

A Journey of My Own

By

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Statement of Artistic Aims

For my Senior Project, my plan is to be an actor as part of a performance. I will be a part of two productions during the spring semester. The first production I will be acting in is Project Journey by Tristan Griffin. Alongside that production, I will be a part of the staged reading of Adrienne Torres' play titled Subjected: The Altruist during the Plays In Performance: A Senior Project Reading Series. For Project Journey, I will be involved in act two of the show entitled Dreamwheel playing the role of Character A. I take on multiple roles throughout the dreams of Richard. In these dreams, I play an umpire, a judge at an acting audition, a boom mic operator, and a boxer. Outside of the dream world, I play the role of Richard's father. As for Subjected: The Altruist, I will be playing the role of Stevan who is the assistant of Kira Cassidy who is running for Prime Leader and is the daughter of the current Prime Leader Krik Cassidy.

Some skills I would like to gain from this senior project are both experiences as an actor and to become more well-versed in reading and comprehending scripts. I think this will be vital and useful for acting in the future. I want to play a character of significance and importance in today's world and be challenged in acting in this role. Right now it takes a while to understand scripts and their meaning and the significance of the words written on the page. With this senior project, I hope to become better at understanding scripts and becoming more connected to the characters with who I perform. Another skill I'm hoping to further develop is the rehearsal process. I'm hoping to become a better actor through rehearsals and get a better understanding of the scenes and characters with this. I think that these skills can help both now and in my post-Purchase life and thinking on a deeper level of both characters and scripts. I'm hoping that these skills could help both during performance and rehearsals.

Another thing that I thought about doing while in junior seminar was to step away from comedy. I have always been attracted to those types of comedic roles as I grew up a fan of comedy and have always loved to tell jokes. The easiest way for me to connect to people is through laughter. At first, I thought breaking away from comedy would be a way for me to challenge myself as an actor. I now have changed my stance on this aspect of my senior project. I believe that I can still stay true to my love of comedic acting while still challenging myself. With Subjected: The Altruist being my first experience with a staged reading, I think that would be a challenge in the sense of the restrictions of the form. I have only ever done acting with full movement and looking at the other actors. I think that this new experience with a different form of acting on stage could help me with the skills of acting through voice. During a staged reading, all I have to use is my voice, and movement while seated is limited. Expressing emotion through mostly my voice and having to rely on the limited face-to-face contact with another actor could be an interesting challenge. Since I want this to be my full journey as an actor experienced on stage, I believe that the use of comedy is important to establish the skills that I have learned so far throughout my own journey.

I think one thing that I see these two plays having in common is the theme of identity. Throughout my senior project, I want to focus on this topic because that has been something important to my life. I ended my junior year and went through the fall semester without knowing for sure what performance I will be a part of for my senior project. However, during Junior Seminar I approached the idea of using the role and importance of identity within theatre and how it can have an influence on both the actor and the audience. Now I believe that the bigger idea that I can take from these productions, with the focus more on Project Journey, is theatrical influences in my life and how it affects my performance side.

From the talks that I had with Tristan before the start of the spring semester, I knew that this show would be deeply personal from the perspective of his life. I was approached towards the end of the fall semester and was asked if I would be interested in an acting opportunity during the next semester. I was given a show overview and this part of the show description stuck out to me where Tristan states, “This show will explore my growth as a human by revisiting my past and reflecting on my future through...art forms that have inspired my life and its various crossroads.” The way the show is described is quite interesting to me, as this is a great way to reflect on my time here at Purchase. With Tristan’s own personal journey being the main influence of this performance, I believe I could use this to my advantage and think of my own journey. Tristan saying this is using all the forms of media that he has an interest in and that this will be a look back for him, I want to also look at my time here and try to see what my journey could bring to the table.

I also am a playwriting minor and something that I have personally done through my work in playwriting classes is write characters in which I can see a little bit of myself in. I’ve written characters who deal with the anxiety and the pressure of everyday life. When I write something comedic it is usually something that I found funny. I believe that this way of personal writing can relate to the way that Tristan has written Project Journey. Each dream on the “Dreamwheel”, such as boxing, baseball, film, and gaming is all something that Tristan has said he thought of being at one time. I believe this experience in trying to bring personal events onto the stage could be an interesting challenge. I could try and view my own journey as a way to inspire the way that I act as a character on stage.

With my senior project, I hope to grow more fully as an actor. I want to be challenged in my role and have to really think about how I should move forward with portraying my character.

