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Silent and Accessible Theatre

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SILENT AND ACCESSIBLE THEATRE

NICOLE LINE

HONORS PROJECT

Submitted to the Honors College
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Silent and Accessible Theatre

When it comes to theatre, one often thinks of long, multi-act plays with lots of spoken dialogue. While this is the most common style of theatrical performance, there is more to theatre than staged language. I wanted to challenge the stereotypes many people have of theatre and introduce audiences to new perceptions of the artform. When deciding my project's concept this past year, I brainstormed many different ways to include all areas of my studies here at BGSU including theatre, dance, and American Sign Language (ASL). I am very passionate about these aspects and wanted my project to reflect that. After doing some broad research and conversing with honors theatre alumni, I came up with the idea to direct a silent play. I define silent plays as plays without spoken or unspoken (i.e. signed) dialogue, music, or any sound at all. By directing a completely silent play, my project would be theatrical and movement based (reflecting elements of dance) while also being accessible to Deaf and hard-of-hearing audiences. I took this idea of silent theatre and let that propel my research.

I. Research Questions

My primary research question for this project was: How can a silent play tell a compelling story? This is where my concept was ignited and from there, I began researching as much as I could about silent theatre, wordless plays, pantomime, silent films, etc. As I found sources about wordless dramas and silent theatre, I began to base my research around the question: How do silent plays communicate with audiences? I explored the different methods and techniques used by actors to act out scenarios, become characters, and tell stories without words. Another question that propelled my research was: How can theatre be Deaf accessible? I researched how theatre can be accessible to Deaf audiences and what that might look like in different situations. This led me to conclude that silent theatre is a great example of how body

language and movement is just as important, if not more important, than words when telling a compelling story.

II. Literature Review

As a preface, I think it is important to identify and define pantomime. Pantomime is a form of silent theatre that has been around for centuries. A basic definition of the artform is silent theatre that uses movement and gestures to tell a story. Beginning as far back as the eras of Mesoamerica and Ancient Egypt, pantomime and movement have been foundational components of theatre. The stereotypical image of a mime who is stuck in a glass box is a modern performance style of pantomime. However, there are various styles of pantomime that differ across time, locations, and cultures. For example, Ancient Roman pantomime featured one or two solo male dancers/actors reenacting cultural myths and legends (Hunt 169-171) while early English Commedia dell'arte featured a troupe of stock characters performing different scenarios in which actors would play the same characters in each story/situation (Rudlin 7-8). The idea that movement alone can tell a story is not new, but what pantomime lacks is the realism that contemporary silent theatre can bring. In *A History of Pantomime*, Broadbent suggests that,

To trace the original origin of Pantomime, or Mimicry, we must go to Nature herself where we can find this practised [sic] by her from the beginning of all time as freely, and as fully, as ever it was, or ever will be, upon the stages of our theatres... The very name Pantomime itself signifies Nature as Pan was amongst the Ancients, the allegorical god of Nature, the shepherd of Arcadia, and with Mimos, meaning an imitator, we have, in the combination of these two words, "an imitator of Nature," and from whence we derive the origin of our word Pantomime (Broadbent Chapter 1).

While this source is slightly outdated, having been published in 1901, I found it to be a compelling representation of what pantomime is and its history. Pantomime is imitation and imitation is often physicalized with indication which can be briefly defined as using overemphasized gestures to clarify and communicate a meaning. Pantomime actors might mime and indicate things that are not physically there or are not part of material reality apart from the world of the play. In realism, actors try to avoid indicating because realism aims to portray real life on stage. A play adhering to realism looks, to an audience member, like a piece of life plucked from the real world and put onstage. People do not indicate in real life; gestures are natural and while they can have or give meaning, they are often not overemphasized to account for lack of speech. The more I understood the art of pantomime, the better I was able to format my project around a more realistic style of silent theatre. Therefore, I refocused my research on contemporary wordless plays rather than pantomime.

In addition to pantomime, dance is a form of storytelling that does not (often) use words or language of any kind. A notable moment in dance history was 17th century France with the integration of ballet (Gainor 48). Ballet is still one of the most widespread dance styles, especially with the popularity of *The Nutcracker*, to the music of E. T. A. Hoffmann, which is a beloved holiday tradition to many. Ballets and other styles of dance from various cultures and eras have traditionally been put to music. However, over time, with the emergence of different styles of dance, the artform has transformed to incorporate choreography put to spoken word, sound effects, and other audible sources. As a subgenre of performing arts, dance is closely related to theatre and they often overlap in musicals, some plays, and other theatrical traditions or rituals from around the world. My background in various dance styles - jazz, modern,

contemporary, pas de deux (partnering), tap, and ballet - give me a strong foundation for staging movement.

Through my research on the topic of silent plays, I found many valuable and credible sources about wordless theatre and acting through body language. Firstly, *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition* by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau exposed me to a world of silent, ensemble exercises and techniques for practicing and working with body language and movement. This book explains how movement can be used to portray different emotions and create atmosphere. The chapter “Viewpoints and Composition in Contemporary Theater” elaborates on how movement and body language can tell stories and add different elements of personality or character to theatrical performances. The different elements of Viewpoints include tempo, duration, kinesthetic response, repetition, shape, gesture, architecture, spatial relationship, and topography. Apart from the book itself, I was able to find a video of a dance group doing a Viewpoints warmup. It gave me a visual to go along with what Bogart and Landau described in their book. The video is a good reference to how movement can impact an ensemble and how it can be used as communication without any words. I also referenced this video to lead this same Viewpoints exercise at my open auditions to see how the auditionees moved naturally in an ensemble setting.

Jennifer Buckley’s “‘Symbols in Silence’: Edward Gordon Craig and the Engraving of Wordless Drama” is a peer-reviewed journal article about Edward Gordon Craig’s life and works. It specifically analyzes his book *On the Art of the Theatre (1911)* and describes how Craig explored the idea of silent theatre. When planning and writing his production of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Craig stated, “I should. . . like everything to be conveyed without words, by the movements of the actors illustrated by music” (Buckley). Craig’s show was never produced and

only exists on paper. However, it is proof that wordless drama (distinct from pantomime) isn't entirely a "new idea", but has been an area of experimentation in the theatre community for quite some time.

Another analysis of wordless theatre is Patricia Boyette and Phillip B. Zarrilli's peer-reviewed journal article "Psychophysical training, physical actions, and performing Beckett: 'playing chess on three levels simultaneously'" Zarrilli's section on Samuel Beckett's *Act Without Words I* breaks down Beckett's play and analyzes his word choices for each described action. Beckett uses descriptive language and physical actions to tell the story, rather than spoken words. He writes his "script" as if as a novel rather than a play script with dialogue and stage directions. This novelesque setup describes the actions and the scene without quotes or dialogue for the actor to say. The actor and director then interpret the descriptions and bring them to life on the stage. Zarrilli's analysis clarified some of the technical and practical aspects of Beckett's work like the importance of impulse and relationships to objects and space/environment. Beckett believes that an actor must rely on the natural human sensation of impulse to drive the scene and make each action meaningful and realistic (74). He also suggests that the actor must have relationships with the other actors, the scenery/environment, and the objects around them to create the sensation that everything the audience is seeing/experiencing is authentic and real. According to Beckett (as explained by Zarrilli), strong relationships read well to audiences and make it easier for the "magic of theatre" to happen. Additionally, good actors who establish strong relationships and have a full understanding of impulse can really bring a script and character to life (75). I will be further exploring these elements of impulse and relationships in my final production of *The Train* by exploring these techniques with my actors and establishing relationships early on in the rehearsal process.

In addition to peer-reviewed articles and published books about wordless plays, I researched multiple wordless play scripts including Beckett's *Act Without Words I* and *Act Without Words II*, Irene L. Pynn's *The Train*, Mathew Bourne's *Play Without Words*, and Peter Handke's *The Hour We Knew Nothing Of Each Other*. These plays gave me a glimpse into what silent theatre could be. Each one gave insight into the possibilities of wordless theatre and how to analyze a movement based play.

One of the most important sources I utilized was a YouTube video of an interview with Deaf West's *Spring Awakening* choreographer, Spencer Liff. In the interview, Liff explained how he was able to choreograph Deaf and Hearing actors to be in sync with their ASL signing, dancing, and singing. Liff described "pedestrian cues" which are visual cues that go undetected by the audience because they look like natural movement. For example, a cue can be a simple shift in weight from one foot to another or tucking hair behind your ear. These pedestrian cues were used by Liff throughout *Spring Awakening* and his attention to detail had to be precise. I used this idea when blocking/staging my production of *The Train*. I dedicated an entire rehearsal just to establishing the pedestrian cues which I just called "visual cues". I had the actors try different things that felt natural for their characters in that moment and I chose the one that seemed the most natural and undetectable by the audience. These visual cues were cues for the train movements (stage directions that called for both actors leaning/moving in sync to indicate a breaking/accelerating train). In the end, we had a set of visual cues that were timed out to keep the actors in sync without drawing excess attention. The interview with Spencer Liff was very helpful for me to inform my choices on visual cues and give me a better understanding of what movement vocabulary to draw from.

In general, theatre does not play a large part in Deaf culture. Traditional theatre, other than pantomime, is not typically accessible to Deaf audiences. However, Deaf culture has their own, exclusive form of storytelling called Visual Vernacular (VV for short). VV is a mixture of ASL, body language/movement, facial expressions, and gestures to visually bring a story to life. It is often used to recreate an event or scene with one's body and hands. A news article from The Guardian (London) reports that "VV has been around for decades and is more widespread in Europe and the US, where there are festivals, showcases and the ASL (American Sign Language) Slam, the equivalent of an MC battle" (Winship). As a hearing person, I do not partake in Visual Vernacular as it is not my area of expertise nor my culture but there is a lot to learn about this Deaf performance form that can be applied to any kind of theatre.

Deaf culture may not have traditionally involved theatre but in recent years, some theatre companies have started to adapt plays to be Deaf accessible in regards to both audience members and the actors themselves. Deaf West Theatre and the National Theatre of the Deaf are two theatre companies that perform Deaf plays using ASL instead of spoken English. Most of their actors are Deaf or hard of hearing but they also showcase hearing actors that use English alongside ASL to make their performances accessible to non-signing (ASL) hearing audiences as well. The Deaf West website describes the organization in one brief statement:

Committed to innovation, collaboration, training, and activism, Deaf West is the artistic bridge between the Deaf and hearing worlds. Founded in Los Angeles in 1991, Deaf West engages artists and audiences in unparalleled theater and media experiences inspired by Deaf culture and the expressive power of sign language, weaving ASL with spoken English to create a seamless ballet of movement and voice (deafwest.org).

Organizations like Deaf West and the National Theatre of the Deaf are making huge strides in accessible theatre and combining the two worlds of Deaf and hearing people. Knowing that these organizations exist and are creating Deaf accessible theatre encouraged me throughout my directing process. However, what I wanted my project to do differently was to create a performance that did not use ASL or any dialogue at all so that communication was through movement and body language alone.

III. Methodology

I approached this project using the methodology of “Practice as a Research” as well as traditional modes such as text-based research to inform my decisions. Practice as a research is a methodology that focuses on the combined effects of theory and practice as a form of research. In *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts*, Smith and Dean say that, “practice can result in research insights, such as those that arise out of making a creative work and/or in the documentation and theorisation of that work... practice-led research can develop unique processes for creative work and for research” (2). Similar to scientists in a lab, practice as a research is one way that theatrical artists like myself can come to conclusions about their theories through active practice. I was able to put my text-based research into practice to supplement my practice based approach of directing, and showcase a performance as a conclusion. I used the various forms of research to influence my directing, decision making, and problem solving. I worked through challenges and learned a lot throughout the process. These discoveries and experiences are notated in my process journal (see appendix I).

