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An Actor on the Line: Becoming Judy Turner in A Chorus Line

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AN ACTOR ON THE LINE:
BECOMING JUDY TURNER IN
A CHORUS LINE

by
MORGAN MALLORY

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF FINE ARTS
IN
THEATRE ARTS

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO
MANKATO, MINNESOTA

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ABSTRACT

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This document is a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the master of Fine Arts degree in Musical Theatre. It is a detailed account of author Morgan Mallory's artistic process in creating the role of Judy Turner in the Minnesota State University, Mankato's production of *A Chorus Line* in the Fall of 2012. The thesis follows the actor's process beginning with the early production analysis in the first chapter. The actor then discusses the work in its historical context followed by a detailed journal of the acting process in chapters two and three. Chapter four is the post-production analysis and the fifth chapter gives an overview of Mallory's growth and process through her time at Minnesota State Mankato. Appendices and works cited are also included.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Completing my MFA degree is probably the most challenging activity I've tackled in my life. The best and worst moments of this journey have been shared with many people and I would like to thank a few by name—and hope that the unnamed can feel my appreciation as well. It has been a great privilege to spend several years in the Theatre and Dance Department at Minnesota State University, Mankato. From my first interview I felt part of the “family” and couldn't think of a better place to gain further education and experience.

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CHAPTER 1

EARLY PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

On October 4-6 and 11-14 of 2012, the Minnesota State University, Mankato Department of Theatre and Dance will perform *A Chorus Line*, written by James Kirkwood and Nicholas Dante, with music by Marvin Hamlisch and lyrics by Edward Kleban. This production of *A Chorus Line* is the opener for the main stage season and is to be performed on the Ted Paul stage. It is directed and choreographed by associate professor of theatre and dance, Paul Finocchiaro. This early production analysis will focus on the role of Judy Turner as portrayed by Morgan Mallory, from casting through rehearsal and performance.

A Chorus Line is a musical about dancers in New York City auditioning to get a job. At an audition for an upcoming Broadway production, Zach (a director) and his assistant Larry put the dancers through many combinations. Every dancer is desperate for work. After performing two audition pieces, many of the dancers are cut. After the first cut, 17 dancers remain literally on a white line, which presumably Zach has placed on the stage. Zach tells them he is looking for a strong dancing chorus of four boys and four girls. He wants to learn more about them and asks the dancers to introduce themselves. With reluctance, the dancers reveal their stories, one at a time. The stories generally progress chronologically from early life experiences through adulthood, and ultimately, to the end of a career for some. There are few stories that stick out in this

ensemble driven piece; often the ensemble works as one to tell their stories. The audition progresses through many phases and, in the end, the bulk of the characters are cut and four girls and four boys are cast. The show then finishes with everyone involved (including the dancers cut that told their stories on the line) dancing one final number, leaving the audience with the impression of a kicking chorus line that goes on forever.

A Chorus Line takes on one of the most fundamental themes explored throughout theatre: the quest to create unity from a jumble of individual backgrounds and aspirations. The ensemble all have very different stories but are united in their front to get the job. Although seemingly against each other in the beginning, all of the dancers are fighting for the same opportunity; they overcome their differences and become unified. This happens not only through their aspirations, but also through a mutual love of the art and business of dancing. This theme is seen often, such as in the “Hello Love Montage,” or when the cast confronts Zach after Paul hurts his knee. Here, the cast unites, regardless of their differences, and sings about their love of the job. In the end, the audience is reminded that people can indeed unite despite differences and can contribute to one purpose and project. This theme occurs again in the finale when, after most of the dancers are cut, everyone is introduced and dances as one collaborative unit.

The book writers wrote the play in an interesting style where almost every member of the cast is highlighted but not prominent in the plot. In many cases, each actor is a member of the ensemble as a whole as well as the role they are assigned and helps in multiple capacities. It is interesting to note that the characters in the play really don't interact with each other in the script. They interact with Zach the director one on

one, or interact with Zach as a unit, but they don't seem to talk to one another at all based on an initial reading of the script. Because of this, the actor feels that there may be two distinct characters involved throughout the duration of *A Chorus Line*, Judy Turner, the assigned role, and the actor's role as part of the ensemble.

This duality of character creates many interesting acting opportunities for the actress, and she is anxious to discover how she will make the character work for not only the director but in the show itself. As a solo character, the actress imagines that Judy will need to be memorable to the audience for individual reasons expressed through character work. The role of Judy isn't necessarily prominent and does not contain a solo song or lengthy monologue to allow for character development. Because of this, the actress anticipates a lot of repetition of gestures or movement to help establish the character as an individual away from the ensemble. Perhaps this can be shown through habitual gesture, or a costume piece.

In addition to characterizing Judy as an individual, the actor also plans on extensive character work placing Judy within the ensemble. The actor imagines the role of the ensemble to be one that involves a lot of desire and drive. The dancers all desire the job and work hard to get it. The ensemble is a group of people that are very different from each other but need to move the same way—especially when dancing as a group. The actor is unsure if the individual characters will be using traits specific to their character while “performing,” or if the ensemble members will mirror the styles of each other. However, she imagines that the dance numbers will look uniform when performed. Because of this uniformity, the actor also thinks that the ensemble will look

like each other while dancing—especially in the second act. The actor feels that the ensemble will have a chorus-type feel in both movement and sound. The actor is unaware how this will turn out in rehearsal but is anxious to see it develop.

Judy Turner is a girl that seems both anxious and a bit dumb. Based on an initial reading of the script, Judy is outspoken on topics that are often considered taboo and speaks her mind even when it makes the listener uncomfortable. In essence, Judy doesn't have a filter that prevents her from speaking whatever is going through her mind at the moment. People don't seem to want to be around her and she doesn't have any individual interactions with any of the other characters, excluding Zach. She doesn't interact with Zach other than asking him questions relating to the audition. Her socioeconomic status is unknown. However, she and other cast members mention that their unemployment is running out so it can be assumed that she is the cliché of a starving artist. She assumedly lives in New York but is originally from "El Paso. El Paso, Texas" (3). As a child she moved to St. Louis rather unexpectedly and that seems to have been a prominent moment in her life. The character is physically unaffected by this but is emotionally very affected. She tends to throw anger in the direction of her mother and she has a soft spot for her father.

There is not a concise description of what the character of Judy Turner should look like. There is a section in the song "And. . ." which allows the actor to choose a verse based on her physical appearance. Options include a prominently skinny character, a very tall character, or a stock verse that can be applied to body types that are neither. Likewise there are no costume descriptions or stage directions to indicate what Judy

should look or behave like. The actor appreciates the freedom allowed by not having specific character implications notated in the script and looks forward to exploration in rehearsal through exercises done in previous classes to discover traits specific to this character. The actor plans on discussing which physical characteristic to highlight in the song with the director.

The actor imagines the character of Judy to be very jumpy and someone who moves awkwardly. Because the actor tends to have a graceful fluidity to her movements habitually, she would like to attack this character in a manner that goes against habitual tendencies. To do this, the actor would like to incorporate a pigeon-toed characteristic with the character. This should not hinder movement during the dances, but may affect both the stance and walk of Judy. It is assumed that costumes will not prove to be any sort of barrier to the movement required. Judy probably isn't very familiar with her surroundings and this unfamiliarity will put an air of unease to the performance. The actor also notes that there are no major set changes or props in this show that may cloud movement choices. In fact, props aren't mentioned at all throughout the script, save a dance bag and a headshot that the actor assumes will be held in the first scene only.

In the script, Judy's relationships with members of the ensemble aren't mentioned. The actor imagines Judy wants to connect with the ensemble members but probably doesn't make many connections because of her awkward nature. It seems Judy's efforts to connect with other characters are often thwarted. In the first act she is told she is wrong by Bebe and ridiculed for forgetting her number during the audition. She is also put in her place by Zach a couple of times, most prominently when he tells her

that “being polite isn’t [his] concern” (6). The awkwardness around the ensemble remains constant throughout the show and seems to be an essential character trait for Judy. However, some characters do reach out to Judy throughout the show, including Kristine, who at one point confesses to also kissing a girl so Judy isn’t alone in her revelation. Another ensemble member who reaches out is Val at the end of Act II, when she prompts Judy to reveal her true desire, which is “to be a star” (62).

Judy has the same major objective as the ensemble—to get the job. The actor feels that the given circumstances of the script work fully to support the main objective and offer many obstacles that can be played while maintaining the integrity of the objective stated. There doesn’t seem to be a major discovery for the character, however, the actor is looking forward to progressing with character analysis hoping for a character arc. In the end, Judy does get cast by Zach, so there must be a reason for her getting the job. The actor imagines that Judy’s dance skills must be high and that she has to be charming as well in order to justify this occurring in the end of the play. The actor plans on an analysis of the script to find interesting choices to play. Judy does discover how much she loves dancing (like the rest of the ensemble) when Paul hurts his knee and the ensemble sings “What I Did For Love.” The actor wonders if this is a major discovery and is anxious to see how this scene will be blocked to reflect not only the individual character’s feelings about the event, but those of the ensemble as a whole.

The actor tends to be very physical, and she would like to incorporate any and all previous training into the character that she can—including movement defined by Laban technique. She will also be using her previous dance experiences, not only to learn the

choreography required but to infuse both Judy and her participation in the ensemble with an air of being a professional dancer. The actor does not believe that any of her own mental, physical or emotional dealings will have a negative impact on the character and hopes that her own prowess will be able to shine through while performing. The actor does have a fear that her ballet training may hinder her growth as the character of Judy, who seems to be the opposite of graceful, but welcomes the challenge.

Because this chapter is about pre-production, the concept for the show remains unknown. The actor feels it will be a normal attack on the play. The set is very simple, the costumes not too extravagant and the blocking will be mostly dancing which will allow the audition to be the focus of this production. The director has also decided to use most of the original choreography from both the original Broadway version in 1975 and the Broadway revival in 2006. This choreography will not only reflect the time period, but will also keep the production grounded and easy to identify to audience members. The director's concept for the character is yet to be determined but the actor is excited to collaborate and discover the requirements.

The character analysis of the actor supports the overall production concept by embracing the simple nature of the script. The actor may need to change the interpretation of the main objective to fit within the scope of this production rather than the overall desire of the character, but that is still to be determined. Finocchiaro has proved to be a director who allows the actor to embrace fully any rehearsal techniques needed to find correct character choices with steady, positive reinforcement. The actor feels collaboration for this project will be both easy and a pleasure. There is a mutual

passion for dance and this production between the actor and Finocchiaro, and the actor looks forward to the rehearsal and research process.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

This chapter will be a brief study into the conception and production of *A Chorus Line* and its historical perspective. It is hoped that with this knowledge the actor, Morgan Mallory, will be able to produce a strong character, explore themes and develop tactics for her upcoming performance of the role of Judy Turner in the production of *A Chorus Line* at Minnesota State Mankato. The actor hopes that this knowledge will prevent her from simply recreating Judy as other actors have portrayed her, and allow her to find acting levels that are internally, rather than externally motivated. Mallory also hopes to use any applicable history and themes from the play to help motivate tactic choices and, ultimately, the objectives of the character.

