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Technical Direction of Shakespeare in Love

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TECHNICAL DIRECTION OF

SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE

by

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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 Jared Shofstall's technical direction process for Minnesota State University, Mankato's production of *Shakespeare in Love* in the fall of 2019. This thesis chronicles the author's process from pre-production through post production in five chapters: an early production analysis and a process development analysis. Appendices and works cited are included.

CHAPTER 1

EARLY PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

This chapter contains the early production analysis for the technical direction of *Shakesepare in Love*, adapted for the stage by Lee Hall, based on the screenplay by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard. It will be directed by Paul Hustoles and stage managed by Kendra Gilsdorf. The scenic designer will be John Paul, costume designer David McCarl, lighting designer Steve Smith, and sound designer George Grubb. The production opens October 31, runs for two weekends and closes November 10.

Shakespeare in Love tells the (fictional) story of how a young William Shakespeare fell in love with a young woman of a higher social standing, Viola de Lesseps and is inspired to write what is arguably the most famous love story in the English language, *Romeo and Juliet.* At the beginning of the play, we see how Will is in debt, and suffering an acute sense of writer's block. He keeps writing lines that the audience will recognize as famous Shakespeare, but they are all wrong - “Shall I compare thee to a mummer's play” (1.1 p 9). Viola, meanwhile, has fallen in love with Will through admiring the poetry of his work as it has played throughout London. She desires nothing more than to join the performers onstage and speak Will's lines. She decides to dress as a man so that she can audition to perform in the new show that Will is producing. Almost simultaneously, Viola's father promises her hand in marriage to the incorrigible Wessex. Miraculously, Will and Viola meet outside of rehearsal and fall for each other and Will begins courting her – even trying to woo her outside her balcony – a scene the

audience will quickly recognize as the inspiration for *Romeo and Juliet*'s famous balcony scene. Eventually, Will and Viola fall madly in love with each other and the audience sees Will's masterpiece forming. Wessex's anger at competition and Viola's lack of obedience is a force the couple must continually deal with. Eventually, in a rage, Wessex kills Christopher Marlowe, mistaking him for Will. Despite their love, Viola is forced to marry Wessex ruining any hopes Will had for their love. Before she leaves, she plays Juliet in the premier, in a brilliant production before the queen herself.

Being an adaptation of a screenplay, *Shakespeare in Love*, keeps conventions one would expect from a film – incredibly short scenes back to back with completely different locations. Some scenes are less than half a page in length. This leaves the director and designer with two main options – open stage with lots of tiny scenic pieces or a unit set with a couple of scenic pieces that come on. Hustoles and Paul decided on the latter option. They want a unit set that is inspired by the theatres of the time. In the script there are references to The Curtain and The Rose – Paul pulled most of his research from The Theatre and the modern rebuild of The Globe. Though William Shakespeare and The Globe theatre are inextricably connected in historical context, it strikes the technical director as an odd choice to be the primary source of inspiration.

First, *Shakespeare in Love* is specifically in Shakespeare's early career – somewhere between 1592 and 1596. The Globe was not built until 1599. It then burnt down in 1611, and has been rebuilt based on excavations to the original site and descriptions and drawings of the original. By drawing such strong inspirations from just one of the theatres of the era and ignoring other inspirations makes the design feel a little stilted

towards Shakespeare rather than a general Elizabethan Theatre aesthetic.

The final design that Paul and Hustoles agreed upon consists of two stationary units and a few small pieces that will come on to set certain scenes. The small pieces consist of a 4-poster bed, a ship, and a small boat. The stationary units are a stage with a balcony and a seating gallery.

The technical director sees a few problems before him in this process. As is typical, the budget is a concern. From looking at the model, it looks quite large. At the point that the technical director needs to start building the set, he still does not have any drafting of the set – just a rough groundplan and pictures of the model. This lack of information leads to two main issues: it makes estimating and budgeting properly before building nearly impossible and he will need to make assumptions about some parts of the design to proceed with building. Each of the stationary units has its own engineering concern. The stage's balcony is concerning because it includes a twelve foot unsupported span. Without knowing how many people could be walking on the balcony in the show, there is the potential of a dangerous amount of deflection in the materials holding it up. The seating gallery's main issue is its size and openness. Despite it's size, it is easy to make it stand straight up. The issue the technical director needs to overcome is keeping it from swaying in an upstage-downstage direction. Because it is quite tall and narrow it will want to move in that direction when people are on the second floor. Usually, putting sheet goods on the sides of the unit would make for an easy fix – they would automatically square the unit so it could not sway. The design however calls for the sides to be open, without any visible cross bracing.

The budget to build the scenery is $1500. For a set of this size, that's not an large budget. To compensate for the budget concerns, the technical director plans to use as many stock pieces as he can. Luckily, the theatre department has a good selection of stock platforms he can integrate into the scenery to save a fair bit of money. Both the upper and lower levels of the 'stage' unit can be entirely be pieced together with stock platforms. Unfortuately, the 'gallery' unit is less of a regular shape, and will need more custom built pieces to fit it together correctly. In it's original iteration, it mimics The Globe Theatre, as a rounded unit. The technical director plans to redraw it in a more linear design with angles to mimic the round shape – then bring that redesign to the director and designer as an alternative to save money. The technical director completely understands that they have the right of refusal to any design changes, but in his experience designers and directors usually are not opposed to subtle changes that save money as long as they do not alter the artistic intent. In this case, the question is – if the "wrap around" effect can be achieved with straight lines rather than curves – will it tell the story to the audience equally well? If the director and designer agree that the answer is yes, it can save several hundred dollars.

Additionally, to save money, the technical director plans to incorporate several pieces of old sets that are still lying around the shop. The main element that will be incorporated is four 8in x 8in pine timbers. These timbers are 16 feet long, making them perfect for the front façade of the gallery unit. Again, incorporating these units will require the approval of the director and designer, but the technical director suspects that using them was part of the designer's intent.

The primary structural concern the technical director has with the stage unit is the twelve foot unsupported span between two pillars for the balcony. There are two significant problems in this design: keeping the pillars from swaying without any cross bracing and keeping the balcony from bowing under the load of performers. When considering the types of stresses this structure will need to endure, the technical director feels it is necessary to make several assumptions: at least ten people will be on the balcony at one time, those people all weight at least 200 lbs, and they could all be moving in varying directions. At the beginning of the process, the technical director cannot know how many people will ever be positioned in the balcony during the show, so he feels it is prudent to guess high on both number and the average weight of the performers. The technical director's plan to solve this is to integrate steel elements in the scenery, and then disguise them with wooden elements. He will use a steel I-beam to span the large space. Due to their width to height ratio, I-beams do not flex under load the way other conventional shapes do. This is why they are used in large scale projects to support roofs, walkways, etc. To support this I-beam the technical director will use two pieces of truss from a previous production that are still in stock as the pillars. Similarly, truss has structural advantages to keep it from flexing under load. Because of its width, it will also resist flexing. After contacting the local metal supplier, unfortunately, the I-beam will cost $200 – one tenth of the total budget for one single material. For safety, the technical director feels that this will be worth the cost and will need to be frugal on other materials. Another issue arising from this structural design is how to make the vertical posts have the appearance of columns. The visual research Paul presented of The

Globe indicates that these are wooden pillars painted to look like marble, so these pillars cannot be truss. The technical director will use sonotube, a cardboard like material used as a concrete post mold, as a cost effective façade for these posts.

The gallery unit poses its own structural challenges. The design is for a two story unit that is open on the front and sides. With the integration of timbers on the downstage side, it will be fairly front and top heavy. It is also quite narrow from the front to back, meaning it could have a large amount of sway from the front to the back. Comparatively, there is an easy solution to this problem: steel jacks placed against the back of the unit. Jacks are a common theatre structural device – basically a triangle structure of wood or steel to help narrow scenery stand up. The main problem for this unit is that with the height of the gallery, the jacks need to stick out from the back of the scenery a significant amount (approximately six feet) to be fully effective. The challenges for placing them are keeping them hidden from the audience and not blocking any important pathways for the cast and crew to make entrances and exits.

The largest problem the technical director will have with this process is that at the first scheduled day of building, he does not have a complete design of the scenery. He has a rough groundplan of the scenery and pictures of the model. This leads to several problems: the large scenery will be partially designed by the technical director, small scenery may have to be partially designed by the technical director, the technical director has no clear vision of what to expect from the smaller scnery units, the communication between designers, director, and technical director will need to be constantly open – which is difficult to maintain in a busy academic environment, and supplies will need to

be purchased as they come up – rather than planned and all at once.

Without a final design from Paul, the technical director is hesitant to proceed with many of the steps for the production. In general, it is considered incredibly rude for the technical director to make design choices for the designer – but Shofstall is in a position where he has no choice. The scenery needs to be built on time. The only way for that to happen is for the technical director to make plans from all the information he has. This will allow him to essentially build the shell of the scenery, but it will not include any aesthetic details, with the hope that Paul will provide those details later. From his experience, Shofstall knows that scheduling extra meetings with Hustoles and Paul to discuss any new design information outside of the scheduled production meetings is extremely difficult. This communication bottleneck is something the technical director finds frustrating and he will need to continually need to remind himself to practice patience.

The technical director has also not seen any plans or sketches for the smaller scenic units. This is concerning because it leaves the technical director responsible for scenery he's unsure if he can afford or build. Shofstall finds this exceptionally frustrating because it leaves him no choice but to wait for the design, when he cannot plan how long they will take to build. Shofstall also knows from experience Hustoles does not like getting scenery last minute and will continue to ask the technical director for it. Shofstall dislikes passing blame on to anyone – instead taking responsibility when things go poorly, and is therefore stuck between being responsible and simultaneously not responsible. His only plan to proceed is continuing to ask Paul for the designs while

pushing their build further back in the process.

