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Direction of the Musical: *A Year with Frog and Toad*

Sioux L. Stoeckle
Central Washington University

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Direction of the Musical: *A Year with Frog and Toad*

A Project Report

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

Theatre Productions Specialization

by

Sioux L. Stoeckle

Date of oral examination 13 July 2016

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies and Research

We hereby approve the project report of

Sioux L. Stoeckle

Candidate for the degree of Master of Arts:

Theatre Production

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

Date of Signature

Professor Brenda Hubbard, Committee Chair

Date of Signature

Professor Christina Barrigan

Date of Signature

Professor Michael Smith

Abstract

PROJECT REPORT

Direction of the Production *A Year with Frog and Toad*

Palo Verde College

Directed by

Sioux L. Stoeckle

May 19 – May 21, 2016

This project entailed the selection, background research and documentation, musical analysis, casting, direction, vocal coaching, and post-production analysis of Palo Verde College's production of Willie and Robert Reale's *A Year with Frog and Toad*. Documentation includes research and analysis of the play, its music, and an evaluation of the musical as a production vehicle for Palo Verde College at Blythe, CA. The analysis also includes a discussion as to the directorial vision of this production.

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies and Research

Final Examination of

Sioux L. Stoeckle

B. S. University of Redlands, 1981

M. A. California State University, Dominguez Hills, 1994

For the Degree of

Master of Arts

Theatre Production

Committee in Charge

Professor Brenda Hubbard

Professor Christina Barrigan

Professor Michael Smith

McConnell

Room 213

July 13, 2016

6:00 PM

Sioux L. Stoeckle

Courses presented for the Master's degree:

Course Number	Course Title	Number of Credits	Instructor	Quarter Completed
TH 510	Theatre Literature, Theory and Criticism I	4	Ball	Summer 2013
TH 521	Integ Drama Curr and Prog Dev: Program Development	4	Newhouse	Summer 2013
TH 536	Advanced Stage Movement	3	Bellah	Summer 2013
TH 541	Styles in Acting and Directing	3	Hubbard	Summer 2013
TH 565	Costuming Methods	3	McMillen	Summer 2013
TH 568	Lighting Methods	3	Barrigan	Summer 2013
TH 501	Introduction to Graduate Studies	1	Bellah	Summer 2014
TH 542	Musical Theatre Directing	4	Brown	Summer 2014
TH 583	Scenic and Property Methods	3	Barnett	Summer 2014
TH 544	Acting Styles Application	3	Smith	Summer 2014
TH 571	Design Methodology	3	Haniuk	Summer 2014
TH 511	Theatre Literature, Theory and Criticism II	4	Ball	Spring 2015
TH 540	Contemporary Directing	3	Hubbard	Summer 2015
TH 502	Introduction to the Creative Project	1	Hubbard	Summer 2015
TH 700	Master's Thesis Project	4	Hubbard	Summer 2016
	TOTAL CREDITS	46		

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank Ms. Denise Whittaker and Ms. Sheri Jones for encouraging me to pursue a degree in Theatre Arts. Once I began my studies, my husband, Jim Maxwell, was my strongest supporter and cheerleader as we traveled to Ellensburg each summer for three years. Having Jim and our Chihuahua along for the ride kept me grounded and healthy.

Certainly, all of the professors with whom I studied have been unstintingly helpful, kind, and encouraging. However, Ms. Brenda Hubbard, Dr. Jay Ball, Mr. Dave Barnett, Ms. Christina Barrigan, and Mr. Marc Haniuk gave of themselves generously as mentors as I began my journey into unfamiliar but exciting fields of study. I am most grateful for their patience and guidance as I have begun to explore new ways of teaching and learning. Thanks, folks.

