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CREATING THE ROLE OF LADY MACDUFF IN
MACBETH

by

ASHLEY D'LYN GUNN

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

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Ashley D'Lyn Gunn

This thesis has been examined and approved by the following members of the student's committee.

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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 theatre. It is a detailed account of author Ashley Gunn's artistic process in creating the role of Lady Macduff in Minnesota State, Mankato's production of *Macbeth* in the spring of 2019. The thesis chronicles the actor's artistic process from preproduction through performance in five chapters; an early production analysis, a historical and critical perspective, a rehearsal and performance journal, a post-production analysis and a process development analysis. Appendices and works cited are included.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I.	EARLY PRODUCTION ANALYSIS.....	1
II.	CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.....	11
III.	JOURNAL.....	23
IV.	POST-PRODUCTION ANALYSIS.....	51
V.	PROCESS DEVELOPMENT.....	57

Appendix

A.	PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS.....	69
B.	PROGRAM.....	73
C.	REHEARSAL SCHEDULE.....	75
	WORKS CITED.....	76

CHAPTER I

EARLY PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

The dramatic action of Lady Macduff, to be performed by Ashley D'Lyn Gunn in *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare, starts in the Macduff castle with her children and Ross in Act IV, scene ii, as she questions her cousin Ross about the absence of her husband. He comforts her and leaves shortly after. As she is educating her children on the consequences of being a traitor, a messenger enters and warns her to leave with her children as quickly as she can and leaves immediately. Moments later, murderers appear, slay the children and Lady Macduff, terrified, runs for her life.

In this actor's opinion, a underlying theme of the play is manipulation, initiated by the Weird Sisters. If they would have never told Macbeth that he would become king, then he would have never spoken a word of the vision to his wife, Lady Macbeth and she wouldn't have suffered a guilty conscience that eventually led to her death. The snowballed act of manipulation tangled into the plot was Lady Macbeth turning her husband's eyes from serving as a soldier to the prospect of being the king in Duncan's stead. Would Lady Macbeth have thought of seizing the opportunity presented from Duncan staying at Macbeth's house if Macbeth has not shared the vision with her?

Another theme that is touched upon in Lady Macduff's scene is the balance between reason and emotion when she states that, "All is the fear and nothing is the love,

as little is the wisdom that so runs against all reason.” (IV;ii; 14-16) She’s accusing her husband of emotionally reacting to a situation instead of logically reacting and staying with his family to protect them. There are also the initial internal struggle Macbeth experiences when responding to the Weird Sisters as they tell of his future. He begins with a clear and reasoned thought process that eventually dwindles into a very visceral, selfish emotional response. Then, he shifts toward complete faith in the prophecy; specifically, the detail that he won’t be harmed by anyone born of a woman, thinking this protection justifies his reasons for violence. Lady Macbeth has the opposite polarization of emotion and reason. She starts with complete faith in the prophesy of the Weird Sisters, fueled by the evidence in her husband’s fate that line up with the prophecy. Eventually, her guilt about being a part of the heartless death of the Macduff family drives her emotions to an unrecoverable place. There is one example of a balance between reason and emotion in how Lord Macduff reacts to the news of his family being slaughtered. He knows he must feel the emotional pain of the loss of his family, but he also has a logical reaction to use that emotion to do what is right and murder Macbeth, stopping the tyrant and avenging his beloveds.

The first line Lady Macduff has is in Act IV, scene ii. In the previous scene, Macbeth has given the order to kill Lady Macduff and her children in their home. Not privy to this information, Lady Macduff questions the Thane of Ross, her cousin, about the fact that her husband has left them alone and gone to Scotland, leaving her at home with her children. His motivation was to seek out Malcolm III of Scotland, the late King Duncan’s son, in order to convince him to take the throne from Macbeth by force. The

way the situation looks to Lady Macduff is that he lacks wisdom and is giving into fears instead of exercising judgement and defending his family. The time of day is nearly irrelevant and not specified in the text. The family is not at a meal or nap time due to the text.

Gunn wonders if a pre-scene circumstance will be incorporated for the sake of specifics. After a servant enters the room where the Macduff family resides and warns her to leave as fast as she can with her children, Lady Macduff immediately raises questions about where she should go and why she should leave. This illuminates the fact that information doesn't travel quickly in this time period. Her initial knowledge of Lord Macduff leaving for Scotland is very quickly followed by warnings to leave herself. Not only that, moments later, murderers arrive to carry out Macbeth's orders to have them executed quickly. In the stage directions, Lady Macduff runs away, leaving her death to the imagination of the audience.

Director Dr. Heather Hamilton's edits to the scene give Lady Macduff five children ranging from a few months to about ten years of age. Given the time period, Lady Macduff could have easily had her first child before the age of eighteen, making her roughly between twenty-five and thirty years old in the play. The fact that she has so many children during a season of famine and war is remarkable. This must mean she is well taken care of and, possibly, a natural, healthy person. She is married to the Thane of Fife, Lord Macduff, and they are the leaders of their community. Psychologically, Lady Macduff is strong and capable of much. She would be in charge of the education and upbringing of her children, have command over servants, and practice domestic skills and

crafts. In her scene, she answers very difficult questions for her children, preparing them for the harsh realities of life.

Lady Macduff lives in a castle or large mansion. She states that when her husband leaves, he is leaving behind more than one mansion. There is also mention of Lord Macduff leaving behind titles of importance he has either worked very hard for, or was born into. As the wife of an important man who is listened to by others, she has a reputation to uphold and outward appearances to maintain. In her moment of confusion at her husband's actions, Lady Macbeth is advised by her cousin, the Thane of Ross, to keep herself together, either for the benefit of her children, or because a servant could walk in and hear her disrespectful speech toward her husband.

Above all else, Lady Macbeth desires harmony and loyalty within her family structure. This explains why she is so distressed in her address to Ross about Lord Macduff's sudden absence in a time of war. Even Malcolm confronts Lord Macduff about his motivation to leave his family. There is a clear lack of communication between her and her husband, and in order for her to maintain her place as a loyal wife, she must know she and her children are protected by the head of the family. This protectiveness comes out in her with an example of a very small and loyal bird; if a small and powerless bird has the bravery to defend, then Lord Macduff should as well. Another sub-objective Lady Macduff possesses is to educate her children in the ways of the world so they are not caught off guard by the consequences of their actions. The most available example of the consequence of one's actions involves the children's absent father. Knowing how to

say the hard truth, she alludes to Lord Macduff's possible death because of the traitorous abandonment of his first priority, his family.

One obstacle Lady Macduff finds herself up against is a lack of knowledge about Lord Macduff's motivation to leave. He thinks he is doing what is right by offering council to Malcom who has the ear of the English king, and therefore an army with which to attack Macbeth and take back his rightful place as king. To Lady Macduff, this looks like fear and desertion of the family.

Another obstacle, more overarching to the theme of the play, addresses the internal order of the Macduff home. When a kingdom is ruled by chaos and oppression, the framework of that society crumbles all the way down to the family unit, the first form of government in a society. Lord Macduff's need to bring the country back to order leaves his family out of order. In the time period, the man is the head of the family as leader and protector. Women were not completely equal. The "weaker sex," they would very rarely be abandoned to defend the children by themselves. Lord Macduff's decision to seek out Malcom as an act of duty to country, causes him deep personal suffering.

Lady Macduff is driven by an inward impulse to guard the sanctuary of her family. If Lord Macduff will not stay and keep everyone together, she will take it upon herself and teach the hard lesson in the circumstance so her children are prepared to move forward and make good decisions in their lives, despite her feelings of betrayal. In the circumstances of the time, Lady Macduff is a very blessed and fortunate woman to have as many surviving children as she does. That is until they are slaughtered, of course. Two possible interpretations to explain her situation are; the first, that God is smiling

upon her for her piety and goodness; and second, that she must be a strong woman to have kept them alive this long. Her responsibility to her children's well-being also goes beyond basic physical need. She is in a position watched by those subservient to her in the societal structure and must lead by example. Preparing her sons to fight with a hired sword master proves that she has the confidence that they can defend their own families, and even possibly country, one day.

Lady Macduff has known the truth of how a person's behavior appears to others. The discovery she makes in her scene is that she has absolutely no control of the adults around her. The only power she really has in her scene is to instruct her children to not make the same mistakes that the men who are supposed to be their examples are making. Hamilton's cutting of *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare reads as if she pulled out threads of soliloquy and dialogue, keeping the iconic and important narrative elements, instead of removing large chunks that could interrupt the flow of the plot. The lines cut from Lady Macduff's scene leave out language that indicates Lady Macduff's hostility toward her husband, such as a statement she makes to her young son, "Your father's dead." Gunn appreciates this choice because, despite Lady Macduff's confusion about why her husband left without telling her where he was going or why, she is put in a light of honoring her husband. Hamilton's choice was selective, smart and appropriate for her known audience. Many of the audience members will be high school students that are required to read the production in their English classes.

Upon review of the set, the indoor scene will be staged on multiple platforms and levels. There is also a large playing space on the ground level, with a sunken space in the

orchestra pit for a caldron and witches. There were a few places where steps were placed so that the platforms can be navigated wearing a dress. The rendering of Lady Macduff's costume displayed a floor length skirt, long sleeves, a tapered waistline, and a veil covering over the head cascading down the back of the dress. A veil will be nice, reducing the amount of actor preparation needed before the curtain goes up. Hopefully, the dress has a zipper so this actor can easily perform motherly duties during her breaks in performance to feed her 9-month-old.

Regarding the baby prop, Gunn has her own baby and knows how to hold little ones who do not yet have neck strength. She can spot whether or not an actor has experience holding a baby by how they handle the prop. Usually prop babies are too light, so Gunn will weight her prop if needed for a more realistic feel. Babies also enjoy constant movement similar to being in the safety of the womb. She has seen actors hold very still with prop babies, and the habitual rocking of a mother is truthful, even while the baby is still in utero, and Gunn will capitalize on her personal experience to elevate truth on stage.

Having been a nanny for over three years and being a mother of a baby under the age of one, Gunn carries a deep affection toward children. She also knows the level of responsibility toward the outcome of a growing and developing human. Also, she married to a man who is wholly responsible for his own actions and consequences in the world, and sometimes feels powerless in those decisions. Gunn was not abused physically as a child, but suffered some emotional distresses, as most others have, from the actions of her parents. As a new mother, she often thinks about how she would

approach situations of emotional milestones in her children differently than the way my parents handled her. Gunn is also a teacher at heart and have learned how to remove emotion from the lesson that needs to be learned in any given moment. If she does react in anger, Gunn has learned how to humble herself and apologize so everyone can move forward in a happy and healthy way with forgiveness and understanding. Having a twin, she learned many of my life lessons by observing the consequences her sister has suffered due to her behavior without having to go through the same situation herself. Lastly, Gunn is a fighter who has been knocked down a number of times by oppressors within herself and in the world around her. She has the fortitude to get up and start over from scratch. Pain is a powerful teacher and if one can remain humble and teachable, anything is possible, even change.

Hamilton's theatrical concept of the production was casually laid out with visual aids and explanations of the life and times that the characters possibly experienced. In the time of the play, Great Britain was approximately the size of Minnesota and the people were ruled by men resembling warlords more than the great kings popular television portrays. Many of the warriors who backed the ruling few were also common, everyday farmers who didn't have swords necessarily, or a vast storage of weapons at their disposal. The communities were made up of small villages, shared living spaces and nothing to call grand, but very earthy, small and connected to nature. The food was very bland with little variety, with the bread resembling pita that was often old and stale. A pig was one of the easiest food sources to care for and a common staple. Naturally

fermented mead and beer were also common but resembled a very light beer by today's standard. Fish and eel were easy to come by, preserved by precious salt.

