

Summer 6-2010

Direction of the Play: Sylvia

Zachary Adam Curtis

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Direction of the Play: Sylvia

A Project Report
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
Theatre Production

by
Zachary Adam Curtis
June, 2010

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies

We hereby approve the project report of: Zachary Adam Curtis

Candidate for the degree of Master of Arts: Theatre Production

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

6/15/10
Date of
Signature

Professor Christina Barrigan: Committee Chair

7/13/10
Date of
Signature

Professor Michael Smith: Committee Member

9/15/10
Date of
Signature

Professor Nadine Pederson: Committee Member

ABSTRACT

PROJECT REPORT

Sylvia

Yakima Valley Community College

Directed by

Zachary Adam Curtis

May, 2010

This project entailed the selection, background research and documentation, analysis, casting, direction, and post-production analysis of Yakima Valley Community College's production of A.R. Gurney's Sylvia. Documentation includes research and analysis of the play and an evaluation of the show as a production vehicle for the department of Theatre Arts at Yakima Valley Community College.

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies

Final Examination of

Zachary Adam Curtis

B.A. Colorado State University, 2004

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Theatre Production

Committee in Charge

Professor Christina Barrigan

Professor Michael Smith

Professor Nadine Pederson

Location of Oral Exam: McConnell 117

Date and Time of Oral Exam: 9 June, 2010 9:00am

Zachary Adam Curtis

Courses presented for the Master's degree

| Course No. | Course Title | Credits | Instructor | Quarter Completed |
|---------------|--------------|---------|------------|----------------------|
|---------------|--------------|---------|------------|----------------------|

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Zachary Adam Curtis

Undergraduate Study:

Colorado State University, 2002-2004

University of Northern Colorado, 2000-2002

Graduate Study:

Central Washington University, 2008-2010

Professional Experience:

Graduate Teaching Assistant, Central Washington University: 2009-2010

Theatre Teacher, Harrison High School: 2004-2009

Professional Certification:

Colorado State Professional Educator's License

Washington State Professional Educator's License

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Student

GRADUATE COMMITTEE AND OPTION APPROVAL FORM CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY (Submit the original and three copies)

Note: This form is to be completed as soon as the student has formed a committee and selected an option from the list below. Submit the original and three copies to the Office of Graduate Studies in Barge 305.

Student Name Zachary Adm Curtis Birth Date [redacted] Mailing Address [redacted] Student ID [redacted] City, State, Zipcode [redacted] Date 10/09/2009

Check option: Indicate credits to be received for the thesis or option: [checkbox] Written Exam* TH700 Master's Thesis 6 [checkbox] Non-Thesis Project Course No. Title Credits [x] Creative Project [checkbox] Studio Project Course No. Title Credits [checkbox] Portfolio Review MLA 6th Edition [checkbox] Thesis Style Manual for Thesis or Project

*Students taking written exam option may omit items 1-5 below.

1. Proposed Title: Direction of the production Sylvia

2. Purpose of Study: The direction of Sylvia serves as the culminating experience in theatre arts graduate studies.

3. Scope of Study: Documentation based upon the preparation of pre-production research, post-production evaluation, the direction of the production (including casting and rehearsal of actors, preparation of the director's production book, and oral examination) shall benefit both the student and theatre arts department.

4. Procedure to be used: Three phases of study shall be included: 1) Pre-production research and thesis documentation in MLA style, 2) Rehearsal and direction of production, 3) Post-production evaluation and documentation.

5. Does the procedure involve collection of data obtained from Human Subjects (including use of surveys)? Yes** [] No [x] Use of Animals? Yes** [] No [x]

** If yes, your procedures must be approved in writing by the Human Subjects Committee or the Animal Care and Use Committee before you initiate your research.

Professor Christina Barrigan Committee Chair (typed or printed) Professor Michael Smith Committee Member (typed or printed) Professor Nadine Pederson Committee Member (typed or printed) Committee Chair (signature) Date 11/23/09 Committee Member (signature) Date 11/23/09 Committee Member (signature) Date 11/23/09

Approved by: [signature] Date 7/23/09 Approved by: [signature] Date 12.3.09 Dept Chair/Designee (signature) Date Associate VP of Graduate Studies (signature) Date Dean

Students will be required to submit two copies of all motion picture film, film strips, sound film strips, slides, tapes, cassettes, pictures, etc. produced as part of the thesis. These are to be submitted at the time the thesis (three copies) is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research.

MASTER'S THESIS PROJECT PLAYSCRIPT APPROVAL FORM

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

SCRIPT TITLE Sylvia

PLAYWRIGHT(S) [If musical, list lyricist/composer] A.R. Gurney

NUMBER OF ACTS 2 APPROXIMATE TOTAL PLAYING TIME 1 HOURS 30 MIN.

CAST (fill in with the appropriate numbers)

MEN 2 WOMEN 4 CHILDREN _____ OVER 40 5

ROLES REQUIRING PEOPLE OF COLOR None ROLES COULD DOUBLE Yes, but most likely will not

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAST 6

OTHER CASTING CONCERNS: Female playing Sylvia needs to be a competent and detail-oriented physical actor
One female part (Leslie) must be an androgynous character and could be played by a male or female actor.
Characters of Kate and Greg must possess some singing abilities
College students must be able to play early middle age

ARTISTIC STAFF (check those needed for this play or production idea)

MUSICAL DIRECTOR _____ DANCE CHOREOGRAPHER _____
FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER _____ DIALECT COACH _____ SPECIALTY HIRE _____ (specify what kind)
ORCHESTRA/BAND (specify what size) _____
Will you be fulfilling any of the above? _____ If so, which?

Will a guest artist be fulfilling any of the above? _____ If so, which?

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

UNIT SET? YES NO (CIRCLE ONE) NUMBER OF SETTINGS 5
HISTORICAL PERIOD Present Day GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION Manhattan, NY
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SET CONCERNS OR SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

- The show takes place in several different locales and switches quickly.
- Scene changes must be done with minor shifts

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF PROPS 34 PERIOD Present Day
DIFFICULT OR UNUSUAL PROPS? YES NO (CIRCLE ONE) DESCRIBE:

WEAPONS OR FIREARMS? HOW MANY None DESCRIBE:

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

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF COSTUMES PER CHARACTER multiple, simple changes
HISTORICAL PERIOD Present Day SEASON Multiple (summer to spring)
SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Multiple, quick, simple changes for Kate and Greg. Perhaps just a new jacket or shirt.
- One change for Sylvia
- Only one costume each for Phyllis and Leslie

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHOICE OF SCRIPT

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS SCRIPT PRODUCED? YES NO (CIRCLE ONE)

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

I have not produced or performed in this play before.

WHY SHOULD YOUR ORGANIZATION PRODUCE THIS SCRIPT?

Alicia Bickley at Yakima Valley Community College expressed interest in a script that was a small to medium cast “quirky” comedy with a poignant ending. This show is funny and touching, and will provide challenges to YVCC student performers but is not prohibitively challenging. The set, props, and costumes are all simple and can be created with minimal financial resources or labor assistance.

After meeting and working with Yakima Valley Community College theatre students, I am confident that there are high caliber actors who can pull off this material. In addition, this is a fun show that the community of Yakima and the students at Yakima Valley Community College should enjoy.

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

This show is a small cast and will provide limited opportunities for student actors. It focuses on three leads and offers only three smaller roles for other actors. This show includes some scenes with harsh language, and although the script provides alternative dialogue for those scenes, it would be preferable to maintain the original language.

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

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

SUBMITTED BY: (Printed Name) Zachary Adam Curtis Date Submitted: 11/13/09

(Signature) _____

Thesis Chair Approval: _____

_____ Date Approved: 11/15/09

Thesis Committee Members Approval: _____

_____ Date Approved: 11/23/09

Graduate Coordinator Approval: _____

_____ Date Approved: 11/23/09

Synopsis

Sylvia, by A.R. Gurney was originally produced in 1995 in New York, New York (Gurney 4). The show is set in present day New York City and spans the course of nearly a year in the lives of Greg and Kate, our main human characters. The title role, however, is reserved for a dog, Sylvia.

The play opens in the living room of Kate and Greg's Manhattan apartment home. Their kids have moved out and Greg has begun to experience a mid-life crisis. He hates his job and has started taking long breaks to walk in the park. On one of these recent breaks, Greg met the scruffy and transient dog, Sylvia, and brings her home. At the top of the show, Greg is waiting anxiously for his wife Kate to get home so he can share the good news of his newly acquired family member. Unfortunately, when Kate arrives home and meets Sylvia, she is not as excited about the prospect of having a dog in the family.

As the play progresses, Greg's relationship with Sylvia, played by a human female actress, blossoms into a strong relationship that begins to overshadow Greg's marriage. He quits his job and spends more and more time with Sylvia and less with Kate. As this relationship begins to tear their marriage apart, both Kate and Greg search for advice from friends and professionals.

Greg develops a friendship with Tom, owner of a male dog named Bowser, at the local park. His new friend tries to help Greg understand that he has to be careful to remember that Sylvia is just a dog. He warns that relationships with dogs can easily begin to overshadow human relationships, especially when a man gives his female dog a woman's name.

Kate, meanwhile, goes to her friend Phyllis for advice over her crumbling marriage and her husband's obsession with Sylvia. Phyllis does her best to console her frustrated friend, but in the end, leaves Kate to solve her own problems.

When the situation gets dire enough, Kate schedules an appointment with their psychiatrist, Leslie. Despite all of Kate's complaining, Leslie supports Greg and asks Kate to try harder to understand him and his needs. However, this only lasts until Greg enters and begins talking about Sylvia. Leslie immediately sees his obsession and strongly advises Kate to divorce Greg and shoot Sylvia in the head.

Kate, not wishing to go to those extremes, gains a grant to study in London for the summer and excitedly invites Greg along. The one caveat is that Sylvia will not be welcome. This is the breaking point in their relationship. Greg finally gives in to save his marriage and agrees to send Sylvia to a nice family in the suburbs. On the way, Kate finally starts to realize her own affection for Sylvia and love for the husband who was willing to give up his dog for the sake of their marriage. They change their mind and bring Sylvia home. Kate ends her London study early and comes home to Greg and Sylvia. Finally a happy family, they live together for the next eleven years, until Sylvia the dog passes peacefully in her sleep.

Project Parameters and Schedule

The Yakima Valley Community College production of Sylvia is scheduled for the twentieth through the twenty-third of May with audition dates set for April second and third. This time frame leaves six and a half weeks for the rehearsal process. The show will be completed with the assistance of a four person production team including a director, a technical director and designer, a producer, and a publicity and box office manager. In addition to this

production staff, Yakima Valley Community College students will be involved as actors and in a variety of technical capacities.

The show calls for a small cast of six and this cast should be easily found among community college students. There is, however, the possibility of casting community members as well. All production work will be done by community college students and staff as part of theatre department coursework.

Sylvia will be the spring production in Yakima Valley Community College's 2009/2010 season. As such, it will be awarded a budget of \$3,000, which should be more than enough for this production. There is also a small stipend for the director.

Yakima Valley Community College's theatre venue is a fitting space for this show, but will pose some challenges. The proscenium space has ample seating, a fairly large stage, adequate lighting instruments for the space, and a nice scene shop attached to the theatre. One challenge of the space lies in its size compared to the scope of this show. Sylvia is a small cast and small set show and it would be easy for it to become lost on a large proscenium stage. In addition, we will have to deal with issues of venue use. The theatre is frequently used by the school administration, as it is the only seating venue on campus large enough for Yakima Valley Community College faculty meetings. Also, it is rented out to community groups and other community college organizations. This poses a challenge to the theatre department when staging shows. The sets must be built so that they can remain in, or be regularly returned to the shop or on the back wall of the theatre until the week of the show. This may become a challenge when staging the show and having to either deal with no set pieces, or having to move the set pieces back and forth each night.

The final challenge of this space is simply its unknown quality. Anytime a director is working with a new theatre, a new system, and a new team, there will be challenges. Thankfully, the production team already in place at Yakima Valley Community College is very familiar with the space, the system, and the cast and crew involved with the theatre program. With their help, the show should run smoothly.



SYLVIA

BY A.R. GURNEY

★

★
DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



SYLVIA
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March 29, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

Zac Curtis has approval to continue with his planned production of A.R. Gurney's *Sylvia* (with performances to run May 20-23, 2010) this quarter. I am aware that this production of *Sylvia* is part of Zac's Master's Thesis Project for Central Washington University. He has my permission to use the Kendall Auditorium facilities and the resources at Yakima Valley Community College to complete this endeavor.

Respectfully,

Alicia Bickley
Director of Drama

Evaluation of Sylvia as a Production Vehicle

The cast and crew for Yakima Valley Community College's production of A.R. Gurney's Sylvia will consist primarily of students of the college. The actors and the crew may be students from any college department or major, although many will come from the theatre department. The crew will design and build the show both through design classes and in after-class lab hours, while the actors will rehearse entirely during afternoon rehearsal hours. These students range in age from eighteen to fifty, leaning heavily toward the eighteen to twenty-five age range. They possess varied levels of theatrical skill and interest. Some are working toward a degree in theatre at a four year university and some are simply working with the college theatre department for fun. Sylvia is a show that can challenge and interest all levels of these students and will be a fitting show for Yakima Valley Community College students.

The audience for Sylvia will consist of community college students, faculty and staff, friends, family, and supporters of the cast and crew, and interested members of the Yakima community. The Yakima community and the Yakima Valley Community College setting has shown past support to more traditional shows like Shakespeare's tragedy Macbeth and Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical comedy Cinderella, as well as more modern and controversial shows such as Richard Greenberg's Take Me Out, which "examine[s] themes of democracy, racism, celebrity, sexuality and discrimination" (Bracey). In addition, the college's season this year contains the classic Macbeth, and the very modern and edgy Vagina Monologues and Top Girls, which deal overtly with issues of sexuality and heavy language. Sylvia is a relatively modern show with minor content including harsh language and sexual innuendo. With its past history of support, the community should have no issues in rallying around this production of Sylvia.

The ideas expressed in this show are ideas that are universal. The crowd of middle-age and older patrons as well as the married patrons will appreciate the approach to issues of marriage and growing older. As Greg deals with empty nest syndrome and his progressing age through his new found love of Sylvia, his dog, audiences will see aspects of themselves. Anyone who has felt lonely and sought companionship as life progressed will understand at least a shred of Greg's plight. This play deals very honestly with these issues in ways that will tug at the heartstrings and make audiences laugh with joy.

The play also deals with the relationships humans develop with their pet animals. Anyone who has ever had a pet, will be able to relate to this aspect of the story. When Greg brings home Sylvia, a stray dog, he immediately falls in love. He begins to ignore his wife and his other obligations and begins to show all the signs of having an affair. What he views as an innocent familial love for his dog, begins to turn into something unhealthy and to tear apart his relationships. Many people have felt at least a hint of what Greg is going through. Even if the audience members have not taken things to these extremes, most will have experienced the real and wonderful relationship a person can have with a pet. This recognition is the real beauty of this play. The audience will see Greg's love for Sylvia and vice versa and begin to understand Greg's struggle with sympathy.

There will also be barriers to the audience's understanding of this show, as well as that of the actors. The characters are middle-upper-class citizens living in a Manhattan apartment. Most importantly, the characters are considerably older than the average community college student in the cast or in the audience. It is possible that some younger audience or cast members may have trouble relating to the troubles of middle age. This problem, however, will be minor as the younger crowd will be able to simply focus on other aspects of the play. College age and

younger students will be able to focus their attentions on the honest and humorous portrayal of the dog and the universal elements of human/animal relationships.

Director's Concept Statement for Sylvia

Themes and Synopsis:

A.R Gurney's 1996 comedy Sylvia presents a world of twisted reality in which the audience is invited beyond the façade into the inner workings of the characters' minds. The previous action of the play centers on a couple whose marriage is in trouble, but who don't yet know it. The daily grind and monotony of life, along with a midlife crisis, have affected their married life, and they have fallen into a rut. The intrusion of Sylvia spirals their marriage into devastation, and only from those depths can they crawl back up to true happiness.

This intrusion begins the action of the play. The story is set in a simple, modern-day, Manhattan apartment. The time is present day. Kate and Greg have just recently moved to the city, and are struggling to fit in. Their children are grown and out of the house and Kate and Greg are beginning the next chapter of their life. Kate has started working as a teacher, specializing in her passion, Shakespeare and the education of inner-city children. This is her version of a midlife crisis. Greg works as a currency trader in the city. He hates his job and longs to quit. Unfortunately, he doesn't know what else he really would rather do. Greg is longing for something he can't define when he meets Sylvia in the park.

This meeting begins Greg's personal spiral into his own midlife crisis. With the kids gone and a job he hates, Greg decided that he needs the dog he has just found at the park in order to make himself complete. The show centers around this relationship and the impact it has on those around Greg. The central theme of the show is the individual need to find love when it seems lost and the dangers of forgetting what is important in the process.

The play ends with the very thing that tore their marriage apart bringing it back together stronger than ever. Greg's love for Sylvia opens his heart once again, and when Greg and Kate finally rediscover their love for one another, they are able to be together truly and honestly. Kate grows to accept the dog that was so important to Greg, and Greg grows to see the dog as only a dog and see Kate as the true object of his affections.

Concept:

- Live piano driven
- Fragmented pieces of memory
- Lounge show
- Small cast with three roles being played by one actor

This show includes several moments that break traditional conventions of the theatre, in particular the convention of the fourth wall. Scenes frequently end with Kate quoting Shakespeare. After each quote, she verbally cites the act and scene number of the quote. The most striking break is the final scene in the play. The play becomes a memory play as Kate and Greg turn to the audience to sum up their experiences with Sylvia and update the audience on what has transpired over the past eleven years. In order to justify these excursions into the world of presentational style, the show will be presented with elements of a lounge act. The feel of the show should be one of a fragmented memory. The audience should feel as if they are watching pieces of Kate and Greg's memories unfolding. Some pieces may be missing, but the important elements remain.

Music is an integral part of this show and should be used for each scene change. The script calls for solo piano music between each scene and goes on to list specific song suggestions. While the script suggestions are good choices, following them is not a necessity.

The music should invoke a feeling of a simple and nostalgic New York. It should be fun and lively, following the attitudes of Greg and Sylvia, thereby further alienating Kate. Transitional music should be soft and quick as the transitions will be fluid. Transitional music can underscore beginnings of scenes as it fades out or fade in as it underscores the end of scenes. In order to support the lounge act feel, the piano should be live on stage, with the piano player speaking the lines of the airport announcer and the Shakespeare citations, but not actually interacting with the characters on stage. The piano music played will guide the characters through the stages of their life by mirroring the character attitudes.

Character:

The level of dog behavior portrayed in the character of Sylvia is extremely important. The play ends with the characters admitting that they started seeing Sylvia “differently”. They show us a picture of Sylvia and this is the first time we see her as a dog. Up to this point, it is important to the show’s theme that the audience sees Sylvia as a humanized figure. This is the twisted reality. The show’s theme is based on Sylvia not only being played by a human, but being played by a beautiful woman. In the park, Tom talks about the danger of jealousy and attachment if a dog is given a woman’s name. Despite its similarities in name, this play is not Edward Albee’s version of Who is Sylvia?, in which a man develops an intimate and sexual relationship with a goat (Albee). The relationship between Sylvia and Greg is completely non-sexual. He loves her and she loves him. However, the jealousy this creates for Kate is just the same as if Greg’s love affair were with another woman. For this reason, the dog Sylvia must be portrayed with an effective mixture of human and animal characteristics. When Sylvia talks, people hear and understand her, and she is able to understand human speech as well. This is not a strange world in which dogs talk, but rather a manifestation of the natural communication that

happens every day in our animal-loving society. When Sylvia speaks, the humans in the show, like the audience, seem to be able to understand her intentions and talk back to her as if speaking to a person.

Design and Color:

- Color shift from shades of white as new characters and relationships infuse their lives with color.
- Colors based on character relationships and attitudes
- Fragmented pieces of memory
- Simplistic sets that combine the look and feel of a contemporary Manhattan apartment and the presentational feel of a lounge show
- Fluid scene transitions

This show should emphasize the loving, yet superficial opening relationship between Greg and Kate and the passionate life of the relationship between Greg and Sylvia. By the end of the show, Greg and Kate's life should have been infused with some of this passion and love. The set should be simple in order to emphasize the relationships. This play is not about their apartment or their furniture. It is not about fancy scene changes. Changes should happen as quickly and smoothly as possible with no blackouts other than intermission. Set pieces can double and triple in function and there should be no change time as characters flow smoothly in and out of scenes.

The color is a strong point of focus in this show. The evolution of the different relationships throughout the show should be indicated through the colors. Kate and Greg's opening relationship can be indicated with muted shades of whites, grays, and tans. The introduction of Sylvia starts to bring more warm, rich, and lively colors into the house. The

intrusion of the outside characters should introduce various aspects of Kate and Greg's relationship. Kate's friend Phyllis represents the temptations of the world outside their family, and this should be manifested in bright, bold colors that do not fit in with Kate and Greg's home or costumes. Greg's new friend Tom represents where Greg could be by the end of the play. He was once in Greg's position and has lost his family as a result. His colors should show this lack of development by the end of the show. Finally, the psychiatrist Leslie represents the emptiness of Kate and Greg's marriage. Marriage counseling is their sign that their marriage is sick. Leslie should be in the muted whites, tans and grays that we see at the beginning of the show. As Kate considers leaving Greg, these bright colors of Phyllis can seep into her character. By the end, as Greg and Kate's relationship blossoms they have met in the middle with nice warm colors. These colors can come into both the set and the costumes.

Gurney's script calls for casting one actor as Phyllis, Leslie, and Tom (5). In order to meet the demands of the presentational style, I would like to follow this suggested casting. The character of Leslie, self-described as an androgynous character with an androgynous name, as well as the other two characters, should be played by a male. The character of Sylvia must be played by a woman, most likely younger than Kate to emphasize the comparisons between this relationship and the mid-life affair with a younger woman. The characters of Kate and Greg should be in their early 40s, but can be played by college-age actors who are up to the challenge.

All of the elements of acting style, set, costume, color, music, and pacing should combine smoothly to create the feeling of a memory play. The audience should see the characters and their relationships changing and evolving as the set, costumes, and acting subtly and simply change throughout the show. In the end, when the play refers back to the memories, it should be clear to the audience that they have been watching the memories of Kate and Greg. The

audience should leave with the feeling of hope and love for families, both the human and animal varieties.