One major thing I want to touch on with my senior project is the importance of identity. Identities of all types, such as gender, sexuality, or otherwise can be a major part of people's lives. As someone who has struggled with my own form of self-identity before, I would like this project to bring attention to the importance that identity can have for many people. This senior project could help other people who may struggle with their own identities and I think it is important to know that other people have and or still do struggle themselves. I think it can help people to know they are not alone in this. I know for myself, that theatre has been a major factor in understanding who I am and has helped me to express that. I hope to inspire others to feel the same.

Before the start of the spring semester, I was given a character description for my role in Project Journey. This description stated that I would be playing "At times Richard's father and at times various other roles. Typically is opposed against Richard in some form, who he often feels the need to be impressed by." For my depiction of this character on stage, I want to give the vibe that no matter the role or person that I am in each dream, there is some way that I am in opposition to Richard. My point of view when I read this is that I thought of something where Richard's relationship with his father or maybe what his father has said in the past made Richard think of his father as someone who is in the way of his goals. I hope to bring on stage this idea of Richard's dreams developing caricatures of these people in his life. That was my idea through reading the script was that these people in Richard's life were playing roles within his various dream careers and the type of person they are is based on his perception of that person. For my character, I would like to explore the idea of someone who is seen as a deterrent and made to get in the way of Richard's goals.

As for Adrienne Torres' play *Subjected: The Altruist*, I believe that I could use the idea and themes of mental health and how people are treated to think back on my own experience with this subject matter. As someone who has dealt with experiences of anxiety, theatre has always been something to calm those nerves. I believe that these experiences of being on stage either acting as someone else or someone with who I can relate to will help in the performance aspect. My character in the reading, Stevan, is described as nervous and someone who likes listening to music. This goes along with the idea of my personal journey being my main inspiration as I have often listened to music as a way to calm myself in times of stress or anxiety.

Lastly, I want to use this experience to close out my time at Purchase a way to show just why theatre is so important to me. My own personal journey has been greatly influenced by theatre. My time of acting in high school and discovering my love of Stephen Sondheim is one of the main reasons that this was my first choice of colleges to attend. My time at Purchase has been great not only learning more about theatre but a chance to work with talented and like-minded individuals. I hope that my senior project gives me the chance to work on stage and experiences that I could count as the next step in my journey.

A Journey of My Own

I believe that theatre can truly be something that can not only inspire people but also influence the way people can live their lives. An inspiration can lead people into wanting to walk in the footsteps of the ones they've been inspired by and walk a similar path. Personally, I know that the reason why I do the art that I am doing today is because of the great artists who have come before me and shown a way to do things. No matter what role am I playing, no matter the stage I stand on, and no matter the performance I am in everything I do in theatre is because of my influences. Going through high school and dreaming of being in a production of *Company* is why I am the performer I am today. Experiences in the world of theatre have influenced me to be more open and express myself, even though personally I view myself as not that kind of person. I believe from the moment a person is inspired, and that spark of creativity is lit, to the day they can fulfill a dream is a journey.

The word journey is something that I have often heard used in many different contexts within acting. To the point that I almost laughed to myself while reading "Finishing the Hat" and saw, "his 'journey' (the grandiose word so favored by actors)" (Sondheim, 186). But I believe this to be true. Acting on stage is supposed to be you taking the audience with you on your character's journey. For my character Stevan in Adrienne Torres' play titled *Subjected: The Altruist*, my journey is that of someone who can't stand their boss. Kira is so ignoring of Stevan and letting him take on all the work so much that through the entire first act my character is only mentioned once. My character's presence in the second act is to continue to take on responsibilities that

aren't his own. For me, the idea is that his nerves make it so that he can't really stand up for himself. The culmination of Stevan's journey is when he decides that he has had enough with Kira mistreating him and decides to quit his job and live his life.

The word journey itself is almost cliched but I view it as the easiest way to get your point across. Stephen Sondheim's use of this word was when he was describing the writing process of "Marry Me a Little" from his musical Company. He talks of how he writes as if he is the character and doesn't want it to sound like the character already knows too much too soon. "A good actor will not let you know where a scene is going while he's playing it: he may foreshadow it but he won't give it away" (Sondheim, 186). My own personal journey of my life has very much influenced my acting. The nervousness felt from my character Stevan was inspired through the nerves that I have felt before, such as bringing home a failed test from school and knowing that I will have to show my mom later. Even the fake British accent that I use as one of the judges in the audition scene of Project Journey is something that I have done before as a joke among friends trying to get a laugh. Much like how I had no idea where my life would lead to today, the journey of a character should be unknown until the destination is reached. My journey has influenced my acting just as much as Tristan's journey influenced his production.