Biographical Information

Undergraduate study in music and theatre:

California State University, Long Beach, Cerritos College, Long Beach City College,
Cloud County Community College, California State University, Stanislaus, Palo Verde
College

Undergraduate study in Business Administration:

B. S. Business Administration: University of Redlands, 1981

Graduate study in English:

Certificate, Rhetoric & Composition: California State University, Dominguez Hills, 1994

M.A. English: Literature option: California State University, Dominguez Hills, 1994

Graduate study in Theatre Arts:

Central Washington University, 2013-2016

Teaching Experience:

Rio Hondo College, Coast Community College District, El Camino College, Long Beach
City College, Cloud County Community College, Palo Verde College

Directing Experience:

Founder and Director, A/P Players, Rockwell International
Palo Verde College

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Audition Packet: Cast and Crew Information

Palo Verde College Theatre Arts 2015-2016 Brochure

Palo Verde College Theatre Arts Production Handbook

Newspaper Articles

Program

Flyers

Production Course Syllabi

DVD: First Dress Rehearsal May 16, 2016

DVD: First Performance May 19, 2016

Photographs from May 20, 2016 Performance

SECTION 1

PRELIMINARY

INFORMATION

Stoeckle 1

**MASTER'S THESIS PROJECT
PLAYSCRIPT APPROVAL FORM**

(PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE READ THE PLAY SELECTION CRITERIA SECTION IN YOUR GRADUATE HANDBOOK)

Student Name Sioux Stoeckle **Anticipated Production Dates** May 19-21, 2016

SCRIPT TITLE A Year with Frog and Toad

PLAYWRIGHT(S) [If musical, list lyricist/composer] Willie Reale/Robert Reale

NUMBER OF ACTS 1 APPROXIMATE TOTAL PLAYING TIME 1 HOURS 0 MIN.

CAST (fill in with the appropriate numbers)

MEN minimum 2 WOMEN minimum 2 CHILDREN possibly 1 but probably 0 OVER 40 5-18 possible but not required

ROLES REQUIRING PEOPLE OF COLOR 5-18 possible but not required ROLES COULD DOUBLE See "Casting Concerns"

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAST Between 5 and 18

OTHER CASTING CONCERNS: My goal is to cast all 18 roles using different actors instead of doubling, but the show will work with as few as 5 people. Actors may be any gender, ethnicity, body type, or age (generally 18 and above). In fact, a multi-ethnic company, rather than a mostly white male cast, is preferred. It is possible that a talented, mature child could play Young Frog. However, actors cast must be able to sing the parts in the keys as written, as we will not be able to transpose the prerecorded music.

ARTISTIC STAFF (check those needed for this play or production idea) double click on grey box; select checked to mark or use a pen

MUSICAL DIRECTOR DANCE CHOREOGRAPHER FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER
 DIALECT COACH SPECIALTY HIRE (specify what kind)
 ORCHESTRA/BAND (specify what size) _____

Will you be fulfilling any of the above? No If so, which?

Will a guest artist be fulfilling any of the above? No If so, which?

SCENERY/PROPS (check those needed for this play or your concept of the play)

UNIT SET? YES NO NUMBER OF LOCATIONS 6

HISTORICAL PERIOD fantasy but natural world GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION A natural setting near a stream

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SET CONCERNS OR SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

Black rehearsal cubes will probably be used instead of set pieces. Some flats/drops may be used to frame the proscenium.

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF PROPS 31 PERIOD Contemporary but some will be over-sized

DIFFICULT OR UNUSUAL PROPS? YES NO
DESCRIBE:

WEAPONS OR FIREARMS?
DESCRIBE:

YES

NO

HOW MANY _____

Stoeckle 2

COSTUMES (CHECK THOSE NEEDED FOR THIS PLAY OR YOUR CONCEPT OF THE PLAY)

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF COSTUMES PER CHARACTER 3

HISTORICAL PERIOD Fantasy but natural world
SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

SEASON All 4

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHOICE OF SCRIPT

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS SCRIPT PRODUCED? YES

NO

HAVE YOU DONE THIS PLAY BEFORE? BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PRODUCTION:

No.

WHY SHOULD YOUR ORGANIZATION PRODUCE THIS SCRIPT?