April 2010

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|-------------------------------|---|-----------|---|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| All rehearsals 3:00 to 5:00 unless otherwise stated. | | | | 1 | 2 Auditions 4pm | 3 Auditions 10 am |
| 4 | 5 Cast read through | 6 Block 1.1 Character Work | 7 | 8 Block 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 | 9 Block 1.5, 1.6, 1.7 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 Work Act 1 off book | 13 Block 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 | 14 | 15 Block 2.4, 2.5 | 16 Work Act 2 off book | 17 |
| 18 | 19 Work 1.2, 1.6, 2.1, 2.3 | 20 Work 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.7 (Kate, Greg, Sylvia) | 21 | 22 2.2, 2.4, 2.5 (Kate, Greg, Sylvia) | 23 Work Act 2 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 Work Act 1 | 27 Work Act 2 | 28 | 29 Work Act 1 | 30 Work Act 2 | |

May 2010

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | 3 Work Act 1 | 4 Run Act 1 | 5 | 6 Work Act 2 | 7 Run Act 2 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 Run show Off line call | 11 Run show | 12 | 13 Tech Rehearsal 3-6 | 14 Tech Rehearsal 3-6 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 Tech Rehearsal 3-6pm | 18 Dress Rehearsal 7:00 pm Curtain | 19 Final Dress Rehearsal Preview Performance 7:30 pm Curtain | 20 Performance 7:30pm Curtain | 21 Performance 7:30pm Curtain | 22 Performance 7:30pm Curtain |
| 23 Performance 2:00pm Curtain | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 | | | | | |

Play Analysis

I. Given Circumstances

A. Geographical Location

1. Apartment

- a. At Rise: Greg and Kate's apartment (Gurney 7)
- b. SYLVIA. Do I sleep on this couch? (7)
- c. PHYLLIS. This is lovely Kate. I was expecting something more naïve. I mean, for new arrivals. I mean, sometimes when people come to New York, they bring the provinces with them. I like your apartment. (32)
- d. KATE. Well it's simple and convenient. (32)
- e. GREG. She'll find her ball. It's probably under the hall table. (39)
- f. KATE. Do you think we possibly might put Sylvia in the kitchen. (40)
- g. GREG. They're in a bag in the front hall. (69)
- h. GREG. I'll call the garage. (70)

2. Outside apartment

- a. GREG. I'm beginning to like these late night walks, Sylvia (26)
- b. SYLVIA. I was concentrating on that Doberman across the street. (26)
- c. GREG. The city seems to be shaking itself down to its essentials. That truck delivering tomorrow's vegetables. That doorman keeping watch over his flock by night. (26)
- d. SYLVIA. There! There! Under that parked car. (28)

3. New York City, New York

- a. KATE. In the city, Greg? (11)

b. KATE. Not in New York (11)

4. Apartment's proximity to park and Greg's work

a. GREG. I took a break from the office. So I went to the park to cool off. (10)

b. GREG. She was a good girl walking home, weren't you Sylvia? (13)

5. The Park

a. GREG. Here we are, Sylvia. The park. Where we met. (19)

b. GREG. This is called Dog Hill. They allow dogs to play freely here. (20)

6. Leslie's office

a. An office with a chair and desk. Venetian blinds. (57)

7. Airport

a. VOICEOVER. American Airlines Flight 203 to Indianapolis has been temporarily delayed. (30)

B. Time and Date

1. Time

a. GREG. This afternoon. I took a break from the office. (10)

b. KATE. Dinner! The concert! (19)

c. KATE. I had to eat early. The microwave stands waiting. (24)

d. KATE. Oh, hello Harold. No, It's never too late. (26)

e. GREG. I'm beginning to like these late night walks. (26)

f. GREG. There's the moon! Catch that moon, Sylvia, rising between those buildings. (28)

g. KATE. You wanted an excuse to skip that dinner with those clients. (30)

h. SYLVIA. I get bored with the afternoon crowd. (46)

- i. KATE. I'm going to bed. (56)
2. Passage of time
 - a. KATE. This is the third time this week. (24)
 - b. KATE. I followed you around for twenty years. (56)
 - c. LESLIE. During our last session, you seemed to suggest that he had actually fallen in love with Sylvia. (57)
 - d. GREG. She's not herself lately. Particularly these past few weeks. (59)
 - e. LESLIE. I'm afraid we're confined to the fifty-minute hour. (60)
 - f. KATE. And I changed my mind about England. Oh I went – for a few weeks.
 - g. GREG. And Sylvia stayed. She stayed with us for the next eleven years, until everything went wrong with her and we had to put her down.
3. Date
 - a. GREG. In the middle of August? (24)
 - b. PHYLLIS. Hamilton and I are booked solid...through October. (33)
 - c. KATE. I know it's all been very exciting, walking around town during these fine fall days. (44)
4. Life stages
 - a. KATE. Now? With the kids gone? (11)
 - b. KATE. Not at this stage in our lives. (11)
 - c. GREG. Take Kate, for example. We started dating in high school. (46)
 - d. GREG. She may be in heat. (49)
5. Events
 - a. GREG. She's still under the weather after her operation. (53)

- b. GREG. You applied for this grant, didn't you?...I mean recently, since Sylvia. (55)
- c. KATE. I plan to be there for six months. (56)
- d. KATE. You've managed to chew a hole in a twenty-two-year-old marriage. (56)
- e. GREG. Forever, Sylvia. (64)
- f. KATE. Actually, my meeting's still going on. Greg, I ducked out early. (69)
- g. KATE. I took that picture the year before she died. (72)

C. Social

1. Power Structure

- a. GREG. Then sit! (she sits) (8)
- b. SYLVIA. Even when you hit me, I love you. (8)
- c. GREG. Then I won't. Ever again. I promise. (8)
- d. KATE. Rub her nose in it at least! She's got to learn! (18)
- e. GREG. I won't do that, Kate! (18)

2. Past

- a. SYLVIA. I hardly knew where to turn. I was beginning to panic. I thought my days were numbered. Then there you were. (9)
- b. SYLVIA. In the pound?...They suck! You have no idea what they do...The rows of cages. The shitty food. The time limit...If someone doesn't bail you out, normally within five working days, then they put you to sleep....It's a tough world out there lady. I know. I've been there. That's why I want to be here. (16)

3. Family

- a. KATE. I know, sweetheart. But here? Now? With the kids gone? (11)

b. KATE. When we lived in the suburbs, when the children were around, we had several dogs, and guess who ended up feeding the damn things. But I don't want a dog now, Sylvia. That is the point. Our last child has gone off to college, and we have moved into town, and the dog phase of my life is definitely over. (14)

4. Home environment

a. GREG. Stop barking, Sylvia! She's a teacher. She likes an orderly classroom. Now show her you can be a good girl. (9)

b. KATE. Stop that! Go away! Greg, what is this? (10)

c. GREG. Are you housetrained, Sylvia? (13)

d. SYLVIA. Oh yes. Definitely. Absolutely. No question. (13)

e. KATE. I said off that couch! Right now! (14)

f. KATE. I'm worried, Greg. I'm worried about your job, I'm worried about you, I'm worried about us. (19)

g. KATE. Well, Sylvia, thanks a lot. You've managed to chew a hole in a twenty-two-year-old marriage! (56)

5. Community

a. GREG. I was just saying that these walks at night are giving me a whole new perspective on life. The city seems to be shaking itself down to its essentials. That truck delivering tomorrow's vegetables. That doorman keeping watch over his flock by night. That young couple, hurrying home to screw. (27)

6. Behavior

a. SYLVIA. I suppose you'd like me to sit down and howl at it... Well I don't think I can do that Greg. Sorry. I like to think I've grown beyond that kind of behavior.

(28)

b. SYLVIA. Fuck you, kitty! Up yours with a ten-foot pole... I hate your fuckin' guts, kitty, and don't you ever forget it!... Well. Out of sight, out of mind. Let's

move on. (29)

c. GREG. I should say that stuff to Harold at work. How does it go again? You're a sack of shit, Harold! You're a disgrace the... (29)

d. KATE. And lately he's been taking the afternoon off... But Greg does this every day! He and Sylvia have lunch, and then they go on these long walks... He says he's having a truly democratic experience for the first time in his life. (36)

e. KATE. I might just switch to a little Scotch. (36)

7. Relationships

a. KATE. Sometimes I want to kill her, Phyllis. I want to put De-Con in her dog dish. (37)

b. KATE. Greg, make her stop. (37)

c. SYLVIA. Go fetch that ball?... All right, I will. Seeing as how you're God. (38)

d. KATE. Our friends loathe her. (41)

e. GREG. Come on, sweetheart. Time to eat. (43)

f. KATE. I think it's safe to say I hate your guts. (44)

g. GREG. I wish I knew more about your former owner. (46)

h. TOM. We've inherited these genes from our caveman days when we had to connect with nature in order to survive in it... And your relationship with Sylvia

has reactivated that gene. That's why you respond to her so strongly. On the other hand, your wife's biophilic gene has become so so strongly atrophied... That's why you're having marital problems. (48)

- i. TOM. Actually, my wife and I have decided to split. (48)
- j. SYLVIA. But even when you behave like a complete asshole, I love you completely. (57)
- k. KATE. There is nothing physical between Greg and Sylvia. (58)

D. Education

1. Educational levels

- a. KATE. I've gotten my Masters degree, Sylvia. (14)
- b. KATE. You went to college. (17)
- c. KATE. Lord, lord, how this world is given to lying. (26)

2. Attitudes on education

- a. GREG. I'm not so sure college is the answer to everything in life. (17)

E. Political

1. Political leanings

- a. PHYLLIS. I thought Greg was a Republican. (36)
- b. KATE. He was! He used to be. (36)
- c. PHYLLIS. I think all men should be Republicans, Kate. It seems good for their prostate. When Hamilton voted for Bush, why he – I can't wait for the next erection...I mean election. (36)
- d. KATE. I never thought I could hate anybody except Nixon. But now I hate Sylvia. (36)

F. Physical

1. Character descriptions

- a. STAGE DIRECTIONS. She is pert and sexy. Her hair is messy and she wears rather scruffy clothes: a baggy sweater, patched jeans, knee pads, and old boots. A small name tag in the shape of a heart hangs around her neck. (7)
- b. STAGE DIRECTIONS. Greg wears business clothes, but his tie is loose. (7)
- c. STAGE DIRECTIONS. Kate comes on, brisk, well-dressed, carrying a large tote bag. (9)
- d. GREG. The name was on her tag. See? "Sylvia." (10)
- e. GREG. She's got a lab's disposition. I also think she may be part poodle. (12)
- f. KATE. She's not the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. (12)
- g. GREG. Don't jump up Sylvia. (17)
- h. TOM. Cute little butt on her. (20)
- i. STAGE DIRECTIONS. Sylvia comes on with a new hair-do, a bow in her hair, and a corny outfit. (24)
 - i. GREG. They gave her the full treatment: flea dip, nails clipped, ears cleaned, the works. (25)
- j. GREG. ...the girl who gave her the bath said she thought she was basically French poodle. (25)
- k. TOM. Or else she's in heat...the way she carries her tush. (48)
- l. STAGE DIRECTIONS. Leslie wears a unisex outfit. (57)

- m. LESLIE. And that's why I wear these ambivalent clothes. I may be a man pretending to be a woman, or I may be a woman pretending to be a man. I let my patients select my gender, Greg. (60)
- n. GREG. You look particularly glamorous today, Sylvia. (63)

G. Financial

1. Past

- a. SYLVIA. I never would have survived out there on my own. (8)
- b. KATE. You haven't changed since Vassar, Phyllis. (33)

H. Careers

- a. GREG. She's a teacher. (9)
- b. GREG. I took a break from the office. (10)
- c. KATE. He's your boss for God's sake!...He sounded a little mad Greg...For leaving work! In the middle of the day! (13)
- d. KATE. Don't lose your job Greg...The kids would have to quit school.

I. Current Lifestyle

- a. GREG. I'll get her all checked out...To deal with the fleas. (11)
- b. KATE. The Waldman's have tickets to a chamber music concert. So we're meeting for dinner, and going to that. (12)
- c. KATE. And tomorrow night we have our Spanish lessons, and Saturday we're going to the Knicks game with the Kramers. (12)
- d. KATE. We go out a lot Sylvia. We visit friends in the country on weekends. We see the kids at college. (16)

- e. GREG. Remember when we passed that poor homeless woman huddles in the doorway? Or that scruffy guy poking in the garbage for soft-drink cans? Remember how I made eye contact with them Sylvia? (27)
- f. KATE. I'll tell you what's real, Greg. The mortgage on this apartment is real. The kids' tuitions are very, very real. (42)

II. Previous Action

- A. (Page 9) Sylvia lived on the streets before being found by Greg.
- B. (Page 9) Kate has been working as a teacher.
- C. (Page 10) Greg works at an office.
- D. (Page 11) Sylvia has acquired fleas
- E. (Page 12) Kate and Greg have had a busy social life with couple friends.
- F. (Page 14) Kate grew up with dogs in the suburbs
- G. (Page 14) Kate and Greg's last child is off at college.
- H. (Page 19) Greg and Sylvia met in the park.
- I. (Page 26) It took Kate two years to agree to marry Greg.
- J. (Page 32) Kate and Greg just moved into New York.
- K. (Page 34) Kate is working to put Shakespeare into the junior high school curriculum.
- L. (Page 56) Kate and Greg have been married for twenty two years.

III. Analysis of Dialogue

A. Choice of words

1. Kate, Greg, and Tom all use simple, casual, yet proper words and plain language. Their speech is typically grammatically correct. The word choice of these three characters shows their level of education and place in upper-middle class society.

- a. Both Kate and Greg are willing to cuss using four-letter words. Kate seems more comfortable with using them, while Greg seems a little more hesitant. Neither use them with any regularity.
 - i. GREG. "I should say that stuff to Harold at work. How does it go again? You're a sack of shit, Harold! You're a disgrace to the –" (29)
 - ii. GREG. "Damn right" (69).
 - iii. KATE. "Damn" (30).
 - iv. "(KATE. "Oh hell. As Shakespeare once said, what the fuck!" (71).
- b. Sylvia speaks proper English, however retains some canine vocal qualities.
 - i. SYLVIA. "Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey! (9)
 - ii. SYLVIA. "Which is called sharing, Kate. Which is what some people sometimes call love" (71).
- c. Phyllis speaks using proper grammar and polite word choice.
 - i. PHYLLIS. "I said, the shells are lovely, Sheila, but where do you shit? – I mean, sit...I mean..." (32)
 - ii. PHYLLIS. "Just fizzy water, please" (34).
 - iii. Even when flustered by Sylvia's actions, she maintains her poise.
 - (i) PHYLLIS. "I've got to be off. Really. So nice to see you again, Kate. Bye bye Sylvia" (40).
- d. Leslie demonstrates her intelligence and education through her choice of academic and professional words without sounding completely out of touch and pretentious. She loses her professionalism when she becomes aggravated and this shows through her word choice.

- i. LESLIE. "Maybe Sylvia is simply the medium through which he expresses his love for you" (57).
- ii. LESLIE. "You, on the other hand, seem to have retreated into a kind of pastoral nostalgia" (61).
- iii. LESLIE. "To shoot Sylvia. I hope you get her right between the eyes...Sorry, I'm late for my shrink" (63).

B. Choice of images

1. The characters in Sylvia speak very plainly and honestly. They rely more heavily on realism than on figurative language. That said, there are times the characters, Greg in particular, philosophize about their life and use imagery to do so.
 - a. GREG. "Time is for slaves, Katie" (24).
 - b. GREG. "The city seems to be shaking itself down to its essentials" (26).
 - c. TOM. "We've inherited these genes from our caveman days when we had to connect with nature in order to survive in it" (48).
 - d. GREG. "She's got limpid eyes. Limpid, deep, serious eyes" (59).

C. Choice of peculiar circumstances

1. Kate frequently ends scenes alone on stage quoting and then citing lines from Shakespearean plays. This is a result of her education and career in Shakespeare in schools. It is also a slight break of the fourth wall.
 - a. "I must be cruel only to be kind. Thus bad begins...and worse remains behind. Hamlet, Act Three" (19).
 - b. "Lord, lord, how this world is given to lying. Henry the Fourth, Part One" (26).

D. The sound of the dialogue

1. The speech of Greg is upbeat and wandering.
2. The speech of Kate is soft, direct, and even.
3. The speech of Sylvia is loud and energetic.
4. The speech of Tom is calm and relaxed.
5. The speech of Leslie is calm and deliberate.
6. The speech of Phyllis is exuberant and posh.

E. Structure of lines and speeches

1. Greg – longer lines, many speeches
2. Kate - short to mid-length lines; a few speeches
3. Sylvia - short to mid-length lines; a few speeches
4. Tom - short lines, to the point
5. Phyllis - short to mid-length lines
6. Leslie – short speeches

SYLVIA
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IV. Analysis of Character

A. The protagonist for this production is not a single individual. The action of the play is driven by Kate and Greg's marriage and decisions that harm or help that marriage. For that reason, in this production, the protagonist will be viewed as Kate and Greg's marriage. The antagonist to this marriage is Sylvia and all of the challenges that accompany her presence. The show centers on the relationship of Kate, Greg, and Sylvia. The other three minor characters will be played by one actor.

B. Sylvia

1. Desire: Primarily, to remain in her new home and not be returned to the pound. Secondly, to love and to be loved by her master. She views her master as Greg, but also longs to have the approval and love of Kate.
2. Will: Strong. She holds strongly to her beliefs and opinions.
3. Moral Stance: She is too honest to be immoral. She has no censor and says exactly what she feels at all times. Will do and say whatever she knows she can get away with.
4. Decorum: Easily excitable and loves all people at first meeting. Very physical. Frequently jumps up onto people. Likes people instantly, more discriminate with other animals. In heat and lustful when placed around large male dogs. Slow to judge against people, but when she does, she holds onto grudges. Open and honest. Lacks a censor and says and does whatever feels right at the time. Voice varies with mood from sweet to crude and crass. Dress varies with level of grooming. Always dressed to mirror the sexy younger woman appeal in dog form.

5. Summary Adjectives: Loyal, loving, passionate, honest, open, crude, excitable, lusty, urgent

C. Greg

1. Desire: Primarily, to feel passionately and love and live life to its fullest.
Secondarily, to hold his marriage together.
2. Will: Strong, yet naïve. He holds strong to his actions, even when they meet opposition, yet seems to do so not out of strength, but out of a naivety to the gravity of the situations surrounding him. Sylvia strengthens him.
3. Moral Stance: Genuinely good. He cares about others and cares about doing the right thing. He just doesn't always know what that is.
4. Decorum: Casual and kind to all people. Afraid of being offensive and hurting others. Frequently not able to notice the sarcasm or negativity of others. He has reached a point in his life when he is more concerned with himself and his own needs than the needs of others. Voice reflects his innocent naivety, but rises to anger in moments of released honesty. Dress becomes more casual as he shirks off his work responsibilities.
5. Summary Adjectives: Caring, determined, compassionate, naïve, innocent, sheltered, short-sighted, lost

D. Kate

1. Desire: To hold onto her marriage. To establish and advance her career.
2. Will: Strong, but somehow keeps losing battles over Sylvia with Greg. She makes her stands with logic, not passion.

3. Moral Stance: She is willing to bend her values or use manipulation to get what she wants.
4. Decorum: A social climber. She will change her persona to fit in with different elements of society. She is eager to establish herself in her career field and afraid of losing her position. Her voice is manipulative and changing, adjusting in tone to meet her immediate needs. Loses her purposeful poise when frustrated. Uses Shakespeare to bring her back to her desired poise. Dress is casual business professional.
5. Summary Adjectives: Ambitious, focused, logical, appraising, poised, social

V. Polar Attitudes

A. Sylvia

1. Beginning: I love anyone who loves me and I am so excited by everything I see around me. Love me!
2. End: I see the world for the complicated reality it is.

B. Greg

1. Beginning: I feel like a new man, adventurous and free. Through Sylvia, I have rediscovered my ability to love and feel passion.
2. End: I love my life and my family and have set my priorities with my marriage coming first.

C. Kate

1. Beginning: I still love my husband, but I need to take advantage of my newfound empty nest in order to focus on my career.
2. End: My family comes first. I love and embrace the people and animals that make up my family.

D. Phyllis

1. Beginning: My social standing and ability to remain prim and proper in any situation gives me my self worth.
2. End: I can no longer hide my improper feelings in order to adhere to the norms of society.

E. Leslie

1. Beginning: I pride myself in my ability to always maintain my professional and unbiased behavior.
2. End: I can no longer handle the crazies I come across in this job. I am going to think of my own needs first and not censor my personal feelings.

F. Tom

1. Beginning: I love my dog and enjoy the dog park and its casual conversation. I will give informal advice and enjoy the male camaraderie.
2. End: I see now the extent to which some dog owners take their relationships with their dogs and I want no part of it.

VI. Ideas of the play, identification of the main ideas

A. Meaning of the title

1. The title, Sylvia, refers to the title character Sylvia the dog.
 - a. "The name was on her tag. See? Sylvia...She was lost and abandoned Kate" (11).
2. Sylvia as a woman's name
 - a. On his website, argurney.com, A.R. Gurney described his viewpoint on his play Sylvia. "I consider this play to be a variation on the plot of the menopausal

married male falling in love with an enticing young girl – only in this case, the girl happens to be an adorable stray dog named Sylvia.”

- b. In the play, Leslie tells Greg “You wanted your dog to be a woman, that’s why you named her Sylvia” (61). When Greg tells her the dog was already named Sylvia, Leslie responds by saying “But you embraced the name. Because you needed a woman” (61).
 - c. Tom warns Greg of the dangers of giving a dog a woman’s name.
 - i. “Give a dog a woman’s name, you begin to think of her as a woman...That can be dangerous” (21).
 - d. GREG. “Come on, sweetheart. Time to eat” (43).
 - e. SYLVIA. “Fair enough! And may the best species win.” (45).
3. Shakespeare sonnet
- a. “Who is Sylvia? What is she, That all out swains commend her?...Holy, fair, and wise is she...The heavens such grace did...” (60)
 - b. In Act Two Scene Four of Shakespeare’s Two Gentlemen of Verona, Proteus sings a song with the following lyrics:

Who is Silvia? What is she,
That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair, and wise is she;
The heaven such grace did lend her,
That she might admirèd be.
Is she kind as she is fair?
For beauty lives with kindness.