The one thing that stood out to me whenever I spoke to Tristan Griffin about his show Project Journey is that his show was very personal to him. This could be seen throughout as everything was inspired by something that he personally loved. In a personal interview I got to conduct with Tristan about the directing and writing process of his senior project, I got to learn more of what his experience was like. The main idea that he wanted to convey was that this show should be a, in his words, "reflection of my time" at Purchase College. Each act of the show

takes the perspective of a different form of media that Tristan had at one point been interested or involved in. These acts included music, a staged play, film, and dance. Act two of the show titled Dreamwheel, which I acted in, took a look at the different possible careers and interests that Tristan at one point had thought about taking, such as baseball, acting, directing, and other forms of media.

My earliest memories of theatre are a little fuzzy, but a few moments stand out. Watching the Wizard of Oz as a kid and going to watch a production of Annie for a school field trip in 2006. The first of these is from growing up with a collection of movies that my parents had, which included many DVDs and VHS tapes that included a wide range of genres. One of my favorites to watch growing up was the Wizard of Oz which then influenced my love of moving into watching Disney musicals. Another movie I remember watching as a kid was the 1999 version of Annie. So when I had the chance to watch the stage version at the Theatre at Madison Square Garden for a field trip in the first grade, I was very excited and still fondly remember it. Even though we got there late and missed a good portion of the first act, I still loved watching it and even though I was six years old and barely have any other memories from that time, I still remember really enjoying this great production that I got to see at a young age. My love of watching musicals as a kid could be considered my introduction to wanting to be involved in theatre, my dream to be an actor, and the beginning of my journey. The process of working on Project Journey gave me time to reflect on my own journey

My relationship with theatre has always been a way to escape for me. Whether I am in the crowd, on stage, or behind the curtain, I get a chance to forget about everything that is going on outside and not have to worry so much. Instead, I get the opportunity to immerse myself in this world in front of me. In the words of actor Alan Cumming in an interview with the New

York Times “I like entertaining... and I think you have a responsibility as well as the leader of the company to make everyone have a good time” (Schulman, 2014). I’ve always viewed myself as a bit of a shy person as I grew up. As a kid, I was a little more hyperactive and willing to talk and be friends with anyone. The more I grew up, I started to experience some problems with social anxiety and was not sure of myself. I would often worry if people had liked me or if I was annoying them. I was still able to make friends here and there but I kept to myself more, as I had begun to question myself and my identity throughout high school. This would all fade away as soon as I entered a theatre. I was able to forget about all that and be able to have fun. I believe these words from Alan Cumming describes it best, of course the audience should be having a good time but if the people on stage aren’t having fun then what’s the point? I always loved being on stage no matter the role and still keep these fond memories with me today.

My love of theatre, especially musical theatre, has helped me throughout my life. As I had mentioned before, I have experienced some bit of social anxiety and the feelings of nervousness before. I believe these experiences have helped me in forming characters and the traits in which in took while acting. Something that I had noticed early as a young child is while sitting I would do in which I would have this little shake or bounce with my leg. Even as I write this sentence I am currently bouncing my leg up and down. I learned that this may be a response to nervousness. Since then, whenever I portray a character who is described or I view as nervous or something relating to that, such as Stevan. I decided to add little fidgets with my hands, talking with a lot of arm movement, and the leg bouncing as ways to express these nervous traits of my own.

In a way, theatre helped me in a sort of therapeutic sense. Helping me identify these little traits in me and releasing what they are and how to portray them as a character helped me stop

over time. Of course, I still have my moments of anxiety and worry about things from time to time, but I am able to overcome them because of theatre. I've met some of my best friends through working with them in theatre. For me, being in shows helped me in bad times. When my family was going through a rough time after my brother was diagnosed with schizophrenia and was at the hospital, I was still going through school. I was worried and knew that my family was too. I didn't talk to anyone about it, one of the things that helped was being able to go to the drama club after school. It was a time when I can have fun and escape. Singing and performing on stage with my friends was a fun way to escape for a while. For me, the theatre was therapeutic in only a metaphorical sense but it has been used as actual therapy.

