

The Mindful Actor:
The Impact of Mindfulness-Based Acting Exercises on Presence,
Impulse-Following, and Creativity

James Huntley

Student ID: 2502525

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

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Advisor: Jonathan Pugh

I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT (<https://chatgpt.com>) from December 12, 2025 to March 10, 2026 as a supplemental editorial tool using the following prompts (in chronological order):

- 1: Help me organize my thoughts so they read with coherence and suggest places where I need to flush them out.
- 2: Please do a ‘language only’ pass-through, keeping my original voice but improving academic readability.
- 3: Edit for grammar and tone appropriate for a BA dissertation while keeping my voice. All edits and suggestions for coherence to be made in brackets, separate from the text.

Chat GPT was used to obtain feedback on structural organization, clarity of argument, and coherence, as well as to identify areas where academic phrasing could be improved.

I confirm all research, interpretation of sources, reflective analysis, and the content of this dissertation were produced by the author. 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.

Introduction

Acting asks individuals to access parts of themselves that everyday life often requires them to suppress. In contemporary acting practice, there is a strong emphasis on the actor's ability to respond truthfully and impulsively within the given circumstances of a performance, allowing behavior to feel alive rather than rehearsed or artificial (Gordon, 1987; Morris, 1981; Hughes, 2025). This emphasis is particularly visible in contemporary Western plays and film, where authenticity and spontaneity are often taken as markers of effective performance.

However, fear, self-judgement, and culturally learned patterns of behavioral repression can make this responsiveness difficult. Actors are frequently asked to embody behaviors and emotional states they were taught to suppress or avoid in everyday life (Wang, 2000; Hughes, 2025). This embodiment of what audiences feel they themselves are not allowed to be in daily life is often considered one of the attractions of theatre and film. Through performance, audiences are able to live vicariously through characters, encounter unfamiliar perspectives, and witness experiences they may not otherwise access (Wilson, 2009). As Morris (1981; 1985) and Hughes (2025) suggest, the process an actor must undertake in order to believably portray these repressed or taboo human experiences often requires a degree of self-exploration and psychological awareness, as well as a willingness to encounter uncomfortable or unfamiliar aspects of the self.

The experience of embodying such roles carries emotional and psychological risks. Research suggests that actors can experience negative psychological effects associated with sustained emotional immersion, including mood changes and difficulty separating personal experience from character (Robb et al., 2016). Actors are also at heightened risk of poor mental health more broadly, experiencing higher levels of anxiety, depression, stress, and substance misuse than the general population (Maxwell et al., 2015; Clements, 2022). Other contributing factors -such as performance pressure, job insecurity, low income, and hierarchical power structures within the industry- also play a significant role (Sørensen et al., 2024), though these fall outside the primary scope of this project.

Research further suggests that emotional and psychological strain is often normalized within actor training and may continue into professional practice if left unaddressed (Seton, 2010).

Robb et al. (2016) found that aspects of performing arts culture can actively discourage engagement with mental health support. Participants in their study reported fears around accessing psychological help due to what they described as a “leave it at the door” culture, alongside concerns that seeking support might lead to tarnished reputations and being labeled as difficult to work with.

Similarly, Curtis’ (2019) research into the mental wellbeing of musical theatre students suggests that tertiary institutions often underprepare students for the psychological demands of their chosen profession. Curtis argues that students should be supported in developing resilience and other positive cognitive habits, alongside education around lifestyle factors such as sleep, diet, alcohol consumption, and time management. In a related study, van den Eynde et al. (2016) recommends that performing arts curriculum include dedicated modules addressing protective factors, social support networks, industry-specific challenges, available resources, and other self-protective strategies. As Seton (2010) deduced, if actors don’t enter the industry with skills to support their own wellbeing, they are likely to continue behaviors that impact themselves and those around them negatively.

Although my own training has included the use of mindfulness exercises, these have primarily been introduced as tools for relaxation, with the intention of increasing presence during rehearsal and performance. There has been little discussion of long-term psychological or physical self-care, nor of the psychological risks that are widely acknowledged within the performance industry.

This dissertation explores how mindfulness practices might support actors in: the exploration of self and psyche for the purpose of creatively embodying a role; the differentiation between my own identity and the characters I portray; the creation of original works; and the development of sustainable mental hygiene and self-care practices within a demanding industry and lifestyle.

The central questions guiding this research are:

- Can mindfulness practices support an actor’s capacity for presence, impulse-following, and authentic performance?
- Can mindfulness support the creation of an original piece of work?

- In what ways might mindfulness assist actors in managing the psychological demands of emotionally challenging roles and work environment?

This dissertation is divided into two parts. Part One establishes a theoretical and contextual framework, examining mindfulness, actor training, and mental health within performance practice. Part Two presents a practice-based exploration of my own acting and creative process, analyzing the use of mindfulness techniques during the preparation and performance of various pieces, including the creation and performance of an original work.

As an acting student in the final year of my Bachelor-level education, I seek to identify practices that support both my artistic expression and personal wellbeing as I transition into the next stage of my performance career. Because this research is primarily concerned with the discovery of practices, tools, and philosophies that support my own creative and psychological sustainability, a subjective, practice-based approach is most appropriate.

This focus does not, however, limit the relevance of the findings to me alone. Rather, the experiences explored may offer insight into how mindfulness practices can be applied more broadly within actor training and by professionals within the industry.

Part One: Theory and Context

Impulse, Presence, and the Actor

An actor's ability to follow their impulse is often considered as a core element of effective acting, particularly within modern realist performance philosophy. Morris (1981) describes impulse as being the root cause of a person's actions, reactions, and emotional expression in response to an inner or outer stimuli. He argues that many actors are taught to analyze characters from the third person, prescribing a specific reaction to be replicated in an identical way each time performed, and suggests this sort of acting is perceived by the audience as disconnected and mechanical (Morris, 1985). When actors allow themselves to respond authentically to *all* the inner and outer stimuli while performing, their behavior then appears spontaneous and truthful, helping performances feel authentic and alive. Gordon's (1987) analysis of Stanislavski's later

work also places emphasis on responsiveness and psychophysical integration, encouraging actors to work moment to moment rather than aiming for fixed emotional results.

Both Stanislavski (1996) and Morris (1985) suggest that impulse is frequently blocked by fear and internalized social conditioning. From a young age, individuals learn to regulate or suppress emotional expression in order to conform to social norms. While this regulation may be functional in everyday life, it can limit the emotional and behavioral range required of an actor. As a result, Stanislavski based actor training often involves the process of unlearning habitual responses and developing greater awareness of internal experience (Ingleson, 2022; Stanislavski, 1996).