Love doth to her eyes repair,
 To help him of his blindness,
 And, being helped, inhabits there.
 Then to Silvia let us sing,
 That Silvia is excelling;
 She excels each mortal thing
 Upon the dull earth dwelling
 To her let us garlands bring. (Orgel 135)

4. Connection to Edward Albee's The Goat or Who is Sylvia

- a. Although Edward Albee's play The Goat or Who is Sylvia was written and produced years after A.R. Gurney's play Sylvia, the titles are still connected. On his website, argurney.com, Gurney described his opinion of the connection between the two titles.
 - i. They say that great ideas can be contagious at certain times. A few years after my play was produced, Edward Albee took a more drastic look at the same subject in a play where a man falls passionately in love with a goat. The protagonist becomes so serious about his relationship that his wife determines to kill the animal. My Sylvia dies, too, but being a sentimental soul, I have her death bring about a return to marital harmony. I don't know whether Albee's goat's name is Sylvia or not, but he subtitles his play "Who is Sylvia?" which I like to think is an homage to mine. Or else he is simply quoting Shakespeare's poem, "Who is Sylvia?" as I do in my play.

5. Meaning of the name Sylvia

- a. "She of the woods" (Gurney 11).
- b. "Sylvia is a popular Latin girl's name and means she of the forest." (www.name-meanings.org)

VII. Philosophical statements in the play

- A. GREG. "I have a need...I'm not sure. But I have it." (12)
- B. KATE. "Real? What's real?" (17)
- C. SYLVIA. "I sense the clock ticking away." (27)
- D. SYLVIA. "I must say it helps to express your feelings." (28)
- E. KATE. "Ev'ry time we say goodbye I wonder why a little." (31)
- F. SYLVIA. "I'm a mystery. I'm what's known as the other. That's never happened to you before. That's why I'm so exciting" (47).
- G. SYLVIA. "'I wish it could have been otherwise.' I've been thinking about that. Know what 'otherwise' is, Kate? Otherwise is that man who ran off with his grandchildren's au pair. Or that guy who took a shot at his wife while she was doing her step aerobics. Otherwise is those sad couples sitting in restaurants night after night, eyeing each other, with absolutely nothing to say. That's otherwise, Kate.'" (71)

VIII. Purpose of each scene

- A. Act 1 Scene 1 – Apartment
 - 1. This scene sets the main location of the play. It is important for Greg to not only introduce Sylvia into his marriage, but also into the home they share. When he brings Sylvia, representing the 'other woman', into the home he shares with Kate, he is confronting Kate with an invasion into a space she once saw as her domain. Kate begins to become an outsider in her own home

B. Act 1 Scene 2 – Park

1. In this scene, Greg meets Tom, who represents a voice of male wisdom for Greg.

Tom is like Greg in his love for his dog, and because of this similarity, Greg is more willing to take advice from Tom. Tom also struggles balancing his marriage and his canine relationship, and therefore is able to provide Greg with a sounding board. This allows the audience a glimpse into some of Greg's true feelings that he does not openly share with his wife.

C. Act 1 Scene 3 – Apartment

1. This scene creates the impression of a passage of time. It is important that the audience feel the strain being put on Kate and Greg's marriage by the presence of Sylvia. This scene establishes the tension building in their home as Greg begins to lose his job and Kate begins to reach her limit with Sylvia.

D. Act 1 Scene 4 – Walk

1. In this scene, Greg is able to explain his deep life philosophies to Sylvia. Similar to being with a younger woman, Greg feels that with Sylvia, he can say anything and be himself. He has loosed himself of all of his responsibilities and is trying to live life to the fullest. Sylvia, in the meantime, reminds the audience that she is just a dog. She does not have the intelligence to converse with Greg about philosophy and life. This scene demonstrates to the audience the stark difference between Greg's image of Sylvia and the reality of Sylvia.

E. Act 1 Scene 5 – Airport

1. The scene in the airport shows the disintegration of Kate and Greg's marriage. She is physically leaving, even if only temporarily. In addition, the conversation is cold and

not nearly as heartfelt as the conversations Greg has with Sylvia. This scene shows Kate and Greg both struggling for their marriage, but unsure how to rescue it. The song at the end of this scene, sung by all three primary characters, is “Ev’ry Time We Say Goodbye”. This song shows the effects of a goodbye on each of these characters. When Sylvia sings it on the couch at home, and then immediately jumps up when Greg gets home, the difference in attitudes becomes clear. While Greg and Kate sing about the pain of seeing their marriage slip away, Sylvia lays on the couch at home, singing the woeful tale of a lonely dog, immediately cured upon Greg’s return. Sylvia is just a dog and it becomes more and more clear that her feelings are not in fact as deep or true as those of Greg’s wife.

F. Act 1 Scene 6 – Apartment with Phyllis

1. Phyllis represents a life that Kate once had and a life that she feels has been lost. Through Phyllis, the audience gets a glimpse into Kate’s past as well as a view into her present career path. It becomes clear that Kate views Sylvia as an obstacle to her career and to her social life, particularly at the end of the scene when Phyllis flees the apartment

G. Act 1 Scene 7 – Apartment

1. This scene provides Kate her moment to finally hold firm to her needs and tell Greg that the dog must go. The audience learns that Greg has lost his job and that Kate is fed up. However, despite this, Kate tries to listen to Greg and understand him in a way that Sylvia could not. Greg doesn’t seem to want this understanding if it means losing Sylvia, and so he resists. In this scene, everything is laid out and their marriage is put on the line when Greg seems to choose Sylvia over Kate. The scene

ends with Kate swearing to fight for her marriage and the audience sees clearly that the second act will be a battle.

H. Act 2 Scene 1 – Park

1. This scene in the park addresses the idea of man's love of and need for nature, which Tom calls man's "biophilic" (49) gene. Tom explains to Greg why he might need Sylvia so much. Through this, Greg begins to understand himself more clearly, but it only serves to strengthen his relationship with Sylvia. Greg takes things too far when he confesses he wants Sylvia to get pregnant so he can take care of her and the babies like he did for his wife. This pushes Greg into the realm of "sick" (51) in Tom's mind and Tom leaves.

I. Act 2 Scene 2 – Apartment

1. An opportunity presents itself to Kate and Greg is made to choose between Kate and Sylvia. Greg is torn, which indicates how far he has fallen in his relationship with Sylvia. He is beginning to lose sight of the difference between Kate and Sylvia.

J. Act 2 Scene 3 – Marriage Counselor's office

1. Leslie's office serves as a representation of the logical. She addresses everything with logic rather than emotion. She always maintains her professional behavior. This represents the direction Kate and Greg's marriage seems to be headed. Their marriage is becoming formal and lacking in honest emotion or connection. Greg continues to demonstrate the extent to which he has lost touch with reality and when Leslie finally snaps at the end, it is a foreshadowing of the marriage. It must snap in one way or another.

K. Act 2 Scene 4 – Apartment

1. Greg makes a huge leap as he agrees to give Sylvia away. It is clear that he hates the decision and resents Kate for it, but he makes a choice of Kate over Sylvia as an indication of his love for Kate.

L. Act 2 Scene 5 –Theater

1. Kate responds to Greg's magnanimous gesture by making one of her own. She chooses Greg and their marriage by allowing Sylvia to stay. By this point, both Greg and Kate have made gestures indicating their willingness to put the other first, and through that, saved their marriage. The final scene in this play, gives the impression that everything the audience has just seen has been a memory. This scene establishes Sylvia as a memory play. It wraps up the story and gives it closure, focusing on their marriage and their newfound ability to deal with the reality in front of them and get over their mid-life crisis need for something more.

IX. Main ideas and themes

- A. Men versus women and the difference in their understanding of a need for pastoral comfort (Sponberg 152)
- B. Male and female mid-life crisis and their effects on a marriage (argurney.com)
- C. The nature of human/animal relationships
- D. Music as a soundtrack to life
 1. 1920s songs of Cole Porter and Gershwin are a nostalgic reminder of Kate and Greg's past. More contemporary songs represent the forward momentum of their lives. The mood and tempo of the songs represent the attitudes and mindset of the protagonist.
- E. Letting go of constraints in order to fully live life

X. Previous Reviews

A.R. Gurney's Sylvia starring Sarah Jessica Parker was first produced by Manhattan Theatre Club in New York City. It opened on May 2nd, 1995 under the direction of John Tillinger and the Artistic Direction of Lynn Meadow. The set design was created by John Lee Beatty, the costume design by Jane Greenwood, the lighting design by Ken Billington, and the sound design by Aura Fixation. The production Stage Manager was Roy Harris. On September 29th, 1995, the show moved to the John Houseman Theatre in New York City (Gurney 4).

In an interview with author Arvid E. Sponberg, Gurney provided a glimpse into his view of the theatre critic:

The playwright, particularly if he or she wants to succeed beyond the local community, still has to go through New York. A New York success is still the imprimatur of theatre success in this country. And when I say that, I'm thinking of the *New York Times*. You can survive a bad review by the *Times*. Some writers do. Herb Gardner does. Neil Simon has. But nonetheless, for a young writer coming up, it's very hard. A young writer has to be approved by the *Times* in order to really succeed and get out there in the world. And that's unhealthy, the fact that one individual's opinion, no matter how bright he is, should so determine one's fate. That's not freedom, when you are at the mercy of one opinion. (Bryer 100)

By the time of Sylvia's opening in 1995, A.R. Gurney was already an accomplished playwrights with produced works like The Dining Room, Snow Ball, and Love Letters (Bryer 90). With this past success, perhaps Gurney no longer felt he was at the mercy of the opinion of the *New York Times* reviewer, but he still knew the influence a review could have on the viewing public. Luckily, the *Times* review by critic Vincent Canby on May 24, 1995 was the first of many to openly praise Sylvia. Although he does not provide an entirely positive reflection on the show, Canby refers to the show as "critic proof" (Canby 1) due to the sweet sentimentality evoked in dog owners and dog lovers in the audience. He goes on to praise the performers, in particular, Sarah Jessica Parker's performance of the dog, Sylvia. He describes her performance as "anthropomorphic" in its balance of human and dog-like characteristics. According to Canby,

Parker occasionally used dog gestures such as scratching for fleas, but never went so far as to crawl on all fours.

Canby goes on to critique what he feels is the major weakness in the production and in Gurney's writing. He argues that while the play is not really about Sylvia, it seems to center around her and loses something when she is not onstage. In addition he argues that the script gets a bit messy as it evolves from trivial to "foolishness" (Canby 1). However, despite these concerns, Canby seems generally positive about this crowd pleasing show.

Two years later, in his review of the revival production in New Brunswick, Alvin Klein of *The New York Times* sees the play differently. He refers to Sylvia as a "gimmick" (Klein 1) and "an attempt at exploration that settles for glibness". He felt that the production relied too heavily on the audience's connection to the "cuteness" of dogs and their love of their own furry friends. This may be in part because of the performance of Katherine Heasley as Sylvia. Klein seemed to feel that Heasley relied too heavily on canine characteristics and lost some of her identity as a symbol for the 'other woman'. David Ng of *The Los Angeles Times* takes this idea even further in his November 5, 2007 article. He gives ample credit to star Catherine Rigby for her physical portrayal of Sylvia, but chastens her for her for "indulging in canine antics that seem infantile and somewhat condescending to the audience" (Ng 1).

The reviews for this production, while hitting different high and low lights, all seem to focus on a few seemingly universal aspects of this show. The positives all seem to center around the idea that Gurney's Sylvia is a cute play that audiences will enjoy. The clever writing, well-acted characters, and cute storyline will please audiences, particularly the dog loving variety. However, the critics also all seem to agree on the play's shortcomings. The director and the actors must be careful not to fall into these pitfalls. The character of Sylvia must be played with

energy and canine enthusiasm without crossing the line into the absurd. The audience must always remember she is a dog, while never losing sight of the fact that she represents far more than that to both Kate and Greg. In addition, this show must avoid becoming trivial. The real danger to Kate and Greg's marriage must become evident and the solutions unclear. This is a touching story of love and life and if it digresses into a cute story about a guy and his dog, the point has been lost.

Gurney himself chimed in on the issues of this play in an interview posed on his biographical website argurney.com. When asked about Sylvia, Gurney seems to agree with the critics' comments as he describes the play as follows:

I consider this play to be a variation on the plot of the menopausal married male falling in love with an enticing young girl – only in this case, the girl happens to be an adorable stray dog named Sylvia, or “she of the woods”. The man's affection for her costs him his job and almost his marriage. The play works best when the dog is played straight, with no attempt to be arf-arf or cutsie-poo. After all, this is first and foremost a love story and should be treated as such. (www.argurney.com)

XI. Research on the playwright

In the preface to A.R. Gurney: A Casebook, Arvid F. Sponberg described A.R. Gurney as a man who “became a playwright because he discovered when he was young that plays lead interesting lives, and so do the people who stage them, watch them, and write about them.” In the introduction, Sponberg goes on to describe the interesting life that Gurney led from his childhood on to his playwriting career.

A.R. Gurney was born Albert Ramsdell Gurney Jr. in Buffalo New York in 1930 to educated parents both interested in literature. Both his mother and father attended good boarding

schools, and his father went on to attend Yale. Gurney's mother married his father at age 19 and therefore did not receive a formal collegiate education. However, throughout A.R. Gurney's life, his mother demonstrated an interest in literature by hosting her own book clubs reading authors such as Faulkner and Joyce. Gurney credits this love for education and literature with his early interest in writing.

During his childhood, A.R. Gurney's parents continued to spark his interest in specifically in theatre. According to Sponberg, Gurney's parents would regularly take the sleeper train into New York City where they would see Broadway shows before coming home and telling their son about the theatre they had seen. In addition, Gurney's grandmother would occasionally take him to local plays at the Erlanger Theatre in Buffalo. This familial love for the theatre combined with a love and appreciation for education and literature gave A.R. Gurney a spark and a head start in his playwriting career.

As an elementary school student at St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire, an all boy's school, Gurney was cast in his first play, as a female role in Arsenic and Old Lace. For a period of time, Gurney quit theatre after being teased and called "Legs" Gurney for his portrayal of a female character.

As he continued his education, he developed a passion for writing. Frequently, when teachers assigned him compositions, he took the opportunity to write a play instead. He loved writing dialogue. As he developed his writing style, he realized that he felt strongly about point of view. He was not fond of stories told in the first person, and preferred to write in the third person point of view. "I liked the third-person narrative where you had an outsider" (Sponberg 7).

By 1948, Gurney has decided on a career in theatre, and began attending Williams College. While there, he met and admired the work of Stephen Sondheim, who was two years ahead of him in school. He had great respect for Sondheim's work with student musicals, and was eager to collaborate on a project. Sondheim's senior year, Gurney collaborated with him on a musical revue. After Sondheim graduated, Gurney continued to produce the annual musical revue and develop his interest in musical theatre. He translated this interest into his writing, many of his plays heavily focusing on music as a storytelling tool.

After graduation from Williams College, Gurney joined the Navy. While in the Navy, Gurney wrote and produced musicals on the aircraft carrier Franklin D. Roosevelt until he left the Navy in 1956. After the Navy, Gurney began attending the Yale School of Drama. As a student at Yale, he wrote Yale School of Drama's first musical, entitled Love in Buffalo. He worked with Yale professors, in particular Nikos Psacharopolous, to establish his sense of playwriting and build connections in the theatre world. After Yale, Gurney parlayed his experience and connections into a job teaching at the Belmont School in Belmont, Massachusetts. Before long, he moved up into a position teaching in the Humanities department at MIT.

By the 1970s, Gurney had been writing plays for twenty years and understood the needs of the theatre community. Non-profit theatres with small budgets were gaining importance in the theatre community. In order to assure that his plays would be produced, Gurney wrote plays with small and flexible casts, and minimal and flexible settings in order to accommodate the needs of small non-profit theatres. In 1982, Gurney left MIT and moved to New York to work as a full time playwright. In his career, now spanning six decades, Gurney has written over forty

plays, three novels, and several musicals. Some of his most popular works include Love Letters, The Dining Room, and Sylvia.

XII. Learning Goals

A. Students at Yakima Valley Community College will expand their skills in the following areas:

1. Set design and construction
2. Sound design
3. Properties design
4. Stage Management
5. Physicalization and Characterization
6. Projection and Articulation
7. Emotional access
8. Blocking and stage composition
9. Collaboration and Communication

Production Journal

Friday, April 2nd:

At 4:00 this afternoon, I braved the snowy roads to Yakima and held auditions for Sylvia in the Yakima Valley Community College theatre. Thankfully this is a small cast show, because the audition turnout was unfortunately low. I had eight people audition today. In my past discussions with Alicia Bickley, director of the YVCC theatre department, I had been directed to choose a small cast show with a lot of female roles due to the abundance of females in the department. After discussing several possible shows, we settled on Sylvia, despite its small cast size. Only three women showed up to today's auditions, making me appreciative of the fact that we had chosen a show with only two female roles. Only one of the three women who auditioned today had potential to be cast. I will be hoping for more women to show up tomorrow in order to be able to effectively cast this show.

Of the five men that auditioned today, three were reasonable casting options. I could cast the male roles from this grouping if necessary. I asked a few people to return for Saturday's auditions, although this was less of a call back than an attempt to boost my Saturday audition numbers.

Saturday, April 3rd:

This morning at 10:00 in the morning I returned to YVCC to complete the second day of auditions. Two of the people I had asked to return from yesterday showed up early. In addition to these two, I had five new people show up. Of this group, the most interesting were two females very fitting for the female roles, and one male who was older and had professional acting experience as well as a Bachelor's degree in acting. He did have talent, but it worried me that his background was so much above the level of the rest of the auditioners. After speaking

with him about his reasoning for being there, I felt more confident in my ability to work with him.

Casting went well today and I was impressed with some of the new talent that came in today. Although only thirteen people showed up to audition for this show, I felt confident I would be able to effectively cast this show with one exception. No one that showed up played the piano. I will leave this role uncast and continue to search for a piano player to tie this show together.

After much thought on the way home, and even more thought at home, I have finally decided on a cast. My two greatest concerns involved Jeff Polage, the experienced actor, and my ideas of using understudies. I was concerned that Jeff Polage's acting style would conflict and that he might not work well with the young college cast. I feel good about my solution of casting him in the comedic, multiple-part role of Tom, Phyllis, and Leslie.

My other concern was casting the right people to work as understudies. The use of understudies is not traditional at YVCC. After hearing horror stories about dedication in their past two shows, I wanted to be sure that if an actor was missing, rehearsals would be able to continue. In a cast of four, one person missing would be a major hindrance to rehearsals. My original thought was to cast a male understudy and a female understudy. After auditions, I felt the best thing to do was split the female understudy. The two best girls could have played either part, but if I wanted both of them in the starting cast, I needed to cast more limited actresses for the other parts. I had a talented actress who could play the part of Kate, and a girl with promise that, with some work, could play the part of Sylvia. After splitting the understudy roles, I ended up casting a total of four women in the show. For the men, I cast my two leads, and then simply

cast the most talented actor left as the male understudy, as I felt he would be able to step into either male role if necessary.

I e-mailed the cast list out to all those who auditioned as well as the YVCC faculty. I am now excitedly awaiting our first rehearsal at 3:00 on Monday. We will stick to the planned rehearsal schedule with one small adjustment. I learned that the students are supposed to register for the credits before I can technically hold a rehearsal. For that reason, our Monday gathering will be called a mandatory meeting and at some point during that meeting, I will need to get all of the students to fill out registration cards for the class.

Monday, April 5th:

Today's first rehearsal went very well. We were able to get through registration information and introductions rather quickly and begin a read through. The cast seemed to bond well. Unfortunately, we were missing two of our cast. I received a call earlier today that the male understudy was in the hospital getting a spinal tap test for meningitis. His girlfriend, the actress playing Kate, was with him. Thankfully, the tests came back negative and both actors will be in rehearsal tomorrow.

Tuesday, April 6th:

I started blocking the show today with Act One Scene One. It was encouraging. We were able to work through blocking for the scene, and then run it all a second time through. Finally, we had time to allow the understudies to run through it once while the starting cast observed. I am a bit nervous as to how the understudy process is going to work with this show. They all seem eager and willing to work as understudies, but I want to make sure I keep them motivated. I also want to be sure I rehearse them well enough that they feel prepared should they ever be asked to step in and perform. For this reason, I'd like to make sure I give the

understudies, at the very least, a chance to observe and then run the blocking for each scene during this blocking phase.

Thursday, April 8th:

I spoke with Josh today and discussed with him his most recent ground plan. The set design is coming along nicely. The student set designer was also present today pulling furniture from the department's stock. Due to the small budget, we have \$500 set aside for the set, whenever possible; we will be re-purposing stock pieces for this set.

The use of understudies in this process has been new to me. So far, it has gone very well, although I am still approaching the idea very carefully. I am trying to give every opportunity for the understudy cast to rehearse without taking important rehearsal time away from the primary cast. At this point, all of the understudies are working hard and approaching this challenge with a fantastic attitude. The primary cast also seems to have a very supportive attitude toward the understudies. Today, we were able to block three scenes and run through them with both the primary and the secondary casts.

I spoke with Jeff Polage this afternoon regarding the portrayal of the characters of Tom, Phyllis, and Leslie. He is a hard worker who takes direction well and is eager for comments on his acting. We discussed his major difficulty, which is his tendency toward film style acting. He is from a Hollywood background, and tends to speak low and mumble. He realizes the need to articulate and heighten his characters. This was a great first step. We are well on our way now to creating interesting characters.

Friday, April 9th:

Today, we wrapped up blocking for Act One. My personal directing style is to work efficiently and block quickly, in order to get the show on its feet as early as possible into the

rehearsal process. From this point, the actors can now memorize in preparation of their off-book day on Monday, and by next week, we'll be able to start adjusting and working on character work. I spoke with the cast today about some memorization techniques as well as my expectations for their memorization for off-book rehearsal on Monday. They seem nervous, and my expectations are not extremely high for Monday, but I do trust that they will give it their best effort.

I spent the last twenty minutes of rehearsal today talking to the cast about general questions or issues they have about the first act or their characters. I also spoke with individual cast members about any thoughts I had on their acting so far. Although I am not really giving acting notes yet, I want to make sure I am giving them the direction they need in order to develop their characters. Jeff really brought his A game today. His portrayal of Phyllis was a lot of fun. While not completely fixed, he really addressed the issue of his introverted, film-style acting by creating a boisterous and over-the-top character. I told Jeff how much I loved his character, and just that as we go on, we may have to start bringing her down in places. He created some very funny moments and character choices, we just need to avoid the character becoming completely insane. He completely agreed.

