

**Is He Here Yet?**

***Waiting for Antonio* by Drew Palmer**

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First Reader: Lenora Champagne

Second Reader: Janis Astor del Valle

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## Artistic Aims

Growing up, performing was a big part of my life. I started as a dancer with my first recital at the age of three, where I looked into the audience and felt stage fright for the first and last time (not that I remember any of this, but I have watched the home video of it plenty of times). In elementary school, I began singing in revue-type shows. It wasn't until fifth grade when I was cast in my first play, *Peter Pan*, where I played the Indian chief and was too young to realize the terrible whitewashing taking place. I acted in my middle school drama club for all three years and decided to audition for my county's performing arts high school. Not only did I get in, I attended the school for four years, receiving a foundation in acting and theatre that proved to be immensely valuable. I knew I loved theatre and I wanted to pursue it professionally, which led me to Purchase.

My senior project journey began in November of my sophomore year: Rob Reddington and I had just seen *The Servant of Two Masters* at Theatre for a New Audience and were on the train back to Purchase when he asked me if I would collaborate with him on our senior projects. Senior year seemed like it was a million years away and I couldn't believe that Rob was already trying to figure out his senior project, but we had already done two shows together that I was (and still am) proud of and, through those shows, developed quite a close friendship. Saying "yes" rolled off my tongue so easily and I felt like I had accomplished something big.

The Theatre and Performance major has allowed me to take incredible classes that deepened my knowledge of performing and playing a role (even when not onstage) in the theatre. I've had the great opportunity of taking Fundamentals of Acting with Sophia Skiles, Introduction to Lecoq and Physical Performance with Brendan McMahon, Commedia and Pantomime with Lenka Pichlikova, Voice and Speech Essentials with Maggie Surovell, and Solo Performance

with Lenora Champagne. I think the class that will help me the most when tackling *Waiting for Antonio* is Acting Scene Study, which I took with Alex Correia. We learned to be in the moment while acting and to never give exactly the same performance. He taught us about wins and losses in our beats and that every scene is always a debate. The only part of the class that I didn't always like was when we substituted personal experiences into our scenes. Substitution isn't necessarily a bad thing, but the places Correia would ask me to go to as an actor brought a lot of raw emotion out of me. These performances were thought to be impressive, but I felt that going to these places wasn't good for my mental health. One time in particular, I came into class already mentally exhausted from something personal that happened the night before and when my *A View from the Bridge* scene was being workshopped, Correia asked me to tap into something that related back to my situation at that time. It was too much for me to handle and I ended up breaking down in class. The lesson I learned here is that I have to know my boundaries and where I can and cannot be pushed as an actor. My mental health should always be a priority over giving a great performance.

Actors must prepare for their roles, so I will prepare using Uta Hagen's Six Steps for each scene of the play. Additionally, I will split the text into beats and work on my tactics in each beat. To make a more well-rounded character, I will make a list of discoveries about Val that will hopefully carry on to the performances. There are always new things to find in the text or about the person you're inhabiting, even while you're in tech. I think the work that will really carry me forward in my discoveries is the work I do with others. Playing around with Rob and my fellow cast members and being able to establish real relationships offstage will hopefully translate to our onstage relationships. I'm excited for Tina to help me dig deeper with what I'm already doing.

As with any theatrical production, my role as an actor and producer on *Waiting for Antonio* means that I can only do so much work by myself. Bringing his show to life requires me to collaborate with multiple people, but I predict that I will be collaborating mostly with Rob and Tina. Val and Eddie are consistently onstage together throughout the entire show, which requires the chemistry between Rob and me to be exceedingly strong. I have a feeling that because we are already such good friends and now roommates, creating this chemistry onstage won't be a problem. Rob and I will also be co-producing *Waiting for Antonio* together and I'm curious to see how our partnership will translate to our producing responsibilities. Rob has previously produced a show here at Purchase, and while that experience can definitely be helpful to me, I hope that it doesn't put us in a position where one of us thinks less or more of the other.

However, I find this scenario to be unlikely. I think that if I were to struggle anywhere in terms of collaboration, it would be with Tina. Up until this semester, Rob and I have been working with her in a mainly producer capacity, a relationship that she may not be used to, and it's possible that we got off on the wrong foot. Last semester, when Drew was in the process of writing the play, Rob and I found her difficult to work with and apparently, she felt the same way about us. A meeting with David, Bess, Lenora, and us four seniors took place in late April to better discuss our concerns. While Rob and I mainly talked about our concerns with the play itself, Tina said that she felt that we were overstepping in our role. Even though I disagreed, the message was clear: She is the director and her vision for *Waiting for Antonio* is the one that will ultimately matter most. My hope for our collaboration is that we can all respect each other's responsibilities and choices that are out of our control. It's fair to say that between Tina, Rob, and myself, we all have a vision and expectations for what our show will be and for our

collaboration to be successful, there must be overlap in these areas and open, respectful discourse where overlap is lacking.

For these performances, I hope to draw in a more diverse crowd than is typically seen at past Theatre and Performance senior projects. After four years at Purchase, I have an expectation that audiences at senior projects will mainly consist of other Theatre and Performance students and friends and family members of those involved. When I took Marketing the Arts, we first learned about navigating audience demographics and psychographics, so what I can surmise about these audience trends is that the reasons these people come is either to support someone they know or support the medium (in this case, theatre) that they love or sometimes both. These aren't bad reasons by any means, but they've created a "core audience," aka the people who will come to your show regardless of what it is. I don't want to rely solely on this core audience to fill seats. My hope is that Purchase students will want to come see *Waiting for Antonio* regardless of whether or not they're involved in the theatre scene here or whether or not they know someone in the show. Val and Eddie's stories are relatable to people from all walks of life and I want Purchase students to get excited to see students like them onstage. The relatability factor is a big selling point that we can't stress enough while marketing the show.

One way that I'm hoping to market the show is through social media like Facebook and Instagram. Since I'm trying to reach Purchase students, I know that they spend a lot of time on these sites. Not to mention, there have been past senior projects and independent productions that use Facebook and Instagram to promote their shows. However, most shows' accounts follow similar formats in the sense that they list information about the performances and perhaps show some behind the scenes photos or videos. I want to stray from this format, at least on Instagram. On Instagram, there are accounts known as "finstas" or fake Insta's that are a private collection

of one person's inner monologue. They aren't supposed to be well-curated or aesthetically-pleasing like many accounts I see, but instead are just whatever you want them to be. I think it is very possible for Val and Eddie to have finstas, so the Instagram account for *Waiting for Antonio* will be a finsta. Each post will be a picture of Rob, myself, or both of us and a caption that relates back to a theme of the show. Our Facebook account will contrast that with more "expected" content like meet the cast/crew posts, rehearsal photos/videos, and performance information.

There is an expectation that every senior project will raise its own funds for its production and ours is no exception. When Tina and Drew proposed *Waiting for Antonio*, their anticipated budget was \$1600, with \$1500 going towards the set and \$100 for costumes. Although this was based on a more elaborate directorial vision on Tina's part, Rob and I kept the \$1600 budget. We plan to have a crowdfunding campaign on Indiegogo that will feature our story and fun and creative perks for donors like marijuana stickers, shutter shades, and even junk food. All of the seniors as well as the cast will be sharing the Indiegogo on Facebook to increase views to the page. I don't know what Tina has amended her vision of the set to be, but it probably won't cost \$1500. Personally, I think that as long as we raise \$1200, which is 75% of our goal, we can get by on that.

Val's monologue towards the end of the play shows the immense anxiety and concern of life post-grad. When I came to Purchase as a freshman, I thought I would leave wanting the same things as when I entered: to be a cast member on *Saturday Night Live*, to be on a long-running ensemble-y sitcom like *Seinfeld*, and most importantly, to have a successful career as a comedic actor (I think I wanted Julia Louis-Dreyfus' career without knowing it). But at the beginning of my sophomore year, when I attended the first Movement for Actors class of the semester, Ronni

Stewart went around the class and asked us “what we wanted to be when we grew up.” As I listened to the juniors and seniors of the class answer with eloquence and confidence, I realized I had no idea how I was going to articulate what I wanted to be. If I remember correctly, I probably said something about comedy and wanting to make people laugh because saying “I don’t know” didn’t seem like an option at the time. I didn’t stay in the class because I wasn’t emotionally ready or mature enough for what Ronni was doing, but this was a catalyst for me: for the first time, I doubted my acting abilities and potential career and seriously considered other career options.

What I’ve discovered in the past few years is that even though I love acting, I also love being able to wear multiple hats as a theatre-maker. I’m currently enrolled in Directing 1 and Playwriting 1, I’m learning about producing by co-producing this show with Rob, I’ve gotten to teach theatre and other performing and visual arts at the summer camp I worked at, and I even dabbled in stage management during an internship January of my junior year. But what does this mean for my life post-grad? To me, it means that I won’t limit my career options. Of course, I still find graduating scary and having all my relatives continue to ask me about my future doesn’t help. But if it’s up to me, my future is in theatre, in thought-provoking plays that don’t present characters as right or wrong but as debaters, giving arguments and making points that only we can form individual opinions of.



## Research Essay

As the old adage goes, “Nothing’s original anymore,” so after thousands of years of storytelling, people are bound to recycle material. This is by no means a bad thing to do; on the contrary, it has brought about countless new works treasured by the masses. People wait outside movie theaters to see their favorite book on the big screen. Even William Shakespeare, the Bard himself, was known for taking plots of tales he heard and writing them into the plays now adored across the world. Taking others’ material may be popular but is not devoid of critique and comparisons are sure to be drawn between an original and new work. Drew Palmer’s *Waiting for Antonio* takes inspiration from Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* but never adapts the text. *Antonio* reimagines the world Beckett wrote and has created a work that can stand both with *Godot* and on its own.

