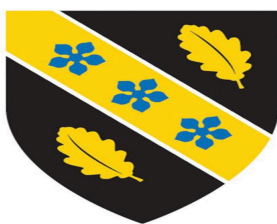


Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

‘LUCKY?’

Individual Project
Module code: ADPA6000
By Lauren Paige Griffiths (2203840)
Due Date: 03/06/24
BA Musical Theatre

WAVDA- University of Wales Trinity Saint David (Cardiff)



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
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Table of Contents

Element 1

- Introduction..... 2
- Literary Review..... 2

Element 2

- Stimulus..... 8
- Writing exercises..... 10
- Structure..... 11
- Scheduling..... 12
- Set Design..... 14
- Lighting and sound..... 16
- Rehearsal process..... 21
- Tech rehearsal..... 24
- Directors notes..... 25
- Final script development..... 26

Element 3

- Links..... 27
- Reference list..... 27
- Bibliography..... 30

Introduction-

Within my individual project I will be exploring the life of a girl and her new-found independence. I will display this through a mini musical about a care leaver and her relationship with her boyfriend. At university she is pursuing a degree in musical theatre, she harbours self doubt and her foster mother assures her she is more than capable for this challenge. With her support system seemingly diminishing her only sense of normality and consistency is her long term boyfriend. However he is struggling in silence and needs more support than Alice originally thinks. The plot will follow the pair's struggles, focusing on themes of grief and self doubt. My musical will explore the necessity of a reliable support system; as well as the importance of communication to receive the appropriate support. Being a care leaver myself I have experienced judgement from peers and adults due to my home life. I want to showcase the concept that you never know what is happening behind closed doors. I find life stories both inspiring and eye opening, and will delve deeper into them within my stimulus to help me create my project.

Literary Review-

When determining a topic for my individual project I was inspired by recent graduate's projects; particularly their semi-autobiographical storylines. I have decided to base the plot of my individual project on my firsthand experiences as a care leaver. The key question I will be answering through my research is do care

leavers receive enough support?. I will also look at the effects of childhood trauma alongside sibling separation.

While exploring the foster care system itself I wanted to find out what the main goals were towards foster children. I was disappointed when finding no clear explanation of what the foster care system aims to achieve on the official government website.

However, I found a recruitment for carers whose aim is that “foster carers offer children and young people a safe, loving and nurturing home when they can’t live with their birth families.” **(Fostering Network, 2024)** Children's charity NSPCC Cymru shared an article on how they plan to achieve emotional well-being for looked-after children in the care of the local authority; one of their goals was “Embedding an emphasis on emotional wellbeing throughout the system.”

(Bazalgette, Rahilly and Trevelyan, 2015) Support is paramount for vulnerable children, feeling understood and safe can aid in building trust and long-lasting relationships with adults.

A child entering care could argue that the process of finding a foster family is traumatic in itself; emergency placements are a frequent occurrence leaving the child in limbo as they wait to find a permanent home. In 2023 “Around 4,955 children were living with foster families on 31 March” a shocking figure especially when compared to the approximate number of “3,800 foster families in Wales” that same year.

(Thefosteringnetwork, 2023) The clear distinction of these figures determines the disturbing shortage of homes needed for looked-after children. There are many people who oversee the life of a foster child some of which are a foster parent, social worker, school safeguarding officer and independent reviewing officer (IRO) who all

meet to discuss the welfare of the child in a looked-after child review (LAC Review).

A vulnerable child may feel uncomfortable expressing their wishes to this array of people, social services combat this by offering every child an advocate. This person will speak during meetings and can request anything such as a piercing to a potential change in placement on the behalf of the looked after child. **(GOV.WALES, 2019)**

From my own experience being a looked-after child I was often private regarding my home life. A short film titled 'feeling wanted' expresses others' feel similarly as a former foster child explained " You don't want to admit that you don't have a permanent home." **(Charell, 2015)** So why are foster children embarrassed of sharing their home status?. While researching this topic many articles referred to the stigma surrounding children in care. An American study that discussed internalised stigma which shared that "Many children seemed to feel both stigmatised and marginalised" about being in care and fear potential "bullying" from peers. **(Dansey, Shbero and John, 2019)** The study concluded that children were self sufficient in terms of protecting the fact they are in care from others; this magnifies the need for sufficient support from caregivers.