Presence is closely linked to impulse. Presence refers to the actor's ability to remain engaged with the present moment and respond to all relevant stimuli that is occurring, rather than relying on pre-planned choices or habitual reactions that may not be appropriate when something unplanned occurs. An actor who is present is able to listen, adapt, and respond authentically to their scene partners and the unfolding circumstances of the performance, including mishaps. This is especially relevant for live performances where unplanned events alter the course of a scene. For example, if an actor's scene partner drops a prop, they may incorporate it into the scene rather than ignore it and perform as they've rehearsed. Filmed performances also benefit from actors who are present, bringing authenticity to a role and allowing for off script improvisation from actors that are often left in the final edit (Zigler, 2023). The concept of developing an awareness of, then responding to all relevant stimuli that occurs in a moment closely mirrors principles found in mindfulness practice, suggesting a clear link between acting and mindfulness.

Defining Mindfulness

Mindfulness is commonly defined as paying attention to present-moment experience with openness and without judgement (Johnston, 1983). Although rooted in Eastern contemplative traditions, mindfulness has been widely adopted within contemporary psychology and therapeutic practice as a means of supporting emotional regulation, self-awareness, and wellbeing.

Mindfulness involves focused attention, embodied awareness, and an accepting attitude toward thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, and external stimuli. Rather than attempting to control or suppress internal experience, mindfulness encourages noticing what is happening and choosing how to respond (Walsh and Shapiro, 2006).

The term *meditation* refers to a family of self-regulation practices that focus on training attention and awareness in order to bring mental processes under greater voluntary control and thereby foster general mental well-being and development and/or specific capacities such as calm, clarity, and concentration. (Walsh and Shapiro, 2006 p.228-229).

This ability is of primary importance to the actor, who must remain aware of subtle internal shifts while simultaneously responding to external stimuli and scene partners. Several writers have noted the parallels between mindfulness and acting practice. Goldstein (2015), for example, suggests that acting often requires a form of non-judgmental awareness, particularly when actors allow emotions to arise without becoming overwhelmed by them. This overlap suggests that mindfulness may offer a useful framework for understanding and supporting acting processes.

Mindfulness in Actor Training Practices

Many established actor-training approaches include practices that closely resemble mindfulness, even if they are not explicitly labelled as such. Eric Morris's work places strong emphasis on awareness of moment-to-moment emotional experience. His "I Feel" exercise asks actors to identify and express what they are feeling in the present moment without censorship, helping to build sensitivity to internal states and the capacity to express them truthfully (Morris, 1981; 1985).

A progression of this exercise involves sitting opposite another actor and sharing a stream of consciousness about feelings and the thoughts that follow. Morris is clear that participants should not share anything they wish to keep private, yet the exercise still requires vulnerability, presence, and attentive listening. In my experience, this practice increases emotional awareness and encourages more authentic responses both on stage and in everyday interactions. Practicing this with a fellow actor can cultivate a close bond by building trust through personal revelation that can lead to the discovery of shared connections and the development of empathy. This does

not come without risk, which is why practicing personal discernment regarding the extent of information shared is encouraged. It is always possible that either the participants or the audience, in this case other students, could end up intentionally or unintentionally sharing the participants' personal information outside of the container established by the practice, or using personal details to harm the sharer psychologically or emotionally through bullying, character assassination, or other misuses of private information.

In their Doctoral thesis, *Front Row: A Grounded Theory Exploration of the Psychological Wellbeing of Professional Actors*, Kumar (2019) warns that encouraging emotional openness and personal exploration can increase psychological vulnerability, particularly when past trauma is activated in the pursuit of authenticity. This makes it important to consider mindfulness not only as a tool that yields positive results, but also in relation to psychological safety and ethical responsibility within actor training.

I have chosen to abstain from exploring the aforementioned partnered stream of consciousness practice in the context of this dissertation because of the risks involved. It is worth noting, however, that in the past I have practiced this technique with both actors and non-actors, and have found it to be highly valuable when practiced within proper guidelines. This leads me to believe that it would be worth exploring at a future date with proper oversight and protocols in place, as it has the potential to be especially useful for actors working together in scenes that require high levels of emotional vulnerability.

Kristin Linklater's (2006) vocal work similarly emphasizes embodied awareness and visualization as a means of releasing habitual tension and restoring the capacity for natural expression, while Wangh (2000) instructs his students to physically "exteriorize the contents of their minds" (p. 12) in his Stream-of-Consciousness Warm-up combining the moment to moment awareness of mental activity with physical expression. Phillip Zarrilli's psychophysical approach draws more explicitly on physical meditative disciplines from Eastern traditions, directly linking mindfulness and actor training (Zarrilli, 2009). Taken together, these approaches suggest that mindfulness may function as a shared underlying mechanism across a range of acting methodologies (Blanchet and Atkin, 2023).

Zarrilli's (2009) approach is primarily focused on martial arts training as a mindfulness technique to acquire what he calls psychophysical awareness, focusing on the physical body in

specific and precise movements as a practice to develop holistic awareness in actors. Truly, an actor needs to be as aware of their bodily or outer state as they do their mental/emotional inner state. This physical awareness is overlooked by teachers like Morris, who teach their students to explore and develop their inner awareness, potentially leaving their physical performance vulnerable to the actor's habitual movement patterns. Zarrilli's (2009) methods are not, however, designed solely to include awareness of the body into a performance, but primarily to use the body as a vessel for mindfulness of the whole self. Similar to Linklater, his philosophy begins with awareness of the breath in connection with physical sensations and utilizes visualization to help facilitate focused awareness.

Hughes teaches the use of a consistent sitting meditation practice as a tool for the creation of a character. He believes that by combining character analysis -the investigative process of discovering who the character is, how they think, and how they would behave through in depth study of the text- with visualization meditation, an actor can then "create a characters subconscious, allowing it to manifest in front of an audience without [the actors] own unfinished thinking in the way" (Hughes, 2025). He defines unfinished thinking as past trauma or thinking patterns that affect the actor, but that the actor is not fully aware of. He describes a character's subconscious as "a collection of mental impressions, 90% of which are mental pictures" (Hughes, 2025). His system ties these individual mental pictures to specific moments in the text, teaching an actor to visualize these images as they perform, thus embodying the character's consciousness.

Mindfulness as a tool for creativity

As an aspect of the practical application of mindfulness skills, and in an attempt to observe objective benefits from said application, I have committed to the creation of a performance-related product. At the time of this writing, I remain unsure of what this product will be, other than an exploration of a mindfulness based creative process. Creativity being defined by Runco and Jaeger (2012) as the process or ability to devise or develop ideas, solutions, products or artifacts that are both novel and effective. Though this definition appears to be clear, both novelty and effectiveness are subjective depending on who is judging the end product (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). In their study of the impact of mindfulness practices on

creativity amongst students in a US based Arts and Design program, Henriksen, Heywood and Gruber (2022) found that subjects reported experiencing an increased ability to regulate emotions and cope with anxiety, both of which supported mental clarity and reduced identification with their internal “Voice of Judgement”. The benefits of this may be best expressed with a quote directly from the article,

When students become more aware of the thoughts or emotions they struggle with that present as obstacles to the creative process, the space for dereification increases, distancing the students from these barriers, bringing them more in touch with their present moment experience. In doing so, students may question and recognize that they have more choice over their thoughts and experiences, which allows new ideas or work to emerge, through artistic expression or life experience (Henriksen, Heywood and Gruber, 2022, p. 164).