In order to properly discuss what is not an adaptation, it is imperative to first discuss what it is. The most basic way to think about adaptation is in reference to change: “the process of changing to suit an alternative purpose, function, or environment; the alteration of one thing to suit another” (Adaptation”). Artistically, adaptation first brings to mind the literature to film formula; in today’s age of transmedia and multiple authors and sources, however, adaptation encompasses a large variety of forms (“Adaptation”). Adaptation can cross over from one medium to another such as literature to film but work in a medium can be adapted into another work in the same medium as well. In this essay specifically, the adaptation of dramatic literature into a secondary piece of dramatic literature will be explored. While this adaptation can consist of plays turning into musicals, the focus here is only on plays.

Postmodernism is an often tossed-around term in various artistic media but trying to find a definition for it is a challenging task. The article “Postmodernism” on the website All About

Philosophy explains that “[defining] it would violate the postmodernist's premise that no definite terms, boundaries, or absolute truths exist.” The movement and philosophy stems from the starting point that the Western world has become corrupt due to capitalism, nationalism, and outdated religious beliefs and rituals. These three issues are thought by postmodernists to divide humanity unnaturally and any promise of freedom by the Western world is a false one (“Postmodernism”). To identify as a postmodernist, one must deny absolute truth, the black and white answers to life (i.e. good and evil, right and wrong). Instead, they understand the subjectivity of truth and experience and do not insist that what applies to them applies to everyone. Postmodernists are often times atheists or agnostics and favor political systems outside of democracy (“Postmodernism”).

Understanding this about postmodernism allows for a comprehension of specific productions of *Waiting for Godot*, as seen in Mariko Hori Tanaka’s article “Postmodern Stagings of ‘Waiting for Godot’”. While the case has been made both ways as to whether Samuel Beckett was a modern or postmodern writer, what matters more is that interpretations of *Godot* made by directors and performers have sometimes shifted towards postmodernism as a reflection of their personal worldviews (Tanaka 55-56). These have included Andre Engel’s 1979 production, adapting the play to have a total of ten characters, as well as Tamiya Kuriyama’s 1980 production, also adapting the play to have several pairs of Estragon and Vladimir. Tanaka explains that this expansion of the characters veers away from Beckett’s minimalistic approach to his plays but doing so brings out a postmodern originality to each production (56-57). In other stagings, stylizing the acting contributed a new postmodern element. For example, when the Ad Hoc theatre company in London produced *Godot* in 1995, language and movement were experimented with by incorporating a sense of the mechanical.

Vladimir spoke, avoiding the eyes of other characters and even the audience. He started vacantly into the air as if he were haunted by some unseen power, Estragon spoke stifflingly in a rather quiet voice without crying or shouting even when he was in despair. Their elocution, in spite of their apathetic manner, sounded lyrical, as lyrical as we find it in Beckett's plays (Tanaka 60).

Tanaka goes on to discuss how these postmodern *Godot* productions appeal to contemporary audiences and even though some of the productions stray from Beckett's work, they still preserve the fact that the original work exists (61). *Waiting for Antonio* continues in this fashion and therefore continues Beckett and *Godot*'s legacy.

In the theatre world, a woman famous for adaptation is Sarah Ruhl. She writes in her article "Re-runs and Repetition" that American theatre-makers exist in a crossroads between stealing plots while also longing for originality, leading to yet another crossroads where theatre could be either optimally reimaged or unfortunately repackaged (283). However, reusing plot or characters can provide a certain level of comfort to viewers who thrive in familiarity (e.g. watching reruns on television). Even more important than familiarity is the balance of the known and the unknown. Ruhl recounts a 2002 production of the Greek tragedy *Medea* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music:

After Medea kills her children, ... we see the children's blood smeared across glass, and then country music comes up slowly on the radio with bad reception. Watching, I felt as though I were going to vomit... I knew what was going to happen, it happened, and I was startled into nausea by a strange hybrid of the ancient and the modern... It was in that place — between the familiar and the unfamiliar — that my gut got all riled up (286).

Ruhl attended this production with her friend, a lawyer who was less familiar with theatre than she was. When the show had ended, the friend expressed a love for it, with an exception for the chorus parts, but quickly pondered what someone who had more theatre expertise would say instead. These statements astonished Ruhl, who only a year later explored gut reactions from the Greeks in her play *Eurydice* (286-287). Here she brings up an excellent point: the theatre-watching experience can potentially be enhanced by prior knowledge, but that knowledge is by no means necessary for enjoying a theatrical event.

Anton Chekhov was a Russian playwright who is remembered for such plays as *Three Sisters*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *The Cherry Orchard*. Many of his beloved characters and thematic devices are found in Christopher Durang's comedy *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*. The play centers around the aforementioned titular characters Vanya, Sonia, and Masha, who are all siblings. While Vanya and Sonia live together in their parents' Bucks County home, Masha has reached a great deal of success as an actress (Lipton). Chaos ensues when Masha returns home accompanied by Spike, who is significantly younger than her. The siblings immediately begin to argue while somehow avoiding the real reason for Masha's return: she plans to sell their family's home to ease some of her financial burden (Lipton). Throughout the play, it is learned that Sonia, who is adopted, has romantic feelings for Vanya, who is homosexual, and resents Masha; their youthful neighbor Nina makes Masha more insecure about the fact that she is aging; Vanya reveals near the play's end that he feels as though the modern age disconnects people (Lipton). The play is an obvious ode to Chekhov: besides the characters' names, the siblings each make a fuss about how they long for something or someone that they cannot attain while never actively going about achieving what they want. In the first scene, Vanya and Sonia complain that because they chose to take care of their parents, they gave up on having lives of their own. With all of the

Chekhovian nods, this play still does not read as an adaptation. It is comedic in nature, while Chekhov is dramatic in nature, and stands alone as its own work. One such off-Broadway production explains this:

As any savvy theatergoer will figure out before entering Lincoln Center's Mitzi Newhouse Theatre, a working knowledge of the plays of Anton Chekhov will come in handy to get the myriad in-jokes embedded (and on the surface) of ... Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike. Truth be told, an appreciation of Durang's signature brand of Absurdism, is far more necessary an attribute than having seen *The Seagull* for this work to fully resonate. Should you somehow possess none of these virtues, you can still relish Nicholas Martin's first-class production, anchored by the performances of Sigourney Weaver, David Hyde Pierce, and Kristine Nielsen (Lipton).

*Waiting for Godot* was written by Samuel Beckett in 1949, first as the French *En attendant Godot*, and later translated to English by Beckett himself. Its first production was in 1954, directed by Roger Blin at the Théâtre de Babylone in Paris, France, and featured a minimalistic set of a nearly bare tree, a moon, and a mound to sit on. A similarly minimalistic approach was taken with the props, of which there were not many, and costumes. Running for more than one hundred performances, the production was applauded by the critics (Brater). A common tagline for the play is “Nothing happens, twice” as the main characters Estragon and Vladimir wait for a mysterious man called Godot, passing the time by ultimately doing nothing.

*Godot* and religion, especially Christianity, are often discussed simultaneously. Beckett does not shy away from introducing religious themes into the text, such as this interaction early on:

VLADIMIR: Did you ever read the Bible?

ESTRAGON: The Bible... (*He reflects.*) I must have taken a look at it.

VLADIMIR: Do you remember the Gospels?

ESTRAGON: I remember the maps of the Holy Land. Coloured they were. Very pretty. The Dead Sea was pale blue. The very look of it made me thirsty. That's where we'll go, I used to say, that's where we'll go for our honeymoon. We'll swim. We'll be happy (Beckett 4).

This seemingly ingrained association with religious text continues on throughout the act.

Capping it off near the end is another reference to Christianity, this time through the Christian Messiah, Jesus Christ.

VLADIMIR: But you can't go barefoot!

ESTRAGON: Christ did.

VLADIMIR: Christ! What has Christ got to do with it? You're not going to compare yourself to Christ!

ESTRAGON: All my life I've compared myself to him.

VLADIMIR: But where he lived it was warm, it was dry!

ESTRAGON: Yes. And they crucified quick (Beckett 43).

The use of religious references is noted because of its prevalence in prior critiques of *Godot*, but it is additionally important to note that these references are not echoed in the text of *Waiting for Antonio*. In fact, the topics that Valerie and Eddie discuss do not match many of that of Vladimir and Estragon.

Even though the main action of both *Waiting for Godot* and *Waiting for Antonio* revolve around back-and-forth between two characters, the duos are sometimes joined onstage by three

other characters, adding a new dynamic to the scene. Just as Valerie and Eddie shift between similarity and difference from their *Godot* counterparts, so do The Plug, The Homeless Man, and The Business Woman. The Plug is the first outside character to enter Valerie and Eddie's world as the two complain about Antonio once again:

EDDIE: Why would he be honest. If he told you the truth you probably would just go and find another plug.

THE PLUG (OFF STAGE): Did someone say plug? ...

THE PLUG: You students need some herb?

EDDIE: umm no we're good man.

THE PLUG: Come one why wait for your guy when I'm here right now. I'm sure there are better things you could be doing then waiting for your man (Palmer 9-10).

The Plug's introduction of himself bears resemblance to Pozzo's entrance and introduction in *Godot*. Pozzo says his name to Estragon and Vladimir, who at first think he is Godot and ultimately do not know who he is (Beckett 14-15). In *Antonio*, though, Valerie is eventually able to recognize The Plug as a dealer she had attempted to buy marijuana from the month before. She gets upset with him for not holding up his end of the bargain while he tries to turn the experience into a teachable moment, only to be undermined by Valerie for his chosen profession (Palmer 10-11). Another difference between Pozzo and the Plug is evident by each of their exits. When Eddie sides with The Plug on his stance about learning more from him than their college, Valerie chides Eddie and insults The Plug as well, who scoffs that the two of them are unaware of how he came to sell drugs in the park and are undeserving of the marijuana he sells, prompting him to leave (Palmer 11). Pozzo, on the other hand, decides to leave quite suddenly after smelling something putrid coming from either Vladimir or Estragon, and the three begin a

long-winded goodbye ending with Lucky and then Pozzo running as they exit (Beckett 37-38).