Upon completion of my initial proposal, I knew a theme I wished to utilise in my project was sibling separation during foster care. This prompted the question why do siblings often get separated when in foster care?. During my research, I came across a study examining sibling separation and its effects. The participants within this study had different interpretations of why siblings are separated; reasons included ease of placement, adoption and sibling relationships. A participant expressed their reasoning that sibling(s) may be adopted so that the remaining sibling "could be a

child themselves” after being forced to act the parental figure. **(Participant 3, 2023)**

A second participant felt that social services “value the permanency of one young person, over ensuring that permanency happens for both or all siblings in the same home.” **(Participant 4, 2023)** A former foster child from America expressed a similar response in regards to the child welfare system sharing that “no one ever asked your opinion or cares what you think” before separating them from their sibling(s).

(Ashley, 2016)

Arriving in the foster care system is often a distressing experience; you have to adapt to new rules, routines and environments. One study believes that “siblings exert a significant influence on children’s functioning.” **(Font, 2022)** Which is why distressing experiences; such as transitioning into foster care could potentially be made easier by having a sibling with you during the transition. My opinion is supported by an article that expressed “the presence of a sibling helped to mitigate the uncertainty of being placed in foster care as they had one predictable element, their sibling.” **(Armeda Stevenson Wojciak, 2016)** Within the same article looked-after children expressed that the bond they have with sibling(s) “reminded them that they are not alone” and that they have someone who understands what they are going through. **(Armeda Stevenson Wojciak, 2016)** From my research on the separation of siblings, I believe many studies have found that sibling separation is distressing for those involved and could even provoke longer transitional periods alongside a higher chance of placement instability.

The effects of childhood trauma into adulthood. foster children “high levels of maltreatment (such as abuse and neglect)” subsequently both current and former

looked-after children exhibit trauma-induced mental illness such as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and anxiety. **(King, 2023)** I came across an article that explored the non-linear path to recovery after experiencing a prolonged childhood trauma. The article followed a middle aged woman receiving trauma-therapy after enduring and witnessing violent abuse from her father during childhood. This paper discussed the fight, flight and freeze responses people have during high stress and traumatic situations. Therapy the woman received found that she would resort to a “parasympathetic immobilization” as a defense mechanism when experiencing and revisiting the abuse she suffered as a child. **(Harrington, Williams and Palmer, 2024)** The knock on effects of the trauma manifested in feelings of powerlessness when making big decisions and sometimes fear and anxiety over tasks she once excelled at. The study concluded that revisiting childhood trauma can help take the fear and power away from memories of abuse they had no control over. A prominent feature to all the articles I researched on this topic was the acknowledgement that young people need a trustworthy support system to process and overcome the trauma they experienced. This could prevent the long lasting effects such as guilt and mental illness as adults.

I came across short films called the ‘foster care film’ series where care leavers share their own experiences with the system. The films share former looked-after children's experiences with the foster care system and how “youth aging out of foster care are typically not afforded the luxury of a gradual transition into adulthood” **(Geenen and Powers, 2007)** My personal experience as a care leaver is negative and want to explore what support is actually out there for youth leaving care. Once I turned eighteen I got appointed a personal advisor (PA), this person is meant to support you

in looking for housing if you need as well as aid you in financial situations. For example as I am in full time education I should receive twenty-five pounds to help pay bills. This is where my support from social services ended; I want to find out if there really is not any emotional support available for care leavers or was I just not made aware of any.