In past creative endeavors, I have struggled to overcome thoughts and emotions that either limited my pursuit and completion of a project or compelled me to curate a product that was intentionally designed to appeal to an audience. In this project, I hope to create an authentic product, letting the creative process guide the work rather than be guided by my thoughts of how it will be received by the audience. Based on past experiences, I believe that overly concerning myself with the audience’s perception and approval would result in an intentional attempt to manipulate the audience. I will, however, attempt to utilize what I have learned about theatrical arts by including skillful editing and thoughtful stage design to the end product.

Mental Health, Risk, and the Rationale for Practice-Based Research

The psychological demands of acting are increasingly recognized within academic literature. Actors frequently report emotional exhaustion and difficulty separating themselves from emotionally intense roles (Robb et al., 2016). Method-based approaches, while not exclusively responsible for these issues, have been criticized for encouraging excessive emotional immersion without sufficient strategies for emotional regulation or recovery.

Although mindfulness is often promoted as a mental health intervention, recent research suggests it is not universally beneficial. Lyddy et al.’s. (2021) study on mindfulness in the workplace

revealed that mindfulness can intensify emotional experiences and mental fatigue in environments that have organizational requirements or social norms that do not allow for authentic emotional responses. This behavior, deemed *surface acting*, is defined as the feeling one must hide their true emotions or pretend that they have emotions they don't really have. Though surface acting is depleting in all employees, the harmful effects were heightened in those who practiced mindfulness. By developing heightened awareness of the inner workings of oneself, there are negative outcomes including emotional exhaustion and psychological fatigue. *Deep acting*, in contrast to surface acting, is when a person proactively changes their internal feelings to align with the organization and is not considered resource depleting. It is also worth noting that those who practiced mindfulness were less likely to participate in surface acting (Lyddy et al, 2021), though the relationship between mindfulness and one's ability to resist surface acting were not discussed. The implications of the impact of surface acting versus deep acting seem relevant for the actor. Though most modern philosophies of acting downplay the practice of cultivating and performing emotions, all acknowledge that emotions are present and suggest various ways of addressing them. Based on Lyddy et al's. research, it seems plausible that an actor's attempt to perform inauthentic emotions (surface acting) could result in negative outcomes. If this actor practices mindfulness, the risk then becomes higher. I cannot, however, state that I know if these negative outcomes would be personally harmful to the actor or merely result in poor performances.

Morris (1981, 1985) addresses this in his books, warning that when an actor holds himself back from following an impulse on stage, intentionally out of fear or unintentionally due to wandering thoughts, it interrupts the actor's ability to be present. This leads to mechanical and superficial acting, which he claims can only be overcome by consciously becoming aware of one's internal and external experience in the moment. By returning to the actor's actual experience and making on-stage choices informed by those stimuli, the actor can again find flow and authenticity in the character.

Shapiro, Seigel, and Neff address another potential issue with mindfulness,

If care is not taken, mindfulness practice can be used defensively as a way to shut off and close down to the responsibilities of life. Meditators may fall into the trap of withdrawing

from the world, not taking action or being engaged in the significant challenges that our world faces, as a way to avoid reality. (2018 p.1696).

Both of these issues highlight the importance of applying mindfulness critically and contextually, rather than assuming it will benevolently improve one's acting abilities or support their wellbeing.

Much of mindfulness research is based on how those who practice mindfulness in isolation respond to stimuli in the everyday world. This is helpful when we acknowledge the increased risk for mental distress actors face in a demanding industry (Robb, 2016; Sørensen et al, 2024; Maxwell et al, 2015) and suggests a personal mindfulness practice may be supportive. However, these studies do not address how mindfulness in action, i.e. during production, performance, or creative endeavors, can produce positive results in the actor's work.

For this reason, a practice-based research methodology is well suited to this study. By positioning myself as both actor and researcher, I will be able to examine mindfulness as an embodied and lived process while allowing for detailed reflection of both the benefits and limitations of mindfulness practices within my practice.

The following practice-based investigation examines how mindfulness, presence, creativity, and psychological regulation impact my own acting and creative processes.

Part Two of this dissertation explores these ideas through practice-based research. By applying mindfulness techniques during rehearsal, creative development, and performance, I examine how these theoretical claims function within my own acting process. The following section shifts from theoretical discussion to reflective analysis of my practice, documenting how mindfulness influenced impulse, creativity, and psychological awareness during the preparation and performance of several acting projects.

Part Two: Practical Exploration and Reflection

Description of the Practical Project: Mindful Creation

The practical component of this research involved the writing and performance of an original script, alongside participation as an actor in a production of *Blood Wedding*. Throughout both processes, mindfulness practices were intentionally integrated into my creative and rehearsal routines. These practices included seated meditation, breath awareness, mindful movement, journaling, and Eric Morris's "I Feel" and "I Want" exercises.

I choose the "I Feel", and "I Want" exercises because they are foundational practices within Morris's approach and are designed to establish awareness of one's inner experience. In order to discover deeper aspects of oneself, the practitioner must circumvent habitual protective responses to emotional stimuli. The "I Feel" and "I Want" practices require the practitioner to repeatedly answer a single question, encouraging exploration of present-moment experience without explicitly directing attention toward the protective thought patterns and behavioral adaptations that, according to Morris, societies often instill in individuals during childhood in order to facilitate social conformity (Morris, 1981; 1985).

Through repeated engagement with these practices, actors are encouraged to develop sensitivity to their internal states and to recognize how habitual responses may limit authentic expression. In this project, I explored how these exercises might function not only as acting tools but also as practices capable of supporting creative exploration and psychological awareness during both writing and performance preparation.

Mindful Creative Process: Original Script

During the writing phase of this project, I followed a modified creative process attributed to Cai Tomos, as referenced in a conversation with Jonathan Pugh (2025). Each mindful creative session began with ten minutes of seated mindfulness meditation, followed by ten minutes of mindful movement, usually in the form of free-form dance. This was followed by ten minutes of writing, either journaling or script development, then ten minutes of the "I Feel" exercise, and a further ten minutes of writing. This cycle was repeated as time allowed, and each session concluded with a ten-minute seated meditation.

I began this process without a predetermined concept or "seed" idea. Over the course of nine sessions, each lasting approximately three hours, I was able to discover a central concept and

complete a script (see Appendix A). I found that this structured, yet open process supported both creative openness and psychological grounding. The cyclical structure allowed ideas to emerge without force while simultaneously providing a sense of containment that prevented the process from feeling overwhelming or directionless.

