

Gwylltia

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ADPA6000

An understudy finally gets the chance to shine but the pressure takes over and the self-doubt kicks in.

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Introduction

Subject: Does being Welsh hold you back from being successful anywhere other than Wales in the performing industry?

Overviews and aim: I believe that I have the opportunity to connect to others. I will be writing a one woman play that shows how being Welsh shouldn't stop you from being successful in somewhere like London. I feel strongly that people should be proud of their language and where you're born, I will be showing the high and lows to make sure people understand when you hit rock bottom there's always a way up.

Research:

Website:

I feel like researching more into my culture and into Wales will help me include enough facts and important information in my piece that I feel proud of.

<https://www.wales.com/about/culture/wales>

I believe by researching into individuals that's from Wales and has made it into the west end, it might be more encouraging and will be able to grab other people's stories and make it my own.

<https://www.welshofthewestend.com>

<https://playbill.com/article/i-could-have-danced-all-night-the-top-10-musical-theatre-showstoppers-com-330807>

Books:

I'm already familiar with Welsh author Llio Maddocks work but I feel like her poems will really come in helpful with the direction I'm going.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Twll-Bach-Welsh-Elain-Maddocks-ebook/dp/B08P582N6M/ref=sr_1_1?qid=1675118956&refinements=p_27%3ALLio+Maddocks&s=b_0001&sr=1-1

Podcasts:

I came across this podcast called 100,000 NOs, which is a podcast about how to overcome rejection.

<https://open.spotify.com/show/1xFqJAmUufSojbJX3fuQWW>

Interview:

I'm thinking of interviewing Welsh people that's living in London that's in the industry to see what their experiences are.

Literary Review

Is the English xenophobic to the Welsh? I'm focusing on Xenophobia and by looking into xenophobia, I can understand signs, causes and different types of xenophobia. 'Xenophobia is usually rooted in the perception that members of the outgroup are foreign to the ingroup community'. I can say that the xenophobia between the English and the Welsh is already strong so by identifying the causes of xenophobia might help me understand the feud between the Welsh and the English. I feel like this article was the most useful while I was researching because it had the most information, while reading through it I could see some facts that was relatable by being Welsh. As a Welsh person, being pinned down to a few nicknames and insults regarding the Welsh culture and nature is a big part of xenophobia and is a feeling of an attack. 'Cultural xenophobia: This type involves rejecting objects, traditions, or symbols that are associated with another group or nationality. This can include language, clothing, music, and other traditions associated with the culture'. Cultural xenophobia is something that many countries face every day, even England, but in my opinion, I feel like the Welsh gets it more.

'Annibyniaeth!' researching into Plaid Cymru and the Welsh independence is important in the sense of my culture and understanding my character and her love and beliefs. The Welsh independence is a political movement regarding making Wales an independent country within the UK. 'Decisions on the constitutional future of Wales should lie unequivocally with the people of Wales'. Plaid Cymru is the political party that's fighting for all the rights but as referenced, it's all down to the people of Wales and all is needed from the people is a vote. I don't feel like this benefited me in the piece but I feel like it benefited the character's development as it was mentioned in the piece, and it shows that she was proud to be Welsh

'Sut rydych chi'n teimlo am Cymru/How do you feel about Wales?' I created a questionnaire with some questions about Wales and its language and culture to see what people responds to them. I asked several questions from how they feel about being Welsh or Wales in general to do they think that you can make it into the performing industry by being Welsh. The reason I found this interesting because I can see others' opinions on certain things. I find it really interesting how people also respond, depending on where they're from. In one of the questions, I asked which was 'How do you feel about being Welsh or living in Wales/Sut ydych chi'n teimlo bod yn Gymraeg neu byw yng Nghymru?' and I had two answers in particular that was really interesting to me, the first being 'Balch dros fy ngwlad, falch i fod yn Cymraeg', with the other being 'Nothing special I guess, it's been my only life'. Being a proud Welsh woman, I was surprised with some of the answers I received but then proves that not everyone proud of their heritage, it seems extremely controversial.