While researching I found a couple of articles relating to care leavers on the official welsh government website. One of which was about a scheme called 'When I am Ready' which allows foster children to remain living with their foster parents up until they are twenty-five. I am currently a part of this programme even though I live at university accommodation most of the year, the scheme allows me to have a home and support system around me. The scheme was created as social services recognised that "the transition into adulthood can be more difficult for care leavers than many of their peers of a similar age" and hoped to provide support and teach living skills to aid in the transition out of a foster home. **(When I am Ready Good Practice Guide 'When I am Ready' Good Practice Guide, 2016)** The website also shared information on a new pilot that aims to help care leavers financially. Care leavers will receive "£1,280 every month to spend on food, clothing and other things you may need. You will keep getting this money for 2 years after your 18th birthday." **(GOV.WALES, 2022)**

Stimulus-

The process of creating my project began last year while I was privileged to be a part of two individual projects; both shows included semi-autobiographical themes. I was inspired and empathetic to the storylines and loved seeing how the shows reflected the creator in a light the audience had not seen before. My foster mother often tells me that people do not talk about the success stories of children in foster care; this statement alongside the shows I was a part of inspired me to share my own story. I appreciate that everyone has their own story and that no one knows what happens behind closed doors; so I took inspiration from films and documentaries that show themes that people do not usually talk about.

Richard Fishers Funeral, By Kellie Powell

You don't get it. I've been afraid of my father all my life. I spent every waking moment trying to keep him from exploding. Trying to do everything just right - and not just believing, but knowing... that one day he would kill me. That he'd kill us all.

My first memory... is the day my brother spilled a can of paint down the stairs. My parents were painting the house. Ricky thought he was helping, but it was too heavy for him, and... paint just went flying, everywhere. I held my breath. I don't know why I thought that would help.

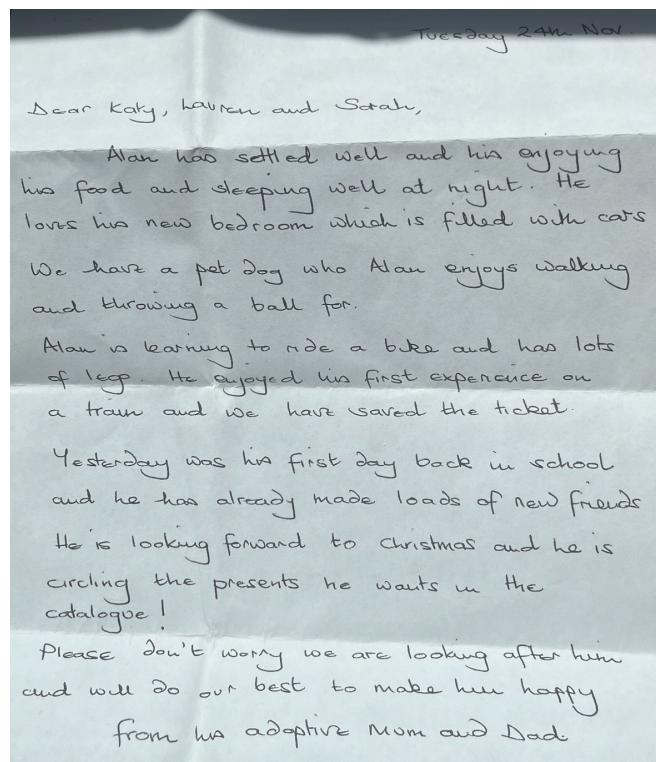
My father put his fist through the wall. I screamed. Ricky and I started crying. And the whole time that he... the whole time, he kept yelling at us to stop crying. I couldn't. I thought he was going to kill us both, and my mother couldn't stop him. I was four years old. Ricky was two.

And I have been living in that hole in the wall, ever since.

I can't forgive him. I won't pretend. So go read "Footprints in the Sand" if it'll make you feel all warm and fuzzy inside. Today my father's going in the ground. Except I don't remember having a father. A father couldn't do that to his kids.

This is a monologue I performed for our showcase. I was impressed by how much information it gave away about what happened to the character; yet it was only ever heavily suggested and not fully confirmed. I wanted to try and emulate this within my script in order to make the audience wonder what else happened; hopefully making people think about how you do not know what happens behind closed doors.

Some of my own siblings have been adopted which impacted me negatively in a variety of ways; however I still receive letters from two of my siblings that have been adopted and from their parents. As I have chosen for my character Alice to have two brothers that got adopted while she was in foster care; I knew I could potentially use similar letters within my project. Below is an example of a letter I received from my siblings' adoptive parents.