A Chorus Line was a groundbreaking musical in a lot of ways. The production challenged many devices set forth by the genre previous to its conception. *A Chorus Line* is often called an “anti-musical” because it defied most conventions of the American musical (Kroll). For starters, traditionally it lacks scenery beyond the use of a few mirrors and a simple white line across the stage. Ironically, the setting is vague throughout the show—the theatre does not have a distinct name and The audience never knows the name of the show for which the characters are auditioning. It doesn’t have prominent costumes other than the leotards and tuxedos for the finale. It is often performed without an intermission and, maybe most importantly, there is no star performer. Truly an ensemble based piece, the characters involved all contribute to the

plot, reflect crucial themes and each have a moment to shine.

A Chorus Line opened Off Broadway at The Public Theater on April 15, 1975. Advance word had created such a demand for tickets that the entire run sold out immediately. Producer Joseph Papp moved the production to Broadway, and on July 25, 1975, it opened at the Shubert Theatre, where it ran until April 28, 1990. *A Chorus Line* was an instant hit, receiving 12 Tony Award nominations and winning 9 of them, in addition to the 1976 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. It ran for 6,137 performances becoming the longest-running production in Broadway history. It remains the fifth longest-running Broadway show to this day.

This groundbreaking production was mostly conceived by Michael Bennett, a choreographer and director who had been involved with many productions previous to this one. Bennett is considered one of Broadway's all-time greatest choreographers by many. He was born in Buffalo on April 8, 1943, and his career as a dancer began in the chorus of *Subways Are For Sleeping* (1961), went on to *Here's Love* (1963) and ended with *Bajour* (1964). For a dancer, this was not much of a career, but as a choreographer and director Bennett found his place within the scope of the theatrical world. He first became a choreographer in 1966 with the short-lived *A Joyful Noise*, for which he earned his first Tony nomination. Next came *Henry Sweet Henry* (1967), *Promises, Promises* (1968) and *Coco* (1969), all of which gave Bennett more nominations. After many nominations without much success, Bennett became involved with Stephen Sondheim's smash hit, *Company* (1970). Sadly, for the fifth year in a row, Bennett had another nomination without winning the coveted Tony award. Finally, he was successful with

Follies in 1971. He won a Tony award for the work, and some feel that the dance for the number “Who's That Woman?” was arguably the best number in Broadway history at the time (Mandelbaum, 32). Two years later, another Tony for choreography was awarded to Bennett for *Seesaw*.

At this high point of his career, Bennett shifted to a new project that focused on dancers. Throughout the previously mentioned musicals, Bennett created a style of choreography that remained unique to each particular show. At the top of his form with *A Chorus Line*, he incorporated what he called “cinematic staging”(Mandelbaum, 45). There was constant jumping or cutting by the characters as the audience's attention was shifted from one figure to another as the plot developed. The choreography for the show was pivotal to the plot and was as visually stunning as it was challenging for the actors involved. Equally as effective in throwing focus, creative and dramatic was Bennett's use of mirrors in the show. It was musical staging that went beyond anything other musicals had ever presented (Stempel, 156).

Instead of a standard plot, *A Chorus Line* had what might be called a strong staging scheme. At an audition for an upcoming Broadway production, a director and a choreography assistant choose seventeen dancers. The director tells them he is looking for a strong dancing chorus of four boys and four girls, and he wants to learn more about them. They are then told to talk about themselves. From there, a minimalistic plot is unfolded and is centered around the individual lives of the characters. They contribute stories as a whole, based on certain themes such as youth, sex and how they feel about their career choice.

A Chorus Line actually emerged from several workshop sessions that Michael Bennett held with fellow Broadway dancers. They met with Bennett after rehearsals for various other shows and jobs to talk about their personal and professional lives. These sessions were tape-recorded, written down, and a musical libretto was put together using the stories recorded. He explained to his fellow dancers in a tone that clearly captured his passion and excitement, "I really want to talk about us. I'm talking about an idea that I have for a show. It's really about examining a group of people in society, and that's us, Broadway's actors. I'm also thinking, we're pretty interesting, and I think that maybe there's a show there. It should be called *A Chorus Line*"(Viagas, 35). He eventually started paying them one-hundred dollars a week for their participation. Further, it was Bennett and his collaborators' intention to not only give voice to the dancers they interviewed but to create a piece in which the characters would represent and acknowledge the contributions and sacrifices of the thousands of chorus dancers who sacrificed their own ambitions and careers to support the star of the show, all for the love of their craft. Playwright and novelist James Kirkwood and former dancer Nicholas Dante assembled the book for the show. Marvin Hamlisch composed the music and Ed Kleban wrote the lyrics. Neil Simon was also called in to do some un-credited book doctoring, adding some of the great one-liners (78).

The workshops began in a dance studio. Poetic perhaps, but Michael Bennett wanted to make the dancers comfortable when talking. They started out with a warm-up routine and moved on to combinations, sweating together and dancing together to create a comfortable cocoon where they could reveal themselves and their stories. After Bennett

had taught and danced alongside them, he invited them to sit and talk. He made sure to tape the stories told and the dancers talked long into the night. This happened for a series of nights in January of 1974. Subsequent taping sessions took place in February, March and April, each following the same pattern of dancing, talking and divulging. Some tape sessions were taken outside of this protective cover after the process as more dancers were brought on to the project. After the taping sessions concluded, Bennett moved forward by translating the ideas expressed in the tapes into a work-shopping process (Stempel, 97).

In the beginning of the workshops, there was no music. Bennett and the dancers would improvise to drumbeats and pure percussion. The first sets of workshops focused solely on the dancing. Many of them were working second jobs in order to survive. Many times Bennett would put the dancers through singing and acting exercises, pushing them to create character and work with musicality. The book about the show, entitled On the Line, states that “he was finally doing what dancers had never heard of before. He was asking how we felt” (113). Through these character exercises and the consistent string of dancing, Bennett won the trust of the dancers, which would be pivotal in the second series of workshops. After a brief hiatus and an initial round of auditions, the project picked back up again in January of 1975, this time with a rough script and libretto. Many of the dance and song sequences such as “At the Ballet” and “Hello Twelve, Hello Thirteen, Hello Love” were expanded and fixed throughout this process. New dancers were added and some were cut, leaving everyone involved a bit on edge. Drug use became prominent and tensions started to take toll on the dancers involved. In

February of 1975 the show was pitched, performed and moved on to rehearsals and previews. Finally, in July of 1975, the show transferred from Off-Broadway to Broadway and became a huge success (Flinn, 89).

There is some controversy surrounding the methods Bennett used to create the musical. As *A Chorus Line* started making strides and gaining momentum, the dancers were approached with a contract and told they must sign it to continue on with the project. This contract called for each of the participants to receive \$1.00 for the right to use their stories in the production. They were also only offered a single percentage point of the royalties for those at the tapings. Many of the dancers were not happy about this, but signed the contract not only out of loyalty to the show but also because they needed the job. As a director, Bennett was fairly manipulative with his actors. Many of his methods used when looking for specific emotions to be portrayed on stage were mentally unsafe for the dancers. The dancers were extremely loyal to him but also admitted he was quite erratic, often yelling and screaming to get his point across. One example mentioned Bennett telling a dancer that he outright hated them, and challenged them to prove him wrong (Brantley, 34). Another moment is when Bennett faked a knee injury to evoke tears and despair from the dancers in order to have them recreate the moment on stage. Also, Bennett went through a time where he would shift the dancers that were “hired” at the end of the play, just to keep the dancers on edge and not knowing whether they would continue to be part of the project. Despite all the controversy, the production became very successful and the dancers remained loyal to its creator (Flynn, 101).

The character of Judy Turner was originally played by Patricia (Trish) Garland.

Garland was very close to her sister Jacki, and there was a bit of sibling rivalry between the two of them. Growing up there wasn't enough money for both sisters to take dance classes, so Trish Garland would learn to dance by watching and imitating her sister, Jacki, who was taking the classes. They worked to pay for the classes by performing at county fairs and by cleaning the dance studio. From an early age, their mother encouraged them to follow their dreams, regardless of occupation choice. Both choosing to pursue ballet, they went to New York to audition for the New York City Ballet, where Jacki was accepted but Trish was not, due to her age. After this initial disappointment, Trish Garland went on to dance with many prominent ballet companies, and was first cast on Broadway in *Cabaret* when she was seventeen. She was initially cast not only because of her dance talent but because of her tall height. From there her career took off, and she met Michael Bennett when she was hired to dance in *Follies* on Broadway. Both of the Garland sisters were in the initial taping sessions for *A Chorus Line*, but Bennett only wanted one of them in the show. He went on to make them audition for their own role in the production. This caused some turmoil between the sisters, and they both struggled with the task of winning the chance to tell their (now combined) stories in the show. Trish won the role by performing Jacki's monologue and story (Viagas, 58).

Themes in *A Chorus Line* are perhaps three-fold. It first and foremost highlights the performer's desire to get a job because of financial insecurity. Throughout the production there are many references to financial need from the characters and an overtone of desperation to get the job for which they are auditioning. It is also a social commentary on the status of dancers on Broadway during this time. This commentary

revolves mostly around the manipulation of the dancers by the director. Thirdly, it is also a true showcase of many different backgrounds and people coming together to create a stunning final product—the “show.” The actor feels that all three of these themes are strongly reflected in the character of Judy, and looks forward to portraying them throughout the piece.

The actor finds the history surrounding the play both helpful and informative when making choices about how she will present the character of Judy. Although Judy is not prominent and the other characters on stage don’t necessarily affect the actor’s character directly, they do affect how she will be portrayed. Because Judy is such a minor character, the actor imagines that any interaction will be because of interest in furthering objective rather than enlightenment.

The assumed staging of the original production is interesting to consider on the actor’s part as well. The actor thinks the presentational style that was used in the first production would be very appropriate for this staging of *A Chorus Line*. The actor plans on dancing being a huge part of the blocking and looks forward to seeing how the staging is handled because of the numerous dance numbers. She imagines that in a style appropriate for this show, the actors will not leave the stage. Instead, the actors will be lit in ways that will allow them to be on the stage but not actually part of the scene at all times. She also thinks that the concept of having the onstage actors being active in the process of revealing the individual stories of the characters in front of the audience is interesting but is unaware if the director will choose to use that during performance.

The themes explored in the play (need for the job, social commentary on the

treatment of dancers at the time) ring very solidly throughout the actor's character. In the spirit Bennett intended, the actor plans on making her desires known to the audience very plainly from her first entrance and will continue to sustain those desires in a visible way throughout the performance. She wishes she could more fully incorporate the social commentary aspect, but feels that it is better expressed through other characters involved in the play.

CHAPTER 3

JOURNAL

August 28

Goodness, a thesis! I guess I feel a little overwhelmed at the beginning of this journey. I knew when the season was announced last year at Minnesota State University, Mankato that I would like to be part of *A Chorus Line*. I really wanted it to be part of my educational experience. To have it be my capstone role is just a dream come true.

