Pianos, and Productivity: A Student Artist's Survival Guide to Multi-tasking.**" does not fit the definition of research:

"A systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge."

Therefore, IRB review is not needed.

Thank you for your time in resolving this issue. Please continue to submit applications that involve human subject activities that could potentially involve human subjects as research participants.

On behalf of Tracy Dietz, Ph.D., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 09/16/2008 02:01:56 PM EDT

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joanne Muratori".

IRB Coordinator

APPENDIX F: KCACTF ADJUDICATION RESPONSE FOR MACHINAL

Production response for: Machinal
<<http://www.quickbase.com/i/clear2x2.gif>>

Produced by: University of Central Florida

Respondent First Name: Brian C.

Last Name: Natale

The Show's Director is: Julia Listengarten

This respondent's IRENE RYAN SCHOLARSHIP AUDITION nominee is:

Kyle Crowder

This respondent's SOUND nominee is: Amanda Wansa

The respondent provided the following comments on CHOICE OF PLAY:

The play which I adjudicated at the University of Central Florida was 'Machinal' by Sophie Treadwell. In regards to whether or not the play is appropriate for college or university level production, I would say that it was very much appropriate for that level of production and especially so for a conservatory style theatre program.

I believe that for a production to be worthy of being executed at the university level, it should be in some way, relevant to what is happening in the modern world, either through theme, design, text, or style of performance. While it is not absolutely necessary for a production to be 'modernized' in any specific way, I do think it adds extra credibility to the ability of a director/department when a play which was written almost a century ago, is given a treatment that both preserves the original message, but also presents a modern, or 'timeless' approach that makes it just as relevant in the modern age as it was when it premiered.

The UCF Drama production of 'Machinal' very much met and exceeded my expectations and criteria for being a play absolutely worthy, almost necessary, for production at the college/university level. From the direction and choreography to the design, management, and performance of 'Machinal,' the production was, honestly, better than all of the professional/Equity productions I had seen in my own town. The concept and performance was unapologetic and candid in its remaining faithful to the original intent of being an Expressionistic play. Though the author, Sophie

Treadwell, did not necessarily mean for 'Machinal' to be a 'feminist' play, the UCF Theatre Department managed to subtly yet powerfully bring to light elements of 'Feminism' and Realism inherent within the script without tarnishing the look, feel, or original message of the play; that of a woman, as a cog in a strict, male-dominated society, whom can not turn out of place or seek her own freedom, without being utterly crushed by the machine.

The respondent provided the following comments on DIRECTING:

The directorial concept of Dr. Julia Listengarten was very well plotted, detailed, and executed. Dr. Listengarten's basic concept as I read it, was to create a 'timeless' feel for the main character of Helen, one in which she (Helen) constantly looks to create a sense of understanding and self-importance in the machine of a capitalist society where the needs and desires of the individual, in this case and especially so, for a woman.

The director clearly worked closely with her design staff, (comprised of mostly students and one faculty light designer,) co-director and choreographer, dramaturg, sound designer, cast and crew to illustrate her intended concept and the result was nothing short of spectacular, breath-taking, and visually and audibly stunning. Since finding a copy of the play to be nearly impossible before I traveled to the University of Central Florida for my adjudication, I was unable to actually read the script before I was to see it. I did however, do a great deal of research into the history, thematic, and critical elements of the play. I was delighted to have the chance to speak with Dr. Listengarten before the production to hear her explain her concept to me in person. Dr. Listengarten and I found we both had a passion for Avant-Garde, or what I like to call the 'thinking person's' theatre. It was, I believe, as I recall, Dr. Listengarten's concept to create a world for her play that was again 'timeless' but also Expressionist in its intent to deliver its message, but also Realistic in a way which would make the message relevant to our modern sensibilities but not to vilify the protagonist.

The execution of the directorial concept and the director's vision in performance was perfectly synchronized with the actors' movement, stage blocking, and all of the design and technical elements. Choreography was used in guiding the actors through their entrances and exits, as well as all of their scene transitions. At the beginning of the play, there was a fantastic dance done by the actors in which they entered in a line, marching into the space in rigid and precise mechanical form. Then the actors proceeded into a line and did a dance as a metaphor for the evolution of man which then lead into the actors moving in a very machine like maze around the stage, constantly repeating the same patterns with slight evolutions that allowed them to make their way to their places for the opening scene

without ever detracting from the action or feeling as if it was taking too long.