Drama therapy is used as a way for the betterment of mental health. It employs the use of interactive and improv theatre exercises and techniques for the patients to better express themselves and so they can open up about possible traumas. There are four different approaches to drama therapy at Fitzsimons General Hospital. These techniques are employed on the "ward patients having both psychotic and psychoneurotic diagnoses... various techniques are employed depending upon the nature of the case and the purpose desired" (Barbato, 158). The first method uses a kind of improv where the director and "supporting cast" will help the patient to verbalize the patient's emotions and what type of attitude they have. This is recorded and then transcribed and at a later date, the patient listens to their own recording. After they listen, they talk about the emotions expressed at the time and are later interviewed by the psychiatrist. This method helps open up the patient to realize what the emotions and attitudes that they may be holding in. Having temp listen back to it later can help them understand what it is they are feeling after hearing it verbalized. This next one is for use of veterans, as the patient re-enacts emotionally traumatic episodes encountered during their service. This is process is repeated as a form of

desensitization for the patient. Another form that uses a kind of desensitization to possible anxiety that the patient might experience is multiple events they might have to overcome as they return to civilian life. These examples include, “returning to wife and home, answering inquisitive friends... finding a job, or going to school, etc” (Barbato, 159). The final use listed is that patients act as their opposite. If the patient was known to have hostility towards officers, then the exercise has them act out as an officer. This technique is to help give the patient an understanding of how their hostility is affecting others. There is also drama therapy experiences for the nurses in the hospital to help them know what to do with certain difficulties with their patients. This form of drama therapy as described by Lewis Barbato is a great example of what I was saying before. By acting out the certain things I notice I do while anxious helped me fully identify them as a reaction to my anxiety. As the article states to close out “For us, the methods described are simple, effective, and serve a useful purpose.

Those are the types of ways that theatre has been able to help me in the past. However, I still think that the journey is the most important aspect in how can have an effect on somebody. I believe Sonheim describes it as a “grandiose word” for a reason. For an actor, the journey is how the audience follows the story. In the case of Tristan, his journey was how he wanted to be remembered and to look back on what he has accomplished to get to putting on this production. Since Tristan has used his journey as the reason for his writing, I thought about the ways that my acting has been influenced by my journey.

My elementary school had all grades from pre-k to the eighth grade. I had been going to this school since I was five years old, and when I was in the third grade they had just introduced a drama club that would put on one musical every year. I’m not sure what decision process lead to not joining those first two years. I had never really done anything to express my passion,

which I didn't know existed yet. These were before the days of telling my mom I wanted to be an actor when I grow up, and she would tell me she would tell a friend of her's from work who did acting in the city. I had watched my brother perform two years in a row on stage. The first year was a production of Annie and the next year was a production of the Wizard of Oz. The piano player for the performances and the musical director also taught the music class in the school so she knew both my brother and me. During the spring break, I went with my brother to a rehearsal for that year's production of the Music Man just as something to do and to get out of the house. I had sat at the piano for most of the rehearsal watching as it went on. I mostly tried to stay out of the way and let them perform. As they reviewed the choreography to a number, the music director joking told me to get on stage and show them how to do it, and so I got up with the cast. This was the kind of school show where everyone who auditioned got to be in the cast, the ensemble being mostly the younger kids of the school. This would lead to me becoming a full cast member and being a part of the performances. I had to learn the dances and the songs all from watching everyone else and I had no idea what I was doing at eleven years old but I was having fun.

The next year, we did a production of Beauty and the Beast, and unlike the Music Man was something I was already familiar with. Alongside being in the ensemble, I had also been cast as the Bookseller, a role with a name. Well, I guess not a name and more of a job description. I had even more fun this time around getting to be a part of one of those Disney musicals I loved watching growing up. The show came and went, I had my fun but I remember the feeling that I couldn't wait until the next school year and for the next production. That next production was

Aladdin where I played the role of Iago. I still have the memories of making the squawking noise of a parrot and trying my best to sound somewhat like Gilbert Gottfried. Unfortunately in the eighth grade, there was no production.

Even though I always had expressed an interest in acting, I was still unsure if that was really what I wanted to do with life. At this time I still thought being a professional wrestler was still a possible option. Not only did I not do any on-stage acting in my eighth grade but I also skipped out on my freshman year of high school. I remember my high school putting on a production of Little Shop of Horrors but I, unfortunately, could not make it work out with my schedule. Going back to my interview I conducted with Tristan, I had asked him who his inspirations were since this production was very much a show that had to have been inspired by something. Luckily, he had a list of these people on hand and the one that stuck out to me was he said his high school theatre director was on this list. I related to this because it was during high school that I had made the decisions that would lead me to writing this paper. During my sophomore year, the new directing team of Luke, Faith, Angela, and Ryan was introduced.