I started life as a dancer. I danced from the time I was three until I was thirteen. Then I picked it up again at fifteen and discarded it again at sixteen for voice lessons and acting. I've tried to take classes during every semester of college—all 13 undergraduate semesters and now 5 graduate semesters. I guess you could say that dance really shaped my life. I don't remember a time in my youth without at least three dance classes a week. Competitions were on weekends and I would travel great distances to compete with whichever team I was on at the time. I remember competitions being scary when I was younger and not understanding why I was cut from an audition.

My first recollection of an audition was for the *Nutcracker Ballet* when I was six. I was more interested in smiling at myself in the mirror than I was dancing, but the auditioneer was patient and could see that I was eager to please the adults. The other kids seemed so scared, so timid to come forward and perform the dance. I probably showed him the dance at least fifteen times—sometimes even coming forward when it wasn't my turn to help out the other students. I don't think I fully grasped the concept of auditioning

at this point, but got the role and went on to perform with the ballet company for five years. How quickly things turn. When I turned eleven I became too tall to dance with the ballerinas and to continue my ballet career. It was a crushing blow.

But I kept auditioning throughout life. Dance teams and show choirs and musicals—anywhere I could dance and tell a story by moving my body. It seems that all of my big moments in life started with an audition. I think this is what drew me to being part of *A Chorus Line* in the first place—it's an audition. Their entire lives are put on display during an audition. It's a beautiful irony. I'm excited and anxious to get started on not only the show but the exploration of the role I was assigned: Judy Turner. It's almost like going back to my comfort zone. Dancing feels like coming home.

Tonight we had two gentlemen visit the cast who are very familiar with *A Chorus Line*. Michael Gruber was in the closing cast for the original Broadway production as well as the 2006 revival. Tony Vreiling was in both national tours. It was amazing to listen to these actors and to hear about how much the show meant to them. As we were listening, a few things they said stuck out to me. The first thing they mentioned was about the passion and history this show brings with it. Although circumstances aren't the same currently, the auditioning process remains just as gut-wrenching and hard to go through. This show serves as a commentary for all people in the performing arts—provides a snapshot into how we feel about our profession and the unrealistic expectations we give ourselves. Tony mentioned that when the cast sings “What I Did For Love,” they are actually saying “What I Do For Art.” This beautifully rings true and I imagine many actors feel the same way about singing those lyrics. How would an artist

feel if they could no longer do something they are so passionate about? This idea is definitely going to affect the way I look at that song in performance.

The other thing that stuck out to me was when Gruber and Vreiling brought out a photo of the line and went through character by character and gave some insight into the characters themselves. What a treat. They solidified the fact that Judy is a bit crazy, but they also said that she was also genuine; her crazy demeanor and lines weren't because she was acting or putting up a front. She's just a nice person who doesn't filter what she says or how it comes out of her mouth. I had been planning on playing the character along these lines but to hear their validation was comforting. It makes me excited to see in what directions Judy will take in the future.

Having these visitors was a great experience. It was the perfect way to start the journey as a team.

August 30

We've started rehearsals with both dancing and singing, which is new based on my experience here at Minnesota State Mankato. Usually when starting a musical we dig in and get very familiar with the musical score, then add the dancing later on, along with memorizing and staging. However, director Paul Finocchiaro is starting us with dancing right away. This is a wise choice—the dance we initially learned at auditions is becoming the opening number; this dance is extremely challenging. I remember thinking at auditions that the dance was the hardest I had done at this college. It also appears that

we have people in the cast who have never danced before, so the choice to dance early on in the rehearsal process is really good.

I really enjoy the opening number. I'm not sure how Judy will be during it but she starts out by declaring she has forgotten her audition number, so I'm assuming it's going to be in a comical direction. The dance is very difficult. Having to perform the dance in character heels is hard too. I'm counting on a lot of outside rehearsal time to make it all come together seamlessly.

The music in the score gives me mixed feelings. Based on previous research, I was expecting the music to be mostly unison and easy to read, but the timing is complex and the words are very intricate. There are also a lot of instances where the chorus splits into parts, which I wasn't expecting.

Probably the biggest challenge I'm finding with the music is the patter-like manner in which it's written. The music for Judy is written mostly all in speak-singing, which I feel insufficient in executing. She doesn't really hold a pitch for very long and rapidly moves through her solo for comedic effect. I appreciate the challenge this brings me—I am most comfortable singing in an operatic style with a lot of round vowels that provide me with a lot of opportunities to open my mouth and let the sound penetrate. Here, however, the words move very fast and the notes are almost barked out to the point of being overwhelming. During the rehearsal tonight, I unabashedly declared to music director Nicholas Wayne that the part has left me “super stressed out,” and he jokingly said that it stressed out every Judy from its creation.

The patter doesn't just lie in the Judy solos, however. It is present also in the "One Montage" there is an extended period where the chorus splits into four parts and speaks through various dance movements on a set rhythm. This is going to be extremely difficult to memorize. I'm just hoping that the moves match so it becomes easier while we are dancing.

Something I really appreciate about working with Finocchiaro is his consideration of his actors. He really strives to let the actors go early from rehearsals—especially in the early stages of music and routine learning. This really prevents burnout later on down the road and I find it extremely helpful. This week has been no exception. I find myself leaving rehearsals earlier than planned and am very grateful for the extra sleep—this show is very exhausting already! I can't imagine what it will be like to do run-throughs.

September 3

We've moved on from the opening number into learning the big dance number "Goodbye Twelve, Goodbye Thirteen, Hello Love." This number is extremely complex and is taking a lot of time to learn. It's comprised of four different sections—and there are many small dance breaks in between that are interspersed by solos from the line.

I really enjoy this style of dance. It's very seventies—disco inspired and has a very Fosse type feel with lots of body isolations. Bob Fosse created a stylized form of jazz that included not only a sensual feel but also body isolations such as shoulder rolls and turned in knees. For example, in this dance, our arms are almost always behind us in a typical "holding a log" fashion, and the girls have lots of hip isolations in their

movements. This style of dance is perfect for this song—the characters are all recounting their adolescent experiences and these almost all contain some sort of sexual reference.

Although I enjoy this style of dance, I don't feel strong at it. I'm a very aggressive dancer but I'm better at contemporary styles and ballet, not necessarily modern and isolations. I'm finding the steps challenging. I also find that certain muscles such as my neck and arms are extremely sore after practices.

It's interesting to think about Judy having these types of experiences. I see her as always being a bit awkward with relationships but also being sought out by peers because of her candid nature. I like to think Judy is a likable character. In this montage, Judy has her solo appearances. The words are coming easier but the music is still difficult. I'm getting closer to nailing the notes now that memorization has become a priority. Finocchiaro is also very helpful with vocal patterns and where the tone should go up and down to provoke audience response.

September 4

While continuing on with the "Hello Love" montage, I find it interesting to look at Judy's improvisation. There is a point where she gets to mime a story she's telling while the other characters sing behind her. I've done some research on previous Judys and how the character is portrayed in current productions, but have purposefully not looked into what story they chose to mime so I could discover mine on my own. After some thought outside rehearsal, I decided to tell a story about a walk through a park.

After trying it out in rehearsal tonight, I think it works well and also tells a little about the character of Judy.

Judy likes to take walks and look at different people. I imagine she finds people absolutely fascinating and wants to learn everything she can about everyone she meets. Although she's awkward, I think she's very friendly—but she's also candid and frank with her observations. In this particular story, she notices a window washer in the park high on a building. She finds this very interesting and stops to watch him for a while, wondering if he is afraid of heights. Then, she notices a beautiful bird in a tree on the opposite side of her view. After observing the bird for a few moments, she becomes immediately scared for the window washer who she has determined is probably afraid of heights because everyone is (at least a little bit). Looking back at the window washer she almost screams at him to not look at the bird but discovers that he has noticed the bird as well. He loses his footing on the scaffold and falls to the ground. Judy then exclaims that it was the first time she's seen a dead body.

I'm struggling a little bit with the demeanor of Judy during this story. She obviously knows that it's a bad thing that's happened, but the lines don't really slow down enough for her to recite it with emotion. Because of this, I'm thinking Judy is also child-like, both in her approach to life and to relationships.

September 6

I came across an interesting piece of material in my research. In the original script, Judy mentions that her real name is Lana Turner. In the revival, they changed the

name to Tina Turner. It's an interesting switch. I haven't found any explanation for why this happened, but I wonder if it's a time reference. I wasn't familiar with Lana Turner until I looked her up but I think everyone is pretty familiar with Tina Turner. The Judys I've watched seem to really take off with dance moves during the line delivery—it's fun! It would be a great way to continue the idea of Judy not having a filter and saying whatever comes to mind, whether it's appropriate or not. I like the change and hope to incorporate it; it would make the line delivery a bit easier on my end.

September 7

After talking with Finocchiaro, we decided to leave the line as written—Lana Turner. I have been struggling with making this line credible but Finocchiaro suggested that I try delivering it like I'm making it up or lying about the situation. This has made it a lot easier and more credible in my opinion. It makes sense within the context as well. Judy is in the middle of the line and has been listening to everyone up to her have successful introductions that all have included a second name of some kind. I think she would more than likely try to find one to fit in, but since she doesn't have one she makes one up. Up to this point, the time period for the show has been ambiguous, but now that we are shooting for the 1960s-'70s the reference makes sense and is properly placed within the scope of the show.

Finding Judy's stance for the line has been a process. Mostly Judys have stood with one foot turned in to indicate her being a little "off" in general. I agree with this choice and have turned in my right foot because my ankle feels stronger on that one, and

I anticipate holding the pose for a long time. I also am trying to turn in my left foot but have natural turnout from many years of ballet, so I struggle to maintain that one turned in even for short periods of time. The hands were a little more complicated. There isn't a consistency from Judy to Judy that I've been researching, so I've placed one hand on my hip and the other is to my side with a flexed hand. I'm not in love with it, but hope it will evolve as we continue to run material.

September 11

Judy is a neurotic mess. I think I've made a breakthrough and I really like the direction this character is taking. As we've been blocking the show and moving through the dance numbers, I've noticed myself fidgeting a lot. The fidgeting is mostly necessary to keep blood flowing to my feet but is becoming a character trait. I find myself playing with my clothes and twitching my feet a lot. It helps me stay turned in and pigeon-toed and also helps communicate nervousness—which is obviously present in the audition situation she finds herself in. I don't want to overdo these new tics or upstage fellow actors, so it's something I'll have to watch to keep in check, but it's a fun new development.

I've also solidified my arms in the signature pose. The right arm will go on the hip as most Judys do and the left will be fidgeting with my leg covering. I'm guessing I'll be wearing either tights or pants for the show, so Judy will play with the fabric to indicate her mood. It's a nervous tic that will be fun to play.

I'm struck by how interesting Judy is. She's becoming a rounded and developed character mostly through play in the rehearsal process. I feel fortunate that I have a character that doesn't require a lot of research—I feel most of the research I've done has been show focused and not necessary to develop Judy. It's a delight to simply attend rehearsal, play, and to find the character. I attribute most of the "play" mentality to the Acting Techniques class I've taken previously, and find it helpful in this situation. The character herself isn't prominent enough in the show to prohibit this attack of discovery, and I find myself loving rehearsal more and more each day.