After researching silent theatre, I wanted to expand upon my findings by directing a silent play myself. Up until the first week of April, I had not decided whether I would direct a pre-existing wordless play, or write one myself to produce. I did not have too many choices for

already published works due to the fact that wordless theatre is rather experimental and not mainstream. I narrowed down my top picks to *Act Without Words I* by Samuel Beckett and *The Train* by Irene L. Pynn. I was also still considering writing my own play. After much discussion with my advisor, I concluded that I wanted to direct *The Train* by Irene L. Pynn as part of BGSU's 2021-2022 Elsewhere season.

This production that I directed combined multiple elements of my research. I drew from the knowledge gained and resources I acquired during my semester of HNRS 4980 to produce and direct a piece of theatre that had no dialogue making it accessible to hearing and Deaf audiences alike as well as non-English speakers and audience members for whom English is not their first language. Not only was this play Deaf and hard-of-hearing accessible, but since it was purely movement based, language barriers were not an issue. While movement can carry cultural connotations, I did not feel that in this case those connotations would be restrictive to cross-cultural comprehension. Directly after both performances of my production, I held a talk-back session during which audience members - my peers, professors, advisors, and others - were able to ask me and my cast questions about my project and/or the show itself. I had two interpreters at the performances and talk-backs to accommodate for any Deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals that were in attendance. By doing this, Deaf and hard-of-hearing voices were also included in the talk-backs.

I have included my process journal and other documents at the end of this essay which further elaborate on my directing process and reflect on the challenges that came across and how I worked through them. My process journal also goes into detail of what was discussed in the post-performance talk-backs and how I learned from this project. The other documents give

information on the “business” of directing a play at the college level and what steps I had to take to make it happen.

IV. Execution

In BGSU’s Department of Theatre and Film, undergraduate students interested in directing can apply to do so as part of the Elsewhere season via a proposal process. The Elsewhere season is different from the mainstage season which usually includes fully produced plays and musicals. The Elsewhere season gives opportunities to undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty/staff to direct and work on shows without technical elements, costume and scene shop support, or a budget (except for the funds required to purchase the performance rights). All set pieces, props, costumes, etc. are provided by the director and cast themselves. This is exactly the kind of opportunity and setting in which I wanted to produce my honor’s project because I would be able to explore directing a silent play with a full cast but without the stresses of a full-fledged production. It was perfect for the academic and experimental needs of my project.

Once my Elsewhere proposal was approved, BGSU’s theatre department obtained the rights to the show and I was assigned performance dates. I was given the dates of October 1st and 2nd for two evening performances. I then began the pre-production process which included script analysis, scheduling, reserving audition/rehearsal spaces, and other preparatory actions. From there, I recruited a stage manager for the production and together we scheduled an audition date to hold open auditions. I formatted the audition like a workshop in which I could assess how each auditionee worked in an ensemble setting, how naturally they moved, and how they responded to silent tension. Once the show was cast, I scheduled three weeks of rehearsal, including tech-week (the week leading up to the final performances in which costumes, technical

elements, and the performance space are introduced into the process). I planned for rehearsals to be from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. five days a week during those three weeks. I did not plan to use the entire three hours every rehearsal but I made sure to reserve the space for those times in case we did need it. We had two dress rehearsals before opening night and were able to have a capacity of forty-six audience members at each performance. To adhere to COVID protocols, we used a Sign-Up Genius to control the number of people in attendance each evening. Both performances were followed by a talk-back.

V. Results

Following the performances and talk-backs, I gained a strong understanding of what the audiences took from the performances and this project. The biggest take-away for me was the feedback I got from the Deaf audience members in attendance. They gave me their honest opinions about the performance and the way my project affects members of the Deaf community. They were very supportive of me and this project and encouraged me to take it further in efforts to make accessible theatre more mainstream. I learned a lot through this process about being a director, using detailed blocking and choreography, and how to make theatre more accessible. Accessible theatre doesn't need to be difficult to achieve, it just takes time research, and an awareness of how it affects the audience and the formatting in which the performance is conducted. It also takes resources, but they do not have to be expensive. Research can build connections and make resources easier and cheaper to obtain.

With this being my official directorial debut, I have grown in my practice as a director and established my directing process. There are definitely some things I would change or do differently if given the chance, but nothing major. Mostly, I would pay even closer attention to detail and add additional strong moments that would give more insight into the characters

lives/personalities. I would give more rehearsal time to building the characters' backgrounds and working on each character's physicality (where they carry tension in their bodies, how they walk, etc.). I would also be more conscious of how props and lighting give information. Perhaps I could flicker the lights whenever the train accelerated or braked to go along with the actors' physical shifts/leaning. Overall, I am very happy with how the show played out and the final product I presented to the audiences.

VI. Conclusion: Implications for Future Research and Practice

With the conclusion of this production, I am left with some lingering questions. One question is: Did not having music or sound effects impact hearing audiences? I was primarily focused on creating a Deaf accessible play by taking away any sound cues or the need for sounds entirely that I did not particularly address how the silence would affect the hearing members of the audience. I received no feedback from hearing audience members during the talk-backs about the silence being detrimental besides it being confusing and/or awkward at the start. Those who gave this feedback then went on to say that they quickly got used to it and it did not take away from their understanding or enjoyment of the performance. However, this play was only ten-minutes long; maybe a longer play performed in silence would begin to push the line towards awkward or even distracting for hearing audiences. Hearing people are so used to ambient noise and often rely on it for subconscious information about the space/environment, situation, etc. Does the lack of this information from ambient noise take away from the hearing audience members experience? Can Deaf and hearing people ever have the same experience at all? My original goal for this project was to give Deaf and hearing audience members the same viewing experience but now, at the conclusion of my project, I wonder if the "same" experience can ever be achieved given the different ways members of each group (as well as additional groups)

experience and process the world around them. These are all very interesting concepts that I would love to explore more in the future.

Another question I am left with is: How does lack of sound change things for children? Does this being a silent play make it more accessible to children (and adults) with special needs; e.g. autism? This leads into the idea of sensory-friendly theatre which is becoming a more common practice in theatre, especially in children's theatre organizations. One theatre company that is adapting sensory friendly theatre is the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. According to their website, kennedy-center.org,

Sensory-friendly performances are designed to create a welcoming and comfortable arts experience for people with autism or other disabilities.

Modifications [sic] include include [sic]: lower sound level, especially for startling or loud sounds, lights remain on at a low level in the theater during the performance, a reduction of strobe lighting and lighting focused on the audience... designated quiet areas within the theatre, [and more]

(kennedy-center.org).

Sensory theatre gives all children the opportunity to experience and enjoy theatre. This is a concept I could take even further as I am interested in pursuing children's theatre and making theatre accessible to all at any stage of life.

With all of these options for accessibility, there are still limitations for the visually impaired (both children and adults). One way to combat this is to turn visual performances into auditory ones where audience members could listen to a speech or music adapted version of the performance in real time during the show. This would be a challenge but it is an issue I think is important to address. Accessible theatre needs to be accessible to ALL, not just most. I am sure

that there are various options for making performing arts accessible to the blind and visually impaired that I am not currently aware of, but I feel it is important to have some possible solutions brainstormed in order to maintain an awareness of my production and project's implications.

Moving forward, I would love to produce and direct this play at regional or other mainstream theatres. I want to open this accessible play to a larger population of people, specifically Deaf communities. This project has lit a passion in me for accessible theatre and I would love to pursue it further wherever life takes me. Approaching graduation, I will be looking into Deaf theatre companies and the roles that hearing people play in them. I would love to direct this play again, maybe multiple times or as a touring production, and I would be very interested in directing another silent play or even adapting existing plays with dialogue into silent plays. I am very passionate about this project and I think it is very important. Accessible theatre is not as mainstream as it needs to be and I hope that my efforts will make an impact even in the smallest way.

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Appendix I. Process Journal

Below is the journal I kept throughout the production process. I reflected on the challenges I came across, how I overcame them, what my experiences were, and how I felt about the project at different points in the process. This journal also serves as a thorough description and explanation of everything I did to produce and direct this silent play.

The Train by Irene L. Pynn
Dir. Nicole Line
SM Grace Ranard
Process Journal

9/8/21 - Wednesday

Auditions - Workshop Style

I held my open auditions like a workshop. I had everyone come at once and work as a group and “audition” simultaneously. I made a Sign-Up Genius earlier in the week for people to sign up for the audition to have a head count for both my preparedness and for COVID restrictions. 21 people signed up, 18 attended the audition in person, and one person sent in a video audition. I watched the video recording prior to the start of auditions so I could have them in my mind during the audition/workshop and consider them for a role.

My goal going into the audition/workshop was to find the two people with the best chemistry, that’s basically it. The script does not specify the two characters’ genders, age, ethnicity, etc. so I was going into the audition not knowing exactly what I was looking for. This was stressful but also gave me a lot of freedom to pick whoever I felt would be best fit to work together in a fictional relationship. I did not ask my auditionees to bring resumes, headshots, or prepare anything because those were secondary to my decision making. I told everyone at the start of the audition that I was choosing my cast based on chemistry and natural movement, not on talent or experience like in a typical audition.

As people began to arrive at the audition room (Wolfe 203), I played a video of a dance troupe executing a Viewpoints exercise. The exercise focused on ensemble movement that changes as individuals make choices. The rules are to move in unison but if someone changes a movement, adds a sound, changes pace, etc., everyone must then follow to become unison again. This must be done without any language communication. After the video ended, the audition officially began.

I introduced myself and my stage manager, Grace. I also gave a run-down of what my project is about, why I am doing it, and my vision for the play is. I then explained the Viewpoints exercise, referencing the video when needed, and instructed everyone to begin the exercise. I told them to make strong choices and let go of judgement. As they did the exercise, I took notes on the people whom I perceived to move naturally and, to my opinion, without judgement. This went on for about ten minutes before I stopped them and we discussed the exercise.

I got a lot of responses from the group about how the exercise was fun and how they had learned a lot from doing it even just once. We talked about how some people became leaders while others became followers. After a short discussion, I had them do the exercise again, this time focusing on doing movements that might seem a bit strange or bold. I encouraged them to make even stronger choices and to continue to ignore the judgemental parts of their minds.

After another ten minutes of them doing the Viewpoints exercise and me taking notes, we discussed it once more. Overall, the auditionees enjoyed the exercise and applied it to their own

acting. This was interesting to me as the facilitator of this workshop setting. It was very cool to hear that my leading of this exercise was helpful to the majority of the group. We talked a bit about visual cues and how they are important, especially for a silent play. We connected visual cues to the Viewpoints exercise and further discussed how these ideas can be implemented elsewhere in theatre, dance, etc.

I gave the group a water and bathroom break before starting the next part of the audition. I had everyone choose a partner to work with at first. I then had them stare into each others' eyes, without talking, moving their bodies, etc. I asked them to be as relaxed yet present and energized as they could. I walked around and observed how each person reacted to this kind of tension and took note of who showed visible signs of awkwardness, uncomfortableness, or any other noticeable reactions. These aren't necessarily bad things, I just wanted to see how people might do in high tension/awkward acting situations like the ones in the play. This went on for about five to ten minutes before I had them relax and take a short break. I then paired them up with new partners to maintain eye contact for another five to ten minutes as I took similar notes. We did this about four times, each time with different partners, and I slowly pieced together who I thought had good chemistry. With the last set of pairings, I asked each pair to pose like a couple for a "family photo". With everyone's permission, I took a picture of each pairing so I could reference photos to put faces with names in case I forgot later on. Most pairings came up with cute, clever, and funny poses which made the pictures more interesting and made the whole process more fun and light. By the end of the last eye-contact exercise, I had a list of people who I was considering for the play and a list of people who I had to sadly say no to. I released those on the "no" list and gave those on the "maybe" list another quick water/bathroom break. Before people left, however, I made it clear that I am grateful for all of them for being interested in my play and for attending the audition workshop. I thanked them for coming and making it a very enjoyable experience for me and others.