I also spoke with Michael, who is playing the character of Greg. He is inquisitive and eager to improve. He ultimately wants to be a director, so in addition to wanting to improve as an actor, he also wants to learn about directing from this process. He asks good questions and is a very dedicated actor. We discussed the idea that Greg is a tough character because he acts very one-dimensional at times, but that will get boring rather quickly. We discussed some options for finding the depth and emotional layers in this character.

Finally, I spoke with Jessica, who is playing the understudy to Sylvia. Jessica has never done any theatre at all in her life before this show. She is, however, eager to learn and she seems to fit in well with this cast. Jessica is a very small girl, her career goal is to be a horse jockey, and as such has a very small voice. In talking to her today, she expressed fear that her voice was too mousy for the character. I reassured her that her voice was unique and was a large part of her charm. We spent some time discussing the idea of speaking from the core and using the diaphragm without yelling and sacrificing the unique qualities of her voice. I sent her home with some vocal exercises to practice this weekend. My hope is that not only will she develop projection, but that it will also give her the confidence to make some bold vocal choices with her character.

Sunday, April 11th:

Just as I found out that my male understudy actor is feeling better, another medical emergency arose. I received a call this evening from Michael Kemper, the actor playing Greg, informing me that he had spent the weekend in the emergency room. After some serious medical issues regarding a seizure and spinal fractures, he has been told by doctors to spend 6-8 weeks on his back in bed in order to fully heal. Unfortunately, that means that my lead male actor is dropping the show. I called my other two male actors today and discussed the options with them. I asked Cody to step up into the role of Tom/Phyllis/Leslie, only after discussing with Jeff the idea of switching over to play Greg. Although Jeff was doing a fantastic job bringing life to those three characters, I felt that he was better equipped to play Greg than Cody was. Both actors agreed to those changes. Now, tomorrow during rehearsal will simply be less of a focus on being off-book, and more of a focus on reviewing the blocking for Act One.

If this is the last setback we have in this show, we will be fine. I feel confident in the actors I have left playing the roles. However, if we lose another male actor for any reason, I need to consider my options. I do not feel confident enough in any other actors who auditioned to bring them in as understudies. If I lose Cody for any reason, I will most likely split the three parts and have Auna play Phyllis, bring in a Tom, and possibly have Evan, my assistant stage manager, play Leslie. If I lose Jeff from the cast for any reason, I do not see any immediate options except to play the role myself. I hope it does not come to that.

Monday, April 12th:

I said yesterday that I would be fine if we had no more setbacks. On my way to rehearsal today, I received a call from Cody, the actor recently moved into the role of Tom/Phyllis/Leslie. He is having adverse effects from his recent spinal tap and is on his way back to the hospital. Apparently spinal fluid is now leaking out of his brain. When I arrived at rehearsal, I also learned that my assistant stage manager was going home sick. With everyone else, there, we were able to rehearse with my stage manager filling in for Tom/Phyllis/Leslie.

Jeff is doing a nice job graciously taking over the role of Greg. I worry about his ability to play a more natural role, but I feel more confident after today's rehearsal that with some work, he will be up to the challenge. I really appreciate his willingness to go with the flow and his positive attitude.

Today was supposed to be an off-book rehearsal of Act One. I always anticipate that such an early off-book day will be disastrous, but demand it nonetheless. I find that this pushes the actors in an effective way. However, I had not anticipated the incidents that have recently struck the cast. One of the cast members is in a brand new role, one is at the hospital, and one is the distracted girlfriend of the actor in the hospital. On top of this, I find that I have a weakness

when dealing with adult actors. I feel less authority to be able to push an issue with them compared to working with high school age actors. I let them clearly know my expectations, but when I came in and not a single actor was prepared to go off book, I felt that I had no recourse as a guest director. I worked a deal out with the cast. Because of the recent mix-up of the cast, I would delay the off-book day until the following Monday, as the rest of this week will be spent blocking Act Two. My only hope is that I can motivate them to have their lines learned by next Monday. I have made it perfectly clear that my expectations are now higher for next Monday and that there will be absolutely no scripts on stage on Monday.

Tuesday, April 13th:

I arrived at rehearsal today to a familiar feeling. I walked in and saw Noelle, the actress playing Kate, in a foot cast, walking around on crutches. In three days, I have had three cast members in the hospital. Apparently, she needs to stay off of it for a couple of days, and should have the cast off in two weeks, plenty of time for performance. For now, I will have Auna, her understudy, fill in while Noelle takes down her blocking and studies her lines. Both Auna and Jessica are doing great jobs as understudies. With Auna in particular, I would be happy to have her perform in this show.

Jessica is a little rougher as an actress. She has never performed on stage before in any capacity. We spent a small amount of time today while she was on stage working with her projection. She has a very small and unique voice. I am working to bring out not only volume, but also confidence, without losing the unique qualities of her voice. I didn't want to push her too hard today, as we are only working on blocking, but I want her to start thinking about these things.

Thursday, April 15th:

I finished blocking the end of Act Two today, and since this section of the play was a little shorter than others, I had some time leftover to work on some of the moments in these scenes. One item I spent time on today was Jessica's acting. I focused on her projection. I was impressed with her positive attitude and desire to improve. She still has a long way to go, but was showing moments of improvement.

The other actor I focused on was Jeff. He is a talented actor, but holds on to his tendency to keep his acting very small and mumble. I worked with him today on these final two scenes in order to get him to open it up a bit. The biggest idea I wanted Jeff to get was that the end of this play cannot focus on sadness or depression. Although the characters are sad, they have to cover that emotion with other objectives. After working with him on this he really began to show some great things.

Friday, April 16th:

I did not require actors to be off book today as listed on the schedule. After moving the Act One off-book date back due to illness and change of casting, I decided to push back the Act Two off-book date as well for consistency. We got in a good rehearsal, reviewing blocking for Act Two. We will be off-book for every rehearsal starting Monday.

As for today's rehearsal, we were able to run through all of Act Two to review the blocking, and still have some time leftover to work in some more detail into a few Act Two moments. I was happy that I was able to work the Leslie scene with Cody for a while. He is a talented actor, but it takes him a fair amount of rehearsal in order to get into a character. He is coming along nicely. We staged some nice moments today.

Unfortunately, I did not have time to get the female understudies on stage today. They continue to have a great attitude about everything. I think as we get into working scene by scene,

we will have less and less time to give the understudies a chance to run things. Particularly now that the male understudy has been moved into a lead role, it will be difficult to have the understudies run scenes on their own. I will have to work hard to continue to find this balance.

I spoke with Josh today regarding the technical aspects of the show. He has a great attitude, but he does seem to have some fear of being able to get everything accomplished within the allotted time frame. He is working with a new set construction class that is moving slowly because they are just now learning the basics of set construction. In addition, he typically is paid on a contract to work after hours to build the set. This quarter, they were not able to pay him his contract, which means that the only time he has to build is during this class. During our conversation, we discussed the idea of simplifying some aspects of the set design in order to be able to achieve our end goal. I offered my services to Josh and he gave me hours he would be in the shop building. I plan to go on Tuesday this week and see if I can help get the set going.

Monday, April 19th:

On the way to rehearsal today, the curse of this show continued. I received phone calls from two actors. The one with the spinal issue had gone back to the neurologist today. They ran tests and recommended that he stay in bed for 24 hours. The other phone call was from Noelle who was home throwing up, possibly from side-effects of her on-going Chemo treatments. This has been a very interesting cast.

Thankfully, I still have two dedicated understudies ready to step in, although I no longer have a male understudy. If anything happens to Jeff or Cody, I have decided that I will step in. Rehearsal today was supposed to be working four of the Tom/Phyllis/Leslie scenes. However, with Cody's absence, I decided to swap scenes with tomorrow's rehearsal. For this reason, I gave the actors one more day's extension on being off book. I hate that I have had to soften my

off-book policy, but the situations just dictated it. We'll see how well they do off book tomorrow.

Today, we were able to work through four of the Greg, Kate, and Sylvia scenes. I am happy with the progress we made today. The blocking seems set and the characters are coming along. Jeff is still an enigma to me. He is obviously the class clown type and loves to be silly. He plays around on stage and with his character, but he does it in subtle "film acting" ways. I've spoken with him about where his character needs to go and I think he understands the demands of the theatre, but he is having a difficult time reaching that place. I need to just keep reminding him to be bigger. When I ask him, he immediately gets bigger, but quickly reverts back.

Tuesday, April 20th:

I was able to go in early today to help Josh Johnson with the set. I worked with Josh on creating a demo column, and then his class came in to build the rest. Josh is clearly struggling to complete this set. With his lack of extra duty contract, he is unable to spend outside hours on this set. That leaves him with only class hours, which really means that the stage construction class is building the set. The problem is that the members of the class are all new to set construction and are still learning the techniques. This simply means that everything is a little slower. Hopefully I'll be able to go in one or two times per week and offer whatever assistance I can.

Today was the first rehearsal off book. I was pleasantly surprised. Everyone was off book and pretty competent at it. It was exciting to finally get to start doing some real scene work with scripts out of the actors' hands. Cody was back and feeling better, although Auna still had to fill in for Noelle. Cody has a challenging task ahead of him, playing Tom, Phyllis, and Leslie. He is starting to play with the characters and make some interesting choices, but he still has a

long way to go. I miss my original casting a little bit, but I have confidence in these actors.

They are starting to show some improvement, and we still have plenty of time left.

I got Chelsee and Jessica their music today. In the middle of the show, Sylvia will sing a French cabaret number entitled “If We Only Have Love” by Jacques Brel. This will be a challenging song. Chelsee has told me she has a vocal coach and will work on this song with her. I am prepared for two possibilities. The first is that she will sing it beautifully with piano accompaniment. The second is that if she cannot handle the complexities of the song, we will play it up a bit more and play the humor of a dog singing poorly; perhaps adding a few “howl-like” notes into the song.

Thursday, April 22nd:

Today was a productive, though challenging day. We worked through three scenes from Act Two. After a promising day of off-book work on Tuesday, today felt like a regression. The actors were clearly behind on their memorization for this act. The energy in the rehearsal quickly dipped as the actors continuously called for lines. The biggest problem today was the actual process of line calls. It became clear that Yakima Valley Community College’s theatre department has not established a culture that trains their students in proper line call techniques. The actors had trouble simply calling line, preferring to mumble claiming they knew the line and then spend time trying to figure it out. The Assistant Stage Manager, in charge of being on book, tended to either give the actors too much of their line, or guide the actors to remembering their lines instead of simply stating the line. Finally, as lines were forgotten, there was a tendency toward multiple people hollering out the lines. As soon as we took a break, I spoke with the actors who had trouble calling line, and then to my Stage Manager and Assistant Stage Manager. The process improved after that, but they still have a way to go.

I had a choreographer come in today to work with Chelsee. She choreographed the French Cabaret number where Sylvia dances around the piano. I'm excited to see the results on stage. It went really well. Tomorrow I will have Chelsee teach the dance to Jessica, her understudy. While Chelsee was learning the dance, I had her understudy perform Sylvia. That section of rehearsal was the toughest. Jessica has no acting experience and has trouble bringing energy to the stage. She was considerably behind on her memorization. I need to have a talk with her about the idea of working as an understudy. She will only get to perform in a dress rehearsal if she shows me she can fulfill the duties.

After rehearsal today, we all attended a barbecue at one of the actress' homes. I wanted to gather everyone together for a social event where we could also invite dogs as research. We had a great barbecue that brought the cast together and also allowed us to observe dog behaviors. We came up with a list of specific dog behaviors that we might be able to add into the show. Over the next couple of rehearsals, we will be finding ways of incorporating these canine behaviors into the show.

Monday, April 26th:

This week is scheduled for working sections of each act that need work before we begin act run-throughs. Today we focused on Act One. I felt that the most productive aspect of today's rehearsal was my work with Cody on his character of Tom. Together, we were able to bring out the confidence in his performance and give the character of Tom a unique personality. I am excited with the approach we are taking with the character.

Tuesday, April 27th:

Today we continued our work on Act One. This act is in more need of work than the second act. A couple of the actors continue to struggle with lines. In particular, Jeff and Jessica

are both really struggling. As an understudy, my concerns for Jessica are different, but as a lead, I have real concerns for Jeff. His performance is, however, beginning to become more theatrical and articulated.

Thursday, April 28th:

I can now add one more strange ailment to this cast's list. I just received an E-mail from the actress playing Sylvia saying that she will be at rehearsal, but she needs to take it easy because she just spent last night in the emergency room. She apparently has a heart condition. At rehearsal today, I asked Chelsea to sit out and let her understudy run the scenes while Chelsea relaxed and recovered. I really need her healthy for the show, in part because I am not confident in Jessica's ability to play the role at a high level.

Jessica got a much needed opportunity today to perform on stage. She has no previous acting experience or training, and as a result is definitely struggling. She has trouble opening up on stage and developing emotional responses throughout scenes, and not just when she speaks. Today, however, she did show marked improvement. She is starting to make choices and develop an interesting character. I would still not feel confident in her stepping in to play Sylvia for a performance, but she is showing me the effort I needed to see in order to let her have one of the dress rehearsals.

We are currently at the worrisome point of rehearsals. As of today, we are three weeks out of opening night. Our struggle right now is to overcome this hump point of the rehearsal process and develop a cohesive and quality performance. In order to do that, the actors that are still struggling with lines need to step it up. Once actors are confident with their lines, we will be able to begin fine tuning characters and begin to pick up cues and set pacing for scenes.

One exciting thing happened at rehearsal today. We finally secured a piano player. She came in and auditioned. After playing extremely well, we discussed the rehearsal schedule and what we would be expecting of her. I think she will work out very well.

Speaking to Josh, we also changed our plans regarding the piano. Since we were unable to secure a baby grand from the music department, the plan was to use a keyboard and build a baby grand shell to place it in. After watching Molly, the new piano player, play the stand up piano that lives in the theatre, we decided that although a brown wood stand up piano is not ideal, it might be our best option. So hopefully we will get that piano tuned and be able to use it in the show.

Friday, April 29th:

Today's rehearsal went very well. There was no school at YVCC today, so I was pleased that all cast members attended rehearsals today with no schedule conflicts arising. I felt it was a very productive rehearsal. We managed to have two rehearsal spaces going on at a time, doubling the amount we were able to rehearse and giving the understudies a chance to run the scenes as well. We focused today largely on the physical aspects of the show. We rehearsed and ran the scenes with physical chases, falls, and hits, as well as the Tom scenes, to further develop the character of Tom. We developed these scenes and then ran them with enough repetition to solidify the scenes for the actors. Today was a very productive rehearsal. I am excited to start full act run-throughs next Monday.

I did speak with the actors today again concerning memorization. Although they did well on the scenes we worked today, overall I know it is still a problem, and I stressed to the actors the need to be fully memorized by the time full run-throughs of acts start next week. Jeff approached me today and apologized for his lack of ability to memorize up to this point. He

pledged to me that he would try a new technique and make a concerted effort to catch up on his lines. It was good to hear that he realized there was a problem and that he was going to take steps toward solving it.

Monday, May 3rd:

Today we ran a run-through of Act One. Pacing was extremely slow, largely due to the lack of appropriate line memorization. We did not get to run through the entire act today, and will have to finish it tomorrow. We did also use today, however, to set the piano and tech cues.

Line memorization was bad across the board today. Although Jeff is the worst, all of the actors could manage to improve. I gathered the cast after rehearsal today and lectured them about line memorization. I tried my best to be a little mean about it so they would believe I was serious. Lack of memorization seems to be a cultural norm set at Yakima Valley Community College. While I realize I cannot change that, I do want them to realize the damage it causes to a show. There are just certain things we could have achieved with this show if lines had been memorized on time that we will not achieve now.

Molly came in today for the first time. Although she hasn't learned all of the music yet, the music she played added a lot to the show. I think her addition to this show will really help set the mood and tie the show together.

Tuesday, May 4th:

Today we finished our run of Act One. All together, the act ran about two and a half hours. Clearly, that needs to change and fast. After finishing the run, we had some time to run through all of the transitions to set the piano cues and work exits and entrances with the music. Finally, we rehearsed the songs the characters sing. We spent quite a bit of time rehearsing "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye" with the cast but we could not seem to get it. I take the blame

for this. Because it took us so long to get a piano player in, we were unable to rehearse this song until now. I had counted on the actors being able to quickly pick it up. I was wrong. They had trouble finding their notes and the rhythm of the song. Looking back, I should have brought in a temporary piano player to double as music director to rehearse the song with the cast. Now, however, time is limited and I need to come up with a creative solution to save this song.

Thursday, May 6th:

I thought about the music problem last night and came up with an idea. I called Molly and asked her if she could sing. Molly has approached everything about this show with a fantastic attitude. She has been willing to do everything asked of her. She said she could sing and she was willing to. My thought was to still have the actors sing, but have Molly fill in the bulk of the song. This way, I would still get the lounge show feel of the performers singing in character, but the bulk of the song would be sung beautifully. Sylvia will sing the first two lines, as before. Then Molly will step in and sing the rest of the verse, interspersed with actor lines, until the last three lines. Kate will sing one line, then Greg one line, and then all three actors will sing the final line of the first verse. We will end it there instead of moving on to the second verse.

We ran Act Two today. Lines were much improved. The act ran approximately one hour. This is still about fifteen minutes longer than it should be, but we are getting closer. Jeff continues to struggle with his lines.

Friday, May 7th:

Despite our troubles with Act One, I decided to stick to the schedule and repeat Act Two today. Lines continue to improve at a slow rate. After the run today, we discussed as a cast the need for pacing. We took a one page section of script and practices appropriate pacing and cue

pickup. We discussed the need to build a scene to its climactic moment, rather than pausing or hesitating on each line. I am hoping that this will drastically help our pacing issues.

Yesterday at rehearsal, I was looking at the set starting to be erected on the stage, and I thought about the furniture. Last I had heard, the furniture was being constructed in order to match the renderings from the set designer. Since the set designer is an interior decorating student, her design was primarily the use of form and color in furniture. I called Josh and asked him about the status the furniture. I was informed that not only did we not yet have the furniture, the purchase deadline for the year is today! I spent my morning shopping thrift stores and finally bought a couch. I am counting on Josh to be able to create a slip cover for the couch. At rehearsal, a crew member volunteered a chair they had in their garage to serve as Greg's "comfortable" chair, and a cast member volunteered a chair and side table that would work to replace the chaise lounge. We found a desk that was workable in the theatre stock. None of the furniture is ideal, but it will have to do.

None of this is to say I am not happy with working with Josh as technical director. He is doing a great job with what he has. He has been put into a very difficult position. He is being paid to teach one technical theatre class, but as of this quarter the department is out of money and he is not being paid a stipend to technical direct this show. Therefore, all work on this show much be completed during his class time on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In addition, his class is composed entirely of beginners who have never worked in the theatre before. With this class, he is asked to teach design, construction basics, lighting, sound, scenic arts, etc., as well as design and build the show. Josh is doing his best to put in a few free hours on the side to complete the job, but he has been forced to pick up a second full-time job to supplement his income.

Monday, May 10th:

Today is the first day of no line-call. We were scheduled to run the entire show today, but with only two hours to rehearse and our pacing/line issues, we focused on Act One. We were able to run through this act and cut the time down to one hour and fifteen minutes. While that is still slightly longer than I would ultimately like, it is a considerable improvement.

Jeff's line memorization is still a major issue. Nothing I say or do seems to make a difference. It is starting to frustrate the rest of the cast who feel that they have to cover for him on stage.

Tuesday, May 11th:

One more injury to report. Today, while setting up the stage, one of my assistant stage managers was moving the couch while wearing sandals. The couch moved over her foot and ripped the toe nail completely off of her big toe. We were able to get her to security for medical treatment, but the cast and crew needed a lecture from Josh about stage safety that was probably long overdue.

Today, for the first time, we completed a full run through of show. We ran the show in two hours and fifteen minutes. I would still like to cut another thirty minutes off of that time, but we are getting closer. Jeff's lines are only very slowly improving. I am beginning to worry about his ability to perform this role in only a week. Noelle came to me today stressed about working with Jeff. She feels that her character development is falling by the wayside because she spends her time on stage focusing on saving Jeff when he goes up on a line, and trying to move the scene along. We spent some time discussing her character arc and things she could improve on.

I stayed after rehearsal today to provide Josh with some help. A couple actors stayed as well. I stayed until 9:00 sanding, painting, and hanging lights with Josh. He is getting really worried about finishing the set without giving up his few hours of time to spend with his family.

Thursday, May 13th:

Today was the day I always hope for as a director. Today was the day I finally took a sigh of relief and realized that this show just might turn out well after all. We completed our first rough tech today. The lights were added in. Although they are still a bit rough and in need of adjustment (they were designed by a student with no actual training), they looked good and helped to set the mood of the show.

The most amazing thing about today is that the lines seem to have finally arrived. Today's biggest concern was not lines, but projection and energy. There are several moments in the play that are deep and philosophical. In those moments, the actors, particularly Jeff, have trouble projecting and maintaining high levels of energy. We have been working a lot on this, and Jeff still was not there as of today. Otherwise, the props, lights, sound, set, and scene changes were all worked in today and worked pretty well. Hopefully, the actors keep working at improvement, and don't just settle for what we had today. Tomorrow will be another tech, this time for the two female understudies to step in. That might be a little rougher. Overall, I am happy with our progress and excited for dress rehearsals to start next week.

Friday, May 14th:

Today was the understudy tech rehearsal. Overall, I am impressed. After very little rehearsal time with me, the understudies did a very nice job, and even brought new elements to the character to make their performances unique. I really enjoyed watching them, and now feel

that not only will they be fine on Tuesday in front of their families, but the show will be okay if one of them needs to step in.