I found that Tomos's approach, combined with daily meditation, supported not only the creation of a new work, but also fostered an attitude of acceptance toward the work itself. Compared to past creative experiences, I noticed a significantly reduced concern with audience approval. Rather than attempting to shape the material according to what I believed an audience might want or expect, I was able to remain more focused on the process of exploration.

This perceived detachment from audience reception remained largely intact throughout the writing process and post-production analysis. There was, however, one notable exception. When the time came to present a working version of the script via an unrehearsed performance while reading the script aloud to my cohort in order to receive feedback, I experienced strong feelings of fear and anxiety. I believe these emotions were connected to the vulnerability required to share an autobiographical work, which was a novel experience for me as a performer and writer.

Upon noticing this emotional response, I chose to treat the workshop presentation as an opportunity to expand my comfort zone. Susan Jeffers, in *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway* (1991), argues that deliberately engaging with situations that provoke manageable levels of fear can gradually expand one's comfort zone. Approaching the presentation of my work with this mindset allowed me to frame the experience as a form of practice rather than evaluation. The result was a productive workshop experience and a positive emotional response that I would describe as relief -a post-performance feeling that was relatively unfamiliar to me in comparison to the self-critical reactions I have sometimes experienced following previous performances.

A limitation of this approach was the requirement for adequate privacy and physical space. The "I Feel" exercise requires vocal expression without inhibition, while the free-form movement component requires sufficient space to move freely. Although I was able to access an appropriate studio space provided by the university for this project, such resources are not always readily available to independent artists. This raises questions about the financial and logistical feasibility of sustaining this and similar mindfulness-based creative practices outside of institutional environments. More broadly, this limitation also points toward structural inequalities within the

arts sector, where access to rehearsal spaces and creative resources can shape who is able to experiment with certain working methods.

The original vision for the staging of this production ultimately exceeded the financial resources available for this project and therefore had to be thoughtfully adapted. After considering my options, I chose to pursue a relatively simple staging approach. I collaborated with a student specializing in Set Design and Production to create a lighting design intended to support the audience's understanding of the narrative without deliberately employing conventional lighting techniques designed primarily to evoke specific emotional responses.

Although this minimalist approach allowed the focus to remain on the spoken text and performance, I recognize that the design could have been more carefully developed. Nevertheless, I feel that this decision allowed me to maintain a sense of creative integrity within the practical limitations of the project.

Novelty and Effectiveness

In order to identify whether this creative process resulted in a product that could objectively be considered creative or original, I draw upon Runco and Jaeger's (2012) definition of creativity as being the production of ideas or artefacts that are both novel and effective.

Novelty

During the creation of the script and the parallel development of a performance concept, I initially believed the work to be predominantly novel. However, I was aware that I had been partially inspired by Samuel Beckett's *Not I* (1973), particularly in relation to the script's formatting. Knowing that a structurally similar form had been explored previously provided reassurance during the creative process. Nevertheless, the content of the two works differs significantly, the primary difference being that Beckett's piece is fictional, whereas my script is autobiographical and performed by myself.

During later reflection, I became aware of two additional influences that had been operating outside my conscious awareness during the creative process: Morris's "I Feel" exercise and the song *Hi Ren* (2022) by the performing artist Ren.

As previously discussed, the “I Feel” exercise is a stream-of-consciousness practice designed to cultivate awareness of one’s present emotional state. While using this exercise during the early stages of the creative process, I began to experience emotions connected to long-past events. These memories gradually became the catalyst for the autobiographical content of the script. Interestingly, I later recognized that the performance structure of the piece mirrors the experiential structure of the “I Feel” exercise itself. Although Morris did not design the exercise to be performed publicly, its influence on the final artistic form of the work appears significant.

Similarly, the song *Hi Ren* made a strong impression on me when I first encountered it in 2022, and it has remained one of my favorite music videos since then. I did not consciously consider it during the early stages of development. However, after discussing the music video with a peer several weeks before beginning the writing process, I began to notice structural and thematic similarities between the song and my own work. Although there are clear differences between the two pieces, the comparison raises questions about how unconscious influences may shape creative work.

This reflection leads me to consider whether mindfulness practices may facilitate access to deeper or less consciously controlled creative material. In *The Art of Creative Thinking*, Adair (2007) suggests that creative insight often arises from subconscious cognitive processes. If mindfulness practices encourage greater awareness of internal experience while temporarily quieting self-critical thought patterns, they may allow previously unrecognized influences or memories to surface during creative work.

The similarities between my script and the structure of the “I Feel” exercise also suggest that different mindfulness-based practices may shape creative output in specific ways. If this is the case, then the selection of particular mindfulness techniques may have aesthetic consequences for the resulting artistic work.

Though I acknowledged the potential influence of these three factors -Beckett’s *Not I*, Morris’s “I Feel” exercise, and Ren’s *Hi Ren*- I feel comfortable describing the work as novel in a meaningful sense. I did not consciously attempt to replicate or imitate another artist’s work, and the autobiographical content of the piece is unique to my own experience. Although structural and thematic similarities may exist, each work ultimately stands as an independent creative artefact.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of a creative work may be understood in terms of its value, usefulness, or appropriateness for those who encounter it (Runco and Jaeger, 2012). The perceived value of a work will inevitably vary depending on the audience experiencing it. From this perspective, even a work that resonates with a small number of people may be considered effective, although its perceived value may increase as the number of people affected grows.

In order to explore the effectiveness of my work, I asked eight audience members to complete a brief questionnaire after viewing the performance. Participants were predominantly aged between nineteen and twenty-two years old, with one participant in his fifties. The group included three male-identifying participants, four female-identifying participants, and one non-binary participant. The questionnaires were completed anonymously and did not collect personal identifying information. I am aware of the demographic characteristics of the participants through personal acquaintance, but I do not know which questionnaire corresponds to which individual. Scanned copies of the completed questionnaires are included in Appendix B.

The creation of the questionnaire itself was informed by mindfulness practices. I began by sitting quietly and asking myself the question, “What am I curious about regarding this performance?” I then closed my eyes and focused on my breath while waiting for ideas to emerge. When my mind wandered, I repeated the question internally and returned my attention to the breath. After approximately thirty minutes, several questions had emerged, which I wrote down and later refined into a short questionnaire.

At a superficial level, the piece might be interpreted as a commentary on aspects of the Western male experience. However, I was surprised to find that a majority of respondents (six out of eight) reported personally relating to the work. When asked, “Do you relate to any aspect of this piece? If so, what is it like for you to see it expressed on stage?”, several participants described recognizing broader cycles of the human experience reflected in the performance.

Responses included statements such as:

- “It was so moving.”
- “...makes me feel less alone.”
- “...very inspiring to see it on stage.”

Another question asked participants whether their experience of the piece changed depending on whether they believed it to be fiction, non-fiction told in the third person, or autobiographical. I had not explicitly informed the audience which category the performance belonged to, although some may have suspected that it was autobiographical due to the intimate staging and my presence as the performer.