With the nine remaining auditionees, I had them improvisationally act out part of a scene from the play. I described the setting (the subway train car) and placed one black box to use as a set piece (subway bench). I assigned the auditionees to be either Person 1 or Person 2, some of them played both roles, with different scene partners. I gave each auditionee a different character description to give them more to work with. Two at a time, I had them perform a short, silent improv scene of the moment when the two characters see each other for the first time and feel the first spark of love. We did this until everyone had gone at least once. I took notes on any chemistry I noticed and gave each person and each pairing a letter grade (like in school). I did this for clarification for myself. It was the easiest and quickest way to clearly mark who I thought had great chemistry and which two people looked good together. After everyone had gone at least once, I had four pairings go at the same time, with one person sitting out at the start. As they did their silent improv scenes, I walked around taking notes and giving more letter grades. I also switched out different people with others and had the person sitting out switch with someone in a scene, etc. I eventually got to a pairing set-up that I felt was really strong. I wrote these final pairs down and gave them final letter grades for my clarity.

I wanted to know a little bit more about what these nine people have done in the past and whether they have any experience in silent theatre, dance, or other movement based things. I asked them to wait in the hall. Grace, my stage manager, brought them into the room one at a time for a short “interview”. I asked them to list off any related experience they might have and I also wanted to know if they have ever done any partner work in dance (pas de deux) or in other similar situations. All nine auditionees have had various theatrical experiences and at least some basic dance experience. This helped me to understand that all nine of them would do just fine in an often stressful environment with only a three-week rehearsal time-frame. In the end, the interviews were only useful for clarifying that all nine people I was considering were solid casting choices no matter what I did decide.

After the interviews, I asked the nine remaining auditionees back into the room. I further thanked them for coming and for being valuable assets to my project and this production. I released them for the evening and then discussed casting with my stage manager, Grace. I asked for her thoughts on the nine auditions I held-back. I agreed with most of what she had to say and we discussed why I wanted specific people over others based on what I saw in their auditions. It only took about fifteen minutes of discussion for me to come to a conclusion. I decided to cast Kayleigh Hahn as Person 1 and Maddie Hatton as Person 2. I typed up the cast list announcement, proofread it a few times, then sent it out to the auditionees and the Theatre/Film/Dance department email list for everyone to see and be informed. Just like that, my show was cast!

The audition process overall was very stressful for me because I had no clue what I was looking for going into it. I have been on the casting side of productions before but with those shows, we had more flushed out character descriptions and parameters to cast off of. This was so ambiguous which allowed for my complete creative freedom, but it made casting ten times harder. During the auditions, I actually acquired a headache because of how much hard, critical thinking I was doing. It was very stressful for me. Yes, I still had fun and enjoyed the experience, but I was not prepared for how difficult of a decision I was making. Additionally, the auditionees were all so talented and responded very well to the exercises that they made it no easier. I saw something worthwhile in every auditionee and I could see so many strong possibilities for casting and for the show. Each auditionee sparked a new character idea in my mind and it became rather overwhelming to have that many different characters compiled in my head at once. It was a unique and new experience that I definitely learned from. It was stressful and difficult, giving me a headache, but I had a lot of fun with it as well. I am grateful for this experience and I would definitely do it again if given the chance. Hopefully the rest of this process will be as enjoyable as well (perhaps not as stressful and headache inducing, though).

9/13/21 - Monday

Rehearsal #1 - First Rehearsal

In this first rehearsal, I took the cast through some of the research I had done and read through my project proposal. I framed the show and gave context for how it fits into my Honor’s

Project as a whole and why I made the choices I made (choice of show, choice of topic, etc.). We then watched a video recording of the play being performed as part of the Seoul 10-minute play competition. I explained how I interpreted the performance, pointed out the things I really liked or felt inspired by and I also pointed out the things that I felt didn't work that I would want to change/work through. For example, Person 1 in the video performance made some gestures that I thought were overdone and unrealistic. They seemed more like comedic pantomime which is what I am avoiding in my rendition of the play and for the purposes of my project. Then, I had the cast do a read through of the script which turned into more discussion of directing choices and script analysis. I then led them through my director's givens to establish the show's setting (location, date, time of day, season of the year, weather, etc.). I walked them through the play's plot structure (inciting incident, climax, resolution, conflict). We also began character analysis and I gave the cast homework to come up with fitting names for their characters and backstory details including where they grew up, where they live now, where they work, their relationship history, and their favorite book or music. After brainstorming some developmental ideas and getting everyone's wheels turning, I had the four of us (me, two cast members, stage manager) play the card game "Kemps". I chose to play Kemps because it involves visual cues. The way the game works is that there are teams of two who sit across from each other and have a visual cue/physical motion. The goal is to get 4-of-a-kind by drawing and discarding cards in the center. Once a player has gotten 4-of-a-kind, they signal to their teammate (via visual cue) to call out "Kemps!" to win. However, if the other teammate catches them doing their cue (guessing at what it is), they can call "Kemps" and win instead. This game is practice for how small and unnoticeable visual cues can be while still being effectively communicative. Also, it was a fun way to start off the rehearsal process!

9/14/21 - Tuesday

Rehearsal #2 - First Blocking Rehearsal

For this first blocking rehearsal, I went through the original script and made a basic outline of the movement and plot. Then, I lead the cast through step by step blocking. I made decisions as I went and saw what worked and what needed fixed/changed. We established entrances and exits as well as the overall sequence of events. We skipped the "dance sequence" - as I am calling it - and saved it for the next rehearsal. This blocking process lasted about two hours. Once we had a very general rough draft of the blocking, the actors walked through it as I narrated it. My stage manager also recorded it. After rehearsal, on my own time, I used the recording to type out a "script" with all of the stage directions. I brought a copy of this "blocking script" to the next rehearsal.

9/15/21 - Wednesday

Rehearsal #3 - Dance Sequence Rehearsal

For today's rehearsal, I passed out the typed "blocking script" to the cast and stage manager. We then worked on blocking/choreographing the "dance sequence". Before we began

dancing/established the dance sequence movement, I had my two actresses do an intimacy exercise. This exercise helped them to clearly know each other's boundaries of where they are not allowed to touch during the partnering/intimate blocking. I reassured them that they would not be any more intimate than resting a head on a shoulder, holding hands, and slow dancing in very close, touching, proximity. They both gave consent and made it clear that these actions did not cross any of their boundaries. We were then able to move forward.

I came into rehearsal with a rough idea of what I wanted but I needed to see it in action to really make decisions. We went piece by piece and figured out what looked best and what worked with my two actors. They voiced their needs and abilities and we worked around any hiccups that arose. For example, we needed to find a way for Maddie (playing Person 2) to get down from a platform safely so I had Kayleigh (Person 1) assist her down by performing a basic dance lift where one holds the other's hips and assists them up off of the floor (the platform in this case) and back onto the floor in a slower, safer manner. It looks cute and fun as well which is perfect for this moment in the dance sequence/play.

Overall, I wanted this dance sequence to represent the "spark" that the two characters feel when they fall into each other's arms. I formatted it to be a montage of what their relationship could look like if they were to find themselves in one. I formatted the dance sequence, or, similarly, dream sequence, to start out playful and light then grow more and more intimate to represent the flow of this "imaginary" relationship. I used various levels, body positions, and used the entire stage (stage right and left, up and downstage, centerstage, etc.) to give variety to the movement and make it more visually interesting. Because there isn't much use of the whole stage while "on the train", I wanted to be sure to use every inch of the stage during the dance sequence. As the dance sequence is going on, the previously established train disappears and the subway seats become more ambiguous in an undefined space. They are sat on, walked on, danced around, and sometimes ignored by the actors. The atmosphere shifts to a sense of lightness and ambiguity as if in a dream, hence "dream sequence".

This rehearsal went rather smoothly for all and was a lot of fun as well.

9/16/21 - Thursday

Rehearsal #4 - Visual Cues

In today's rehearsal, we reviewed the blocking and dance sequence before getting more specific. I then went through the script (with the actors and stage manager) and marked each train movement with a "size". The train movements are one of three things throughout the script: *train starts*, *train stops*, *train bumps*. I decided to mark them all with shirt sizes (S, M, L, XL, etc.) to clarify how each movement differed from the others and to adhere to realism. What I mean by this is that in real-life, trains don't stop, start, and bump the same way each time. Some are harder than others, sometimes a bump is shorter or longer, sometimes it starts slow then speeds up which can throw people off balance if they weren't properly prepared or centered. I wanted to make each train movement different and as realistic as possible so I labeled them with the different "shirt sizes". This also helped me to shape each movement with different tempos

and qualities as well. My two actresses had to be perfectly synchronized to make the train movements seem real and natural. They had to know the quality, direction, tempo, and “size” of the movement to convey this sense of natural realism.

To establish that the train moves left to right for the audience (Stage Right to Stage Left), we had to be precise on which direction to lean for each train movement. For every *train start*, the actors leaned/stepped stage right. The *train bumps* were also to stage right as if the train sped up suddenly. The *train stops* were all to stage left.

After we labeled which direction, “size” and quality of each movement, we then went through them, focusing on one at a time, and figured out the visual cues that were needed to keep both actors synchronized. From my research, I knew about “pedestrian cues”, as they are sometimes called. These are visual cues that an actor can do to communicate with the other actor(s) but are not noticeable by the audience. It can be anything from tucking hair behind an ear, shifting weight from one foot to another, to even something as simple as a breath that can be both visible and auditory or just one of those two depending on the needs and abilities of the actors. I took this idea and used it in my direction of this show by assigning different “pedestrian cues” to each of the train movements. For example, when Maddie (playing Emily/Person 2) enters and finds a spot on the subway to stand, she takes a relieving breath which cues Kayleigh (playing Shay/Person 1) so they can move together to signify the train starting/departing. There is more to it than just that, however. To further specify the movement and to keep both actors perfectly in sync, the breath also communicates tempo. Maddie establishes the tempo by the speed of her breath in and then breath out. As soon as she completes the breath out, Kayleigh and Maddie together lean at the same tempo towards stage right. This is the first synchronized “train movement” in the show.

By the end of rehearsal, we had every train movement cue established and specified. It was nowhere near perfect and we still had to work on making the cues undetectable and keeping both actors in sync, but we had a clear understanding of what the cues were, how they worked, and how to execute each train movement. I was very satisfied with our work for the week so I decided to cancel the next day’s rehearsal (Friday) and give everyone an extra day off.

9/20/21 - Monday

Rehearsal #5 - Cleaning Day 1 with Peer Feedback

For this week’s rehearsals (Monday-Wednesday), I had invited people from the theatre/film/dance department to come and observe rehearsal to give feedback, etc. I thought it’d be beneficial for me and the cast to know if things were reading properly, making sense, that the relationship was clear, etc. Also, it is beneficial for those observing to see how a silent play rehearsal might be conducted and also for undergraduates interested in directing to experience a unique rehearsal process from the outside (rather than acting, working tech, etc.). I got a lot of good responses from people thanking me for inviting them and encouraging me to continue this kind of peer collaboration in the future.

I will also note that I found cheap, completely clear, face masks on Amazon for my actor's to wear. It is important that we/the audience can see their entire face because there is a lot of emotion needing to be conveyed without any dialogue. It was a priority of mine to have their full faces visible for both rehearsals and performances. The clear masks allowed for this to happen. Plus, the masks were really light weight and rather comfortable which made it more bearable for everyone.

At the start of today's rehearsal, we reviewed the visual cues, with me still calling most of them. We ran the show once through before peers showed up for the viewing. My stage manager, Grace, had created a Sign-Up Genius where undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, etc. could sign up to view rehearsal in half hour increments. Rehearsal started at 7pm and we had the first group of people come at 7:30. We had three people for this first viewing, all of which were undergraduate theatre majors. We ran the show for them once, then asked for opinions and feedback. The biggest thing they told us was that it was weird for the characters to leave their bags unattended on a busy subway. This was a very helpful note for clarifying the setting and making the show more realistic and believable.