From an acting perspective, The Plug's exit, while faster overall, is more motivated by the events of the scene than Pozzo's.

The Homeless Man is another example of *Antonio* using a counterpart character from *Godot*, which here is Lucky. The most notable distinction between Lucky and the Homeless Man is that Lucky is never alone with Estragon and Vladimir where the Homeless Man's entire scene is him alone with Eddie and Valerie. While the Homeless Man talks about a cop who made him move as well as a man called Gary, he is not reliant on the presence of another character besides the main duo (Palmer 16-17). What ultimately ties the two characters together are their rambling monologues. Pozzo says to Estragon and Vladimir that Lucky is unable to think without his hat, and once Vladimir puts the hat on Lucky's head, Pozzo tells the two to stand back and Lucky to think (Beckett 33). Lucky then begins a punctuation-less monologue ranging topics and physical pages:

LUCKY: Given the existence as uttered forth in the public works of Puncher and Wattmann of a personal God quaquaquaqu with white beard quaquaquaqu outside time without extension who from the heights of divine apathia divine athambia divine aphasia loves us dearly with some expectations for reasons unknown... in spite of the tennis the facts are there but time will tell I resume alas alas on on in short in fine on on abode of stones who can doubt it I resume but not so fast I resume the skull fading fading fading and concurrently simultaneously what is more for reasons unknown in spite of the tennis... (Beckett 33-35)

By the end of this monologue, Lucky is defeated as he repeats and stumbles over his final words and Vladimir removes his hat, causing him to return to silence and fall to the ground to the



amusement of the other three (Beckett 35). The nonsensical and chaotic energy that emerges in Lucky's monologue is the same energy brought to the Homeless Man's scene: he enters by interrupting Valerie as she complains about the way people speak to each other, and then does not truly hear Eddie's response when he answers a question (Palmer 16). When Eddie lets him bum a cigarette, the Homeless Man thanks him with a story:

HOMELESS MAN: This all went down a couple of nights ago in East Village. I like to move over there once the sun goes down cause that's where all you college kids go to snort ya beers and drinks ya pots...It was a pretty slow night not too much foot traffic down Avenue A, I figured it must have been a Wednesday but I haven't checked a calendar or newspaper in the last 15 years so I'm kinda going off a limb here—

VALERIE: (*interrupting*) WHAT'S THE POINT OF THIS STORY (Palmer 17)?

Although he speaks more coherently than his counterpart, the Homeless Man rants and rambles once he is given the chance. His story is met with painstaking frustration from Valerie, leaving him to retreat as Lucky did.

The ending of *Waiting for Godot* has become iconic. It encapsulates the absurdity of the play as a whole and prepares the reader or audience for the inevitability of what's to come.

VLADIMIR: We can still part, if you think it would be better.

ESTRAGON: It's not worth while now.

(*Silence.*)

VLADIMIR: No, it's not worth while now.

(*Silence.*)

ESTRAGON: Well, shall we go?

VLADIMIR: Yes, let's go.

*(They do not move.)* (Beckett 45).

The ending of *Waiting for Antonio* bears a striking resemblance to this ending, using similar language as well as placement of lines. Valerie, like her *Godot* counterpart Vladimir, instigates the desire to leave, but Eddie reacts differently than Estragon: while Estragon immediately turns down the idea of leaving, Eddie embraces it as a possibility, although his answer is not a clear yes or no. The resemblance continues in the final lines of each play. In *Godot*, Estragon comes around from his previous reluctance and prompts his and Vladimir's supposed exit, which Vladimir agrees to. Palmer flips the question in *Antonio* when Valerie prompts a straight answer from Eddie and he reaches his verdict after a pause, which is that the two should leave, or rather "dip." What follows the final lines from both Vladimir and Eddie is a contradictory stage direction that prevents the characters from leaving. Displayed in both Act 1 and 2 of *Godot*, it sets up the cycle that Vladimir and Estragon are confined to. For Valerie and Eddie, it sets up a cycle as well but feels more realistic due to the play's subject matter.

VALERIE: I mean we could always dip.

EDDIE: We could.

VALERIE: Do you wanna?

*(Pause for a few moments)*

EDDIE: Yeah let's dip.

*(They do not move, fade to black)* (Palmer 25).

It cannot be argued that certain art works stand the test of time for a reason. Art is often thought to imitate life, and in it, audiences can see universal scenarios and themes played out to their amusements. For pieces like *Waiting for Godot* and the subsequent *Waiting for Antonio*,

such scenarios include passing time with a friend, falling into cycles, and fear of the unknown. Through its characters, themes, and dialogue, *Antonio* presents a *Godot* type world through a fresh and contemporary look. Palmer honors the work done before him as a way to preserve his inspiration, but his play is still its own entity that enticed college students and recent graduates alike with its relatability of the experiences of young people today.

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## Technical Essay

It is surreal to me that the performance part of my senior project has come to an end. My senior project journey began as a sophomore and to watch how the project has grown and come to life in that time is incredible to reflect on. I have never before been so involved in developing a piece of theatre and this experience has been invaluable. Wearing two hats as an actor and a producer was definitely a lot of work, but I found that work to be extremely rewarding.

Our rehearsal process spanned approximately two months, but it felt as though it flew by. Due to the play's length, we had rehearsals once a week for two to three hours. Tina arranged it this way as to not "beat the play to death," as the majority of our rehearsals were spent running the show a few times. I tried to make the most of our rehearsal time. We touched on character work extremely briefly in rehearsal, but luckily Rob and I had many wonderful conversations about the show and our characters on our own. I would say that these moments brought about some of my insights about Val and were definitely helpful for me. I was able to incorporate some substitution into the role as I had learned in Acting Scene Study, although none of them were as intense as what I went through in that class. I think the reason for this is that I found so many similarities between myself and Val. I've been freaked out about my future plenty of times, I've had relationship drama, I've had trouble expressing how I feel to people close to me, which all happens to Val in this play. Surprisingly, managing and creating content for our social media was also extremely helpful in developing my character. I used my posts as a way to further a lot of what Val discusses (or doesn't discuss) in the play. I got to touch on relationships, her view of feminism, and socializing, to name a few. Detail-orienting my character work in this way had major benefits for the show.

I had a theory when I read *Waiting for Antonio* that I discussed with Rob many times: Writers often times write what they know, so are Val and Eddie based on people Drew knows? In my opinion, Drew wrote Eddie to reflect himself and Val is reflective of Tina. Drew has gained a reputation of being a jokester like Eddie and Tina often gets very stressed about her schoolwork. These are only some of the qualities shared between the characters and the people. Drew came up with the idea for *Waiting for Antonio* while taking Junior Seminar with Tina. As they were two of four students in the class, I imagine that they got very close because of the natural intimacy the class provided.

Once we started tech is really when our show came together. For me, even though the costume I had on was essentially something I'd wear in real life, wearing it during the show gave me more to play with. I had on a grayish purple jacket that was a little big on me, so moving in that felt different than wearing a t shirt or just the flannel I had on underneath. Because we had dressing rooms, it was a great opportunity to bond with our cast, especially Alyssa Andrews who played the Business Woman. Getting ready together before the show began connected us. I'm a firm believer that it's easier to act with your friends, people you love and respect, than total strangers.

Working with our playwright Drew Palmer felt inconsistent. He spent much of the spring 2018 semester writing the play and was open to feedback from Rob, Tina, and myself, which we would give him. In our meeting with our senior project advisors in April, he admitted that the feedback that Rob and I gave made him feel like we didn't like what he was writing. It was the first time for all of us being in this developmental position and because we didn't know to clearly line out at the beginning what to expect, we could only assume what was expected of us at this time. I think that Rob and I expected to have a bigger say in who our characters were, which

wasn't the case, so when we gave feedback, we did so thinking that we were molding these characters before the play was even finished. Drew tried to keep up with the notes we gave him, but often times when we would set deadlines for a new draft, those deadlines wouldn't be honored. What seemed to happen was that he would tell Tina that he needed more time and she would give it to him, sometimes without telling Rob and me. Once we began rehearsals, Drew wasn't involved at all. I thought he would come to one or two rehearsals just to see what we were doing, but he didn't even do that. He did get to see a run when we were in tech and he came to one of our performances. From what I could tell, he was extremely pleased with the work we had done.

Rob Reddington and I have worked together several times during the past four years. Through the shows we worked on and our own similar interests, we developed a wonderful friendship that I know carries over to our onstage relationships. Working with Rob in this regard felt so easy to me. Portraying friendship onstage with your own best friend means that you've done that character work already. In fact, once we were performing in front of an audience, one of the most commonly-heard praises of the show was the chemistry between Rob and me. I guess I can take some credit for it, since friendship is a two-way street. I often times felt that in the rehearsal room, Rob would get more notes than I would, and we would spend a good chunk of time going over moments that pertained to him. I want to believe that this is less about Rob and more about Tina wanting specific things from him that he wasn't giving. However, anxiety creeps in and I have to wonder if there is a possibility of any other reason. For example, in the play, both Rob and I had monologues. For Rob's, Tina went over it with him in rehearsal at least three times, stopping him and working with him to dissect what he was saying. This never happened with my monologue. I later learned from the gossip train that Tina was frustrated with

Rob for not understanding her direction. After taking Directing 1, I have to say that maybe this is unjustified: if, as a director, you see that after constantly giving an actor the same note, they aren't doing what you want them to be doing, you should probably head back to the drawing board and try something else with them. This was just not the case with Tina, who seemed obsessed with getting particular moments to be just so and never acknowledging an alternative solution.