People clothed themselves with the natural materials that surrounded them, such as furs and leathers, with many layers due to the climate. Their shoes were soft and not the sturdy shoes of today. Some of these items were got by trade, but mostly locally because traveling traders were a seldom occurrence. Traders who came into town were a rarity and returned as infrequently as once a month. Travel was taxing as most of the areas surrounding populated villages were thickly wooded forests with small dirt paths for roads. These woods were the ideal imagination grounds for spirits as everything was alive and in balance with a give and take relationship.

Abnormalities in nature were directly related to abnormalities in human life and politics. The correlation and attachment to nature as a guiding force for human decisions was strong because most people were illiterate and looked for signs in nature to explain what was going on around them. The largest cultural influences for the people of this time were the Scots, Angles and Britons. Religious influences trickled down from the church clergy in a repressive way. Mortality rates were sometimes explained with mysticism and untamable supernatural influences. Medical and nutritional practices of the time were archaic and the human body, hygiene, bacteria and the like were misunderstood.

Thanes were great, strong heads of families and were the protectors of the community in exchange for food and textiles. The people were loyal to their Thanes and the entire social structure was built on this infrastructure. Women had right to hold

property if they were elevated in status because of their husband or family. They could also lead other men into battle and sometimes did when they were called upon to step up during war times, if available and trained to do so. However, the home was still the first priority of rule. They were the keeper of the keys rather than servants to their husbands. Men were still the head of the household.

Hamilton explained that this show has often been portrayed with Lady Macbeth being interpreted as an unnatural, demon woman. Her interpretation follows that this isn't only a story of ambition, which some scholars have stated as the internal motivation of the Macbeth family. This can also be told as a story of the loss of children because of war. Hamilton challenges the old idea that it doesn't matter how many children Lady Macbeth had and that that detail shouldn't be looked too far into. The mourning and pain of the childlessness she is suffering can be highlighted, especially since the text states that she still has milk, suggesting that her baby has not been dead for very long.

With this motif of loss and children layered on top of the other themes of the play, Lady Macduff is portrayed as an extremely privileged woman who has the honor of raising the little ones she carried in her womb. Gunn will do her best to portray the character with truth.

CHAPTER II

CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Lady Macduff was written by Shakespeare as a foil to Lady Macbeth. Critics have suggested she was either too submissive or too obstinate. Some suggest Lady Macduff's purpose was to stir Lord Macduff to action after her murder. These opinions, along with possible motives behind Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and adaptations thereof, will be discussed in the following pages.

Macbeth is one of Shakespeare's classic tragedies that has been performed, adapted and criticized since its debut in 1606. Its first performance was for King James I at the Great Hall at Hampton Court Palace. James VI of Scotland inherited the English crown after Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603, making him James I of England. The fact that King James descended from a Scottish heritage is important to consider.

"Shakespeare drew not nearly from his favorite Holinshed but from Hector Boece and various other sources of Scottish history . . . in the effort to please his royal patron . . . in which James might see and applaud the downfall of tyranny at the hands of his own supposed royal progenitors" (Wilson 75-76). Lady Macduff supports this idea of patronage in her line, "But I remember now I am in this earthy world, where to do harm is often laudable, to do good sometimes accounted dangerous folly" (IV, ii, 60 - 72).

According to Aristotle's six main elements work together to create tragedy, listed here in order of importance: plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, song. Lady Macduff contributes to a few of these elements.

In his book, On the Design of Shakespearian Tragedy, Harold Wilson illustrates an element of fate vs. human control that is interwoven throughout the plot. Even though the Weird Sisters know Macbeth's future, they have little control over his conduct. . . . Macbeth chooses to act—to kill Duncan, to arrange Banquo's murder, to murder Lady Macduff and her children, and to persist in his other nameless crimes. Macbeth clings to the seeming support of their later prophetic pageant, and that he cannot be killed by anyone born of a woman. But even to the end, he relies most of all upon himself; that is his tragedy, and also the measure of his heroic, if desperate, courage. With his last hope gone, he still fiercely challenges Macduff. (Wilson 73)

Pity is also created in the audience by the spectacle of suffering. Macbeth and his wife suffer to the point of death, while Macduff turns his suffering into revenge for justice. Lady Macduff's suffering is undeserved and quite cruel. She not only is forced to watch the death of her child (children in Hamilton's production) but she is left by her husband to fend for herself against a tyrant. She is also abandoned by two others, her cousin Ross and a messenger. Either one of them could have helped her leave, or could have stayed to fight.

Shakespeare's use of language and syntax support the mood behind each thought through the diction provided. When a character is feeling unpleasant or sad, words of

sadness are used. When a character is demanding, the language used supports the thoughts of dominance or control. According to Ted H. Miller in his article “The Two Deaths of Lady Macduff,”

In the terms offered by the Folio, Lady Macduff cannot see the higher responsibility to the political order—thereby affirming Aristotle’s gender hierarchy. In this version, her husband emerges as a man of proven virtue and the one most responsible for restoring moral order. In the scene that immediately follows her death, his virtue is reinforced in an unusual exchange while in exile in England with Malcolm. Just before her own death, Lady Macduff is thus made to condemn the morality of the play’s moral pinnacle. (861)

Shakespeare uses a great deal of imagery in *Macbeth*. As a woman with surviving children, Lady Macduff’s babes become a woven thread of symbolic imagery. Terence Hawkes writes in his book, Twentieth Century Interpretations of Macbeth: a Collection of Critical Essays, According to Cleanth Brooks, “The number of such references [to the babe] can hardly be accidental; and the babe turns out to be, as a matter of fact, perhaps the most powerful symbol in the tragedy” (46). Even though the line was cut from Hamilton’s production, there is an intended imagery and foreshadowing that links Macbeth’s original murder of King Duncan with that of the Macduff child. The foreshadowing occurs with the line, “And pity, like a naked newborn babe” (I; vii; 21). It could be interpreted that Macbeth realized the monster winning himself was at an infant stage, adding weight to his orders to kill the innocent Lady Macduff and her child. In turn, the future that Macbeth is attempting and unable to control is symbolized in the

prattling of Lady Macbeth's child as he banters with her about his absent father. The child's "defiance testifies to the force which threatens Macbeth and which Macbeth cannot destroy" (50).

Men played the female characters of Shakespeare's day and the audience members were expected to suspend their disbelief when going to the theatre. What they saw on the stage was not accepted as truth and reality. It was understood "... that the audience participated in the world on the stage and at the same time recognize the this world is a sort of playful adult make-believe that illuminates our world and yet vanishes when held against it" (Barnet 9). According to Barnet, this suspension of disbelief is a more complicated response than that of realistic or illusionistic theatre. He also mentions that the exceptional is more likely seen here, rather than realistic theatre. *Macbeth* presents, "... the world of unusual people and unusual happenings; it is both a familiar world and a strange world" (10).

At the time *Macbeth* was produced, the appearance of a woman on the stage was happening in Italy and France, but unthinkable in England. The original role of Lady Macduff was possibly played by the same actor who played Lady Macbeth at the Globe Theatre in 1611. John Rice was a boy actor with The King's Men at the time and may have played the double role. It is suspected he was not experienced enough to handle the magnitude of the role and an older man was used in performance. This suspicion stems from the attempt to protect the novice apprentice actors from a reputation of thief or degenerate. While discussing how Shakespeare's company trained their apprentices, David Edgecombe states in his book, Theatrical Training in the Age of Shakespeare,

“The reasons for keeping these young artists in obscurity are complex” and “...actors were thought to be aligned with the devil by some Puritans” (23). The young apprentices, starting between the ages of ten and thirteen, were often adopted as “...wards of individual actors” (25) and given training, shelter and food in return for their work performing.

Tina Packer’s book, Women of Will, talks about how young apprentices were required to memorize at an expressly rapid pace, as revisions to lines were made often and the boys were only given a single day to rehearse, in most cases. There were many young apprentices, so a healthy amount of competition raised the stakes for them. “So a young boy, working under this pressure, was going to be nimble of mind, a quick study, be naturally coordinated in mind and body, say his lines clearly” (171). Rotating through the boys may have released writing restraints from Shakespeare as he wrote female characters. A famous adult actor had a reputation to uphold, but the youth were fresh and free, and hopefully courageous enough to be vulnerable and truthful on the stage.

The boys were not the responsibility of the company, but of their new masters. There are testimonies of both quality relationships and strife between the numerous apprentice/master relationships. “Most frustrating is our almost complete ignorance of the boys who played the great female roles...” (23). Despite their lack of experience and knowledge of the world, the young men were accepted by the audience.

According to Phyllis Rackin in her book Shakespeare and Women, “There are far more fathers than mothers,” in Shakespeare’s writing, “and the mothers who do appear

are usually unsatisfactory” (134). In *Macbeth*, the role of Lady Macduff is the sole example of what normal femininity should look like, a woman restricted “to the private, domestic sphere, defined by their ‘natural’ vocation as wives and mothers” (134). This viewpoint on women was just beginning to emerge when *Macbeth* was first written and performed, but Shakespeare failed to support the character with any examples of a healthy marriage between Lord and Lady Macduff.

The modern domestic umbrella under which Shakespeare writes Lady Macduff is apparent in the lack of defense at home. Instead of living in the proper strongholds of a castle worthy of the feudal system’s war climate, she appears to be in an undefended and unfortified household. According to Rackin,

A medieval noblewoman would have been expected to lead the defense of the castle in her husband’s absence, but this lady is represented as a domesticated modern ‘wife,’ helpless without her husband’s protection, easy prey to the assassins who violate her domestic space. (135) Although cut in Hamilton’s version of the play, Lady Macduff also states aloud her weakness as a female after the Messenger leaves her. She shouts after him that she has done no harm, and quickly scolds herself for her visceral response with, “Why do I put up that womanly defense, To say I have done no harm” (IV; ii; 78-79)?

Lady Macduff’s final words before she runs off stage and is murdered, are of a loyal and submissive wife. When they ask where her husband is, she responds, “I hope in no place so unsanctified where such as thou mayest find him” (IV; ii; 86-87). To violent strangers, she will defend Macduff’s honor before running to defend herself. Sir William

Davenant, a very significant figure in the English Restoration, rewrote the classics to fit the politics and pulse of his generation of actors and theatre goers. Women were now allowed to perform, so naturally, the writing would change to fit the politics of a female.

Davenant's adaptation was performed a mere four years after Charles II was crowned King of England. As Lois Potter expresses it, the Macduff's argument "... externalizes an inner conflict..." about Restoration politics, an argument that "...badly needed ventilating..." at the time (206). As Michael Dobson notes, Davenant's "... complex presentation of political conflict. . ." may have been precisely what garnered this production its longevity (37-38). The fact that Davenant took the time to craft this argument for Lord and Lady Macduff, brings a debate of loyalty motives to the forefront of conversation, especially in his day. His writing addresses the "... contemporary interests and anxieties. . ." of the Restoration (Greenfield 51). In turn, the restoration audience was able to relate on a level that gifted longevity to this wildly successful adaptation.

Characters were also amended for the audiences of the Restoration. One of the characters drastically altered was Lady Macduff. According to Anne Greenfield's critical analysis, "D'Avenant's Lady Macduff: Ideal Femininity and Subversive Politics," she is magnified to a "full-fledged dramatic heroine" (41). She has three additional scenes in her character expansion. Davenant took the liberty to cultivate a stronger marriage between Lord and Lady Macduff in his addition. Rather than an abandoned bird, Lady Macduff was written as a confidant, supporter and friend to her husband.