For the second viewing group at 8pm, we only had one person; a graduate theatre student. We did another run-through of the show for him and then he gave us his feedback. The thing that stuck with me that he mentioned was the inconsistency with the mimed subway handles. My actors were moving their hands throughout the show in ways that are not consistent with how subway handles work. I also had noticed that but it was good to hear from someone else that this was something that needed fixed/specified. I took note of this and after he left and we had finished the peer-viewing for the day, I worked these things with my actors.

I had my actors clarify the height of their hands/arms in relation to each other to keep it consistent with a real subway train that has leveled handles. This was a simple fix but also was something that can easily be forgotten at the moment so I know that this will come up a lot as the rehearsal process continues. I will definitely be reminding my actors of their hands/arms at least once every rehearsal.

I also took note of what the first viewing group said about the bags. I wrote it down for myself to think about overnight and come to tomorrow's rehearsal with an idea of how to fix that issue. Sadly, I did not come up with a perfect solution but I will continue to brainstorm until it is fixed. I do think it is an important element for consistency and realism.

We ran the show once more (without peers present) to solidify the changes we made.

9/21/21 - Tuesday

Rehearsal #6 - Cleaning Day 2 with Peer Feedback

Similar to Monday, we ran the show at the start of rehearsal to review the changes from yesterday and practice before the first viewing group arrived. At 7:30, the first group arrived which consisted of one undergraduate theatre major. They watched a run-through of the show and gave us good feedback. Most of the feedback was repetitive from Monday but it was helpful to hear that things were reading properly and that we were on the right track. I did ask the

peer-viewer about the subway handles and they said they did not notice any inconsistencies but that doesn't mean there weren't any. However, I was glad to hear that it is improving either way.

We had no one signed up for the 8pm viewing group so we were able to run the show once more, further fixing little issues as we went, before calling rehearsal for the night.

9/22/21 - Wednesday

Rehearsal #7 - Cleaning Day 3 with Peer Feedback

On this last day of peer viewing, we ran the show once on our own with me calling cues as little as possible. I only spoke up when my actors got stuck or skipped a cue/moment. After this quick review, we had one person show up for the 7:30 viewing group; an undergraduate theatre student. She watched one run-through of the show and then gave us feedback. The thing that stuck with me the most was her question about the dance sequence. She seemed confused about why it occurred and what it was for. I explained the intention behind it and she better understood it and said that lighting definitely would have helped her understand it in the moment. She clarified that it was just her misunderstanding the context rather than a flaw in the show/my directing but I still took it as something to think about and consider as we continue to work the show and clarify details.

Once again, we did not have anyone signed up for the second viewing group so we were able to spend the rest of rehearsal running the show without me calling cues. We found the "trouble spots" that the actors frequently trip up on. I had them run just those sections a few times before putting it back into the context of the show with one last run-through for the evening.

At the end of rehearsal, we discussed costuming. I asked both actors what kinds of clothes they see their characters wearing and I stated my thoughts as well. We almost completely agreed which was good. I asked them to send pictures of different costume options from their own closets so we could continue to discuss our ideas at tomorrow's rehearsal.

Overall, I am really happy that I asked my peers to come view rehearsal because it helped me see issues more clearly and it also validated my work in positive ways as well. With this being my (technical) directing debut, I am learning throughout this process as much as others are learning from watching me. Having people sit in on rehearsal gave me new perspectives to work from as well.

9/23/21 - Thursday

Rehearsal #8 - Cleaning Day 4 with Advisor Feedback

For today's rehearsal, I invited my primary project advisor, Heidi Nees, to observe rehearsal and give feedback. Heidi also serves as my Elsewhere advisor.

At the top of rehearsal, we further discussed costumes and reflected on the pictures my two actors had taken of possible costume options. I concluded that I wanted a green button down for Kayleigh's character, Person 1. I was still unsure of what undershirt to wear, white or black, and what shoes and pants to wear. I did like Kayleigh's idea of wearing her hair in two low

“space-buns” with dark-colored scrunchies (green and/or navy blue). I also liked her idea of her character wearing funky earrings. We decided they would be alien earrings with the green matching her button-down. As for Maddie’s character. Person 2, I had not yet decided if I wanted her in a baby-doll style dress or dress pants and a blouse/sweater. I did know, however, that I want her to wear black flats for her shoes and a white scrunchie in her hair which would begin in a low-pony then be taken down half-way through the play. We also discussed if she would wear her glasses or contacts. I liked the glasses but they would potentially cause a glare in the lights.

After discussing costumes, I had my actors do a review run-through and work through some of the trouble-spots we had fixed yesterday. Heidi then arrived at 7:30 to watch another run-through. I did not call any cues (other than lighting cues) and my actors didn’t miss a single one! I then released my actors and stage manager on a long break so I could discuss things with Heidi in private. She gave me a lot of valuable feedback about my directing choices, the show itself, the acting to some extent, and she asked clarifying questions to gain a fuller understanding of where I was coming from and where we were in the cleaning process of the show. Some of the feedback she gave me was about clarifying that the subway is crowded, specifying where the subway doors are located, how the actors’ entrances and exits communicate different things to the audience, and she also gave a suggestion on how to fix the “bag problem”. Heidi suggested that the actors keep the bags between their legs when they cannot be holding them so that they are still in control of their bag on the crowded subway, but the bags are also out of the way for the “fall” that leads into the dance sequence and for the dance sequence itself.

After about 30 minutes of discussion, I called my actors and stage manager back into the rehearsal room to work some of these notes. Heidi stayed for a few minutes as I shared the notes with the cast but she left once we started another run-through. We ran the show twice more, focusing on the new changes, then we called rehearsal for the week. I decided that we didn’t need another cleaning rehearsal this week so I canceled tomorrow’s (Friday’s) rehearsal as I did last week.

9/27/21 - Monday

Rehearsal #9 - Cleaning Rehearsal #9

Today’s focus was on running the show as much as possible to really get it into the actor’s bodies. I stopped calling cues completely, having the stage manager call the lighting cues from now on, and I took notes on very important things but also extremely specific details that would bring the show to the next level. We ran the show about five times before we felt comfortable enough to call it a night.

Because my stage manager, Grace, is getting a minor surgery tomorrow (Tuesday), I decided to cancel rehearsal. We got everything done today that I wanted to get done, plus some. I feel confident that we are more than prepared for first dress on Wednesday.

9/29/21 - Wednesday

Rehearsal #10 - First Dress

Yesterday, on our day off, I met with one of our lighting technicians to discuss my vision for the show's lighting design. Since this is a completely silent show, lighting is very important to establish location and mood and to signify scene/location changes, I felt it extremely necessary to have at least two set lighting cues. We also discussed COVID protocols for the space and did the math to discover that we could have 50 people in the space for each show, including the interpreter, and the four of us cast/crew members. With this information, I created a Sign-Up Genius to send out to the theatre/film/dance department and to anyone else who we would want to invite to the performances. We were able to have 46 audience members at each performance. We reserved a few seats for our out of town friends/family which was reflected in the sign-up form by having a slightly less number of available seats. I sent out the sign up this morning (Wednesday) and by the time rehearsal started this evening, all of the slots were full. This was exciting but also slightly annoying since not everyone who wanted to see the show was able to sign-up in time. It is a really great problem to have, however, so I am extremely grateful.

For today's rehearsal, we moved to the performance space: the Eva Marie Saint Theatre (a black box style theatre). At the start of rehearsal, I met with the same lighting technician to go through all of our lighting options and find the best color for the dance sequence. I decided to use full white lights for the scenes on the train to represent real subway fluorescents. I went with a pink lighting color for the dance sequence to represent both the playful and intimate aspects of the characters' dream/future relationship. Additionally, pink is the main color in the lesbian flag which pairs with my version of the play as a queer, female, love story. I made sure to check the costumes under the lights to one, solidify which costume pieces would be used and two, to see how the lighting colors affected the costumes so we could make adjustments if needed. Because we used the LED lights to switch through the color options, the lighting technician needed another day to put the correct color gels into the ellipsoidal reflector spotlights (the most common lights used in theatre and what we have available to us in this space). He informed us that the lights will be ready for tomorrow's final dress rehearsal.

To solidify the costumes, I had my actors do a little "run-way show" with the different options under the two lighting settings. I made the decision that Kayleigh, Person 1, would wear the green button-down (unbuttoned) with a black undershirt, black skinny jeans with rips at the knees, white converse shoes, two accent necklaces, alien earrings, and one blue and one green scrunchie for two "space buns" for her hair. For Maddie, Person 2, I decided that her costume would be black-and-white plaid dress pants, a white sweater (tucked in), black flats for shoes, a white scrunchie for when her hair is in a low-ponytail, and a long silver accent necklace. I did have her wear her glasses because there were little to no issues with glaring. I also told both actors to wear very minimal make-up, keeping it natural but not washed out under the lights.

After solidifying the costumes, set, and lighting, we did our first run-through in the performance space. We used spike tape to set the locations of the black boxes (for the subway benches) and also to mark the entrances and exits of the "invisible train" in order to keep the

actors consistent in their use of the space. The second time we ran through the show, my stage manager, Grace, and I made distracting noises to challenge the actors' focus. It was fun to come up with unique and improbable sounds to distract them with but we wanted them to be able to hold character and remain focused in an over exaggerated circumstance. If they can stay focused with our distractions, they will be more than ready for the slight distractions that will most likely occur during the actual performances. We ran through the show twice more, with slight distractions, before discussing our successes for the rehearsal and plans for tomorrow's final dress rehearsal then calling it a night.

9/30/21 - Thursday

Rehearsal #11 - Final Dress

For our very last rehearsal before opening night, we started with practicing the lighting cues. I had my stage manager, Grace, run through the light cues on her own to get the hang of them and write the cues in her script. While this was happening, I had the cast get into costume and prepare for the evening. Once Grace felt good about the lighting, we ran through the show once to practice these lighting cues in action.

At 7:30, my friend, a photographer, arrived to take some production photos. We did another run-through of the show with her taking candid and action shots. I reviewed the photos and then I posed the actors in different moments from the show to capture some more specific moments and get some close up shots. I looked through the photos once more before thanking the photographer and dismissing her for the evening.

At 8pm, a few audience members arrived who couldn't make it to the shows this weekend but wanted to see it or needed to view it for a class assignment. We used this small audience as practice as if doing a real show. This is the perfect format for a dress rehearsal, anyways. We did the full run-through for this small audience, then had a short talk-back so I could get a feel for the kinds of questions that might be asked of me tomorrow at opening night. After the small audience left, I gave myself and my actors/team a long break while we waited for the next group of dress rehearsal viewers to arrive.

This next group was the cast of the Amateurs which is the first mainstage production of the season. They have rehearsal during the first performance and most of them weren't able to sign-up for the Saturday performance. Because of this, the director, Sara Chambers, asked if they could take a break from their rehearsal today and come view our final dress rehearsal. I happily agreed because it is yet another great opportunity for my actors to practice performing the show with a real audience, not just me and Grace. The run-through went smoothly and was successful. I then got feedback from the cast and crew of The Amateurs which gave me further insight of what people might ask me during the talk-back sessions. Overall, dress rehearsal went very well and we are more than prepared for opening night, tomorrow.