In terms of my collaboration with my director Tina Curcio, the journey was very much a roller coaster of sorts. There were times when I felt extremely confident in her directing abilities and that our process was going smoothly, yet there were other times where I felt the exact opposite. I will say that in the rehearsal room, she was able to facilitate an environment where we as actors had the room to play around and make independent choices. I never felt stifled by Tina's direction to me specifically as it was many times her asking me questions in regard to my character. I appreciated that at the beginning of our rehearsal process, she took the time to sit with everyone in the cast individually to learn more about us as people as well as the character work that we had begun. It made me feel like she was investing in me as a person and as an actor. Several little problems piled up into one big one: I felt that Tina was unclear in her vision of the show. As a producer, I wanted to make sure that the show I told people about was the same show that they'd watch, meaning that my vision matched hers. Perhaps she didn't want to tell us much because we were her actors, but as producers and people marketing a show, it was imperative to fully understand what she wanted. Once other people (i.e. faculty members) started watching runs, that was when the show truly began to shape up. This show that we were promoting as a comedy just wasn't funny until Lenka encouraged Rob and me to incorporate our Commedia training and find bits of humor, especially physical ones. I also found with Tina an



almost obsessive need to be in charge of everything, even the things she wasn't in charge of. Per the request of one of our Arts Management advisors Janis Astor del Valle, we created an MOU outlining our responsibilities so we had a clear understanding of what we should and shouldn't be doing. Rob and I abided by that MOU during the process, while Tina used it as a light suggestion. There were many conversations about certain personnel that went on for too long with no results (e.g. hiring a student from the Fashion Club to be a costume consultant and never actually hiring anyone for the position) and on the flip side, there were no conversations about certain personnel that we wanted to know more about (e.g. Tina put herself in charge of finding a photographer and agreed to let Alex Theisen's girlfriend do it the day before the photos were supposed to be taken and without including Rob or me in that conversation). Additionally, I'm not certain whether our safety was one of Tina's main concerns. At one particular rehearsal where I was having a poor mental health day, Tina was so blown away by what I had done that it almost seemed as though she wanted me to be in a poor mental state during the duration of our show. In terms of physical safety, the bench that we used became excessively wobbly as we kept using it. Every time I would get up on it at the top of the show, it wobbled under me and although I'm not religious, I would pray that this wasn't how I died. Since she sat in the house and watched each of these runs occur, I'm surprised that she never brought it up. Based on my experience with her, I plan on not working with Tina again.

In terms of fundraising, our Indiegogo campaign was wildly more successful than I could have hoped for. We ended up having a total of forty donors. Our donors were comprised of mainly family and family friends, although there were three current Purchase students as well as two alumni. Personally, one of the biggest reasons why our campaign did as well as it did is all thanks to my mother, Beth Gottesman. Not only was she our first and most generous donor with

a \$200 contribution, she was adamant in sharing the link on Facebook several times, each time emphasizing the importance of this show to me and my education. Doing this on Facebook, she was able to reach family and friends we aren't as close with, but whose donations are no less valued. Twenty of our forty donors were people that my mom was either able to compel on Facebook or family that wanted to support me regardless. Rob, Tina, and I also shared the link to our Indiegogo on Facebook, as did a few friends. Through our forty donors, we raised \$1645, surpassing our original goal of \$1600. Our campaign was launched in mid-August and we reached our goal just a month later. The most disappointing part of our campaign was probably the lack of students donating to our campaign. I understand that being in college means that money can be tight, but I know that college students can blow through money on Starbucks coffee and other seemingly insignificant items pretty easily. There is such a huge community of artists who talk about how they want to support each other's work, yet when it comes time to actually support that work with a \$10 Indiegogo donation, they are nowhere to be found. This is a show about college students and to have only a handful of support from that community is sad.

I managed our funds alongside Rob. Because crowdfunding sites take a percentage of the money, we did not receive the full \$1645 that we raised. After Indiegogo took their percentage (when I calculated it, it was approximately 8.27%), we were left with \$1509.63. The money was linked to Rob's debit card, so if Tina wanted to buy something, she had to go through us and we would wire her the money she needed for the specific item. Rob and I decided on this system because as producers, it was our responsibility to control the money, but also because we knew we probably wouldn't spend all of it and if that was the case, we wanted to be in charge of where that money went to. Once we started to purchase items we would need, Rob and I made a spreadsheet to keep track of our spending. We would write who spent the money (either Rob or

Tina), what the item was for, the item itself, what it cost, how much money we had left, dates ordered and received, and where the item was from. Because we were in a festival and Tina ended up toning down her original vision out of necessity, we only spent \$854.43 on scenic design items. This left us with plenty of money to use on other areas, such as buying perks for our donors as well as buying hospitality gifts for the people who worked on the show with us. Out of the three shows in Purchase Performance Lab, *Waiting for Antonio* raised the most money. Once we started tech, I worried that this might be an issue, the issue being other shows seeing us as a money tree. When Rob went with our scenic designer Alex Theisen and our production stage manager Kat Taylor on a Home Depot run, he made it crystal clear to them that we wouldn't be the money tree, especially not for *The Role of Della* who raised no money.

Marketing our show was actually a lot of fun for me, especially our social media marketing. We launched our Instagram account on September 26<sup>th</sup> and posted twenty-three times from then until November 19<sup>th</sup>. Rob and I made the posts as Val and Eddie. Our first few posts got a little over thirty likes each, but after using more popular hashtags, our likes went up to the early to mid-forties. After our first few posts, Tina sat Rob and me down to tell us why she didn't like the direction we were going in, so we tried to be as transparent as possible with our goals. Finstas are generally seen as "silly" and "ranting", but that's why it worked so well for this show. Our interactions were of course from people we knew, but there were plenty of accounts we had no clue about who liked what we were putting out. Our Facebook page racked up sixty-five likes. I found it so much harder to get likes on Facebook than Instagram and I'm still not sure why. Our content was a bit more normal, with information about the cast, the occasional meme, and of course our poster. Our graphic designer Cat Neftleberg designed a beautiful poster for our show. It was an iPhone lock screen with calendar notifications about the performances.

Rob and I printed so many out and put them in nearly every building on campus. Some were torn down almost immediately, but some are still standing to this day. To round out our marketing, I made a Facebook event page for the festival as an entity. It was meant to be a place where everyone could make posts about their shows to get everyone hyped. What ended up happened was that after I had suggested the idea to our producer Jack Tamburri, no one else wanted to take the responsibility of creating the page and I volunteered myself. While I kept telling people at production meetings that they were encouraged to also post in the event page, no one ever did with the exception of Ashley Driscoll of *Trifles* to let everyone know that our show would go on even with the snow. I have learned that the language I used didn't light a fire under anyone's behinds. If I had said that a representative from each show was required to make a post there, I would have gotten different results.

Despite our efforts, I don't think we necessarily brought in the new audience I had hoped for. I may have put down going to a show because you know someone involved, but actually, knowing someone involved is a great way to branch out and see something you normally wouldn't. I have some friends in the music conservatory who expressed interest in coming to the show, but if I wasn't a part of the show, I think they'd be less likely to give it any thought. I do feel as though the Purchase students who did come were more varied than just Theatre and Performance students, which is exciting in its own way.

I am excited to move forward with even more theatrical endeavors. Just recently, I asked Jack Tamburri, the producer of Purchase Performance Lab, if I could be a Producing Assistant on next semester's festival and he very enthusiastically said yes. I hope my experience from *Waiting for Antonio* will help me to be a leader and guide the seniors to creating work they are proud of. As I've been telling my family when I see them, I'm moving away from acting for the

time being and I'm okay with that. Through the playwriting and directing classes I took this semester and the producing class I'm about to take next semester, my future in theatre won't be onstage but it will sure be bright.

## **Actor's Workbook**

### **Uta Hagen's Six Steps**

I was introduced to Uta Hagen during my sophomore year of high school. I found her approach to acting to be the most helpful for me when doing realism or anything close to it. I like to add an additional step for “findings,” the discoveries I make along the way on my own and through rehearsal. I try to do the steps for all of the beats possible, but sometimes my answers stay the same, especially in this play.

This first beat includes information that I would consider my super-objective/super-six steps.

Beat 1: beginning of play- “Well Antonio’s killing mine”

- 1) Who am I?
  - a. My present state of being is tired and frustrated.
  - b. I perceive myself averagely, enough to get by for now.
  - c. I am wearing a green and purple flannel shirt, medium dark wash skinny jeans, a purple/gray jacket, and black TOMS.
- 2) What are the circumstances?
  - a. Present day, an October afternoon just before 2 pm. A Thursday. I am 21 years old.

- b. I'm in Washington Square Park in Manhattan's West Village.
  - c. I'm outside on a secluded bench away from the fountain. An identical bench is directly across from me. There is a big tree behind my bench. It is a 55 degree day, partially cloudy. A slight breeze passes through every now and then.
  - d. I have been running around what feels like the entirety of the park looking for Antonio. Eddie made me do it because he did it last time. Antonio's last text said he was 5 minutes away. I ran and hopped on benches and probably scared children and Antonio still isn't here.
- 3) What are my relationships?
- a. Eddie and I have known each other since the first day of college. We only hang out one-on-one when we're buying from Antonio, otherwise we hang out in group settings. We hung out more freshmen and sophomore year than we do now because honestly, I just don't make time for him. He's fun to hang out with, but he gets on my nerves sometimes and I don't like to get personal with him because I don't think he could handle it.
- 4) What do I want?
- a. For Antonio to show up.
- 5) What is my obstacle?