Davenant's Lady Macduff also changed by demonstrating moral opposites between she and Lady Macbeth, of the former being virtuous and the later being wicked. Critiques Greenfield collected from Elizabeth Howe and Peter Dyson, shed light on the politic shift about how women are viewed. In summary, they express that there is a misogynistic layering of the proper behavior of an ideal seventeenth century woman. These virtues were dramatized in added lines such as, "Took with him half of my divided soul"(Davenant 10), a remark made after she was left behind by Macduff going away to war. She demonstrates her elevated status above the Weird Sisters and their prophecies with her statement, "He that believes ill news from such as these, deserves to find it true" (28). Of course, this is the opposite reaction to the prophecies that Lord and Lady Macbeth have, giving the two families a light and dark, black and white comparison. The internal motivation of ambition that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are written to possess is vehemently opposed by Lady Macduff. She urges her husband more than once to, "be never by ambition lead" (Greenfield 32). She refuses to let her household become a victim of ambition, staying domestic in her motives while his rebuttals are addressing a concern for the affairs of the nation.

With the expansion of her character, Davenant placed Lady Macduff in similar situations as Lady Macbeth. How each reacted to the same situation highlighted the difference in the moral character of the two women. Because of the parallel writing, Lady Macduff's character is misplaced under a microscopic lens of misogyny. "[She] does not always conform to contemporary standards of ideal femininity. Sometimes. . .[her]. .

. behavior can be quite subversive” (43). In Davenant’s Act III, Macduff has discovered that the murder of King Duncan was at the hands of Macbeth. Being the foil, Lady Macduff challenges her husband’s duty and right to overthrow Macbeth and urges him to recant his statements of intent to do so. According to Greenfield, if Lady Macduff were actually submissive in this situation, she would not challenge her husband with such boldness.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have explored Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* in the medium of film, Orson Welles, Akira Kurosawa, Roman Polanski and Justin Kurzel have all taken on an adaptation of *Macbeth*. Welles created a dynamic mood in which “tone is really that of Macbeth-noir,” with an extremely low budget, a papier-mâché set and lighting that was “dark and murky, creating a sense of heightened paranoia within the sparse, simple setting” (Jones). Kurosawa adjusted Shakespeare’s work to fit the medieval Japan, changing the names of the characters and hurling arrows at Taketori (Macbeth) in the final battle, instead of staging a duel, pinning him “. . . to the wall of his fortress, having been turned on by his own men” (Jones). Polanski’s version was his first feature film after his wife and unborn child were murdered. “The slaying of the Macduff family in particular is almost too brutal to watch” (Jones). In Kurzel’s rendition, there is a highlighted comparison between Lady Macbeth having no children and Lady Macduff having many. The children are more utilized, as in Hamilton’s production, to torment the Macbeth family, “. . . the young girls of the household perform a song for Duncan and his guests.” (Jones). In a review by Claire Hansen, Kurzel also has a horrific murder of Lady

Macduff and her children. Just before the scene, the audience sees “the children in the Macduff household play-fighting over a crown of branches” (Hansen).

There are a number of ways to interpret the murder of Lady Macduff and her family, that vacillate between effective and overdone. One interpretation is to consider the act as unmotivated and unrealistic. Another interpretation is to consider it motivated by mercy and a warning to others not to cross the tyrant King, therefore saving many other lives. These views were discussed in the classroom of Marie Syrkin at Brandeis University between 1928 and 1954, where the opinions of her students have fluctuated dramatically over the decades. Before the climax of Hitler’s power, the students laughed at the entirety of the scene, especially the bold voiced, self-sacrificing son announcing his death and begging his mother to run away. According to Syrkin’s students at the time, the episode was dismissed, “. . . as an embarrassing remnant of the Elizabethan weakness for melodrama. . . The Lady was unconvincing primarily because the class found the situation unconvincing. The bounds of reasonable probability had been grossly exceeded” (317).

Miller suggests that Lady Macduff is “. . . suffering a moral free fall” (861). She asks her son, “How wilt thou do for a father” (IV; ii; 39)? He capriciously responds with, “Nay, how will you do for a husband” (IV; ii; 40)? In which she responds, “Why, I can buy me twenty at any market” (IV; ii; 41). She fails to be a model of a virtuous woman in the eyes of her child by suggesting that a husband is cheap and easily replaced. After the attempted genocide of the Jewish population in World War II, the conversations in the classroom shifted dramatically. “To kill or not to kill has ceased to be a real issue;

the question is rather, how many. Wholesale destruction carries something of the appeal of a bargain sale. It gets defended as being swifter in achieving its purpose but as ultimately suffering” (Syrkin 319). In the end, it was interpreted as kinder. Due to the amount of violence today’s young audience experience in multi-media, it could be argued that they have been desensitized to violence and are able to view and psychoanalyze the actions of homicidal individuals with less and less empathy.

Despite the brevity of the role, Lady Macduff’s death, along with the death of her children and the servants, is the pivot point that turns *Macbeth* into a revenge tragedy. Some adaptations show her death in detail, and some pay a more direct homage to the original Folio with her death implied to have happened off stage. In Ted H. Miller’s opinion in his article “The Two Deaths of Lady Macduff,” “She does not die well. She is deprived of a certain dignity, and this is achieved through a series of juxtapositions with her cousin Ross, her son, and her husband” (859). Miller suggests that Lady Macduff’s murder is the worst crime Macbeth commits, even over the regicide of King Duncan. Lady Macduff’s confusion about her husband’s absence is also not resolved. Her cousin Ross is the deliverer of many facts about family members that are difficult for the individuals to receive. “But cruel are the times when we are traitors and do not know ourselves” (IV; ii; 22-23). Ross’s words are a defense of Macduff as he brings to light how her accusations of her husband are an act of betrayal and she should not give into the traitor within herself.

Lady Macduff has been criticized as a woman who doesn’t know her place, despite Shakespeare’s original intension of creating her as a foil to Lady Macbeth. The

writing of her character has been talked about as either too passive or too aggressive, depending on Shakespeare's original Folio or the adaptation thereof. In Women in the Age of Shakespeare, Theresa D. Kemp writes, "Lady Macduff's purpose is primarily to highlight Macbeth's depravity and to illicit Macduff's guilt and righteous vengeance" (96). Her character is important and motivates action within the play. Many adaptations have capitalized on Lady Macduff being undeserving of her murder, either painting her to be the pinnacle of virtue, or depicting her death in a gruesome and grotesque way. Though brief, Lady Macduff made her mark in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

CHAPTER III

JOURNAL

Monday October 1, 2018

Auditions started with an unpredictable day in motherhood and time had escaped me by the time the afternoon auditions came around. Having neglected to sign up for an audition time, I approached Heather Hamilton at the beginning of auditions to request that I tag onto the last group. Instead of granting my request, she insisted I perform my monologue right then and there at the beginning of the first group. I should have anticipated that she might make such a request. I argued I was dressed down and would set a poor example for the new undergraduates. I also argued that I needed to go do motherly things to feed my tiny one, and again she insisted, so I ran my fingers through my hair, and gave it my best. I mixed up a few of the lines, but pressed on with conviction and stumbled my way through. I had put on my audition form that I was interested in the role of Lady Macbeth, but in that moment, I knew my stumbling monologue lost me the role.

I also realized that the piece I had chosen was a monologue of Hermione's in *A Winter's Tale*, listed toward the mother character, Lady Macduff.

The department was casting our Minnesota State University, Mankato company in four different productions all at one time: *Macbeth*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Stupid Fucking Bird* and *The Happy Elf*. The crowded green room was bustling with

individual's stories of their multiple monologues, groups rehearsing tap and jazz callbacks, friends calming nerves, frantic stage managers, assistant stage managers and shadowing stage management students making phone calls and passing out numbers to pin on actors, all while the smell of dinners funneling through the single microwave wafted through the air.

My *Macbeth* callback pulled me from the tap audition for *The Happy Elf*. It proved my prediction of not being cast as Lady Macbeth and I read for Lady Macduff. I also neglected to read through her lines before the audition, so I stumbled my way through that as well and didn't expect to receive a speaking role. After midnight, the cast lists were posted, and I found I was cast as Lady Macduff after all.

Monday November 26, 2018

The first rehearsal started with huge sea of greetings from familiar faces and darting glances from unfamiliar ones. Some of the unfamiliar faces were the children cast in the production, mostly children of adults cast from outside of the university. Hamilton had a tent set up with coloring books, toys and reading books to entertain them in the long evening's line-through. We were asked to be memorized and I was almost there. I had utilized a technique of mind mapping where I attached images to each line or phrase, and in some cases, each word, and placed them in locations walking into my childhood home. I'm almost to the point where each thought no longer needs a picture

and character intention is taking over. The young ones who will be playing my children were making eye contact with me.

Professor David McCarl began his time explaining the costumes will resemble the actual period that Macbeth lived, the 11th Century just before the Norman conquest of England. Simple garments were worn with lots of layers. Battle court is a costumer term used where the person would take off armor and the costumes are what remain, simple, T-shaped and layered. The women wore fitted, slinky elegant gowns and McCarl's drawings were just so. Lady Macduff was drawn with a fun head piece. I hope I don't have to do anything extravagant with my hair.

The rehearsal time not taken up by our line-through was filled with Hamilton explaining her vision of the show, which is documented in the previous chapter.

Tuesday November 27, 2018

Tonight's rehearsal was full of fun discussion and conversation with the cast. Hamilton spoke about the daily life of people in this time period. It is rainy and smells of the Highland peat and manure. She said that the kind of people we shall portray were earthy Christian people, farming in long strips with cattle tilling a few acres of property. The diets of the people contained vegetables, lots of beer with a low alcohol content, and lots of eel and pork. Many families had a pig because they didn't require a great deal of husbandry. The average life expectancy statistics were swayed by the extremely high number infant deaths. It averages out for the most part with adults living until their seventies. That is, of course, if individuals were not exposed to disease from poor water

resources and lack of nutrition, killed in the battles of war, or died in childbirth. We are not to imagine grand kings draped in gold cloth with excessive jewelry. The soldiers were farmers and when the Thanes called them, they set down their plows to go fight with whatever they had.

Superstition was everywhere. Wilderness was part of that superstition. Christianity was there, but the worship of nature was an incorporated part of religion. Every single character would consider everything around them had value and if you take from nature you must give back or nature, or consequences might follow. The king is connected to the land. If there is a famine, then something is going on with the king. The ghosts weren't necessarily evil, more wild. Women's work was highly respected. They could hold property and could lead others into battle. The ruling and maintenance of the home was the responsibility of the wife.

Many pictures were passed around. One was of a church similar to one where Macbeth would have been crowned. Another was a picture of the stone where the witches supposedly appeared called the Suenos. The Pictish people are often considered to be naked, blue and barbaric, and left behind no language, but lots of stones.

Hamilton described the bones of the Norman invasion briefly.

So, you've got the British Isles filled with Celtic people. Rome comes in and sets up an infrastructure and then falls. Then other tribes come in and fight in a goulash of cultures. In 1066 there is an English King named Harold (EH) and a Scandinavian King named Harold (SH). SH attacks and EH has to defend England from the Vikings. The battle of Stanford

Bridge and EH wins. William, the Bastard of Normandy landed. EH ran for 3 days to fight William and almost won. William wasn't as badass as he bragged. What William brought with him was Norman culture, chivalry, cavalry, food and culture. This one battle completely changed the face of this entire culture. The old-world England then became of what we think of today.