Tuesday 24th Nov

Dear Katy, Lauren and Sarah,

Alan has settled well and is enjoying his food and sleeping well at night. He loves his new bedroom which is filled with cars. We have a pet dog who Alan enjoys walking and throwing a ball for.

Alan is learning to ride a bike and has lots of legs. He enjoyed his first experience on a train and we have saved the ticket.

Yesterday was his first day back in school and he has already made loads of new friends. He is looking forward to Christmas and he is circling the presents he wants in the catalogue!

Please don't worry we are looking after him and will do our best to make him happy from his adoptive Mom and Dad

Writing exercises-

Once I had settled on my musical storyline, I needed to pinpoint my concept and core themes. To help with this I partook in a number of writing exercises introduced to me by my tutor.

Two minute splurge on initial idea- 12/01/24:

My idea is about a young girl who has just left her foster home to move into university; she has a long-term boyfriend who is experiencing depression caused by a recent death in his family. The story takes place entirely within the borders of the girls bed room and will incorporate both script and song. The first song will be a duet between the girl and her foster mother.

This exercise forced me to be concise regarding an explanation of my project, which helped me pinpoint the clear themes I wished to include. Reflecting back on this exercise my concept and skeleton storyline stayed consistent and the initial idea stayed the same throughout the process.

Write a scene with no words- 12/01/24:

Alice walks around her room with various household items sorting and organising. She sits down on her freshly made bed. She begins to reflect on everything in her life that led up to her sitting on her new bed. Her phone beside her starts ringing.

Writing this scene helped me visualise my idea and start envisioning a set. It also made me realise that certain things I wished to convey were not possible unless it was spoken. As I was writing my script I used the above exercise, this helped me come up with potential dialogue and props.

Write a monologue direct to the audience- 12/01/24:

The thing is, I should not be here. At university I mean. I should not have gotten in; I am not special I have no talent. But I am here. I got myself here, I pushed through being neglected, beaten and even lost my siblings along the way. They are safe now though, I hope they are happy. I'm not too bad myself, my foster mum Vicky has always supported me in all the ways you expect a mother to. But when I think back I can't help but feel angry that the woman who brought me into the world didn't love me enough. She didn't care to take us out of the abuse environment she put is in.

Completing this mini monologue helped me put my character Alice's life into perspective. I used this writing task to build a backstory for her as well as distinguish the path in which I wanted to take the character along. After this creative writing session I had a clearer vision of what I wanted my musical to look like and which character's story I wanted to use as the climax of the show.

Structure-

Taking in account my initial ideas for the scenes, I chose to create five scenes. This was to aim to have a distinct beginning, middle and end to my musical. The table below is a basic structure I used to establish I would have enough material to fulfil five scenes.

Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Scene 4	Scene 5
Alice arrives at university.	Introduction to Alice and Liams relationship.	The relationship gets rocky. We see Liams battle with grief.	Alice gets triggered by something and	Pair resolve their problems by choosing to accept them and

Introduction of self-doubt.			feels that no one understands.	work on them together.
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As I wanted to use a three act structure; I created a table of where I could embed my storyline to where it would most make sense within the structure.

Beginning- Introduction	Middle- Midpoint	End- Climax/ Resolution
• Alice arrives at University. • Explore Alice and Liam's relationship.	• Alice and Liam's relationship gets rocky. • Liam opens up about his grief.	• Argument ensues between Alice and Liam. • Alice abruptly states her feelings on her brother's adoption. • Pair decide to work through their problems together.

Scheduling-

Due to the volume of work that goes into creating an individual project; I had to hold myself accountable for how I managed my time, which is something I have previously struggled with. In order to keep myself on track I created a personal timetable using key components that helped in the creation of the musical 'Lucky?'.
Personal Timetable:

Task:	Start Date:	Estimated Duration (Hours):	Deadline:	Notes:
Research	1/01/24	40+	03/06/24	Keywords- Foster care, Adoption and Grief.
Project Proposal	30/11/23	3	09/02/24	Initial Idea

Individual Project
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Due: 03/06/24

