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Production 1-ADPB6001

The World Goes 'Round Reflective Journal

Word Count-1,094

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 goal for this journal is to critically examine the ideas and approaches during the rehearsal process for The World Goes 'Round, written by John Kander and Fred Ebb. I will also reflect on my experience being a cast member in this production. I will explain the historical context surrounding this production, my professional development, the director's vision, and how I overcame obstacles and collaborated with my fellow cast members and creative team.

The process started with an audition. We were tasked with singing a short cut of a song we believed suited the music of The World Goes 'Round. I chose the song 'All I care about' from Chicago. Stefan Holmstrom's first tip for choosing audition songs is "make sure the song is appropriate" (Holmstrom, 2022). I used his ideology and made sure my song fit the musical style of this show, by using a song composed by the same artists. The audition was in front of our director Matthew Holmquist, our music director David Laugharne, and our choreographer Tori Johns. I was satisfied with how my audition went. I took direction well and I believe I was vocally secure throughout. When we started rehearsals for the production, the first week consisted of learning music with David, our individual numbers as well as ensemble songs. Matt insisted that we have creative freedom. He stated, "I want the process to be as collaborative as possible" (Holmquist, Personal Communication, 18/02/2026). The initial conversations I had with him; we spoke about ideas for my character and how we can connect my songs and create a story from them. He gave us character profile questions which I found extremely beneficial to understand my character beyond the context of the piece. I had the challenge and the opportunity of having three songs. It was a lot of content to learn, however, I was fortunate to have more songs than I anticipated.

This show was set in Europe in 1942. This was a very prolific period so before rehearsals continued, it was imperative for me to investigate the historical context. As this show has many different minorities, I made it my mission to research those minorities

specifically. I needed to know how these characters were at risk. “Hitler had played the racial card in promoting his policies in the region before the war.” (Rieber, p.78, 2022). It is my understanding that the Nazi’s hated any form of minority, especially Jewish people. “The Nazis embraced the false idea that Jews were a separate and inferior race” (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2025).

As rehearsals continued, we discovered that Matt envisioned this production to be performed in-the-round. It “is a type of stage that’s surrounded by audience members on all sides” (Frawley, 2023). Therefore, I needed to be constantly aware to direct my performance to as many audience members as possible. We also started staging our ensemble numbers. I greatly admired Tori’s choreography for these numbers, I believe they elevated the story and presented a challenge to us as a cast. When staging my songs, Matt proposed that my character should manifest a romantic interest in the songs ‘I Don’t Remember You’ and ‘Marry Me’. His idea for the former was that these two people have been separated for so long that my character has completely forgotten about her. I suggested that instead, these people parted ways because of my character’s inability to commit. Matt responded positively to this idea, and we decided that this song was the first time they have seen each other in over a year, and the new narrative would be how they initially interact under this different dynamic. My character in this context is in denial of his former partner and is emotionally manipulating himself into forgetting everything about this time in his life “if I left you once before, somehow I can’t recall it anymore” (Kander and Ebb, 1968). Matt also encouraged us to discover other relationships within the cast. His concept for the 1940s bar (that the show is set in) would be a queer space for us to be ourselves unapologetically. He approached me with the idea of my character not being heterosexual, which I valued because queer visibility in theatre is especially meaningful to me. I fulfilled this request and cultivated queer relationships among other characters. David assigned us a task to complete a song study. This aided me in applying the correct technique as well as having appropriate acting choices in my songs “When technique and truth meet, that’s when you find the magic.” (Davis, 2023).

When it came to performing full run-throughs of the show, it was apparent we had made something incredibly special. This came to light during the song ‘Dear One’, the whole cast was emotionally connected to this song, bringing tears to many of us every time we sung it. This was assisted by the amazing experience we had with the creative team. They created such a safe and supportive environment for us while also maintaining a high level of professionalism. As tech week approached, I was elated with the progress I had made throughout this process. I developed my relationships with the other characters, had a deeper understanding of the historical context and refined my songs to a standard I was satisfied with. The song ‘Sara Lee’ proved to be a rewarding challenge for me. Tori and Matt’s vision was for my duet partner and I to emulate the style of Fred Astaire “Astaire combined elegance, ease and grace into a dance style that

offered escape to an American audience struggling through the Great Depression and then a devastating world war”(Pytlik, 2020). This was important as our characters were stage performers during the Second World War. They would have idolised someone like Fred Astaire and would have tried to replicate his style to create “an escape” for the other people in the bar. By the end of our four-show run, I elevated my performance and was thrilled with the outcome.

To conclude, this production was an amazing experience for me. My skills in group improvisation developed. I cherished the whole process with the creative team. By working with them, I was able to link my research to my practical work, add the historical context into my performance, and meet the creative team's expectations. The new opportunity of working in an immersive in-the-round theatre was a pleasant gateway to future projects I will seek to work on. These approaches culminated in a successful run of performances and substantial growth for me as a performer and a person.

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