Next Hamilton played an audio clip of what is believed to sound like Shakespeare's actual dialect. It was hard to understand and very interesting.

Wednesday November 28, 2018

Tonight, was table work for my scene. Two of Lady Macduff's children were there, actors Nora Sturgis and Owen Haque, who I will refer to as Nora and Owen, so we went through the scene a few times, mostly for them to hear their cue lines from myself. Neither of them was afraid to make eye contact and engage with me. Both were a bit shy to say their lines with conviction, but it will be wonderful once their little minds jump into the world of make believe.

I neglected to bring my script and a true test of memory was necessary to launch me into bringing the character to life in a more genuine way. I bumbled my way through, with corrections of pronunciations. For example, I had flipped letters around for the name of the bird mentioned from "wren" to "wern." I also was not paying attention to the meter of the language. Instead I was attempting to make the words make sense to the

hearer. With one adjustment from Hamilton, I was initially successful and will continue to bring the language to life.

Hamilton also warned me to never play Lady Macduff as a shrew. I never considered her to be so. Being a new mother and now realizing the strength it takes to take charge as the matronly queen of my own home, coupled with how outspoken Lady Macduff reads, my intentions were to play her suppressing her anger that comes from fear, while still setting an example and teaching her children in the real moments of life.

Thursday November 29, 2018

Tonight, was fight technique and choreography with Meredith Kind. Being in McCarl's fight choreography class my fall semester, I was curious to see a different perspective of broadsword fighting for the stage. Instead of beginning with the 8 points of the body, Kind began with walking technique.

I was soon shifted into rehearsal for my scene with the children where everyone dies. Hamilton did a wonderful job addressing how we were playing at death like they were superheroes in movies to take the fear out of the situation. When we began discussing the snapping of a neck, Nora leaped into her mother's lap kissing her repeatedly and saying, "I don't want that to ever happen to me." After that the wiggly kiddos and I ran through lines a few times, and then we went through blocking. After about an hour Kind came in to put the finesse on the skeleton Hamilton had put together. Instead of Nora collapsing on the floor away from me, Kind had her collapse into my arms as she died. Nora and I had built a rapport by that point and she fell into my arms

willingly and trustingly. I let her know that I would be screaming, and we figured out how I could cradle her head where my hand covered one ear and her other ear was against my chest.

Monday December 3, 2018

We cleaned my scene with Kind tonight. Two of the children were not there, so we started the scene when the Thugs entered and finessed the fight choreography. It was interesting to watch Nora voice that she was getting a little creeped out when her father Ryan Sturgis had to stab her. Kind was amazing with her and demonstrated a few times when they added a twist of the blade and a body reaction. Nora finally jumped back in, no longer afraid. I told Sturgis that at Nora's age, I would have been so extremely terrified to pretend something like that. I probably watched too many Freddy Kruger movies at far too young an age.

On the sidelines waiting for my section of the rehearsal I was asked by Kind to think about why Lady Macduff wouldn't just grab her children and leave the moment her children were in danger as the Murders came in. I had thought about the circumstance, and possibly could make it evident to the audience that I was very newly postpartum and was possibly struggling to get around still. I wasn't able to walk without pain for nearly 5 months after I had a cesarean section myself, so I could relate. The only problem was trying to get the situation to read correctly for the audience. Kind mentioned that the oldest boy, Owen, eventually steps in to defend his Sword Master, played by Erin Wegleitner. It was suggested that I wouldn't leave the room until I had all of them and

that we would ad-lib me calling his name and him refusing to leave his teacher behind. On the first day of rehearsal the children were asked to choose a character name for themselves, so I approached Owen and asked him if he had thought about a character name for himself. He hadn't so I got some suggestions of period appropriate names from Ty Hudson to let Owen choose from. He hated Edward and Edger type names, so I went with the traditional Bible names, Mark, Luke, John. John was his favorite, so now I just have to finesse with Heather in later rehearsals when it would be appropriate to shout for the boy. Owen is a gem of a young man and has started doing fun kid things to sneak up on me and such.

Tuesday December 4, 2018

Today was a brief evening for me as we blocked some of the scenes in the beginning of the show. Hamilton added me into Act I scene vi where all the guests greet King Duncan as the honored guest at the Macbeth mansion. The entire Macduff family is invited to this tremendously formal occasion, including the baby. We learned how to step backward and bow simply, marked our spots, and were asked to remember our blocking for when we touch the scene again for next month.

Thursday December 7, 2018

Tonight, is our first full run-through of the show. The shenanigans began with a fight call between Macbeth and Macduff, a fight they had learned the evening before and were

therefore still working at half speed. They did well remember since it was a fairly long fight.

Mitchell Evans playing Ross is on crew for the Fall Dance Concert so I will once again do my scene without him. The children are also not called for this rehearsal, so I hope I remember my lines as I will be on stage with only Erin Wegleitner, talking to myself with a coat for a baby. It might be like a film shoot, with more people behind the scene than in the scene, and we're just doing my shots. It actually went pretty well. I'm hoping some of the children will learn to be dynamic in their line delivery.

Watching the skeleton of the show pieced together in room 126 was exciting. There was obviously no underscoring and an eerie hum of the central air that loomed over the room. It was nice to see almost everything blocked since the last time we went through the show it was just a line-through. Now we have a winter break and will be restaging in our space when we return in one month.

Monday January 14, 2019

The new dynamic of moving to the Ted Paul Theater for the first time was a challenge. Tape on the floor to outline the levels of such a dynamic set would have been useful in our first rehearsal space, but there isn't a practical way to apply it to the floor of any of the dance studios in the Performing Arts Building. Another challenge was acting with Evans for the first time. Since tonight, I've spoken to a void with multiple voices speaking Evan's lines.

The children remembered everything they were supposed to, for the most part. Monir is beginning to break out of her shell a bit. I'm especially impressed with Nora's ability to connect with props on the stage. She found detailed interaction with the doll used as the baby and it actually helped me engage with her in more detail. In the following rehearsals I'll find ways to touch and connect with the other children more. Especially Monir, who is the inquisitive child in the script, worried about the fate of her father. I'm still struggling with holding the prop baby.

I'm having trouble speaking to Owen being so far up stage without directly looking out to the audience. I'm sure Hamilton will work it out like she said she would before the break.

On a whole, we called line way too much and I'm expecting a lecture to the company from Hamilton. For some reason, I didn't catch that we were supposed to speed through our lines, so I was pausing and thinking and emoting inappropriately. Hudson was the only one who was actually speeding through his lines accurately. I would be frustrated as well. We have had months to memorize, and previous lectures. I never called line myself, but I was tripping over words and correcting myself.

Thursday January 17, 2019

Tonight, Hamilton finally got a chance to really guide and direct me. I love being directed and given suggestions to run with. I was basically announcing my lines like I'm on a mic in a sports stadium instead of connecting with the text and the people around me. I was trying to project, but increasing my volume also raised my pitch to an almost

whiny tone. Hamilton didn't say this explicitly, but she did match the pitch and tone I was using to make me aware of how I was sounding, and it didn't match the power of Lady Macduff. Upon Hamilton's request, I lowered my pitch, took the Pinter pauses from between my lines and progressed from anger to fear to panic to resolve in my short monologue. Hamilton also reminded me to make the opposites in the text obvious, highlighting the comparisons to make the meanings behind what was said more attainable for the audience.

I've also be waiting to connect with Evans and finding a way to touch and plead with him to stay. Hamilton went with the idea and added a kiss on the forehead from him to me to make my grasp of his arm not look romantic.

The baby I chose this evening was one with a soft body. It felt much more natural to handle as I have a nine-month squishy baby of my own at home. Hamilton is debating a crying sound cue to add stress to the circumstance of me being alone with all of my children. Just after her comment, I might try to record my daughter, Nahar'a, crying— dear God kill me now—and present the sound bit to her. If the sound cue is my own daughter, it will naturally heighten the anxiety boiling beneath Lady Macduff. My skin crawls when she cries and the lack of sleep from sleep training an infant will hopefully help play into the frustration needed.

I'm honestly not doing any prep work before my scene in rehearsal. I'm resolved to be much more focused.

Sunday February 3, 2019

Kind came to adjust the fight choreography now that the set is in place. The platform levels are much higher than anticipated, but it does add to the athleticism of the fights. The levels also make the fights seem more spread out. I now get to lift children off the first platform to avoid them jumping too far. They are wonderful and just go with it. Nora and I added a moment where I tell her to run while the other children are fighting the thugs. She so easily goes into a land of imagination and has no hesitation bantering with me, even if I change our ad-libbed script. There are a few changes in the details of some of the deaths and these will add to the empathy of the scene. The little prop baby keeps getting dropped and bounced upon the stage. I wonder if I could ask Monir to run with it off stage, and she places it somewhere safe off stage and returns to help fight for her family.

February 4, 2019

I had my first costume fitting today. I loved my gown but have gained far more maternity weight than I or McCarl were ready for. He was very reassuring that he could let out some of the seams in order to give my baby weight some more breathing room, but I couldn't help but feel self-aware in a way I wasn't used to.

On a lighter note, Steve Smith our lighting designer came in to add lighting tonight. His lighting makes a world of difference, enhancing the mood and the spooky feel of such a murderous tale.

Hamilton is also layering in detail with the children. As the mother of most of the children in the play, there are added moments that establish the Macduff family dynamics. I greatly appreciate the added scenes with Owen and Lord Macduff. Hamilton has added nice nuances to give weight to the scene where he learns his children have been slaughtered.

Despite being one murderer down, we ran the Macduff family slaughter a few times this evening. Monir is having trouble ad-libbing, but I have some ideas of games to play with her backstage to get her to start pretending. Owen is also having trouble projecting. I can probably come up with a game or two to help him with his articulation and volume. I'm also worried that some of my interaction with the children still showcases the top of my head too much. I'm not sure why I can't seem to remember that I can crouch down to get on their level.

Tuesday February 5, 2019

Tech rehearsal took quite a while this evening, expectedly so with the magic making of the witches. The constant sound of wind howling, the occasional crow cawing, and thunder add a welcome eerie quality.

I've started kissing the tops of some of the children's heads and holding their chins to get them to look at me, or wipe something from their cheeks. Omar is so affectionate and sweet, and never pulls away when I touch his little head or face. It's nice that he doesn't have a space bubble and will go along with little gestures and improvisations. But, I'm still not sure how to make sense of the fact that I don't leave

with my children once the murders enter the home. Some of them are not understanding how to show that they are scared.

Wednesday February 6, 2019

The run went alright this evening. The children were caught up in playing and games more than usual, so some of the cues were missed. I remember performing when I was young, and I needed to be reminded and shuttled to every one of my entrances. There is no way I would have been responsible enough to pay attention and wait for my cues.

For some reason I was going up on my lines during fight call. I'm so painfully exhausted trying to sleep train my own daughter that my husband has sent me to sleep on the couch in the living room, so I don't hear her crying and wake up myself. Honestly, there is no way I would be able to function at even a fraction of the level I'm attempting to function if it was not for my husband. If I graduate, he gets a two-week vacation all by himself somewhere, anywhere!

Friday February 8, 2019

Fight call was productive tonight. Monir has been very reluctant to take direction and react to the murders coming to kill them, so Hamilton moved her far stage left and centered Nora and myself as Nora ad-libs and reacts to the action around her. This helps me so much. Nora is also acting scared and clinging to me, making it difficult to move off stage. This will play as much more believable. After I hand Monir the baby, she just

stands there, and it might look like she's too afraid to go by herself and is waiting for me. The next wonderful change was that Owen's dad now pulls him back and cuts off his line. This was the first time I had noticed, due to my new stage position, and it was wonderfully jarring. Nora was also given a wooden toy sword by the sword master that I take from her during our dialogue. I need to remember to react to the fact that she is playing with a boy's toy.