Responses suggested that several participants felt a stronger emotional connection when they interpreted the work as autobiographical. Two respondents explicitly described the autobiographical framing as the most impactful interpretation, suggesting that the perceived authenticity of personal storytelling may have increased their emotional engagement with the piece.

Taken together, these responses suggest that the mindful creative process employed during this project was successful in producing a work that was effective for at least some audience members.

Acting Practice: Blood Wedding

Prior to the creation of my original work, I performed in a full production of *Blood Wedding* during the first nine weeks of this project. Throughout rehearsals and performance preparation, I maintained a daily seated mindfulness meditation practice and regularly engaged with Eric Morris’s “I Feel” and “Inner/Outer Monologue” exercises, as well as visualization meditation and reflective journaling.

These practices were used to support character analysis, emotional preparation, and embodied presence. Visualization techniques drawn from psychophysical and vocal training were used to cultivate emotional states based on my interpretation of the text. Rather than attempting to generate emotions through memory recall or deliberate effort, I focused on creating conditions in which emotional responses could emerge organically.

Act One reveals that my character, Leonardo, is a low-income laborer who has been rejected by a romantic partner -the character named and hereby referred to as Bride- due to his low social status and limited financial prospects. In an attempt to move on, Leonardo marries Bride's cousin and begins raising a family with her. However, it soon becomes clear that his feelings for Bride remain unresolved. When he learns that she is about to marry a wealthier man, he confronts her, initiating a chain of events that ultimately leads to tragedy. The play also suggests that Leonardo is viewed negatively by many members of the community, partly due to his volatile temperament and partly due to the violent history associated with his family (Lorca, 2008).

Through my analysis of the text, I came to view Leonardo as a man who feels trapped by his social position, his marriage, and his emotional attachments. He is isolated from much of the community and appears to believe that his value as a person is defined primarily by his economic status. As a result, I interpreted his emotional baseline as being characterized by sadness, anger, loneliness, and a persistent sense of defeat.

In order to embody this emotional landscape, I employed symbolic image visualization exercises inspired by Linklater's *Freeing the Natural Voice* (2006). Before entering each scene, I would generate mental images designed to evoke the emotional states associated with Leonardo's circumstances. These images were adapted depending on the dramatic context of each scene.

Once on stage, I focused primarily on what Leonardo wanted from the other characters in each moment. Maintaining this objective naturally influenced my vocal delivery and physical behavior. At the same time, I attempted to remain aware of my scene partners' actions and responses, allowing these stimuli to shape my reactions in real time.

This approach required a considerable amount of conscious mental effort. Stanislavski suggests that with sufficient training, psychophysical responsiveness should become increasingly natural and effortless (Stanislavski, 1996; Tohver, 2022). My experience suggests that I am still in the earlier stages of developing this capacity.

I also experimented with Morris's "Inner/Outer Monologue" technique when I felt that my performance had become mechanical or uncertain. For example, during Act Three, Scene One -in which Bride and Leonardo attempt to escape their pursuers- Bride delivers several extended

monologues while we remain alone on stage. I initially struggled with this scene because the urgency of the situation appeared to conflict with the length of Bride's speeches.

By using the Inner/Outer Monologue exercise, I became aware that I, as the actor, was experiencing confusion, anxiety, impatience, frustration, and insecurity during the scene. Interestingly, these emotions were entirely consistent with what Leonardo might have plausibly experienced in the same circumstances. Once I allowed these authentic emotional responses to emerge rather than suppressing them, the scene began to feel more alive and spontaneous.

There were other moments during the rehearsal process when I attempted to apply this technique, sometimes with positive results and sometimes with little noticeable effect. While these methods are not a guaranteed solution for producing compelling performances -despite Morris's strong claims about their effectiveness- I nevertheless found them to be useful tools that contributed to my development as an actor.

In previous acting experiences, I have sometimes found myself emotionally affected by the psychological states of the characters I portray. Although these experiences have not resulted in lasting harm, they have occasionally produced short-term emotional discomfort for both myself and those around me. Because Leonardo's emotional struggles resonated strongly with aspects of my own life experience, I was particularly attentive to the possibility of similar effects occurring during this production.

To address this concern, I adapted the visualization exercises described earlier to create a process to emotionally "de-role." After rehearsals and performances, I would imagine transitioning from symbolic images associated with Leonardo to images associated with my own personal emotional baseline. Although this practice did not eliminate all emotional residue, I found that it reduced the intensity of the after-effects I sometimes experienced following rehearsals.

Following the conclusion of the production, I continued practicing this visualization technique for several days, focusing exclusively on images associated with my own identity rather than the character. Subjectively, I felt that I returned to my usual emotional baseline more quickly than in previous performance experiences.

These mindfulness practices also appeared to influence my broader approach to self-care during the production process. Rehearsal periods often involve long working hours, limited exposure to

natural daylight, and significant cognitive demands related to memorization and collaboration. During this production, however, I noticed that I became more disciplined in maintaining healthy routines related to sleep, nutrition, physical movement, and social relationships. This suggests that mindfulness practices may support not only performance preparation but also broader forms of lifestyle regulation that contribute to actor wellbeing.

Analysis and Reflection

Across both creative processes, I observed several recurring effects of mindfulness practice. Increased present-moment awareness appeared to support my responsiveness and adaptability during both rehearsal and performance, particularly during moments of uncertainty. I also noticed that I felt more willing to explore unfamiliar or risky creative choices. In previous experiences, fear of failure or self-judgment has sometimes limited my willingness to experiment in rehearsal.

Mindfulness practices also appeared to support my ability to differentiate between my own emotional experience and that of the character. Although emotionally demanding material occasionally produced physical responses such as fatigue or stomach discomfort, mindfulness practices generally helped me return to a more neutral emotional baseline following rehearsals and performances.

My prior experience with mindfulness-based therapeutic approaches -including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and Internal Family Systems- may also have contributed to my ability to regulate emotional experiences during the rehearsal process. Rather than attempting to suppress or “switch off” emotional material, I found that acknowledging these experiences and allowing them to pass naturally was often more effective.

From a psychological perspective, this approach resembles models of emotional regulation that emphasize awareness, acceptance, and cognitive reframing rather than suppression. Within the context of actor training, such strategies may function as a form of emotional containment, allowing performers to engage deeply with challenging material while maintaining a degree of psychological stability.

The creation of my original script appears to have been strongly supported by the mindful creative process described earlier. By approaching each session with the intention of engaging fully in the process rather than pursuing a predetermined outcome, I was able to maintain a sense of curiosity and openness that might otherwise have been inhibited by self-critical thinking.

Reflecting on the completed work, I can now recognize influences from both other artists and from the mindfulness practices themselves. This observation raises interesting questions concerning the relationship between originality, influence, and authorship within creative practice.