As performers, something we suffer with a lot is rejection. I felt the need to research into how to deal with rejection. I've experienced rejection in the past, but I felt like I needed to get a good

understanding of it so I could work from the roots of my character. 'We feel rejected when we're not included, accepted, or approved of.' We as people can feel rejection almost every day because of either little things or big things but the best way to manage that is to know how to deal with it. In the article by Psychology Today, there is 4 different ways to deal with rejection with the last step being 'Keep putting yourself out there' but in an article by Better Up it gives you 7 tips. Both articles are different, but I feel like the article by Better Up is more detailed and realistic, it is also more up to date.

Being a performer, I know what it takes to be successful, but I still feel like I don't know yet because I haven't had my first job and I'm still training. I thought that it would be the better idea to research into skills you need to succeed in the performing arts. I know that we think it's all about the talent and how hard you work, and it is, but it's also more than that. 'Successful performing artists are often required to work on more than one project at once and work schedules can become hectic.' On a website called PROSPECTS, it tells you the set of skills you need that's more than just talent, it's all about you and your confidence, organisation, time management and flexibility. Some of the skills mentioned with is things I still struggle with today, but the page really gives you a clear basis of what you need as a performer. I came across a website called 'Iampro', and it includes information on what it takes to become a performer. I also investigated this because I need to know what others say about becoming successful and see what other's think about the industry. It explains what a performer is and goes into what skills you need.

Self-doubt is a big part of my piece as my character goes on an emotional rollercoaster. 'Self-doubt is a lack of confidence regarding yourself, or your abilities' Self-doubt is common especially in the arts, it's something that's hard to get rid of or set aside but there are ways to overcome it. In an article I read by Better Up, the best way to overcome self-doubt is to replace the bad habits into good habits. The habits include 'try not compare yourself to others' and 'think about past achievements', the reason I used both as an example is because those is the ones I used to relate to my character and how she coped. There was also an interesting quote I came across on the 'minds' website 'I thought self-hatred was normal. Everyone wakes up every day and looks in the mirror and thinks 'yeah, I hate that bit about me', right?' I found this interesting because self-doubt and low self-esteem is becoming more normal, but people don't understand that it's an unhealthy way to live.

I explored into Wales, and it's cultured a little bit more so I could understand things in a deeper context and the website I investigated was Wales' official page and I found it useful as it goes in on everything. I feel making sure I know everything about my culture is really going to help me and make me understand to a better ability and find out connections to other cultures 'The first and only twinning between two UNESCO world cultural heritage sites is that of Conwy Castle in North Wales and Himeji Castle in Hyogo, Japan' I found things out that I didn't know and has made me feel a whole different appreciation for my Country and I put that into the character's profile.

At the beginning I felt the need to explore into Welsh people that's made it into the arts industry and by doing that I felt a little bit better and confidence that I could put it into my character as inspiration, for a long time I used Catherine Zeta-Jones as my character's inspiration but while writing the script and the character's profile, I found that the website and the research didn't benefit me or my writing. But it did give me the boost I needed at the start.

How do you prepare for a performance? Because my piece is based on getting ready in a dressing room before a performance, I felt the need to research into different ways to prepare for a performance. I came across a website which includes 9 ways you can prepare from learning your lines to getting into character. I came across another website which gives you 8 steps to also prepare yourself for a stage performs, the step from this website is a little bit different than the other one because I feel like these are more practical as they vary from warming up to get enough rest before a performance day to be on time. I feel like the second article is more helpful for me and how I structured my script, not everything in the article is helpful for me because it's not exactly based on a musical performance, but the techniques and order is very helpful for me.