I wonder if there will be a baby crying cue. . . we have a very silent fake, naked baby so far. I'm also worried about going up the stairs in my dress.

Saturday February 9, 2019

Hamilton asked me to ad-lib while chasing the two children fighting and chasing the bread tray. I'll probably add phrases such as. "Children come hither." "Shall I fetch father?" "Kind hostess." "Go Hence." "Humblest apologies."

Nora's attempted multiple times to coach how I'm holding the prop baby. It's a very stiff doll and in no way natural, but I took her suggestion and hopefully it helps her to not be distracted by it any longer. I love when she bends down and kisses the baby's head so I can kiss the top of her head.

Owen had a stomachache and asked to sit out for a bit. . . I forgot he asked Hamilton to do so and went looking for him and missed the entrance. For some reason, the entire Macduff family didn't enter because I wasn't there, so I approached Hamilton at intermission and let her know it was my fault that the entrance was missed.

I'm having a difficult time lifting Nora from the first platform and placing the two of us center. I always end up too far to stage left. In tonight's run, Nora let me know that I was hurting her ribs when I picked her up, but we never worked on a better way for me to grab her, so she ran down the stairs right next to the murderers to avoid my squeezing her. I'll have to think of a solution.

Sunday February 10, 2019

First dress started with a fight call in costume. My beautiful dress built by McCarl was let out perfectly. I was able to do my fall to the floor without feeling like the sleeves would rip at the armpit. The hem of the skirt was shortened enough where I never needed to raise it to walk.

Evans, Owen, and one of the murderers were missing tonight. My solution to make sure I hit center after picking up Nora from the platform went well. I now hand Monir the baby after the messenger leaves so both hands are free to grab Nora, so I don't squish her ribs. When we changed the blocking so I could easily stay center with Nora while the fight on the platform with the sword master takes place, It worked! However, Monir is still standing there reacting to nothing. I'm not sure how to help her, Omar and Owen who don't know what to do. Hamilton asked Ryan Sturgis, one of the murderers, to run the scene a few times during intermission to help get the kids in the groove. In our rehearsal I suggested Monir crouch down with the baby, frozen in fear or that she open her eyes very wide and look back and forth between things. She was hesitant to all suggestions, but I'll keep trying.

I was thinking my ad-lib scene needed to be louder because it came across that I was unsure of what I was saying; however, after the run, Hamilton gave me the note to make it soft and under my breath instead of loudly projected. I'm sure they didn't sound like a part of the text. The children are doing a wonderful job making it difficult for me to catch them. I love natural truth that comes out of young children.

Regarding the absence of Evans. It reminds me of when I lost my voice during a week rehearsal for a musical. I was forced to react to what was going on around me while the stage manager read everything for me in the house. It added a layer of physicality that would not have been there otherwise. In this case, I've been forced to focus on the prop baby and reacting to the children around me. I think I'm finding ways to interact with them more despite the brevity of the scene.

Monday February 11, 2019

I've been having trouble feeling like I look natural with the baby doll. I slipped a couple of five-pound ankle weights into the swaddled doll and it helped immensely. Now hopefully when the baby falls to the ground in the Macduff murder scene it will seem more believable. There is still no sound cue for the baby crying. I must have a good little sleeper.

Our fight call took 45 minutes tonight because people kept leaving the room to prepare for lobby photos. Once I realized the issue our fight captain, Tyler Hudson, was running into with missing actors, I chose to stay in the theatre until the Macduff murder rehearsal. I had yet to get into hair, makeup and costume. Knowing that my hair was in a simple braid down my back, I estimated three minutes for that; I can get show makeup on

after a day of wearing my everyday makeup in five minutes; and my costume fasteners include 3 snaps and a zipper, estimating about three minutes. If I ran down the hall and didn't take my pants or socks off, I could execute the change in under ten minutes. I neglected to time myself, but I think I was pretty close and didn't miss my photo. Unfortunately, people kept leaving the theatre during photo call as well and we didn't start our run until 7:50 PM.

Tuesday February 12, 2019

To help wrangle the children, the Macduff fight call is now first. This is extremely helpful and went very well tonight, despite myself being two minutes late unhooking from my pump in my office. Hamilton changed the boy's blocking to come down and stand in front of me and their two sisters as if they wanted to defend us. Nora was pulling on the boys to leave and it will work if she doesn't get too aggressive. I still feel like I have egg on my face and wish we had some drums or underscoring or light shifts to help mask how awkward it feels that I don't leave. Hamilton also suggested the reason I don't just run away is because my children won't follow me. I'm going to try to ad-lib more lines calling them to me, shout for a guard, telling the girls to run. Hamilton establishes the children as being disobedient when they chase the servant with the bread tray in Act I and I struggle to get them to listen and go back to dinner.

McCarl added a veil to my costume that cascades from my head down my back and I couldn't be more excited about it. This now means I have to put no effort into my

hair because it's covered the entire time. That's one fewer thing to check off the list each night. I'm already pushing the limit due to lactation needs.

After rehearsal, Hamilton gave me the note to work with the children to help the boys look like they are trying to defend me. They had taken the note to come down off the platform and defend the ladies. However, when I adlibbed for them to follow me, they willingly moved over to stage right instead of standing their ground.

Wednesday February 13, 2019

Tonight's fight call went well. Hudson pointed out that I was not making contact with my murderer before I pulled my arm behind my back for him to grab. It was worked out that my wrist is grabbed at my side and then together we move to placing my left hand behind my back in what looks like a bind. This added a shift and a beat of struggle and dominance. During the performance, I forgot about this and stuck my hand behind my back quickly. I'm not sure if adrenaline got the best of me, or I was trying to mask the previous limping along of the scene. I'll ask Hudson if it was alright. Poor little Nora was sick tonight and let me know that she was not feeling well and that our contact should be minimal. She was still engaged, acting and reacting to what was going on around her, but her energy was slightly mellowed. The other children did a bit better reacting to Owen's humorous lines as he's teasing his mother and attempting to show off his wit. As far as helping and coaching the children, they listened for the most part by not moving toward me as I yelled to get them to leave the scene. I felt a bit like a bird who was stuck in a room and couldn't find the exit as I kept bouncing back and forth

between each of the children trying to turn and push them off to the door, or picking them up and placing them by the door and then running and tugging at the boys.

Sturgis came down to me sooner than normal and helped get some of the egg off my face. I'm interested to learn what others thought of the scene having not seen any of the rehearsal.

Thursday February 14, 2019

Opening night went well for everyone in the cast. The audience was small due to Valentine's Day, but they were listening. There was a moment after Nora dies in my arms and I scream where the audience chuckled. I'm not sure if they were laughing at one of the kids dramatically dying in the cutest way ever, or if they got the giggles among themselves. I'll have to ask around to find out what was tickling them but never found out.

I ad-libbed a new line tonight as I'm running toward Sturgis. I usually just say no and charge him, but after thinking about it more, I'm going to change the motivation to advance to pleading. The new line is "Please, grant mercy." It felt more natural to be pleading because of how impossible winning the fight would be.

Friday February 15, 2019

My daughter, Nahar'a, and my husband, Dalen, escorted me to the theatre tonight. She's going through a mommy phase and I surprised the two of them this afternoon. I

wasn't warned that she had been crying and asking for me for part of the day, so when I showed up to wish her a happy 10 month birthday she cried a little and reached for me. The I asked her, "What's the matter, little bear?" She immediately pointed at her dad and Dalen and I burst out laughing. To give her and I a little more time together today, she watched my fight call and then we all watched the rest of the call together. Then I saw Hamilton in the hallway, and we spoke about raising up the next generation of performers. "Nothing makes me happier than a bunch of children with Shakespeare." Hamilton stated with a twinkle in her eye as she went to braid her daughter's hair.

My costume zipper got stuck in the middle of my shoulder blades when I dressed for the evening. It's so stuck that I was unable to do my mommy duties to get milk for Nahar'a for fear of not being able to get it back on and making the situation worse. I was a busy Lady Macduff for the bloodbath. Also, it allows the costume to rest just past my shoulders, making them look broad, so this wardrobe mishap is just fine with me. The Macduff family murder scene went well tonight. I accidentally stepped on the hem of my dress after kneeling with Nora and giving her instructions to go down the stairs and out the door to find the guard. We both took quite a fall and sat stunned for a beat. I asked her in character, unfortunately in contemporary English, if she was alright, then I got her up and stood myself. Cast members off stage said our fall added to the scene.

Saturday February 16, 2019

Tonight, seems to be dragging for me. The KCACTF responder is in attendance, so the rest of the cast seems to be very in the moment. Even Nora, who has clearly

become comfortable improvising on stage. Tonight, after I escorted her to the platform to sit with her doll, she tried to kiss me on the lips. Her being sick, I turned and offered my cheek and she planted one on me. Instead of standing, as I usually do, to speak with Monir, I stayed and interacted with her a bit more, stating some of my lines with my chin on her head. I have no idea how any of it read I was caught so off guard. I'm comfortable making things work and changing stuff last minute, but I hope my not kissing her didn't devalue the performance in any way. I wish we would have all been this comfortable around each other earlier and the other children cast were willing to imagine.

I tried to fall with Nora on purpose tonight, and it felt false through and through. I landed on my left cheek pretty hard, so I know it was at an appropriate speed. Nora was aware of the change since we spoke about it at intermission. I reminded her to not anticipate the fall with a facial expression that would indicate we were about to go down, but I can't see her face so I'm not sure how it went. A lot of times when something happens on accident it's wonderful and reenacting the mishap doesn't play correctly. After tonight, we get a few days off!

Thursday February 21, 2019

We had an interesting fight call after four days off. Wegleitner fell weird and knocked the wind out of herself with the handle of her sword, therefore, we reset. Some lines were missed by one of the children, I can't remember which one, so we reset. Nora decided to test her faith in me and instead of collapsing onto me in her dramatic death,

she all but threw her arms to the side and attempted a “trust fall.” I caught her, but the impact sent my torso backward and we ended up in a pile on the ground. Because I’m still lacking core strength after the birth of my daughter, I couldn’t sit up and continue the scene, therefore, we reset. Apparently, the gutsy little lady also gave more blows to her father with her wooden prop dagger than usual, and one last time, we reset. The actual performance of the scene went much better. Nora only did half a “trust fall” and I caught her little head just before it smacked against the stage. The ironic thing was, just that very morning I was half playing with my daughter in the kitchen while trying to tackle some dishes and I turned to her just in time to catch her tiny little head before it hit the hard wood. My reaction time was already primed and ready to go.

Little Omar has become brave and added some choreography to his fight scene during fight call. After his death, instead of laying still like he usually does, he decided to shake things up a bit and rolled off the platform. I was downstage of him saving Nora’s life, so I didn’t see it, but the gasps were sudden enough from the adults that I quickly turned to see the commotion. I think he almost landed on the sword that the Sword Master drops during her death.

As I was walking down the hall to get set for my first scene, there was a hustle and bustle about our leading lady, Megan Keuter, hurting her knee. I found her and asked her to perform a few simple maneuvers to assess the situation. As she was jumping off the platform in the opening scene, she didn’t bend her knees and one of them buckled backward enough to cause some pain. Some kind stagehand got her an anti-inflammatory and I gave her a gentle wrap with some gauze from a first aid kit and by intermission she

was feeling much better. “The initial panic of not knowing how badly I hurt myself is why I seemed so out of sorts.” Kueter stated in the dressing room. “I’m pretty sure it will be sore, but I’m sure I won’t need to go to the doctor or anything.” I was glad to hear it. I have strong fear of getting injured myself.