Limitations and Challenges

Despite the benefits described above, mindfulness practices were not consistently effective throughout this project. During periods of heightened stress or fatigue -particularly when my emotional intensity reached what I would subjectively describe as an eight or higher on a ten-point scale- my ability to regulate emotions through mindfulness practices diminished.

In these situations, mindfulness did not necessarily provide emotional control. However, it did increase my awareness of my internal state, which in turn allowed me to respond more constructively by taking breaks, seeking support from peers, or adjusting my expectations regarding rehearsal outcomes.

There were also occasions when certain mindfulness practices produced unintended negative effects. Morris strongly advocates for daily engagement with the “I Feel” exercise as a means of cultivating emotional awareness and authenticity. However, after several weeks of consistent practice, I began to notice that the exercise appeared to reinforce rather than resolve certain challenging emotional states.

During this period, I experienced a sense of emotional and physical exhaustion. Although these symptoms cannot be attributed solely to the exercise, they improved when I temporarily stopped practicing it and instead focused on visualization practices combined with reflective journaling (Huntley, 2025).

I have since returned to the “I Feel” exercise but now practice it less frequently. I view it as a potentially useful tool rather than a universally applicable practice. This experience has led me to question Morris’s assertion that the exercise should be practiced daily and has encouraged me to adopt a more flexible and context-sensitive approach to mindfulness within my acting practice.

Conclusion

This practice-based research explored whether mindfulness-based practices could support three aspects of an actor’s work: Their capacity for presence, following impulse, and performing authentically; the creation of an original piece of work; and the psychological management of mentally and emotionally demanding roles. The findings suggest that mindfulness practices can support actors in developing presence, emotional awareness, and psychological resilience. When integrated with traditional analytical acting techniques, mindfulness may contribute to a more balanced and sustainable approach to both performance and creative work.

However, mindfulness should not be viewed as a universal solution to the psychological challenges associated with acting. Its effectiveness appears to be influenced by factors such as stress levels, fatigue, individual temperament, and the broader working environment.

For this reason, mindfulness practices should be approached critically and applied flexibly rather than treated as guaranteed methods for improving performance or wellbeing. Future research might explore the impact of various mindfulness-based practices and their impact on novel creative works.

Nevertheless, the findings of this project suggest that mindfulness practices offer valuable tools for actors navigating the emotional and psychological demands of performance. When used with awareness, adaptability, and appropriate boundaries, these techniques may support both creative expression and personal wellbeing, allowing actors to engage more fully with their work while maintaining a healthier lifestyle and relationships than may be possible otherwise.

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Appendix A (Script)

SATURN RETURNS

An Embodied Stream of Consciousness
Performance

By

James Huntley

Eugene, Oregon

James.h.huntley.jr@gmail.com

(House lights fade to blackout. Character begins speaking in blackout)

Always the same... same screaming breath... no choice... unready... don't know why... didn't ask for this... no real reason... Suddenly... violently... here... No consent... no control... no voice... not our own... not from the inside... All the same... innocent... until... lost... taken... That's the difference... Where it really starts... the beginning... Where it was lost...

Where was it lost?... with her?... Yeah... definitely... probably... Having left?... No, no... before that... somewhere before... Early memory... First memory?... In the dark... single light...

(Square projected onto floor) in the kitchen... on the floor... her and him... falling apart... yelling and screaming... hate and rage... back and forth... back and forth... Not supposed to be this way... please stop... all wrong... got to stop... make it stop... "STOP!"... Mom and Dad... eyes turned at me... hate and rage... turned at me... destroying me... changing me... less of me... more of... Doesn't matter... damage done... Then she goes... leaves... no word... no goodbye... no love... just... nothing... where she used to be... supposed to be...

He stayed... lost in a bottle... but still... tried... didn't give up... did his best... Dried out... eventually... even then... especially then... he and I... back and forth... back and forth... just a boy... small boy... not an equal... never an equal... growing... so full of anger... hate and rage... GROW UP!... must be a man... be strong like a man... yell like a man... fight like a man... bottle it up... gotta pretend... it's good... I'm good... Gotta be strong... gotta be good... gotta be perfect... perfect... perfect... perfect... Could be worse... do as he says... not so bad... not all bad... Complicated... do as he says... gotta be good... be good...

Continuing on... down the road... nearly there... at the end... the beginning... finally time... my time... to choose... what I'll do... my life... Supposed to know... don't know... always told... Time to choose... have to choose... something... anything... but everything is wrong... nothing *feels* right... *is* right... YOU HAVE TO CHOOSE!...

I chose... nothing... hiding... pretending... waiting... to be rescued... shit job... shit dreams... shit home... like everyone around me... dead end... nowhere to go... survive... escape... Where?... How?...

“Lucky break”, they say, “Once in a lifetime”... “Rat race”, I say, “gilded cage”... on a platter... Can’t say no... stupid to say no... too much money... want to say no... but nothing else... nowhere else... have to do something... have to take it... they all say take it... can’t stay here... waiting... Sell yourself, your life, your soul... buy freedom... somewhere... down the road...

Locked away... wasting away... 8,10, 12, 16 hours... day after day... what men do... day after day... Hate this cage... this life... Must escape... have to escape... Nighttime... darkness... freedom... on a mirror... in a pipe... Freedom... for sale... here... now... every night... every day... feels like reading a book... about someone else... who doesn’t matter... doesn’t care... time speeds up... faster... faster... need more!... No future... no need... doesn’t matter... I have what I need... here... now... but never enough... never quite enough... fuck this life... faster... faster... Hunting death... chasing death... going to kill death...

In a hospital... white and blue... buzzing lights... wait-ing... wait-ing... wait-ing... beside his bed... at his feet... He’s leaving... going... not like her... no choice... no choosing... just wait-ing... wait-ing... Read about him... in my book... his last days... last breaths... trying to feel... trying to care... Wrong... all wrong... I have to stop... have to make it stop... Have to choose... to close the book... to throw it away... Have to throw it away!...

Crash to earth... smash to earth... at his feet... watch him die... no more book... real life... see him dead... still a kid... not yet twenty... hear his voice... “grow up”... “be a man”... “get your shit together”... “I love you, son”... start over... try again... back to work... what we do... what men do... for someday... down the road...

Over the worst... in the past... feet on the ground... baby steps... finding a way... Then... as happens... Her... not her, her... the first her... Another her... a new her... Another life... a new life... new beginning... together forever... Cheap façade... quickly crumbles... This is love?... this hate and rage... back and forth... so familiar... This is love?... can’t stop!... her... me... she... we... can’t stop... each other... Ourselves... Maybe this time?... PLEASE!... Have to try harder... Next time?... MAKE IT STOP!... Gotta make it stop... try harder... be better... again and again... back and forth... has to get better... TRY HARDER!... supposed to get better...

