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Production 1 (ADPB6001)

The World Goes 'Round - Written Reflective Journal

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I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

The aim of this piece of writing is to reflect upon the ideas and frameworks I encountered throughout the rehearsal process of the production, 'The World Goes 'Round', composed by John Kander and Fred Ebb. I intend to conduct a thorough analysis surrounding the methodology I employed throughout the process, providing evidence for both the personal and academical discoveries I made within the project. Finally, I plan to utilize credible resources to assist with the evaluation of my development.

The initial stage of this process involved meeting our director, Matthew Holmquist, and understanding his concepts and intentions for this project. The piece was set in 1942, during World War II, where all our characters have found refuge in a tavern where we all express our individual stories and hardships through song and dance. Holmquist outlined his proposal of creative freedom amongst the cast, explaining that we had the artistic choice to independently innovate our own characters and their unique properties, such as their background, relationships, and personal dynamics. Emma O'Sullivan expresses that "having the *theme* of the story at the front of her mind informs creative choices."

(O'Sullivan, 2021). This inspired me to reflect on my solo number and develop a character around it, keeping the periodic era of the project in mind.

I was given the solo number, 'Go Back Home' from one of Kander and Ebb's more recent works, The Scottsboro Boys. Mauricio Arreola-Garcia states that "you're practicing lyric analysis any time you listen to a song you particularly like, and you begin to wonder at the meaning of it." (Arreola-Garcia, 2020). As such, I carried out a lyric analysis to break down the lyrics and understand my characters' potential experiences and feelings. This method of character-building was promoted by our musical director, David Laugharne, who provided us with the song study to complete this analysis. I decided my character would be a traveler who could not return home to his family due to the circumstances of the war,

hoping that “maybe times will turn” and can one day “go back home” (Kander & Ebb, 2010). It was at this moment I recalled Holmquist’s request to approach him with new ideas, stating that “If you can play any instruments, we would love to incorporate that somehow.” (Holmquist, personal communication, 18th February 2026). This encouraged me to utilize my talents with the ukulele, further allowing me to develop my character from a simple traveler to a travelling musician. I also felt that the ukulele fit Kander and Ebb’s composition of this piece, juxtaposing their more distinguished jazz work within the project. Furthermore, this gave me the opportunity to collaborate with Laugharne, working one-on-one to develop my chords.

Holmquist desired the project to be as immersive as possible. He wanted us to exercise our developed characters and interact with the audience at every opportunity, bringing the cohesive environment to life. As such, the project was set in-the-round. “Having the audience and performers in close proximity to one another is an important factor in the relationship between actor and audience.” (Holloway, 2010, p.2). My initial impression of this was a feeling of worry. The concept of being observed from every angle and spontaneously improvising with numerous audience members was nerve-racking; stemming from my undeveloped improvisational skills. According to improvised theatre specialist, Mark Jane, “When you start improvising, the first thing you need to understand is how this fear is blocking your own creativity.” (Jane, 2022, Chapter 3). This coerced me to shift my fear and view the improvisation as receiving new material from the audience. By carrying out this method, I quickly became more comfortable interacting with not only the audience, but also my fellow cast members, permitting me to further develop my character’s relationships and discover more about him, such as his sexual orientation deciding that he would be polyamorous and flirty. There was clear evidence surrounding the development of my improvisational skills, succeeding in making the audience laugh and contributing to the interconnected environment Holmquist pitched in the early stages of the project.

Reflecting on the vocal elements of this project, I was introduced to Laugharne’s teaching style; a teaching style that I was very unfamiliar with. I found myself struggling to accurately sing my harmony as I would need to sing an octave lower than the alto singers who were transferred onto our original harmony. To overcome this obstacle, I made efficient use of the digital backing tracks constructed by Laugharne, practicing my harmony outside of rehearsals. Furthermore, I applied my developed ability to read sheet music and studied the sheet music that we were provided with. (Learning scales, chords and intervals will give you the basic understanding on how music is structured.” (Joubert, 2022). Through this development process, I gradually managed to successfully sustain my harmony in each ensemble number, remaining true to Kander and Ebb’s unique

composition style. Additionally, I remained flexible through Laugharne's teaching style and became well-adjusted to it throughout the process, developing my ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Having fully developed my character, I found it difficult balancing his humorous nature with the disastrous stakes of the time period. I felt it imperative to conduct independent research into World War II and the effects it would have had on our ensemble of characters. Through this research, I learned that the actions of Adolf Hitler cost the lives of over 70 million people, with many Jewish people and other minorities being executed or forced to seek refuge, illustrating the importance of our project's tavern. According to the World History Encyclopedia, "many cities and towns suffered tremendous physical damage to buildings and infrastructures. Bomb-damaged buildings remained a familiar sight in many places right through the 1950s." (Cartwright, 2025). This assisted me in understanding the implementation of the bomb sound effect in the ensemble number, 'Money, Money', being able to react to the sound with heightened stakes and panic. Overall, carrying out this method of research helped me comprehend a deeper understanding surrounding the threats of Hitler in the environment we had created, as well as the consequences my character was posed to.

In conclusion, the personal and academic research methods I employed throughout this process had a profound impact on my development. In collaboration with the creative team, I was able to connect my research with my practice, apply my artistic choices, and meet the criteria set in place by our director from the beginning. Through the frameworks I adopted, I made vital discoveries that I put into fruition, allowing for a successful performance and continued personal growth as a performer.

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