10/1/21 - Friday

Performance #1 - Opening Night

Our call time for the 8:00pm performance was 7:00pm. All four of us cast/crew arrived on time and were ready to go by 7:10. We made sure the theatre was prepared for audience members and that COVID protocols were being enforced and followed. At around 7:15, we did a run-through of the show. With it being only a ten-minute play, we were able to run it in its entirety before opening the doors to the audience. After the run-through, with the actors feeling warmed up and prepared, the interpreters arrived. I had expected only one interpreter but I was happily surprised to see a team of two show up. I introduced myself to them and showed them to their reserved seats. I gave them a script of my pre-show, Director's Announcement to review and practice before having to translate it in real-time to ASL. I also explained how the talk-back would go and told them to ask me to slow down my speech at any time. I wanted to make sure they were comfortable and able to do their jobs. They were very kind and even asked us to use our extra clear face masks which are much less restricting than face shields and the other versions of clear masks they had come across before. I gladly donated two of our masks to them and asked them to keep them. The more I can do to make my show more accessible, the better!

We opened the doors at around 7:35pm. I stood by the entrance to hand out programs and welcome the audience members to the show. My stage manager, Grace, sat right inside the entrance with the list of people from the Sign-Up Genius to check them in and make sure only those who signed up were seated first. At 7:55, we still had three seats that were unclaimed. There were two people waiting in the lobby who weren't able to sign up but were hoping to claim extra seats. I was happy to offer two of our three unclaimed seats to them which they expressed much gratitude for.

We closed the doors at 8:00pm and Grace, the stage manager, went to the dressing room to call the actors to places. I made my way to center stage with the interpreters to make the Director's Announcement. I introduced myself and the interpreters, welcomed everyone to the theatre, and gave a brief overview of my project and its purpose. I and the interpreters made our way back to our seats and the show began. After curtain call, I went back to center stage with one of the interpreters to thank everyone for attending the performance and to announce that after the meet-and-greet with the cast in the lobby, we would reconvene in the theatre for the optional talk-back.

Back in the theatre for the talk-back, I sat with my stage manager, Grace, and my two actresses, Kayleigh and Maddie, on the black boxes that made up the set. The interpreters sat just stage left of us. I started the conversation by offering questions from the audience. This was met by multiple hands being raised and a lot of positive enthusiasm. I was happy to see this and knew that this talk-back would be both insightful and fun. One of the questions that was posed to me was about my casting choices. The person who posed this question wanted to know if the script called for a queer story, if I intended it, or if it just happened to turn out that way. In response, I explained my casting process and gave a little overview of the audition workshop I held. This led to a brief discussion of inclusivity of not only the Deaf community but also the LGBTQ+

community. This was an interesting point that I had not necessarily intended for but am happy that it turned out this way.

Another question that got asked of me and the cast was how we were able to synchronize the train movements. This opened up a much deeper and longer discussion about details and visual cues. I explained what visual cues are and the “pedestrian cues”, as they are often referred, that we used to keep the actors in sync. I also explained the importance of not accidentally doing a cue before it was meant to be done. I gave an example like this: If a visual cue for the train starting is tucking hair behind an ear, then you can’t do a hair tuck before the train is supposed to start, otherwise, the other actor might do the leaning motion (the train starting) without the other actor, because that wasn’t supposed to be the cue. As the director, I had to pay a lot of attention to detail in this production, more so than in most other plays. While extreme attention to detail is always important and good to do, it is an especially integral part of this kind of silent theatre because without words or sounds, the visual is the only thing we have to work with. I elaborated on this in the talk-back and got a lot of good responses from the audience saying that my attention to detail was effective and well thought out. I was glad to hear that my hard work and focus on this aspect paid off.

The discussion about detail and visual cues went on for another ten or fifteen minutes before leading into a new topic. An audience member asked how I and the cast planned to use this production and the experience we got from it in the future. I had my two actresses answer first. They talked about how this focus on movement would help inform their acting in the future and make it stronger without focusing on just the spoken words. Grace, also said that this would strengthen her acting but also, as a stage manager, she said that this was a challenging show to call cues for because it relied only on visuals. She said it was easy due to the lack of cues but when she did have cues, she had to rely only on visuals. She also said that working with me, she learned a lot and is much more aware of the importance of visual cues and detail work. I then answered the question by saying that this was my official directing debut and that I will definitely be directing more things like this in the future. I agreed with what Grace and my two actors said and explained how their responses also applied to me, but I also elaborated on my goals and plans for my future after I graduate in the spring. I plan to go into Children’s Theatre and be a director/choreographer that works with children of all ages. I also would like to pursue a performance career, at least for a while in my early post-grad. years. This experience has also allowed me to reach even further in my potential career options by showing me that I can excel in professional theatre as well, especially in accessible theatre. My dream would be to combine all of these aspirations into one broad career where I can do whatever I want within the theatre/arts community, but I will be happy as long as I am being creative and making theatre in some capacity. For accessible theatre specifically, I would love to work with Deaf actors and/or audience members more if given the chance. My experience with ASL as a language, my connections to Deaf community members, and my vast experience and connections in the theatre industry would make me a perfect candidate for Deaf theatre and accessible arts. This project

could potentially propel me in that direction if I let it. This excites me and I am proud to call this production my Honors Project for that very reason, and many more.

The talk-back wrapped up around 9:00pm. The audience dispersed and my cast and I reset the space for tomorrow's performance. It was a very successful night and I only got nervous a few times! I am excited for tomorrow's shows and to learn even more from the next talk-back.

10/2/21 - Saturday

Performance #2 - Closing Night

Our call time for tonight's 8:00pm performance was 7:00pm. We arrived on time and were ready to go by 7:10. We once again made sure the theatre was prepared for audience members and that COVID protocols were being enforced and followed. At around 7:15, we did a run-through of the show. The actors felt prepared then went to the dressing rooms to wait for showtime. The interpreters arrived shortly before 7:30. It was the same two interpreters as last night which made it easy for me to not have to re-explain how the performance and talk-back will go. At 7:30, we opened the house to audience members. Once again, I handed out programs while my stage manager, Grace, checked people in. We had one seat available from the beginning due to someone contacting us earlier in the day stating that they were unable to attend. One person did bring a plus-one that was not on our list so we were able to offer the extra seat to them.

We closed the doors at 8:00pm and Grace, the stage manager, went to the dressing room to call the actors to places. Just like last night's performance, I gave the Director's Announcement before the show which then performed (successfully in my opinion). After curtain call, I made the post-show announcement then joined everyone in the lobby for the meet-and-greet. The talk-back began around 8:30pm.

Tonight's talk-back was with a larger group of participating audience members which gave way to further discussion and more questions than Friday night's talk-back. All of the questions asked were the same. We were asked about our use of visual cues, the synchronization of the train movements, attention to detail, and what this project/production means for my and the casts' futures. We answered the same way we did last night, possibly adding or forgetting a few minor details, but getting the same overall idea of our responses. These repeated questions alone made the talk-back about 30-minutes long but there was still more to go!

Something especially special about tonight's performance was that two Deaf audience members were in attendance. I had invited my ASL Professors and told them to extend the invite to their friends and other Deaf people in the area who might be interested. My ASL 1 professor (BGSU) from two years ago was able to attend. He also brought a friend of his who is also an ASL professor at a different university. During the talk-back, they brought a lot of amazing and insightful input about Deaf culture and its relationship with theatre. They said that my project is a huge milestone for Deaf inclusion and that it is something that needs to be talked about more. They also posed questions about my future and if I planned to produce this show elsewhere or possibly make it more mainstream outside of an educational setting such as this. I answered these

questions by giving my sincere acknowledgement that I would love to continue with this productions and other accessible theatre like it, but that I am unsure of where my career will take me and what aspects of theatre I end up focusing on. My future is not set in stone and as much as it would be nice for me to bring this kind of completely accessible theatre to other, larger theatrical companies and into mainstream theatre, I can't promise that it will happen. Our discussion led to another audience member describing that he has worked in Deaf theatre before and he shared a lot of information about being a hearing person in Deaf theatre. This helped me learn about my possibilities as a hearing person potentially pursuing Deaf accessible/collaborative theatre and different paths my career could take me.

Another question that was asked was about various other aspects of accessible theatre. For example, an audience member brought up the point that this is ADHD and Autism friendly (plus other differing-abilities) because it is similar to a "sensory-friendly" performance. The lighting is not abrupt, there are no sounds so loud/sudden noises aren't a problem, and it is short to accommodate shorter attention spans. Also, there is not a lot of movement so it is not visually overwhelming but there is still enough to focus on for audience members who have a harder time focusing. The show could also be adapted to be more visually stimulating if needed. As for content, this play is not exactly meant for children but it is also kid-friendly at the same time. It is a rather mature love-story but there is no mature content other than very subtle allusions or implications. Another way that this production is accessible is that it accommodates non-English speakers (or any other language difference barrier). The silent nature of the play creates a lack-of-need for language translation of any kind. Something to keep in mind however, is that movement can also be cultural. Some gestures/body language does differ from culture to culture which would mean that this play is specifically American. It can even be said that it is specific to New York City which is the setting for the play. Even with these cultural movement differences, it can be assumed that most everyone, from any culture, could understand the play's plot and/or characters. Something else that I have put some thought into about accessibility is blindness. How would I adapt this play for the visually-impaired? My thoughts would be to create an audio-recording of the play using full, descriptive language. I even thought that (with much more time and funds) the audio-recording could be timed to play in-sync with the play itself so that blind audience members could be in the theatre during the performance and listen to the play through headphones as it is performed in real-time. This would be a very interesting and cool concept, but would take a lot more planning and logistics. I just want to point out that I have thought of these things and I have taken the time to at least brainstorm ways to further this production's accessibility.

To wrap up the discussions during the talk-back, I was asked a question about my decisions as a director with the script I was given. I talked about how the script gave very little in detail and characterization. This allowed me, as the director, to take full liberties on casting the production, creating characters alongside my actors, and blocking the play with whatever details I saw fit. The script gave me the freedom to shape the play into my own vision and to focus on the themes I felt were important to my production.

Around 9:30, the talk-back concluded and the audience/guests went home. My cast stayed behind to help me strike the set and clean the space. I thanked everyone once more and that was the moment I entered the post-production phase. I am now preparing to finish writing my reflections and concluding my final project essay.

Overall, tonight's talk-back was just as successful as the first one, maybe even more so. I learned a lot from the feedback from the audience and I was able to give the audience a view of my creative and intellectual process. The actors and my stage manager, Grace, enjoyed the talk-back as well and were glad to share their experiences alongside mine. I am glad I decided to hold talk-backs after the short performances and I am grateful to all those who participated in the discussions. I am also extremely proud of my cast/crew and of myself for this production. Both performances went flawlessly, as flawlessly as live theatre can go, and I cannot wait to finish this project and continue the discussion of silent, accessible theatre.

Appendix II. Original Script

Below is the original script of *The Train* by Irene L. Pynn. This is what I, the director, received after the rights for the production were finalized.

The Train
by
Irene L. Pynn

Irene L. Pynn writes fantasy, horror, and science fiction. Her work spans novels, games, plays, transmedia events, and more.

Irene L. Pynn

This is a play without any lines about two people on a crowded subway commute.

BY IRENE L. PYNN

The Train
By Irene L. Pynn

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(TWO FLEXIBLE)

- Person 1: On a subway train. Bored and lonely, bogged down by the commute.
- Person 2: Also on a subway train. Tries to be happy even when the world is gloomy.

BY IRENE L. PYNN

(The stage should indicate the basic concept of a subway train car. PERSON 1 sits, riding, bored. Sounds of the train are so loud that no one could possibly talk over them.)

PERSON 1

Sits and rocks with the jerky movement of the train. The train frequently stops to let people off and on, but more (unseen) people are boarding than leaving. PERSON 1 has to squeeze in on the seat. Somebody smells bad. Tries to send a text message, but the train keeps jerking around too much. Gets frustrated and gives up. Puts earbuds in.

(Music begins playing instead of the sounds of the train.)

PERSON 2

Enters at the next train stop and sees nowhere to sit.

PERSON 1

Looks up and sees PERSON 2. Pulls out earbuds.

(Music stops, and train sounds resume.)