Lighting continued to improve this evening. Patrick, the student lighting designer, was in rehearsal continuing to tweak the cues and adjust focus. One of the biggest problems is cue times. Because apparently he did not know how to clear out a past show, the cues are all built over the cues of Macbeth. As a result, most of the cue times are at zero seconds. Amazingly, the cues I want fast, seem to be the only ones set at five seconds. Patrick claims he knows how to adjust times and will get this done on Monday. Otherwise, the lights look good at this point. There are a couple of dark spots left on the stage, and Patrick has gone up multiple times to adjust focus in an attempt to fix the problem. I wish Josh were in here to help him. I like the color that he has added on the cyc. My biggest complaint, that we just don't seem to have time to address, is the lack of color in the other lights. The stage light is very white, which really bounces off of the white set. I would love more color in the lighting, but this is all happening so last minute, I don't think anything will be able to happen.

Monday, May 17th:

Today was our first dress rehearsal. I was excited to see the show on its feet with full technical support. After the tech rehearsals last week, I am finally starting to feel comforted that the performances will reach an adequate level by opening night. The set, however, is starting to concern me. It still has not been painted, the "see-through" walls have not been put up yet, the set is still lacking set decorations, and there are numerous small jobs that still need to be completed. In addition, I talked to Josh about my lighting concerns, and he said he would at least try to talk his student designer through some solutions. Josh is doing a great job, but he is

in a tough position with his employment contract and I know he is working hard to do everything he can.

The first dress went well. The actors continue to improve both in their memorization and their characterization. The piano music sounds beautiful. The singing is another story. It is starting to improve by slight increments, but still has a long way to go. I take full responsibility for any challenges with the singing. I over-estimated the simplicity of the songs and the singing ability of the actors. Each day this week, we will set aside time at the piano to work these songs. Molly is singing her part well, but needs to work on her line readings. I am already impressed with her willingness to play piano, sing, and act through a handful of lines. I realize that is a lot to ask of a musician. I will work with her tomorrow before the show on her line readings. She just needs to approach them with a little more confidence.

Today I approached Anita, the publicity manager, about the filming of the show, as I was told she normally takes care of that. She told me that she normally does, but for this show she would not be able to. I went ahead and arranged for a camera rental and procured the tapes. I now need to find a volunteer to film the show on Friday.

Tuesday, May 18th:

Tonight was our understudy performance. We had a small audience of twelve, consisting of Auna and Jessica's family. Alicia Bickley watched the performance this evening for the first time. The performance went surprisingly well. Working with understudies was a challenge for me in this process, as it something I normally do not do. I was not able to spend the rehearsal time with the understudies that I would have liked. With that in mind, I was extremely impressed with the performance quality this evening. I cannot really take credit for their performances, as they had very limited rehearsal time with me. They worked hard on their own

and watched rehearsals closely over the last six weeks and as a result, created fun and interesting performances unique to them and their personalities. The result was very different characters compared to the primary actors, but equally fun to watch.

I spent the day before rehearsal today working with Josh in the scene shop completing the set. I was really happy to see the set finally coming together. We added all of the details, the paint, and all of the smaller elements I worried may not happen. The set looks really nice.

The lighting for the show looks good with a few small issues. Many of the transition times on the light cues are still off, either too fast or too slow. We continue to adjust each of these and they are almost all fixed. There is still a small dark spot center stage, but the lighting designer continues to adjust to fix this problem. We added in the pre-recorded pre-show announcement this evening and now have all elements of the show put together.

It has been fun seeing the show come together. I love the way the music works with the story, and I am really enjoying the symbols throughout the show. I know that not all of the symbols will be clear to the audience, but I am confident that the overall effect will play to the audience. Without being able to look at things as an impartial observer, I feel like the symbolism of the hanging pictures, the impartial door, and the color added throughout the show will positively impact the inferred meaning of the show.

Wednesday, May 19th:

This morning I went into Yakima Valley Community College to be a guest speaker in Josh Johnson's Humanities 104 class. I was asked to spend 30-50 minutes talking on the art and career of directing. I was told going in that the class was very quiet and unresponsive. I was pleasantly surprised. The class seemed honestly interested in what I had to say and asked some great questions. The class went very well.

Tonight was our preview performance. Many students were invited to this free show, and as a result, the audience was fairly large. Overall, I was really happy with the quality of the show. During the first act, the audience really seemed to enjoy the show. There was a lot of laughter and I could really feel that the audience was connected to the characters and their story. After intermission, I felt a different play. As the play starts to shift to more serious topics, the writing also slows down and the actors responded by slowing down their own pacing. The slow drag of the second act really seemed to affect the audience.

Tonight's performance confirmed something I has predicted about this show. The audience did not clap until the curtain call. I talked to the actors afterward and explained the phenomenon to them so they wouldn't feel it was a negative reaction to their performance. I realize that my decisions caused this audience reaction. I really wanted to propel the show forward without lulls. I used piano music for all of the transitions and used a simple set design in order to prevent the need for lengthy scene changes. I am happy with the pacing this creates for the show, and willing to sacrifice the obligatory scene-by-scene clapping in exchange for this effect. I reassured the actors that the lack of clapping does not mean that the audience is any less connected.

Thursday, May 20th:

This morning I received a call from one of my actresses that she was putting together the display case in the lobby and wanted to know if we had any pictures of the cast. Apparently, Alicia Bickley had asked her to get some pictures and design the display case before tonight's show. I told her that I could print some pictures, but didn't have any already on hand. I asked her to inquire as to who would be paying for these prints. According to Alicia, because this was happening so last minute; the financial responsibility would fall to the director or the cast.

Feeling that this was an inappropriate expectation, I let her know that we would not be able to provide any pictures for the display.

Tonight was opening night. Although the audience was smaller than last night's free preview audience, they were fairly responsive and seemed to enjoy the show. The trend of clapping continued, although at the end of Act One Alicia Bickley started the claps, which spurred the audience to clap at this point. I am torn on this effect. I enjoy the audience clapping at this point, but am wary of telling the audience how to react.

I continue to see improvement from the actors each night. They continue to try new things and add detail to their characters. The second act cues were picked up slightly, cutting about five minutes off of the show, but the second act was still considerably too slow. At this point, the crew is running the show, so I was able to sit in the house and enjoy the show. That's a nice feeling.

Friday, May 21st:

This evening's performance was once again in front of a small, and included the adjudicator, Ginny Quinley from Columbia Basin College, as well as my thesis advisor Christina Barrigan and one of my thesis committee members, Nadine Pederson. In addition, my wife Mindy, who worked as the costume designer, was in attendance.

Tonight's performance was a bit rough, particularly the first act. I eventually determined that somehow the grand drape had been moved in slightly, which pushed the corner furniture in and cut off entrances and exits from the wings. As a result, actors were crashing into and knocking over furniture. The second act picked up and ran more smoothly. Tonight was the first night I actually felt the second act was the stronger of the two.

After the show, we had the pleasure of hearing from the ACTF adjudicator, Ginny Quinley, from Columbia Basin College. I really enjoyed what she had to say. She was a very positive respondent and made the cast and crew feel great about their show, while still giving them things to think about and improve upon.

Some of her compliments on the show were on the ability of the pre-show music to set the mood, the style of the set design, the initial energy, articulation, smooth scene transitions, the costumes, the Tom/Phyllis/Leslie character delineations, and the calm mood set by the park scenes. It was nice to hear compliments on so many of the elements we worked so hard on. It was good to hear that these were communicated to the audience.

She also had questions or critiques of some elements of the show. These were presented to us very effectively and positively. One of her questions included why we included the human-like touching between Sylvia and Greg? I thought this was a good question, but that we answered it well. I cited previous reviews of the show that focus on the balance between the dog and human behavior of the character of Sylvia. The reviews seemed to agree that the more effective Sylvia performances were the ones that did not rely too heavily on canine behaviors. She also questioned the lack of a loving marital relationship at the top of the show to contradict the strained relationship throughout most of the show. I agree that this would be nice to see, but the script, as I see it, is a story of a marriage that is already strained, being further pulled apart, then brought back together by Sylvia.

The adjudicator also had some honest critiques of the show that I thought were quite accurate. Her critiques ranged from the detailed, such as the color of the wine and the sound of calling off stage into other rooms of the house, to larger and ongoing issues such as reactions and cue pick up. Both of these are things I have worked on consistently with the actors. It is nice to

hear someone else say something to the actors that I have been saying for weeks, but it also makes me realize that I need to learn new techniques to work on these particular issues with inexperienced actors. I am happy with the progress these actors have made through the rehearsal proves, but I also realize that through more effective rehearsal techniques, I will be able to take actors even further.

After the response, I sat with Ginny Quinley to discuss the nominees for ACTF. She praised the show and we discussed actor performances and work ethic in the discussion of who most deserved the nomination. I asked her to go ahead and recommend two nominees. Since there were only three eligible actors, I felt too close to the show to select two actors out of three. I do, however, agree with her selections of Chelsea Newman and Noelle Poe. In my mind, these two actresses gave great and interesting performances, and were also extremely dedicated and hard working through the rehearsal process. I also worked with Ginny Quinley to give certificates of merit to the stage manager and the lighting designer.

I used a Yakima Valley Community College camcorder tonight to record the show. The video quality is not great, but thankfully, two of my three committee members were able to see the show live. Unfortunately, I got distracted and forgot to record the second act.

Saturday, May 22nd:

This evening's show was played before a similar sized house of about thirty people. The show went fairly well. I went in early and re-adjusted the grand drape and reset the furniture to avoid and more crashing into furniture by the actors. The first act went well with the exception of a couple of misses lighting and sound cues. Unfortunately, when I went backstage to congratulate the actors on a good first act, I observed some actress drama going on in the dressing room. I believe that one of a director's jobs is to serve as a therapist when needed, and

tonight was one of those nights. I stepped in to mediate the argument between my two actresses. Chelsea, who is only eighteen, felt her performance was being criticized by her costars and was feeling hurt by their attitudes towards her. I addressed the situation and did my best to calm everybody down. The actors did a great job continuing with the show, but it was visible. The energy was a little lacking after this point and in Sylvia's final monologue to Greg, Sylvia had an emotional breakdown full of tears. On one hand, Chelsea did a great job using her emotions in an appropriate spot. Unfortunately, she also let them get away from her and let the scene be about the tears. I addressed the situation further at the cast party and I feel confident it will be resolved in tomorrow's performance.

After forgetting to record act two yesterday, I made sure to get it tonight. That is, until the camcorder ate the video tape. I have one more shot to record the second act.

After the show tonight, the cast gathered for their cast party. It wasn't much of a party, but I was happy to see the cast bonding. I announced the ACTF nominations and the cast followed that up by giving each other their own silly awards. I was happy to see the cast growing together after this evening's drama.

Sunday, May 23rd:

Tonight was our final performance. It was again in front of a house of about thirty. Despite the audience being an older matinee audience, they responded very well to the show. I felt that tonight was our smoothest show since opening night. Thankfully, I was able to film both acts this evening. I watched the tape on the camcorder before sending it to be recorded onto DVD. The tape is not fantastic quality. My biggest concern is lighting. Tina mentioned the bright white of the couch center stage, which didn't help. However, I think the main problem

was the practical lighting instruments on the stage. The lighting instruments on the stage really created blinding white spots for the camera.

After the show, Josh Johnson came in for strike. He was well organized and divided the cast and crew into assignments. The strike went really smoothly and it was nice to see the project wrapped up.

Self-Evaluation

Now that this show is complete, I wanted to look back and reflect on the final product. Overall, I am happy with the result, although I certainly feel there were areas which could have been improved. When I first read Sylvia, I read a show filled with very funny moments. Although I thought our production was fun, it lacked honestly funny moments. Unfortunately, the show played to very small houses each night which prevented the actors from having a really positive energy to respond to. In addition, some of the choices I made regarding my concept of the show drastically changed the mood of the show. I think our production added some unique elements to this show and, as Ginny Quinley said, added layers to the show. I would have loved more response to the comedy, but I was happy that the show played as a bitter-sweet story.

The live piano music was the biggest risk that I took as a director. The original script has actors singing as well as talking to the audience. I felt that adding in live piano music to give the show a live lounge show would help to tie the show together. I am really happy with the decision. I love the music in this show and I think it is largely responsible for setting the mood.

As happy as I was with the piano added to the show, I was not happy with the singing scripted in the show. I had originally thought that the actors would be able to sing these without being singers if they just had some time to work on them. Unfortunately, by the time we secured a piano player, we were running short on time. If I could go back, I would try to find a volunteer

to bring in to train the actors in the songs. Without that, the songs really were subpar. The actress who played Sylvia worked on her song with her personal vocal coach, but the resulting performance did not seem to reflect that work. The final performance of “Evr’y Time We Say Goodbye” was also still severely lacking. I was happy with my decision to shorten the song and give half of it to Molly, but that was not enough to save the song. I had considered cutting it completely, but felt uncomfortable removing an important element the author placed into the script. I really liked the singing and its placement, but would have loved the quality to be improved.

At one point, I was worried about scene change transitions. I realized that the way I had set up the scene changes with piano would prevent the audience from feeling the urge to clap between scenes. I was debating with myself on how I felt about that. It was nice to hear Ginny Quinley confirm my thought that the lack of clapping was not distracting, but was simply an indicator that the audience was engaged. Looking back, I am happy with the decision. I feel that the smooth scene transitions propelled the show nicely and kept the audience engaged.

One of the biggest challenges with this show was working with amateur actors. At the community college level, the actors have professional desires, but, like high school students, are lacking the training needed. Their rehearsal process was certainly slower than I would like, particularly concerning line memorization and cue pick up. Jeff especially had trouble with this aspect. The actors also continually had troubles with projection, articulation, and energy. As a result of spending time getting actors to work on these issues, I feel that I neglected Noelle. Noelle had energy and clarity from early on in rehearsals and I spent much time trying to get the rest of the cast to match her energy. If I was able to go back, I would work with Noelle to find a

few more honest moments to supplement her theatricality. Overall, I was very happy with the growth I saw from all of the actors.

We were only able to rehearse four days a week during the six week rehearsal process. At first, I was concerned about this. In the end, I felt that a day off each week might have actually been good for the cast. They worked hard, and deserved a break. I feel good about the rehearsals I ran. They were effective and to the point, challenging the actors without pushing them beyond their limits.

With the limited rehearsal time, one of the biggest challenges was working with understudies. I was not able to give them nearly the rehearsal time they needed. Before their understudy tech rehearsal, I was really worried about this understudy performance, but I was willing to give it to them so they could perform for their families. In the end, however, I was impressed with their performance. There were even things the understudies did in their performances that I liked better than the primary actors. It was fun to see a different take on the characters. Casting and working with understudies is not an ideal situation, but with all of the medical issues this cast has had, I am glad I made that decision.

The technical portion of this show was an interesting challenge. The woman who designed the set was an interior designer and so her set design was focused primarily on furniture, colors, and lines. For the rest of the set, I brought some ideas to Josh, who worked them into a design. The biggest challenge was that all of the designers were inexperienced students being trained by Josh. However, Josh was not being paid as technical director for this show because of budget constraints in the department, so he was only able to put in his time as the stagecraft teacher two days per week. This showed in the lighting design in the frequently mentioned dark spot center stage. The student lighting designer repeatedly tried to fix it, but

Josh was unable to come in to fix it himself. This also showed in the last-minute completion of the set. We were forced to scrounge for furniture and piece the set together with what we had, particularly after the department purchase deadline passed.

I was happy with the costumes in the production. Of course, they were designed by my wife. The costume design followed the concept well and incorporated more color throughout the show. The costumes fit the characters well and served their function effectively while maintaining a natural feel.

Yakima Valley Community College is an interesting place to work. They have a nice theatre facility and great students to work with. They seem to be lacking organization in budgeting as well as training students in effective habits. However, throughout this process, they were very positive and supportive. I truly enjoyed this experience.

**CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
THEATRE ARTS GRADUATE PROGRAM**

THESIS PROJECT/ PRODUCTION PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

STUDENT -- Zachary Curtis

Student ID: [REDACTED]

UNDER CONSIDERATION IS DIRECTION OF: *Sylvia* by A.R. Gurney

EVALUATOR'S NAME: Christina Barrigan

TITLE: Associate Professor, Thesis Chair

PLACE OF PERFORMANCE: Yakima Valley Community College

DATE OF VIEWING: May 21, 2010

DESCRIPTION OF PERFORMANCE VENUE: Yakima Valley Community College has a mid-sized proscenium theatre. Lighting is comprised of a control booth and a single front-of house catwalk with two overhead electrics. There appeared to be an adequate number of older lighting fixtures. The sound is a standard playback arrangement controlled from the booth. The Proscenium opening was approximately 25' across, and the stage was relatively shallow (wider than it was deep). Wing space on either side of the stage was limited to approximately 10' deep. Just behind the stage, there was room to build scenery and presumably dressing rooms.

DESCRIPTION OF CONCEPT:

The director wanted to approach *Sylvia* as a memory play in order to contextualize the presentational qualities of the script. Both costumes and scenery (set dressing and props) would be used to comment on the emotional journey of the characters. Colors would vary between warm and earthy to bold to washed out and pale as per the emotional context of the scene. The director intended to connect the various scenes with live piano music.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTUAL PRODUCTION DIRECTION AND/OR REALIZED DESIGN OF SETS, PROPS, COSTUMES, LIGHTING, SOUND:

SETS: The setting was a unit set that was primarily the interior of Kate's and Greg's New York Apartment. The visible parts included the front door, a sitting area, a dining area, a office/study area and a piano nook. The walls were implied by architectural pillars and family photographs that were "floating" on the imaginary wall. The photos cunningly depicted the various stages of the couple's life together. Everything from engagement to wedding to children at all stages of life was on display as it would be in a family's home. This created a nice sense of history and home for the apartment. The door into the apartment space was a "floating" doorknob mounted on a piece of Plexiglass that was hinged to work as a door. The furniture that defined the spaces was both trendy and comfortable. The office/study doubled as a the counselor's office and the coffee table in the living room area doubled as a park bench. This idea of one location serving two purposes was reinforced with lighting choices.

PROPS: Hand props were nicely contemporary and fit the setting. The small objects like the red rubber ball for Sylvia and Kate's book and wineglasses etc. were nicely chosen. The only jarring prop was the wine itself. The color was a little too vivid to be believable red wine (probably needed a couple of drops of blue food coloring).

COSTUMES: All costumes supported the chosen time of 1990s and the director's concept of using color to describe character's attitudes and influences on the relationship between Kate and Greg. Kate's first costume successfully depicted her as an uptight woman in contrast to the pleasantly rumped Greg. It was clear from their clothing that these two people were on different tracks in their lives. Kate and Greg's clothes continued to support their emotional journeys throughout the piece. Sylvia's appearance was delightfully human with a wonderful doggish flavor. I enjoyed her necklace with the heart-shaped tag as a pendant. I particularly appreciated the suggestion of a dog collar without the actress actually wearing a dog collar. Sylvia's clothes varied wildly reflecting the essence of an un-groomed dog and an impeccably groomed dog. The actress wore headbands with bows suggesting the bows tied into a freshly groomed dog's hair. The costume differences between Tom, Phyllis, and Leslie were sufficient to change Cody Westbay's appearance to suggest different characters. Tom's appearance was sporty, complete with water bottles and supported the sense he was a bachelor with a dog. Phyllis was brightly colored and quite urbanely conservative. She was appropriately accessorized and wearing a wig that I thought was upside down. The effect was slightly askew just like the character. Leslie, the androgynous counselor, was appropriately wan and pale. She/he wore khakis and a white button down shirt. This was

appropriate to communicate the indefinite gender of the character, but I feel that the illusion came apart when one looked at Leslie's masculine shoes.

LIGHTING: Lighting was adequate to make the action of the play visible, and give basic focus to the scenes. Outside scenes and the scenes at the airport and the counselor's office were supported by selectively lighting the stage to delineate the area of the scene. The Park scenes were augmented with some blue light, but both color and focus was uneven throughout the stage area. Lighting cues were well placed, but quite abrupt in execution. The cyclorama was used to fill in both the upstage implied wall and underscore the emotional content of the scenes. Wonderful practicals were tastefully sprinkled throughout the scenic design to help support and flesh out the idea of a domestic apartment. These lights all worked and added tremendously to the atmosphere of the apartment.

SOUND: The only sound in this production was a pianist who accompanied the two songs characters sang and who provided transition music between scenes. She also spoke the play attributions for Kate's Shakespeare lines used to end the scenes. I was charmed by the use of the pianist's voice as the airport announcements. Very nice choice.

HOW DID THE PRODUCTION DIRECTION OR DESIGN IMPLEMENT THE IDEAS EXPRESSED IN THE CONCEPT STATEMENT?

This production supported the director's stated concept by keeping the settings comfortable, realistic, and simple. Costumes reflected the characters' emotional with color or lack of color. Props and set dressing was used to subtly alter the space to help illustrate Kate's and Greg's emotional journeys. And the music was a unifying factor, tying the scenes together. Everything together supported the idea of a memory play by focusing on the characters in an insubstantial environment.

APPROPRIATENESS OF CHOICE OF SCRIPT FOR ABILITIES OF PERFORMERS, AUDIENCE, VENUE, AND/OR ACADEMIC SETTING?

This piece concentrates on the relationships between people, allows characters of various ages, and tells a story that everyone can identify with easily. With a cast of five, this was a very appropriate play to produce at Yakima Valley Community College. The performers were suited to their roles, there was enough variation of ages on stage to make the play believable, yet enough differences to appropriately stretch the students' abilities. This small cast with the few locations fit nicely in the proscenium house available to them. The scale of production was appropriate to the resources available.

ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING IF APPLICABLE: CLEAR DELINEATION OF UNITS OF ACTION, MOTIVATED BLOCKING, VISUALLY INTERESTING COMPOSITION, VISUAL EXPRESSION OF METAPHOR, USE OF PICTURIZATION IN STORYTELLING, CLEAR AND BELIEVABLE CHARACTERIZATION, ADEQUATE USE OF BODY AND VOICE, UNITY OF PRODUCTION ELEMENTS, CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING.

Jeff Polage's portrayal of Greg was delightful to watch. He added some delightful vocal and facial mannerisms that filled out who Greg was as a person. It could have been quite easy to play Greg as a deluded, whiny man having a mid-life crisis but Jeff managed to give Greg a nice depth which allowed the audience to sympathize with his confusion. Some of his more effective choices were his vocal variation between how he talked to Kate, his wife, and how he talked to Sylvia. I enjoyed his slightly embarrassed jealousy of Sylvia's interest in other dogs at the dog park, and his genuine bewilderment when Kate didn't ever warm up to Sylvia.

