Theatre and it's Response to the #Metoo Movement

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Table of Contents:

Abstract........................................................................................................................................... 3
Artistic Aims....................................................................................................................................... 4
Research Essay .................................................................................................................................. 11
Technical Essay ............................................................................................................................... 25
Actor’s Portfolio ............................................................................................................................... 30
Festival Playbill ............................................................................................................................... 42
Abstract

This Theatre and Performance senior project consisted of acting in the Fall 2018 Purchase Performance Lab in the short comedy, *The Role of Della* by John Wooten. *The Role of Della* is a short comedy about an actress who has her heart set on the role of Della, the lead, but she must convince a difficult director that she is right for the part. The project was directed by Alex Kaouris and was also Rachel Kingsland's senior project. The research for this project delved in to the theatre's reaction to the #MeToo movement, in plays, festivals, and organizationally.
Artistic Aims

There are several goals that I hope to accomplish by performing in *The Role Of Della* by John Wooten for my senior project. *The Role of Della* is a short comedy about an actress who has her heart set on the role of Della, the lead, but she must convince a difficult director that she is right for the part. I was interested in this play because it is so different from the other projects that I have seen on this campus. My main goals in performing in this production are gaining more comedic and acting experience, being able to use the skills that I have learned and opening up the audience to enjoy themselves while thinking about serious issues as well. Performing in this show would be an opportunity for me to do something different with my acting. I do not have much experience acting in comedy, so it will be a good opportunity for me to get some more comedic experience. I will also have another acting experience to add to my resume. This project will be an important step towards my post-Purchase goals because it will give me more acting experience. I hope to be able to use the acting skills and techniques such as techniques from Lecoq and warm-ups from voice and speech classes that I have learned from my time here at Purchase in my senior project. I hope to be able to use techniques that I have learned from Lecoq such as the animal work, and clowning to perform the physical scenes in this play. I hope to be able to use techniques that I’ve learned from voice and speech classes in warm-ups such as the breath of fire technique, which opens up the lungs to allow more breath to come into the body and makes the voice louder. I hope to be able to prepare myself to possibly continue my education or to enter the professional theatre world after college.
This project will also be an important step towards my post-Purchase goals because it will give me experience collaborating with other artists. I would like to be able to gain skills to collaborate with other artists after college. I will encounter collaborations with the director, stage manager and other actors involved in my project. I will also need to collaborate with other projects to ensure that the festival as a whole runs smoothly. I will need to collaborate artistically as well as technically. It will be a challenge for me as well as the rest of the team working on our project, to have to collaborate and meet with the two other shows. This will be a challenge because there are so many people involved in the festival that it is not possible for all of us to meet at the same time. Collaboration is not a skill that comes easily to me because of my social anxiety. It is difficult for me to speak up when I need to or open up to others. It will be a challenge for me to communicate my needs, ideas, opinions and concerns when it is needed, with the team and the other artists involved in the festival. It is especially challenging for me because I am more inclined to keep my thoughts and ideas to myself but, it will be very important for me to push past this anxiety and communicate my thoughts about the production during this process. Working with other artists will be an extremely important skill to have when I enter the theater world after college. Making theatre is a very collaborative effort so it will be important for me to have experience doing this. I will also develop the ability to communicate effectively with other artists through collaboration. I also hope to be able to show others that I am able and ready to work with other artists to create theater after college.

I hope to conquer many artistic challenges by performing in this play. I would have the challenge of being in a lead role for the first time. My character also has some
very physical scenes, which will be a challenge for me as well. I have not done a lot of physical theater before but it will be an important skill for me to learn. This project could show that I can be in a comedy even though I am usually a very serious person. It will be a challenge for our team to work with the third actor since she is in another show and we will have to wait until she is available to rehearse the last scene. Performing in this play will be a challenge for me as an actor because it will push me out of my comfort zone, while providing me with more comedic experience. I hope to be able to use the techniques that I have learned from Lecoq such as the animal exercises that we did in class. This will help me with the scene in which my character is auditioning and pretending to be various animals. I also hope to be able to use techniques that I have learned from voice and speech classes such as the breath of fire. This will help me with my volume. Another challenge that I might encounter due to my anxiety is being okay with letting go and letting myself look silly. A big part of having social anxiety is worrying about how I look and what people will think. An important part of comedic acting is being able to laugh at yourself and look silly in front of others. This will be an important thing for me to do as well. This is something that I have had trouble with before but I will need to develop this skill to achieve my comedic acting goals in this production. Performing in this play will be a challenge for me as an actor because it will push me out of my comfort zone, while providing me with more comedic experience. Performing in this play will be an exposure for me as well because I will be encountering situations in which I will be uncomfortable but the more I do it the easier it will get. In this project I hope to be able to embody the physical as well as the emotional elements of the character. I hope to be able to bring to life the really funny moments that my character
has as well. I will hopefully be able to create an atmosphere that is light-hearted and funny too. This project will help to provide me with the tools that I will need in order to become a better comedic actor.

It will be a challenge to rehearse the technical aspects of the festival and the transitions from one show to the next in a smaller space. The space is smaller than what we originally had to work with so there will not be a lot of spaces for the actors or the set backstage. We will also have the challenge of not knowing what the space will look like because we will not be able to look at the space before tech week. We will have the challenge of not having the space that we intended to use originally. This will be a difficult because we will have to predict how much space we will have and how the space will look when we are rehearsing. It will be difficult to block scenes without knowing how much space there will be for the set or the actors. I will also have the artistic challenge of producing a play since I do not have any experience producing theater. I hope to be able to use the tools that I have gained through my experience with cognitive behavioral therapy in order to communicate effectively and collaborate.

This project needs to be staged here and now because not many people are aware of realities of the audition process today. It is also important especially because of the realities that women face in the audition room. Not many people are aware of the challenges that women face during auditions. People need to know that not every director is willing to work with you and that some are very demanding. It is also important for female actors to be aware of how they might be treated by directors or casting directors because of their gender. Women are constantly criticized and scrutinized by directors during auditions. Many female actors have experienced sexism during the audition
process. Some casting calls are even extremely sexist. More people need to be aware of the double standards and the unfair treatment of female actors during the casting process. Even some female directors treat female actors differently because they are women and this needs to change. People need to be more aware of all of these issues. I hope this project brings to light the challenges that female actors and directors face. It is important for this play to be performed here and now because of our current political climate and especially because of the recent #me too movement. This play needs to be performed at Purchase because there is a large theatre and acting community at Purchase and every person in the community will encounter an audition at some point in their lives and will need to know what to be prepared for and how they might be treated. It is also important especially for the women at Purchase, to see the challenges that we face during auditions. I hope this will inspire more people to make a change to the way we treat each other in this industry especially during the audition process. I hope that by performing in this play, I will be able to bring these important issues to the attention of more people.

Staging this play could impact the women in the audience. I hope that staging this play also influences women in the arts to support each other and collaborate with each other more. I hope this play will lead the audience to start a conversation about how we can all treat each other better in the theatre and in this world as a whole. This production also needs to be staged here specifically, because there are not many comedies being staged at Purchase. It is important to have a variety of genres shown on campus. It would be nice to be a part of a show that is different from the others that will be staged this semester. Even though I hope this play gets people to think about serious issues they should reach this through comedy. Comedy often can help people to be more receiving to messages
about serious issues. I hope that this show will also be a place where audience members can forget about their everyday problems, let go, enjoy themselves and just laugh.