The neurotic nature also plays well with the story of the show itself. Ultimately, Judy is cast. Why is this? Previously, I was thinking it could be because of her friendly, child-like, candid nature. But now I also think it's because she's just an amazing dancer. She does come off as a bit abrasive, but I imagine her almost OCD-like nature means that she is a well-trained dancer. She probably has flawless technique because she couldn't stand it if she didn't. It is playing well. Judy is awkward and unsure until she begins dancing, and then she is confident and flawless.

September 13

There are rumblings of negativity throughout the cast as of late. It's becoming a monotonous stream of cleaning and running the numbers—which is expected for this type of production, but it's really starting to wear on the cast. The show itself is physically exhausting but it is starting to come together.

Most of the complaining comes from the inconsistency of the dance captains. Both the performing and non-performing dance captains are essential in the rehearsal process, but are numerous in their approaches to both cleaning and teaching. There are a lot of them in general. I don't think I've ever been part of production that has had so many performing dance captains and non-performing dance captains. It's a lot of information from a lot of mouths that all seem to contradict each other. The lack of information on top of a cast that doesn't know the dance is frustrating. I wonder if a smaller number of more proficient captains would have been more helpful in this instance.

For example, my biggest concern is that the captains are majorly modern dancers and can't count the rhythms for the steps. The show, in general, is very stylistically jazz, and I feel relies heavily on the 8 (sometimes 6) count structure within the meter. When cast members ask the captains which counts a certain step comes one, they answer with sentences such as "I don't know the counts, it's on this tone in the music" or "it comes after this." Because of this, cast members feel the need to speak up and give answers, and the rehearsal as a whole becomes a mess of yelling, explaining, and relearning. Also, the dance captains don't have a vocal presence in the middle of the actors and are often overshadowed. I'm trying very hard to not speak up and correct or give input so I don't add to the chaos.

The beginning number is becoming more and more polished. I'm finding using Judy's tics during this scene works really well. I also try to make her cheerful and likable

throughout. We've started stringing together the first act and it's exciting to see the show take shape.

September 14

We've started learning the combinations for both the "One Montage" and the finale. These combinations are simple in their structure but are rigid in their execution. It's reminding me a lot of my drill team days. I'm really enjoying them—I like dance combinations that don't leave a lot of room for individual interpretation and, in this case, the entire ensemble is trying to look like one another. The angles of the heads, arms and legs should be the same all across the line. The cast is finding keeping the line straight a little difficult, especially because we all take different sized steps.

The cast is also having some difficulty with the hats. We use hats for both of these numbers (the combinations are identical, we are just performing them facing different directions or in different configurations). During the number, we are required to put the hat into the hair on specific counts and then onto our head on a specific count, and it's difficult to keep them all together as a cast.

It's interesting to dance next to one another in the line. I feel like the cast was unaware as to how close we actually stand together on "the line" until we started trying to dance in the same space. It's really tight to get the movements in there, especially in some of the smaller rehearsal rooms. I'm hoping we have more space to spread out on the stage but know that we probably will stay tight to create the illusion desired by Finocchiaro. The synchronized effect of all arm angles and body angles is magical.

The kick line is no easy feat. Although we don't execute a lot of kicks, I find it tiring and difficult to sustain. My stamina has definitely weakened since my drill team days. I am happy that the kicks don't come above the waist—I think this will help keep the number uniform and easily performed by the entire cast.

Another interesting thing has occurred within the past few days and I wanted to journal about how much it's changed my process of finding character. Finocchiaro took headshots for each member of the cast to be used as props in the show. Because they would be used for our characters, he requested that we dress like our characters with both what we were wearing and how we styled our look. It was an interesting exercise in character building. Usually when building a character I tend to focus on back story or emotions felt, even physicalizations of movement. But to take a step back and focus on what Judy would do if she were getting a professional headshot taken was interesting. Because Judy is an interesting character, I went totally against what I personally would have done in the same situation. I chose a small non-intrusive pattern to wear and only pinned one side of my hair back. It's not the choice I would make for a headshot but after seeing the picture, it's most certainly Judy. Imagining characters doing "every day" and somewhat mundane things is something I'll use in the future.

September 17

Another major Judy discovery today. I've been able to sustain the awkward-and-yet-lovable character through most scenes but tonight we worked on the knee scene with the character Paul. In this scene, one of the other characters (Paul) falls during the

audition and injures his knee, prompting a response from his peers. Most of the cast tends to act in a scared manner. Initially I had Judy hang back in the crowd but it hasn't felt right when we've run it. Tonight we were missing another character while we worked the scene a couple of times, so I went with a gut feeling and went in closer to investigate when Paul fell. It was a good discovery. It seems right that Judy would want to be the first on the scene to investigate. Although, when Paul starts to cry from pain, I move away from the crowd. This is more an actor choice than a character choice but I think it helps balance the stage nicely and I'm able to motivate it by her not wanting to hear someone in pain. I imagine after seeing someone fall off a building, any amount of pain would be difficult to watch.

September 18

First run-through of Act I was mostly smooth. It seemed to go by fairly fast and I was surprised when we began the final number that it had arrived so quickly. I imagine the act will run in under an hour, which makes me wonder if the show really needs an intermission. I'm grateful for any chance to get off my feet though and I think the cast feels the same. Tonight during the number "Nothing," the entire cast exits the stage and we all nearly collapsed when we exited. It's difficult sustaining a standing position during all the solos during the first act! The challenge of not moving to the point of upstaging the main action is going to be brutal. There are a few bursts of movement in "At the Ballet" and during the "Hello Love Montage," but my feet are very sore this evening.

I'm having a hard time as of late differentiating Judy from the person standing next to her in the line, Bebe. It seems that when I make a character choice or decide to react in a certain way to something happening in a scene, the actor playing Bebe adopts the choice as one for her character as well. It's become extremely apparent when we both introduce ourselves—we are both fidget, use the same inflection in our voices, use nervousness as our tic, and she even has started saying “okay” at the end while backing into the line like I do. I'm not annoyed by this situation at all but am finding other character choices to distinguish Judy from her. Normally I don't think it would matter but, because the characters are next to each other in the line, I would like to be different, especially in the beginning part of the play so the characters don't get confused. I think the next time we run the act I'll try more to be uninhibited and “without a filter” as Judy introduces herself to see if she comes off as a different personality than her peer.

September 19

The first run of Act II wasn't nearly as smooth as the run of Act I. The dance numbers aren't difficult in this act—in fact it's a little bit of a break physically because we don't stand for nearly as long. The problem with this act is that we are essentially singing the same song twice but in different configurations. The same goes for our movement. Putting the singing and dancing together for the pieces is difficult because the dance step falls on a different words depending on which piece we're performing.

Also, there's a section of the “One Montage” that is spoken in rhythm that has been difficult to memorize. It's a series of hand movements that don't necessarily

coincide with the movements we are executing. On top of that, the cast is in four lines with each line doing the choreography on a different count. I've been spending a lot of time outside rehearsals trying to get the lyric down with the movement. The rhythms don't match and it isn't coming easier with repeated practice. I'm hoping it solidifies soon, or that maybe we can just go to counting during that part instead.

Other than those difficulties, the act goes fairly quickly and has lots of opportunities for Judy to be herself. We've worked the knee scene a lot more and I feel like the changes are really working. The dialogue after the knee scene takes place is getting a bit heavy and stagnant, so director Finocchiaro asked me to use some of my lines as comedic effect to help lighten the mood. I've been playing with tone and pace of line delivery to see if I can get the results requested. Judy has a tendency to talk fast (her music was written that way), so tempo changes in speech really work with this character.

It is nice to be working with such a professional cast and crew. I've really enjoyed working within the scope of all the shows during my time at Minnesota State Mankato, but this cast is especially tight knit and supportive of each other. The cast remains quiet backstage and when they aren't actively performing, and the stage management is really top notch. The caliber of the people involved in this production really set the tone for productive rehearsals.

September 20

We've now worked all of the acts and started into runs. I'm feeling really

good about the direction my character is taking throughout this process. I feel a bit awkward in some spots, but for the most part Judy is playing nicely and I'm discovering new levels every time I'm in rehearsal.

Now that we've begun running the show, most nights relationships have started to form within the characters of the show. Mostly the characters in this show don't really get opportunities to play off each-other because they're either singing as one entity or addressing Zach. There are a few moments where we do get to interact with each other, however, and the relationships that are forming on stage are interesting.

The characters get to interact with whomever they are standing next to in the line (without upstaging). Judy and Bebe interact quite a bit and, unsurprisingly, are like each other in many ways. When Judy becomes confused, Bebe often helps her out by explaining things or making sure she understands by asking her questions. Richie, on the other hand, can't stand Judy. He often shoots her nasty looks to which she responds to with kindness and questioning. Mostly the actor playing Richie stays stationary throughout the show though, so Judy doesn't get much interaction from that side of the line.

During the dance breaks there is more time for interaction. In the beginning number, Maggie and Judy team up and talk for a bit about the big stars, Sheila and Bobby. I've decided that Judy, being neurotic and obsessive about dancing, probably knows about all the major dancers in the audition circuit at the time in New York. That would include both Sheila and Bobby, who are the most experienced of the dancers, and so she is in awe of them and their skills. This is especially apparent with Bobby, whom

Judy tap dances with later on in the show. Another character that Judy interacts with on a regular basis is Val in the final scene. Val speaks out for Judy when she admits she wants to be a star and Judy looks up to Val and her confidence.

These interactions are interesting to me. This production is different in its set-up as far as the script goes. It seems anti-climactic for the characters to not have any written dialogue where their plots are forwarded by interacting with each other and yet, as a whole, the show works really well. I've never been in a production that is written in this fashion. The only character that Judy interacts with on a one on one basis that's written in the script is Zach. I don't think that Judy and Zach really have a relationship worth noting. She talks back to him in an unabashed sort of way but doesn't know anything about him. He in turn doesn't know a lot about her, and really the only impression I get is that he realizes she's socially awkward and doesn't know what to say most of the time. It's an interesting process working through the interactions and I'm not sure if the character grows or decays over the course of the show based on her relationships. She does get the job though, so I suppose her storyline gets finished regardless of relationships or the lack thereof. Also, it's interesting to note that the only relationship that helps complete the character arc for Judy is her relationship with Zach, and their interaction is minimal. All interesting stuff to think about.

September 25

The running of the show over the past few days have gone by without any major developments in the character of Judy. It's starting to feel steady and well-rehearsed. I

feel like the cast is really coming together to create a great final product but that strides aren't necessarily being taken to further the development of the show by any of the actors. It seems that the exhaustion has set in and the cast is just going through the motions to rehearse and go through the production.

We had our first sound tech rehearsal tonight. For a musical, the placement of the microphone generally doesn't affect me very much but, in this case, adapting to the microphone is interesting. Because there is so much dancing involved in this show, my microphone tends to slip around my hair an awful lot when I'm moving. I've found that by securing the microphone in my hair with bobby pins, this can be avoided. It will take some trial and error to figure out the best system for keeping the microphone in place while maintaining the integrity of the look for the character and also the dancing throughout the show.