Friday February 22, 2019

My little Macduff family didn’t feel like going through lines together at the top of Act II in room 113, so I pulled Owen aside to run our little back and forth. I’m not sure if he was distracted by something off stage or in his head about something that had happened in the day, but he dropped one line. I didn’t cover as well as I hoped I would have in that situation. There was a lengthy pause while I was interacting with Nora and her little wooden toy, but hopefully it looked either purposeful or natural. After that little bump in the road and the murderers entered, something magical happened for our audience full of high school students. They were very engaged, like one could feel them at the edge of their seats, and the last moment, when Nora fell into my arms, they gasped. Maybe it was because she did a death defying trust fall again, this time in the perfect place where I could cradle her and I wasn’t worried about her head hitting the stage, or maybe it was because she dropped so fast, as if she was really hurt. Either way, it must have looked real.

Photo call wasn’t as painful as I imagined it would be. Having been directed a number of times by a Minnesota State University, Mankato Alumni, I’m used to having a photo call with moments picked from the director reenacted for a still shot. However, I

wish there was a way we could get a photographer during a performance so everyone could get home a little sooner and so the shots looked more realistic. During the photo with Nora in my arms dying, I was asked to make an uglier cry face from Hamilton. I have so many ugly cry face pictures of myself from previous shows I guess I was trying to get one glamor shot in the bunch. I realized I'm in the moment screaming during in this part of the production, so I have no idea what my face really looks like, so I'm not sure what face I made in the moment.

Saturday February 23, 2019

Two show days are my least favorite days of any run of a production. I'm fortunately not in very much of *Macbeth*, therefore I can get a little bit of homework accomplished while I'm doing mommy things in my office. Everyone is exhausted from photo call last night.

The Macduff murder went pretty well in the matinee. I saw Hamilton filming offstage and turned it up a notch. In the heat of the moment, after Nora collapses in my arms, I didn't breathe deeply enough to support my scream and it will probably take a bit longer to warm up for tomorrow's closing matinee. Looks like I'm going to be on vocal rest for part of the weekend.

Well...this evening was an interesting show. Nora is now very comfortable adding a few lines in here and there. It actually makes the scene seem natural as she is doing what in real life would do. For the first time she acted angry that I took her toy dagger away from her and we made up by me picking up her doll and handing it to her.

She gave me a great big kiss, on the cheek, and a hug afterward. Her death fall was another story altogether. She was closer to me than normal and when I caught her, I barely got my hand underneath her head. She herself wasn't used to the change and didn't close her eyes to die. Right after the lights went down, she said, "That was a good fall." Unfortunately, the audience giggled as I shushed her. I started to get frustrated at first, but quickly remembered when I was six years old in the opening prologue of *The Nutcracker* in Amarillo, Texas. Before I left the stage, I shouted, "Hi, Mom!" My mother was standing offstage left to usher me back to the dressing room until my appearance as an angel in Act II. This entire experience is captured on a VSH and sits on my mother's bookshelf. You can even hear the delighted giggles from the audience at the tiny person breaking character. I hope she remembers this experience when watches her six year old performance in *Macbeth* when she's a professional stage actress. I also hope she is cast in a show with an imaginative young lady such as herself someday. Oh, the joys sharing live theatre with children.

Sunday February 24, 2019

Closing Show! I got to the theatre right on time. It was quite the endeavor getting out the door this afternoon with my daughter just waking from her nap right as I was supposed to be driving away. I gave her a snuggle and handed her to her Dad for an afternoon snack. Honestly, I'm not going to struggle with the post show blues because my heart is at home and I feel like I've missed out so much already with her first year milestones. I know she won't remember this year of her life, but I will.

Highland Summer Theatre auditions are going on during our closing show, so fight call was a bit out of order due to half of the cast preparing and popping into an audition. This weekend alone most of the Theatre Majors and Graduate students were involved with whatever show they are in currently, the 34th annual High School Theatre Workshop, Highland auditions, BFA auditions, rehearsals for the upcoming productions, dance concert rehearsals and whatever homework needs finishing. Phew! If this department doesn't prepare one for the juggling of the real world, I don't know what would.

For our last added scene in Act I with Lady Macduff chasing her two youngest children, Omar and Nora, who are chasing a servant with a food tray, Nora found something new to improvise. She added the line, "Shiny," last night as she reached for Lady Macbeth's necklace, and on top of that, today she added, "I want snacks." I have no idea if she prepares these added lines or if it just comes out of her in the moment. We were kept on our toes throughout this production. If she ever "makes it big," I will be the first one to buy a ticket. What is her imagination going to be like after some life experience?

Wow!

Little Omar has had a tradition of pretend killing the prop baby backstage before our scene together. Tonight, was no exception. I'm not sure if he realized it was his last time to pretend, but he added enough sound effects that he needed a gentle reminder to be quiet backstage. Funny guy!

I took a bit of inspiration from Nora and found something new in my performance this afternoon. Usually when the murderer throws me to the ground I cough, gasp, grab my knee, grab my wrist; tonight, I started to crawl away as if to escape. I didn't go too far, but this helped with Nora's fall being in the right place. She also added a final breath and exhale to show she was dead.

As the lights faded to blue, I said goodbye to Lady Macduff, goodbye Ted Paul Theatre, goodbye Minnesota State University, Mankato. Till our paths cross again.

CHAPTER IV

POST PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

Hamilton's final synthesis of this production was a domestic one with more than expected technical elements that morphed the play into something slightly different than what Gunn originally visualized. The theme of dead children was woven through the story, as intended, and added to the depth of Lady Macbeth's story in the production. While Lady Macbeth is a character in the forefront of the action, a great amount of added detail went into creating an empathetic response from the audience toward her. There were children for more of the characters, creating empathy for Lady Macbeth, a married woman with no children of her own. In the Prologue, an Irish lullaby was added and sung sweetly in a major key, then shifted to a minor key to set the mood of mourning. All the women in the scene had a child of their own that died of famine from war. The Weird Sisters carried around the corpses of their children wrapped in black shrouds throughout most of the play, with Buckley dragging a large, heavy, pre-adolescent body. Lady Macduff's scene in Act IV usually only has one young boy and herself discussing the seemingly traitorous actions of his father. Hamilton added another boy, two girls and a baby to the scene, splitting up the boy's lines among three of the children. Earlier in the show there were also added bits with one child breaking away from her Macduff family unit and embracing Lady Macbeth. This emphasized a natural affinity toward children possessed by Lady Macbeth. Having no surviving children of her own, the empathetic response was heightened by other children gravitating toward her. In turn, weight was

added to Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking monologue. Lady Macduff and her clinging child were murdered, and Lady Macbeth knew about it. "The thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now?" (Shakespeare 46). Lady Macbeth may have felt responsible for the murder of the only woman in the play who had greatly defied the odds of famine and death from bearing children, and it was more than Lady Macbeth could endure.

The following quote by Sylvan Barnet in his book, The Genius of the Early English Theater, displays the actor and audience shift that has happened since Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth*.

Perhaps it is enough to mention that although the prose theatre offers realistic imitations that please, it usually lacks. . . the element of play, of fun. The awareness that a drama is a play, and an actor a player, tends to disappear in the nineteenth-century illusionistic theatre. When, for example, Ibsen was congratulated because he created good parts, he replied, "Parts! I do not write parts. I create men and women." None of Ibsen's characters reminds the audience that it is sitting in a theatre, as Shakespeare's characters occasionally do (9).

Often, a direct address to the audience, inviting them into the world of the players, helps the suspension of disbelief, especially for a contemporary audience. Without this aside, Shakespeare's audiences would have suspended their disbelief anyway. Today they expect to see truth and the reality of relatable circumstances, even with Shakespeare. Aware of this fact, Hamilton encouraged and coached actors to find meaning in the words and make the poetry understandable to an audience whose ear is not

tuned to the style. This allowed the audience to understand more of the plot. With the style of acting more realistic, Gunn inevitably appeared very contemporary in her style attack.

One of Hamilton's final comments to myself and other actors within earshot was that, "[You] all did your job today, thank you! You all just got a bunch of high school students excited about Shakespeare. Well done." As an educator, this is a viable point to celebrate for Hamilton. Several of Shakespeare's plays are required reading for Secondary Education English classes, and the element that is often missing is how does the text translate to the stage. In Gunn's opinion, plays were written to be performed, not picked through with a fine tooth comb in an class, unless you're a part of the creative team in a particular play. Gunn appreciates that Minnesota State University, Mankato works with local high schools to provide discounted group tickets so students can begin to imagine the performative elements of a play.

There were added elements of mysticism and magic in this production: a boiling caldron that ghosts would appear from and disappear into, fog machines placed in multiple locations, lighting effects to simulate lightning and sound effects of birds, thunder, distorted voices, reverberating song lyrics and screams, drum underscoring in battle, etc. These smoke and mirrors coupled with the contemporary acting gave the final product of the show a slightly cinematic feel that went over very well, especially for the high school students in attendance.

Costumes often change the physicality of the actor, and in Gunn's case, the costume nearly completely changed how she had previously physicalized Lady Macduff.

A mistake the actor made was not using a skirt during the rehearsal process. During the first dress rehearsal, the actor nearly panicked thinking the children might step all over the skirt when she bent down to directly address them. Mentioned in Chapter II, Gunn scooped up a child and tripped over her own dress, sending both of them crashing to the floor in one performance. There was also a challenge stepping up onto the platforms in a long skirt. First, she tried to kick-walk up the step. It worked two out of three times, so Gunn decided to go ahead and lift the hem. In her scene, she was carrying the baby prop and often holding the hand of another child. During some of the dialogue, she upstaged herself longer than desired to guide Nora up the platform, then lifted her hem to ascend herself.

Another challenge Gunn was aware of from the beginning of the rehearsal process was not being amplified vocally with a microphone. She had no trouble projecting when facing out toward the audience but knew there were moments when she would be facing away while speaking. Inevitably, she felt like she increased her volume and articulation to an artificial level, hoping the back of the house would understand her. There is already a challenge with today's theatre goes not being accustomed to the rhythm and language of Shakespeare's prose; however, by the time Gunn spoke, the ear of the audience had had hopefully adjusted to the language. Gunn never received a note from Hamilton regarding volume and articulation, so it must have been acceptable.

The stage combat in this production was very theatrical, exciting and showy. This is where the spirit of theatre in Shakespeare's day was captured the most accurately. A naturalistic or realistic approach would have had far less footwork and leaping from

platform to platform. There would also be a greater emphasis on physical struggle. Much of the combat, especially with the children in Gunn's scene, was executed at a very slow speed. Today's audience is used to quickly paced combat because of film. Gunn was very happy she did little combat because an injury would have been extremely inconvenient.

The use of the children to magnify Lady Macbeth's sorrow was written into the script and expounded upon by Hamilton, but the placement of Lady Macduff's child hugging Lady Macbeth broke the flow of one of her iconic monologues. There were other times when adding children as ghosts in battle scenes upstaged the combat and action. Acting in a scene with inexperienced children was a major learning experience for Gunn. Some of the young actors were comfortable with the change of blocking and positions that occur as the rehearsal process goes on, and others were not. Some of the young actors were comfortable pretending and could improvise and go with unexpected moments that inevitably happen in live theatre and others were stoic and difficult to guide into making choices. The lesson Gunn learned is to build a relationship with the young actors much earlier and play games backstage that lead them into looking like they are making choices from truth.