1. A family-friendly show will draw an audience from a community with little exposure to theatre.
2. A musical will draw an audience from a community with little exposure to theatre.
3. A show with a variable number of roles makes allowance for not knowing how many actors will show up for auditions.
4. A lower level of technical difficulty (particularly sets and costumes) is preferred for a first-year director in a new program with no other theatre arts faculty or technical support personnel.
5. A high-quality pre-recorded accompaniment with full orchestration is available for this show and version.

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS (IF ANY) TO DOING THIS PRODUCTION AT YOUR SCHOOL?

1. The director is not aware of the skill level (or number) of people likely to audition and commit to the schedule.
2. Staging a musical increases the level of complexity.
3. It has not yet been determined if the college's newly hired music instructor will be given an assignment as musical director or vocal coach. If no music director or vocal coach is hired, the rehearsal schedule will become much tighter.
4. There are no other theatre arts faculty or staff available to assist the director.

PLEASE GIVE A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE SCRIPT ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER AND ATTACH.

PLEASE INCLUDE A COPY OF THE SCRIPT FOR THE THESIS COMMITTEE TO REVIEW.

SUBMITTED BY: (Printed Name) Sioux L. Stoeckle Date Submitted: 10 August 2015

(Signature)

Thesis Chair Approval: _____ Date Approved : _____

Thesis Committee Members Approval: _____ Date Approved : _____

Graduate Coordinator Approval: _____ Date Approved : _____

Please note: Signature has been redacted due to privacy concerns.

*Synopsis of A Year with Frog and Toad: Theatre for Young Audiences Version**SPRING*

Friends Frog and Toad are hibernating in bed when three birds fly in and sing about the coming spring. Frog and Toad meet in their “dreams,” then Frog wakes up and tries to get Toad out of bed. After Frog tricks Toad into thinking it is May, both arise and greet the spring. The next day, Toad is sad because he never gets any letters. Frog writes a letter and gives it to Snail to deliver to Toad.

SUMMER

Frog and Toad go to the riverbank to swim. Toad is embarrassed to be seen in his bathing suit, and Turtle, Lizard, and Mouse poke fun at Toad. Later, Snail is seen continuing his faithful delivery of Frog’s letter to Toad. Next, Frog visits Toad’s house and they bake cookies together. Mouse tells Toad how to know when the cookies are done. The birds arrive, and everyone gobbles up all of the cookies.

FALL

The birds fly south for the winter, promising to return the following spring. Frog and Toad both secretly rake the leaves in the other’s yard as a surprise, but the squirrels undo their work by messing up the piles of leaves. Days pass, and Toad visits Frog during an evening thunderstorm. Frog tells Toad a scary story (with a happy ending).

WINTER

Snail, now in winter attire, continues his letter delivery. Frog and Toad ride a sled down a hill. Frog falls off, which frightens and angers Toad. Snail enters (finally) with Frog’s letter for Toad. Toad reads the letter, which tells him that Frog is only happy when Toad is happy. Toad forgives Frog. Snail celebrates his success at delivering Frog’s letter to Toad. On Christmas Eve,

Toad is at home in front of the fire waiting for Frog. Toad worries that Frog may be in danger, so Toad prepares himself to rescue his friend. Frog, however, was late because he was wrapping a present (a new clock) for Toad. Frog and Toad go to bed to hibernate for the winter.

SPRING

The birds return now that winter is over. Frog and Toad awaken from hibernation, and a new year has begun.

Libretto Vocal Book

A
Year
With

Frog and Toad

Theatre For Young Audiences Version

Music
by
Robert Reale

Book and Lyrics
by
Willie Reale

Based on the books by **Arnold Lobel**

NOTICE: DO NOT DEFACE!

Should you find it necessary to mark cues or cuts, use a soft black lead pencil only.

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Citation:

Reale, Willie, et al. Libretto Vocal Book: A Year with Frog and Toad Theatre For Young Audiences Version. Musical Theatre International, 2002.

<https://www.mtishows.com/a-year-with-frog-and-toad-tya>