These delays in communication also bring up the further problem of budgeting the whole show as one cohesive unit and getting all the needed supplies at once. This leads to extra trips to the lumber yard, wasting valuable time in the process. The best the technical director can do at this point is plan every aspect as plainly and conservatively as he can and hope if comes in under budget.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Murder, intrigue, romance, mistaken identity, *Shakespeare in Love* contains many of the plot devices used by the bard himself. What makes *Shakespeare in Love* unique is that it plays as a Comedy, Tragedy, and a History. Though the play is a work of historical fiction, and the romantic storyline is predominant, there is more historical truth than one might suspect.

"All the world's a stage", so it makes sense to begin there. The Rose theatre was one of the first public theatres built in London. It was built in 1587 by Philip Henslowe and John Cholmley. It was smaller than some of the other theatres, and would later need to be renovated. Evidence suggests that The Rose was unique in its capability to have multiple actors elevated on a second level at once. This feature may have shaped some of Shakespeare's early works and influenced the construction of The Globe in late 1598.

"And the men and women merely players", so one must examine the historical figures mentioned in the show. To begin, Christopher (Kit) Marlowe. Marlowe first appears in the very first scene of *Shakespeare in Love.* In the play, he serves as Shakespeare's competitor and comrade. He was born in 1564 in Canterbury. He would go on to attend Corpus Christi College in Cambridge. Marlowe earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree. While at university, some scholars say that he was recruited for secret government work though there is debate on this issue.

Marlowe moved to London in 1587 with some playwriting experience already

under his belt. Though his career in London theatre would only last six years, Marlowe would be the one to establish “blank verse” (unrhymed iambic pentameter) as a staple in Elizabethan writings. His first big success was *Tamburlaine the Great* which was performed by the Admirals Men. The success of this show would lead Marlowe to focus his attentions on playwriting. Though many of his plays were performed during his career, *Tamburlaine* was the only one to be published during his lifetime. His other works include *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (published 1594), *The Tragicall History of Dr. Faustus* (published 1604), The Jew of Malta (Published 1633), The Massacre at Paris (published 1593), and The Troublesome Raigne and Lamentable Death of Edward the Second (published 1594).

Christopher Marlowe died in May, 1593. The circumstances surrounding his death were considered very mysterious until 1925 when records of an inquest were discovered. The records tell the story of an argument over money turned violent. Marlowe was stabbed in the eye and killed. To be more precise, Marlowe attacked a man named Ingram Frizer. He either slashed Frizer’s face or attacked him with the hilt of the dagger. Marlowe was eventually stabbed just above the eye in Frizer’s attempt to protect himself. This information was discovered, but scholars still argue over whether that is the whole story. One theory is that he was killed because “He was a man who held highly controversial-most would have said heretical-opinions about religion, and about the political uses and misuses of religion.” (Nicholl 38). These beliefs had not yet made it into his plays, but it was known that he held them in his personal life. Further “In the weeks preceding his death, Marlowe’s ‘monstrous opinions’ were under investigation.”

(Nicholl 38). There are scholars who believe that Marlowe knew too much about important people and was assassinated. Other scholars say that he faked his death to disappear from political enemies. Still others believe the evidence from the inquest with no hesitation.

Marlowe may have arrived in London earlier, but the next major playwright is the star of the show. William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-Upon-Avon in 1564 (the same year as Christopher Marlowe). There has been a lot of research done about Shakespeare's life and writings, but most of the facts known about him come from official documents (e.g. baptism death, and marriage records). He attended primary school, but did not go on to university. Shakespeare married Ann Hathaway at the age of 18 (likely because of an unplanned pregnancy). He moved to London sometime between 1585-1592, and would spend the bulk of his career splitting time between Stratford and London.

The first reference to Shakespeare in London is in 1592. His career would continue until around 1613. During this time, he worked with the Chamberlain's men, wrote dozens of plays and over 100 sonnets, and helped to build the Globe on the banks of the Thames. In 1613 it is believed that he left London for Stratford. He died in 1616. After his death, Shakespeare's works were compiled by a group of actors into what is now known as the first folio.

Shakespeare's and Marlowe's lives and works have been studied and debated for hundreds of years, but in *Shakespeare in Love,* the audience sees the prolific playwright as a young man just starting out, and Marlowe as the established author. This would have

been true for the time. The question of whether or not they worked together is debated among Shakespeare scholars. According to Robert A. Logan in his book on the subject "No evidence has been found to tell us whether Marlowe and Shakespeare ever actually met or whether Shakespeare acted in one of Marlowe's plays, but both are quite likely" (3). In recent years, there has been a study of the language used in the text of the plays. This study revealed that Marlowe was almost certainly a collaborator on all parts of Henry VI. Not everyone agrees with these findings, but starting in 2016 The Oxford University Press began publishing Christopher Marlowe's name as a co-author for those plays. In addition, *Richard II, The Merchant of Venice, As You Like it, Julius Caesar, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Troilus and Cressida,* and *King Lear* all "quote lines from Marlowe's works" (Logan 8). Whether they were friends, rivals, acquaintances, or strangers, there is no denying that Marlowe's writings certainly influenced Shakespeare's even if the man never did.

Though Shakespeare and Marlowe are the most important writers in the play, there are several other historical figures mentioned in the text. One of the most historically significant of these is Edmund Tilney. In *Shakespeare in Love,* Tilney is seen as a supporting character mostly focused on censorship in the theatre. Though censorship was an important part of his job, he played a much larger role in Elizabethan theatre, and in the history of theatre in general.

Tilney served as the Master of Revels from 1579-1606. When he took over the revels office, he realized that it was in financial ruin. That meant that instead of following in the footsteps of his predecessors and planning numerous balls, galas, dinners, and other

expensive events, he had to think differently. Tilney realized that by funding the playhouses, he could build on existing entertainment infrastructure instead of constantly spending money the office didn't have on more extravagant events. By putting money and parliamentary approval into the playhouses, Tilney elevated the status of the actors and those who worked in the theatre. This elevation of status made it socially acceptable for companies to perform at court as seen in *Shakespeare in Love*.

In 1581, Tilney was officially put in charge of all the players in London. This is where the censorship part of his job became very important. Because he was a member of parliament, the plays produced in these playhouses reflected the crown, and needed to be approved. "An indiscretion-like 'forgetting' to secure a license, or thrusting unauthorized material into a licensed play would land them in prison without bail while every playhouse, not just their own was shut and every player went hungry" (Rutter 18). By approving only the plays and topics deemed appropriate, Tilney shaped the writings of the time, and his influence is still reflected in contemporary productions of Elizabethan works.

Now, since actors are stereotypically bad at math, a theatre manager was a critical piece of the equation. Philip Henslowe was an adept and brutal businessman and entrepreneur. Born in 1550, Henslowe would be the brains and record keeping behind some of the most creative minds of the time. He built the Rose theatre in 1587 and the Fortune in 1600. Known for being focused and meticulous, Henslowe has given the theatre community one of the best kept records of the time. Henslowe's Diary is a thorough list of the transactions in his life. It has specific dates and invoices for specific

shows, it contains receipts, specific notes on casting and hiring, and information about the construction of his theatres. Henslowe's Diary has offered the theatre community some concrete information assembled in one place to piece together the chronology of Elizabethan theatre. For example, "Philip Henslowe's entries in his *Diary* for the ten performances of *The Jew of Malta* and fifteen of *Henry VI* indicate the entries for March 10 and 11, April 4 and 5, May 4 and 5, and May 19 and 20 that *The Jew of Malta* and *Henry VI* were played in succession" (Logan 3). This information has strengthened that argument that Marlowe and Shakespeare knew each other and may have worked together.

Continuing, where would Elizabethan Theatre be without Queen Elizabeth? The life of the queen was so fraught with turmoil and change that it would have been a good inspiration for one of Shakespeare's plays. Born in 1533 to Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth was considered the heir to the throne until the beheading of her mother. After that, she was declared illegitimate and sent away. Henry VIII would later reinstate her as his successor, but only after Edward and Mary. Fortunately or unfortunately, Edward died at the age of 15, and Mary died after a short five years as queen.

During Elizabeth's reign, the country saw a period of incredible growth. The people of the country went from surviving to thriving and competing for advancements in society. Elizabethan England was a tough and dangerous time, but the people were finally living in a time where their circumstances were not dictated from birth, but that more and more people had access to growth. Importantly, Elizabeth championed access to education "Learning, once the province of the ruling class and the clergy, was now embraced by the burgeoning middle class, and from 1550 increasing numbers of

grammar schools were founded, many under the auspices of Queen Elizabeth herself, who cared passionately about education." (Weir 6) This exposure to education would usher in a new era of literacy and culture which would set the stage for playwrights like Marlowe and Shakespeare to gain recognition and acclaim.

Finally, the actual players Richard Burbage and Edward "Ned" Alleyn. Richard Burbage was born in 1567. He is known for performing many of Shakespeare's famous roles including Hamlet, Othello, and King Lear. He worked with the Chamberlain's men (later called the King's Men), and would be an important figure in building the Globe theatre.

On the other side of things, Ned Alleyn was born in 1566 and was known for performing many of Marlowe's greatest roles. In *Shakespeare in Love,* Alleyn is portrayed as a diva. Whether or not that is true, he certainly would have been a very well-known actor for his time. The fact that he was Philip Henslowe's son in law probably didn't hurt him either.

Another interesting element of the Elizabethan theatre was not a person at all, but the plague. During 1593 when the play is set, the plague was surging in London. In act 1 scene 6 it is revealed that Ned Alleyn is in the provinces and they do not have the people that they need in London. The reason for this is that the Rose was closed because of the plague, so Lord Strange's Men (including Alleyn) went on tour in the provinces. The constant openings and closings of playhouses meant that actors had to adapt. Notably, Shakespeare did not leave London during this time. In act 1 scene 13 the actors return from their tour. Though not known, it is possible that Alleyn and Shakespeare may have

worked together with Lord Strange's men before joining the Admirals men and Chamberlain's men respectively

Though very obviously a creative work of fiction, *Shakespeare in Love* contains a great deal of factual information and historical figures. Perhaps Kit Marlowe and Will Shakespeare did work together. They may not have been hanging off some woman's balcony composing a sonnet, but perhaps they coauthored plays. Perhaps Shakespeare worked with Ned Alleyn early in his career. It is entirely possible that without the intervention of Edmund Tilney that the works of Shakespeare would have never been performed. How this tale should actually be told is a mystery lost to time, but in *Shakespeare in Love,* the audience gets to meet England's greatest writers and performers as they may have been.