PERSON 2

Smiles at someone else (unseen), hoping to be offered a seat, but no.

PERSON 1

Stands quickly, hoping to offer seat to PERSON 2, but someone else (unseen) takes it. Now they're both standing, and PERSON 2 hasn't even noticed PERSON 1.

PERSON 2

Is trying to send a text message, but the train keeps jerking around. Doesn't get frustrated. Instead, tries again, succeeds, gets a response, laughs.

PERSON 1

Watches PERSON 2. This is the one person on the train who isn't bogged down by the commute. Wonders where PERSON 2 comes from and is going.

PERSON 2

Senses someone staring. Turns and sees PERSON 1.

PERSON 1

Mortified, looks down and puts ear buds in.

(Music begins playing instead of the sounds of the train.)

PERSON 2

Smiles anyway and turns back to play on the phone.

BY IRENE L. PYNN

PERSON 1

Sneaks a peek up at PERSON 2. Thinks: Why didn't I say something? I should have smiled. Or maybe waved. Or maybe I could have made a joke. Decides to do this next time they look at each other. Stares, waiting.

PERSON 2

Is involved in a delightful text conversation with someone. Keeps laughing.

PERSON 1

Slowly removes ear buds again, hoping to hear the laughter.

(Music stops, and train sounds resume.)

PERSON 2

Gets another text. It's a picture. Examines it, then laughs again. Laughter can't be heard over the loud train.

PERSON 1

Is disappointed. Somehow this sums up everything about life: you get on the train with a zillion people, and maybe one of them is supposed to be your soul mate or your best friend, but you'll never know because there's no way to communicate with each other in the din. Is about to give up all hope when –

PERSON 2

Looks back at PERSON 1 again. They lock eyes.

PERSON 1

Is terrified. Thinks: What do I do?

PERSON 2

Waits patiently.

PERSON 1

Says "Hi, there," but can't be heard.

PERSON 2

Puts hand to ear.

PERSON 1

Tries again with "How are you?" but it's no good.

PERSON 2

Can't hear. Shakes head.

PERSON 1

Shrugs, frustrated. Indicates this train. Too crowded. Too loud.

BY IRENE L. PYNN

PERSON 2

Laughs, inaudible, but the expression is pleasant anyway. Nods agreement that the train can be annoying.

PERSON 1

Smiles stupidly. There's an awkward pause, and now PERSON 1 is thinking: I have nothing else to say. How can I start a conversation here?

PERSON 2

Waits a little, and then smiles as if to say, "Well, have a great day," and turns away.

PERSON 1

Sees this and keeps looking sadly at PERSON 2, who has just ended the one good moment of this day. If only it could have lasted a little longer. Suddenly the train jerks much more dramatically than it has been doing this whole time.

(The lights flicker. When they come back on, PERSON 2 has fallen into PERSON 1's arms. They look at each other. Time freezes. Without ear buds, the train noises cease. Both people hear music.)

PERSON 1 and PERSON 2

They hold each other for a moment, enjoying the sensation. There is no rocking of the train. There is no train. Realizing they're free, they move, holding hands, into the larger space of the stage as if they have all the room and all the time they could possibly want. PERSON 2 smiles. PERSON 1 smiles back. The music begins a waltz, and they immediately fall into a dance together, moving gracefully around the entire stage. Once or twice toward the end of the dance, one of them staggers or missteps as if some movement (like a train) has thrown them off balance. As the dance ends, they are in the same position when they started in each other's arms. PERSON 1 touches PERSON 2's face. They are about to kiss.

(The lights flicker. When they come back on, PERSON 2 is standing back in the original space on the train, texting and laughing, and the train sounds have returned.)

PERSON 1

Suddenly realizes this was all a fantasy. That's almost too much to take. It's sad enough to see your soul mate on the train and not be able to talk, but to get a glimpse of what might have been is cruel. Dreams crushed, PERSON 1 internally curses this train and its smelly people and crowded cars and loud noises. Checks the next stop – at least it's almost time to get off and go home.

PERSON 2

Looks at PERSON 1, who seems really bogged down by the commute. Wonders where PERSON 1 comes from or is going. Considers saying something – tries – but it's too loud. For the first time, feels a little sad.

BY IRENE L. PYNN

PERSON 1

The train stops, and the doors open again. It's time to leave. Checks belongings and gets ready to go. Looks one last time at PERSON 2. Considers saying something, but (unseen) people keep brushing past and getting in the way. Gives up and steps outside.

PERSON 2

Knocked around by all the (unseen) people exiting and entering, it's been impossible to say anything to PERSON 1 at this stop. Sees the opportunity going away forever. Considers what to do. Goes for it and jumps off before the doors close. Dashes out to PERSON 1, who is walking away sadly.

(Once both characters are outside, sounds shift to the noise of a train platform with tons of people milling about.)

PERSON 1

Turns as PERSON 2 gives a quick tap on the shoulder. Can't believe it. They lock eyes and stare at each other for a moment.

PERSON 2

Smiles.

PERSON 1

Smiles back.

PERSON 2

Laughs inaudibly at having done something crazy.

PERSON 1

Smiles. Waits. Can barely believe this is happening. It's probably too good to be true.

PERSON 2

Suddenly a little embarrassed. Maybe this was a bad idea. Considers leaving, but then sucks in a breath and holds out phone to ask for PERSON 1's number.

PERSON 1

Reaches for the phone to enter the digits.

(Black out.)

THE END

BY IRENE L. PYNN

Props list: (these can be mimed, as well)

Two cell phones

Ear buds

Other bags and things for carrying on a train

Appendix III. Blocking Script

Below is the director-made blocking script used by the actors and production team for rehearsals and notes. It is a step-by-step description of the movement/actions of the characters that also includes stage directions and technical notes.

The Train

LIGHTS UP

Enter SHAY - looks for seat

S sits - squeezes between 2 ppl

train starts

S puts down bag - gets out book

S reads - interacting with environment/ppl throughout

train bumps

(more interacting w/ environment)

train stops

Enter EMILY - looks for seat - none available - stands

S briefly notices E

train starts

E puts headphones in

S really notices E (double take)

S puts book away (rushinglly?)

S gets up to offer seat to E - stops in tracks (nervous)

S goes back to seat - sees it is taken

S moves to standing position

S looks at E (X2)

S turns to face towards E (for better view)

train bumps

E readjusts (facing more towards S)

E notices S

S feels E looking

they make eye contact and immediately/simultaneously look away

E checks out S - looks away

S checks out E

S gets self conscious and picks up book - tries to look cool/impress E

E looks at S then looks away

E gets self conscious and begins to make little appearance adjustments

E glances over at S (still making adjustments)

train stops - ppl on and off - pushing S to move over (further from E)

E makes lots of adjustments as ppl go on and off

S stares at E

E finishes adjustments and [attempting casually] looks for S

S realizes she is staring and looks away (as E looks away after finding S)

train starts

E “casually” moves closer to S

they make eye contact for a longer time - look away simultaneously

they slowly make eye contact again (simultaneously?)

E softly waves at S

S does not respond (only staring)

E looks away and readjusts (turns away from S)

S realizes the mess up and looks away, uncomfortable/embarrassed - turns away from E

S looks back at E

train stops - ppl go on and off - they adjust (both face front)

S (casually) moves closer to E

train starts (hard bump) - E stumbles closer to S (apologizes to other passenger?)

they make eye contact again (longer again)

E waves again

S waves back quickly (small)

eye contact is broken - awkward, cute

train bumps (hardest) - E stumbles - S catches E in arms

LIGHTS CHANGE

dance sequence

LIGHTS CHANGE

E back in S arms

S helps E stand up

they hold brief eye contact

E brushes herself off - S watches to see if E is okay

E steps away from S

S slowly turns away

both contemplate what just happened - what was that feeling?

train stops

S notices it's her stop - gathers things
S looks back at E as she exits train
E sees S leaving - grabs things to rush after her
S notices E has followed her
they face each other and hold eye contact
E gets out phone - hands it to S
S hesitates then takes phone - puts in digits
S hands phone back to E
their fingertips touch under the phone

Pause

they both look at phone (simultaneously)
they make eye contact (simultaneously)

BLACKOUT

Appendix IV. Notated Script

This version of the script is the one I took notes on directly during rehearsals. My notes consist of missed cues, things to fix, reminders for the actors, character details, blocking notes/details, specified stage directions, etc. I crossed out notes when I gave them to the actors and/or when they were fixed or dismissed.

rustled?

The Train

LIGHTS UP

Enter SHAY - looks for seat *points*

S sits - squeezes between 2 ppl *door*

train starts

S puts down bag - gets out book *bookmarks (lets)*

S reads - interacting with environment/ppl throughout *hands*

train bumps

(more interacting w/ environment)

train stops

7 sec. - cue

Enter EMILY - looks for seat - none available - stands

S briefly notices E *breath cue*

train starts

E puts headphones in - widens stance low

S really notices E (double take)

S puts book away (rushing?) *took @ seat before leaving*

S gets up to offer seat to E - stops in tracks (nervous)

S goes back to seat - sees it is taken - *longer pause*

S moves to standing position

S looks at E (X2)

S turns to face towards E (for better view) *feetsteps cues it held 2*

train bumps

E readjusts (facing more towards S)

E notices S

S feels E looking

they make eye contact and immediately/simultaneously look away

E checks out S - looks away *good*

S checks out E - respectfully *looking @ E a lot*

S gets self conscious and picks up book - tries to look cool/impress E

E looks at S then looks away *amused*

E gets self conscious and begins to make little appearance adjustments

E glances over at S (still making adjustments)

R head phone out w/head head up

good n.p.m. man

→ m (train stop)

Yes glasses

Clarify what you're interacting to

9 by 7 1/2 Nic's feet (benches distance)

h too stop at

baby or Mago Man headphones

Emily join to music → cute

Maddie smile @ env.

SMILE

change Song

M elbow

Uncomfortable (M)

thing M does

Specify + acts

→ m train stops - ppl on and off - pushing S to move over (further from E)
 E makes lots of adjustments as ppl go on and off - put bag down (phone: inside) headphones disconnected
 S stares at E
 E finishes adjustments and [attempting casually] looks for S
 S realizes she is staring and looks away (as E looks away after finding S)

head cue bk + sm

← L train starts
 E "casually" moves closer to S - ass out
 they make eye contact for a longer time - look away simultaneously
 they slowly make eye contact again (simultaneously?)
 E softly waves at S
 S does not respond (only staring)
 E looks away and readjusts (turns away from S)
 S realizes the mess up and looks away, uncomfortable/embarrassed - turns away from E
 S looks back at E

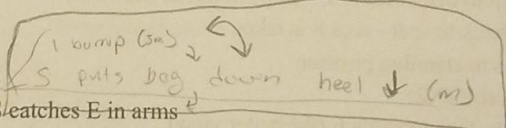
M SMILE cute M L

→ m train stops - ppl go on and off - they adjust (both face front)
 S (casually) moves closer to E

hair tuck (as hand goes down)

← XL train starts (hard bump) - E stumbles closer to S (apologizes to other passenger?)
 they make eye contact again (longer again)
 E waves again - smaller k
 S waves back quickly (small)
 eye contact is broken - awkward, cute

Footstep hold 2

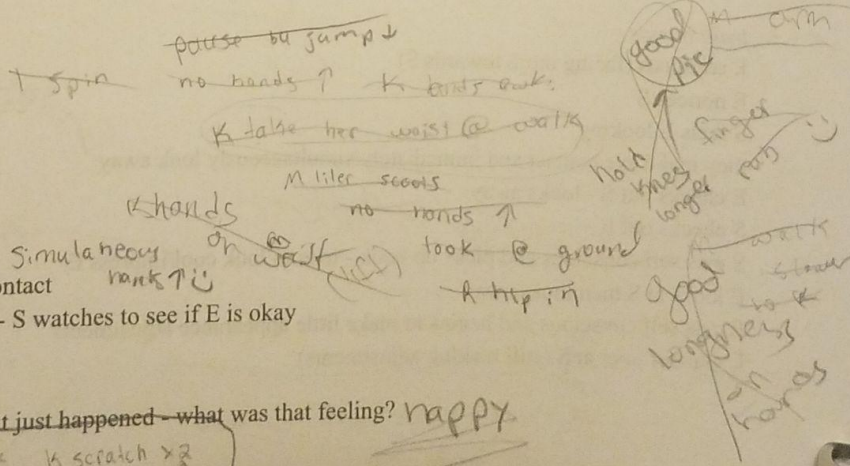


← 2XL train bumps (hardest) - E stumbles - S catches E in arms

LIGHTS CHANGE

Slower

dance sequence



LIGHTS CHANGE

E back in S arms
 S helps E stand up
 they hold brief eye contact
 E brushes herself off - S watches to see if E is okay
 E steps away from S
 S slowly turns away
 both contemplate what just happened - what was that feeling?