Microphone checks are also interesting for this show. The sound crew is insisting that the actors have their full costumes on and their hair done for the check, which I haven't experienced before at Minnesota State Mankato. Thinking through it, it's probably wise to have this rule in place because of the tight fitting garb and the fact that we move around so much, but it will require an earlier call on my part to get ready before the check. This isn't a problem, just an adjustment from what I'm used to working on this stage.

The orchestra sounds amazing and really adds to the flavor of the show. I really enjoy them in "Hello Twelve. . ." especially. They add to the 1970s flavor and feel of the show quite a bit. However, there is a bit of a complication. The orchestra is actually

located behind the periaktoi, which is difficult to work with. During my solo in “Hello Twelve. . .” many of my cues are taken from what the orchestra is doing and because I can’t see the music director, it is difficult to accomplish the solo correctly. Music Director Nick Wayne and I are drilling a lot with both the piano and the orchestra so we both are informed about what the other is doing and so we can get a general feel for how the solo will go. Thankfully, the timing for the orchestra is cued by a few key words, so as long as I’m consistent while emphasizing those words it should work out. It’s rough some days and smooth others, but I’m sure it will adjust nicely in the end.

Other than these trivial matters, the production continues to move along nicely. We are getting to the point as a cast where an audience would be beneficial. I’m anxious for this stage to arrive.

September 27

Moving right along throughout the tech process now, lights were added to the show tonight. Although they don’t really affect my movement or what I’m doing, they really are spectacular. I especially enjoy seeing all the subtle changes between songs while I’m standing on the line.

There aren’t many new discoveries with Judy as of late. I really am trying to infuse her with a new energy on a daily basis but feel that she may have peaked as far as new discoveries go. There have been a couple of notes given by director Finocchiaro about certain word stresses such as “my” in the phrase “my braces” and in keeping my inflection upbeat and comedic (especially throughout the “knee scene”), but most notes

given on a daily basis are dance technicalities. The dance rehearsals are the most productive part of the rehearsals at this point. I feel that because the characters themselves are introduced so briefly, they were discovered early on in the process by most of the actors and are just being finely refined from this point on. Because of this, the cast is able to run the dances thoroughly and focus on making them perfect rather than developing character.

During the tap sequence, however, Judy is interacting with people a little bit differently every day. Tonight she was quite enamored with Bobby (played by Carter Allen). I usually have her show some “awe” at him in earlier scenes but tonight he came over and interacted with me during this sequence. I liked the change but am unsure if it will stay permanently. I was pleased to find myself not only reacting in character but physically thinking how Judy would when reacting to this subtle change in the action. Perhaps Judy has gotten to the point where I am not only reacting externally but internally as well.

September 28

A great run tonight. Judy is really starting to feel consistent and makes the same choices night after night. I received the note today after the run I was expecting to come a lot sooner than it did: Morgan, don't fidget so much. When thinking of autistic gestures for this character I tried to come up with something that wouldn't upstage the action going on but that would also be distinct enough to make an impression on the audience. Fidgeting with my tights seemed to fit and worked in all situations throughout the play,

so I stuck with it. Tonight it seemed to be a bit much and started to upstage. Pulling it back is an easy measure and I've asked director Finocchiaro to inform me if it gets too big again. When acting I suppose it's better to get notes saying you're too big or too committed to a certain action rather than be told you aren't big enough or committed enough.

September 30

First run with the costumes tonight went smoothly. Fortunately, I've been able to wear my own leotard for this production. It feels more comfortable and better to move in than one I tried on during initial costume fittings. I really like the costume I get to wear for this show. The costume designer, Angela Sahli, really did a great job of capturing individual character traits for each character on the line and Judy is no exception. Judy wears a plain black leotard with a cropped orange shirt that hangs off of her left shoulder. I've decided to wear my hair in a ponytail on the side to show even more of a quirky nature to this character. That put together with the turned in foot show a character that is "just a little off" in a perfect way. I'm a little worried about the neckline of the shirt stretching quite a bit throughout the dance because of my arm movement, but this is something I'm sure can be fixed easily.

The quick change at the end of the show is just that—a very quick change! We have a lot of dressers that are trying to help us out but I'm finding that they don't stretch their resources quite enough to completely help out every actor. I'm planning on "over-dressing" to help them out. By "over-dressing" I simply mean I'm going to wear my first

pair of tights and my white leotard for the last number under my second pair of tights and black leotard during the entire show. I think that this will help the change become faster and more efficient and will also help the dressers move on to other actors that may have more of a struggle getting ready.

I know I've complained about this quite a lot but my feet are really sore throughout this process. It's hard to sustain all of the dancing in character shoes as well as stand for around three hours a night. I keep hoping that it will be easier from night to night but it actually seems to become harder. When the show opens, I'm looking forward to a break and getting off of my feet for a few days.

October 2

We've finally made it to performances! We had the majors come tonight to the show and they were a great audience with a fantastic energy. It's always interesting to have an audience and to see how they will react to the lines being spoken. Because in many instances my character is being used as comedic relief, I was especially anxious to see how certain lines would be received by an audience and when laughter would occur. Granted, the audience in this instance is made up of peers and so can be receptive regardless of what they are presented; however, I was pleasantly surprised with their reaction to many moments throughout the show.

In the beginning few montages there wasn't much audience interaction worth noting. However, when Allen stepped forward as Bobby and started with his jokes the audience became a lot more responsive to the comedic moments in the show. From there

on there are a lot of comedic moments, and they all sparkled. “Sing,” the “Hello Twelve” montage and “Dance: Ten, Looks: Three” were all well received by the audience. I was surprised during Judy’s solo during “Hello Twelve. . .” at the lack of response from the audience. I can only attribute it to the speed and quick delivery of the solo lines, because once the song stopped and the dialogue started there was laughter. It will be interesting to monitor this throughout the run of the production.

There was a little bit of a costume challenge tonight on my part as well. The shirt has become very stretched and because of this has started to impair some of my movement. It’s also requiring me to constantly place it back on my shoulder, which is an autistic gesture I’m not really interested in exploring. After speaking with the costume designer Sahli, it was decided that elastic would be put in the neckline to prevent this from happening further.

October 3

We had another successful performance for the corporate sponsor tonight. There wasn’t a lot of change in the show to note but I was pleasantly surprised how well the adjustments to my costume allowed me to focus on reacting as Judy rather than reacting to what my costume was doing. Audience reactions were similar to last night but on a slightly larger scale as the house was bigger for this performance. There have been a couple of issues with hearing Zach (Steven Lange) when he is located in the booth and talking with the dancers on the line but I’m sure these issues will be worked out with repetition.

October 4

Opening night was a high energy success. For some reason during the performance the cast as an ensemble had a hard time adjusting to having laughter and knowing how long to hold for the laughter to diminish. This hasn't proven to be a challenge the previous two nights, so I'm unsure why this specific audience affected the ensemble as a whole. I imagine everyone is very exhausted after having a long stretch of rehearsals, tech and opening, so perhaps this has affected our timing.

There were also bits that the audience really enjoyed that weren't expected, such as my interaction with other characters during the tap dance sequence. I didn't feel like I was pushing any moments during this or providing "schtick" of any kind, but do dance with Bobby at that point, so perhaps the audience was reacting to a difference in his character rather than Judy during that sequence. Regardless, it was a delightful surprise to have an audience reaction at that particular moment of the show. The energy from the audience was just the boost the cast needed to fully explore their characters, and I found myself having more of an energy to my performance and a bounce to Judy's step that wasn't necessarily there in rehearsals. What a great way to open an already successful show.

October 6

This performance was just as successful as the rest have been this week. We've been able to have really high energy audiences at every show, so it's been a great time as

an ensemble. The characters are remaining consistent from run to run and I'm happy to find that Judy is consistently received warmly by audiences—especially during the first scene of the show. The audience seems to love the fact that Judy forgets her number not once, but twice, and laughs during both occurrences.

There were moments this evening when the audience literally stopped the action by applauding for certain characters. I feel like this performance has been the most successful of the run and I'm not sure we'll get another performance like this before we close. This ensemble has been great to work with and of a professional caliber from the start. I hope I get to work with this type of production again and again.

This was a perfect performance for the responder from Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival to visit. Bethany Larsen came from Buena Vista University and really enjoyed the show. She talked a lot about the technical aspects first. She talked about the pared down scenery and loved the effect of the lights behind the actors adding color to a somewhat bland set. She also liked the set transitions and said that having the “A Chorus Line” drop in at the end really gave a final button to the show. She also commented on how the costumes gave character information right from the start, but stated that she wanted the costumes to evolve more throughout the audition process. I think she has a good point here but don't know if the idea would have been very successful. Having more costume pieces to take on and take off throughout the audition process would have complicated the show and taken away from the dancing—which I think is more important for this production.

While the responder was on the topic of costume evolution throughout the production, she also mentioned that she missed seeing the characters themselves evolve. While I think each character has a definite arc throughout the show, I'm not sure how I feel about them evolving in the strictest definition of the word. I think that the tactics shift and that the characters find out about each other and therefore evolve in that manner. Larsen mentioned evolving the physical stance that is so characteristic of the line as well. She wanted more exhaustion, more communication through the pose as the show progressed. She mentioned not ever seeing anyone fidget (other than Judy) or scratch their faces—basically I think she was communicating that we had a lack of realistic situational gesture. I think it's an interesting idea but I'm not sure I agree with her views regarding this.

Probably the thing that hit the hardest among the cast was when she mentioned that she didn't see a clear objective from all the characters. She felt that the audition wasn't "life or death" for everyone involved and she really missed seeing high stakes during the performance. While she didn't get specific, I can agree with the sentiment. I do feel that a lot of the cast members focus on an ensemble feel to the show and the dance numbers and so the overall objective of the individual characters can become diluted. By letting the audience experience the audition with the characters—especially in "What I Did for Love"—will strengthen the stakes and therefore the objective.

I really appreciated the refreshing nature of this responder. She covered all the bases in a quick amount of time and stayed after to give individual feedback to each character on the line. My individual feedback was especially helpful. She complimented

my ability to stay present “in the moment” throughout the show and the consistency in my physicalities. She mentioned my height, which was expected, but she mentioned it in a different manner than I usually receive. She complimented on the fact that although I’m tall I was able to achieve small movements. I took up less space than my smaller counterparts.

I was able to ask her a number of questions, but probably the most prominent was my constant struggle to appear credible because of my external tendencies as an actor. She sympathized with my plight, and stated that she too was an actor that took external cues when developing character rather than the other way around. She said that the work didn’t show during this performance and that I was credible, but that she felt the character dropped a bit when I was dancing. I agree with her and hope to be able to make Judy more consistent throughout the show for the final few performances.