- a. Because of his issues communicating, I have no clue where he is, if he's close or far.
- 6) What do I do to get what I want?
- a. Inform Eddie with what I know and try to commiserate with him.
- 7) Additional findings to inform beat:
- a. I got 5 hours of sleep last night because I was busy writing a paper for my senior capstone class. I've had a couple cups of coffee so far but I'm still pretty tired and looking for Antonio was only possible through a sudden burst of energy.
  - b. I woke up at 9 today. I worked for a couple of hours in the library and went home for a bit. I read a couple pages of my homework and made an appointment at the Wasserman Center for Career Development to talk about job applications, resumes, cover letters, and the ungodly future.
  - c. When this is all over, I will be doing some solo Netflix and chill (but actually chilling).

Beat 2: "Where are my cigs" – "Sure thing"

- 1) Who am I?
  - a. No change
- 2) What are the circumstances?



- a. Eddie wants his cigarette pack, which I stole from him when he wasn't looking. He doesn't know I have it. He typically will smoke while we wait for Antonio.
- 3) What are my relationships?
    - a. The cigarettes aren't lit, but they're pretty much burning a hole in my pocket.
  - 4) What do I want?
    - a. For Eddie to give up on finding his cigarettes.
  - 5) What is my obstacle?
    - a. He is addicted to those things and will stop at nothing to find them.
  - 6) What do I do to get what I want?
    - a. I pretend to not hear him, I play dumb (pretty convincingly), I lie to throw him off his rhythm, I make a fuss.
  - 7) Additional findings to inform beat:
    - a. I associate smoking with an uncle who died of emphysema. Logically, there's also a ton of research that shows how bad it is for you. Eddie knows I don't like him smoking but he does it anyway.

Beat 3: "Not cool" – "If it means less time waiting around with you"

- 1) Who am I?

- a. Feeling worse about myself that after all this time, I still can't get Eddie off cigarettes.
- 2) What are the circumstances?
    - a. Could've easily burned my hand touching that cigarette, a real close call.
  - 3) What are my relationships?
    - a. Now that we're standing, people could potentially notice us more than when we were sitting.
  - 4) What do I want?
    - a. To shame Eddie for his gross habit.
  - 5) What is my obstacle?
    - a. He isn't that shameful.
  - 6) What do I do to get what I want?
    - a. Crush his cigarette, corner him physically.
  - 7) Additional findings to inform beat:
    - a. I've never really blown up like this at Eddie for smoking. This blow up is really more about me than him.

Beat 4: "You hit me up because you needed another twenty to cop" – "Hey I deserve a bit more credit than that remember the time"

- 1) Who am I?

- a. I'm a better student than Eddie is, so I feel superior to him.
- 2) What are the circumstances?
    - a. His paper is for a super easy gen ed that he should have taken years ago.
  - 3) What do I want?
    - a. For Eddie to make a good decision about his school work for once.
  - 4) What is my obstacle?
    - a. He doesn't think he's making a bad decision.
  - 5) What do I do to get what I want?
    - a. Offer him helpful tips, make him feel bad, show an alternative route
  - 6) Additional findings to inform beat:
    - a. I actually took this class fall of my sophomore year and got an A.
    - b. I call Eddie a "stoner procrastinator," but I smoke just as much as he does. I just happen to get my work done in a reasonable time.

Beat 5: "Oh my god look at that" – "Regardless that kid is waiting for the day he's let off that leash"

- 1) Who am I?
  - a. Embarrassed that Eddie wants to cause a scene.
- 2) What are the circumstances?

- a. Eddie thinks this woman is an idiot because she wants to walk with her kid on a leash. Maybe I'd agree with him if he didn't make a huge scene about it in a public place...
- 3) What are my relationships?
- a. I have seen this woman and her leashed kid once, but they're still strangers.
- 4) What do I want?
- a. For Eddie to sit down and shut up.
- 5) What is my obstacle?
- a. He's got a point. It's pretty ridiculous.
- 6) What do I do to get what I want?
- a. Purposefully disagree with what he says, motion him over with my hand.
- 7) Additional findings to inform beat:
- a. A family friends' kid was put on a leash because they thought he was too rambunctious. The leash really didn't change much about his personality, just where he was physically when he went out.

Beat 6: "Just got a text from Antonio" – "If he told you the truth you probably would just go and find another plug"

- 1) Who am I?

- a. Annoyed at Antonio, but not surprised.
- 2) What are the circumstances?
    - a. My phone's battery is at 35%.
    - b. The clock on my phone says it's 2:20 pm.
  - 3) What are my relationships?
    - a. I want to stay off my phone so I don't look like a typical millennial.
  - 4) What do I want?
    - a. To bond with Eddie over a mutual dislike.
  - 5) What is my obstacle?
    - a. Does he think less of me with that kid on a leash thing?
  - 6) What do I do to get what I want?
    - a. Theorize, commiserate
  - 7) Additional findings to inform beat:
    - a. While waiting for Antonio, we'll typically get 4 texts before he either shows up or cancels.

Beat 7: "Did someone say plug" – "Matter of fact you don't even deserve this sour with your high and mighty asses"

- 1) Who am I?

- a. Annoyed at and distrustful towards this strange man. Then even more annoyed once I recognize him. Then even more annoyed once he talks back.
- 2) What are the circumstances?
- a. I don't like to talk to strangers.
  - b. Where did he even come from? I didn't hear him come over.
  - c. Eddie probably thinks he's really cool.
- 3) What are my relationships?
- a. Right when the semester started, I was in the park with my friend Amanda to catch up. I was having a similar conversation about Antonio being unreliable when this guy popped up out of nowhere. He said he'd sell me a gram for \$10, which is a steal, but he didn't have it on him then. He told me to come back the next day at the same time and he'd give it to me then. I showed up but he didn't. It was a mild inconvenience, but it felt extremely personal.
- 4) What do I want?
- a. For this guy to leave.
- 5) What's my obstacle?
- a. Eddie seems ready to buy from him.
- 6) What do I do to get what I want?

- a. Stay quiet, use nonverbals to communicate with Eddie, berate the man, discredit him
- 7) Additional findings to inform beat:
- a. I've only had sour once. It was with an ex-boyfriend. When we smoked, he told me that he cheated on me and I've steered clear of the stuff since.
  - b. This guy reminds me of my dad, who I haven't been as close to. We were close when I was younger, but as I got older, I found myself telling my mom about things, knowing she'd tell him.

Beat 8: "I wonder if his sour really is fire" – "You know I think she has glaucoma so that might work out"

- 1) Who am I?
- 2) What are the circumstances?
- 3) What are my relationships?
- 4) What do I want?
  - a. To get Eddie on the same page.
- 5) What is my obstacle?
  - a. He won't agree with anything I say.
- 6) What do I do to get what I want?

- a. Butter him up about his futon, make a convincing argument about the library, joke about the librarian.

7) Additional findings to inform beat:

- a. I've been to Eddie's apartment plenty of times before. It's a duplex in Bushwick. When we go out in Brooklyn, I often sleep over so I don't have to ride the subway in the middle of the night or spend a bunch of money on an Uber.

Beat 9: "What ever happened to that dude you were chilling with" – "Cause last time I checked all of your relationships haven't lasted more than one night"

1) Who am I?

- a. Confused as to why Eddie wants to talk about the guy I'm hooking up with and dismissive because I don't want to talk to him about "boy problems."

2) What are the circumstances?

- a. This guy is Eddie's roommate, Ben. We matched on Bumble at the beginning of September and started hanging out mid-September, so it's been about a month.

3) What are my relationships?

- a. Eddie and I rarely talk about who we're seeing because we always seem to have something negative to say about that person.



- 4) What do I want?
  - a. Reveal as little information about my relationship as possible.
- 5) What is my obstacle?
  - a. Eddie never seems satisfied with the answers I'm giving.
- 6) What do I do to get what I want?
  - a. Give simple answers, turn it around on Eddie's lack of commitment
- 7) Additional findings to inform beat:
  - a. I'm so used to texting the guys I hook up with on a near daily basis and Ben and I text maybe once or twice a week. I'm trying to adjust.
  - b. I really like Ben. He's a musician and he's super smart. We could spend hours hanging out (and we do). I'm not sure what he wants from our relationship though. I hope he wants to actually go out because I'd bring him home in a heartbeat.

Beat 10: Eddie's monologue

- 1) Who am I?
  - a. Bored. A little sleepy.
- 2) What are the circumstances?
  - a. Eddie wants to rant about the state of relationships these days.
- 3) What are my relationships?

- a. When Eddie gets worked up about something he cares about, he rants.  
I just sit back and nod and let him do his thing.
- 4) What do I want?
  - a. To tune Eddie out.
- 5) What is my obstacle?
  - a. He's making some sense about this...
- 6) What do I do to get what I want?
  - a. Move away from him as he gets closer,

Beat 11: "Netflix and chill guy" – "Maybe tomorrow"

- 1) Who am I?
  - a. At a crossroads because Eddie shouldn't be the one giving me advice.
- 2) What are my relationships?
  - a. I can count on one hand the amount of times Eddie has convinced me to do something. This is a real shift.
- 3) What do I want?
  - a. To not take Eddie's advice.
- 4) What is my obstacle?
  - a. His advice is pretty good, and it would probably help.
- 5) What do I do to get what I want?

- a. Decide against it at the last minute. I can't give him the satisfaction now, but maybe when I'm feeling braver, I'll do it.
- 6) Additional findings to inform beat:
- a. It's not that I have problems texting guys first. I just feel like I do it all the time and I wish they would pick up the slack a bit.