I hope to be able to share with the audience what I have learned from my time here at Purchase through my senior project performance. I hope to able to inspire other actors that will perform in their own senior projects to do more comedy in the future. I hope to be able to display my growth as an actor in my performance as well. I hope this performance will be a useful addition to my resume as well. I hope to be able to use the knowledge I will get from producing a show especially on a small budget. I hope that this will give me skills to work with a limited budget and to develop skills needed to produce theater. I hope to accomplish all of the goals and conquer all of the challenges that I will encounter in this experience. I hope that I will be prepared to work with other artists in the professional theater. I hope that I will learn a lot from this whole experience so that I can take what I have learned with me into the professional theater world. I hope that my newfound knowledge will also help others. I hope that I will be able to provide others with advice when needed with their senior projects. I hope that I will be able to share my experience with other artists and that they will learn from it too. I hope to learn what it takes to put on a production. I hope to learn about some of the other aspects of putting on a theater production other than acting. I hope to be able to use the techniques and skills that I have learned from many of the different classes that I have taken at Purchase. I hope to be able to collaborate effectively with other artists. I hope to be able to be a comedic actor in this play. I hope to grow as an actor as well. I hope that I will be able to take everything that I will have learned from this experience and be able to use it in the
professional theatre world after college. This experience will help me grow as an actor, collaborator, and comedian.
Theatre and its response to the #Metoo movement

Many people and institutions have responded to the recent #metoo movement in various ways, and the theatre is among them. The #metoo movement began in 2006 and started as a way of helping sexual assault survivors to heal. The #metoo movement started as just a way of helping young black survivors of assault but recently has become a worldwide online movement. The #metoo movement is an online movement of people coming forward with their stories about assaults. People share their stories so that others feel encouraged to share their own. After the hashtag went viral: “A vital conversation about sexual violence has thrust into the national dialogue. What started as a local grassroots work has expanded to reach a global community of survivors from all walks of life and helped to de-stigmatize the act of surviving by highlighting the breadth and impact of a sexual violence worldwide” (metoomvmt.org). It is important for survivors to be heard so that others know that they are not alone. Theater is one way of sharing these stories. Theater is a great medium for this because there is a sense of community that is created that can empower and inspire others. When people feel empowered they are inspired to start creating change. In this paper I plan on examining examples of how the theater community has responded to the #metoo movement, through artistic means such as plays that were written and organizations such as Not in Our House. One change that came about from the movement are the procedures introduced by the organization Not in Our House. There are three plays in particular that respond to this movement. These plays are The Bedroom Summit by Scott Sickles, Wounded Warrior by Jeffrey Strausser, and Actually by Anna Ziegler. The Bedroom Summit and Wounded Warrior were part of a
theatre festival called the #metoo Plays. An organization that developed as a result of the #me too movement is Not in Our House. Not in Our House was established by the Chicago theatre community in New York City at a meeting of organizations and theaters in 2015. Not in Our House is a 30-page document intended to be used as a guide for establishing a safe work environment in the theatre. The plays and organization are examples of how American theatre has responded to the movement.

The plays *The Bedroom Summit* by Scott Sickles and *Wounded Warrior* by Jeffrey Strausser were produced in a festival called #metoo plays. Each play addresses a different aspect of sexual assault experiences. I attended a night at the #metoo festival in November 2018. The #metoo plays festival was a festival produced by the Alternative Theater Company in New York City. The festival consisted of two nights of plays, *Resist* and *Persist*. The #metoo plays were a response from playwrights and producers in the theatre to the #metoo movement. Celine Havard, the founder of The Alternative Theatre Company, produced the festival. Havard produced her first production when she was 19, before metoo was a movement. Havard also founded the companies, Abingdon Theatre Company and Stagedotorg. Havard has worked with many theaters and theater organizations in her career. She is an actor, director and producer as well. Havard has directed and produced several plays off-Broadway, off-off-Broadway, and regionally. She has also acted in New York and regionally. Last January, Havard had decided that it was time to do something about all this assault and abuse,

“I put out a call to action for the plays. No matter the varying opinion, what EVERYONE had in common was that they were passionate about it and HAD a point of view! People WANTED to talk, AND it was a subject matter that NEEDED talking about! Audience votes, post play discussions, video interviews and discussion panels, community and web feedback AND an Honorary Selection Committee (with Broadway/Off-Broadway and Expert Playwrights, Directors and Producers) weighing in -
all are elements that went into the final determination of the 16 plays that were chosen for the two Programs presented in this Showcase: RESIST and PERSIST. There were SO many brilliant stories, so many varying styles, genres and different voices that it was impossible to represent every perspective and do as many as deserved to be done. ALL voices deserve to be heard and believed! We recognize that abuse, assault and harassment reach beyond boundaries, into every strata of every part of our society. It knows no gender, no age, no color and no class. Sometimes it’s not always black and white. And for this reason, it MUST continue to be part of the conversation” (Havard 1).

Havard believes in the importance of helping others through theatre. She believes that “When one survivor steps out on a journey they do so for all survivors making a safer culture for ours and future generations to come” (Havard). This festival is one of the ways that theatre has responded to the movement. I watched the RESIST plays and found the performances very moving and powerful because the topics were so relevant. Some of the themes and topics of this night of the festival were sexual assault in the political sphere, high school, assault in the military, and criminal investigations of assaults.

One of the plays produced in the festival was The Bedroom Summit by Scott Sickles. This play addresses many themes prevalent in the #metoo movement like sexual assault, harassment, and sexuality. I think this play is really important because it addresses an issue that is often not talked about, men being sexually assaulted. This topic is rarely discussed. Many male survivors are too ashamed to come forward because they think that only woman are sexually assaulted and being assaulted makes them less of a man. It is important for survivors to feel like they are not alone and this play could help male survivors in the audience to feel less alone and maybe even de-stigmatize male sexual assaults. This play responds to the #metoo movement by conveying the message that men are assaulted too. This play also contributes to the movement by sharing a story of male sexual assault. The play is about a young high school boy named Boyd sitting
alone in his room when a former friend and current bully comes in and assaults him. This bully, Justin, coerces Boyd, threatens him and confuses him. Justin offers protection from his friends in exchange for Boyd’s cooperation. Justin’s friends might beat Boyd up and taunt him for being gay if Justin does not protect him. Justin then threatens to physically harm Boyd and promises to make him miserable if he does not comply, “If you do this with me, I will. No one will bother you. You will be safe. But if you don’t… Then I can’t protect you. I won’t” (Sickles 11). Justin tries to convince Boyd that he will protect him but only if he does what Justin wants. This play illustrates that consent is not always black and white because the characters have feelings for each other but Justin threatens and coerces Boyd. Boyd questions his sexuality as well. Boyd tells Justin that he does not want to have feelings for him: “I don’t. I don’t want any of this. I don’t want to feel this way” (Sickles 9). Boyd is confused about his sexuality because of his feelings for Justin. This play was very well received by audiences. The Bedroom Summit was a finalist for the 2017 City Theatre National Award for Short Playwriting. Other playwrights on the New Play Exchange website recommended the play. Playwright John Minigan said, “I don’t know if I’ve ever seen or read a ten-minute play that captures so much: young love, the pain of both the bullied and the bully, the fear of self-knowledge, and the way possibility and heartbreak weave together. Bedroom Summit is a powerhouse about the ways oppression and repression work on all parties. Beautiful and devastating work” (New Play Exchange website). Another playwright, Matthew Weaver, responded, “WOW. A highly charged, erotic story between a boy and his bully. Sickles doesn’t shy away from the steam, or the complications that arise between nerdy cute Boyd and dangerously charming Justin: ‘I will not rest until I have stuffed you in every locker in
that school.’ Here he expertly, delicately balances the dueling themes of fear and shame with desire- a great challenge for a director and two strong performers to embrace and give into wholeheartedly. Sickles dares to ask many questions of the audience. And then he dares not give us any easy answers” (New Play Exchange website). The playwright is not afraid to bring these topics to the audience’s attention.