The main disappointment to the production was the lack of material Gunn can use from this production for a performance reel. In Lady Macduff's only scene with lines, she was placed in the down left corner of the stage, facing away from most of the audience. The children were also placed in position of primary focus in the scene. Gunn was also unable to turn and directly address one of the children in dialogue because he

was upstage of her, high on a platform. In early rehearsals, Hamilton reassured Gunn the upstaging would be completely fixed but that never happened, and understandably so.

Due to the fact that most of the children were very resistant to any kind of direction from Hamilton or fellow actors, the rehearsals to adjust their memorized blocking would have taken far too much time. The outcome resulted in Gunn delivering some of her lines out and up in the direction of the audience with a tonal inflections indicating that she was speaking to her son, and therefore there may be some live pictures, in addition to those taken at photo call, that are usable for a portfolio in the future.

The set design created traffic problems within the large group scenes. There were very few paths to get from platform to platform including one or two on stage steps to ascend or descend levels and no off stage entrances or exits to the middle levels. The lack of options created an issue for Hamilton trying to get the right person in the right place to be seen. The rhythm of the stage picture of The Macduff Family at the Macbeth banquet, with all the other lords and ladies, took a great while to set up.

Gunn enjoyed her experience in Director Hamilton's production of Macbeth and was impressed with the grandness of the costumes. She also enjoyed watching some of the actors backstage, namely Ty Hudson. The highlight of Gunn's experience was watching Hamilton's six year old daughter get lost in telling the story, especially when she would improvise.

CHAPTER V

PROCESS DEVELOPMENT

The following chapter discusses the process from Ashley D'Lyn Gunn's earliest memories of theatre into the present. Her passion for the arts started at the age of four and progressed through baton twirling, dancing, acting, singing and finally choreography and teaching. She was groomed by Pacific Northwest Ballet (PNB) in Seattle, to join their company by age sixteen. She spent eight summers of her teens and early twenties involved in the summer intensive PNB's school. The first five years as a student planted the seeds for her ambition to pursue a career in performing. The latter three years were spent as a dorm counselor where her eyes were opened to how much work goes into facilitating educational arts programs. PNB's program catered to achieving excellence in performance craft with an emphasized balance of dorm and social life.

Gunn's first major focus shifting from ballet occurred when she developed an interest for musical theatre in high school. She auditioned for the annual spring musical and got the lead. Her director and choreographer was Blair Bybee and he directed Gunn toward Lindenwood University to work with a modern dance choreographer to get some of the ballet rigidity out of her technique.

After experiencing her first taste choreographing for musical theatre at Lindenwood University, along with performing the roles of Cinderella in *Into the Woods*, Sally in *Cabaret* and Our Lady of the Lake in *Nine*, Gunn realized a gap in her

experience. She was well versed in the role of an actor and able to take direction well, but that was about it. Despite the efforts of her ballet teacher, Gunn was less than comfortable teaching and coaching others. The following eleven years were intense with training and choreographing for all levels, ages and styles of dance. All the while, Gunn was given the opportunity to develop her Musical Theatre and dramatic acting skills at her local community theatre in roles such as Millie Dilmount in *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, Judy Haynes in *White Christmas* and Babe Botrelle in *Crimes of the Heart*, as well as various ensemble, supporting leads and choreography opportunities at Coeur d'Alene Summer Theatre, Arizona Broadway Theatre and The Alhambra Playhouse in Jacksonville, FL. While in pursuit of becoming a well-rounded performer, choreographer, teacher and acting coach, another change of heart surfaced with the opportunity of joining a team to found Spokane Valley Summer Theatre. A broadened scope of theatre education, production and management became her focus as she stepped into the Director of Education position. Despite the difference in vision and eventually walking away from the project, Gunn still plans to invest in young artists through equipping the proper artistic tools for launching into the professional industry of performing and directing, which has led her to pursue her Masters of Fine Arts degree in Minnesota State, Mankato's Graduate program. The actor's training at Minnesota State, Mankato has proven to be incredibly useful in her continued development as an actor and educator. This chapter will focus on the most useful contributors to that progress.

Gunn has taken some profitable classes at Minnesota State University, Mankato. One of significant use was Theatre Speech II taught by Paul J. Hustoles. This class

opened the actor's awareness of vocal dynamism, as she discovered her voice was very capable of stretching beyond her perceived limits. This vocal manipulation didn't necessarily come easily to the actor, especially the different vocal qualities featured in class: breathy, harsh, horse, muffled, strident, throaty, nasal and thin. However, she was eventually able to blend the qualities and layer in other dynamics: time, tone, tension, volume and articulation, to catalogue an arsenal of tools for character building. Gunn was also introduced to Standard American through the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). This skill of identifying unique sounds of American English speaking outside of the twenty six letter alphabet has proven extremely valuable.

After Theatre Speech II, Gunn was permitted to take two semesters of Stage Dialects. These courses were built upon cumulative knowledge from Theatre Speech II, with the added layer of idiosyncratic substitutions in IPA of ten specific dialects: High British, Cockney, Brooklyn, French, German, Southern, Russian, Scottish, Italian and Irish. Gunn was also required to evaluate dialect performances, enabling her to refine constructive criticism and grading.

One of the most challenging classes Gunn has taken is Advanced Acting Techniques with Hustoles. The amount of material covered was vast for one semester. A cumulative final performance project incorporating dozens of specifically layered techniques, tools and skills was most beneficial to the actor's overall development. Implementing one facet at a time required formulaic and meticulous attention to detail, broadening her range as a performer. The layered approach of this course will become a guiding framework for Gunn's future teaching opportunities.

Acting Styles proved a useful endeavor to Gunn in that it allowed her to put into practice and observe dozens of plays from multiple periods she had learned about in Theatre History I. Five styles were explored in depth, utilizing proper greetings and gesticulation, and much more: Greek, Elizabethan, Comedy of Manners, Romantic and Post realistic. Gunn has no previous formal training in period styles, but a lot of experience with outside-in acting from her ballet experience. Ballet performance is mostly presentational, so finding the basic framework of each scene wasn't difficult. The Elizabethan and Comedy of Manners scenes were very wordy and hard to memorize, but once that obstacle was hurdled, the scenes were great fun to rehearse and perform. Taken in her last semester at Minnesota State, Mankato, Gunn was able to apply techniques she had learned in her previous two years, giving her scenes the dynamism Hustoles was looking for.

Gunn performed in enough productions to meet her requirements for her degree at Minnesota State, Mankato but due to her pregnancy in her second year, she wasn't able to be as involved as she would have liked to. A noteworthy role was playing Amanda Wingfield in Tennessee William's *The Glass Menagerie* directed by Melissa Rosenberger. The significant challenges in the rehearsal process of taking on such a weighty character were properly guided by Rosenberger. Together, Gunn and Rosenberger were able to craft a performance unforgettable for the actor. Emotional range, longevity and a deep understanding of building relationships between characters, were a few of the invaluable lessons gleaned from this experience.

The role of Margaret March in the musical *Little Women* was another unforgettable role for Gunn. Being in her first trimester of pregnancy, the actor was still able to sing and execute the dancing required for the role. A deep connection to the historical Alcott family developed as Gunn was entering a new milestone in her own life of becoming a mother and raising a little woman of her own. There was also a deep sisterhood that blossomed amongst the women cast that will be forever special as the actor shares stories about performing the role of Meg with her daughter someday.

In her most quirky role doing high musical theatre comedy, the actor easily dove into her inner goofball in the role of Eulalie Mackecknie Shinn in *The Music Man*, directed by Hustoles. This particular production provided an opportunity for her to stretch her choreography muscles as well as enjoy and really chew on the supporting lead role. Having choreographed for non-dancers and musical theatre students with very little dance training, Gunn was pleasantly surprised with the turnout at auditions and had quite the time choosing her ensemble of Teen Dancers. The incoming freshman class gave was an unexpected plethora of young talent to choose from. Bouncing between these particular responsibilities is nothing new to Gunn and gave her more to look forward to in rehearsal. Gunn took Musical Theatre Acting II during her second year, instructed by voice teacher Nick Wayne and Hustoles. Five solos and five duets were performed by the actor, ranging through multiple styles, genres, and eras. The actor was forced to memorize, develop an appropriate attack, and block material at a very rapid rate. The following song types were learned and discussed in depth with each student receiving critique from Wayne, Hustoles and fellow classmates: Ballad, Charm Song, Comedy Song, Rhythm

Song, Musical Scene, Patter Song, Throwaway Song, Eleven O'clock Number, Special Material, Ballad Parody and a Character Song. This open forum analysis of each student proved to be of great value to the actor's overall performing and teaching skills. With the structure of the course being rigorous and memorization heavy, Gunn developed the necessary skill of memorizing song lyrics quickly and has much to add to her audition repertoire.

Sprinkled throughout her time at Minnesota State Mankato, theatrical content taught in an academic lecture format helped broaden the scope of theatre as an art form for Gunn. Theatre History I and II, as well as Musical Theatre History introduced a wide range of dramatic literature from the origins of storytelling through the multiple changes and developments that leads us to what we call theatre today. In Theatre History I, starting with the beginnings of Greek masked theatre, Gunn was able to timeline the theatrical world and its political, philosophical, and social dynamics into the Seventeenth Century. Reading and analyzing plays from almost every period, the actor gained a deeper respect for the writers who labored to provide material for the players of the stage. In Theater History II, Gunn was privileged to guide a small group of undergraduates through numerous discussions and study hours, as well as leading a lecture to the entire class on her own, touching on a subject of her choice. Many of her peers embarking upon their Masters Degrees do not get the opportunity to teach and lecture, or learn how to grade essays where they chose to enroll. Knowing the privilege, she was experiencing, Gunn felt even more prepared for the collegiate professorship that lie before her.

In Musical Theatre History, the birth of American Musical Theatre in 1866 into the present day was lectured by Hustoles, introducing the actor to the wide range of categories Musical Theatre has to offer. Cumulatively, Gunn is now able to identify key players in Musical Theatre throughout the decades, the successes and flops of each era, and most importantly, the composers and lyricist who make the art of Musical Theatre a possibility.

Stepping outside of her emphasis in performance, Gunn was permitted by Hustoles to take his Advanced Directing class. Having directed straight plays and musicals in her past, Gunn realized very quickly she approached directing purely from an actor's point of view. This class allowed her to take a step backward and tell a story with the big picture in mind. Actor coaching is a necessity for a director working with very amateur actors, yet, coupled with picturization, composition, rhythm, mood, lights, sound, etc., the actor can now direct with confidence, knowing a little more and realizing where she needs to keep learning and growing as a director.

Theatre Management was another class outside her emphasis that Gunn was given permission to take by Hustoles, broadening her view of a producer's role in a theatre company. Without Gunn's previous experience with starting a professional Summer Theatre, she would have been completely overwhelmed with this course. However, because she had a hook on which to hang the information she was learning via lectures and the required text, Gunn thoroughly enjoyed the class. She was able to practice building theoretical companies with mission statements, management flow charts, production budgets and show seasons, helping her see the forest for the trees. Gunn

gained a vast understanding of Microsoft Excel and Keynote Speaker/Power Point as she prepared for each of her three enormous creative projects, each with different specifications that together covered the extensive material learned.