Beat 12: "Do you ever think about how much time we've spent waiting on Antonio" – "There's nothing I can't stand more than someone talking with no –"

- 1) Who am I?
  - a. So. Tired. And also sick of Eddie.
- 2) What are the circumstances?
  - a. My tiredness makes Eddie even more annoying than normal.
- 3) What do I want?
  - a. Keep Eddie quiet.
- 4) What is my obstacle?
  - a. He won't stop talking.
- 5) What do I do to get what I want?
  - a. Dismiss him, insult him, teach him.

Beat 13: "Well I don't care what they say" – "Thanks for the cig"

- 1) Who am I?

- a. Exhausted with a pounding headache from Eddie and now this homeless man.
- 2) What are the circumstances?
    - a. This homeless man just came out of nowhere and probably thinks the three of us are best friends now. Couldn't be farther from the truth.
- 3) What are my relationships?
    - a. I've never seen this homeless man before. I find him repulsive. He is exactly why I don't talk to the homeless. Every time he opens his mouth, I have to start breathing out of my mouth.
- 4) What do I want?
    - a. Peace and quiet.
- 5) What is my obstacle?
    - a. The homeless man and his need to speak.
- 6) What do I do to get what I want?
    - a. Distance myself physically from the two of them, try to tune him out, yell at him
- 7) Additional findings to inform beat:
    - a. Growing up, my mother would always walk straight past homeless people when we would visit New York. She instilled a great distrust of anyone who looks shifty in me.

- b. Again, this blow up is so more about me than the homeless man. But apologizing feels weak to me.

Beat 14: “Didn’t your mother ever tell you it’s rude to interrupt people” – “You better stay right where you are”

1) Who am I?

- a. Reflecting on my screaming from before. I do feel bad, but this is the road I’ve chosen for myself and I have to stick with it. Giving into my hunger.

2) What are the circumstances?

- a. Some bodega snacks aren’t a full night of sleep/a therapy session/something that’s actually helpful, but it could tide me over for now.

- b. I’m starting to doubt that Antonio will even come.

3) What do I want?

- a. To not feel like shit.

4) What is my obstacle?

- a. Nothing is looking up. I’m too in my head.

5) What do I do to get what I want?

- a. Defend myself, suggest leaving, suggest a deli trip.

6) Additional findings to inform beat:

Beat 15: “I AM NOT SITTING ON THIS BENCH ANY LONGER” – “Cause you’re always on top of your shit”

1) Who am I?

a. Broken. A fraud. I hide every bad thing from the people who want to help me. If I’m not careful, I’ll explode. Physically, mentally, all of it.

2) What are the circumstances?

a. Eddie is asking me too many questions. I guess it’s time for me to be just a little truthful.

3) What are my relationships?

a. I can’t even remember the last time I was this honest with someone.

4) What do I want?

a. For my problems to magically go away on their own.

5) What is my obstacle?

a. I don’t have magic; I have Eddie and his well-intentioned friendship.

6) What do I do to get what I want?

a. Distance myself from Eddie, allude that he doesn’t understand

7) Additional findings to inform beat:

a. I’ve never been to therapy. I feel like I’ve got a mental illness but I’m not sure which one. I know deep down I should go and talk to someone, but I make up excuse after excuse and it never happens.

- b. I don't want Eddie to think I'm weak. For the past few years, he's painted an image of me that's "on top of her shit" and well-adjusted and set up for success because I've never given him a reason to think otherwise.

Beat 16: Val's monologue + "Well that's not depressing"

- 1) Who am I?
  - a. Scared of the future. Scared of being a cog in the machine. Losing control.
- 2) What are the circumstances?
  - a. The job market sucks, no matter what field you're in. My timeline is no different than anyone else's because our lives are so inevitable. Why should I bother doing something to matter or make a difference?
- 3) What are my relationships?
  - a. It's me, myself, and I here. I can't see the park, Eddie, nothing. It's like blacking out or maybe what fetuses go through when they're all by themselves.
- 4) What do I want?
  - a. To finally feel free from burdens.
- 5) What is my obstacle?

- a. The world feels like it's literally weighing down on me and I can't take it.
- 6) What do I do to get what I want?
- a. I talk without waiting for a response, I make small jokes, I face my reality head on.
- 7) Additional findings to inform beat:
- a. I'm doing a combined BA/MA at Steinhardt. The BA is in History and the MA is Teaching Social Studies, Grades 7-12, Initial Certification. I decided I could do this in 4 years, which wasn't recommended, but student debt is real.
  - b. I have five friends who have graduated already. Three of them moved back home with their parents and seem stuck in their hometowns. The other two have moved throughout the boroughs and work really hard just to make end's meet. None of them seem happy.
  - c. My cousin went to Cornell for business. It seemed like a smart move at the time. I've always looked up to him as someone who would be super successful. He was interning at a Midtown firm and made a mistake when dealing with a client, so the company didn't ask him to join them when the internship was over. It really knocked down his confidence and he wasn't sure that he wanted to do business anymore,



so he got a job at The Queens Center while he tries to figure out what to do with his life.

Beat 17: “This is the fifth coffee run they sent me on today” – “YES WITHOUT COFFEE”

1) Who am I?

a. Trying to pretend like everything is normal. Turning my attention to something/someone else.

2) What are the circumstances?

a. Some young woman spilled a bunch of coffee while on the phone with what I guess is her boss or maybe a coworker.

3) What are my relationships?

a. I don't know this woman, but she seems really great. Like someone I could potentially be friends with. She's got it all (aka a job) and honestly, I'm a bit jealous.

4) What do I want?

a. To gather up every possible tip this woman can give me.

5) What is my obstacle?

a. She doesn't really have any tips. She's just kinda morbid.

6) What do I do to get what I want?

a. Buddy up to her, flatter her, admit a truth.

## 7) Additional findings to inform beat:

- a. I am definitely more comfortable around women than I am around men. I feel like every woman has the potential to be warm and loving and maternal. Guys aren't like that.
- b. I'd never given much thought to savoring my college experience. I always felt like it was a set-up for how the rest of my life would be. Now I feel like maybe I should savor it more.

Beat 18: "Hey do you remember the first time we picked up from Antonio" – "I wish you would take yourself seriously sometimes Eddie, cause if you don't no one will"

## 1) Who am I?

- a. Worried about the future still. In need of a distraction.

## 2) What are the circumstances?

- a. That woman's advice, combined with Eddie's, is making this a much harder day than I originally imagined.
- b. I feel like Eddie and I could genuinely connect and have a real talk.

## 3) What do I want?

- a. To make Eddie see his worth.

## 4) What is my obstacle?

- a. He keeps joking around.

5) What do I do to get what I want?

a. Compliment him, teach him something, admit a truth

6) Additional findings to inform beat:

a. I feel like Eddie has a warped view of himself. He's so talented but he just wants to make people laugh. It seems superficial.

b. Once we graduate, there is an excellent chance that Eddie and I will grow apart. I don't think he'll be that good at keeping in touch and I predict that he'll be doing some man-child things well past his 20s.

Beat 19: "Let me guess another 5 minutes" – "We should've copped from the plug when we had the chance"

1) Who am I?

a. Remembering the stresses of my life and adding a new one.

2) What are the circumstances?

a. My phone is about to die any minute.

3) What are my relationships?

a. Walking around with a dead phone is like walking around with no phone at all. It makes me feel vulnerable and naked and uncomfortable.

4) What do I want?

- a. For Antonio to show up and do some deus ex machina shit so I can go on my merry way.
- 5) What is my obstacle?
- a. My expectations have been lowered too much and I know he won't come.
- 6) What do I do to get what I want?
- a. Rely on Eddie, accept my fate
- 7) Additional findings to inform beat:
- a. I always try to keep my phone charged enough when I'm out and about, but when I went home earlier, I forgot to plug my phone in. Blame it on the lack of sleep or me being a human.
  - b. Eddie is so weird about his phone usage. I feel like he doesn't use his phone as much as most people our age do. I like to make fun of him for being an old man for it.

Beat 20: "I mean we could always dip" – End of play

- 1) Who am I?
  - a. Fed up and ready to break out of the cycle.
- 2) What are the circumstances?
  - a. My phone is on its last leg. Eddie's phone is deceased. The chances of Antonio arriving are slim to none.

3) What are my relationships?

a. I feel more connected to Eddie now than I ever have.

4) What do I want?

a. To leave the park and go home.

5) What is my obstacle?

a. A weirdly optimistic glimmer of hope on Eddie's behalf.

6) What do I do to get what I want?

a. Take my cues off of Eddie.

7) Additional findings to inform beat:

a. Home for me is in Harlem. I live in a 3-bedroom with two other women, Julia and Bex. I met Julia in my Espionage and the Making of the Modern World class my sophomore year and we hit it off immediately. She is one of my closest friends. Bex is one of Julia's friends, but since she started living with us, she's less of a friend.

b. I don't know the next time I'm going to see Eddie. Or the next time I'm buying from Antonio. Today was a lot, and I may not hit up the guy until the spring semester rolls around.

I think Rob and I approach these characters from quite different perspectives. I find that I have a lot in common with Val (sometimes a little too much in common...) than Rob does with Eddie. This is both a blessing and a curse. It's much easier to empathize with a character when their problems/choices/ways of thinking overlap with yours, but at the same time, it can be harder to "shake" a character off once a rehearsal or performance is done when that overlap is strong or requires so much energy, whether it be physical or mental. At our final performance, I dived headfirst into my monologue and ended up actually crying. This had happened in a rehearsal in October because I had really exhausted myself that weekend with a lot of interpersonal interaction. It felt cathartic both times.

Val doesn't let others in easily and I'm the same. She is self-sufficient to a fault. She wants people to think of her as a good student, fun to be around, a good influence. Val spends a lot of time worrying about others: what they think of her, if they like her or not, and of course, the decisions they make. I've found in my own life that once you stop caring so much about others and just live an authentic life, you'll be a lot happier.