Another play from the #metoo festival, *Wounded Warrior*, explores similar themes of sexual assault and harassment. This play displays the messed up way that the military handles sexual assault. The play sheds light on the issues in the military of men in power and the patriarchy. This play is about a woman who served in the military and was raped by her superior officer. The military dishonorably discharges her even though it was not her fault. This woman, Jessica Long, returns from the military and shows up at a party for the army captain. She shows up at his home and tells his wife what happened. Jessica tells Ann about the reality of being assaulted in the army:

“Here’s a news flash for you, Ann. One in four women in the military has been sexually assaulted. The vast majority of the cases go unreported. Even when the army does do something there are very few convictions, less than five percent. Why should you be any different? Once you report an assault… a rape, especially by an officer, your career is over. The predators, like your husband, stay in and move up; the victims, like me, get pushed out. Nobody wants to hear from us. As crazy as it sounds to you, it was a hard decision for me to report your husband. I don’t have choices like you do”(Strausser 6-7).

The wife doesn’t believe her at first but eventually realizes that it must be true. Sexual harassment is all too common in the military and it is very difficult to take action against perpetrators. Victims are punished instead of the aggressors. Victims are usually dishonorably discharged. Victims are often blamed and told to be more careful when filing complaints as well. Victims only have 60 days to file a formal complaint: “Soldiers
have 60 calendar days from the date of the alleged incident in which to file a formal complaint” (Sexual Harassment/Assault Response & Prevention website). Many victims do not come forward right away because they are ashamed or afraid. 60 days is not a lot of time to decide if a victim wants to take action. A male authority figure, higher up in the chain of command is often the perpetrator. This is difficult because these assaults are often not believed and it is more difficult to action. Wounded Warrior brings necessary awareness to these issues. This play is important because it illustrates the importance of systemic change in the military. Changes need to be made so that victims are supported, believed, and are not treated as less than. I think the play helps to further the needed change because it brings more awareness to the problem. Survivors should not feel ashamed or afraid to come forward. They should not feel that they will be punished for something that is not their fault. According to the playwright, this play was also very well received by audiences.

The play, Actually explores consent, race and gender politics. The blurred lines of consent are brought into question. This play is about two college students at a party. Amber and Tom are at a college party and spend the night together. Amber, after some time, comes to realize that she has been sexually assaulted. When Amber tells her friend Heather what happened, she realizes that something is not quite right:

“So I just say to Heather that things went pretty far and she’s like but that’s not rape and I’m like I know that Heather. What might have maybe constituted something approaching sex without my one hundred percent consent was that he got a tiny bit rough with me and at first I was into it but then I wasn’t into it anymore and I stood up and was like “actually, um” but he pulled me back and kept going. And then she says, all horrified, “and all you said was ‘actually’?” and I’m like yeah. And she’s like “but that’s not no” and I’m like I am aware that two different words in the English language are not the same word…Also, I was just so drunk.”(Ziegler 13).
Consent is not clear in this play, just like it often is not in reality. Sometimes the lines of consent are blurry because of coercion or attraction. Sometimes an interaction starts as consensual but then it goes too far. Being under the influence of a substance can be a contributing factor to the uncertainty of consent that can occur. Title IX is alluded to as well. Since the assault in the play occurs on a college campus, title IX is a resource for investigating sexual assaults on campuses. Title IX is a law that was passed in 1972 that requires “gender equity for boys and girls in every educational program that receives federal funding.” (Title IX website). Under Title IX schools are required to prevent and address harassment against students. Title IX is often used for survivors to take action against aggressors. The characters in the play are in a typical “he said, she said” scenario. A “he said, she said” scenario is a situation that occurs between a man and a woman where each has a different unconfirmed story. Each character in the play has a different version of the story. This type of scenario occurs commonly on college campuses especially if there are not any witnesses. It is important that the play addresses this issue because it is a real life experience for some people. The play can be relatable in this way. The narrative is also non-linear which is similar to the way that a person who has suffered from a trauma recovers their memories. A non-linear narrative is an interesting technique because trauma memory is often uncovered out of order. This technique can also make the play more relatable to audiences and readers. In a New York Times review, Jesse Green addresses the relevance of the play, “In September Betsy DeVos announced a plan to corral colleges’ prosecutorial ‘overreach’ by revising Obama-era rules governing campus hearings on sexual assault. Advocates of stronger enforcement argue that the revision will sweep the crime, and its victims, back ‘under the rug’. Ms. Ziegler not only
pulls up that rug but also beats it mercilessly to see what dust might arise” (Green1). This play brings awareness to issues of sexual assault on college campuses that so many politicians and institutions today try to cover up or hide. Many colleges underreport the number of assaults that occur on their campuses. This play is important because it addresses issues of sexual assaults on college campuses. During a time where politicians are committing these crimes or trying to erase them, this play sheds light on these important issues. Her play is important because it shares a story of ambiguous consent and sexual assault on a college campus. Ziegler contributes to the conversation of the #metoo movement. The story is effective because it is relevant to the movement and helps survivors feel less alone as well.

Along with festivals and plays, theatre has responded to the #metoo movement with new organizations and standards. The Chicago Theatre community, in particular, created an organization known as Not in Our House. Not in Our House was developed by Chicago-based actors Lori Myers and Laura Fisher in order to change the organizational culture of theaters and the ways that workers are treated. Fisher and Myers tried to accomplish their goals of creating a safer place in theater by creating guidelines for grievances and complaints and by creating standards for a safe, respectful environment. In January of 2015, a meeting was held at New Dramatists NYC of different theatre organizations where three proposals were made for change to procedures. The meeting included individuals representing The Dramatist Guild of America, The Actor’s Equity Association, and the Stage Directors and Choreography Society. The meeting was held in order to make changes to the sexual assault and harassment procedures used in Chicago theaters. The new procedures that developed were:
“1) We recommend that a clear statement be read at each professional production’s first company meeting outlining the procedure to file a complaint. The procedures and related contact numbers should be prominently posted on theater and union/guild websites. 2) We recommend that each union or guild designate a specific person to receive complaints. This person should be thoroughly educated and knowledgeable about the procedures and be prepared to guide victims to them and to appropriate support services. 3) We recommend that, when appropriate, a mediation process overseen by a neutral professional be added to what the unions and guilds currently offer to parties in dispute over a claim of abuse or harassment.” (Not in Our House website).

These changes to the procedures of complaints and grievances in Chicago theatres are a necessary change and response to the #metoo movement. These new procedures are important for people working in the theater to have guidelines and are aware of the guidelines for reporting sexual assault or harassment.