After their first year there with a production Tarzan, yes another Disney musical to add on to the list. My junior year of high school was when they put on a production of Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street. The music director Luke was very much a big fan of Stephen Sondheim but this happened during my introduction to him. This would be my first experience with the man who would go on to be the biggest inspiration in my journey. My favorite part of working on this production was the music. Of course, Sondheim being mainly the composer of all the musicals he worked on. I still am a big fan of the song "A Little Priest" at the end of act one. In this song, the characters of Sweeney Todd and Mrs. Lovett talked about their plans for

the rest of the show. These plans include Sweeney using his barbershop to kill his customers and they use their remains as the ingredients for Mrs. Lovett's meat pies. The morbid dark humor works very well for this play and these characters. They even go through various jobs of the people in London and using puns to describe them being cooked into a meat pie. This even comes back later in the play during the song "By the Sea" which opens with the line "Ooh, Mr. Todd, I'm so happy I could eat you up, I really could." that works as a morbid call back to the fact that they are serving meat pies that are made of people. This is the type of writing that made me love Stephen Sondheim. This type of writing has influenced not just my own writing but also my acting. In an interview with Stephen Sondheim, he explains, "I like to make the collection of songs have some kind of unity not just in tone but in musical and lyrical ideas because I think it makes for a tighter, more absorbing evening. "Sweeney Todd" is a very good example of that: the utilization of themes over and over again, but developed, not repeating" (Max 2022). These repeating of themes as he describes can be very useful in a performance. In Sweeney Todd, he uses the ensemble as a way to tell the story as if it has already happened. I think the idea of repeating the theme is a good example of the idea of the Dreamwheel and my character in Project Journey. Each dream is presented as everyone being a different character and yet the archetypes that we each play stay mostly the same. Richard always has support, something in between, and my character, who always seems to get in the way of his dreams.

I believe that this play had an effect on the way I view comedy in theatre. Ever since I was a child I had always been a fan of comedy in any form of media. My favorite movies as a kid were all comedies and I still have fond memories of my dad playing standup comedy CDs on long car rides. Ever since those days, I had always been a fan of comedy. I think the way that I can really feel like I can connect with someone is through laughter. I always have loved joking

around and laughing with my friends. Of course not all the jokes land but it's the thought that counts. Alongside trying to make friends laugh, I have always enjoyed making an audience laugh. Those early days of loving comedy has led me to want to try out comedic roles on stage. I've even written plays for classes here at Purchase and almost all of them are at the least comedic in tone. One of the plays I wrote even takes inspiration from the dark humor that is present throughout Sweeney Todd. These comedic inspirations have led me to playing many comedic characters including in both Project Journey and Subjected: The Altruist. The one character in the film directing dream in Project Journey where I struggle with a boom mic is one that I had some fun with and was and the look on my face was something I had fun playing around with. The other major comedic moment that I had fun playing with was Stevan's monologue where he complains about the ten-dollar scone that is terrible. When I first read that in the script, I knew it would be fun to play around with the frustration over something as absurd as an overpriced scone.

I believe that the idea that I can act on stage and get a laugh is very reminiscent of an interview Lin-Manuel Miranda did for the New York Times. For me, I figured out in high school that what I wanted to do was acting and I had figured out all these new types of musicals. I listened to rock musicals and in the case of the musical adaptation of American Idiot, musicals can have songs that I already know and love. For Lin-Manuel, he used his love of Broadway and hip-hop to help bring them together on stage. Being a fan of comedy and theatre, I knew that bringing them together could be a good experience for me. As Lin-Manuel states in this after seeing a performance of Rent, "which he described as "a revelation — that you could write about now, and you could have musicals that really felt contemporary." (Paulson, 2015)

After the production of Sweeney Todd, I had a newfound love for musical theatre. Along with the usual music that I would listen to every day from bands such as Green Day and Queen, I had added songs from musicals to my daily playlists as well. I remember the days of high school where I would be on the bus going to and from school and having my headphones on listening to songs from musicals like Sweeney Todd, Spring Awakening, Hunchback of Notre Dame, along with many others. The school year closed out and I had the chance to work with the same directing team over the summer that year. This is where I would get the chance to perform in yet another Stephen Sondheim musical this time it being Into the Woods.

During the production of Into the Woods, I played the roles of the Narrator and the Mysterious Man. Alongside being another Sondheim musical that ended up becoming one of my favorite musicals ever, I got the chance to continue working with the same people who were putting on shows at my high school. Besides from helping with morning announcements that were broadcasted through the school, being a part of the drama club was my only other real extracurricular activity in high school.