→ m train stops - G + Bc K scratch x 2 fall

Tues.

hand thru hair slow

S notices it's her stop - gathers things
 S looks back at E as she exits train
 E sees S leaving - grabs things to rush after her
 S notices E has followed her
 they face each other and hold eye contact
 E gets out phone - hands it to S
 S hesitates then takes phone - puts in digits
 S hands phone back to E
 their fingertips touch under the phone

~~good at it M~~

M you see her leave

~~drop bag~~

Pause

they both look at phone (simultaneously)
 they make eye contact (simultaneously)

other ppl
 in M way
 ↓
 less awkward ✓

BLACKOUT

don't look M hip more
 Seal

notes

~~bump
 ppl?~~

~~make his
 step
 clearer~~

~~work
 on
 lift~~

~~(ds) hiding???~~

Wed: →
~~Falls in work on E adjusts.~~

~~tape
 floor
 doors~~

~~anytime let go,
 widen stance~~

~~play w/ catch + bags~~

~~pace~~

M keep more

M did not grow up in NY
↓
M more rushed to get on

~~hands on time?~~

~~K exit not so easy~~

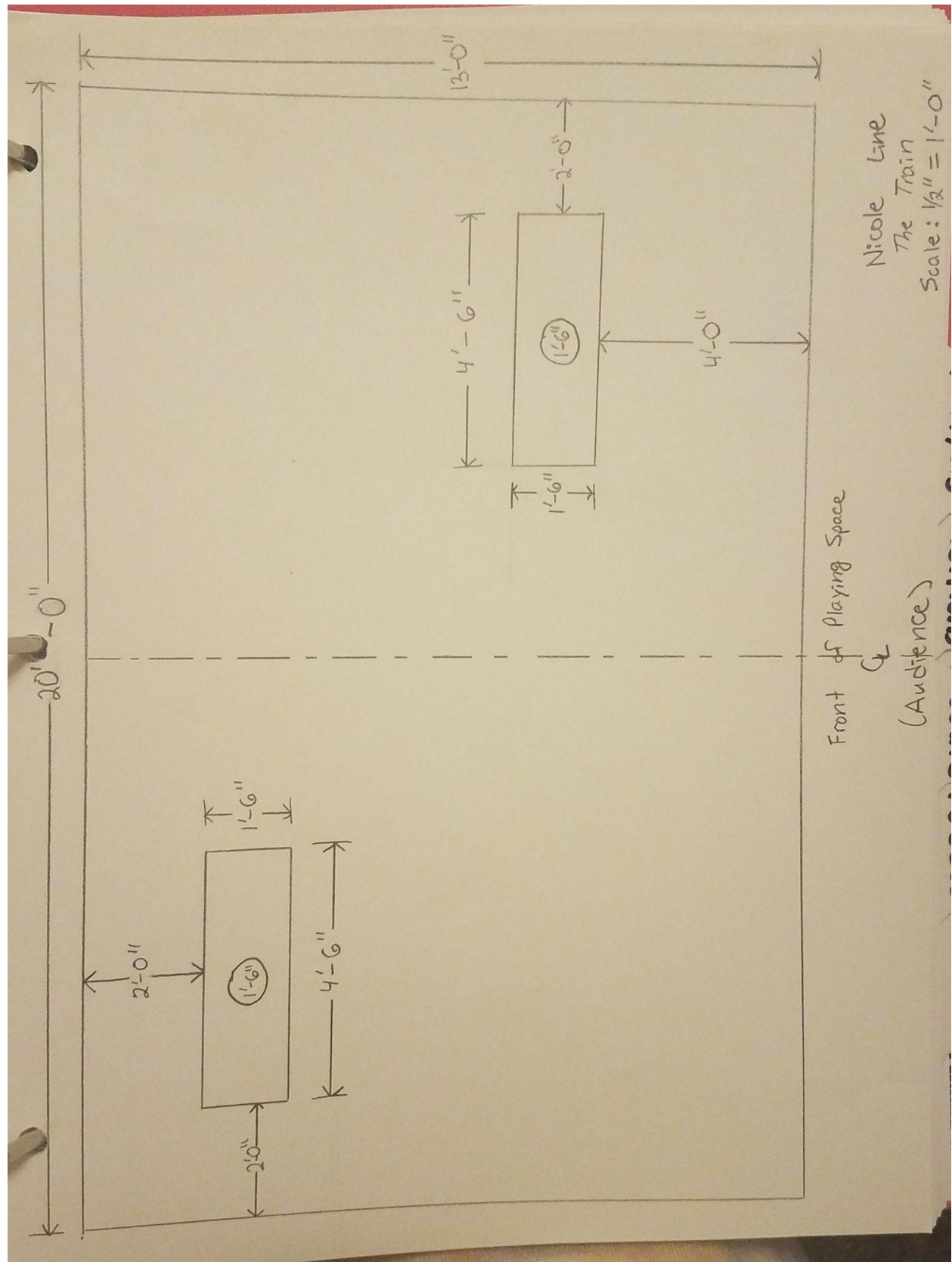
~~K go out of order on boat~~

look M's entrance (happy, excited)
↓
look around a lot more

M clutch bag everytime ppl look around a lot

Appendix V. Floorplan

Below is the floorplan I created in scale for a 13' X 20' playing space (stage/acting area) in the BGSU Eva Marie Saint Theatre. With very limited resources, I had to work with a simple set. I used black boxes to create the subway benches. The rest of the environment was imagined and implied with context given through blocking/movement.



20'-0"

13'-0"

2'-0"

1'-6"

2'-0"

4'-6"

1'-6"

4'-6"

1'-6"

2'-0"

4'-0"

Front of Playing Space



(Audience)

Nicole Line
The Train
Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Appendix VI. Script Analysis

As the director, I analyzed the script prior to auditions and the rehearsal process. With the information the script gave me and my own creative decisions, I made this list of “given circumstances” for the world of the play. I also create fully realized characters for the actors to portray and as a cast/team, we specified the characters’ details and backstories. Once rehearsals were underway, I added to the costume and props lists as I made creative and informed decisions about what I wanted to see and what was needed for the play.

The Train by Irene L. Pynn

Dir. Nicole Line

SM Grace Ranard

Director's Givens

**italics indicates information discussed and brainstormed collaboratively by cast and director*

Setting:

An NYC Subway Train

Wednesday, September 25th, 2019

sunny and cool/comfortable day (65°F)

5:22pm (rush hour - both heading home from work)

crowded subway

Characters:

Person 1 = Shay Miller; 22; bookworm, plant lover, hippie fashion designer, awkward in a charming way; queer - female presenting - "chapstick lesbian"

-Fashion Design:

-gender; masc or femme, fits different body types, nonbinary, genderless clothes

-have dated a handful of women/nonbinary people (mostly women)

-few long term relationships, really well, but ended bad

-some that were eh

-scared of being hurt again; keeping her from making a move

-Lives in Brooklyn - Dyker Heights - 20 min. subway ride + some walking

-tiny apartment - don't get along with roommate - coexist

-cat, Shay's (Cheeto)

-Work in greenwich village

-favorite author emily dickenson, genre: poetry

-astrology: Libra sun, Aquarius moon, Taurus rising

Person 2 = Emily Baker; 21; bubbly, pop music and showtune lover, elementary teacher, fancy wine drinker (feels fancy while drinking cheap wine); queer - female presenting - "femme" bisexual

-Past Relationships:

-talking, crushes, casual stuff, no real serious experience

-first time falling for someone (Shay)

-makes a move at the end to explore new feeling (love, not like like)

-grew up in NY suburbs

- teaches public city school (Public School 19) - 2nd grade (all subjects)
- in charge of show choir until 5
- lives in Mapleton - 1 roommate - get along, she
- favorite musical: *Wicked* or *Rent* depending on mood
- Swiftly (Taylor Swift Fan)
- favorite wine: pink moscato
- astrology: Cancer sun, Pisces moon, Capricorn rising

Structure:

Inciting Incident: The two people see each other for the first time.

Climax: When person B (2) falls into Person A's (1) arms (the dance)

Resolution: The two people exchange phone numbers.

Conflict: Both people are too sheepish to make a move on the other.

Goals/Objectives: Both people want/need each other's numbers.

Obstacles: For both people, the crowd on the subway is an obstacle as is themselves (their lack of courage, sheepishness, awkwardness, etc.)

Stakes: For both people, this may be the only time they ever see each other and neither knows how soon the other's subway stop is.

Genre: Comedy, Romance

SET LIST:

- 6 black boxes (1' - 6" X 1' - 6")
 - set in horizontal lines (SR to SL) in two groups of three
 - one US CR, one DS CL
- See floor plan for more info.

PROP LIST:

- Emily Dickenson book (provided by Nicole - me) - Used by Person 1 (Shay)
 - filled with various colored post-it notes
 - various sizes/types
- Totebag (provided by Maddie) - Used by Person 1 (Shay)
 - weighted with
- Bookbag (provided by Nicole - me) - Used by Person 2 (Emily)
 - weighted with a few books and/or school supplies
- Cellphone (provided by Maddie) - Used by Person 2 (Emily)
- Headphones (provided by Maddie) - Used by Person 2 (Emily)

COSTUMES:

Person 1 (Shay)

- forest-green button-down (unbuttoned)
- black undershirt
- black skinny jeans with rips at the knees
- white converse shoes
- two accent necklaces
- green alien earrings
- blue and green scrunchies in two “space buns” for hair

Person 2 (Emily)

- black-and-white plaid dress pants
- white sweater (tucked in)
- black flats for shoes
- white scrunchie
 - when her hair is in a low-ponytail at beginning, to be taken down half-way through play
- long silver accent necklace
- glasses

Both characters

- very minimal make-up
 - keep it natural but not washed out under lights

Appendix VII. Program

Below is the production program I created which was given to the audience as they entered the theatre for information about the credited artists. I included a director's note to give context to the performance and inform the audience members of the play's intention/purpose.

The Train

By Irene L. Pynn

Directed by: Nicole Line*

Stage Managed by: Grace Ranard

Cast:

Kayleigh Hahn*

Maddie Hatton

Director's Note:

This ten-minute short-play is part of my BGSU Honors Project. It is intended to be completely Deaf accessible and focused on how body language and movement can tell a compelling story without dialogue or sounds. It is a heartwarming story about feeling that first spark of love. I hope you enjoy the show! - Nicole Line

*denotes membership of Alpha Psi Omega

Appendix VIII. Director's Introduction

This is the introduction I gave at the beginning of the performance to welcome the audience to the theatre and indicate emergency exits.

The Train by Irene L. Pynn

Dir. Nicole Line

SM Grace Ranard

Director's Introduction

Hello! Welcome to the Eva Marie Saint Theatre for BGSU's Elsewhere Production of *The Train* by Irene L. Pynn. I am the director, Nicole Line, and this production also serves as my Honor's project. I chose this short-play because I wanted to create a performance that was completely Deaf accessible and focused on how body language and movement can be used to tell a compelling story without the presence of spoken words, music, or sounds.