A tool that was developed as a result of the movement are the Chicago Theatre Standards. These standards are used by theaters in Chicago as guidelines for creating a safe space in these theaters:

“The Chicago Theatre Standards is a voluntary tool for self-governance that seeks to nurture communication, safety, respect, and accountability of participants at all levels of theatrical production. Its mission is to create:

- **Spaces free of harassment**, whether it be sexual, or based in race, gender, religion, ethnic origin, color or ability;
- **Nurturing environments** that allow us to challenge ourselves, our audiences, and our communities; that support risk of mind and body; and that establish the freedom to create theatre that represents the full range of human experience;
- **A common understanding** of practices for theatre environments, including written, reproducible standards available at no cost; and by
- **Peer support** through mentorship and collaboration through online communication and community outreach” (Not in Our House website).

The organization Not in Our House, and the Chicago Theater Standards are important tools and guidelines that every theatre should use to establish an environment that is welcoming, safe and supportive. Theaters in Chicago,
Washington D.C., Virginia, and Maryland have adopted these new guidelines. As a result of Not in Our House, other states and institutions began developing their own versions. Washington D.C. also developed their own version of Not in Our House as a result of the organization. Not in Our House D.C. involves multidisciplinary theatre artists in Maryland, DC and Virginia. Not in Our House D.C. strives to “Develop standards of safety and empower individuals and organizations to address existing structures that allow for harassment and unsafe conditions in out theatres” (Not in Our House DC). These standards and approaches are relevant to theatre education as well because it is important for students to learn in a space where they feel respected and safe. Elizabeth Horn, an Assistant Professor in the Theatre for Young Audiences graduate program at the University of Central Florida, wrote an article for Howlround suggesting guidelines, based on Not in Our House, for creating a safe environment in school theatres. She has been an assistant director, teaching artist, dramaturg and theatre artist. In her article, written in February of 2018, Horn suggested that she believes that educators have a responsibility to students involved in theatre: “As educators, our well-meaning pep talks about commitment, developing thick skin, and leaving baggage at the door might only perpetuate the young actor’s false belief that their bodies, hearts, and minds are only meant to be used on stage- rather than honored, cherished, and protected so that they may continue to grow and thrive as both artists and people” (Horn 1). Horn suggests creating a community agreement where standards are agreed upon to develop respectful methods of communication. The shows that are chosen and the methods of presenting this
information to students should be taken into consideration before being shared with the students. Horn encourages making consent a part of the practice. There should be a constant and open conversation between actors. Boundaries should be clearly communicated. Horn also suggests incorporating acts of self-love and self-care. Horn recommends sharing current events and initiatives in theatre with students as well. Horn’s suggestions have not yet been adopted by other schools. Some educators commented on the article agreeing with her ideas. One educator even had his students read the Chicago Theatre Standards and led a discussion about the standards. The DC version of the organization utilizes the same standards as the Chicago version. It was also developed to create a safe and supportive work environment in the theatre. Though the exact number is uncertain, many theatres that have adopted these new guidelines.

All of these plays, festivals, and organizations were reactions by the theatre community to the #metoo movement. As a result of the new policies, more theatres across the country are adapting the policies and guidelines that were implemented. School theatres are beginning to see that change is needed as well. Not in Our House has started the conversation about the changes that are needed in theater for complaints and grievances about sexual assault and harassment. This organization has started to create change in the theatre industry because more theatres are adopting these guidelines. I think that we will start to see more and more changes in theatre as a result of this organization. Plays are another way of bringing awareness to issues like the #metoo movement and the plays Wounded Warrior, The Bedroom Summit, and Actually do just that. Theater is a really great medium for sharing these important stories and creating an empowered
audience because of the sense of community that theater creates. When a group of people go through a similar experience they bond and start to make change together. I think these plays will inspire even more people to come forward with their own stories and start creating change. I think more and more stories will be shared. I hope that more policies and guidelines will be made so that every theater becomes a safe, respectful environment to create and learn.
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Technical Essay

I have accomplished many of my goals, conquered challenges, and learned a lot from performing in my senior project, *The Role of Della*, by John Wooten. I was able to use the skills and techniques that I have learned from my time here at Purchase. I used some of the techniques I learned from acting classes, movement classes and voice classes such as the breath of fire and what I learned from the animal class in Lecoq. I was able to embody the physical as well as emotional aspects of my character. I was able to “be a dog” and “be a cat.” I think this project accomplished my goal of proving that I can be in a comedy even though I am usually very serious. I accomplished my goals of creating a space where the audience members could let go and just laugh. The audience was very receptive to the show and the comedic parts. Performing in this show provided me with an opportunity for more comedic experience. I was able to collaborate with other artists such as my director, fellow actors, stage manager and others from the other projects in the festival. I was given an opportunity to act in a comedy. This project will be a great addition to my acting experience and resume. I think I was able to show others that I am ready to work with other artists to make theatre in the future. I feel prepared to enter the world of acting after performing in my project.

The collaboration process had its ups and downs, but taught me a lot about working with other artists. It was difficult in the beginning of rehearsals because we were still trying to find the third actor and other members of the production team. Once we found the people we needed, we started blocking scenes and began rehearsing the play. The third actor that we planned on using dropped out so we had to find another one. When we finally found a third actor, we couldn’t rehearse with her until two weeks
before the show because she was involved in another project. There were many times
when we all felt frustrated because the play was so short and we couldn’t run through the
last scene yet. We overcame the challenge of rehearsing without the third actor because
the last scene was so short that it did not effect rehearsals. There were also
communication issues that occurred a few times. The director and the technical director
were not communicating effectively so there was some confusion about technical aspects
of the show. It wasn’t easy to plan things around everyone’s schedules for the whole
festival, so there were many times when I would be the only person form our project that
could show up. I was often put in an awkward position and would have to answer
difficult questions that only the director knew the answer to. I also had some issues in the
beginning with marketing. I had originally planned on being the main marketing person
or at least an equal marketer. When I went to the first festival meeting however, I had
discovered that the stage manager would be the marketer for our project. I came to terms
with this but as we got closer to opening I realized that we did not have a poster or an
image, so I took matters into my own hands by having my friend create the image and
poster. We overcame the challenge of rehearsing without the third actor because the last
scene was so short that it did not effect rehearsals.

Our show was part of a festival, The Fall 2018 Purchase Performance Lab. When
we started tech, that’s when everything collaboration-wise started to finally come
together. We were all in the same space at the same time, which helped us be able to
communicate more directly and quickly. We overcame the challenge that arose from not
having the theater that we were supposed to have, the CMFT theatre. We ended up in the
Passages Gallery. We rehearsed in a room in the Humanities building and used a table
and chairs for the set. The only difficult part about this was not knowing exactly how much space we had to work with for blocking. Once we got into the theater and had some time to rehearse in the space, we figured out the blocking. We communicated with all of the people involved with the festival more once we got in to the space. We were able to block scenes knowing where our boundaries were. The shows, involved in the festival *Trifles*, and *Waiting for Antonio*, and our show *The Role of Della*, worked together to build the sets and helped each other with transitions during the rehearsals. Actors from other shows would help with the transitions as well as moving sets and props. Every person involved in the festival helped build all of the sets, which also helped us, to communicate more effectively. We all worked together well and communicated more. I definitely learned a lot from this aspect of the process. I learned that communication and organization are the most important parts of collaboration. I learned ways to overcome my anxiety from the exposure therapy that I went through in CBT the year before. When I had an issue I was able to share it and communicate how I felt about it. I found that when I needed to communicate with others about issues they were very open minded and receptive. I think that this experience helped me to develop my communication skills better as well.

