

Production 1:
Written Reflective Journal
(ADPB6001)

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AI declaration

I acknowledge no usage of AI in this essay.

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 which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Introduction

Throughout the creative process of *And the World Goes Round* (ATWGR), I engaged with a myriad of different performance techniques and rehearsal mythologies, while simultaneously developing a deeper understanding of professional rehearsal standards and production assembly. The process commenced with auditions, enabling the creative team to determine appropriate casting based upon each individual's strengths (Rutherford, 2012). Following this, we focused on learning harmonies, lyrics and musical notation under the guidance of the musical director, David Laugharne. Once this material was introduced, actors were expected to practice externally to commit the material to memory. I felt experienced in conducting self-guided rehearsal as I had exercised this skill during the rehearsal process of *I Love You, Your Perfect, Now Change* (UWTSD, 2025).

Subsequently, the choreographer, Tori Johns and the director, Matthew Holmquist introduced choreography and staging. Holmquist also facilitated character development through the application of Rudolf Laban's Efforts (Harvard and Evans, 2013) and Konstantin Stanislavsky's Given Circumstances (Stanislavsky and Benedetti, 2017). I felt this successfully supported me to construct an understanding of my characters' backstory and identify objectives. Full company runs were then conducted, followed by detailed note sessions where the creative team identified areas for refinement to later resolve. In the final week, technical elements were incorporated culminating in a technical run and a dress rehearsal in preparation for performance.

Reflection of the Creative Process

One aspect of the creative process that I found offered a particularly impactful point of reflection was the creation of an immersive audience experience. Achieving this required each cast member to develop a nuanced understanding of their character, interpersonal relationships and the productions settings. Stanislavsky's Given Circumstances exercise was particularly valuable in achieving this. Through close analysis of the script and lyrics, we identified the factual information relating to our characters and environment (Merlin, 2014). Then we expanded upon our findings using imaginative inference supported by Stanislavsky's "Magic If", to construct psychologically coherent and detailed interpretations (Merlin, 2003, pp. 47–48). This internally focused, analytical approach contrasts significantly with Meisner's technique, which I had previously studied during our Acting for Musical Theatre module (UWTSD, 2025). Whilst Stanislavsky's practice offers a more internal approach, involving script analysis and discovery of authenticity through understanding (O'Brien, 2017), Meisner's approach prioritises spontaneity and reactions to external stimuli, finding authenticity through instinct (Silverberg, Foote and Stern, 1994). I found Stanislavsky's approach particularly beneficial, as it's analytical approach aligned with my preferred working style and enabled me to form detailed, evidence-based character interpretations.

This production also marked my first experience of immersive performance. Initially, I found this concept quite daunting as this form of theatre includes much closer audience-actor proxemics and this made me feel quite exposed (Hopkins, 2022). However, as I further explored my character and utilised my team work skills that I had developed through our Collaborative Project module (UWTSD, 2025), I grew increasingly confident in improvising with audience

members whilst maintaining character integrity, also being able to engage with other characters to establish relationships. This experience has equipped me with transferable skills that I can now utilise going forward when approaching future performances, including our final production of *Alice by Heart*.

Another element of this process that prompted meaningful critical reflection, was the exploration of physical movement as means of accessing emotional truth. To support this work, we studied the Laban's Efforts and engaged in related practical exercises (Panet and McHardy, 2009). One exercise we conducted involved the actors walking up and down in their own separate "lanes" completing a simple physical gesture which Holmquist would manipulate by altering variables such as flow, space, time and force (Harvard and Evans, 2013). It was interesting to discover how one gesture could translate a vast range of meanings purely depending on its physical qualities. I found executing this exercise helped me identify intention behind movement and allowed me to determine what gestures evoked a specific emotional response. I was then able to experiment with the different ways to gesticulate when rehearsing my solo number, which in turn supported my establishment of clarity in my storytelling. Laban's externally driven practices differ greatly from Chekhov's Psychological Gesture, which relies on internal imagery work to generate physicality (Chekhov, 2020) whereas Laban focuses on external instruction to impact physicality in order to generate an emotional response. I found that Laban's method was particularly effective for my practice, as it allowed me to obtain more precision with my physical storytelling.

Throughout this process, I also discovered the importance of maintaining good professional rehearsal etiquette. It was vital to the show's success to be punctual in order to remain on schedule, this involved being vigilant with call times. Another key element of professional rehearsal standard was that the actors were expected to independently revise songs, staging and choreography outside of the rehearsal room to allow progression (Mercanti, 2017). I felt I displayed a high level of professionalism throughout the process as I was punctual and completed independent rehearsal to solidify material. As well as this, I also showed respect to other creatives within the room and assisted vocal ensemble work. One aspect I believe I could further improve moving forward, to strengthen my professionalism, would be to maintain better focus through long rehearsal days, as for some of the longer technical rehearsal days my energy and attention would deplete. Fischer (2017) recommends eating a healthy balanced diet with nutrient rich foods to help maintain energy levels through intense rehearsal periods, which is a strategy I intend to use moving forwards.

Conclusion

Overall, I feel I have developed a range of essential performance skills over the course of the creative process for ATWGR. I have also gained an insight into what a professional rehearsal entails and the expectations of an actor throughout the creative process. Additionally, in being exposed to a myriad of different practitioners approaches, I have been able to critically assess what techniques best support my artistic development. This was something I had previously been advised to do in my Acting for Musical Theatre module feedback to help develop my approach to script work (WAVDA, 2026). This evidences my progression and ability to self-reflect. Going forward, I feel more confident approaching production rehearsals and I feel I have established a reliable personal process, incorporating exercises that best support me, to allow me to develop a well-established character. I look forward to transferring the knowledge I have gained from this module to our final production of *Alice by Heart*.

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