CHAPTER III

JOURNAL

September 13th, 2019

Today was the first production meeting I attended. I was never informed of the initial concept meeting.

John Paul, the scenic designer, presented research images to the group. They are of various theatres of William Shakespeare's time, including The Globe, The Swan, and The Theatre. Paul Hustoles, the director, liked the elements of them that were clearly holdovers from medieval theatre's pageant wagons. He discussed the idea of the small scenic pieces like benches being able to be stored underneath the stage unit we could build.

September 20th

Paul presented a sketch of what he was imagining for the scenery. It includes one large stage with a balcony above it and a large seating gallery on the other side.

In terms of time, this set looks manageable. My main concern is the budget. We have the smallest budget of the semester and the scenery looks fairly large. Not wanting to stifle creativity, I held back mentioning it – as long as it does not grow before our next meeting, there should be adjustments we can make to the future design to keep it reasonably priced.

September 27th, 2019

Paul was missing from today's meeting, so it was difficult to discuss the details of the set as Paul had provided me no further information since our last meeting. We decided to try to set up a separate meeting to solidify the plan for the set. This meeting was scheduled for Monday September 30th.

September 30th, 2019

This afternoon Hustoles, Paul, and I had a meeting about the set. Paul presented a model. This was the first time I had seen it. The thing that surprised me the most about it was the open span underneath the balcony. From the sketch I missed that it was a walkable surface rather than something that would be more of a roof detail.

While discussing it, I said quite firmly that I was concerned about budget and Hustoles and Paul acknowledged it may be big. They agreed we should make changes to build the units out of stock wherever possible. They also decided to use the large 8x8 timbers we have in stock as the vertical pillars in the Gallery Unit. I'm not sure using those units actually saves enough money to be worth using them, but if it works with the aesthetic choice I do not mind using them. I stated very clearly that I could not properly budget from the model and needed drawings as soon as possible because I wanted to have some time to plan before I start building next week.

October 4th, 2019

Today, Paul brought a groundplan to the meeting. There were multiple issues.

First, Hustoles did not like the actual placement of anything on it. Moving the model around on the groundplan, Smith was able to help finalize the location of everything. The drawing of the Gallery is also round. This is in direct contradiction to what we discussed Monday about using stock wherever to build it. If we leave it round, we have to custom build everything for it. This is completely possible, but contradictory to previous discussions. Luckily, when I brought up squaring off the unit to save money, Hustoles and Paul quickly agreed to it. The third issue is that it does not account for the placement of the 8x8 timbers at all. Unfortunately, I did not realize this point until after the meeting, so I need to ask Paul about it. The fourth issue is the drawing was missing escape stairs. While I assumed that these would be needed from the model, it is still difficult to make up this detail.

I also have no elevations so currently I am left making up details about how this set looks.

I'm still concerned about budget and planning with how late I got this design – this show moves into the scene shop first thing next week. I also know that I have no time this weekend to plan, so I will be forced into planning as I go.

October 7th, 2019

Intending to assist Paul over the weekend, Grubb agreed to make a digital copy of the groundplan and move the scenery into its correct locations. After a string of several versions, there was an agreed upon version. Smith, while taping the set on the stage had a discussion with Hustoles and the groundplan changed again this morning.

October 8th, 2019

Today the shop was able to start building. Another production needed most of the labor because it opens this week. We were able to drop the orchestra pit into its location and build everything for it. This was good because Hustoles indicated that this was the most important thing he needed for blocking purposes.

October 9th, 2019

Today labor was split between two productions again, but we got all of the platforms for the Stage unit set up. This was good as Hustoles wanted them as soon as possible for blocking.

October 10th, 2019

I miscalculated the best way to use labor. My main goal for the day was to stand up the sixteen foot 8x8 timbers that we have in stock. These timbers are to be a major part of the visual of the gallery unit. Because of their size, I wanted to have at least six people on that task. With their height, without enough people, it would be easy for one to lose balance and fall which could easily hurt someone. I thought there was a large overlap of the crew at 3pm, but did not account for people leaving at that time. We had two of four stood up when several people left for the day and I made the choice to opt for safety and not try to put up the other two.

October 11th, 2019

This morning we had our production meeting. We discussed the remaining units to be designed. They are the four-poster bed, a bench for “Juliet's grave”, and two separate boats. The bed will need to come on and off stage. Hustoles hoped to have it that night for rehearsal even though it was not designed. We discussed the size of it, and landed on 5 feet wide. I told him that I could build a mock-up that he could at least use for rehearsal that night while Paul designed it over the weekend. One of the boats will just be a 2 dimensional cut out and the other will need to be a built up wagon with 2 dimensional details on two sides.

Mid-morning after class, it occurred to me that I forgot to ask what type of casters Hustoles would like on the bed. Regular casters are quieter, but require would require stage brakes. Stage brakes are notoriously not good at keeping a light unit still if there is lots of activity on it, which Hustoles said would be present. The alternative is pneumatic air casters, which would set the wagon down directly on its frame. The disadvantage of these casters is that it is very difficult to disguise the noise of the casters releasing the air in the system as the wagon sets down on its frame. This unmistakable “whoosh” noise can be very distracting in a period piece like Shakespeare in Love. I emailed Hustoles for his input because I am not sure of the action on the bed. He responded that he preferred the air casters.

This afternoon, we got the remaining timbers safely stood up. We also got several of the stud walls in the set stood up. Finally, we built the mock up bed. Hustoles came through at the end of the day and indicated that the bed was too long. Without a drawing,

I guessed at its total size and made it 5ft by 8 ft. Together, we decided that 5ft by 6 ft would be best, and I assured him that we could rebuild it on Monday. Fridays are light on labor so it was a successful day.

Paul asked me to prioritize which drawings I needed first. One week after I have begun building and with two weeks until tech, this was a frustrating question. To date I have only received one drawing, which is an inaccurate groundplan. All of my planning and building has been from this one drawing and pictures of the model. Both of these sources look like what I would define as sketches. Without mentioning that frustration I wrote a list for him: bed details, railing details, details of the archway in the gallery, a detail of the decoration that goes on the upstage side of the balcony railing, the tomb bed, and finally the two boats. He promised to have at least the first three for me on Monday.

October 14th, 2019

Today we did the little bit of steel work that the show needs. This includes resizing two steel legs from the previous show Newsies and one piece of 1x2 that is serving as a ledger in the gallery. I chose to use steel in this spot as an easy solution to match the angles the timbers are at without losing structural integrity. We also finished putting up the stud walls that form the upstage side of the gallery unit. This means that today looked unproductive, but was a fantastic prep day for tomorrow. We can put the last elevated platform into the gallery and install the I beam for the giant span in the balcony of the stage unit. We also completely rebuilt the bed to the correct size.

Paul had no new drafting for me.

October 15th, 2019

Paul still has no new drafts for me. We talked through some of the details to put into the set. He brought up that at one of the early meetings Hustoles mentioned that he liked the idea of seeing the space underneath the stage, as if to show that the players are on the edge of bankruptcy and throwing all of this together. The players could then quickly dress the stage with curtains for the performance. I have already completely faced this space, and only legged it up. Because the stage is built from existing stock platforms, the legs for it are in places for each unit to stand up safely, but as a collective would aesthetically look terrible – not like a designed and built as one thing unit. I told him that we could take the facing off of the unit, but that it would look terrible because currently it was a hodge-podge of legs and I did not have time to change that. He agreed that keeping the facing on at this juncture was the correct choice.

We got the I beam installed and the elevated platforms installed. This is a good day because it means we have the complete skeleton of the set installed. From this point it is a matter of building the missing pieces and making these two units look finished, which can all happen relatively quickly.

October 16th, 2019

Paul had no new drafting for me.

We continued work on the details of the gallery, including a hand railing and one of the escape stair landings. We also cut sonotube and wrapped it around the I beam supports so that we could have a visually round pillar in those corners. I was originally

concerned about several points with this technique: I could find none that were tall enough in town so we had to combine 2 to be the correct height, they would have to be cut vertically and then slid around Newsies posts, and the ones I found at Menards had a tolerance rating – meaning they are not standardly the same size and could end up not the same size between the top and bottom halves. Luckily, we ended up with two pairs that were the same size, and the half inch difference between the two pillars would be impossible to discern from a distance. Cutting them vertically and sliding them around the posts worked to the best of my hopes with no complications. We ended up with a one inch gap where they did not come together, so we turned that side upstage and it is completely invisible to the audience.

October 17th, 2019

Paul is sick, so he stayed home and had no new drafting for me. On the phone he said he'd try to get the ones I am missing done.

We continued putting in all the missing things, including getting the escape stairs for both units installed. I held off installing them before today because the upper levels did not have railing and I was concerned about actor safety if they went up there too early. I designed the entryway to the upper section of the gallery to be a hidden door that would function like a screen porch door. This way it would blend into the rest of the set and also be incredibly easy for the actors to operate – they would never have to think about closing it or operate any sort of handle.

We put 4x4 posts on the bed so I could move forward on that unit. We put them

on the sides, but after trying to get them through the archway they should fit in, the tolerance was less than one inch. Realizing this would be problematic for actors/stagehands, I switched the posts to the front/back position. Typically, this would be unethical for me to do without discussing it with the designer and director. It is not the technical director's place to make changes to the design, but so far I have completely designed this unit. I have seen neither model nor drawing for it and wanted to expedite the process.