I overcame many personal challenges in this project. I overcame the challenge of letting myself look silly and not worrying what people would think. I had some trouble in the first few rehearsals because I did not know everyone very well yet. It takes some time for me to become comfortable with people I do not know well. Alex, our director helped me with this a lot. We did exercises and theatre games in the beginning of every rehearsal. We played what animal am I game. We also played a game where we had to
move across the room as a particular animal. These exercises were extremely helpful for me because they helped me to become more comfortable looking silly and they helped me to open up more to everyone working on my project. These games also helped me with the physicality that I needed to have in the chase scene.

I did a lot of research and used different techniques that I have learned in order to achieve my artistic goals for this project. In order to achieve some of my comedic goals I thought about what I had learned from Lecoq. In Lecoq, we did different exercises that involved movement and physicality as well as some comedy. I took a lot of the techniques that I learned from the Lecoq class where we were each a different animal. I used the observations that I made from other performers in the class and from my own performance. I also recalled the exercise from class where we came out in groups and were animals walking through a museum. We also spent a few rehearsals playing games that would make us look silly so that we would be more comfortable looking silly on stage, which helped a lot as well. I also used some techniques that I learned from Advanced Vocal Exploration to warm up. I also did some research for the part of the scene when my character has to have a southern accent and a Spanish accent. I watched some videos of other actors doing accents and I also listened closely during dress rehearsals to the actors in *Trifles* since, they had southern accents and used that as well. We also spent a rehearsal playing with different power dynamics so that Rachel and I would be able to establish a dynamic during our scene. We played a game where we had to fight over control and power of the scene. This was really useful and helped us establish more of a power struggle, which was important so that the audience would believe that Rachel was the casting director and that I was the actor auditioning. I
I definitely think that our performance was enjoyed by the audience. I achieved my goal of having an audience enjoy themselves, and laugh. We got a lot of laughs during our show.

I have learned a lot from every aspect of this experience. I learned the importance of communication and how to communicate effectively with other artists. I learned how to let go and let myself look silly. I have gained more comedic acting experience and more acting experience in general. I learned a lot about all the work that goes into putting on a production. I also learned a lot about what it takes to put on a theatre festival with other artists. I’m sure exactly what I hope for in the future yet but I hope that I can start to work in professional theatre productions now that I have accomplished all of these goals. I feel prepared to work with other artists and collaborate more in the future. I hope to take everything that I have learned from this experience with me as I enter the next chapter of my life.
- pronunciation of Spanish words
  - southern accent

- be off book until "Actors do not think Beth"
  - When saying "John Wyatt says hello"
  - schmooze [Emma]
  - play up nervousness
  - At [Emma]'s line "Do you have a headshot and resume?" move in front of the table
  - Hand Rachel resume when she sits
  - Fill in the ... for each one, and
  - keep going until Rachel cuts me off
  - "Can you move back a little please?"
  - move back half a step
  - When motioned to move further back
  - move back a step at a time
  - "Sure, sorry" - be confused
  - After "No, I need your headshot." - laugh audibly
  - when doing monologue for audition part
  - be super dramatic
- Line starting with "As soon as your fear was gone" - take it slower, start caught off guard
- "No" of course not. I wasn't trying to
  - continue thought
- Beginning to tell story - look at lights or up before the Story
- Tell a story
- Be aware of pace
"I played Laura," he confused.

"Last summer," dead eye contact.

After she tells me to add a southern accent, think about it for a minute first.

Spanish, "La grande jefe."

At line "leaped up unto the couch." "jumped up on the chair."

Pulled up her dress pretend to be pulling up her dress.

When Rachel says Faster jump down from chair.

"Then Carol's mother's boss's husband." Knock heads shots off the table.

"No words!" run all the way around the table.

For chase scene - bark and mean while running around table, faint, die.

Death, stab self and die dramatically.

After, "couldn't think of anything else, huh?" pause, then get up and say line.

"I don't want to. I'm leaving!" be more defiant, start to walk away.

"Really?" be more excited.

"Thank you!" be really excited, this is your first big break.

"Wig?" touch hair, pull on hair.

"I'll be in touch." turn and start to leave.

"Thank you. Thank you so much!" have stars in eyes.
- After "NO, thank you" exit stage left
- metro card as audition card
- practice Spanish accent, listen to others say the line
Purchase Performance Lab (New Name for Fall Festival)

General:
1. Trifles
2. Della
3. Antonio

Next Big Date: Load in November 3rd and 4th. Sunday and Monday are build, Tuesday (Della), Wednesday (Trifles) and Thursday (Antonio). Friday is split.

11 pm tech ends. The latest you can go is 12 am. Tech day ends at 11 pm, actors are dismissed. Technical could work later than 11.

Need to find out when we get the keys. Kat needs to contact Mark.

SCENIC:

18 x 20: audience cut back a little. Keep each show different, keep the night in unison. Trifles starts with 3 flats in back. For Della, the flats move forward, meanwhile Antonio is prepped behind.

10 x 18 space. Can push to 12 x 18. Two sided flats; one side is black, the other is what Trifles wants.

Floor: thinking they may put in spring board. Could be working on the brick floor.

Could add excess flooring. Could bring steel decks in but they will slide on brick. Scenic and shows will have to discuss options; platforms are no longer an option. Rugs could be an option.

Props: Della is meeting Joe Thursday at 11. Sam Lynch and Amanda Brown have not gotten in contact with Joseph Dotts yet. Amanda tried and did not get any answer.
COSTUMES: Trifles met with Maggie yesterday. No other costumes needed.

OFF STAGE STORAGE: Mark said something about dressing rooms; there is a freight elevator there. Need to find out if there is storage or actor hanging area outside of the space itself.

LIGHTING: Addison has been in contact with the BFA show (Dave Gill); they will make a REP plot for our festival. There will be instruments in the space with inventory. Need to find out the inventory and the plot they are setting. Peter said you have access to lights in acting studio if not being used at the time. Should send an email containing plot to BFA. Peter will offer a board up. House lights and maybe something fun and dynamic on the set set for preshow. No need for gobos.

SOUND DESIGN: Della does not yet have a sound designer; want clips of actors auditioning and then the show begins. Jack and Alex will ask Andy for the finalized designer. Logan can offer names to Della if they need a designer. We will work with whatever the BFA has set up. Peter will offer a board up. Will need to discuss preshow music and curtain call. Will talk to Della about creating copyright free music. I am open to suggestions.

SPECIAL EFFECTS: Tina is using fake cigarettes, we cannot have a flame so herbal cigarettes are out. This design element is up to her; vapor or powder versus a prop that indicates smoking without the effect. Needs to be in contact with lighting and stage designers about the decision and need to let actors know.
DIRECTORS:
Don't stage bodies low to the ground, especially downstage. If you block someone downstage laying down and it's essential to the plot, we will need to discuss set design. If you'd like Jack to attend a rehearsal, reach out and invite him.

MARKETING: We are called the Performance Lab, covered show clates; no objections.

10/10/18 Meeting NOTES

GENERAL:
Discussed rehearsal process so far. Trifles is finishing blocking, Della is almost off book. Antonio is in rehearsals, they are blocked and off book, date is coming up. Jack, Peter and Rachel will discuss introducing the show.

COSTUMES:
Trifles fittings are next week. Della believes costumes are finalized. Antonio has not yet discussed costumes except that the cast will be wearing their own clothing. Jack encourages Amanda and Tina to discuss this as soon as possible.