October 11

Wow, what a slow show. The first show back after a break is always rough and, in this case, most of the cast is exhausted from being in rehearsals for another show while performing this one. I find the schedule satisfying because I like to work hard but there was an energy shift for this performance that was hard to grasp. A lot of the beats and moments that were crisp last week became sloppy. Perhaps a pick up rehearsal would have been a way to avoid this from happening but I’m looking forward to a better show overall tomorrow night.

The cast was also extremely frustrated because Lange was extremely unfocused during this show. There were multiple moments where he blew lines, paused for extreme amounts of time, called wrong cues, and even called the wrong people out of the line to step forward and tell their stories. Although it did force the cast to tune in to the action on the stage and really dig into character to be able to react to these moments, it also caused a lot of frustration. As a whole we are hoping that things pick up tomorrow and that we can get back to the solid show we had last week.

I tried to focus a lot on making Judy consistent within the dance breaks, but I feel that she is the type of character to snap back and forth from being an amazing dancer and then awkward in social situations. Judy seemed consistent throughout the performance regardless of the inconsistencies of some of the other performers.

October 12

The cast is extremely frustrated again. Lange again seemed unprepared and struggled throughout this show. He dropped a number of lines and was generally unfocused during the performance. There is a lot of grumbling happening off stage and backbiting has started to occur within the cast. The show ran well when Zach wasn't necessarily involved in a scene but it was again a discouraging show this evening. I tend to be a peace-maker in these types of situations and so I've been trying to calm a lot of the actors down about the situation—especially before we go into a two show performance day.

October 14

I can't believe this show is over! After the performance on Friday, the weekend flew by and was full of successful performances. My feet were so sore on Saturday! There was a point during the second act and the second performance that I had to alter my stance in order to keep standing. I honestly couldn't have been happier though—performing makes me feel complete. The final kick-line the last time was very satisfying. The audience energy was incredible. The cast was able to work through their differences and be accepting of each other's faults—and the show was successful the last three times it was performed. Cues were picked up, the energy was rediscovered, and everyone really came together with the same spirit we captured in the first week of the run.

As I look back at the run of the show, I am really pleased that I was able to create such a consistent character that was performed the same way show after show. I'm also happy I was able to break away from my habit of producing "pretty" characters that use a lot of floating gestures. I was also able to break the habit of keeping my feet turned out while in performance. This role helped me grow in a lot of ways that were beneficial, and I don't think I would have had the same experience playing any of the other characters on the line. I'm very grateful for the opportunity I had to not only grow as an actor but perform in such a magical musical.

CHAPTER 4

POST PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

At the recent conclusion of a successful run of Minnesota State University, Mankato's 2012 production of *A Chorus Line*, the actor, Morgan Mallory, reflects on the analysis and character development process used in order to create the role of Judy Turner. After a seemingly fast rehearsal process, the cast united together much like the characters they were playing to present a show full of dance to a mostly sold out audience. Overall the audience members seemed engaged and vocal throughout all of the performances. The production ran a total of nine performances over a span of two weekends, and the actor was delighted at the product and feedback received over this body of work from both the community and her peers.

The actor feels that there were many strengths that came from the early analysis stages of both her role and the show itself. Rehearsals began the day after casting, so although Mallory was familiar with the script she did not read it enough times to be sufficiently ready for character work. Throughout the early stages of rehearsal, this didn't prove to be problematic as rehearsal time was used mostly for music work and learning choreography. However, the actor threw herself into character research early in the process, paying particular attention to any detailed information given about past performances of the role of Judy Turner and what made them memorable. Because the actor had the opportunity to play both as an

individual character and as part of the ensemble as a whole in this production, she also made sure to create distinct physical characteristics that would distinguish her from other actors present on the line. Also the actor started to visualize the character of Judy early on and attached her to physical cues such as the tendency to fidget and being pigeon-toed. These were bold choices for the actor because they go against her normal tendencies, but an overall consensus from peers is that Mallory was able to depart from these normalcies and create a character that was different than anything she'd previously done at Minnesota State Mankato.

Director Paul Finocchiaro embraced choices made by the actor early on in the rehearsal process and, because of this, the actor was able to solidify her character fairly quickly. Although specific physical choices changed over the course of the rehearsal process, Mallory was very consistent with her physical choices once they were solidified. Because the characters remain standing on the line for a majority of the show, many movement choices were limited for the actor in general. However, the actor with the guidance of the director was able to make subtle movement choices that helped express the character work she had determined. She was also conscious to make those choices unique but not distracting based on the given situation.

The actor was also able to capitalize on her existing dance background and skill set to bring this character to life. The entire cast accepted the challenge of a dance heavy production which required many hours of rehearsal outside of the

allotted time. The actor felt that the rapport and positive attitudes created by the cast as a whole contributed greatly to the final product being a success.

In most other projects, the actor noted that at the end of the performance process some of the mannerisms established at the beginning of the rehearsal process usually become softer or less character driven. This usual weakness was not present throughout this production, much to the delight of the actor. The actor assumes this is because the character was constantly either fidgeting with her tights or remaining rigid on the line, so movement created didn't have the opportunity to be stagnant.

Because the actor has previous movement training and experience, the character of Judy was easily performed by the actor. The actor employed many Laban techniques such as dabbing when walking and, in contrast, played with stronger movements with her hands (such as slashing) while dancing. However, some weaknesses did occur on the actor's part when sustaining this role—especially in performances. The rehearsal process was strenuous and the actor felt the physical manifestations of long dance rehearsals early on. Because the role required physical exertion the actor was not necessarily used to, she found herself exhausted at the end of performances. This was most apparent during the final weekend, especially when two shows were performed in the same day.

All preconceived notions by the actor regarding the rehearsals of *A Chorus Line* were shattered. Throughout the rehearsal process, there were many successes and many times that were difficult. The actor felt that Judy grew exponentially as a

character while in the rehearsal process. However the actor did find times to infuse discovery into performances so the character would not become predictable and stale. The rehearsals were productive and enjoyable, but were content heavy—especially when it came to the dances. Although different, the actor quickly adapted and felt success in adding to not only the rehearsal process but to the collaboration as a whole for the production. The dances became an extension of the character and because of this the actor felt very successful in contributing to this production in this regard. The final product worked well for both the actor and the director. Through deeper character work and involvement (and encouragement from the director) the actor was able to sustain character choices for Judy and found new and exciting moments to explore all through the rehearsal process and performances.

The actor found it challenging to get all the content for the show she needed to fit within the parameters of the rehearsal process and so found outside time helpful. This was especially helpful when learning the music. The actor found the solo work for Judy to be difficult because of its monotony of notes and its patter-like delivery. This was something the actor had no experience with before this project, and required lots of drilling outside of rehearsal. The actor also went over choreography extensively on her own to allow the scheduled rehearsal times to be devoted to character development rather than the repetition of steps.

The actor found the most beneficial thing about the rehearsal process to be the time she was able to have with the director when blocking and modifying her scene work. The dance rehearsals as a whole were a bit hard to follow because of

the many dance captains, and the actor really relished the times when the director was in charge of the situation. Although not necessarily one-on-one, the actor felt that the collaboration between herself and the director was equitable and allowed the actor freedom to be both an artist and create a product that was in line with what the director was envisioning. Having the director give motivation to the movement and dances was very helpful and the actor found that these moments helped the scenes come together seamlessly. Relationships were established easily between the characters and musicality was developed within the numbers.

Overall, the actor felt that the process used to establish character in this production was executed well. The actor would have preferred to have more solid information regarding the backstory of her character and how she related to the production before rehearsals began but found that the information was easily obtained after beginning rehearsals, doing research and by talking with the director. The actor also found it challenging to develop a style for the character and have that style match the rest of the actors during the production—especially when it came down to feeling like an ensemble and dancing in uniform ways. Although she feels the product was stylistically appropriate and that the ensemble matched in intent, the varying level of dance ability from the cast as a whole made it difficult to seamlessly match.

There were other weaknesses overall that the actor hoped to avoid in this project. Mostly, the actor worried about looking over-rehearsed or not credible in her performance. To overcome this, the actor went into rehearsal with an open

mind to the motivations and the intent of the character. In the past this has been troublesome for the actor because she thinks from an external source first, but the actor found the change in perspective to be helpful and beneficial with the creation of character. Movement should come naturally as the tactics are played, not the other way around. By having a constant sense of urgency and by playing the constant objective of the need for the job the actor hopes she was able to overcome this negative habitual.

The actor also struggled with creating a clear character arc for Judy. However, the lack of character arc was heavily due to the script and was not an omission on the actor's part. Mallory took delight in exploring Judy as a well-rounded character and feels that this exploration was appropriate for not only the genre, but the production itself. She also feels that although a character arc was not scripted, Judy changed over the course of the show and was able to achieve her goal based on her objectives.

From a technical standpoint, Mallory fit seamlessly into the set, costumes and lights. The set was very simple and made it easy to perform the dance moves required, however, the actor did struggle a bit with space issues because of the number of actors on the stage. The props were also very simple and consisted of a single bag and a single headshot. The actor regrets not having more character attachment to her props, but also feels that personal attachment wasn't a justified choice that would be noticed by the audience due to their brevity on stage.

She was also mostly unaffected by the lights. Mallory struggled a bit staying within the spotlight her first time coming away from the line to deliver dialogue but with rehearsal it became easier for her to hit the required mark. Other instances where the lights were even noticeable to the actor were minimal. Mallory did appreciate the light shifts between what she considered “real time” and “song time” in the show and these major shifts in color scheme from the lights helped her distinguish when to blend more with the ensemble as a whole.

The actor felt her costume was very fitting for Judy, and she really enjoyed the sleeve having a lot of influence on her character. In the first week of running the show the left shoulder of her shirt was free moving and hindered movement slightly. It also forced a gesture requiring the actor to constantly move it out of the way of her arm movements, which Mallory didn't feel was appropriate for the character because of previously established gestures involving her tights. The costume designer was very gracious and placed elastic in the sleeve, which maintained the look she was going for but also freed the actor of any involvement with the costume piece.

Overall the actor would have liked to have more one-on-one time with the director to do some character analysis and table work, but in this case felt the production was successful without these things, so wonders if they will be useful in future productions. Also the actor would like to continue her focus on making future roles more believable and “in the moment.” Because of the eclectic character choices of Judy, the actor is unsure if either of those were achieved. However,

regardless of the weaknesses expressed, the lessons the actor learned from being a part of this production of *A Chorus Line* are ones she hopes to be able to capitalize on in future productions both scholastic and professional.

CHAPTER 5

PROCESS DEVELOPMENT

In this chapter the actor intends to evaluate where she stands in the development of her craft since beginning her studies at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Much of this training comes through classroom work and studies, but the actor has been also able to refine her skills through participation in actual productions. She has been in productions that have been directed by the performance area faculty members of the theatre department: Paul J. Hustoles, Heather E. Hamilton and Paul Finocchiaro.

As mentioned in previous chapters, Morgan Mallory started her theatrical life as a dancer. Competitions and recitals littered her life from the ages of six to thirteen, when the actor began singing in choirs. Choir and individual voice lessons were an integral part of Mallory's life for six years, until she graduated high school. The actor also kept up her dance skills with show choir and dance teams, but the actor mostly focused her priorities on acting. She loved to be involved in the high school plays, and was involved in nine throughout high school. After high school, the actor dabbled in dance, singing and acting throughout her undergraduate career, but didn't further her studies in that area. After getting her bachelor's degree in dietetics, the actor again found herself drawn to theatre and began performing again throughout the community. It was this love that prompted her to find further education.