In an email chain in the morning, Hustoles asked if he could also have the tomb bed by his rehearsal on the 18th. I informed him that I still had no drawing but double checked the measurements for it from my notes at our previous meeting and confirmed that I could build something that size. Again, I completely overstepped my position and made a design choice without consultation. Rather than waiting for a design, I did a quick visual search of benches online. I found a picture of one that was generic but also could potentially be in a tomb and an acting troup could have on hand. I had two of my crew spend the afternoon on this so it could have some detail in it. This was a gamble – if Paul and Hustoles do not like it, we will have to rebuild it. At this point however, it is becoming easy to believe that I will never receive drawings for the missing pieces and with first tech next week I need to move forward.

October 18th, 2019

Paul is still ill, so I received no new drawings today.

Today's progress was moderate, we had several new sets of hands in the shop so

much of the day was spent getting them used to working on projects and learning tools. The progress of the scenery is right on schedule and ready to largely hand over to Paul to lead paint next week though.

Our production meeting got rescheduled to the end of the day. Without Paul there, there were no real developments on the scenery front. I double checked that Hustoles needed a ladder in the location indicated a couple of weeks ago and assured him it would be there on Monday.

October 21, 2019

I received no new drawings today.

The shop crew was small today, but we still finished the to-do list I had for the day. For the main set, the carpentry is nearly finished. We also solved the keystoning issue the gallery was having. Keystoning is when something that is supposed to be square distorts and becomes more of a parallelogram shape. This commonly happens when weight on an elevated platform shifts in one direction or another. Usually, the solution to this problem is some form of cross bracing. Sheet goods covering a whole gap work the best, but another option is stick lumber diagonally crossing an open area. Unfortunately, the design does not allow for any such additions. We were, however, able to add large jacks to the upstage side of the unit. These helped greatly, but we could only install two and keep them hidden by the set. We were also able to extend the small existing cross bracing in a very subtle way, but allowed for greater attachment points. These two things combined reduced the keystoning to almost zero.

We also installed the ladder on the stage unit and a vertical pole to hold one curtain. Hustoles came into the shop later in the afternoon and informed me both were in the wrong position. Neither one was difficult to move, but it is not the first time that we've had to redo something because the design was not finished.

Later in the afternoon, Paul stopped by the shop. We discussed what the remaining units would vaguely look like. Nothing was a surprise. I described how I thought one of the boat units should function and he liked my idea.

At this juncture, I am forced to make a decision. I can either wait for drawings or make some design choices about the remainder of the set. This is a tough spot to be in. It is typically unethical to take liberties with the design. On the other hand, it is also my responsibility to get the show completed on time. In general, the deadline to have a set completed is first tech. This leaves four work days to finish the set. The earlier the carpentry is done, the earlier the set can be painted. It also leaves us ample time to work on details and fix notes. Without drawings, I am also coming close to a point where I do not have specific jobs for people to work on that actually move the process forward.

The night's rehearsal report specifically requests that Hustoles see the drawings for everything before it is built. This means I am forced to wait for drawings from Paul.

October 22nd, 2019

This morning I received the missing drawings from Paul. It included the ship, the boat, and the detail on the stage. The boat and the detail piece are simple two dimensional pieces. The ship is more complicated than I expected – it includes an

elevated platform and a compound angle built into the stern. Something that detailed is not a problem to build, but I wish I had more than an hour to figure out the math for it.

In the afternoon, Paul requested lots of help with paint. I was willing to lose the labor to push paint forward. I kept one person with me so I could personally work on the ship. Without adequate prep time, I knew I could not properly draft it where I could pass it on to someone to build – but I could build it myself.

In the evening, I attended rehearsal so I could get clarification on several of the notes from the weekend and to make my own notes on the set. We discussed the changes to the ladder and a few other minor notes. Luckily, the ship was rehearsal ready, so we could see for sure that it needed to be detailed, but worked well. It was also fortunate that I delayed building the two dimensional boat, because I could make several small changes so it could function properly.

October 23rd, 2019

Today I split the day between building our remaining pieces and Paul's need for paint labor. For the first half of the day, I kept most people working on carpentry, just to push them quickly forward. When planning the afternoon, I was very specific about what labor he would get and when, and then he was unprepared for them. I understand the difficulty of teaching people to paint well, but I made sure to give him three "skilled" workers to work with and supervise two "unskilled" workers. In my mind this is a fair enough spread that even the non theatre majors can be useful. Instead, they stood around for fifteen minutes watching the others paint. This was frustrating simply because Paul

so strongly requested labor and then he squandered it. While I am not behind, I also feel a need to make working in the shop educational – if a person is just watching someone else work, they are not learning.

October 24th, 2019

Today we finished up the ship details. We also added a few other detail pieces to the set. According to my list for the set, the only thing I have left to do is install the curtains that arrived too late to install today and replace the ladder on the stage unit, which I do not want to do until I speak with Hustoles about Paul and I's idea for it.

Tonight I attended the rehearsal so I could speak with Hustoles about the ladder and see if there were any other notes that I could take care of before tech tomorrow night. I have other commitments over the weekend and will be unable to do anything that is not an emergency on this set until Sunday. Hustoles had no other notes for me.

October 25th, 2019

Today we rebuilt the ladder. Hopefully my design for it functions – I decided to make it out of steel with a wooden facade. I did this because the climbing an actor does is very vigorous. At one point he is hanging almost sideways from it. I have faith in the vertical portion of lumber – but most of my ideas for wooden pegs made me nervous – unless I found a true wooden peg and not a dowel rod – a difficult thing to find in town quickly. To save time and money, I decided on the steel/wood hybrid to quickly and efficiently solve the problem. The curtains we ordered came in. We had to make a few

adjustments to them to make them fit properly, but overall they looked good.

Tonight we had our first tech rehearsal. There were minor notes – but they were primarily detail notes for Paul not me. This was good because other than tech rehearsals, unless there is an emergency, I am unavailable to work on the show this weekend. This is why I went to several rehearsals earlier in the week. The ladder worked well and Hustoles liked the look of it.

October 26th, 2019

Tonight was second tech. Paul had added some small details to the gallery unit. He asked that I add similar ones in a few other places – which will be simple to do on Monday. No other notes from tonight.

October 27th, 2019

Tonight was first dress. Paul did some painting during the day. At the end of the night Paul said he would prefer to think about the notes he wanted us to work on Monday, so we decided to meet at lunch time to discuss those. There were no other notes.

October 28th, 2019

Today Paul and I met and discussed the few things he would like the shop to do on the set. This consisted of adding a few details to the stage balcony and the gallery including dimensional human faces. Paul had some in his office and asked that we paint

them, then we could decide which ones to use. After we painted them, I thought only one of them looked good – so I decided to make another one to see if it would work for Paul. The shop already has face molds on hand, so I picked one that I thought would work well. It's a man's face smiling – which would contrast well to the old man face Paul brought in. I used the vacuform machine to quickly make a plastic copy. Vacuforming is a technique popular in cosplay and prop construction – a sheet of plastic is heated, then pressed over an object with vaccuum suction underneath both. The heating process makes the plastic soft and the vacuum pulls it around the the object making a copy of it. We painted the face I chose and when Paul had the chance he agreed that it was a good choice for the second face. We then finished all the other notes Paul had for me.

Tonight was the second dress rehearsal. I received no notes on the set.

October 29th, 2019

Tonight was the final dress rehearsal. Things went well. Hustoles asked Paul if we could add some trim to the lower section of the seating gallery. This is easy to accomplish so we will take care of it in the morning.

October 30th, 2019

We added the small pieces of trim today as per last night's note. From my point of view, the show is ready to open.

November 10th, 2019

Tonight was strike for the show. It went well. We safely broke down the entire set. My largest safety concern was the large timbers. Due to their height and weight, they are difficult to lay down safely. Fortunately, everyone listened carefully to instructions and worked as a team to bring it to the ground safely. We also managed to get the stage mostly clear. This was imperative so the lighting department could move forward first thing the next day on their changeover to the next show. There is a pile of materials to sort and clean remaining in the shop, but that was to be expected.

CHAPTER IV

POST PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

This chapter contains the post production analysis for the technical direction of *Shakespeare in Love*, adapted for the stage by Lee Hall, based on the screenplay by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard. It was directed by Paul Hustoles, stage managed by Kendra Gilsdorf. The scenic designer was John Paul, costume designer David McCarl, lighting designer Steve Smith, and sound designer George Grubb. The technical director was Jared Shofstall. The production opened October 31, ran for two weekends and closed November 10, 2019.

This chapter will serve as a reflection of this process and the resulting set. It will reflect on the process with an emphasis on the communication of the design team, safety concerns, the budget, the end product and a reflection of what the technical director learned from this process.

The play is a fictional narrative of the life of William Shakespeare in his early career. For the scenery, Hustoles and Paul were inspired by English theatres of the time period, primarily The Globe Theatre as it would have looked at the time. To achieve this look, the orchestra pit was dropped two feet for a low level, there were two large stationary units, and there were four smaller mobile units that would come on and off. One stage unit was an audience gallery that would be two stories tall, have a ‘wrapping’ effect, and take up half the stage width. The other stationary unit was inspired by the Globe Theatre’s stage. It was a large performance platform with a balcony above it. The

balcony was held up by two pillars designed and painted to look like marble. There also was a method for the actor playing Will to climb up to the balcony while onstage. The smaller units consisted of a four poster bed, a "graveyard" bench, a two dimensional boat, and a three dimensional boat.

The most significant problem the technical director needed to overcome was a lack of communication from the scenic designer. Most of the process consisted of hesitantly making choices and designing the show for the designer. According to the production calendar, the final scenic design was due on September 27th. The technical director did not receive any drawings until October 4th, and those were incomplete and inaccurate. The official start of scenic build was October 8th, at which point the technical director still had received no useable drawings. The technical director never received drawings for the bed or bench, and received the drawings for the boats one week before the first technical rehearsal.

At the start of the build schedule, the technical director had at least a rough idea of what the scenery was going to look like and was able to extrapolate enough information to begin building the two stationary units. With limited options, he chose to fill in design details so he could start the build process. This was how Shofstall handled most of the process, asking Paul for drawings, never receiving them, and being forced to design the pieces without approval from the scenic designer.