Literary Review	18/01/24	10	03/06/24	Initial draft for feedback due 9th February.
Project Portfolio	09/02/24	20	08/03/24	Elements 1-3
Script (First Draft)	01/03/24	5	01/04/24	
Script (Final Draft)	01/04/24	3	13/05/24	Finalise Ideas and print copies.
Set Design	13/05/24	1.5	13/05/24	Sourcing set + Props.
Q Lab	01/05/24	1	22/05/24	Sorting Tracks
Rehearsal 1	29/04/24	1	29/04/24	Introduction
Rehearsal 2	06/05/24	1	13/05/24	Block scene 1
Rehearsals (week before/of show)	13/05/24	15	24/05/24	Blocking/ Music and Runs.
Tech Rehearsal	22/05/24	1.5	22/05/24	Run Through/s
Performance	24/05/24	0.5	24/05/24	Set up and present.

The timetable proved to be an essential part of my individual project. For the most part I was able to stick to the deadlines however, sections I struggled with were extended. To keep up productivity if I was stuck on a section I would move onto another and return to the challenging task at a later date.

When it came to creating a rehearsal schedule I had to adhere to cast personal availability alongside classmates' rehearsal slots. Booking rooms in a block allowed me to create a simple document providing all rehearsal information avoiding any confusion with the schedule. Closer to the performance date double booking of rooms became an unexpected challenge however, as a cohort we amended the

problem. My schedule was executed successfully with only two last minute adjustments due to double booking.

‘LUCKY?’ Rehearsal Schedule	
Wednesday 15 th May;	Gwern and Lauren- Studio 3, 6:00-7:00 pm (read through and blocking call)
Monday 20 th May;	Full Cast- Studio 2, 12:00-1:30pm (Music call)
Tuesday 21 st May;	Full cast- Studio 2, 12:00-2:00pm (Finalising blocking and musical numbers)
Wednesday 22 nd May;	Full cast- Studio theatre 3:30-5:00 (Tech) (Further music calls to be determined if required)
Thursday 23 rd May;	Full cast- Studio 1 12:00-2:00pm (Dress Run)
Friday 24 th May-	Full cast- Studio theatre 4:30-5:00 pm (Show) (Specific call time to be determined likely to watch other performances)

Reflecting back on both of my rehearsal schedules, I determined they were both a success. I was able to follow them closely and keep track of where I was during the entire process. If I were to execute another individual project, I would avoid pushing back deadlines so that the workload would not stack up.

Set Design-

The set for my musical was fundamental. It needed to display a bedroom in student halls with a minimal set. Due to the vulnerability within my plot, I wanted the set to feel intimate drawing focus to the middle of the stage rather than the blank space either side. During rehearsals I set up what I envisioned the stage would look like,

this helped with the blocking as we did not always have access to portions of my desired set.

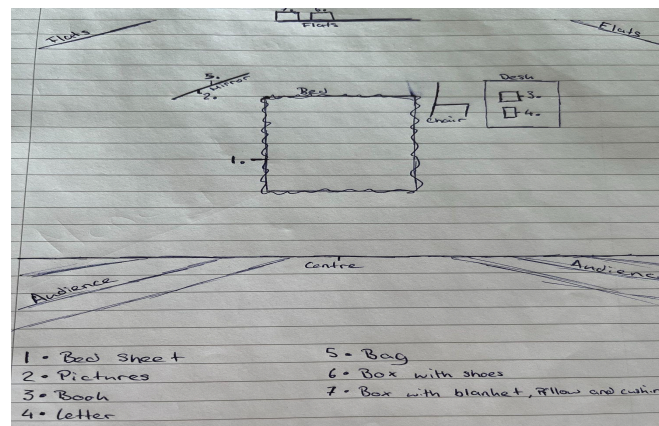


This was my finalised beginning state of my set within the space. Props such as bedding and shoes would be placed during the show. I wanted the beginning picture of my show to reflect a new beginning, as the play goes on it becomes more homely. As I wanted the set to feel intimate I added a layer of personalisation by adding pictures of my own adopted siblings and friends to the mirror.



These are the pictures I placed onto the mirror; they are my own pictures. I wanted to incorporate my siblings into my project as they are a major part of my life, even though I may never get to see my younger siblings again.

To aid in the efficiency of set up and take down of my show; I made a stage diagram with prop plots. This ensured my cast would be confident in knowing where everything was located. It also gave me a checklist of all set and props I needed to source.