The actor came to Minnesota State Mankato with a variety of skills in singing,

acting and dance, but was concerned about her consistency in performance and execution of these skills. She was also looking for opportunities to be involved in many different kinds of productions so as to maybe gain more experience performing through these opportunities. The actor was also looking to boost confidence during the audition process and throughout performances.

During her first semester she was able to participate in the production of Mary Zimmerman's *The Odyssey*, directed by Hustoles. The actor feels that this show helped the actor grow both in stage presence and fluid movement. In a lot of ways it allowed the actor to gain confidence with her abilities and the way they fit within the scope of the theatre department. This show also served as the actor's minor writing project, the first step in her scholastic journey as a graduate student, and she found the process of collaboration with the director both behind the scenes and in rehearsal very helpful to her process. Having constant feedback helped the actor have a greater idea of how the director envisioned both the character and the production. The actor also started rehearsals this first semester for the challenging lead role of Billie Dawn in *Born Yesterday*, directed by Finocchiaro. These rehearsals helped the actor maintain consistency in performance energy and also develop multiple complex characteristics for her character. Here the actor used a vocal quality and dialect, which she hadn't used before while performing. She found this manageable because of her previous vocal training in Theatre Speech II, and although the dialect was mostly consistent, she looked forward to perfecting it further in a dialects class at a later date.

Consistency in performance also came through classes the actor was taking during

her first semester. These classes included Theatre Speech II with Hustoles, in which the actor learned 10 different vocal qualities and techniques and how to produce them in performance. The actor also learned the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Likewise, the actor was able to evaluate her peers for the first time in this class. Because the actor would like to teach eventually, she found this practice very helpful in developing the specificity of her comments and grading procedures.

Another class taught by Hustoles that the actor engaged in first semester was Acting Techniques. This course covered a lot of different rehearsal type techniques for finding character and discovering characters traits or attributes. The actor—being drawn to movement—embraced this class and loved the subject matter discussed. Some highlights of the class include learning anthropomorphism and also working with different styles of gestures. The actor especially enjoyed the creative angle this class allowed for performance projects. The actor was also able to lead an acting class for the first time in her career, and found the feedback and experience very helpful in planning for future classes.

Other classes the actor took during her first semester included two dance classes: Intermediate/Advanced Jazz with Finocchiaro and Beginning Modern with Julie Kerr-Berry. In these classes the actor brushed up on previously developed dance skills and quickly found herself at the top of her class. Because of previous dance training, the actor did not feel pushed in her modern class, and so switched to Intermediate Ballet with Lisa Long halfway through the semester. This proved to be a good change of pace, and the actor felt not only challenged but intellectually stimulated in this class. These dance

classes helped the actor connect more with her core and to produce crisp and clean movements. They also helped the actor get into physical shape and boosted her performance energy both in class and on stage.

The actor's second semester was an intellectual adjustment for her and wasn't nearly so "hands-on" as the previous. One of the classes was Theory and Criticism with Hamilton. This class helped the actor develop a logical way of thinking about theatre and the arts as a whole and also helped her develop her writing skills in this subject area. She also led a one-day class on Boal and Invisible Theatre, a subject she enjoyed enough to repeat teaching it during a High School Workshop Day.

Toward the beginning of this semester the actor also had the opportunity to attend the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival with the production of *The Odyssey*. During this festival, the actor took a variety of movement classes and acting workshops, and was cast in a 10-minute play festival in which she worked with a faculty member from another university. The actor's experience with *The Odyssey* would then continue to Washington D.C. in April where the actor had the opportunity to perform at the Kennedy Center. These performances were an amazing experience for the actor, and helped solidify her sense of ensemble work. The actor also performed in *Born Yesterday* and used this experience for her minor project requirement (without paper). This performance earned her a KCACTF Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship nomination. She also performed in and was a performing dance captain in *The Producers*. These projects furthered both the confidence of the actor and her ability to remain consistent during performance.

Performance training this semester included Musical Theatre I with Finocchiaro and Stage Dialects I with Hustoles. Musical Theatre I introduced the actor to a realistic style of acting when singing a song which was relatively new to her. By focusing on the text without focusing on the music technique, the actor was able to connect to the work on a deeper level than before. She focused her studies on the song “Someone Else’s Story” from *Chess*. In Stage Dialects I the actor was able to use her previous IPA training to learn and produce different dialects. The actor struggled a bit with ear training, but was able to fine tune this through evaluating and grading her peers. The actor particularly enjoyed the Scottish dialect and the Southern dialect in this class. The actor also took Advanced Tap from Finocchiaro and was able to use this skill in *The Producers*.

Fall of 2011 marked the actor’s third semester. Performance classes included Advanced Modern with Dan Stark, Intermediate Jazz with Finocchiaro, Stage Dialects II and Musical Theatre II with Hustoles. These classes involved further study in areas the actor had begun to explore in earlier semesters. Advanced Modern helped the actor fully engage her core, learn how to move her extremities from a central place, and become stronger as a dancer. It also taught her a lot about weight, movement and force. Intermediate Jazz allowed her to again achieve a higher standard of jazz dance and increased her flexibility. It also helped her connect through her core, which the actor struggled with outside of a modern dance class. Stage Dialects II was a continuation of Dialects I, and helped finesse the actor’s ability to critique her peers and also learn a variety of new dialects such as Italian and Russian. Musical Theatre II was a favorite for

the actor, and involved a performance every week. These weekly performances required the class to cover a wide repertoire of songs within a short time frame and the actor found observing her peers very helpful. The intense pressure of producing a staged and perfected product stretched the actor to achieve greatness in this class.

The actor also took a very challenging course during this semester: Theatre Research. Because of the actor's scientific background, she found it difficult to produce successful research papers that intertwined an artistic flair and personality and that also included fact delivery. The actor particularly struggled with writing in a style that was personable and credible, but was able to overcome this challenge in this class with Hamilton. This class required the student to submit a paper to a peer-reviewed journal, which the actor also found helpful.

Performance experience this semester was through a production of *Rent* directed by Finocchiaro. As an ensemble member and Mark's Mom, the actor was also a performing dance captain for this production. The actor enjoyed dancing in a variety of styles for this show, and really enjoyed the sense of togetherness the cast had. The music style was a stretch for the actor, exploring her lower range and really expanding her ability to belt and color her voice. This show in particular stands out to the actor because of the content and message the show portrays. Mallory also feels that the cast stood behind the message of love 100%, and that it was eminent in their performances.

Now halfway through her education, the actor found herself slowing down in practical classes and picking up extra opportunities outside Minnesota State Mankato to pursue some other goals. Still scholastically heavy, Mallory took both Musical Theatre

History and Theatre History I second semester of her second year, both from Hustoles. She found both classes challenging, but felt they prepared her to not only pass along knowledge to her peers but for future students as well. The actor excelled in Musical Theatre History more so, but enjoyed the content of Theatre History I. Mallory also took a class entitled Scene Studies this semester from Hamilton. In this class she was able to work with four of her peers on four different acting scenes. She really enjoyed working within the scope of realistic acting, and found that this class really helped her work on honesty when performing. Rounding out the educational element was Advanced Ballet.

This semester was performance heavy for the actor. She started out with her major project, *The Imaginary Invalid*, directed by Hamilton. In this production Mallory was able to work within the scopes of a style, and the actor found working with Hamilton both engaging and very fun. The actor immediately moved to *Phantom of the Opera*, where she was able to choreograph as well as act in the lead role of Carlotta. This show was physically exhausting because of the strenuous singing, but the actor pushed herself and was able to sustain throughout all performances without problem. Outside the department, the actor had opportunities to work within the community directing and choreographing for both local high schools and community theatres. She found these opportunities challenging and found collaborating with peers outside of an academic setting to be different but delightful.

As a graduate assistant, the actor has had many different experiences. During her first year, she worked in the costume shop under costumer Jessica Guthrie and designer David McCarl. In the costume shop she helped build, pull and alter costumes for main

stage and studio productions. During her second year, the actor was able to teach an Acting for Everyone class, which the actor enjoys very much. She finds working with students very satisfying and enjoys the hands-on learning that is implemented in the class. She also taught a Beginning Jazz class, which was challenging. She was able to spend time with dance faculty member Julie Kerr-Berry working through the form of a scholastic syllabus, and Mallory found this experience very helpful for this class. She was also able to work in the box office as a co-manager. Mallory really enjoys talking with the patrons and problem solving within the box office, and was able to turn it into a position that lasted throughout her tenure at Minnesota State Mankato.

Other performance opportunities that have helped shape the actor during her academic career have included two seasons of Highland Summer Theater. During her first summer she was able to play Grace in the production of *Annie*, directed by Hustoles. Working with the children was rewarding and Mallory found that she really enjoyed working with kids in the theatre setting. The following year, the actor played the role of Elsa in *The Sound of Music*, directed by Finocchiaro. Mallory found this fast paced experience to be fun and mentally stimulating, and hopes to participate in more fast produced theatre in the future.

The actor, nearly through her Master of Fine Arts training, finds that the time spent in class, during performance and rehearsal, and her assistantship have greatly boosted her confidence. It has also prepared the actor for teaching and working in a university setting, which is one of her long term goals. The academic stress and schedule have provided many opportunities for time management skills and multi-tasking.

There are several more goals the actor wishes to work on during the last part of her Master of Fine Arts Degree. The actor would like to further refine her teaching skills and curriculum building for both acting and dance classes. She would also like to choreograph or direct several pieces to gain experience with both leadership and direction of students. The actor would like to refine her dance and singing skills, and work on stylistic acting. Mallory feels as though her training has been well rounded while in school both at Minnesota State Mankato and throughout her undergraduate career. She looks forward to performing in many more roles and gaining skills that will develop a successful career in both professional acting and university teaching.