This was problematic because it generally is considered a very unprofessional thing for a technical director to do. The ideal dynamic for the process is for the director to have a vague vision, the designer to put together how that vision actually looks, and

for the technical director to execute their vision. The only time a technical director should be heavy handed in the design process is when they notice that the design is no longer physically possible to achieve, dangerous, or over budget. Making choices about the aesthetics is overstepping their bounds. The crux in the process for *Shakespeare in Love* came down to timing. Eventually, the director expects to see scenery get constructed, and the scene shop can only accomplish so much at a time – waiting for final designs from a designer eventually becomes impossible.

Shofstall did his best to walk this line professionally. For the two large stationary units, he built them with the information he was given, and left them as plain as he could. The thought behind this was that the set would be functional but still easily modified and enhanced with further direction from the designer. Shofstall was very careful not to make decisions that would clash with design choices Paul wanted to make later. Unfortunately, neither unit was given any detailing until the last week of the process.

Shofstall treated the small stationary units in the same fashion. Without designs for them, Shofstall did not want to build them until Hustoles absolutely needed them for rehearsal. He knew that it could be a waste of time to build things without designs because they would likely have to be changed later. This then happened with the bed. Hustoles needed it for rehearsals, so after still not receiving drawings, Shofstall went ahead and started building one. Unfortunately, as he had foreseen, it needed to be changed. The bed was too big for the action that took place around it, so it needed to be rebuilt at a smaller size. Not long after, Hustoles made it clear he needed the bench as soon as possible. Shofstall again was forced to take a risk and design it without much

preapproval. He found a research image of a cemetery bench he thought would work, made the designs and had one of his carpenters build it. Luckily, this unit did not need to be rebuilt. These pieces were made with as much attention to detail as possible, but again the technical director attempted to make them as simple as he could to leave room for the designer's vision.

The scenery had two significant safety problems to overcome: the narrow footprint of the gallery and the large span under the balcony on the stage unit. The narrow gallery posed a problem because it wanted to lean forward and backwards. This unit needed to safety hold multiple people in several scenes, so making it stable was very important. Unfortunately, its height made even a slight lean in either direction dangerous. This ended up being solved fairly easily using steel jacks on the upstage side to support the structure. The primary difficulty was the placement of them. Because the gallery was very open, hiding the jacks from the audience took some time tracking sightlines.

The second safety concern was the large span between the pillars on the stage unit. Knowing that actors would be standing on the balcony between the pillars and that the large distance between the supports could cause the middle to bow or break, Shofstall decided early to use an I-beam to support this span. This one item ended up costing almost ten percent of the total budget. After the first technical rehearsal seeing how Hustoles had blocked the show, George Grubb, Shofstall's advisor asked why he chose to use an expensive steel I-beam instead of a 2x12 piece of lumber. The lumber would have been cheaper and easier, especially because the balcony was only used once in the show – with only two people. In hindsight, Shofstall had essentially over engineered the

solution, making it harder than necessary to build and using extra resources. Shofstall believes that over engineering a solution to this problem was worth the expense and effort. With communication breaking down on several fronts with the rest of the set, Shofstall never knew how many people Hustoles was planning to have on the balcony at any given time. While reading the script, Shofstall imagined Hustoles using it more extensively. Shofstall believes he made the right choice by erring on the side of safety. By over engineering, Shofstall ensured he never needed to worry about the safety of any performers and the I-beam is now something that can live in stock indefinitely. By having it in stock, similar problems can be solved in the future without any hesitation.

Budgeting *Shakespeare in Love* was its own challenge. Because the designs were in so late, Shofstall was never able to budget the show prior to beginning build. Budgeting should always be an ongoing process because there are always unexpected costs when building scenery. However, budgeting completely in process without the chance to analyze and estimate everything beforehand is not an ideal situation. Because he did not have finished plans and did not know what surprises would be coming, Shofstall had no choice but to adjust everything to fit standard stock platform sizes to save money for unexpected purchases. Fortunately, this strategy worked. Late in the process, the request was made for curtains for the lower portion of the stage unit. Because Shofstall had designed all the scenery to be built from existing stock, there was still room in the budget for this late and very expensive request when it was made. This production had the smallest budget of the season, with $1500 dedicated to scenery. The final accounting came to $1495.61. For being unable to properly estimate the cost of

things, Shofstall is proud of the fact it came in under budget. Further, he is proud that even being forced to underestimate the budget at every turn, there was not a huge surplus that could have gone to add to the production values. The money was used where it was needed. The set was functional (if a little plain), and there was money for important curtains that could have gotten overlooked or cut in other circumstances.

Shofstall understands that he is the harshest critic of his own work and typically sees the problems in it that others do not. His largest complaint about the finished product is purely aesthetic. Because Shofstall needed to build most of the set without communication from the scenic designer, he consistently and intentionally made simple and plain choices. Every choice he made was intended to be functional and blend in, with the hopes that once he had designs, they would provide more detail that would build the world of the play. By the time those designs came, it was too late to do any dramatic changes to the set, so the changes made were subtle and added little to the overall visual appearance.

The lack of adequate communication from the designer required Shofstall to work in an unconventional manner. He learned how to keep things moving and get things built with the information present, and how to take cues from the director to get them what is needed for rehearsal. It was not always comfortable to be stuck between an uncommunicative designer and a director in need of a set, but Shofstall managed to balance the necessity of the build and the lack of information as well as possible.

Through the experience with the I-Beam, Shofstall learned that, in the case of incomplete information from a script or a director, it is always best to err on the side of

safety. It is very possible that blocking could have changed to include more people standing on the platform, and it would have been perfectly sturdy. In future, Shofstall will seek to find more clarity from directors if possible, but when incomplete or unclear information is present, the safety of the performers and crew members will always come first.

In retrospect, Shofstall realizes that his area of greatest growth through this process is his ability to understand a design from minimal information. Because the designer only provided drawings for two of the scenic units, and those coming in very late, Shofstall needed to understand the design completely from a rough model. This was very challenging, and required Shofstall to use his understanding of scenic design, his knowledge of the theatre, his math skills, and understanding of the text in conjunction with this technical direction skills. Having to use all of those skills at once to achieve a successful build was a new and useful experience.

CHAPTER V

PROCESS DEVELOPMENT

Jared Shofstall received his Bachelor of Arts in Theatre degree from Western Illinois University in 2016. In his final semester at Western Illinois University, Shofstall was given the opportunity to serve as technical director for the entire spring semester studio season. This semester included 4 productions, greatly testing Shofstall's management skills. Though this position tested him greatly, Shofstall also grew as an artist and a collaborator with other artists. It was during this time that Shofstall truly discovered his desire to change course from a combination of acting and scenic design to technical direction, and he made the decision to pursue his MFA.

As soon as he arrived at MSU, Mankato Shofstall began working in the school's scene shop. Working in the scene shop, whether the technical director for the current production or not, was the place Shofstall grew the most. It served as a place for practical application for any related classes and learning to communicate with other people on a daily basis. MSU, Mankato's scene shop is typically working on two productions simultaneously and is staffed by graduate students from the program and undergraduates both in and out of the program. Only a small handful of these students are technical theatre students and therefore have wildly varying degrees of interest and skill sets. This provides an environment that is simultaneously rewarding, challenging, and incredibly frustrating. With such a variety of available hands, Shofstall began mentally putting people into three general categories to work with: skilled (few),

unskilled and enthusiastic (medium), and unskilled and disinterested (most). As he advanced through all his productions, he kept trying to work through how to be more productive with this spread of labor. Truly maximizing productivity across the board required Shofstall to completely alter his way of thinking about the issue and hone his management style as technical director across three years of productions.

Prior to *Shakespeare in Love*, Shofstall worked on four productions as technical director and one as scenic designer. The first production Shofstall worked on at MNSU, Mankato was in his first semester. He served as technical director for *These Shining Lives*, part of the studio season. It was directed by Kristin Fox, and premiered in November of 2016. Dalen O'Connell, the scenic designer, was heavily inspired by the interior working mechanisms of a watch, and designed a set that was a series of platforms all shaped like the gears inside a watch. Structurally, this set did not present too many problems. Platforms are relatively easy to put up, but the intricacy this set would require was beyond anything had previously done. The intricate nature forced Shofstall to be creative with problem solving and learn how to manage within the school's scene shop. In his short time before starting the build of *These Shining Lives*, Shofstall believed that the 'unskilled and disinterested' students were more a burden than an aide. With intricate platforms, Shofstall was unsure how to communicate the best way to build them. Eventually, he decided to use a projector as a drawing aid, then he could confidently trust the less skilled students to cut them out. This was an important moment, as Shofstall realized that as long as he planned how to strategically teach skills and pair teams together, it would be rare for someone to actually be "useless" in the scene shop. This

production also included one large hanging clock face. This was Shofstall's first time engineering such a large piece that would need to be rigged and served as an excellent introduction to practical rigging experience.

In the following spring, Shofstall worked on *Ragtime*, directed by Paul Hustoles and scene designed by John Paul. This would be Shofstall's first foray into mainstage productions and his first opportunity to work with these faculty members. The difficulty with this set was that it was large, and almost completely constructed of steel. At first glance it seemed like a simple design, but it required hundreds of small pieces welded into place for specific patterns. Shofstall's advisor, George Grubb agreed that it would be a good opportunity for Shofstall to work on his welding and agreed to let him do most of the welding himself. While this was great to improve Shofstall's skills, it also required him to multitask as a welder and manager of multiple people around him. Through this, Shofstall did gain enough confidence in his welding to begin teaching others this much more complicated skill – which gave Shofstall the freedom in later productions to have other people weld for him.

Between his first and second years of graduate school, Shofstall accepted his first position as a professional technical director for Ozark Actor's Theatre summer stock season. This served as a test for all the skills Shofstall had been working on for the previous eight months. During that time, he had one carpenter and three interns working with him full time. This gave Shofstall a chance to fully develop his style as a manager and technical director without any faculty oversight. This also tested his abilities because the designer for the first two productions produced drawings very late in the process.