SCENES:
The stage has changed from 18 x 20 to 16 x 20. Della is 16 x 10. Please keep this in
mind while blocking. Are using the Spring board deck that was used in the BFA festival. The walls will be black for Della and Antonio, Trifles will have wallpaper, floor will be a gray color. 3 ground plans are set and permanent. Alex needs to go to Home Depot run to get everything she is missing. Alex is making meetings with shows that still need items. Wall units will be reused flats in actor’s storage on castors.

**PROPS:**

Jack needs to know by the beginning of tech what is on stage for Trifles. They went to prop storage today. Jack wants the Trifles prop list. Stove is 2x3, cabinets are both 2x3; everything is very portable and easy to move. These can be put on castors and masked, but the crew/cast can move these items easily.

**Stage Management:**

Kat needs to get the crew needs to send Peter to finalize the crew. Crew will only need to join on the 4th. Stage Management teams have a crew meeting during tech. All stage managers must be present. Antonio may not finish tech on their day; will have to give them enough time the rest of the days. Please review the tech schedule, specifically Nov. 10th, 11th.
Schedule

For load in, if you are a senior and this is your senior project, you will show up for load in and load out.

Sunday and Monday (Nov. 4th and 5th): Alex will start at 11 am-11 pm on Sunday, on Monday 1 pm-10 pm. Production Practicum will come and help. Lights can come in and hang lights if they want around Alex's build.

Tuesday (Della, Nov. 6th) starts at 12 pm, goes until 11 pm. Will contact Andrew and discuss adjusting this. 11 hours is a lot of time!

Wednesday (Trifles, Nov. 7th) Sound in by 4 pm-5 pm. 5 pm-6 pm Lacey and Lighting Designer. 7 pm cast in. Actors out at 10 pm. Production meeting 10:30 pm-12 am lights.

Thursday (Antonio, Nov. 8th) Sound 10 am-11 am. 11 am set up. 12 pm start run through to 11 pm. Run through: 12:15-2:15, break until 6:30 pm. 6:30 pm cue to cue until 11 pm.

Friday (Nov. 9th): Della gets 90 mins before 4 pm. Antonio 4 pm-7 pm (go elsewhere for production meeting). Trifles 7:30 pm-10:30 pm.

Saturday (Nov. 10th): Trifles in at 10 am-2 pm. 2:30 pm-3:30 pm Della. 4 pm-7 pm Antonio. All productions must have a full run this day. Saturday night, mid tech full production meeting at 7:30 pm in the space. All shows must attend this meeting.
Sunday (Nov. 11th): transitions and runs with crew called. Stage management and crew called at 11:30 am to set for Trifles, everyone called at 12 pm. At 3 pm - 6 pm Antonio has space. Trifles has space 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm. Possible day for Jack to train house management called for an hour.

Monday (Nov. 12th): only Trifles, Sam and Peter need to talk about times for supervision.

Tuesday (Nov. 13th): Press rehearsal. Cast and crew called at 6 pm to set up (this is call). 6:30 pm is start time. Anyone who cannot arrive at 6 pm needs to quietly enter. Production meeting begins at 8 pm. This meeting will be check-in to see who will get space. Actors should expect to stay in space until 11 pm. Possible day for Jack to train house management.

Shows are Wednesday Nov. 14th (faculty) call is 6:30 for a 7 pm show keeping space until 11 pm for any extra work. Thursday, Friday the 15th, and 16th call is 7 for a 7:30 pm show (Trifles will call earlier), Saturday Nov. 17th call is 2:30 pm for 3 pm, 7 pm for a 7:30 pm.
GENERAL:
Discussed rehearsal process so far.
Trifles is finishing blocking, Della is almost off book. Antonio is in rehearsals, they are blocked and off book date is coming up.
Jack Peter and Rachel will discuss introducing the shows.

COSTUMES:
Trifles fittings are next week
Della believes costumes are finalized
Antonio has not yet discussed costumes, except that the cast will be wearing their own clothing. Jack encourages Amanda and Tina to discuss this as soon as possible.

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Are using the spring board deck that was used in the BFA festival.
The walls will be black for Della and Antonio, Trifles will have wallpaper; floor will be a gray color.
3 ground plans are set and permanent. Alex needs to do a Home Depot run to get everything she is missing.
Alex is making meetings with shows that still need items.
Wall units will be reused flats in actor’s storage on castors.

PROPS:
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Jack wants the Trifles props list.
Stove is 2X3; cabinets are both 2X3; everything is very portable and easy to move. These can be put on castors and masked, but the crew/cast can move these items easily.

STAGE MANAGEMENT:
Kat needs to get the crew needs to send to Peter to finalize the crew. Crew will only need to join on the 4th day of tech.
Stage Management teams have a crew meeting during tech. All stage managers must be present.
Antonio may not finish tech on their day; will have to give them enough time the rest of the days.

Please review the tech schedule, specifically Nov. 10th, 11th, 13th, and the load out information. Please also send posters to Jack ASAP.

LIGHTING:

Adam, Addison, and Alex need to sit down and discuss set height for their own lighting hanging adjustments.

Jack will check in with lighting on inventory and rep plot.

FINALIZED TECH SCHEDULES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

For load in, if you are a senior and this is your senior project, you will show up for load in and load out.

Sunday and Monday (Nov. 4th and 5th): Alex will start at 11am-1pm on Sunday, on Monday 1pm-10pm; production practicum will come and help. Lights can come in and hang lights if they want around Alex’s build.

Tuesday (Della, Nov. 6th) starts at 12pm, goes until 11pm. Will contact Andrew and discuss adjusting this; 11 hours is a lot of time!

Wednesday (Trifles, Nov. 7th) Sound in by 4pm-5pm, 5pm-6pm Lacey and Lighting Designer, 7pm cast in. ACTORS out at 10pm, production meeting 10:30pm, 10:30pm-12am lights.

Thursday (Antonio, Nov. 8th) Sound 10am-11am, 11am set up, 12pm start to 11pm. Run through: 12:15-2:15, break until 6:30pm, 6:30pm cue to cue until 11pm.

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Shows are Wednesday Nov. 14th (faculty) call is 6:30 for a 7pm show. Keeping space until 11pm for any extra work.
Thursday, Friday, the 15th and 16th call is 7 for a 7:30 show (Trifles will call earlier). Saturday, Nov. 17th, call is 2:30pm to 3pm, 7 for a 7:30pm. Crew called each day an hour in advance.

Saturday after final show, strike sets, and then Monday Nov. 18th during Production Practicum we will do a props load out. ALL SENIORS MUST ATTEND LOAD OUT. Stage managers should also attend this!

SOUND:

Logan is on top of sound and will be coordinating with the BFA on engineering the system. Andrew has his own designer. Jack will contact him for the name again.

Saturday the 3rd, have a meeting 3:30pm. Kat will ask everyone for their availability.

MARKETING:

Antonio is launching a public page for marketing purposes. They will launch the collective marketing images, and Sydney encourages all three shows to add whatever production photos and images they want.

Jack needs images for posters; send posters as soon as possible. We assigned this Friday as that due date.
Thank you to all those who donated!!