## Related Music

In the past, I have sometimes curated music playlists for the characters I play. I chose to create a playlist on Spotify, an online music streaming service, as I was preparing to play Val. Growing up, music was a big part of my upbringing and still plays a great role to me. I believe that music can both influence our emotions as well as emphasize how we already feel. Songs, especially those with lyrics, tell some sort of story whether or not they intend to, something we as humans love. By listening to music, we can attach our own meaning to a previously-created meaning, creating an experience that is both uniquely ours and yet something everyone does.

For this playlist in particular, I tried my best to curate it in a couple of ways by picking songs that thematically describe Val/her perception of the world/her beliefs/etc. as well as songs that I think Val would actually listen to. I intended for the playlist to be listened to on shuffle, so the order of the songs was influenced by my own stream of consciousness and was less important than the songs themselves. Similarly to my own taste in music, this playlist varies in genres, decades, and general content to give what I hope is a closer look into Val's life.

[https://open.spotify.com/user/12164726042/playlist/0GyYhL8KGbdzuBBhpYQQOf?si=uPxZHv4YTdSN81Yef\\_mM4Q](https://open.spotify.com/user/12164726042/playlist/0GyYhL8KGbdzuBBhpYQQOf?si=uPxZHv4YTdSN81Yef_mM4Q)

- “Breathe”, *In the Heights*: In this song, the character Nina sings of returning home to Washington Heights after dropping out of Stanford. Everyone around her sings about how much they love her and how great they think she’s doing, but Nina feels like she’s disappointed everyone. I think Val shares a bit of this, putting up a sort of façade to the world around her and making them think highly of her when she thinks the opposite of herself.
- “Shout Out to My Ex”, Little Mix: This is a fun song that I’ve definitely screamed along to before. Little Mix, a popular British girl group, sings about a breakup in a way that seems nuanced and different. The message here is essentially, “We’re no longer together, which is a good thing, but I’m grateful to you for teaching me something about myself.” Val is no stranger to breakups, and I think that she wants to learn from her past relationships and get to a point where she can sincerely give a “shout out to [her] ex.” I can imagine her singing this with a group of female friends who, in the moment, want nothing to do with bad relationships or bad men.
- “S.O.S.”, ABBA: With the theatrical release of *Mamma Mia: Here We Go Again* over the summer, it seemed like the music of ABBA made a resurgence in many people’s lives, mine included. I like to think of this song as a call for different times, better times even, which is interesting because SOS tends to be used as a call for help. As a college senior in a period of



transition, Val is losing control of her world and longs for an easier time when things made sense.

- “Stressed Out”, Twenty One Pilots: This is probably the one song I have on this playlist that I don’t like that much. It carries a similar storyline as the previous “S.O.S.” in that the singer longs for a different and easier time as opposed to their life now, a longing Val knows too well.
- “Mary Jane”, Alanis Morissette: As an artist, Morissette doesn’t shy away from revealing deep truths about herself that end up being universal. Here, she addresses someone named “Mary Jane” who is very much struggling.
- “Thru Your Phone”, Cardi B: Cardi B goes through her partner’s phone because she doesn’t trust him and unfortunately finds examples of him not being loyal to her. This behavior is actually problematic and immature but Val isn’t above it and has definitely done it and been caught.
- “Work Work”, clipping. featuring Cocc Pistol Cree: I first listened to this song in high school and was amazed at actor/rapper Daveed Diggs’ talent here. This song describes
- “Tonight”, clipping. featuring Gangsta Boo: This song is about being at a club one night and trying to find someone to sleep with as the club is about to close. On the surface, it’s a fun party song with a catchy hook, but when taking a closer look, it illustrates today’s hookup culture and the realities of

one-night stands. Val has definitely had one-night stands before but wishes for more meaningful relationships.

- “Over My Head”, Fleetwood Mac: Here we see the dramatic highs and lows of a relationship. As sweet as the highs can be, the lows are painful and almost unbearable.
- “World Turning”, Fleetwood Mac: We often forget that the Earth is constantly turning, and we are constantly in motion because of it. That turning isn’t fast by any means, but I’ve likened Val’s reflection of her own life in the second half of the play to remembering the world turning.
- “Woman”, Kesha featuring The Dap-Kings Horns: In this age of female empowerment, songs like this feel especially important. Val is a woman and wants to feel confident in her womanhood, especially when other women are involved.
- “All These Things That I’ve Done”, The Killers: This song is not only fun for turning up at a pregame, but it expresses a lot of conflict that Val relates to: being liked by others, feeling like you can’t hold on, analyzing little details until they drive you insane.
- “I Don’t Smoke”, Mitski: This song is less about smoking itself and more about the addiction you can have to a person and how that addiction can

blindly lead you to destruction. Val gets easily caught up in other people, and that makes her do less good to herself.

- “Hey Mami”, Sylvan Esso: Although a fun and danceable track, the lyrics of the song actually discuss a woman getting catcalled. Val is a pretty young woman living in the city and catcalling is part of her reality too.
- “Superboy and the Invisible Girl”, *Next to Normal*: Natalie knows that in her mother’s eyes, she pales in comparison to her dead brother Gabe. She wants to be noticed and appreciated and loved the way he is. Val also longs for someone to pay her this kind of attention that she just doesn’t receive.
- “Young Dumb & Broke”, Khalid: Often times, people of older generations look at millennials and Gen Z’ers as lazy or uneducated and this song gives in to those stereotypes while poking fun at them as well. Val has her whole life to make money and be responsible, but the Business Woman make her realize that she will never be this young again and she should be enjoying it.
- “Fix You”, Coldplay: I’ve always had sad memories of this song. With lyrics like “Tears stream down your face when you lose something you cannot replace”, it is by no means happy. This is a song to cry to, that I would cry to, that Val would cry to when she is ready to feel something real for a change.

- “Dancing on My Own”, Robyn: A fun-sounding, but actually sad track about feeling isolated from someone who’s connecting to someone else. Val might want to be the life of the party, but she can feel almost invisible in comparison to others. Val is an independent woman, but there’s a big difference between independence and isolation, which she knows too well.

## **Links to Producing Materials**

- Indiegogo Crowdfunding Campaign-

<https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/waiting-for-antonio-a-senior-project#/>

- Instagram Account-

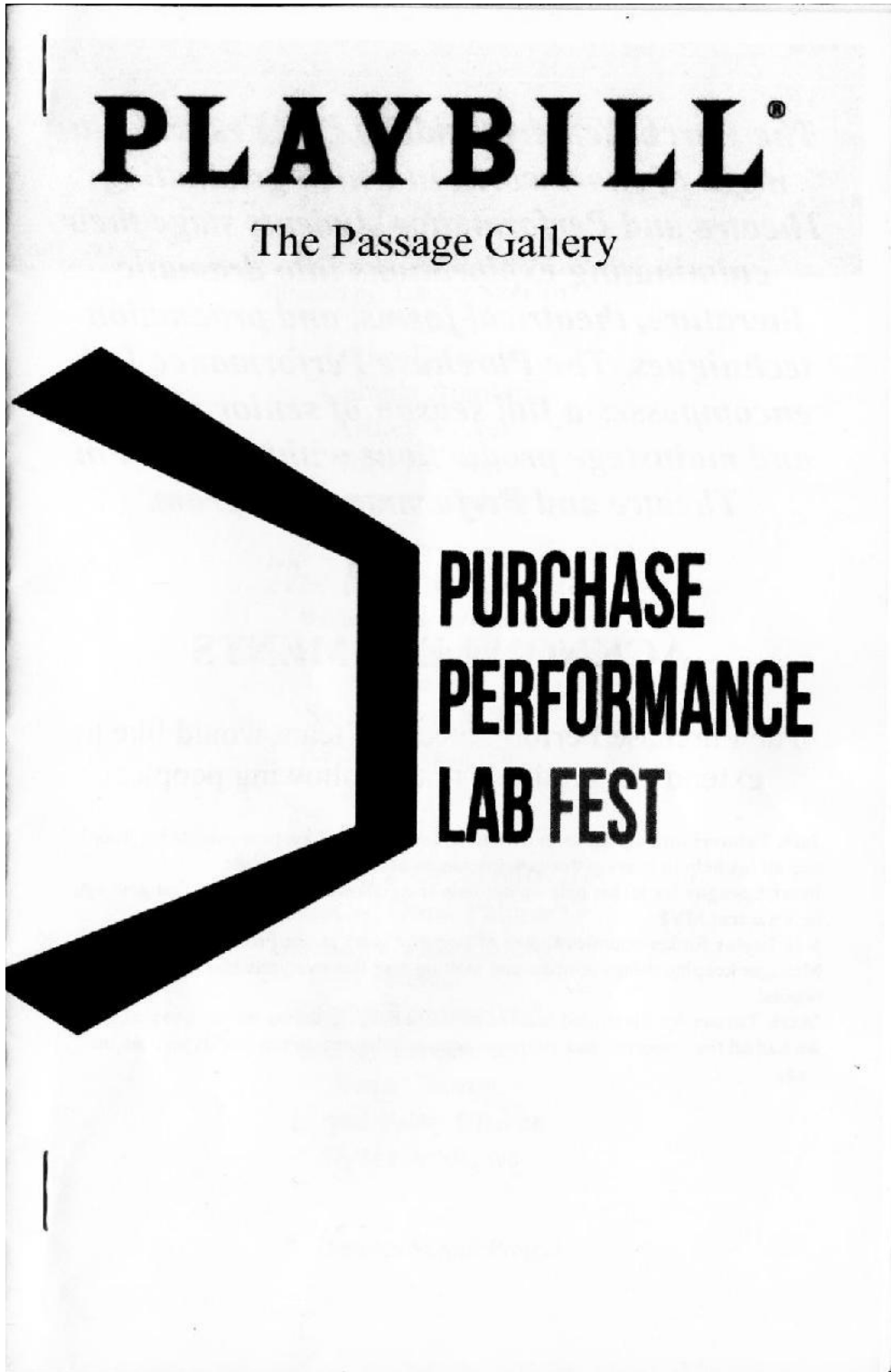
<https://www.instagram.com/waitingforantonio/?hl=en>

- Facebook Page-

[https://www.facebook.com/waitingforantonio/?ref=your\\_pages](https://www.facebook.com/waitingforantonio/?ref=your_pages)

**Playbill**

Designed by Tina Curcio



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

It is interesting to think about what each individual person constitutes as "valuable" and "worth it." We each make decisions based on what we think will reap the most benefits and sometimes, we don't even know what kind of benefits we are trying to gain. We all want the most out of every experience in life, who wouldn't? From each class we take, each vacation we go on, what major we go into, each job we apply for, to each restaurant we choose to eat at, what time we decide to go to bed, or what clothes we decide to put on in the morning, each decision has an outcome and we all want that outcome to be the best it can possibly be.