Therefore, Shofstall was drafting and budgeting for these two productions in great haste to have them done in time. Shofstall was proud that the latter two shows of the season came in within twenty dollars of the budget. During the three-show season, Shofstall not only tested his skills, but learned how to manage a crew that had interpersonal issues. Throughout the summer, tensions with one member of the crew grew more and more tense, and Shofstall needed to consistently diffuse situations and keep the work relationships healthy and productive.

In the fall semester of 2018, Shofstall worked on *The Happy Elf.* This was a bizarre process. As Shofstall understood it when he agreed to serve as technical director, it was originally slated to be *Elf: the musical*, but when he returned in the fall it was now *The Happy Elf*. It was directed by Heather Hamilton and scene designed by John Paul, making it Shofstall's second production with him. This was an unconventional process because from the beginning no one in the production team seemed to have a vested interest in the show. Due to a clerical issue, the scripts arrived to the department late, so Hamilton and Shofstall were the only two who had read the script by the first meeting. Eventually, a unit set was designed that was a central large platform with a curved stair coming up to meet it on either side. In the center face of this unit would be three periaktoi, that when spun to line up could make three alternating small murals. Despite having no interest in the musical itself, Shofstall was excited to build his first curving staircases and periaktoi. In addition to these new challenges, Shofstall was still working on his skills of crew management. In retrospect, Shofstall regrets putting two particularly difficult students together on less important tasks to get them out of the way. While it is

no technical director's job to make everyone enjoy themselves all the time, he believes doing this to these students unintentionally created an 'us and them' environment he never wanted to create. Though the entire production team was satisfied with the speed at which the set was built, Shofstall regrets the emotional cost to some of his crew.

The next show Shofstall technical directed was *Macbeth*. This was also directed by Hamilton and designed by John Paul. In stark contrast to *The Happy Elf,* Hamilton had strong artistic ideas to carry it forward. Paul and Hamilton agreed on the set design quickly and Paul turned in designs on time. This set challenged Shofstall's communication with shop personnel because it was an organic design – something Shofstall had never needed to draft and build before. Overall, the budget and build went according to plan until extreme weather struck Minnesota and the college shut down for a week. It was then a hectic mad dash to finish the set on time. Hamilton also expressed her strong desire for massive amounts of fog in any scenes with the witches, but she particularly wanted low lying dry ice fog. Shofstall knew that the department had a dry ice fogger, but in his estimating, knew that the set would need 95% of the budget – leaving little room for the massive cost of dry ice. Shofstall then spent weeks researching and experimenting to develop a cheaper fog solution. It took a complicated network of hoses, fans, new traditional fog fluid, and a homemade fog chiller for it to work correctly. In this process, Shofstall very intentionally tried to be inclusive to all of his crew. The speed of the building process was slowed a bit, but Shofstall felt it was worth the effort to ensure more people had a rewarding and engaging experience in the shop.

In late spring 2018, following *Macbeth*, Shofstall was the scenic designer for

Brainpeople as part of the studio season. It was directed by Yaureybo Jordan and technical directed by George Grubb. This process was interesting because it flipped the dynamic that Shofstall had been in during the last two years at MNSU. Overall, the process was a success as the design was turned in on time and the completed design looked good. The greatest struggle Shofstall had was not overstepping his bounds as scenic designer. By this point in the year, the crew in the scene shop was comfortable with Shofstall as either a shop manager or the technical director of the project so they would often look to him with any questions, but in this instance it was difficult for him to take the necessary steps back to just be the scenic designer. As the designer, it was a welcome break to manage and lead teams through painting the set rather than the build process, giving him yet another opportunity to shift his mindset of how to teach and lead. Shofstall wanted to test himself, and proactively took students that did not consider themselves good scenic painters and taught them the techniques he wanted used on the scenic elements and worked with them to accomplish the desired effect.

Simultaneous to these productions, Shofstall was also taking a full course load of classes. The outline of courses was laid out for the student when he arrived at MNSU and was based upon a rotating class schedule so classes are taught every other year. The idea behind the class structure for technicians is to build a general knowledge of all design areas and then build a superstructure of academic technique. Additionally, graduate and undergraduate students take many courses together. At times, this worked well, for instance the lecture hall style classes, and at other times hindered the breadth of what the course could have been because the course was tailored to entry knowledge.

For clarity, this paper will first discuss the academic style classes and then discuss the craft courses. In his first semester, Shofstall took Theatre Research. This is one of the few graduate student only classes offered in the department. It focuses on researching topics and writing papers on them. Shofstall did not succeed in this course. The course is designed for students to practice writing, but also clarify the research and submission process. Emphasis was also placed on "finding the hole" in the body of knowledge and trying to stitch together an answer through research. In retrospect, Shofstall became too fixated on this individual idea and created an anxiety loop that made writing more difficult through the rest of his graduate school career.

The following spring, Shofstall took Theatre History I. This was a lecture course serving as a survey of theatre from ancient times through the English Restoration. Shofstall had taken three theatre history classes in undergrad and was unsure how much this course would add to his overall knowledge. Information was presented at a lighting pace, which made it difficult to keep up. Shofstall often found the class frustrating as questions were often answered in a condescending tone. The class read many works from the periods they were studying which was an excellent expansion for understanding the styles of theatre, but were quizzed on often miniscule details of the play, rather than the overall work.

Returning in the fall of 2018, Shofstall took dramaturgy. Shofstall was nervous that he would have a repeated experience from Theatre Research and struggle with figuring out how the research mattered. Students were required to build a research packet for a play of their choosing and present it to the class the same way a dramaturg

would. Shofstall found the practical application of research to be much less of a struggle and found that he had no problems with researching when he knew how the information applied to the task he was doing.

In the spring of 2019, Shofstall concurrently took Theory/Critical Analysis and Theatre History II. Theory was another graduate student only class where the students read excerpts from important theatre writings. Every week, the class would cover a new practitioner and theorist, moving forward through history. Shofstall found this to be his favorite of the academic style courses as it gave the graduate students a place to discuss and explore more abstract theatrical ideas without the end goal of memorizing information. The topics studied in Theory very quickly began to overlap with the time period and material we were studying in History II. History II gave Shofstall his first chance to teach as Hamilton created study groups within the class that would meet one day of the week and be led by a graduate student. Shofstall used the time with his group to deepen their understanding of the theories behind the theatre trends being studied in class. This additionally gave Shofstall a chance to experiment with his teaching style, using different structures every week, eventually settling into a comfortable Socratic method style of teaching, engaging his students with discussion rather than lecturing them on topics.

This paper will now discuss the courses related to theatrical design that Shofstall took in his time at MNSU. In his first semester, Shofstall took Scene Design I with John Paul. Because Shofstall had previous scenic design experience, this class felt like a refresher course. Shofstall wanted the class to push him further, but as a primer course,

the feedback he received was usually that his work was good and gave no further avenue for improvement. This was Shofstall's first frustration with the undergraduates and graduate students sharing a class. If Shofstall could have presented his portfolio and jumped to Scene Design II for more advanced work and discussions, he would have preferred the option.

In the following spring, Shofstall took Lighting Design I with Steve Smith. Shofstall found this to be a much more organized learning environment. Smith's approach to lighting was that anyone can at least create a simple lighting design if they understand some of the basics of lighting instruments and the geometry to use them effectively. Shofstall found the course helpful to understand enough of what lighting designers do to work with them in a more efficient way. Shofstall and Smith's working relationship as technical director and lighting designer also improved after this course because Shofstall understood Smith's plans more than he had previously.

Shofstall then took Costume Design I with David McCarl. This class is not something the student was sure would help him. Shofstall chose to look at this class as an opportunity to work on general design aesthetics and rendering through costumes and eventually came to learn much about his own art style by pushing outside of his comfort zone.

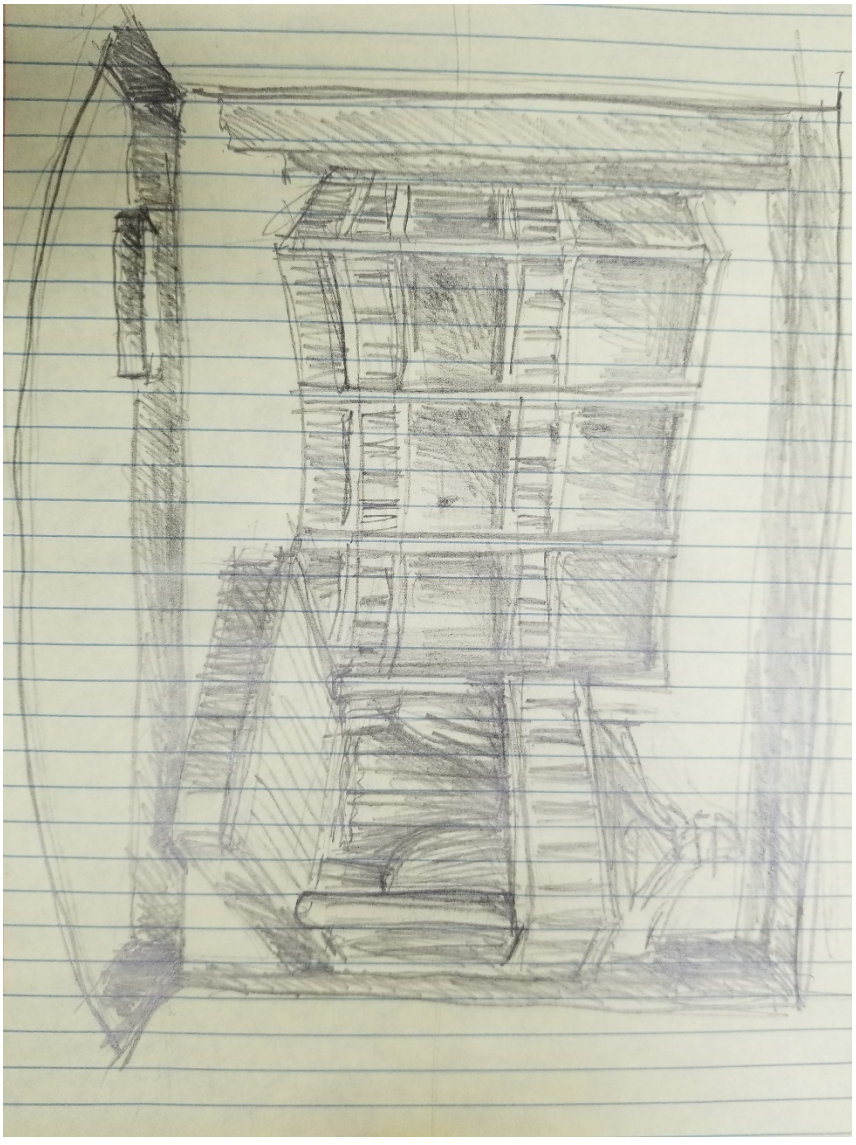
This paper will now discuss the courses most applicable to Shofstall's emphasis: Technical Direction I, II, III, and drafting. All four of these courses were taught by Shofstall's advisor, George Grubb. In the technical direction classes, we covered everything from project management tools to solving technical issues within theoretical