Please refrain from any video recordings or pictures during the performance and take this time to silence all devices. The show is about 10 minutes long and will be followed by an optional talk-back where we can discuss the show, my vision or method for this project, and answer any questions you as the audience might have. In the case of an emergency, please note the emergency exits at all corners of the theatre.

Thank you all for being here. Please enjoy the show!

Appendix IX. Business

These next few documents are the forms and records of the business side of directing/producing a show. In order they are: Elsewhere Application, Performance and Rehearsal Space Request, and the email exchange for requesting and scheduling the interpreters.

APPENDIX A

ELSEWHERE PROGRAM APPLICATION
DUE BY APRIL 19TH, 2021

This application form and any accompanying materials (including a copy of the script) must be submitted as a PDF to Angie Ahlgren (akahlg@bgsu.edu). Hard copy applications will not be accepted. Only complete applications will be considered.

Name: Nicole Line

Phone: (513) 265-1118 Email: nline@bgsu.edu

If applicant is a student, name of production advisor: Heidi Nees

I agree to serve as advisor for this Elsewhere production. Signature: _____

If the piece is an original script, and you are the playwright, name of Director. (For students, this is required. The person directing must be someone other than the playwright.):

Nicole Line

Name of Assistant Director/Stage Manager (Strongly Recommended):

TBD

Proposed for: Fall Semester Spring Semester

Space Requested: Eva Marie Saint Theatre Public Reading Found Space Zoom

Cast Size: 2

Are rights/royalties required for this production? Yes No

As far as I know

Given that this is a production environment that minimizes technical and design requirements, are there any scenic, lighting, sound, costume or property needs that you cannot do without? How will you solve the technical requirements of the production?

It is a silent play so there is no need for sound boards. There are little to no lighting needs and basic white overhead lights that can be turned off/on will do just fine. Set pieces can simply be rehearsal cubes and costumes can be self provided by the cast.

Below, please provide a vision statement that details your motivation for proposing this production. Indicate what educational values you hope to create for you and those working with you, your plans for eliciting audience feedback, and so on. If the production is related to your research, please describe the connection. Attach additional pages as needed.

I have attached my Honor's Project Proposal to this form/email. The Elsewhere will serve as my final Honor's Project. The play is *The Train* by Irene L. Pynn. My vision for this project is to challenge the ideas of what theatre can be by directing a play that has no dialogue or sounds at all. Silent theatre is still in its experimental phase and I would like to showcase it here at BGSU. A silent play will highlight what movement and body language alone can say while also being inclusive to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing audiences as well as hearing.

I have read and understand the Elsewhere terms, conditions, and obligations as described above. Furthermore, I understand that my production is subject to cancellation if I do not abide by and enforce these policies.

Name: Nicole Line

Date: 4/19/2021



**Wolfe Center for the Arts
Event Usage Request Form**

CLEAR FORM

Today's Date: 8/31/21

Guest Artist Name or Name of Event: Elsewhere - Nicole Line ("The Train")

Purpose for which use of the Building is Requested: Rehearsal + Performances

Date of Event: All Month Start Time: 7:00 PM (or 7:30) In: 6:30 PM (or 7:00) Out: 9:00 PM (or 10:00)

Sponsoring Organization/Department: BGSU THFM

Applicant: Nicole Line Title: N/A

Applicant Address: 318 Campbell Hill Rd. Apt. 105 Bowling Green, OH 43402

Applicant Phone: (613) 265-1118

Applicant Email: nline@bgsu.edu

Applicant Signature: *[Signature]*

Notice: You will not be able to make any changes to, or edit this form after signing it!

Space Requested:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Named Space	Designation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Named Space	Designation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Donnell Theatre	Wolfe 100/100A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eva Marie Saint Theatre	Wolfe 124
<input type="checkbox"/>	Donnell Make-up/Dressing Rooms	Wolfe 107/109/110	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eva Dressing Rooms (w/ E.M.S.T)	Wolfe 122/123
<input type="checkbox"/>	Conrad Choral Room	Wolfe 102	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wolfe Center Lobby (Lower)	Wolfe 180
<input type="checkbox"/>	Seminar Room	Wolfe 201	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Heskett Dance Studio	Wolfe 203
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sluhan Classroom	Wolfe 208	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackson Classroom	Wolfe 211
<input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor Patio		<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:	

Rehearsal Needed: Yes No Rehearsal Date: In: Out:

Audio/Video Requests: Sound Reinforcement Projector/Screen Sound Check: Time:
If sound reinforcement is needed, please provide a brief description of needs:

Technical Needs other than Audio/Video (please include equipment needs):

I would like to use basic lighting if possible.

Fund: Dept.: BGSU THFM Account: Program Code:

Funding is: Approved Anticipated Source of Support: Department Funds Other

Charged Event: Yes No Open to the Public: Yes No Anticipated Total number of Attendees: 20-50 (Eva capacity)

For Office use only:	Approved	Denied	Signature	Date
Checklist of Approval:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Wolfe Center Coordinator	
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Digital Tech Coordinator	
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Faculty Advisor	
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Department Chair (if applicable)	

11/4/21, 11:34 PM

Mail - Nicole Renee' Line - Outlook

RE: Accessibilities Interpreter Request

Peggy Faye Dennis <fayed@bgsu.edu>

Thu 9/30/2021 9:39 AM

To: Nicole Renee' Line <nline@bgsu.edu>

They confirmed. We are using Resolute interpreting in case you have any issues the night of the performances, here is their contact info.

Kaleigh Edwards, Manager - Operations

📞 419-244-8377 (v/txt)

✉️ kaleigh@resoluteinterpreting.com

🌐 www.ResoluteInterpreting.com

Take care

Peggy

Peggy Dennis

Director, Accessibility Services

ADA/Section 504 Compliance Officer

Deputy Title IX Coordinator

Accessibility Services | Bowling Green State University

BG Campus – 38 College Park Office Building | Bowling Green, Ohio 43403-0185

Firelands Campus – 105 George Mylander Hall | One University Drive | Huron, OH 44839-9719

Ph: 419.372.8495 | Fax: 419.372.8496 | www.bgsu.edu/accessibilityservices

From: Nicole Renee' Line <nline@bgsu.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, September 29, 2021 5:45 PM
To: Peggy Faye Dennis <fayed@bgsu.edu>
Subject: Re: Accessibilities Interpreter Request

Hello!

Is there any update on the interpreter? We are only a few days away, so I am getting nervous.

Thanks!

-Nicole Line

From: Nicole Renee' Line <nline@bgsu.edu>
Sent: Monday, September 20, 2021 11:15 AM
To: Peggy Faye Dennis <fayed@bgsu.edu>
Subject: Re: Accessibilities Interpreter Request

Hello again,

To answer your questions, I retyped the info below.

October 1st and 2nd in the Eva Marie Saint Theatre in the Wolfe Center for the Arts.

<https://outlook.office.com/mail/id/AAQkADE1ZTBIOTBKLWYwMmEiNDcxNy04Y2FILTfY0MzU0ZWNjMDYxMwAQAO2OC1Jlak9CtwG4YfNyoQ%3D>

11/4/21, 11:34 PM

Mail - Nicole Renee' Line - Outlook

In-Person Interpreting - ASL and Voicing (English)**Rough Timeline Estimates:**

7:45-8:00pm

Check-in and pre-show prep - No ASL needed, just voicing with me (the director)

8:00-8:05pm

Introduction of Show - ASL

8:05-8:18pm

About a 12-minute performance - No ASL or voicing needed, interpreter is welcome to watch show

8:18-8:45pm (possibly 9:00 or even 9:30pm)

Talk-back/post-show discussion - ASL and possibly voicing needed

Details:

Location - Eva Marie Saint Theatre (Wolfe 124)

Name of Show - "The Train"

Dress Code - Professional/Semi-Professional

Audience - Open to the Public, Deaf and Hearing audience members alike, any age

Needing Interpreter - Deaf audience members will need the interpreter, there may only be a few

Director's Contact Info. - nline@bgsue.edu (513)265-1118Department Contact Info - Lesa Lockford: lockflo@bgsu.edu Department Phone: (419)372-8171**Show Info:**

This is a Deaf accessible short-play because it is completely silent. There is no spoken or signed dialogue and no use of sound effects or music. Both Deaf and hearing audiences will have to same experience (besides individual interpretation).

Thank you! I greatly appreciate your help.

-Nicole Line

From: Peggy Faye Dennis <fayed@bgsu.edu>

Sent: Friday, September 17, 2021 12:24 PM

To: Nicole Renee' Line <nline@bgsu.edu>

Subject: RE: Accessibilities Interpreter Request

Hello Nicole,

That is wonderful!

A few questions so I can pass on the correct information to the interpreter agency:

October 1st and 2nd, Friday and Saturday

In person interpreting – ASL – will there be voicing needed?

Is this the right timeline below? Interpreter agencies need to know how long each part would be to determine if one or two interpreters would be appropriate.

7:45 -8:00 set up - no interpreting or voicing

8:00-8:12 intro to show ? ASL needed no voicing

8:12 - _____ show - no ASL needed no voicing needed

_____9:30 talk back - ASL Needed no voicing

I could not figure out if the show was 12 minutes or the intro was 12 minutes. Please fix the timeline and fill in the blanks.

11/4/21, 11:34 PM

Mail - Nicole Renee' Line - Outlook

Eva Marie Saint Theatre room number _____
 Wolfe Center building
 Name of the show _____
 What type of dress is appropriate? _____
 Is this open to the public? Who is the audience? _____
 Who will need the interpreting? Will it be an audience of people watching the interpreter or just maybe one or two?
 Contact person for the agency and phone number _____

Deaf Accessible short play: What makes it a Deaf Accessible short play?
 Is it signed while speaking? Is it silent? Is it captioned? Any more details?
 Let me know the details so I can request the interpreter.
 Thanks

Peggy Dennis
 Director, Accessibility Services
 ADA/Section 504 Compliance Officer
 Deputy Title IX Coordinator
 Accessibility Services | Bowling Green State University
 BG Campus – 38 College Park Office Building | Bowling Green, Ohio 43403-0185
 Firelands Campus – 105 George Mylander Hall | One University Drive | Huron, OH 44839-9719
 Ph: 419.372.8495 | Fax: 419.372.8496 | www.bgsu.edu/accessibilityservices

From: Nicole Renee' Line <nline@bgsu.edu>
Sent: Friday, September 17, 2021 11:12 AM
To: Peggy Faye Dennis <fayed@bgsu.edu>
Cc: Rebecca Ruth Sidders <rsidder@bgsu.edu>
Subject: Accessibilities Interpreter Request

Hello!

My name is Nicole Line. I am a fourth year Musical Theatre and Acting/Directing double specialization. This semester, I am directing a Deaf accessible short play for my Honor's Project and will need an ASL interpreter. My advisor, Rebecca Sidders, sent me your way. She is cc'd on this email as well.

The dates/times the interpreter would be needed are October 1st and 2nd from roughly 7:45-9pm (possibly 9:30) in the Eva Marie Saint Theatre (Wolfe Center). The show starts at 8pm, it will last about 10-12 minutes and then, a talk-back would follow performance. The interpreter would be needed for the brief introduction of the show and then the talk-back (but not during the show). If you could help me through the process of getting an interpreter, I'd be very appreciative. (It can be a different interpreter each night if necessary).

Thank you!

Nicole Line

pronouns: she/her/hers
 BGSU Undergraduate Student
 Musical Theatre and Acting/Directing
 Pres. of Musical Theatre Students Org.

Appendix X. Production Photos

Below are some selected production photos taken during one of the dress rehearsals by photographer Alyson Shaler.