Noelle Poe's performance as Kate was very focused on hating Sylvia, being irritated with Greg for upsetting the financial plan, and working on her Shakespeare lesson plans. All of this made Kate into a very up-tight character. Her tension contrasted beautifully with Greg's casual attitude. Unfortunately, I missed the sense that she loved, felt affection for, or was at all positively emotionally invested in Greg. I wanted more tenderness from her, and I wanted to see the missed opportunities between them. Much of the story is about Greg trying to fill what he perceives as a hole in his life with the dog, Sylvia. He is mistakenly "replacing" the wrong element, and is choosing his new dog over his wife in many situations. Kate has lines about how she feels displaced and so I had hoped for more action supporting that notion.

Chelsea Newmann shone as Sylvia, the dog. She was delightfully boisterous, curious, active and unselfconscious with her acting. She made the lines that were very "doggy" seem very natural and believable. It was easy to see the understanding between dog and human as a "manifestation of the natural communication that happens every day" with animal lovers as stated in the director's concept statement. There was much about Chelsea's performance that suggested dog: exuberant exploration of her surroundings, trying to drink from Kate's wineglass when it was left unattended, climbing on the couch, scratching, playing with the ball, taunting a cat, emotionally turning on a dime when the master came home, and effortlessly sitting on the floor. These patently dog-like things were blended with human emotions and actual words. It was easy to believe Sylvia both a friend with feelings and an animal with different priorities to humans.

She was a joy to watch.

Cody Westbay had the difficult job of creating three characters: Tom, Phyllis, and Leslie. As Tom, Cody was masculine and knowing. Tom knew more about dogs and the psychological problems they could cause a family than Greg did, and was not afraid to share his knowledge. Sometimes his commitment to the physicality of this role (stretching, watching, being macho) compromised his ability to deliver lines clearly. As Phyllis, Cody brought a different physical performance: Phyllis was jittery, high strung and high pitched. Some of her gestures seemed unfocused and repetitive. The choice to make Phyllis inattentive and easily startled had the unintended sense of an inattentive actor (as opposed to character). His vocal choice of a high-pitched voice was sometimes hard to understand. Leslie was smoother, and androgynous as per the script. Cody's choices for this character seemed to not quite bridge the differences between Tom and Phyllis, but borrow from both characters in a way that made the audience aware of the tripling happening with the actor, and not focus on the three discreet characters. It was a difficult job to create three characters and play them throughout the evening. Cody did bring three characters to life to help tell the story of Greg, Kate and Sylvia.

WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THIS PARTICULAR PERFORMANCE VENUE, WAS THIS PRODUCTION SATISFACTORY OR UNSATISFACTORY?

This was a more than satisfactory production for the size of the performance venue, the size of the theatre department at Yakima Valley Community College and for the abilities and relative ages of the student body. It was a delightful evening of theatre.

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Sylvia


A.R. Gurney

Kendall Hall Auditorium

May 20 - May 22, 2010 7:30 PM and Sunday, May 23, 2010 at 2:00 PM

Tickets on Sale Now at the YVCC bookstore - \$10 general admission • \$8 students/staff/seniors

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This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

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Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.



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YVCC Playmasters Presents:

Sylvia

A.R. Gurney



Directed by Zac Curtis

Produced by Alicia Bickley

Kendall Hall Auditorium
May 20-22, 2010 7:30 pm
Sunday, May 23, 2010 2 pm

***SYLVIA* Cast of Characters**

Greg - Jeff Polage

Kate - Noelle Poe

Sylvia - Chelsee Newman

Tom/Phyllis/Leslie - Cody Westbay

Piano - Molly McLaughlin

Kate Understudy - Auna Anderson

Sylvia Understudy - Jessica Protsman

* * *

Setting

Time: Late 1990s

Place: New York City

Act 1 Scene 1 - Kate and Greg's apartment

Act 1 Scene 2 - The Park

Act 1 Scene 3 - Kate and Greg's apartment

Act 1 Scene 4 - A late night walk

Act 1 Scene 5 - The Airport

Act 1 Scene 6 - Kate and Greg's apartment

10-minute intermission

Act 2 Scene 1 - The Park

Act 2 Scene 2 - Kate and Greg's apartment

Act 2 Scene 3 - The Marriage Counselor's office

Act 2 Scene 4 - Kate and Greg's apartment

Act 2 Scene 5 - Epilogue

Production Crew

Producer – Alicia Bickley

Director - Zac Curtis

Stage Craft Instructor - Josh Johnson

Stage Manager - Tyler White

Assistant Stage Manager - Evan Rodriguez

Assistant Stage Manager - Annalisa Beltran

Lighting Design - Patrick Smith

Lights Board Operator - Angelo Mendoza

Sound Design - Tyler White

Sound Board Operator - Aaron Wells

Costume Design - Mindy Curtis

Costume Assistant – Joanne Kirckof

Set Construction – Josh Johnson & Drama 189 students

Set Design/Furniture Props - Charmel Helmick

Hand Props - Elle Meseck

Ticket Sales – YVCC Bookstore

Publicity – Anita Mishina, Niki Hopkins & Stefanie Lea

Poster/Playbill – Anita Mishina & Debbie McBride

A Note from the Director

The first time I read Sylvia, I thought it was a beautiful story. After months of preparation and rehearsal, that fact hasn't changed. I still see a story full of life, energy, humor, and tears. I hope you feel as I do and enjoy the characters as they deal with the weighty issues of marriage, family, aging, love, jealousy, loneliness, and our love for our animals as well as the not-so-weighty life-long question, "What would dogs have to say if they could talk?" Enjoy!

Who's Who in the Cast and Crew

Jeff Polage (Greg) is a jack-of-all-trades. He has been in LA doing movies but is currently attending YVCC with intentions of majoring in sign language. Jeff's interests include cooking and thinking too hard. He would like to thank Shannon (the girl of his dreams), his family, and Earl Kelly – the best acting coach he's ever had.

Noelle Poe (Kate) from Berkeley, California, is a theatre major here at YVCC. She enjoys her wonderful kids and is obsessed with the TV show *Glee*. She is looking forward to attending The Pacific Conservatory of The Performing Arts this fall, and although she will miss everyone at YVCC, she can't wait to study theater on the beach in sunny California! Noelle has appeared in YVCC's *Macbeth*, *The Clean House*, and *12 Angry Men*. She would like to thank her family, her back up boyfriend Tyler White, her silly kids, and her adorable boyfriend, Cody. (The man onstage in a dress. Love ya!)

Chelsee Newman (Sylvia), a resident of Ellensburg, is attending YVCC to get her AA degree. Her previous theatre credits include *The Greatest Love, Beauty and the Beast*, and *Pinocchio*. In the future she would like to pursue a BFA in Performance at Chapman University in Southern California, and to develop her range as a performer. Chelsee would like to thank her parents Cindy and Kurt Newman for being very supportive of her future academic choices, her friends, Miss Bickley, the cast, the stage managers, and of course her director, Zac Curtis.

Cody Westbay (Tom/Phyllis/Leslie) works with independent developmentally disabled adults, plays guitar, and is majoring in theatre here at YVCC. His acting credits include YVCC's productions of *Macbeth*, *Play!*, and *The Tempest*. Cody will be moving to Santa Maria, CA, this summer and plans on being an actor/filmmaker and eventually winning an Academy Award. He wishes to thank all of the actors; Tyler, Angel, and Evan; Mindy (for driving him to the doctor); and Zac (for choosing the best dress and high heels he's ever worn). Finally, he thanks Noelle for loving him and inspiring him to pursue acting and filmmaking professionally. And for being so selfless and never giving up.

Molly McLaughlin (Piano) currently resides in Yakima, WA. She is attending YVCC and likes making dresses. She has plans to go to the Art Institute of Seattle to get a degree in fashion design and own a boutique selling reproductions of 1940s and 1950s clothing.

Auna Anderson (Kate Understudy) is a full time YVCC student with an interest in photography and a dream of majoring in both theatre and English. Her theatre credits include portraying Malcolm and Birdgirl in Davis high school's productions of *Macbeth* and *Seussical*, respectively, and stage managing YVCC's production of *The Actor's Nightmare*. Future plans include continuing her education at a 4-year college and getting a teaching certificate in English and drama. Auna would love to thank her parents for always supporting her and also her brother for always being there for her.

Jessica Protsman (Sylvia Understudy), born and raised in Yakima, is currently pursuing a career as a jockey in horse racing. She has hopes of being successful in the industry then retiring and starting a horse boarding and training business. She would like to thank all the actors, stage managers, the director, and everyone else who has helped with this play -- it's been really fun! She thanks especially Jeff Polage, for helping her with her performance and just getting through the rough parts.

Zac Curtis (Director) taught high school theatre in Colorado for five years before moving to Washington and graduating from CWU with an MA in Theatre Production. He has been a Technical Director and set designer for such shows as *Thoroughly Modern Millie* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, both at Ellensburg High. He directed *A Comedy of Errors* for Harrison High School and *The Real Thing* for Loveland Summer Studio. He has also portrayed Horatio in Theatreworks' production of *Hamlet*. Currently, Zac teaches in the CWU theatre department part-time, and when possible, tries to find time to hike and go camping with his wife, Mindy. This fall he will move to Moscow, Idaho to begin an MFA in directing at the University of Idaho. Zac would like to thank his wife, Mindy, for her love and support, and Tina Barrigan for her wisdom and guidance.

Tyler White (Stage Manager) is a first-year YVCC student. He designed the sound for YVCC's *Top Girls* and portrayed Malcolm in their fall production of *Macbeth*. He hopes to get a degree, continue work in the theatrical arts, and marry rich. He wishes to thank Noelle and Cody (I am going to miss you); his assistant stage managers; Josh Johnson (for letting me bombard you with questions); and Zac (for giving me this great opportunity to learn).

Evan Rodriguez (Assistant Stage Manager) made his YVCC stage debut as Ross in the fall 2009 production of *Macbeth*. He is a YVCC student taking classes in accounting and theatre, but he would like to someday move to California, hit the big screen with Jim Carrey, and raise a Malamute. In that order. Evan would like to thank the wolf pack -- my band of brothers who've made me the man I am today . . . AAAAOOOOOOOOO (How)!!

Annalisa Beltran (Assistant Stage Manager) is a YVCC theatre major and Costco employee who enjoys spending time with family. Her previous YVCC theatre credits include multiple productions of *The Vagina Monologues*, *Antonia* in *The Tempest*, and most recently, *Marlene* in *Top Girls*. Annalisa plans on pursuing a career in theatre and teaching little kids to read. She would like to thank her family (and Tyler -- for putting up with her during her first tech experience).

Patrick Smith (Lighting Design) is a Work Study student here at YVCC. He has been the lighting designer and light board operator for YVCC's productions of *Macbeth* and *Top Girls*, as well as the assistant lighting designer and light board operator for Eisenhower high school's production of *Honk!* He plans on transferring to CWU and majoring in psychology. He wishes to thank Janey Peterson at Eisenhower for letting him learn in her program, and Josh Johnson for teaching him the proper way to design lights.

Angelo Mendoza (Light Board Operator) is a sophomore at YVCC. He enjoys defying gravity and working out in preparation to protect himself against a ninja attack. He recently performed in YVCC's production of *Macbeth* as King Duncan. Angelo plans to transfer to a 4-year school and hopefully, if he is good enough, get a degree in the dramatic arts. He would like to thank Ms. B., Josh, and his director, Zac, for letting him join the crew so late.

Mindy Curtis (Costume Design) is excited to have been able to costume design this show and help her husband with his thesis production. Mindy is a former Utah theatre teacher, and has been working to complete her MA in theatre at CWU. In the fall, she will be starting a PhD program in Education at the University of Idaho in Moscow, ID.

Joanne Kirckof (Costume Assistant) is a YVCC theatre student, a Renaissance reenactment enthusiast, and an accomplished poet. Her previous YVCC theatre credits include designing the costumes for *Top Girls* and appearing as one of the three Weird Sisters in *Macbeth*. She thanks her parents and her friends for their love and support.

Charmel Helmick (Set Design/Furniture Props) is a full time student at YVCC. She enjoys swimming, biking, tennis, and interior design. She will be transferring to WSU in the winter of 2011 to study interior design. She wishes to thank her set design team for a wonderful job.

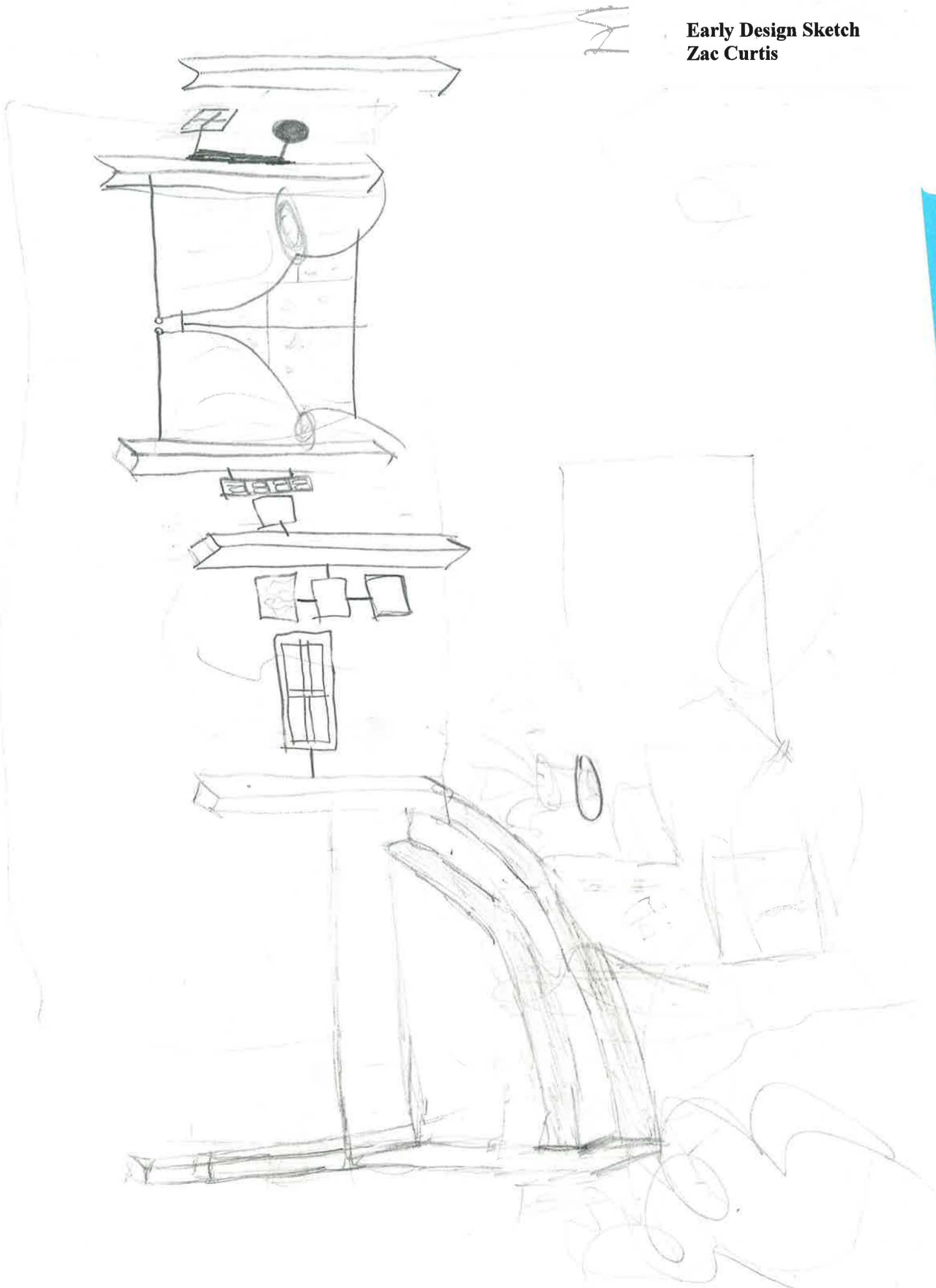
Elle Meseck (Hand Props) is a resident of Ellensburg and is in her last quarter here at YVCC. She intends on majoring in business and graphic art. This is her first experience working in theatre production.

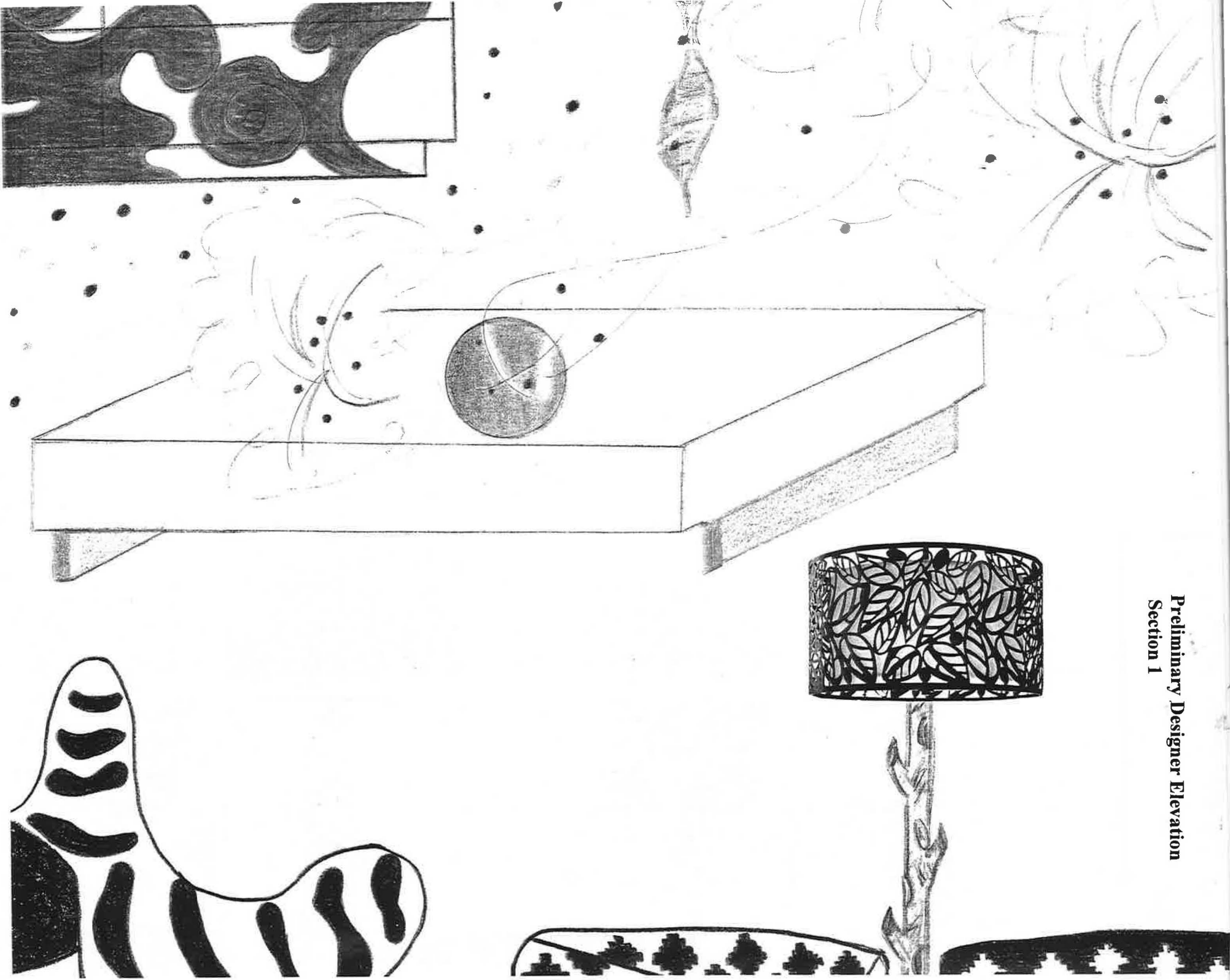
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Dr. Linda Kaminski, Dr. Carli Schiffner,
Cynthia Barwin, Nicole Dunnan,
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Debbie McBride, Carolyn LeBoeuf, Stefanie Lea,
Niki Hopkins, Alicia Bickley, Josh Johnson,
Sherrie Stoothoff, David Blink,
Dr. Scott Peterson, Debra Hardy,
Christina Barrigan, Michael Kemper,
Gordon Koestler, the students of the
Eng 101/Drama 101 class, Charmel Helmick,
Angelo Mendoza, Nick Carr, Aaron Wells,
Dave Rothenberger, Stephanie Sears, Angie Love,
Info Booth Ticket Sales,
the Cast & Crew, our friends & families,
and everyone else who helped
make this production happen.

Thank you so much!