'Life is a Cabaret, old chum' I wanted to research into Cabaret the musical because I need to get a feel of the musical my character is preparing to on for. The musical is based in Berlin in the Kit Kat Klub at the beginning of Hitler's rise of the Nazi Party and life must have been hard for everyone who was living there at the time. I felt that Sally Bowles connected to my character, but I knew that I needed to look into Sally Bowles' history and background. Sally Bowles was working in a different country that she was born in, and I that instantly caught my eye and gave me even more of a reason to investigate more into her. 'Grew Up... in America, a place she was eager to escape for a European lifestyle.' Even though Sally Bowles left her country for different reason she still became a performer and lived as a foreigner.

I investigated many different videos for the last song to see how other performers have portrayed and embraced Sally Bowles. I found it interesting how many different performers have many different interpretations of who Sally Bowles is and who she acts. Looking into many different clips of how it's performed has me in how I performed it and influenced me into going down the route I took.

I find coming up with choreography difficult, so I searched and investigated into many different clips, but I mainly focused on Fosse and his style of dancing. Fosse is best known for his work in 'Cabaret' but what I found most interesting was his different styles of dance but still having the same vibe. Fosse had a famous quote that I found helpful 'Live like you'll die tomorrow, work like you don't need the money, and dance like nobody's watching'. The reason I found this helpful is because I can use this is Sally Bowles' performance as her mantra being she doesn't care about anything only what she loves doing, which is performing.

I specifically looked at Mein Herr for the inspiration because I feel like that's the best choreography I can go off of. It doesn't benefit me in the form of trying to come up with choreography because 'Mein Herr' is very different to 'Life is a Cabaret' because it's too different style of songs but I can look at what kind of moves being used and also steal maybe a thing or two from that. In the musical, it's only Sally Bowles that's on the stage so I'm going to try and input Fosse's style from Cabaret and Chicago to help me choreograph the piece.

Development

We started by doing little tasks in class that helped us find the structure of our piece and I found the exercises really helpful. At first, I based the character on myself because I wanted to bring in my

North Walian culture and my experiences with the different language while growing up. I also wanted to bring in some insecurities I face every day as a performer.

I feel stressed and this
person
when I think about
compensation and ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~problem~~
because I don't know
how much I should ^{and} ~~compensation~~
it - to
can be yourself
mostly your the cause
30m
Personality
energy crisis
every little thing
self discrimination
all here.
why be first and doing
this
Peace
Calm after storm
creative -

During the time we had with the group, we were told to write something about how you feel and when. I said that I felt stressed and explained why, the students then had a chance to ask me some questions and while as was answering they picked out some words that they thought were important or what would help and benefit me. I found this task quite hard because I'm not particularly good with expressing how I feel in a deep, but I did get something out of it. I found it helpful in the fact that I had to hear the words that back and evaluated what I said even though I found it uncomfortable, but it made me think about how I wanted to portray my character and how I thought my words would work into her personality and the way she lives

her life.

We had a task on what would we tell our younger self's. I wrote my one to myself based on how I have grown as a person and something I wish someone would have told me growing up but instead of looking at it as something should be embarrassed of, I embraced it. I did not really connect the task to my piece because at the time I didn't feel like it made sense to do so.

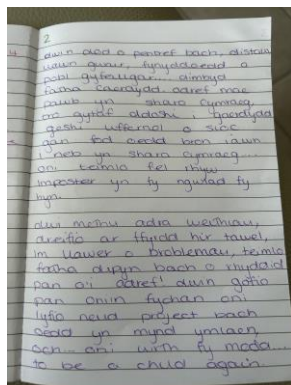
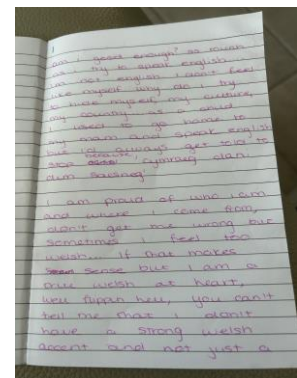
- independence project (Gwynedd)
- therefore
- larger americanish with special
- americanisation
- they didn't move fast enough
- more gradual
- transition into the first world
- position, desire to make it into
- the majority
- different materials in language
- how are Welsh people at home
- how's north Wales attitude
- against the union
- need to discuss success/failure
- and being Welsh would be a barrier
- need to give sleep with
- relevance