APPENDIX A

PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS



Morgan Mallory as Judy Turner



Morgan Mallory as Judy Turner



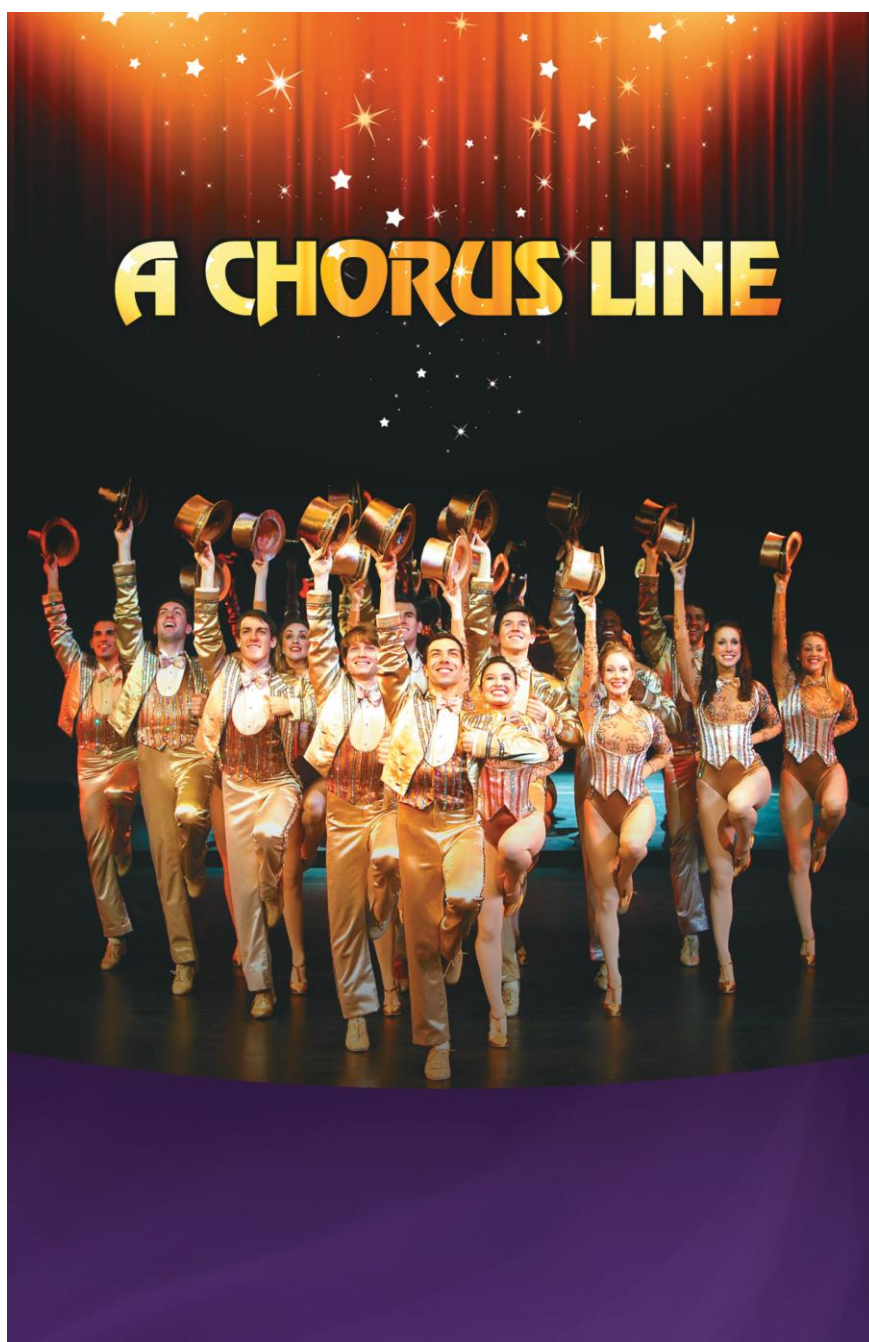
Morgan Mallory as Judy Turner in the Line



Morgan Mallory as Judy Turner

APPENDIX B

PROGRAM COVER



PROGRAM INSERT

Cast of Characters

Zach.....**Steven Lange**
 Larry**Devin Basart**

The Girls

Bebe Benzenheimer.....**Bridgette Karl**
 Cassie Ferguson.....**Larissa Schmitz**
 Connie MacKenzie.....**Leigh Jacobson**
 Diana Morales.....**Cassie Johnson**
 Judy Turner.....**Morgan Mallory**
 Kristine Ulrich-Deluca.....**Emily Jansen**
 Maggie Winslow.....**Nikki Anthony**
 Sheila Bryant.....**Jaclyn Juola**
 Val Clark.....**Callie Syverson**

The Boys

Al Deluca.....**Andy Rotchadl**
 Bobby Mills.....**Carter Allen**
 Don Kerr.....**Sam Stoll**
 Greg Gardner.....**Jordan McDonald**
 Mark Anthony.....**Steven Labine**
 Mike Costa.....**Austin England**
 Paul S an Marco.....**Brandon Lund**
 Richie Waters.....**Jordan Oxborough**
 Ensemble of Dancers/Singers.....**Zach Bolland, Chris Jimmy**

Ian Lah, Colton Moyer, Maria Camila Perez
Alexis Heruth, Alexa Lautenbach, Tylinn Fahrni
Sarah Olson, Sophia Pimsler

Setting

An audition in New York City.

PROGRAM BIOGRAPHY

Morgan Mallory (Judy Turner) is a third-year MFA Musical Theatre candidate from Pocatello, ID, who appeared as “Carlotta Guidicelli” in last season’s Mainstage production of *The Phantom of the Opera* and this summer was “Elsa Schrader” in *The Sound of Music*. She made her Minnesota State Mankato debut as “Circe” in *The Odyssey* and appeared in *The Producers*, *Rent* and *The Imaginary Invalid*. In addition, she was “Billie Dawn” in *Born Yesterday*, for which she received her second KCACTF Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship nomination. At the January 2012 Festival she earned Semifinalist honors. While studying for her BS degree in Dietetics from Brigham Young University, she played “The Witch” (and various other roles) in the production of *Grimm Tales*, for which she received her first KCACTF Ryan nomination. She made her HST debut as “Grace Farrell” in *Annie* (2011).

APPENDIX C

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

A CHORUS LINE REHEARSAL SCHEDULE**AUGUST:**

- 28:** 6:35- Special guest lecture
8:00 Start opening # choreography w/ CD.
- 29:** 6:35- Opening # w/ CD
- 30:** 6:35- Opening # Music with Nick
8:00 Merge
- 31:** 6:35- finish opening # with Music and choreography
8:00- Music for "Hello 12"

SEPTEMBER:

- 1 & 2:** Off
- 3:** 5:00- finish "Hello 12" Music
7:00- Start choreography for "Hello 12"
- 4:** 6:35- Merge "Hello 12"
8:00- Review Opening # & "Hello 12"
- 5.** 6:35- 10:00 ALL MUSIC "I can do that", "Nothing", "Dance 10", "Music and the mirror", "What I did 4 love", "Sing", the "And's", "At the Ballet"
Staging as you are released.
- 6.** 6:35- Scene after opening #. stage P. 10-17 / 19-24 / 28-29
- 7.** 6:35- Put together and run Act I
- 8.** Mankato PRIDE Parade. Meet @ Blue Earth Lib. @ 10:30. Perform @ PRIDE @ 12:15/12:30
- 9.** 6:35- Run and fix Act I Designer Run
- 10.** 6:35- "One" Music and Scene in Choir room
8:45- Put "One" on stage
- 11.** 6:35- Val scene P. 48-51 / Paul scene P. 51-52 / Cassie scene P. 52-57 / Paul scene P. 58-60
- 12.** 6:35- "One" scene, music and choreography on stage
- 13.** 6:35- "Tap" choreography and scene / Knee scene
8:00- review Act II
- 14.** 6:35- Run Act II (No finale)
- 15.** Off
- 16.** 6:35- finale w/ CD
- 17.** Off next audition (Cactus flower)

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

- 18. 6:35- Run and fix Act II
- 19. 6:35- Review & fix choreography
8:00- Run Act I
- 20. 12:00- Performance for MALL
6:35- Run Act II
- 21. 6:35- 1st FULL RUN!
- 22. Off
- 23. 6:35- Full Run
- 24. 6:35- Choreography cleaning
8:00- Full Run
- 25. 6:00- Call for Publicity Photos.
6:30- Sound Check / 7:00-7:15 go
- 26. 6:35- Mic. Pick up / Mic. Check 7:00-7:15 go
- 27. 6:35- light Tech
- 28. 6:35- 1st Tech
- 29. 6:35- SATURDAY NIGHT TECH!
- 30. 6:35 call 7:30 go 1st Dress 1st Orchestra Run

OCTOBER

- 1. 6:35 call 7:30 go 2nd Dress
- 2. 6:35 call 7:30 go Major's Preview
- 3. 6:35 call 7:30 go Corporate Preview
- 4. 6:35 call 7:30 go Opening Night
- 5. 6:35 call 7:30 go RUN
- 6. 6:35 call 7:30 go RUN
- 7,8,9,10 Off!
- 11. 6:35 call 7:30 go RUN. then photo call
- 12. 6:35 call 7:30 go
- 13. 1:05 call 2:00 go RUN / 6:35 call 7:00 go
- 14. 1:05 call 2:00 go RUN and STRIKE

APPENDIX D

ACTOR SCRIPT NOTATIONS

21

BOBBY. School? You wanna hear about school? I went to P. S. Shit ... See, I was the kind of kid that was always getting slammed into lockers and stuff like that. Not only by the students — by the teachers too. Oh, and I hated sports, hated sports. And sports were very big. I mean, it was jock city, but I didn't make one team. See, I couldn't catch a ball if it had Elmer's Glue on it. And wouldn't my father have to be this big ex-football hero? He was so humiliated, he didn't know what to tell his friends. And ...

Lights dim again, leaving SINGERS in specials.

JUDY.⁴ And ...
 God, I'm a wreck.
 God, I'm a wreck. *AH*
 I don't know where to start.
 I'm gonna fall apart.
 Where are my childhood mem'ries?
 Who were the boys?
 What were my toys?
 How will I begin? *LOOK*
 And why am I so thin?!!!
 What should I say?

GROUP III: VAL, RICHIE, MAGGIE, CONNIE, JUDY, DIANA & MIKE.
 What can I tell him?

JUDY. And ...

CONNIE & MAGGIE.
 And ...

RICHIE. And ...

VAL & DIANA.
 And ...

Lights come back up on THE LINE. Music stops for dialogue.

BOBBY. And my mother kept saying: "If you don't stop setting your brother on fire, we're going to have to send you away." And I was always thinking up these spectacular ways how to kill myself. But then I realized — to commit suicide in Buffalo is redundant.

Music [bar 79] big cadence and out.

ZACH. Okay, Bobby. Back in line.

BOBBY steps back in line.

ZACH. (continued). Sheila.

⁴ See Appendix B for alternate lyrics.

ACTOR MUSIC NOTATIONS

48

- 5 - Montage, Part 3: "Mother"

(BOBBY joins OTHERS upstage.)

DON: (out of pantomime) Well, when the guys on the block saw Lola, they all wanted to know what the story was, and I told them about this big hot romance we were having, but actually she was going with this...

Faster

(DON steps upstage with OTHERS. JUDY moves forward.)

Lit-tle brat! That's what my sis-ter was, A lit-tle brat. And that's

Marcato

why I shaved her head. I'm glad I shaved her head. But then my

fa-ther lost his job so we had to leave El Pas-o And we

wound up in Saint Lou-ie, Mis-sou-ri. Well, it was the

fur-thest thing from my mind to be a danc-er, But my

moth-er would em-bar-rass me So when she'd come to pick me up at

school With all those great, big, yel-low roll-ers in her hair No mat-ter

how much I begged her and she'd say, But the

Easy waltz tempo

thing that made my dad-dy laugh so much Was when I

used to jump and dance a-round the liv-ing room...

ACH - Chorus & Vocal Parts

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