It was extremely easy to see just how evident it was the director, and the dramaturg as well, had communicated the concept of this mechanically prone society to the cast as they created the life and feel of the play for the audience. I do not think there was a single person in the audience that could not easily grasp the concept of the play and follow the journey of the protagonist as she endures constant suffering and confusion in a world that simultaneously shuns her whilst trying to make her conform. In a solely Realistic interpretation of the play, the main character could be considered the villain. In a solely Expressionistic interpretation of the play, the main character serves as a tragic heroine. Dr. Listengarten's production played very well on its intended sense of 'timelessness' to create a sympathetic and endearing character, whose struggle can, in many ways, relate to any one of us, especially women in a male-dominant society.

The respondent provided the following comments on TECH ELEMENTS:

Last, but certainly never the least, the technical elements of this show were one of my favorite things to watch and hear throughout the performance. The lights and sound were both subtle and intrusive, in a very Artaudian manner, never one which distracted from the overall aesthetic and feel of the production.

I must start with Amanda Wansa's sound design. Amanda was also an actress in the show, and composed one of the most thrilling, enchanting, haunting, and unsettling scores for a play that I have ever heard. During the talkback I had the chance to interview Amanda and discover some of her trade secrets, all of which indicated that this young woman had spent just as many hours researching, composing, and digitally editing this score as she did researching and rehearsing her characters, if not more. From my entrance into the theatre, I was floored by the sound design. After seating myself, I was impressed by the use of music incorporating stringed instruments such as the cello and violin which were playing songs with a slight enough dissonance to inform the audience member that these were not classical pieces, but modern ones. I later found out from Amanda that the music was taken from string quartet tribute albums and I absolutely adored how the tension inherent in the playing of stringed music symbolically represented the struggle that was about to take place on stage. The pre-show music did not allow the audience to relax into their seats and become complacent, it kept a dark and sinister edge which was not threatening, but not lulling either. The sound design continued through the use of effects played consistently, loudly, and repetitiously throughout each scene, but never all throughout each scene. Sounds of gears, bells, whistles, etc.; all very

mechanical, were put forth from speakers in the rafters, on the set, and, much to my delight, under the audience and in the house as well, which brought the Artaudian experience home very well. The music throughout each scene was effective and kept the tenor that it did during the pre-show throughout, always subtly foreshadowing things and events to come, but never lulling and never threatening.

The light design was accomplished by two members of the department; Vandy Woods, faculty, and Terra Baldwin, student. I did not get a chance to meet either lighting designer at the talkback, so I am not sure which credits are due where, but I loved it anyway. The lights throughout the show played a great deal with shadows cast off both the set and the actors to give both a larger than life feel, and to create a constant shadow play of cages across the floor in each scene. The lighting design incorporated a great deal of moments where yellow and green lights were used to subtly create feelings of nausea and disgust or disappointment. In many scenes of the play, blue light was used also to show both passion and sadness, which I thought was a gorgeous juxtaposition of an established norm. The lighting of 'Machinal' I think, was one of the cast members who did not get enough credit for really contrasting what was going on with Helen, but having a life of its own as well. The light consistently kept the set, which was otherwise dark but alive, well-lit so that the visual metaphor of the set could insinuate itself into the audiences' minds.

APPENDIX G: INK 19 REVIEW OF MACHINAL

Machinal

Machinal □ By Sophie Treadwell □

Directed by Dr. Julia Listengarten □

Starring Brittany Rentschler, Kyle Crowder, Ryan Garcia □

UCF Conservatory Theater, Orlando, FL

For a play nearly 100 years old, “Machinal” feels as if it were written just last week, when the fad for jinky camera work in advertising was at its height. “Machinal” follows the internal state of Helen (Rentschler) as she turns a crummy office job into a wealthy but loveless marriage to George (Crowder). The word “stifled” comes up more than once, and both her husband and her mother (Amanda Wansa) are the types that can praise you in one breath, and make you feel like used whale poop in the next. Things improve when she finds a lover (Garcia) who has a past, a way with women, and a burning desire to return to Mexico. Helen wants to follow him, but decides it’s quicker if she bonks hubby rather than hang around for divorce court. The rest - well, read the tabloids.

This creepy, claustrophobic show relies on fascist fashion and a cold industrial sound track to emphasize Helen’s despair. She seeks freedom, but that requires a bit of cash, and all she collects as we go along is more and more baggage. Crowder’s George is a bit pompous and self-absorbed, but he never does anything to Helen that would begin to justify murder. I like the guy myself, and wouldn’t mind a round or two of mini golf with him. Garcia is excellent as The Lover - he never appears cheap or sleazy, but genuinely caring and genuinely uninterested in commitment. Rentschler’s Helen isn’t exactly sexy, but attractive enough if you focus on her hands and try to ignore her low self esteem. Her world is narrow, but the speakeasy scene broadens her and us. It holds one of the funnier performances where Andrew Clateman plays a man trying to pick up a boy in a speakeasy with a florid description of the joys of Amontillado. That last sip IS the sweetest, right?