At the beginning I had a different idea to what I had in the end. At first, I based my project on the tragedy of Aberfan and I wanted to focus on a mother who lost a child during the incident and how that experience was for her and how it impacted her family and life. But after having a meeting with Elen, I decided it was best to focus on something I can relate to and after rethinking the whole project I concluded that I didn't want to do something to deep because I wanted to have fun with it while also putting a lot of thought and effort into it. In the meeting with Elen, I was saying how I felt about doing a musical theatre course while being Welsh and I

explained how I really like it, but it did come with some challenges as there was some things I would rather do in Welsh and put that into a perspective as a project. I then wanted to base it on being Welsh in the performing industry and what it is like, I wanted to create a project that had both language because I am proud that I'm fluent in both.

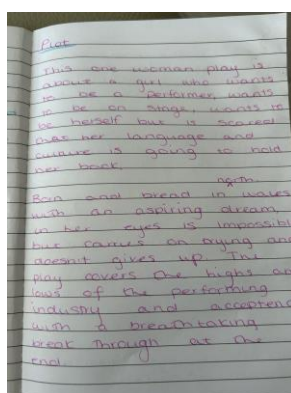
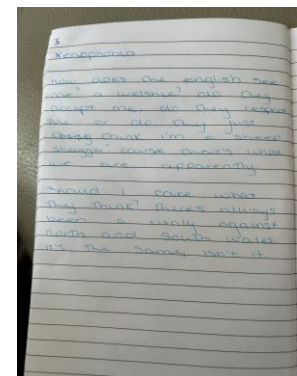
Younger self.
I've always told you
to give up and go to
follow your dreams and
never abandon people
there's no need to tell
what you live or do
and don't be emotional
because who you are
doesn't let people
worries hurt you
You are enough you
don't have to be
what others expect
you to be and if you
feel like a lost soul
on wheels because
it's time to feel
like that. Be you

This was the first thing I wrote based on my new idea and I based it on doubt. I wrote a short monologue doubting being Welsh because I wanted it to show the progress in the character about how it was okay to feel to feel doubt but then suddenly feel proud because you won't always be proud of yourself or your country, you'll always have doubts over things, big or small but I wanted to explore that side of it. I also tried to explore my comedic writing during this monologue, it's not that noticeable because I didn't want it to be over the top but because I make everything a joke to avoid my problems and I use humour as I way to escape I tried to find a way to bring that into my creative writing.



I based my second monologue on my life. The reasoning for this is I felt like by writing about my own hometown and my thoughts on it I could spark up an idea for the character's surroundings growing up and I did want to embrace my experience in north Wales into that. It did help me write my first draft and I found a route with my character's history.

I based my third monologue on xenophobia and at this point I did not know much about it. I knew very little information, but I use the rivalry between North Wales and the Souths and Wales and England as an example. It was hard to write this monologue because I felt like my lack of knowledge made it very difficult, but it gave me the boost to research into it and explore the depth of the issue.



I began to vision my piece and what I wanted to include in it, I went on to write a plot with my ideas at the time and I worked off that idea a built of that idea. I found this task the most helpful because I forced me to think about what I wanted to do in depth. From the plot I started to look at the structure and I knew I wanted to start by explaining where the character's from and how they felt about moving to a city and how different it is from her hometown. I had a good idea about the middle, but I struggled finding an ending.