After a few more shows with the same production team and approaching the end of summer, I knew that I was going to college to study theatre. What started as a fun thing to do after school, had really become my passion, and this is entirely thanks to the work of helping me become more confident in my abilities as an actor throughout high school. I still will never forget standing at the piano going over Miracle of Miracles from Fiddler on the Roof. I was messing up some parts, but then Luke said to me that I had so much potential and just needed to work on it. This stuck with me to this day. I still don't know where this journey is taking me, but much like the way Sondheim wrote the character of Bobby in Company, people don't know what the future hold they have to get there first. I think of a line that my character Stevan has in Subject: The

Altruist where he talks of his dreams when he was younger compared to where he is today, “I could the person other people watch from the other side of the window.” For me, I hope that I can one day inspire someone in the audience the way that I have been inspired by so many others.

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Technical Essay

The rehearsal process for Project Journey was a bit different than I was usually used to. Since the show was broken up into four acts plus a prologue and epilogue and each act had a different cast and was a different art form, the rehearsals were broken up in the same way. The Dreamwheel act which I took part in was a short play that lasted around ten minutes so we had only met on Wednesdays of each week. I think breaking up the rehearsals in this way was a smart idea as the different cast who did not interact and the Tristan and Norah having to have the attention and switch between each act could have been hectic. It was for the best that each act stood on its own instead and had time to focus on the one aspect at a time for the show. It was a bit different than I am used to when it comes to rehearsals as for other shows we would meet at least a few times a week. I think the timing of not only the show but when the show was worked to this advantage. We had two months of rehearsal for a short play, so working on it once a week was more than adequate for time consumption.

For me, I found switching between each dream to be an interesting aspect of the show. We had rehearsals in the CMFT classroom on the first floor. I think having that big empty room to quite literally just play around in was a great area for the rehearsals. Since each dream moves so quickly between each other, it was interesting to find how to make the change on stage to show that this is now a different dream. Also, having each dream be its own little scene that would exist within itself was an interesting idea to play with. I tried to play with that aspect that I am now a different person and trying to think of ways I could express this on stage. I think having a different position to be in helping me make this decision. As the umpire, I could crouch and act as all business. As the judge at the audition, I was able to sit back and act as if I had somewhere better to be. As the boom mic operator on the movie set, I had to hold up the boom

pole and act as if I was struggling with it. For the magic scene, I decided to just stand like a stereotypical dad for watching his son for that moment. Finally, and my favorite part, coming out as the boxer was a fun way to experiment with the idea I am the best guy in the room and no is better than me.

By the second rehearsal, we were able to have the full show blocked. The rest of the rehearsals were mostly playing around with what we had and making any changes that were necessary for the show. The one change that I think ended up working for the best was the blocking for the baseball scene. At first, we had it planned to have everything in this scene down at the front of the stage. The pitcher would throw across the stage to the home plate. In one of the last rehearsals before moving into the humanities theatre for tech week, we had a change in the blocking that helped out the scene. Instead of the way it was set up, the pitcher would be throwing upstage and the home plate was placed on a diagonal line from the pitcher's mound. This way the audience had a better view of Richard batting at the home plate.

Another change I enjoyed playing with, was my line during the magic trick scene. Richard is showing everyone a card trick and tells the story of a bank robber breaking into the vault as he performs the trick. I was supposed to interrupt the trick with a bad joke, kinda like a dad joke. The original line had me say, "what kind of haul are we looking at?" As a way to pretend this is an actual bank robbery. As I said the line in rehearsal, Tristan thought it sounded a bit awkward with the delivery. I was then given the chance to try and rework the line into something that sounded a bit better. I wanted to keep in line that this was supposed to be my character joking around with the story of the card trick. I wanted my character to make the joke as if he was involved in the robbing of the made-up bank as well. I decided on the line "what's the security looking like?" or something to that effect. I thought this line worked better for me as

it wasn't as awkward of a line to deliver and I was able to still make a dad joke about being a part of this bank robbery.

Tech week was an interesting time as we had very few details on what the rest of the show looked like. All that we did know about it came from the short description of each act from the show overview we received before the start of the spring semester. It was nice to be able to see what the rest of the cast had been working on at the same time we were developing the story of Dreamwheel. I thought it was great to finally be able to watch the rest of the show and figure out to transition between each act. The first act with the piano medley of all those songs from different movies, tv shows, and video games with the montage of footage to go with was a very nice thing to start and that was when I truly realized what Tristan meant by the word Journey.

When I interviewed Tristan about a month after the performance, I asked him what his inspirations were, and that was because of this act. The whole idea that this show being a sort of time capsule for Tristan makes sense with the way that montage of things that he likes and has inspired him. This idea that he was inspired by all these things to the point that he put them into this show that was about his growth and experiences that lead to this moments shows just how important it is to be inspired. Just like how the musicals of Sondheim inspired me to want to be an actor, Tristan was inspired by these experiences from childhood up until today is a great thing to experience.