*Trifles:*
Cindy Szerlip
Lou Brandt
Val Driscoll

Steven Dricoll
Bruce Paci
Emma Griffiths

*Waiting For Antonio:*
Beth Gottesman
John Malfitano
Lee S. Rosenthal
Anna & Bob Reddington
Cindy Cubelo
Sheri Arzt
Edna Pilch
Nicole Kayla Ehrhard
Doreen Torche
Jill Shapiro
The Noel S. Ruiz Theatre at CM Performing Arts Center
Annemarie Spano
Melanie Powitz
Joanne Tepedino
Jessica Burdine
Lisa Prevette
Michael Fraucht

John & Anna Karcinsky
Tina & Matt Tedeschi
Helen Kascewicz
Dona Hershowitz
Teri Abramson
Eileen Gottesman
Stacy Kollar
Ted & Donna
Crystal
Thomas Curcio
Erin Michelitsch
Janis Astor del Valle
Meredith Hoddeson
Kathy Porche
Erica Tepedino
Michael Moray

And to all those who donated anonymously!

The Passage Gallery
The Purchase Performance Lab Festival is a night of short works in which graduating Theatre and Performance students stage their culminating explorations into dramatic literature, theatrical forms, and production techniques. The Purchase Performance Lab encompasses a full season of senior projects and mainstage productions within the BA in Theatre and Performance program.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Purchase Performance Lab team would like to extend our gratitude to the following people:

Jack Taburri for helping us in a multitude of ways and keeping everything in order, and all his help in making this process run as smoothly as possible.

Peter Sprague for all his help on not only these shows but ever show that goes up, he’s the real MVP.

Kat Taylor for her countless hours of time and work as our Production Stage Manager keeping things in order and making sure that everyone had what they needed.

Mark Turner for his skilled hand in tech and building, taking the time to make sure we had all the resources and materials we needed to create the worlds you see on stage.

UPCOMING SENIOR PROJECT

STOP KISS

Humanities Theater: Friday, December 7th & Saturday, December 8th
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)

TO BE SEEN TONIGHT

Trifles
Written by: Susan Glaspell
Directed by: Lacey Szerlip*
Starring:
Ashley Driscoll*
Andrada Angileri
Ashley Visker
Jack Boggan
Bernard Scudder

The Role of Della
Written by: John Wooten
Directed by: Alexandra Kaouris
Starring:
Sarahanne Grillo*
Rachel Kingsland*
Jessie Jones

Waiting For Antonio
Written by: Drew Palmer*
Directed by: Tina Curcio*
Starring:
Robert Reddington*
Sydney Gottesman*
Sean Church
Logan Riley Bruner
Alyssa Andrews

*- Denotes Senior Project
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!
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 I), and Syce 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 (Premiere 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

DIRECTOR’S NOTE

Even though Trifles is over a hundred years old, there are parts of it that resonate with the way our society is today. That’s something I noticed right away when I read the show and why I was drawn to it in the first place. The cast pointed out its relevance on our first day. We talked about how stated societal norms may have changed within the past hundred or so years, but that there is still systematic oppression for women. That oppression may come from different directions, and affect each of us uniquely, but there remains female solidarity against the unavoidable oppression that we feel.

This show is a political statement as well as a societal one. The current #metoo movement is only the latest incarnation of revolt against the accepted norms women have faced in society, a jab at the “old boys’ networks” and their “wink-wink” back room handshake deals that have kept women at a disadvantage. Trifles shows the unseen women’s networks, the unspoken bonds that have grown as a defense against the status quo.

As a director, the most important thing I want to achieve is for the audience to leave the theatre thinking. Thinking about the outmoded beliefs some in our society still harbor; beliefs that harken back to days of even more aggressively established limits. Thinking about the people they know who may still believe in a gender-based caste system that has no place in society.

So sit back and enjoy Trifles. But I hope that in the back of your mind, you think about what can be done to make this show become part of the past instead of our future.

-Lacey
CAST

ASHLEY DRISCOLL (Mrs. Hale): is a Theatre and Performance major, playwriting minor debuting in her Senior Project as well as her sixth show at SUNY Purchase. Some of her credits include: Company, Poker Gamr, Hell House, What I Did Last Summer, and The Rivals. After transferring to Purchase only three semesters ago she has had the utmost privilege of being a part of the THP community. Ashley would like to thank Purchase for helping her grow more in her career in Theatre and for introducing her to the many people that have become her friends along the way. She’d like to thank Lacey Szerlip, Samm Lynch and Quinland Thompson for all the hard work they put into this production of Trifles, none of the work onstage would have been possible without them. She hopes you enjoy the show as much as she enjoyed working on it with the fantastic cast and crew that was put together!

ANDRADA ANGILERI (Mrs. Peters): is a sophomore Theatre and Performance major. Her credits outside of Purchase include Happily Ever Once Upon (Red Riding Hood), Beat It, Beatnik (Assistant), 42nd Street (Ensemble), Como Se Dice Superhero (Superhero #2), Flashback (Penelope). Her credits inside of Purchase include Rivers Under the Earth (Francesca), Palazzo Manor (Harlequin). Her upcoming credits include The Terrifying (Raluka) right here at Purchase coming in the spring semester (February 28th-March 2nd). Her film credits include FILTERED (Permanent Character), Mantras of the Bedroom (Jeanie), and If It Had Not Been For the Lord (Lola) all done here on campus for THP and Film BFA students. She would like to thank her cast and crew members for being the completely inspiring and motivating people that they are that she is happy to say she can look up to.

ASHLEY VISKER (Mr. Hale): is a sophomore studying Theatre and Performance. She has been a part of several productions on campus including Austentation and the Red Theatre Purchase Collective’s shows as both a performer and this semester’s current co-managing director. She is so excited to be a part of her first Purchase Performance Lab Fest for her role as Mr. Hale in Trifles and has valued this experience for how much it has taught and developed her as an actor. She would like to thank the cast and crew team that she has gotten the privilege to work with on this project, and hopes the audience will also enjoy the experience of seeing it.

JACK BOGGAN (Sheriff Peters): is a junior at purchase with a double major in THP and History. You may have seen him last year in the senior projects Fool For Love (Martin) and Austentation (Mrs. Kitterly), but maybe you haven’t either so who knows. He wants to thank the cast and crew for an awesome production and hopes everyone enjoys the show.

BERNARD SCUDDER (County Attorney): is a junior Theatre and Performance major, who transferred last year from Marymount Manhattan. He is very grateful and honored to have been apart of this amazing production! He is believes that this is a timely piece of art that truly speaks to the world in which we live. Credits include Servant of Two Masters (Pantalones), Comedy of Errors (Anthipholus E.), Ragtime (Coalhouse), POV Fest Spring 2018, The Rundown with Robin Thede-BET. I want to thank the cast and crew! I also want to thank my family, Daisy and the M3-4 squad!

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 gagged 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
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 won’t 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

PRODUCTION TEAM

LACEY SZERLIP (Director): is a Senior in the Theatre and Performance major at SUNY Purchase. This is her debut as a director on Purchase campus. She was Assistant Director on the plays Olive and the Bitter Herbs and Moonlight in Magnolias with the Surf City Theatre Company in Los Angeles. Lacey would like to thank Ashley Driscoll for taking the chance on her as a director and being one of the most supportive senior project partners she could have asked for. She’d like to thank Samm Lynch for being an amazing Stage Manager and for understanding that Lacey’s Stage Manager brain may get in the way sometimes. And finally, she wants to thank the whole production team, cast and crew, for bringing her vision to the stage. She could not have done it without any of you. She thanks you all for coming to see Trifles and hopes that you enjoy the show!