By doing all of the little tasks I found myself with an idea, I found it hard trying to write a script as this is not my forte. At the beginning I felt really confident in my idea, and I was happy with what I had done so far, I knew that I needed to give the script a bit of depth. I began to write my first draft,

I felt like it took me a while to get into it. While writing my first drafts I used a little bit of the monologue I'd previously done and see how they fit into it. I wrote my first draft as one big monologue and tried to take my character on a journey I was so focused into getting her to be as much as myself as possible I just focused on what I knew and what I aspired to be. After finishing my first draft I found it to be very short and without an ending, so I struggled for weeks trying to figure out what I want to achieve from this and what do I want to portray to the audience. After having a little bit of a writing block, I sent what I had to Elen and scheduled a meeting to discuss what I want to do moving forward. I found making meetings with Elen extremely helpful because she was asking me questions I hadn't thought about and that made me realise that I needed a structure and a in depth character profile. [Independent project draft 1.docx](#)

I found building a structure quite hard, but I surprisingly achieved a lot from it. While building the structure, I started to figure out what I really wanted and started to develop on the idea. I already knew that it was going to be based on being a swing, but then I started to think about changing it to be an understudy for a certain character because I had previously been an understudy but of course not professionally. I also felt like I tried too much to portray the character as myself so then after thinking about it I felt it was right to make up a character from scratch but add some things about me in there. I felt by doing that I achieved a lot more because I didn't feel as pressured to get it right. [Independent project structure.docx](#) I didn't want to base all of it on xenophobia, I still wanted it to be in the piece, but I wanted to base it around panic, self-doubt and anxiety because these are things performers face every day and I feel like I could portray that character very well. I concluded that I wanted to end the piece by singing a song from the musical I was going to be performing in, at this time I didn't have a definite musical.

While I was writing the second draft, I of course had a better structure and thought that having a tannoy announcing the calls was a good idea. It made me feel more confident in my work and letting me have a better journey as a character. The writing process for my second draft was a bit easier than the first but I still found it difficult in what I was writing, I think that it was more of a confidence issue and overthinking the piece too much. I felt a lot better about the second draft because I really felt like I was going somewhere, and I could really see the piece going together. I still struggled to find an ending or a journey to go into the show stopping song. I feel like the whole process of the second draft for me is just getting the structure together and understanding the character's journey. I started to doubt myself once again, so I scheduled another meeting with Elen, and that meeting changed everything because I had a whole new perspective on the piece. In the meeting Elen and I discussed the character and there wasn't enough detail about her, we didn't know her in depth, so Elen did an exercise with me during the meeting where I had to close my eyes for a few minutes and while my eyes were shut she asked question to me about my character and I had to picture her and her life, which helped a lot. I recorded the questions so I could work on the character right after the meeting. [character profile](#).

Before I wrote the third and final draft, Elen told me that the stakes needed to be high in the piece and it needs to be just sheer panic. I changed the structure around a little bit keeping some stuff written in the second draft. By this point I came up with the musical I will be performing which was Cabaret and the character will be understudying Sally Bowles, she is currently playing one of the two ladies in the show. I felt like cabaret was the best option because I need to relate and write about what I know. I wrote the final draft quite quickly as I knew what I wanted to include for definite, I

struggled with trying to write the character having a mental breakdown, so I tried to record myself and see how it sounds if I just played around and I thought that I really worked. I chose to do the song 'Life is a Cabaret' from the musical because I felt like it was the most appropriate and I wanted to showcase myself performing that song. I was happy and confident with how the final draft was written; I was a little bit worried about the time.

Rehearsal Process

Going into the rehearsal process was smooth a first because the script was mostly just me and I had sorted who was doing the Tannoy and coming in for a few lines. The difficulty I had with it being a 'one-woman shows' I was also directing it and it kept stressing me out because I couldn't see if it looked good or if I needed to change anything with the blocking, sorting out the blocking was simple because I didn't have much set but yet again I did think that I was moving too much at the start but then had a second opinion from another student, with them saying it looked fine because my character was just in panic and portrayed that. We were called in on the Friday before tech week and I spoke to Elen and I decided to add backing dancers, the reason I didn't do it previously because that's not how it is in the musical, but Elen made me realise that I could add them in and make the song into my own. Luckily, the girls agreed to be in my piece in very short notice.