There’s a rather elaborate set of notes from the director in the program for “Machinal.” While the director’s interpretation offers useful insight, I think the essence of the show is more straightforward: People become trapped in life, and lacking the heroic vigor to change while change is possible, the slide into lives of quite desperation. And then some of them go a step too far...

“Machinal” is a meaty, thought provoking drama that probably isn’t a great first date show. Save it for that all important LAST date.

For more information on UCF Conservatory Theatre, visit <http://www.theatre.ucf.edu>

This entry was posted on Monday, February 18th, 2008 at 1:15 am and is filed under Blogroll, Uncategorized, theater. You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2.0 feed. You can leave a response, or trackback from your own site.

<http://blogs.ink19.com/archikulture/2008/02/18/machinal/>

APPENDIX H: SOURCES

Figure 2: Actor Script Chart, Episode One

Figure 3: Actor Script Excerpt, Episode Two

Figure 4: Amanda Wansa as The Stenographer, Episode One

Figure 5: Amanda Wansa (Mother) and Brittney Rentschler (Helen), Episode Two

Figure 6: Helen in Episode Four

Figure 7: Helen (Brittney Rentschler) and Richard Roe (Ryan Garcia)

Figure 9: Helen (Brittney Rentschler) and Husband (Kyle Crowder), Episode Seven

Figure 10: Episode Eight

Figure 11: Helen's last moments with her mother, Episode Nine

Figure 13: Helen's final moments, Episode Nine

Figure 14: Helen's Execution (visual that corresponds with Media 18), Episode Nine

Machinal. By Sophie Treadwell. Dir. Julia Listengarten. Perf. Kyle Crowder, Ryan Garcia, Brittney Rentschler, and Amanda Wansa. UCF Conservatory Theatre, Orlando. 14 Feb 2008.

Figure 12: Ruth Snyder, at the moment of her execution

Renner, Joan. "Ruth Snyder: Date with Death" Online Posting. 17 Dec. 2007. 1 Feb. 2008.
<<http://1947project.com/ruthsnyderdatewithdeath>>

Figure 16: "It's a Privilege To Pee", Urinetown, mm. 65-79

Figure 17: "It's a Privilege to Pee", Urinetown, mm. 137 to 145 (Hollman PG)

Figure 18: "It's a Privilege To Pee", Urinetown, re-notate, mm. 65-75

Figure 19: "It's a Privilege to Pee", Urinetown, re-notated, mm. 137-147

Figure 20: Original "Why Did I Listen to that Man", Urinetown, mm. 137-145

Figure 21: "I See a River," Urinetown, mm. 107-114

Figure 22: "Run Freedom Run", Urinetown, measures 61-82

Figure 24: "Act One Finale, Urinetown, mm. 65-72

Figure 25: "It's a Privilege to Pee," Urinetown, mm. 179-180

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Figure 23: Excerpt from "A New Argentina", Evita, mm. 86 to 92

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Media 1: “Idioteque,” Radiohead

Media 2: “Idioteque,” Vitamin String Quartet

Media 3: Amanda Wansa’s combination of Radiohead’s “Idioteque” and Vitamin String Quartet’s “Idioteque”

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Media 4: Amanda Wansa’s combination of “Le Grande Tango” and Hollywood Edge sound effects

Media 6: Episode One Underscore, Machinal, UCF Conservatory Theatre

Media 7: Option One for Episode One Monologue:

Media 8: Option Two for Episode One Monologue:

Media 9: Option Three for Episode One Monologue

Media 10: Final Underscore for Episode One

Media 11: Transition from Episode One to Episode Two

Media 12: Episode Four Underscore, Machinal, UCF Conservatory Theater

Media 13: Episode Four Monologue Underscore, Machinal, UCF Conservatory Theatre

Media 16: End of Episode Seven Underscore

Media 17: Underscore for End of Episode Eight

Media 18: Underscore for the end of Episode Nine

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Media 14: “Cielito Lindo,” Solista Ensemble De Mexico, World Music Mexico

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Media 20: “Why Did I Listen to that Man,” Urinetown, UCF Conservatory Theater
Media 25: Alto melody line of “Urinetown,” Urinetown
Media 26: “It’s a Privilege to Pee,” Urinetown, performed by Amanda Wansa
Media 27: Video footage of “It’s a Privilege to Pee,” Urinetown, UCF Conservatory Theater
Media 28: “Run Freedom Run,” Urinetown, UCF Conservatory Theater
Media 29: “I See A River,” Urinetown, UCF Conservatory Theater

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