This piece is not political, we get enough of that in our daily lives. This piece is funny, its casual, its uplifting, its thought provoking, but most importantly this piece is real. It provides a lense into the lives of real people, living through something that anyone could live through on any given day. It is about two college students just trying to take a break, and even that doesn't seem to be working out too well, but regardless of the outcome they learned some valuable lessons along the way, showing that the journey sometimes has more to offer than the destination.

All in all, I think it is important to keep in mind that everything happens for a reason, and while things might not be working out in the moment, that does not mean they wont work out eventually. Think about what you are waiting for, and never lose sight of what you want.

I hope you enjoy this little lense into what that thought process is like.

Yours truly,  
Tina

## PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

Before you enter the world of *Waiting for Antonio* I want to take a moment to show my veneration for Samuel Beckett and his master work *Waiting for Godot*. Without Beckett there would be no play for you to see today. I have always believed in the power of adaptation. It can be used as a bridge to connect a timeless message that is gapped by outdated circumstances. It is a tool that we have seen been used to persevere the works of Shakespeare, Austen , and Hawthorne. These modernized adaptations have been able to connect these stories with a contemporary audience, thus giving more life to the original authors. So once again thank you Mr. Beckett. Please enjoy the show.

Cheers,

Drew



## CAST

**SYDNEY GOTTESMAN** (*Valerie*): is a senior Theatre and Performance/Arts Management double major. Past Purchase credits include: *Bad Jews* (Daphna), *The Pretty Trap* (Laura Wingfield), *Am I Blue* (Ashbe), *As You Like It* (Amiens/Lord 1), and *Sycc Mob!!* (Angry Storeowner), among others. Sydney would like to thank: her incredible cast and crew, Tina and Drew for taking Junior Seminar one semester earlier and getting this thing approved, Rob for wearing multiple hats with her and spilling hot tea, Jack Tamburri for being the grown up in charge, her fellow seniors, Aunt Eileen and Uncle Scott for taking her out to dinner approx. once a month for the past four years, Mom and Dad for thinking that a BA in Theatre and Performance isn't a complete waste of time, Sam for the millions of Oh Hello references that never got old, and all of her former Netflix and chill dudes for the "character building" and "inspiration." And most importantly, engage in post-show discussion with her or anyone!!

**ROBERT REDDINGTON** (*Eddie*): Rob is a Senior Theatre & Performance (Acting Concentration) & Arts Management double major. Purchase credits include: *The Pretty Trap* (Tom Wingfield), *Funnyhouse of a Negro* (Raymond), *Bad Jews* (Liam), *Blunt Civility* and *New Plays Now*. Rob is thrilled as an artist to collaborate on such a universal narrative as his senior thesis. Rob extends all his love and gratitude to Mom and Dad for their continuous support! Sydney, love and thanks for making this journey unparalleled onstage and off! Many thanks to Tina, Drew, Amanda, Tess, Jack, and our entire cast and team for filling this journey with joy and unforgettable memories! Much gratitude to Lenka for her support, wisdom, and mentorship on my artistic journey.

**LOGAN RILEY BRUNER** (*The Homeless Man*): Previous Acting credits include *The Home Place* (Irish Rep, Tommy Boyle), *Lemon Sky* (Keen Company, Jerry), *The Beautiful Dark* (Premire Stages, Charlie) and the film *Vox Lux* coming out this December. Huge thanks to Tina, Lacey, Ashley, Drew, Rob and Syd for allowing me to work with them on their senior projects, and thanks for the Cig!

**SEAN CHURCH** (*The Plug*): Sean church is a New York based actor, born and raised in Astoria Queens, trained at The Acting Studio's Conservatory, can be seen in his up coming senior project *The Terrifying* opening at the end of February. He is very excited to be a part of a theatre festival and can't wait to see how everything turns out.

**ALYSSA ANDREWS** (*The Business Woman*): Alyssa Andrews is a junior arts management student from Port Jefferson, Long Island. She attended Mount Sinai High School where she participated in various theater productions throughout her four years. Her most notable production was *The Laramie Project*, where she took on three different roles. This is her premiere performance at SUNY Purchase, though she hopes to work on many more projects. She is very excited to be a part of this production and still grins ear to ear when going to rehearsal because she is so happy to be acting again. She would like to thank Tina for giving her the opportunity to be back on stage as well as the rest of the cast for making it such a wonderful experience for her. After all the hard work put in by the cast and crew, she is really hopes that everyone enjoys the show

## PRODUCTION TEAM

**TINA CURCIO** (*Director*): Tina is a senior Theatre and Performance and Arts Management major with a directing concentration. Her previous directing credits on SUNY Purchase campus include *Extraordinary: A Magic Show* and *Rivers Under the Earth*, along with a variety of Assistant Directing credits including *To Be Heard*, *Take Care*, *The Vagina Monologues* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* She is excited to present the world premier of a student written, original work as her senior capstone. She wants to thank her incredible family, Devon, and friends for all their love, support and open ears when she needed to rant, and her cast and crew for helping her bring this piece to life, this truly would not have been possible without them.

**DREW PALMER** (*Playwright*): Drew Palmer was born and raised in Queens, NY, Drew is now in his last semester at SUNY Purchase where he majored in Theatre and Performance. Waiting for Antonio, is the first of his plays to be performed. When Drew isn't writing plays he is producing and acting in various films, and web series. His most recent is a web series titled Answers to Everything, all episodes are available for streaming on YouTube. Drew would like to thank his friends and family for all of their continuous support.

**AMANDA BROWNE** (*Stage Manager*): Amanda is a Theatre and Performance junior. Recent credits include *Madagascar: A Musical Adventure* (PSM) with the Westchester Sandbox Theatre, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Smith Street Stage (ASM), *BLK GRL* (PSM) at SUNY Purchase, *Or Current Resident* (ASM) with Squeaky Bicycle Productions, *Weird Romance* (ASM) with Pail & Shovel Productions. Amanda would like to thank her mom and dad, Eddie and Addison for all their love and support.

**TESS HURLEY** (*Assistant Stage Manager*): Tess Hurley (Assistant Stage Manager) is a Theatre and Performance sophomore. This is her debut as an Assistant Stage Manager at SUNY Purchase. She is ecstatic for this experience. Tess would like to thank her family and friends for their continual support and love.

**ADAM HAMDY** (*Lighting Designer*): Adam Hamdy is a New York based Lighting Designer whose most recent work includes The Lower East Side Festival (as a Board Operator who designed on the spot), Palazzo Manor, REP (directed by Thalia Sablon) and Neighborhood 3. Productions in the near future include Stop Kiss, Always Plenty Of Light At The Starlight All Night Diner, No Strings, The Terrifying, Three More Sleepless Nights and Don't Wake Me Just Yet.

**LOGAN RILEY BRUNER** (*Sound Designer*): Previous Design credits include Pinchfist (Sound Design), Hand to God (Sound Design) and Austentation (Sound Design). Huge thanks to Tina, Lacey, Ashley, Drew, Rob and Syd for allowing me to work with them on their senior projects, and thanks for the Cig!

**ALEXANDRA THEISEN** (*Set Designer/Technical Director*): is currently a Senior Theatre and Performance major at SUNY Purchase with a concentration in Scenic Design. Alex has worked as a Scenic Designer, Technical Director and Stage Manager on many performances in the past 4 years. Alex is very much involved in the senior projects on campus being a scenic designer for mostly all of them. Some of the shows she has worked on are Rivers Under The Earth, The Most Massive Woman Wins, Fool For Love, Austentation, Skriker and Palazzo Manor. She tends to keep her hands full, but her heart heavy for her love of theatre!

**SEAN CHURCH** (*Assistant Technical Director*):

**ROBERT REDDINGTON** (*Co-Producer*)

**SYDNEY GOTTESMAN** (*Co-Producer*)

**Production Photos**



*Rob Reddington as Eddie, Sydney Gottesman as Valerie*



*Rob Reddington as Eddie, Sydney Gottesman as Valerie*



*Rob Reddington as Eddie, Alyssa Andrews as The Business Woman, Sydney Gottesman as Valerie*



*Sydney Gottesman as Valerie*



*Rob Reddington as Eddie, Sydney Gottesman as Valerie*





*Rob Reddington as Eddie, Logan Riley Bruner as The Homeless Man, Sydney Gottesman as Valerie*



*Rob Reddington as Eddie, Sydney Gottesman as Valerie*



*Rob Reddington as Eddie, Sydney Gottesman as Valerie*



*Rob Reddington as Eddie, Sydney Gottesman as Valerie*



*Rob Reddington as Eddie, Sydney Gottesman as Valerie*

## Production Poster

Photo taken by Erin Michelitsch; poster designed by Catherine Neftleberg