I then felt a little bit stressed because I needed to choreograph the whole song during the weekend, so I booked a room for long hours during the weekend because I needed to be prepared as my tech was on Monday. I do admit, I shouldn't have been so last minute. I looked through Cabaret clips and the show's style to keep the choreography within the style of the show and that era. I then started to choreograph the dance and I did struggle a little bit because I was getting too worked up, but I started to improvise to the song myself and see what I like and what I didn't.

<https://youtu.be/5J51T-gOeVQ>

I luckily got to rehearse with the girls on Sunday, they picked it up well, but I struggled teaching them. I struggled to step up and be the leader, but I got on with it, I felt like I made sure what they were doing, and I didn't pressure them to do anything they didn't want to. I asked several times if they were uncomfortable doing some movements and if they would like to change something for their benefit, but they were happy with everything. We worked on the choreography for about an hour that day and we recorded it for them to go over in their free time. We met up a few times during tech week to go over the piece and I wanted to know how they felt about performing it, it being short notice. Once they were in the piece, I added a few lines at the end of the script so it would make more sense with them being at the piece in the end and it made the ending a lot better with the whole xenophobia part. <https://youtu.be/hpY-JytoAlo>

Going into tech week I felt more confident with the piece as I knew what I wanted to do with the lighting and sound as I'd just had the Tannoy recording done and ready. [Tech Spec Mared](#) I started by transferring all my mp3 files to Billy and giving Tegan a clean script ready for her to make her notes. I knew what I wanted with the lights, but they did change in the process. The lighting didn't change much for what I originally planned, it was mostly just the colour and the timing of it, the reason I'm saying it changed I just had a set lighting in my mind, and it just turned out a little bit differently. I was lucky to have Billy there to reassure me if it looked good because I was stressed

that I couldn't see myself and how it looked, I would say I was prepared but then again, I could've been more. On Monday I only had an hour and a half session, so I only had time to the tech and didn't have much time to do a run of it. Luckily, Billy managed to fit me in for another hour the next day, so I'd have as much time as everyone else and I managed to do a run with the girls.

During the next few days, I focused on being off script and double checking that all my props and set were sorted. [SET.pptx](#) I sorted all the costumes and went online for some inspiration, I felt like all black but still a bit sexy was the right call because of how Sally Bowles is always portrayed. I started to think about the quick change halfway through and how that's going to work I tried different things but the most efficient way to that was to have my clothes on ready underneath so I wouldn't take long to take them off and get my character shoes on.

On the day of the show, the actor I had playing 'costume dep' was ill on the day so I had to find a quick replacement but luckily, someone stepped in. I had to change the lines a little bit because originally, I had a female playing the role but because the actor that stepped in was a male, I feel like the lines would've been a little bit inappropriate. I gave him the lines but told him he could say anything along those lines because I didn't mind having to improvise if something went wrong.

Performance

[Indepenant Project FINAL DRAFT](#)

During the performance itself I felt some parts of it went well and others didn't. I feel like I was in my own head, thinking too much about it because I didn't want to mess up the que lines. I felt like the blocking went fine and the lines landed but I do feel like the parts where I was speaking English could've been much stronger because I felt like the Welsh acting was strong, but it shows what language I'm more comfortable in. The quick change went a little bit slower than I would've hoped because my joggers wouldn't come off smoothly like it did previously, but I did manage to get it done before the next Tannoy and the mood change. I felt like I did give it a good performance but on the other hand I know that it could've been a lot stronger with more rehearsals. I felt like the song at the end could've been shorter, but I feel like I kept the energy throughout, I don't know how it came across because the second half of the song was supposed to be dark and a bit rouge but maybe I didn't portray that to the best of my ability.

I feel like I could've done a lot of things differently during this process. I could've definitely managed my time a lot better, gone into more depth with my piece and have enough confidence in myself. I've also learned a lot from this process and gained a lot more skills, this experience has most definitely been helpful for the future.

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