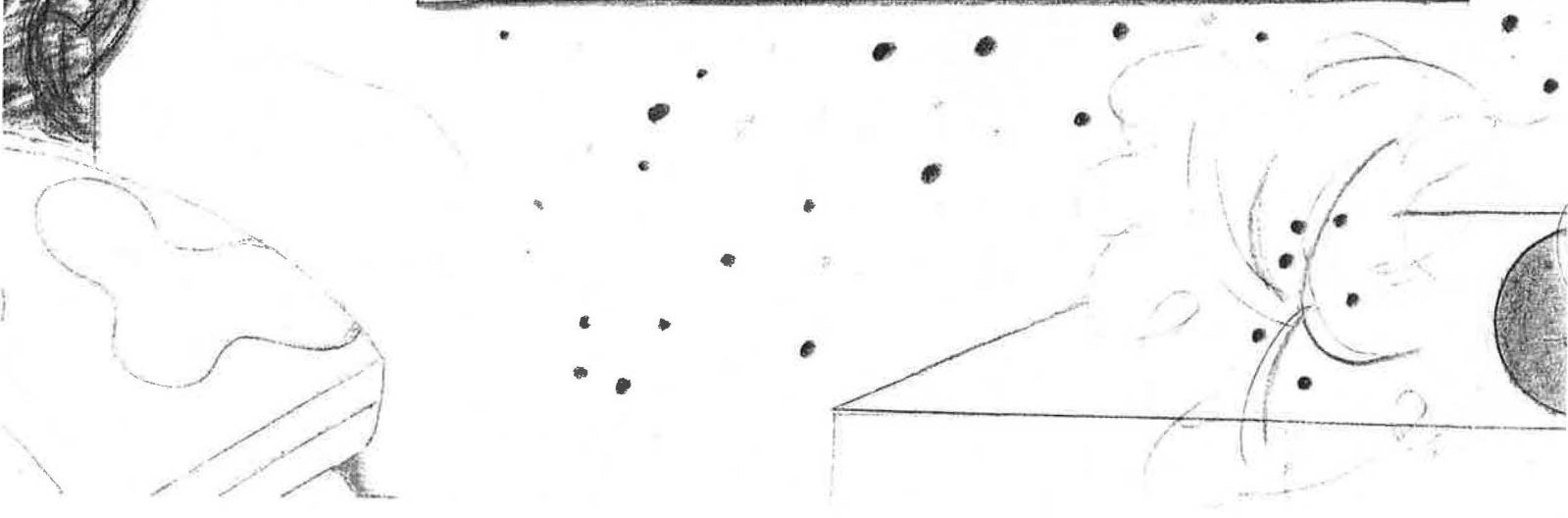
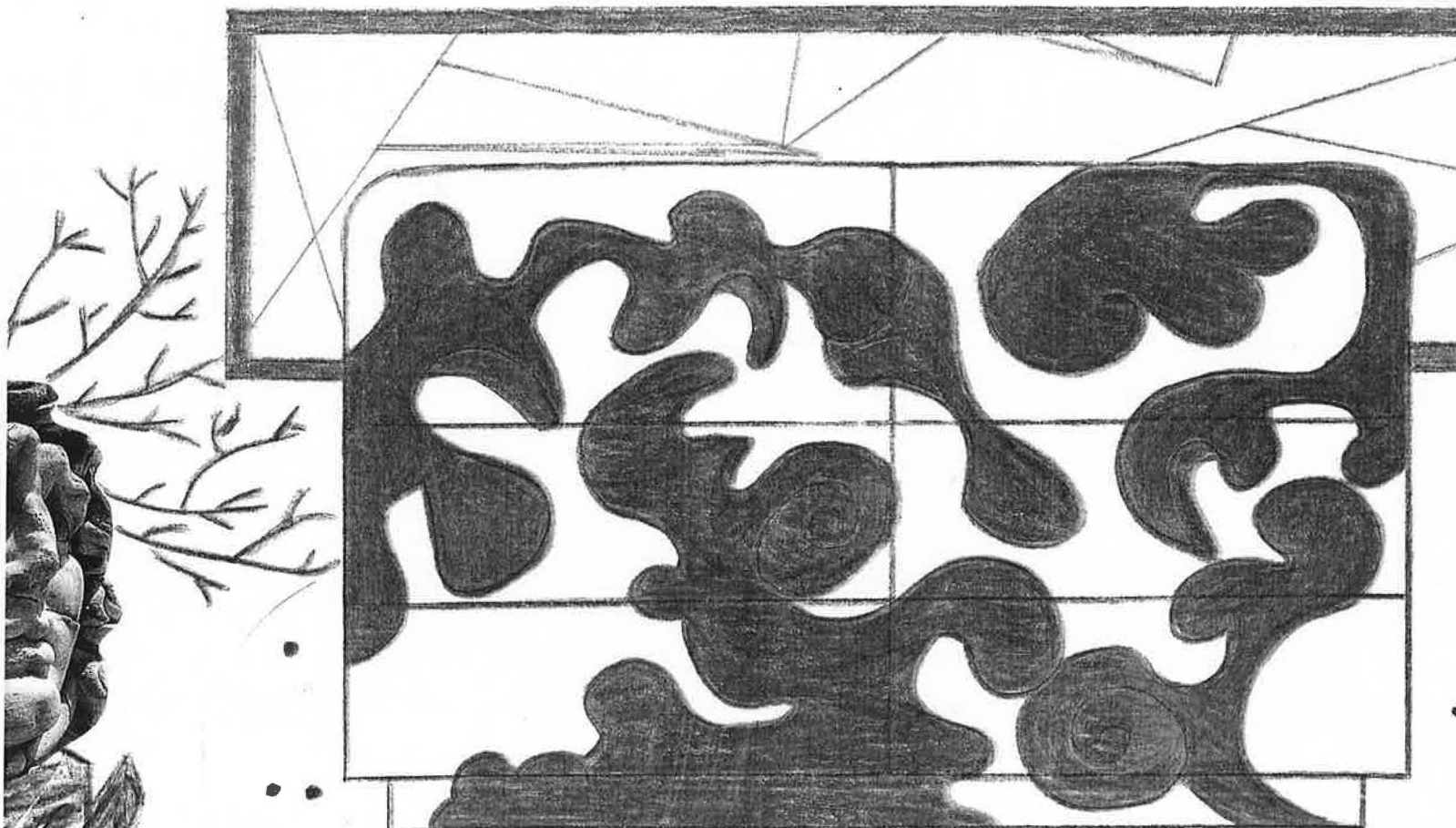
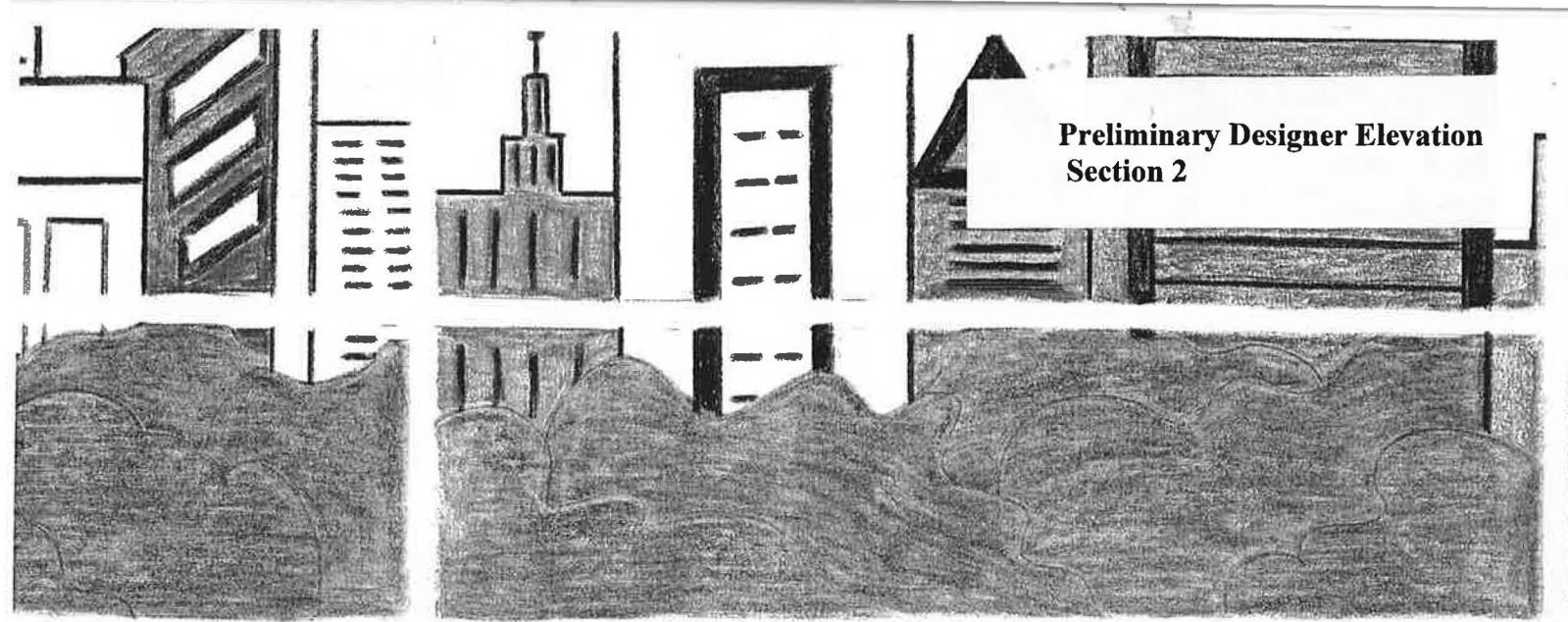
Early Design Sketch
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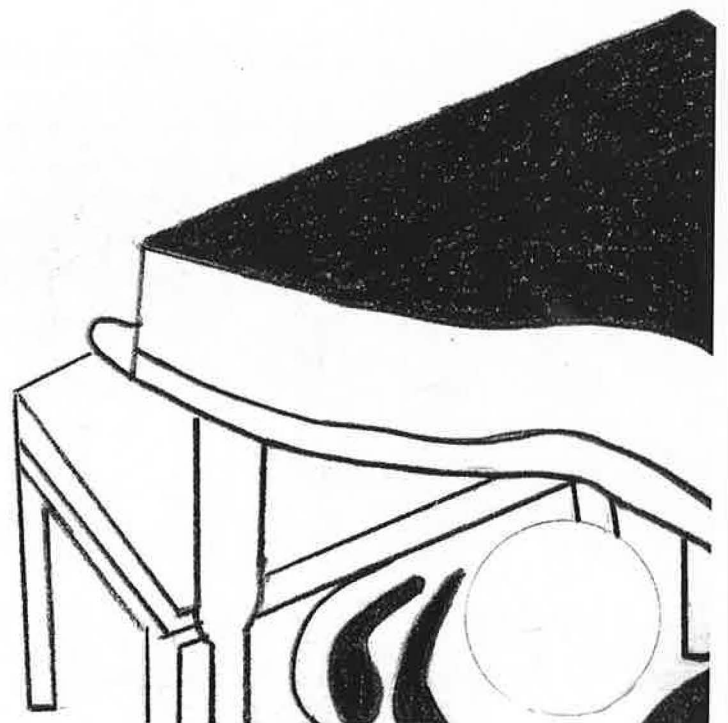


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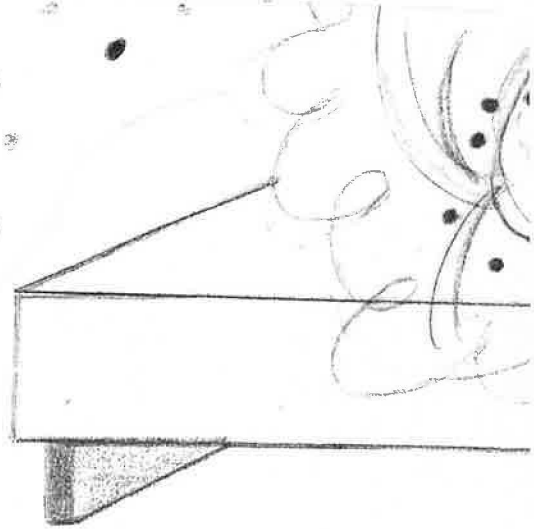
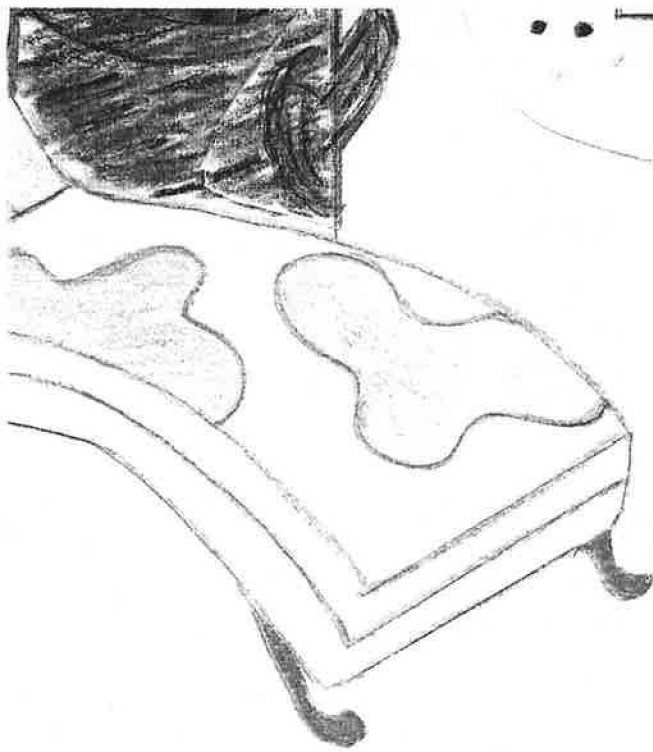
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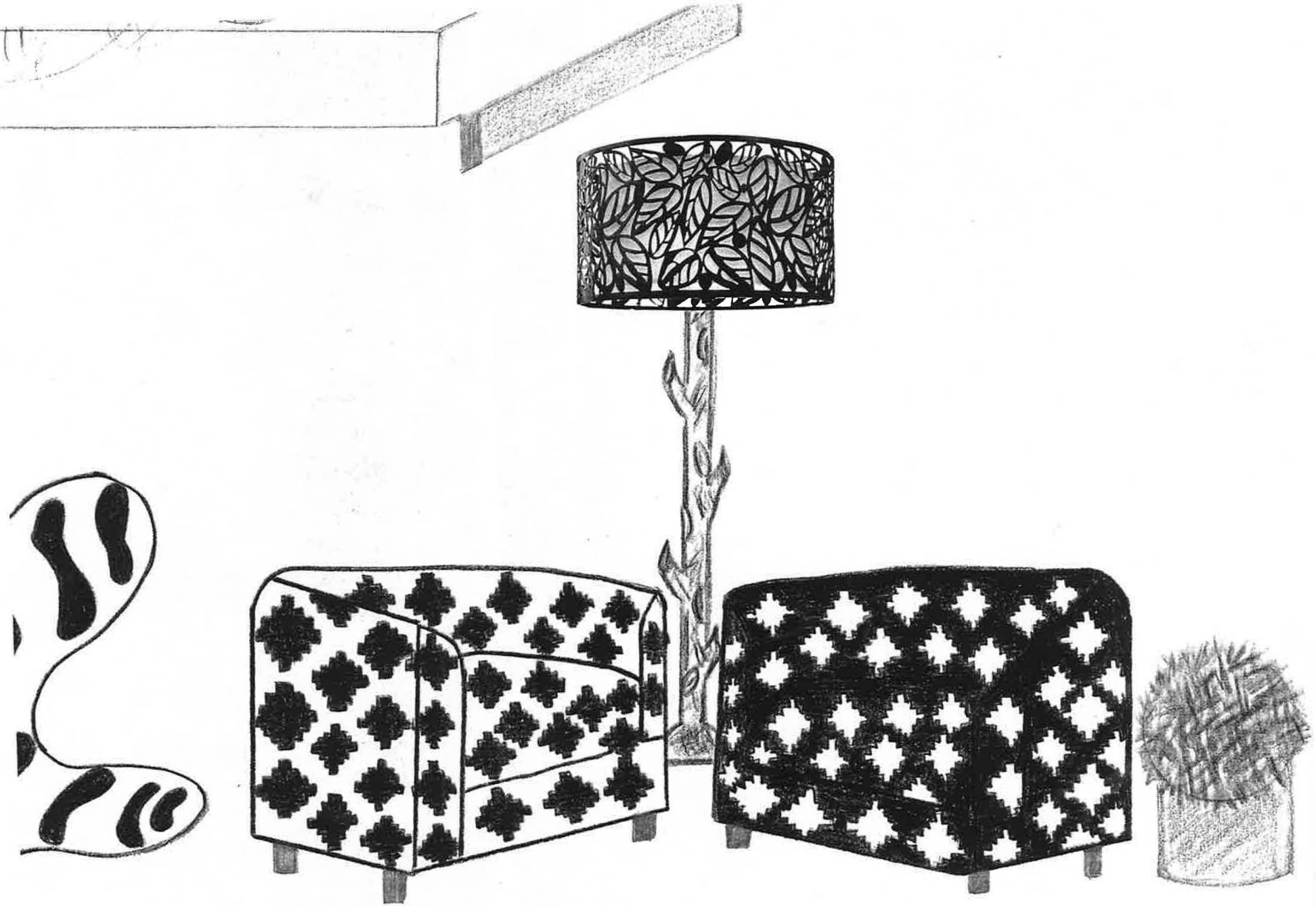


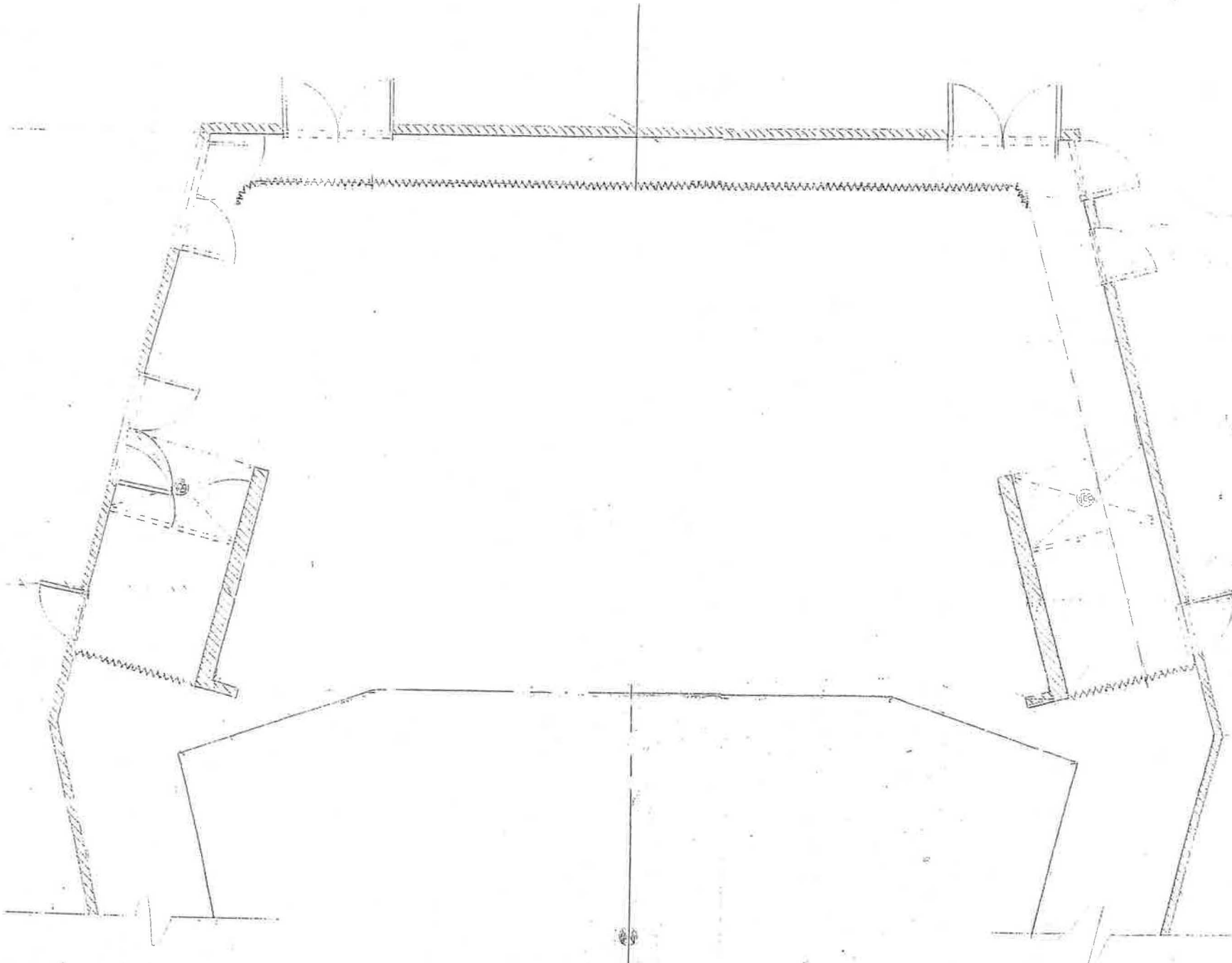
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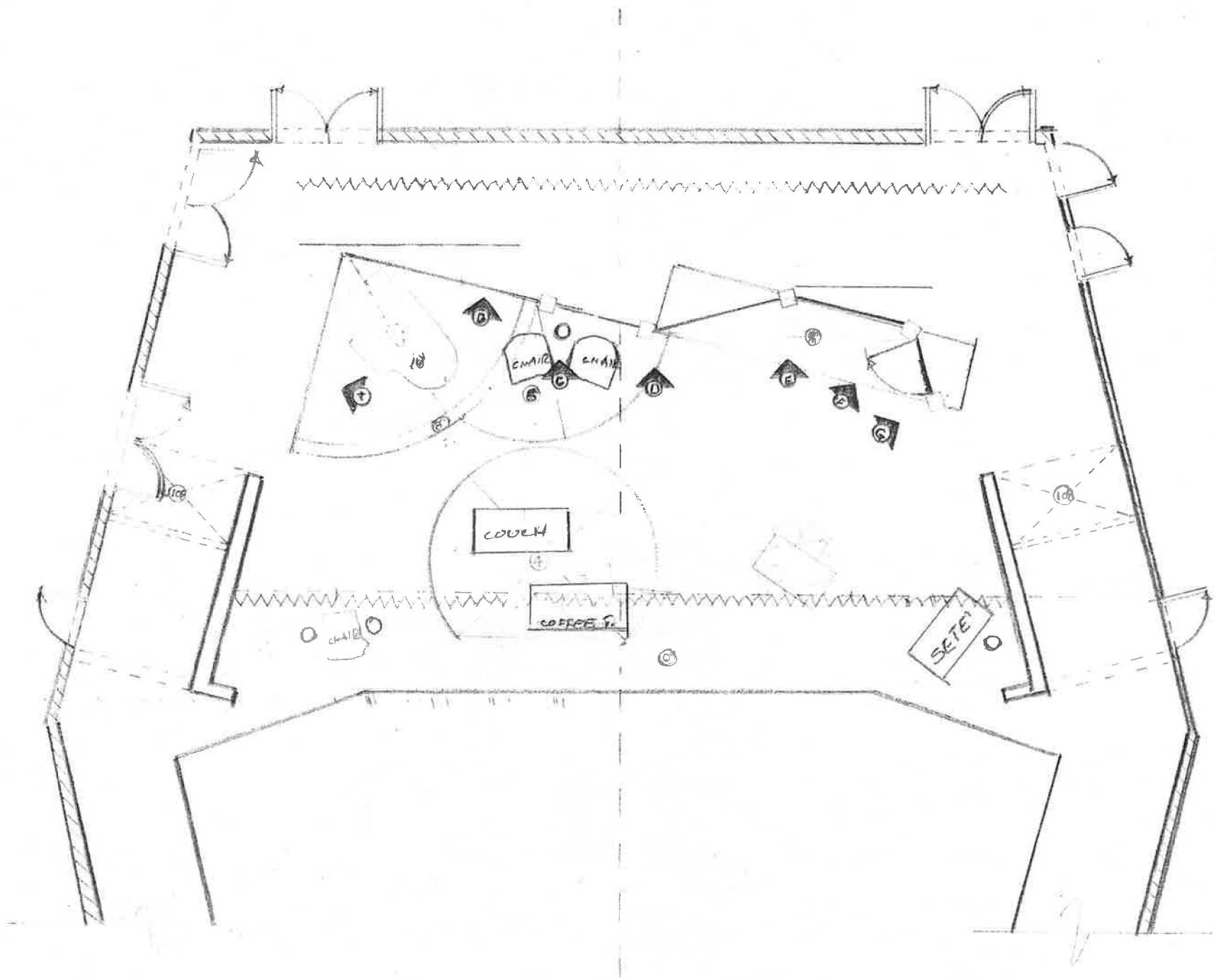