Years later... too many... but not enough... not forever... not till death... We agree... make it stop... no one wins... but... can finally get better... supposed to get better... Health fails...

alone... weak... desperate... GROW UP!... No one to blame... nothing is clear... nowhere to go... thick fog... looking, searching, begging... TRY HARDER!... Falling... flailing... darker... deeper... praying... pleading... BE A MAN!... waiting for... something... anything...

Start thinking... can't stop thinking... obsessing... Taught from a child... paradise... relief... Why live?... Why fight?... Silence... White knuckles... Don't give up... be weak... BE A MAN... don't crumble... suffer... cry... quit... Can't take any more... Don't want to keep going, trying, fighting, screaming... can all be over... so easy... But... there's a part of me... has to know... Just a question... to live for... Have to see... if I can... But how long... before I... or until I'm...

Final straw... alone in the forest... solitude... tears and screams... hate and rage... "God, if you can hear me... If you care at all... now's the time... to show up... or I'm out... I'm done with you, and I'm fucking out!"... No voice from the heavens... No flaming chariots... No burning bush... No surprise... Not that special... not fucking special... Can't be alone... don't leave me alone... Can't be trusted... in the dark... Eyes open... On a couch... at a friend's... sun rises... *(Projected box fades as the lights come up on the rest of the stage)* and a moment... just a moment... of relief... and then another...and another... relief... continuing on...

Now what?... Can't go back... Won't go back... nothing to go back to... Start over... again... BUT... different this time... didn't die... survived... escaped?... messy... not pretty... not proud... but still breathing... Stronger?... Smarter?... Softer... Another chance... another choice... Time to choose... Have to choose... something... anything... but everything is wrong... nothing feels-... STOP!... TAKE A BREATH!... Ok...Ok... Not so bad... another chance... baby steps...

(Character exits, lights fade to blackout)

Appendix B (Questionnaire)

Anonymous Questionnaire: "Saturn Returns" Showcase Feb 16, 2026

Does your experience of this work change if you believe it to be a work of:

Fiction:

Fiction is based upon empathy + believability so if this were fiction it would connect and capture attention very well. It speaks to human conditions.

Non-Fiction (unknown third person, i.e.: Verbatim Theatre):

It is a story of 'everyman' and connects to contemporary insecurity of/in social roles.

Non-Fiction (Autobiographical):

The positivity of watching the author/actor should bring hope to all who may have similar experiences - or who are yet to have them.

Consider the following quotes:

"If we knew each other's secrets, what comforts we should find." John Churton Collins

"When you become conscious of your own story and can share it without shame, it then becomes useful to others." Martin Shaw

Do these quotes have an impact on how you interpret this performance?

They seem to support the value of creative expression and the potential beauty in sharing a narrative within the conventions of the performed act. ... in this context.

The JCC quote feels more voyeuristic than the MS quote.

Do you relate to any aspect of this piece? If so, what is it like for you to see it expressed on stage?

The rush of life, the uncontrolled nature of expectation, personal pressure, of loss and guilt seem painfully universal. That we can all take a breath and trust in our baby steps is an important take away.

Further thoughts or comments. Think of this as a comments section on social media.

Only share if you feel inspired to do so. (Feel free to use the back):

- A powerful piece of art that throws moments of life like skimming stones, skittering and bouncing, with impact and pattern - but with only seconds to live their fullest life, before inevitable descent.
- Great theatricality to enhance delivery.

Anonymous Questionnaire: "Saturn Returns" Showcase Feb 16, 2026

Does your experience of this work change if you believe it to be a work of:

Fiction: I feel if this is based off of fiction it would be based upon a current issue and demographic

Non-Fiction (unknown third person, i.e.: Verbatim Theatre): I feel this would be based off someone you know and would be in tribute to, more emotionally impactful

Non-Fiction (Autobiographical): I feel this would make it much more personal and therefore impactful.

Consider the following quotes:

"If we knew each other's secrets, what comforts we should find." John Churton Collins

"When you become conscious of your own story and can share it without shame, it then becomes useful to others." Martin Shaw

Do these quotes have an impact on how you interpret this performance?

Yes, I feel this implies there is deeper and more thought out ideas that as characters mentioned in the play but ones that effect the characters played.

Do you relate to any aspect of this piece? If so, what is it like for you to see it expressed on stage?

I think this play is very much based on life so yes, I feel there are themes of ~~unknown~~ unknown towards the future and optimism that everyone feels.

Further thoughts or comments. Think of this as a comments section on social media.

Only share if you feel inspired to do so. (Feel free to use the back):

I thought it was a fantastic performance, and the lighting was great.

Anonymous Questionnaire: "Saturn Returns" Showcase Feb 16, 2026

Does your experience of this work change if you believe it to be a work of:

Fiction:

I would be curious as to how you found these words through fiction, what emotions that you have experienced have led you to this fictional story?

Non-Fiction (unknown third person, i.e.: Verbatim Theatre):

It becomes relatable, there's empathy. In previous personal experiences with verbatim, I always take more care with the storyline & characters because I know it's 'real'.

Non-Fiction (Autobiographical):

Again, empathy. I would be curious to understand why now is the time to share this story & if anything should change in the future, would it impact this piece.

Consider the following quotes:

"If we knew each other's secrets, what comforts we should find." John Churton Collins

"When you become conscious of your own story and can share it without shame, it then becomes useful to others." Martin Shaw

Do these quotes have an impact on how you interpret this performance?

Yes! Once again, relatability, empathy, recognition. People can see theatre as a form of escapism, but actually having a face-to-face experience that places a mirror in front of us can be really influential. (Perhaps research 'aesthetic distance').

Do you relate to any aspect of this piece? If so, what is it like for you to see it expressed on stage?

My version of 'baby steps' is 'one day at a time'. Breaking away from negative patterns, ways of thinking, and for lack of better words - tradition, can be really powerful to see on stage!

Further thoughts or comments. Think of this as a comments section on social media.

Only share if you feel inspired to do so. (Feel free to use the back):

Lighting rigs were interesting - wondered if the box shape was purposeful, then it was! When the box faded away, it created 3 distanced shadows of yourself, this felt like something that could be played with - e.g, who is each shadow?

PTO

I thoroughly enjoyed, interesting to interpret. Perhaps more waves of varied emotion? Vaguely remember a conversation about too much drama and pity making it comedic?

Again, Perhaps we need to see you struggle to stay above the surface, rather than seeing you already have drowned? (mere suggestion, not a writer!)

Anonymous Questionnaire: "Saturn Returns" Showcase Feb 16, 2026

Does your experience of this work change if you believe it to be a work of:

Fiction:

These stories are important to tell, fiction or non-fiction.

Non-Fiction (unknown third person, i.e.: Verbatim Theatre):

If known prior it was verbatim or autobiographical, then yes!

Before you watch a film, if it says "based on a true story" it automatically builds that connection between performer and viewer. Becomes a pre-meditated relationship.