SAMANTHA LYNCH (Stage Manager): is a Junior Theatre and Performance major concentrating in Stage Management. Past credits include Assistant Stage Manager for both The Trojan Women and To Be Heard. Trifles is her debut as Lead Stage Manager at Purchase college. She’s very excited for audiences to see this very well-developed show and homes everyone enjoys!

QUINLAND THOMPSON (Assistant Stage Manager): is a sophomore Theater and Performance Major concentration on Production. He was most recently seen at Purchase as Sumner in Men on Boats, and is the Scenic Designer for the upcoming senior project Stop Kiss. This is his first time Assistant Stage Managing, and he has had such a wonderful experience working with this cast and crew. Enjoy the show!

LOGAN RILEY BRUNER (Sound Designer): Previous Design credits include Pinchfist (Sound Design), Hand to God (Sound/Projection 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!

MICHAEL JORGE (Assistant Sound Designer): is a Senior Theater and Performance major. This is my 3rd show assistant sound designing. Previously He has worked on BLK GRL (Sound Designer), Fm (Sound/Projection Designer), A Study in Separation (Sound/Projection), Rivers Under the Earth/Peridelo (Sound design), Pinchfist (Sound Designer), Dutchman (Sound Designer), and Hazel Come home (Assistant sound designer), Hand To God (Assistant Sound Designer), this is our youth (Light Designer). He is so grateful to the Production team and cast for supporting him. Lastly, he would like to thank the cast and crew for being so hard working and determined during this process of bring to life a very moving piece.

MAGGIE DRAKE (Costume Designer): is a senior Costume Designer originally from Rochester, NY. Her past credits at Purchase College include: Blacktop Sky (Costume Design), The Bacchae of Euripides (ACD), The Hot L Baltimore (ACD), A Lie of the Mind (ACD), and Middletown (Wardrobe).
MITCHELL ANGELO (Prop-Master): is a Junior Creative Writing Major at SUNY Purchase. His past prop credits include Beauty And The Beast and The Music Man. This is his first time working on a senior project and he is delighted to provide props for his wonderful cast!

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)

EMILY NOMBUMOTO (Marketing)

ADAM HAMDY (Lighting)

ASHLEY VISKER (Lighting)

JACK BOGGAN (Dramaturg)

ADDISON JENKINS (Preliminary Lighting Designer)
PRODUCTION TEAM

ALEXANDRA KAORUS (Director): Alexandra Kaouris is a senior Playwriting/Screenwriting major with a minor in Theatre and Performance. Her past directing credits include Cereal by Andy Spector, and Out of Silence: The 1 in 3 Project. She would like to thank everyone involved in the festival, (Jack, Peter, Kat & Alex) for their hard work and dedication to the art of theatre, the seniors who are producing their senior projects in the festival, her team, (Adam Hamdy for being an awesome LD, and Andy Tatar for being her right hand man), Sarahanne Grillo & Rachel Kingsland for allowing her to direct their senior project and putting up with her crazy demands in rehearsals, Jessica Jones for jumping on the project late in the game and KILLING IT, Lenora Champagne for giving her the opportunity, and of course, her friends and family for supporting her throughout this process.

ANDREW TATAR (Stage Manager): Andy is a senior Playwriting & Screenwriting and Arts Management double major. Role of Della is the first show that he's ever stage managed. He's not sure if he'll ever do it again.

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.
CAST

DIRECTOR’S NOTE

When reading The Role of Della for the first time, I was taken away by the brevity of the piece. I knew it wasn’t as elaborate as the other plays in the Purchase Performance Lab, and figured I’d have an easier time tackling it.

Well, I was half right. The play demands a break from a comfort zone, just like when you walk into an audition room for the first time. “Am I prepared?” “Is this monologue good enough?” “Am I dressed for the part?” “Is my resume impressive?” Elizabeth is wondering these things, playing them over and over in her head like a busted vitrola, and the aggressive and bizarre demands from Emma pressure her to escape from her comfort zone. To show this “break”, I had to make my actors do pretty wild things in rehearsal; sometimes I would shout “act like a bird!” in the middle of a warm-up, just to give them a feel of what Elizabeth is going through.

Della may have the feel of a late night TV skit, but underneath is truth. In the ten minutes of watching the piece, the audience gets a glimpse of what women go through in an audition room. From the first judgement from a headshot and resume, to harshly criticizing performance ability. On top of that, is the fact that society is pinning women against each other in every profession, not just show business. They’re taught to hate and fight with one another—for what? Women should support each other, because we need that more than ever.

I hope you enjoy tonight’s performances by a group of talented and hard working individuals who have put their hearts and souls into each piece in this festival. Thank you.

-Alex

CAST

SARAHANNE GRILLO (Elizabeth): Sarahanne is a theatre and Performance major concentrating in acting. This is her senior project. This the first festival that she has been involved in on campus and is very excited to be a part of it. Her past college theatre credits include Lockdown: A new musical (still in progress). She would like to thank all of the other members of “The Role of Della” team especially Rachel Kingsland and Alex Kaouris whom she would not have been able to do this production without. She would also like to thank her fellow seniors, Rachel and Jessica for being so amazing. She would like to thank everyone involved in the Purchase Performance Lab especially Peter Sprague and producer Jack Tamburri. She would like to thank Lenora Champagne for her help, guidance, and support from the very beginning of this process. She hopes you enjoy her show along with the others in this festival.

RACHEL KINGSLAND (Emma): Rachel Kingsland is a transfer student and a senior BA Theater & Performance major here at Purchase College. This her second production she has been a part of here at Purchase. Last spring she did a stage reading of Out of Silence: One in Three Project. Favorite productions she’s been a part of outside of purchase is Ragtime, Winter's Tale,Comedy of Errors, Julius Caesar, Romeo & Juliet, and many others. She is very excited to finally put up her senior project and hope everyone enjoys the performances.

JESSIE JONES (Woman): Jessie is a Theatre and Performance major at SUNY Purchase. Previously at Purchase she has acted as Ruby Scott in Palazzo Manor. She earned an Associate’s Degree in Acting from Bergen Community College and previous roles there included Blanche in “Brighton Beach Memoirs,” Aunt Ev in “The Miracle Worker,” Mrs. Malaprop in “The Rivals,” Chorus in “The Clouds,” Mary in “Perfect Match,” Felicity in “23 is the Luckiest Number,” Anna Trumbull in “What I Did Last Summer,” Lieutenant Genevieve Marshall in “South Pacific,” and General Matilda Carthwright in “Guys and Dolls.” Favorite theater roles outside of school have included two outdoor Shakespeare productions, playing “Connie,” a gender-swapped Conrade in a 1920s production of “Much Ado About Nothing” with Babbling Brook Players, Kate in a modern production of “Taming of the Shrew,” also with Babbling Brook Players and playing Mary in “Quite Contrary” at the Barn Theatre’s Summer Showcase. She also enjoyed the roles she got to play at American Conservatory Theater and her time studying there over the summer, which was an experience she will never forget. Jessie has dabbled in film, but theater remains her true love. She would love to thank her beautiful and talented director on this production Alex, as well as her stage manager Andy, lighting designer Adam, and of course the wonderful, fantastic ladies she got to act with and help do their senior project, Rachel and Sarahanne. Honestly could not be working with nicer people! Thanks to anyone else who worked on the show! You are all amazing! Break legs everyone!