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- 95. 1/2" CONC. SLAB
- 96. 1/2" CONC. SLAB
- 97. 1/2" CONC. SLAB
- 98. 1/2" CONC. SLAB
- 99. 1/2" CONC. SLAB
- 100. 1/2" CONC. SLAB

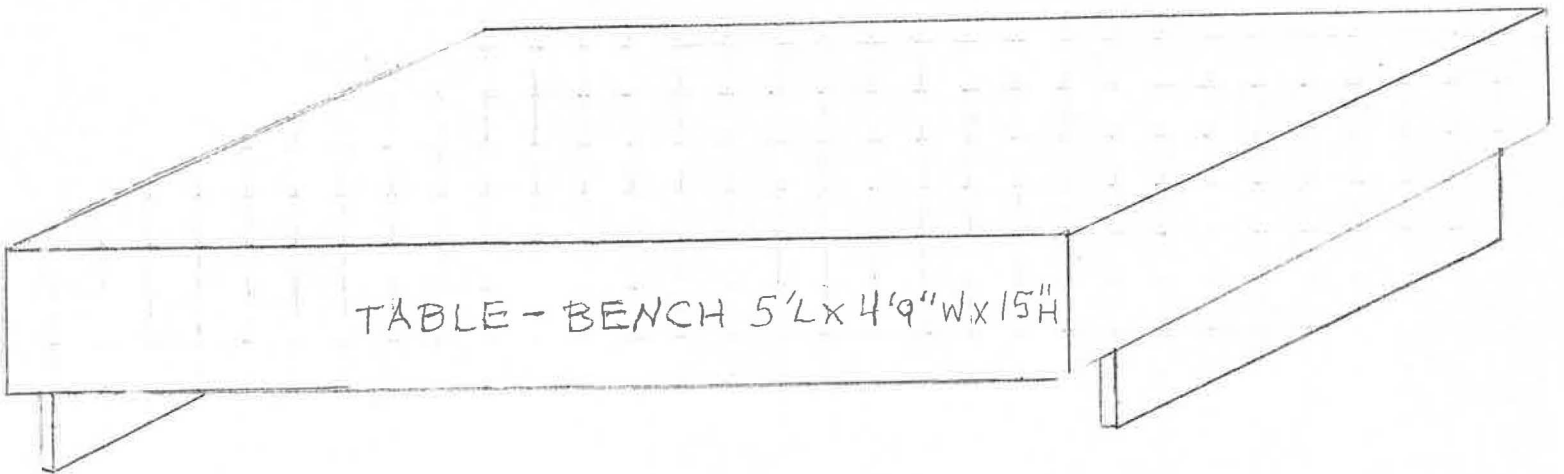
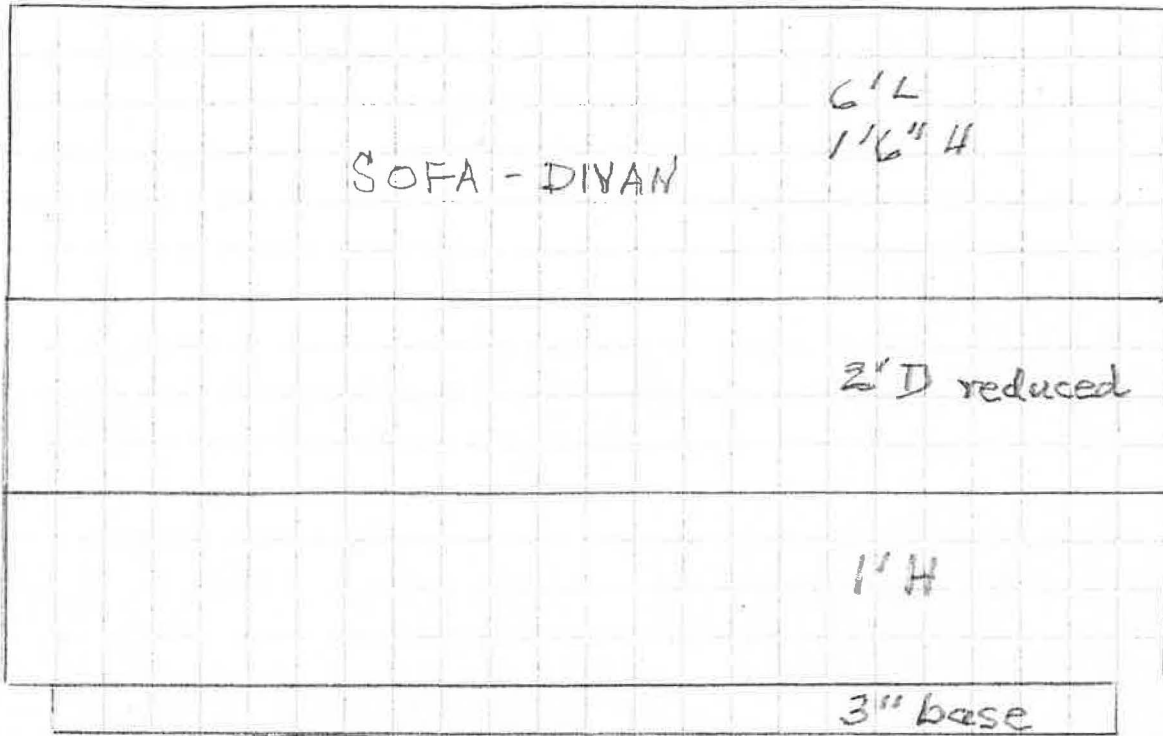
**Kendall Hall
Ground plan**

| | |
|--------|-------------|
| PL 375 | KENDAL AUD. |
| DATE | DATE |
| SCALE | SCALE |

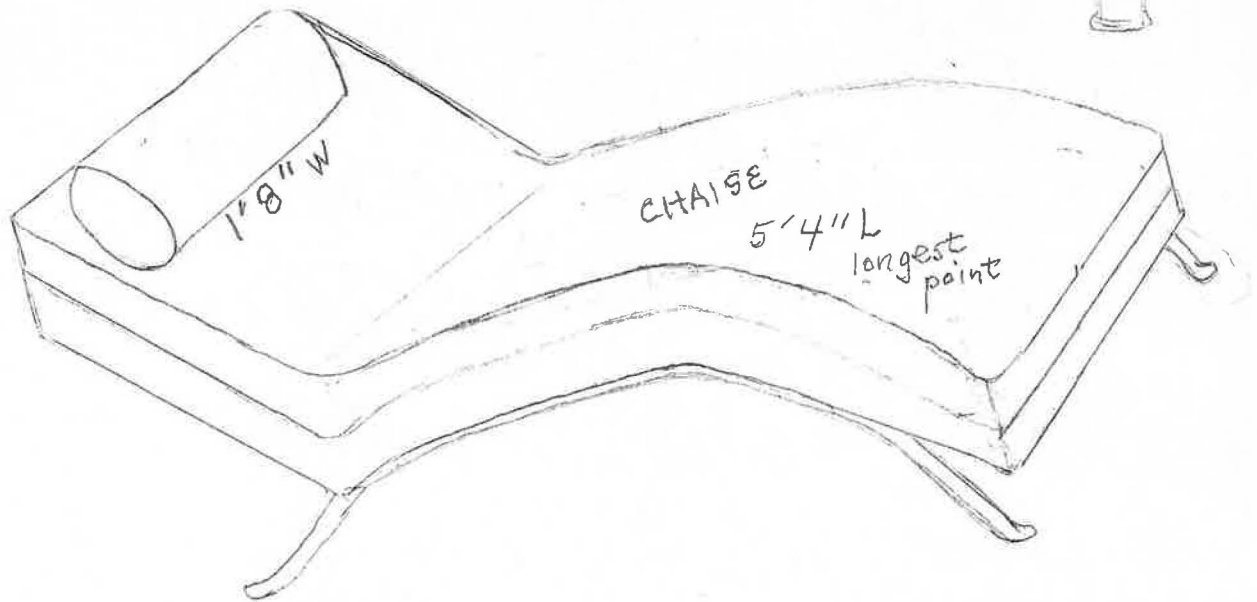
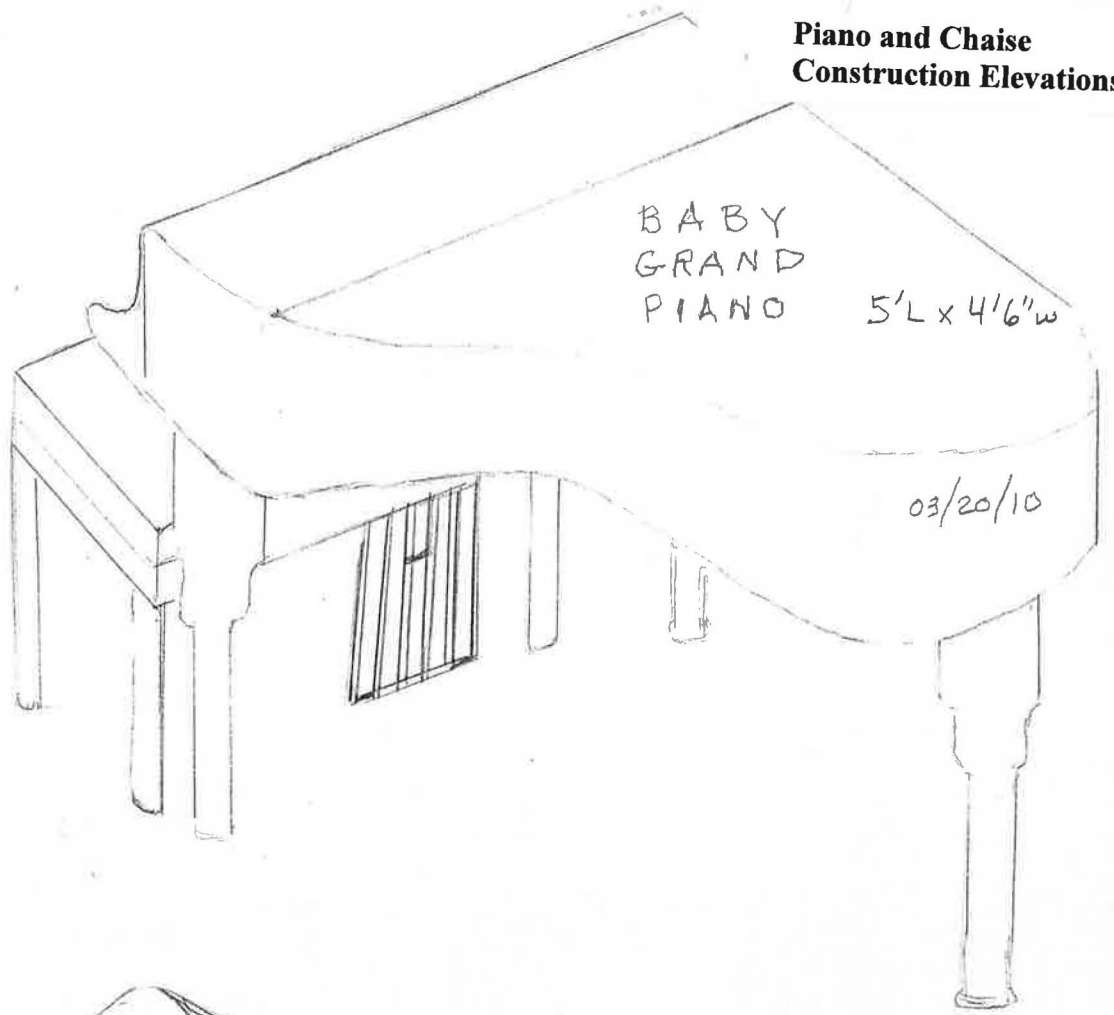


Preliminary Ground plan #1

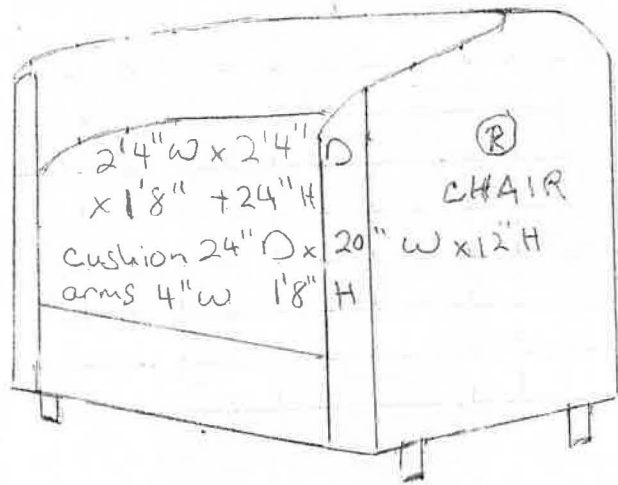
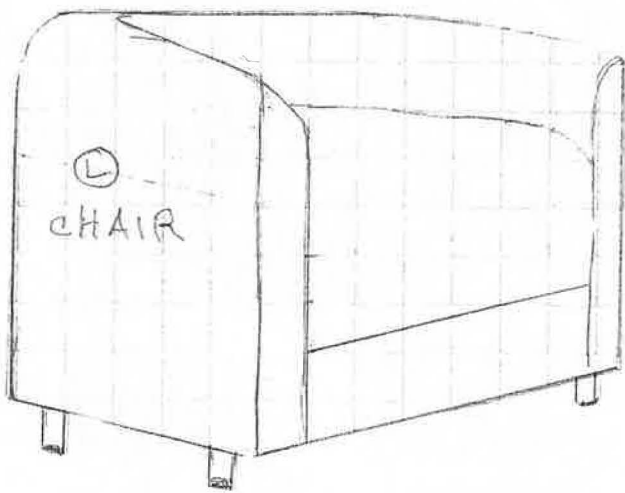
Sofa and Coffee Table
Construction Elevations



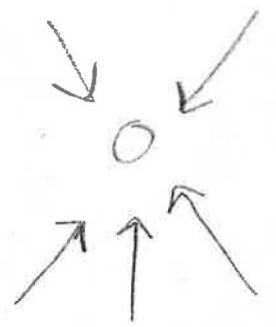
**Piano and Chaise
Construction Elevations**



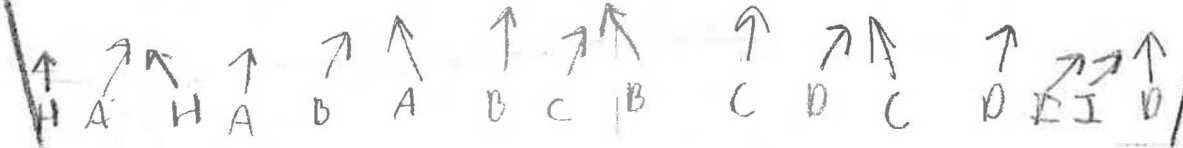
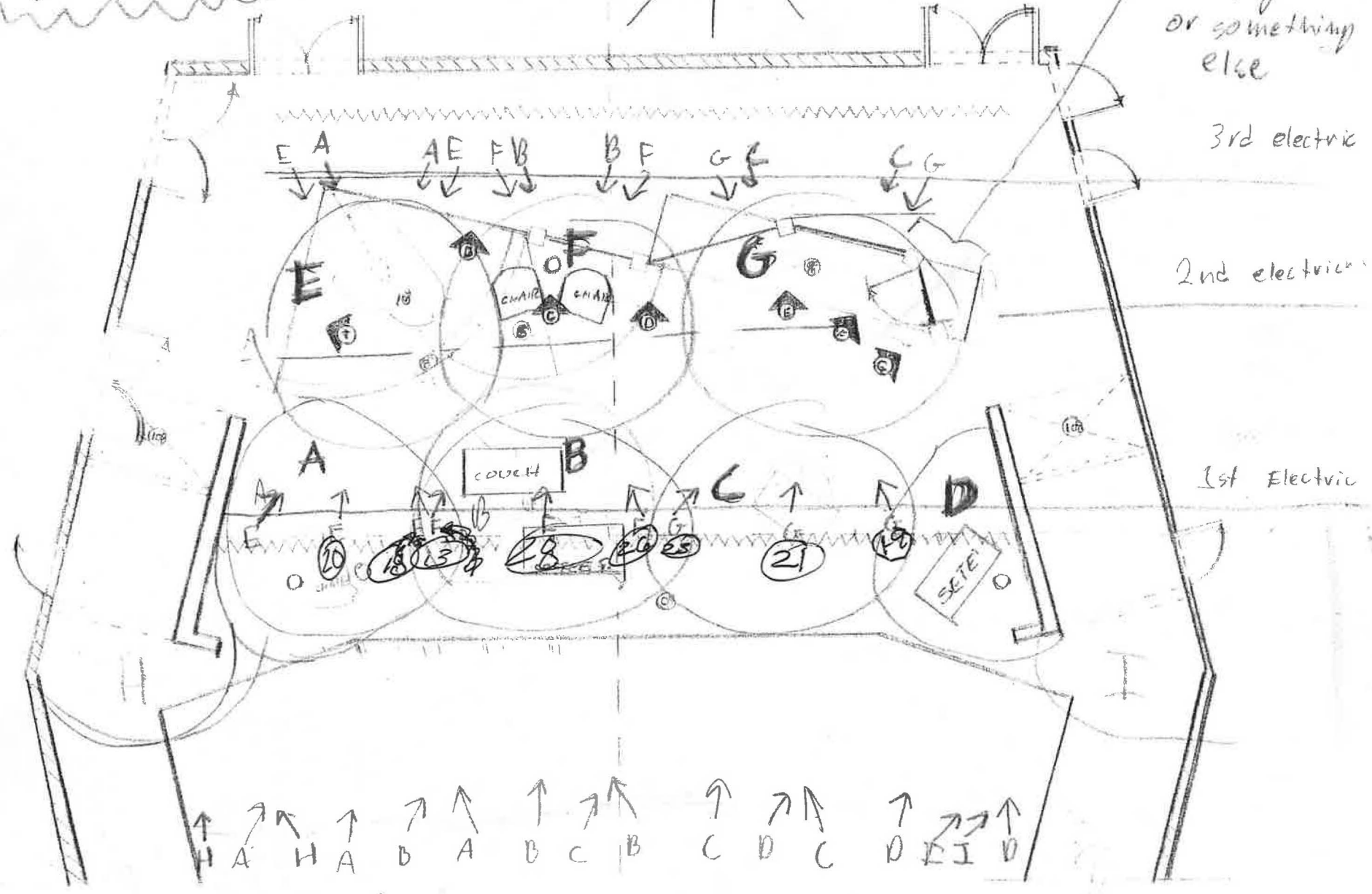
Sofa Chairs (2)
Construction Elevations

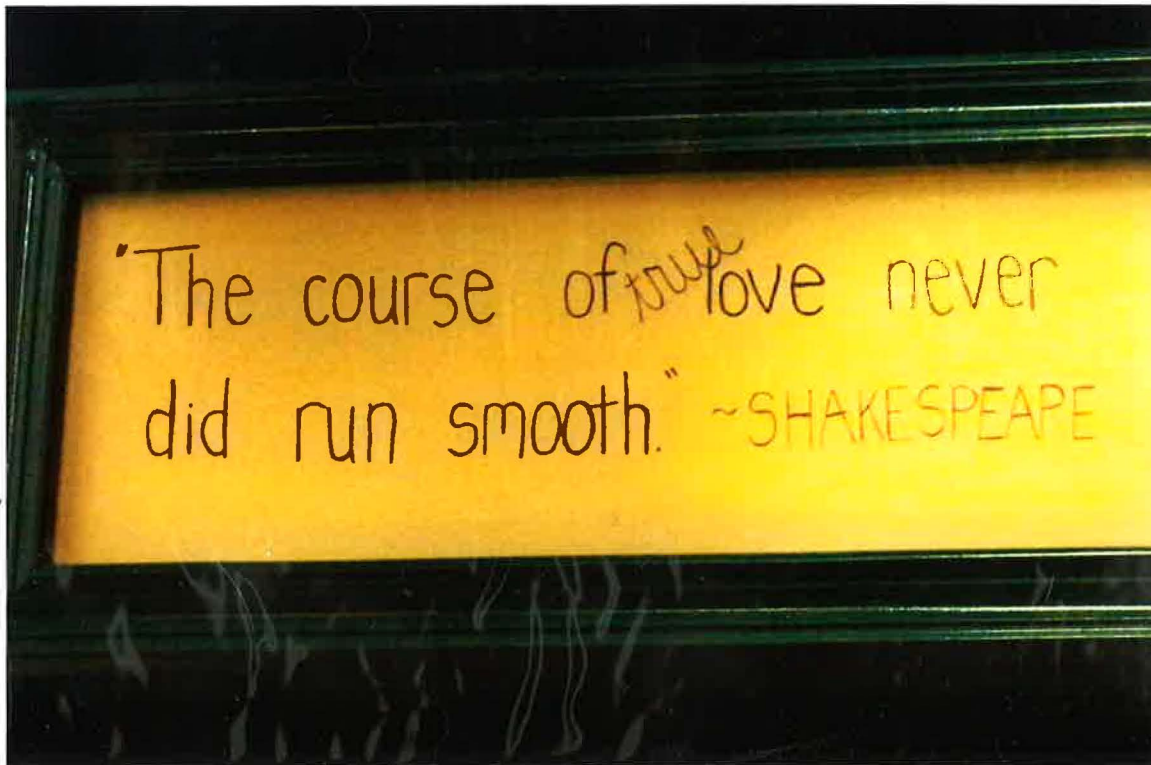


This is not drawn to scale, its just a rough plot



Possible
Special lighting for windows
on Eyc
or something else
3rd electric

























ylvia

Lakima Valley Comm.
College

unday,
ay 23, 2000

Thesis Project
Zac Curt.