scenery. As Shofstall was new to technical direction when he began his time at MNSU, he found these classes to be extremely helpful in learning how to break down a set, make the scenic plan for it, then turn it into an actionable plan considering the labor that would be available. Shofstall feels these courses serve the purpose of creating a project manager, but wish they taught more of the engineering math that is required of technical directors. By his own admission, Grubb is not comfortable teaching math, but it feels like a hole in the education of technical directors from the program. Drafting is an essential skill to any technical director. Because Shofstall had previously taken a course in drafting, done several scene designs, and been technical director for several productions, he had a similar problem with his drafting course as he did with Scene Design I. The course serves as an introduction to the skills, and Shofstall would have benefited more from an advanced course. The majority of the class served as practicing technique, and only provided a few challenging opportunities for growth.

In his time at Minnesota State University, Mankato Jared Shofstall had a broad range of experiences to make him a more rounded professional. Through his experience as a technical director for the department, Shofstall developed his own style of managing people for efficiency. In his classwork, Shofstall gained a deeper understanding of the broader theatre world that has made him a more rounded artist.

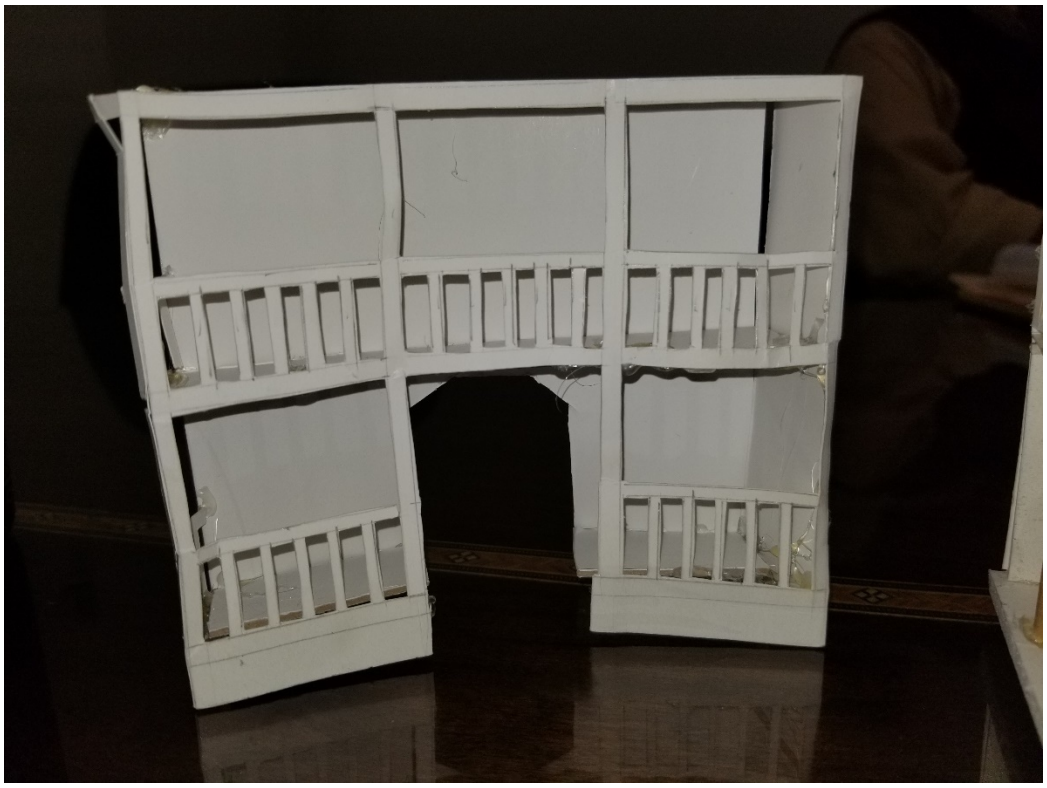
APPENDIX A

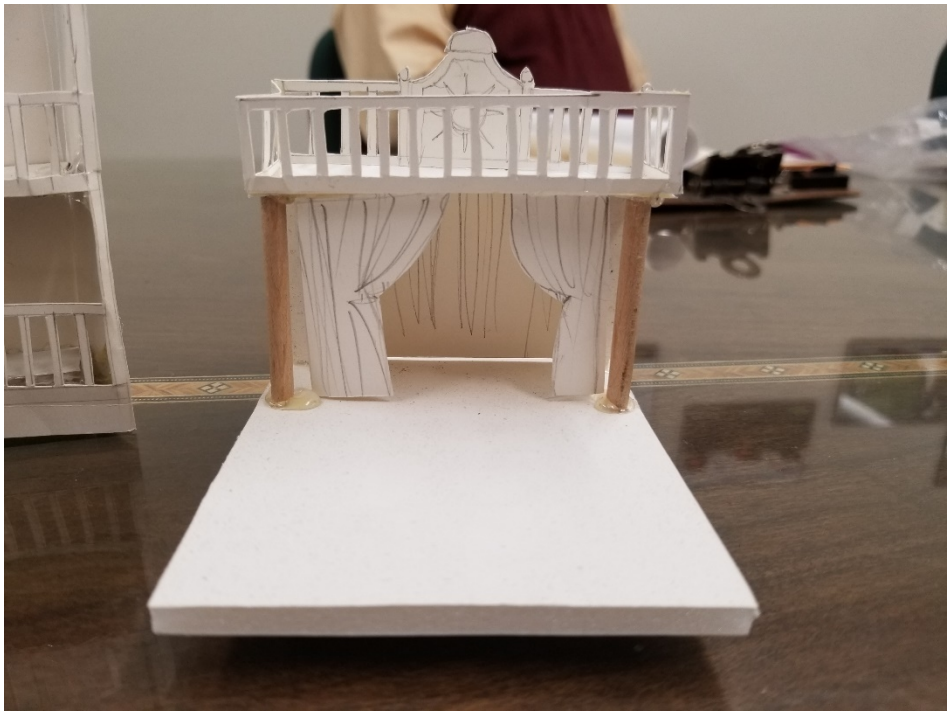
TECHNICAL DRAWINGS



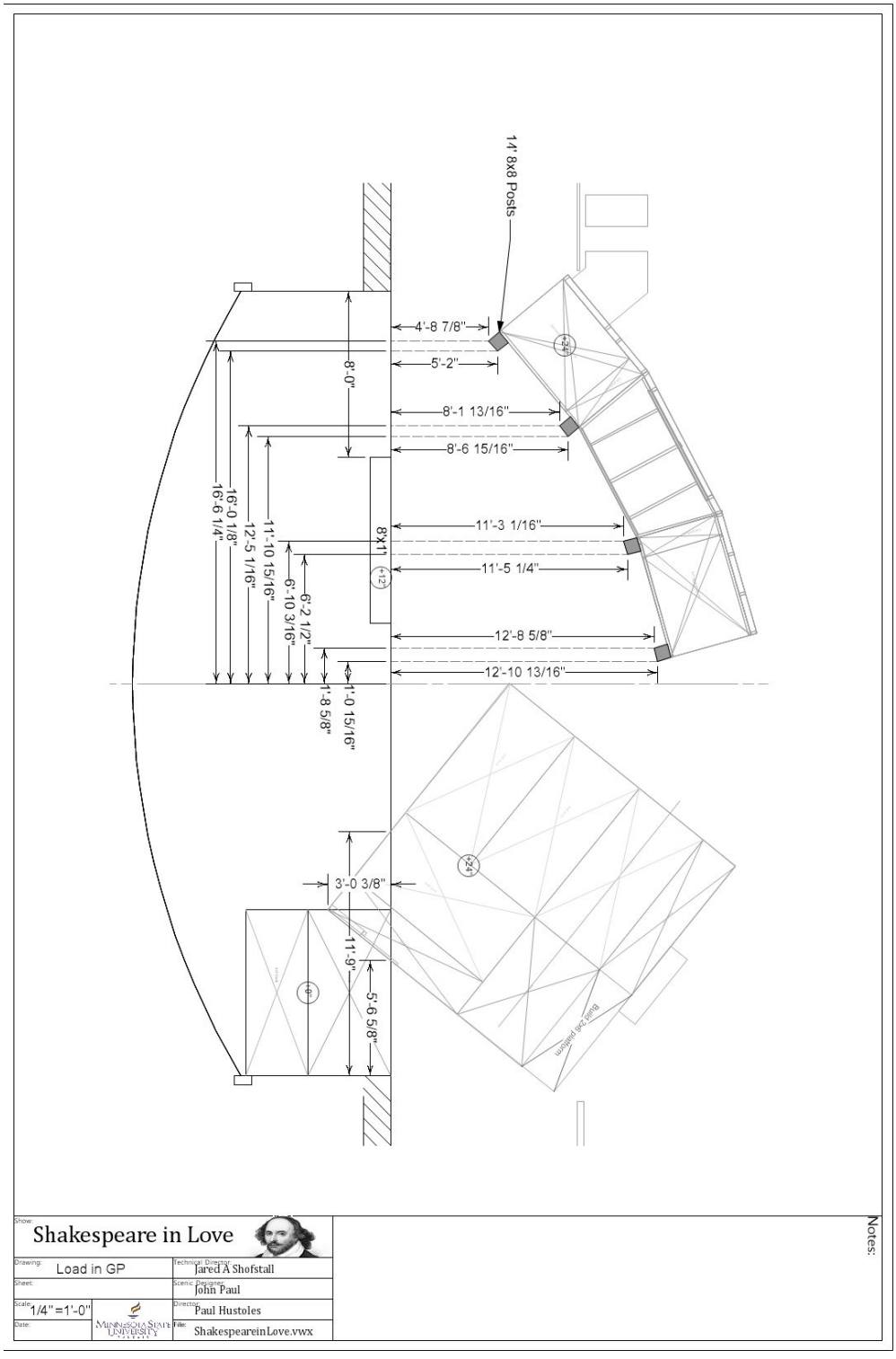
DESIGNER'S SKETCH

N.B.: APPENDIX NOT TO SCALE

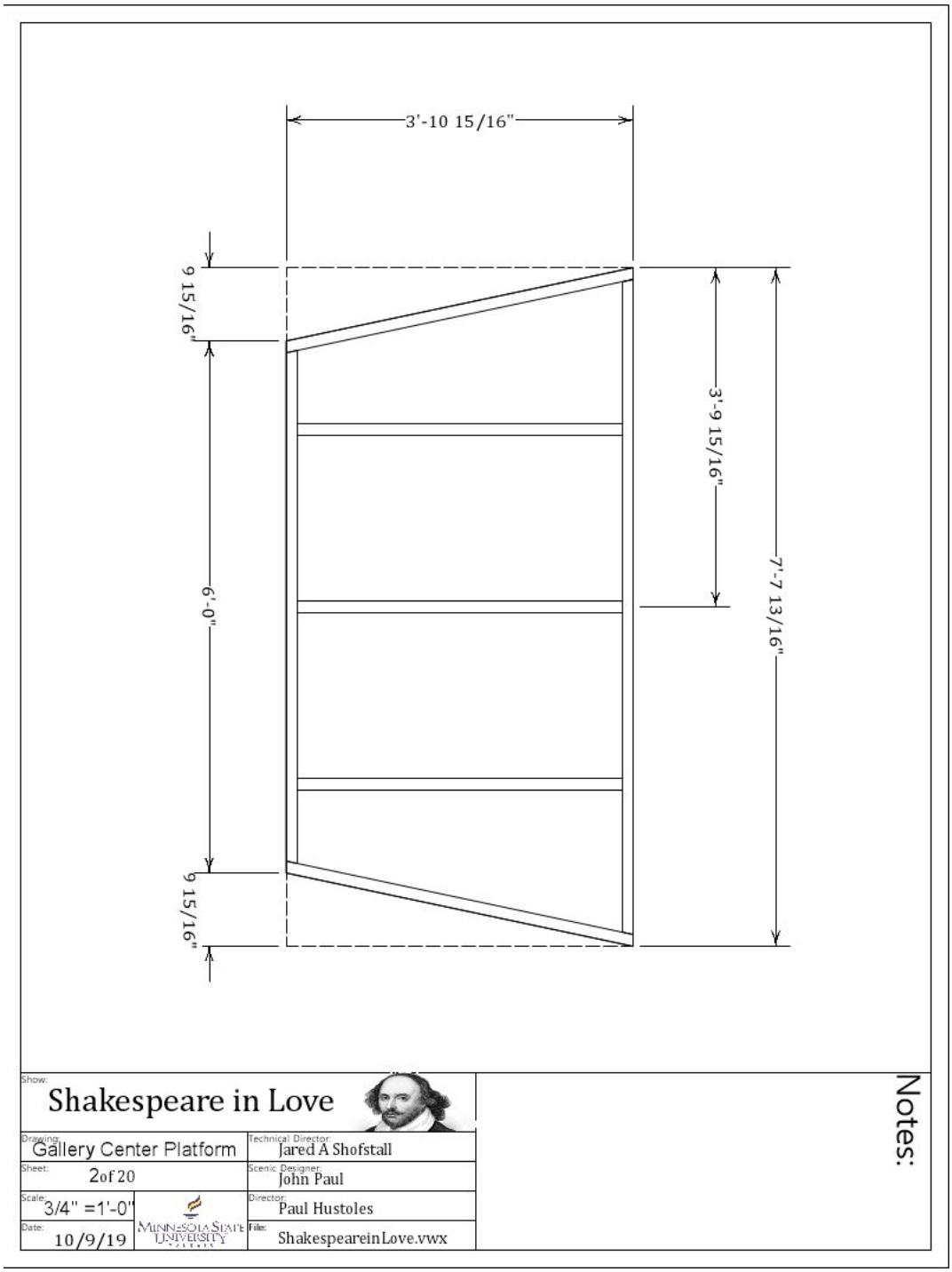




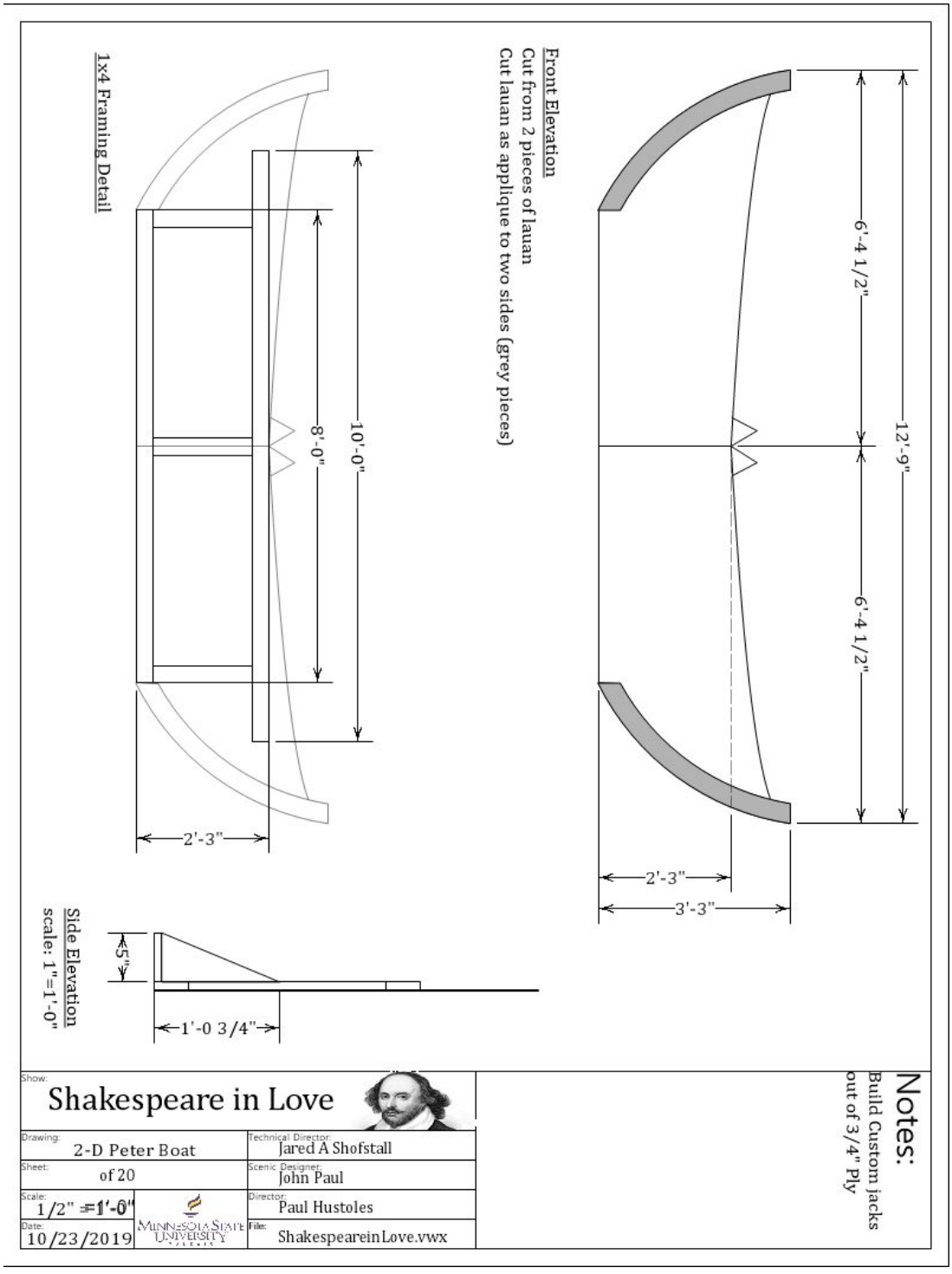
DESIGNER'S MODEL



TECHNICAL DIRECTOR'S GROUND PLAN FOR LOAD IN



GALLERY UPPER LEVEL – CENTER PLATFORM



TWO DIMENSIONAL BOAT

Shakespeare in Love Budget			
October 2019		Starting Total: $1500	
Technical Director: Jared A Shofstall		Director: Paul Hustoles	
Scenic Designer: John Paul			
Purchase Date	**What (general)**	**Vendor**	**Purchase Amount**
10/10/19	lumber	Lloyd lumber	$771.73
10/10/19	Steel - I beam & 1x2	Minnesota Iron& Metal	$140.80
10/16/19	Lumber	Menards	$123.52
10/18/19	Lumber	Home Depot	$59.62
10/22/19	curtains	amazon	$399.94
Total			**$1,495.61**
Remaining			**$4.39**

BUDGET TRACKING WORKSHEET

PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS

INSTALLATION OF I-BEAM ON ‘STAGE UNIT’

IMPROVISED BENCH

WILL AND MARLOWE ON LADDER

2 DIMENSIONAL BOAT

FOUR POSTER BED

FULL SET

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