Gunn has taken a few dance classes while at Minnesota State Mankato. Jazz II with Rosenberger was a fun challenge. Having an extensive dance background, the actor appreciated the variety of styles Rosenberger presented in her combinations and taught at an appropriate pace for the wide variety of skill levels in her class. Gunn still requires improvement in grounding her dancing into the floor to escape the label of “ballerina,” inevitably bleeding into every style of jazz the actor attempts to execute. A variety of casting opportunities will present themselves as soon as this actress learns to hone the skill. The only qualms the actor had with this dance class was the fact that Rosenberger seemed to have little experience teaching the students how to execute the techniques they were lacking. For example, instead of teaching her students how to do pirouettes, she told them to enroll in a ballet class to gain that specific skill. Therefore, instead of teaching the actor how to ground her movement into the floor, her final grade suffered due to the inability to improve upon the correction.

Another dance class the actor took was Dance Improvisation, taught by guest artist Joe Crook, an alumnus of Minnesota State Mankato. Crook’s professional background included modern and contemporary dance disciplines, a form of movement very uncomfortable and foreign to the actor who is used to extreme structure and form. Crook’s main goal for his students was to help break from form and structure to create something innovative and new for the dance world and audiences who enjoy the abstract.

Gunn found herself resorting to a pedestrian attack as she grew in her ability to isolate specific regions of the body. There were also a few characters that emerged from this experiences that will possibly appear in choreography if the actor is given a chance to experiment on willing dance students in the future. The discipline of improvisation in dance is not often thought of as a skill; however, Crook guided his students through extensive exercises and awakened the actor to realms of creativity never tapped into before and Gunn hopes to continue to experiment in the direction of improvisation.

Gunn has also been granted the opportunity to teach undergraduates as part of her assistantship at Minnesota State Mankato. Teaching Ballet I and II for Allison Doughty, who was on maternity leave, was a highlight to say the least. Providing appropriate vocabulary and demonstration skills to a variety of experience levels came naturally for Gunn, having taught classical ballet in a studio setting for six years, guided by very qualified mentors. However, a challenge that caught the actor by surprise was how difficult she found grading the physical movement of the art form in a university setting. The actor finalized her evaluation method upon the effort and improvement of each individual, making grading decisions easier to justify. In order to create opportunities for those with less experience with the classical ballet technique, Gunn facilitated vocabulary quizzes, written examinations and visual demonstrations, giving balance between the well trained and the academically minded. At the end of the day, a dancer's forward momentum depends on how hard they are willing to work and study to climb the latter to the next level of promotion. Professor Daniel Stark sat in on one of Gunn's classes early on in the semester and gave her some inestimable feedback on her teaching. Engrained in

her explanation of each combination were tangents on tips and tricks she had accumulated for technique development. Stark pointed out ways to streamline her class while still incorporating muscle placement and development. Gunn was able to cover much more material in the time allotted for class by applying his feedback.

Yet another teaching opportunity presented itself when two faculty members resigned over the summer between Gunn's second and third year of her Graduate studies. Teaching Tap I and Tap II was an unexpected and very welcome addition to the rigors of her third year. Going back to the fundamentals of tap dance, Gunn approached Tap I from a foundation of individual sounds with their corresponding title, and layering to the double, triple, quadruple, etc., combinations of those single sounds. Having taught tap dance in an individual, private lesson setting, the challenge of equipping nearly sixty students divided into two classes was overwhelming at first. Gunn honed the skill of scanning the room to look and see who was struggling with any given step and pulling each student out to individually assess with a constructive critique and then drill in the pattern or correct habit. There were also multiple experience levels among the students in these classes and in order to keep the curriculum interesting for the upper level tappers, Gunn challenged them to write out the choreography for combinations, fill in the blanks for which foot was used for any given step, and write out the counts above the choreography already noted for them. This proved very effective for the future choreographers and educators of American Tap in each class.

Teaching Tap II was a similar experience, but instead of focusing on each individual movement for an extended period of time, Gunn constructed and printed out an

exhaustive vocabulary sheet for all the tap steps from one sound to eight sounds, as well as twelve different time steps in an even and swing rhythm. With the class, the Gunn would briefly review difficult movements and break them down for combinations. Tap II also focused on original Broadway choreography from musicals instead of Gunn choreographing the combinations. This allowed for exposure to a variety of styles of tapping from kick line to stomp.

A teaching opportunity specific to acting Gunn was privileged to take on was a course called Acting for Everyone. Watching the growth of non-major students was encouraging as a teacher. Her goal was to provide the students with the basic skills and confidence for public speaking and performance for a variety of future occupations. While most of her students will never grace the stage, she believes they left her course with a broader view of theatre appreciation and skills to continue developing in many public and private speaking situations. The greatest challenge presented to Gunn was teaching to a group of individuals who were very close minded to the idea of acting. Once they realized it would benefit them in their careers as police officers, business/marketing/sales representatives and in communications, most warmed up to the idea of standing in front of strangers and facing the fear of public speaking.

Speaking of speaking, Gunn was asked and accepted to teach Theatre Speech I in her final semester. A seemingly daunting task at first, Gunn enjoyed researching and learning the breathing and resonation techniques foreign to herself, applying the techniques in her role as Lady Macduff, and presenting a well-rounded foundation for her Speech students with examples of do's and don'ts from her experimenting in rehearsal

and performance. The curriculum she settled with was written by Lucile Ruben, a speech teacher at Circle in the Square in New York, NY. Her text provided exhaustive exercises, examples, and visual aids that would round the experiences of the undergraduates and International Graduate students in this particular department. In addition, Gunn utilized exercises from Kenneth Crannell's Voice and Articulation, the text used by Hustoles in Theatre Speech II, which also had a plethora of exercises and examples of correct and incorrect technique for building the vocal skills required to speak well.

Approaching the end of her time at Minnesota State, Mankato, Gunn has developed significant pedagogical improvement, giving her confidence behind her passion to teach at the college and professional level. Gunn is very hopeful and secure in continuing her career path as a performer and educator after her time has ended with her professors, students, peers and future colleagues.

APPENDIX A

PRODUCTION PHOTOS



Ashley Gunn as Lady Macduff, Nora Sturgis as Child Three, Monir McCabe as Child Two.



Nora Sturgis as Child Three, Ashley Gunn as Lady Macduff.



Owen Helmer as Child One, Ashley Gunn as Lady Macduff, Omar Haque as Child Four, Monir McCabe as Child Two, Felipe Escudero as Macduff, Nora Sturgis as Child Three.



Jameel Haque as Murderer, Omar Haque as Child Four, Erin Wegleitner as Macduff Swordsman, Sturgis Sturgis as Murderer, Ian Helmer as Murderer, Owen Helmer as Child One, Ashley Gunn as Lady Macbeth, Nora Sturgis as Child Three, Monir McCabe as Child Two.

APPENDIX B

PROGRAM

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO
 Department of Theatre & Dance
Presents


William Shakespeare's
Macbeth

Feb. 14-16 & Feb. 21-24, 2019


Director
Heather Hamblton

Scene Design John David Paul	Costume Design David McCarl
Lighting Design Steven Smith	Sound Design Ben Kramer
Production Stage Manager Jenna Nevenon	Fight Choreographer Meredith Kind

*Peter and the Starcatcher is produced through special arrangements with
 Music Theatre International,
 421 West 54th St., New York, NY, 10019.*

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 the Department of Theatre & Dance at 507-389-6661 (T), 800-627-3529 or 711 TMS/TTY. THEA228K_02/19



- 4 -

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Macbeth.....	Gary Scott Du Charme II
Lady Macbeth.....	Megan Kueler
Lady Macbeth's Attendant.....	April Reed
Duncan.....	Seth Honerman
Macolm.....	Ty Hudson
Donalbain.....	Alexandria Sharpley
Siward.....	James C. Vao Cort
Young Siward.....	Eliana Avila
Macduff.....	Felipe Escudero
Lady Macduff.....	Ashley D'Lyn Gunn
Banquo.....	Trevor Belt
Fleance.....	Maya Avila
Ross.....	Mitchell Douglas Evans
Lennox.....	Yaureybo Jordan
Menteith.....	Ben Siglin
Angus.....	Derek Tomlinson
Hecate.....	Vanessa Vuckovick
Lord.....	Pradeep Gurrata
Sergeant.....	Alex Ess
Old Man.....	Victor Garcia
Porter.....	Ryan Christopherson
Seyton.....	Ana-Brit Asplen
Scottish Doctor.....	Sarah Honerman
Messenger.....	Nick Finken
Servant.....	Lydia Bodner
Macduff Swordsmaster.....	Erin Wegleitner
Weird Sisters.....	Sam Buckley Martha Cubillos Sandiana Mervio
Ladies.....	Harmony Anderson Yu Miao Chloe Sirbu Paige Tiefenthaler
Soldiers.....	Joseph Daly Sam Smith Cody Webb
Murderers.....	Ian Helmer Jameel Haque Ryan Sturgis
Macduff Children.....	Omar Haque Owen Helmer Monir McCabe Eleanore Sturgis
Apparitions.....	Robin Honerman Rhys Eskridge

APPENDIX C

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
11/26/2018 ALL CALLED OFF BOOK! Line through, Dramaturgy	11/27/2018 all called except kids, table work.	11/28/2018 all called except kids, table work.	11/29/2018 FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHY I and V+VI-VIII	11/30/2018 FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHY I and V+VI-VIII	No rehearsal	12/2/2018 Block major March scenes: I, II, IV, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII
12/3/2018 block major kid scenes, Appearances called at 6:30 for IV, I, March kid called at 7:30 for IV, II, Kids released by 8:30, then block murderers IV, II, III, Stage Merchants in III, (but not whole scene)	12/4/2018 Block Dungeon scenes and Banquet I, II, IV, V, VI, VII, III, murderers NOT called for their lines in III.	12/5/2018 block major Madloom and Throne scenes IV, III, V, II, V, IV, III, IV, II, IV, Block Lady III V, I.	12/6/2018 Run Show Without Kids	12/7/2018 Run Show Without Kids	12/8/2018 WINTER BREAK!	12/9/2018 WINTER BREAK!
01/13/19 major kid scenes, Appearances called at 6:30 for IV, I, March kid called at 7:30 for IV, II, Kids released by 8:30, then EVERYONE ELSE CALLED for a speed line-thru	1/15/2019 work Act I, no kids	1/16/2019 work Act II, no kids	1/17/2019 work Acts III and IV, no kids	1/18/2019 work Act V, no kids	1/20/2019 NO REHEARSAL	1/20/2019 NO REHEARSAL KCACTF
1/21/2018 NO REHEARSAL KCACTF	1/22/2018 NO REHEARSAL KCACTF	1/23/2018 NO REHEARSAL KCACTF	1/24/2018 NO REHEARSAL KCACTF	1/25/2018 NO REHEARSAL KCACTF	1/26/2018 NO REHEARSAL KCACTF	1/27/2018 RUN THRU no kids
1/28/2018 Block kids into Act I crowd scene, Run kid scenes IV, I and VI, kids released by 8:30, then work Act I	1/29/2018 work Act II no kids	1/30/2018 work Act III no kids	1/31/2018 work Act IV no kids	2/1/2018 work Act V no kids	2/2/2018 NO REHEARSAL	2/3/2018 Troubadour
2/4/2018 ALL CALLED Run Thru	2/5/2018 ALL CALLED sound tech	2/6/2018 ALL CALLED light tech	2/7/2018 ALL CALLED run thru	2/8/2018 ALL CALLED 1st TECH	2/9/2018 ALL CALLED RUN THRU	2/10/2018 ALL CALLED FIRST DRESS
2/13/2018 ALL CALLED second dress	2/12/2018 ALL CALLED MAJOR'S REVIEW	2/13/2018 ALL CALLED CONFIRMATE PREVIEW	2/14/2018 OPEN!			

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