I think overall, my goal for how to portray this character on stage was a success. My goal was that Richard's father was either someone who did not approve of his child's dreams or just did not believe in him. With this in mind, I wanted each dream to give off something of this the aspect of the character. In my mind, all these people who are involved in Richard's life are appearing in his dreams as caricatures of their real selves. I viewed as the moment in Wizard of

Oz where Dorothy wakes up and has the moment of realization of “you were there, you were there, and you were there”. Going off of the character description, I thought of Richard’s father as a foil so Richard is unsure of himself and one of the reasons he can’t come to a decision.

I had the chance to do some character development for Richard’s father. The stage manager Norah gave us a list of questions that were based on the Konstantin Stanislavski method of building a character. I’ve included my answers on page 27. I used this opportunity of some character work as a chance to look for a reason why Richard’s father would act as something in the way of Richard achieving his dream. I decided to name the character Lucas Gray who was a lawyer. Although this was not his initial dream. I had some fun creating this little story about the character of Lucas who had a best friend named Charlie. When they were kids they had a dream of growing up and being a famous music duo like Simon and Garfunkle. This dream fell through though so Lucas decided to become a lawyer because that’s what Charlie ended up doing after the band broke up. I wrote that Lucas acts as if this is all fine now but you can tell he still regrets never getting to live out his dream. I gave him this bit of development as the reason for why he would be unapproving of Richard’s dreams, and it was because of his own fear of failures from his past.

For the most part, I felt like I was able to accomplish this. For the first dream, I was the umpire in a game of baseball when Richard was up at the home plate to bat. The umpire in baseball is supposed to be impartial and just makes the calls for both teams. So although I wasn’t directly pitted against Richard, I still feel like being the umpire was a way of having my character being the one to rule against Richard. I called out the strike against him as he missed and I felt like this was the way of having my character call out Richard for his failings. Along with this, I decided to watch some YouTube of umpires making calls to know how I should be

making the calls on the stage. I followed along with what I watched but also exaggerated a bit to make it seem more dreamlike.

Another thing I watch was some videos to learn how I should play the judge character. As the judge of the audition, I was asked if I could try a British accent as I was supposed to be the Simon Cowell of the group. I remember watching American Idol as a kid but I also looked up some videos of his reactions as a way to refresh myself on what it was like. I took on a few things like the eye roll, rubbing between my eyes, and putting my hand up to stop the audition all as inspirations from the show. Being the Simon Cowell in this scene meant that I had to be harsh in my negative reaction towards Richard's audition, which continues to go along with being the foil to Richard. Struggling to hold up the boom mic to was a way of unintentionally being a disturbance to the movie shoot. While my little dad joke in the magic scene could be seen as a distraction the trick and just me trying to get a laugh. Finally, me being the boxer against Richard, I used my memories of boxing-related stuff in my life to use. One of my dad's favorite movies are the first two Rocky movies. I also enjoy doing a marathon of all the movies and talking about them with my dad. I used the little things from that as a tribute and also added in the Muhammad Ali shuffle that I remember seeing in videos.

I would say that my time working on this show was a success as I was able to express myself on stage and being able to accomplish my goal as an actor and how the character should be. I was proud of how I was able to use some of my own cherished memories such as watching Rocky to influence the way I did the boxing scene or doing an impression of Simon Cowell. I also felt accomplished in the fact that I was able to work with such a talented cast from all the acts and being given a chance to act on stage. This idea of showing off everything that inspired me in my life and has led me to wanting to be an actor would not possible without Tristan's idea

of wanting to put on a show to showcase everything from his life that has led to this moment.

Thanks to being a part of this performance, I now know what it truly means to show the experiences we all have from our own journeys.

Character Work

CHARACTER DEMOGRAPHICS AND FAMILY

1. What is your name? Lucas Gray
2. How old are you? 42
3. Where were you born? In a hospital. I guess for more information the hospital was in Yonkers.
4. What did your father and mother do for a living? My mom worked in customer service for JVC and my dad called her once about our VCR. Oh, he was an account.
5. Were you well off? Middle class? Impoverished? Middle class.
6. Do you have siblings? If so, what are their names and ages? A 37-year-old brother named John.

CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

11. When you were a child, what was one thing you could always be sure of? That one day I would be able to follow my dreams of being in music duo named Star-Crossed Harmony.
12. What was something you were never sure of? I never was able to follow my dreams of being a part of a music duo, much like Simon and Garfunkel. Me and my best friend Charlie had this idea from a young age. In high school we wrote a song that was sure to be a number one hit. Unfortunately, our duo of Star-Crossed Harmony was not meant to be.
13. Where did you grow up? Is this a place you'd go back to now? Or avoid? I grew up in a nice neighborhood right across the street from a park. All the kids on the block hung out there every day from morning until the street lights came on.
14. Do you still have friends there? Or family? I haven't seen Charlie since the breakup. Well, I mean that's dramatic I guess, He became a lawyer and yes, he lives there still. My mom and dad moved to Tampa though.

15. How did you do in school? I did good and was very focused on my work.

22. If you went to college, what kind of school was it? I went to Fordham University Law School. Unfortunately, not the same one as Charlie, man I miss him.

25. Is that what you wanted to do, or did someone influence you to follow that course? It wasn't my first plan but pressure to succeed from my father, the failure of my music career, training to be a wrestler hurting too much, and my good grades lead to a scholarship and the rest just happened from there.

CURRENT HOUSEHOLD AND RELATIONSHIPS

28. Are you married, single, or in a relationship? Married

29. What is that person's name and occupation? I'll let her answer for herself.

30. How are things going with him or her? Things are going fine, I'm a bit of a nervous anxious goofball but in a fun way.

31. Where do you live now? We live in a nice house together with our son Richard in New York.

OCCUPATION

43. What do you do for a living? Are you self-employed, or do you work for someone else? I'm a Lawyer who started my own law firm called Gray and Grey Attorneys at Law. I work alongside a man named Tyler Grey.

48. If you'd rather be doing something else, what stops you? Is it money? Is it pressure from your family? Is it your own lack of self-confidence? Or does some other thing prevent you from doing what you want to do? Wow, what are you, my therapist? I guess I have a little self-doubt sure. Maybe I was pressured into succeeding after my options of what to do in life were slowly fading from me. I'm not really interested in getting into all that right now.

56. How do you deal with stress? I don't really have a method, I just kind of deal with it. Some tell me that it's not helpful to suppress all those emotions.

57. If you use drugs or alcohol, how do you feel about it? Do you brag about it? Try to hide it? Try to give it up and fail? Have no problem with it? I don't personally have a problem with it. I drink every now and then, but I don't do drugs. I don't really brag because I think "who cares".

59. What is your idea of a really fun time? A nice time with friends listening to music from my childhood and remembering the old days.

60. What do you consider to be your most admirable personal quality? Honesty and being a "real one" as the kids would say.

63. How do you handle conflict with someone else? Do you avoid fights, or are you aggressive? Or are you passive aggressive and only give the appearance of cooperation? I tend to avoid conflict and confrontations, but some have described me as passive aggressive, mainly my wife. Listen I try my best

64. What are your politics? Are you conservative, liberal, or something else? Do you have no interest in politics? What is this a government survey? I don't really care all that much about politics and putting labels such as conservative or liberal. I think it's all pretentious. Some say I only say that to avoid conflict and conversation and I shouldn't be so middle of the road to try and please everyone. I say that's a long run-on sentence.

LOVE LIFE

65. What is your sexual orientation? Are you comfortable with it? I'm just a straight dude and yeah, I'm good with it. I'm definitely straight too, me and Charlie were just friends. I probably shouldn't have written that.

71. What kind of problems do you face because of it? None. We'll just leave it there.

FEARS, CHALLENGES, AND OBSTACLES

87. What keeps you awake at night? All the things I've let go. I've learned to never dream, or you'll be hurt. Charlie, if you're out there reading these, please call me. I miss you man.

88. What is the most pressing problem you have at the moment? Just hoping my son Richard doesn't go through the same pressure and problems as me. I really want him to not be heartbroken that things don't work out in the way he's hoping. You know, like don't get your hopes so high.

89. Is there something that you need or want that you don't have? For yourself or for someone important to you? I just wish I could go back in time so that Star-Crossed Harmony became a success and went on that world tour we always wanted. I just want more self confidence in myself but not worry about my past. I should also not worry about other's future.

97. What happens if you don't get it? What do you stand to lose? All I'll have is to live in regret for the rest of my life. I just want my family to stick together, and I hope I don't lose that.

98. How will your life change if you do get this thing or solve this problem? I keep a lot of these feeling repressed so nothing may appear to change on the outside, but I'll be very happy for once. Charlie, if you're out there, lets get the band back together please.

99. Will someone else suffer if you succeed? I don't believe my success will hurt anyone else.

Maybe Charlie won't be all that happy, unless we get the band back together first.