Non-Fiction (Autobiographical):

There's a special art within verbatim and autobiographical, it's a piece of theatre that facilitates connection and community. You feel for the characters even more.

Consider the following quotes:

"If we knew each other's secrets, what comforts we should find." John Churton Collins

"When you become conscious of your own story and can share it without shame, it then becomes useful to others." Martin Shaw

Do these quotes have an impact on how you interpret this performance?

Shaw definitely has a point. Verbatim and life story theatre are essential in connection. If you can share your story, maybe someone will relate and feel comforted.

Collins also, now knowing the story, it makes me want to support the characters.

Do you relate to any aspect of this piece? If so, what is it like for you to see it expressed on stage?

Toxic masculinity - an important topic that needs to be discussed. Was refreshing to that other men have experienced.

"Be a man" is a perfect example.

Further thoughts or comments. Think of this as a comments section on social media.

Only share if you feel inspired to do so. (Feel free to use the back):

Powerful piece that left me thinking, were able to inhabit some true and captivating emotion!

Anonymous Questionnaire: "Saturn Returns" Showcase Feb 16, 2026

Does your experience of this work change if you believe it to be a work of:

Fiction:

I think that believing if the themes were fiction would make the character less believable

Non-Fiction (unknown third person, i.e.: Verbatim Theatre):

If I didn't know you personally, the themes would affect a lot less

Non-Fiction (Autobiographical):

If it were an autobiographical piece, the hard hitting themes and the way you moved, trapped, makes it very interesting for you on a personal level.

Consider the following quotes:

"If we knew each other's secrets, what comforts we should find." John Churton Collins

"When you become conscious of your own story and can share it without shame, it then becomes useful to others." Martin Shaw

Do these quotes have an impact on how you interpret this performance?

yes, being able to share a story this way is eye opening and interesting

Do you relate to any aspect of this piece? If so, what is it like for you to see it expressed on stage?

Feelings of being trapped and stuck in a loop is a relatable thing to a lot of people. But seeing the sudden change and realisation of being free is very bittersweet. It can happen at anytime.

Further thoughts or comments. Think of this as a comments section on social media.

Only share if you feel inspired to do so. (Feel free to use the back):

A very interesting and thought out piece. I really enjoyed the journey you took me ~~through~~ through. Well done!

An experience people can learn from indeed.

Anonymous Questionnaire: "Saturn Returns" Showcase Feb 16, 2026

Does your experience of this work change if you believe it to be a work of:

Fiction:

if it is fiction then it becomes less personal however it

lets you build your own interpretation of the character and their story if it is not autobiographical

Non-Fiction (unknown third person, i.e.: Verbatim Theatre):

✓ same as above as we do not know the performer / character personally

Non-Fiction (Autobiographical):

It makes the themes resonate more with me as a viewer if it was autobiographical. Makes it a lot more personal.

allows an insight into the performer's life and helps understand their emotions

Consider the following quotes:

"If we knew each other's secrets, what comforts we should find." John Churton Collins

"When you become conscious of your own story and can share it without shame, it then becomes useful to others." Martin Shaw

Do these quotes have an impact on how you interpret this performance?

It makes the performance easier to understand as it shows how we never know people's truths and how life by sharing it with others it can help them feel less alone

Do you relate to any aspect of this piece? If so, what is it like for you to see it expressed on stage?

I relate to the cycle of fresh starts and struggles with family life growing up and it felt very inspiring seeing it expressed on stage as the quotes above stated maybe we feel less alone and share how my story can help others through sharing it and through the medium of stage we can

Further thoughts or comments. Think of this as a comments section on social media.

Only share if you feel inspired to do so. (Feel free to use the back):

AMAZING STUFF!! Well done :)

The raw emotion was very inspiring and truthful. It showed that no matter how much we are struggling

Anonymous Questionnaire: "Saturn Returns" Showcase Feb 16, 2026

Does your experience of this work change if you believe it to be a work of:

Fiction: Absolutely, the personal nature of the work would be lessened ~~into~~ a character, lessening the impact due to the way fictional characters are empathized with.

Non-Fiction (unknown third person, i.e.: Verbatim Theatre): Somewhat, in the layering of actor-character-writer perception. It asks you to empathize with the experience of an ~~unknown~~ unknown third party, possibly muddying the emotional connection.

Non-Fiction (Autobiographical): It feels autobiographical, especially in the frantic wording of the piece. ~~It~~ Especially with the presentation, it asks you to fully connect ~~to~~ to the actor fully as a person through these words.

Consider the following quotes:

"If we knew each other's secrets, what comforts we should find." John Churton Collins

"When you become conscious of your own story and can share it without shame, it then becomes useful to others." Martin Shaw

Do these quotes have an impact on how you interpret this performance?

These quotes do have an impact, almost giving context to the ideology of the performance. Knowing these quotes in the context of this material almost asks you to fully connect to the writer and performer as well as the piece itself.

Do you relate to any aspect of this piece? If so, what is it like for you to see it expressed on stage?

I do not personally relate to this piece, but I do relate to you (Bones) as the performer. Knowing what I do about you already and the work put into this piece, it sheds a light on you as a person and gives me the chance to further understand you.

Further thoughts or comments. Think of this as a comments section on social media.

Only share if you feel inspired to do so. (Feel free to use the back):

Anonymous Questionnaire: "Saturn Returns" Showcase Feb 16, 2026

Does your experience of this work change if you believe it to be a work of:

Fiction:

yes. It removes the truth. its authentic because it is you.

Non-Fiction (unknown third person, i.e.: Verbatim Theatre):

No. This is how I imagined it.

yes, simply because its such a specific story being told.

Non-Fiction (Autobiographical):

Wait lol.

How I imagined it! It came across so genuinely and so personal.

Consider the following quotes:

"If we knew each other's secrets, what comforts we should find." John Churton Collins

"When you become conscious of your own story and can share it without shame, it then becomes useful to others." Martin Shaw

Do these quotes have an impact on how you interpret this performance?

yes, very much so. Truth, the lived experience is what unites us as one. Its what shores our memory, connects us culturally.

Do you relate to any aspect of this piece? If so, what is it like for you to see it expressed on stage?

I didn't relate to it much, but I can understand it.
I can feel it and fear that feeling.
It was so moving.

Further thoughts or comments. Think of this as a comments section on social media.

Only share if you feel inspired to do so. (Feel free to use the back):

I found this very moving. made me start crying.
I found this so captivating in a way that expressed much more than pain, and hurt. be a connection to the shared human experience to be remembered as something

I think that no matter who we are or what we bring to this world we all want to be remembered. We all want to leave a mark and be remembered for something. To be remembered by someone. To love and be loved. To be bigger than nothing.

It's a universal craving to be important. and when we stop, and slow down. we realize we mean so much more than we thought. I think this piece doesn't just showcase this, but also showcases how similar and distinctly same we all are.

Even though we are all so different. Thank you for sharing it it was so captivating.