Lighting and sound-

Once I established my set design and my choice to keep the set an intimate space; I felt it fitting to keep the lighting simple. I wanted to use the lights to reflect shifts in time between scenes; I achieved this through dimming the lights and blackouts. As my production was set in one room; I wanted to have a main state that the lights would revert back to. I chose a warm wash over the stage, as it reflected my own accommodations lighting. The warm wash aided in creating an intimate space and drew attention towards the centre, and took it away from the dead space either side

of the set. If I were to recreate my show as a full stage production, I would use both costume and subtle set changes to represent shifts in time.

Before I decided on a definitive plot for my individual project; I knew I was going to utilise pre-existing songs. I based this decision on the fact songs tell stories, and sometimes reflect the stories of the artists themselves. This adds to my concept of you never know what happens behind closed doors and that you only know what someone tells you. I love music and relate to the lyrics of them, and believe I can place them into my project to boost the narrative. In order to place my chosen songs into my script effectively, I changed some of the original songs lyrics.

The first song I used was 'Read all about it' part three by Emeli Sande. I was drawn to the song as it is powerful and encouraging, and to me it felt like all voices are worth hearing. I incorporated the song by turning it into a duet between my characters Alice and her foster mum Vicky. Vicky utilised the song as words of encouragement aimed toward Alice to pursue her passion. Below is the section of the song I rearranged into a duet.

<u>Original-</u>	<u>My arrangement-</u>
You've got the words to change a nation but you're biting your tongue You've spent a lifetime stuck in silence afraid you'll say something wrong If no one ever hears it How we gonna learn your song? So come on, come on Come on, come on	Vicky: YOU'VE GOT THE WORDS TO CHANGE A NATION. BUT YOU'RE BITING YOUR TONGUE. Alice: I'VE SPENT A LIFETIME STUCK IN SILENCE; AFRAID I'LL SAY SOMETHING WRONG. Vicky: IF NO ONE EVER HEARS IT, HOW WE GONNA LEARN YOUR SONG? SO COME ON, COME ON. YOU'VE GOT A HEART AS LOUD AS
[Verse 2] You've got a heart as loud as lions, so why let your voice be tamed?	

Maybe we're a little different, there's no need to be ashamed You've got the light to fight the shadows so stop hiding it away Come on, come on [Chorus] I wanna sing, I wanna shout I wanna scream 'till the words dry out So put it in all of the papers, I'm not afraid They can read all about it, read all about it Oh, ohhh, oh Ohhh, ohhh, oh Ohhh, oh, oh	LIONS, SO WHY LET YOUR VOICE BE TAMED? MAYBE WE'RE A LITTLE DIFFERENT; THERE'S NO NEED TO BE ASHAMED. YOU'VE GOT THE LIGHT TO FIGHT THE SHADOWS, SO STOP HIDING IT AWAY. COME ON, COME ON. YOU WANNA SING! YOU WANNA SHOUT! Alice- I WANNA SCREAM TILL THE WORDS DRY OUT! Vicky- SO, PUT IT ALL IN THE PAPERS, DON'T BE AFRAID. THEY CAN READ ALL ABOUT IT. Both- READ ALL ABOUT IT! OH,OH,OH,OH,OH,OH,OH,OH,OH,WH OA,OH. Alice: OH,OH,OH,OH,OH,OH,OH,OH,OH,WH OA,OH.
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As lyrics are reflecting a narrative, I often changed lyrics to better fit the emotions my characters exert. Initially I wanted to use the song 'Unsteady' by X Ambassadors as a solo for my character Liam, as he is hiding his grief from Alice. This changed during the first rehearsal to aid my narrative that Alice sympathises with what Liam is going through. The song begins as a solo then a reply to Liam's feelings by Alice.

<u>Original-</u>	<u>My arrangement-</u>
[Chorus] Hold, hold on, hold on to me 'Cause I'm a little unsteady, a little unsteady Hold, hold on, hold on to me 'Cause I'm a little unsteady, a little unsteady [Verse 2] Mother, I know That you're tired of bein' alone Dad, I know you're tryin' To fight when ya feel like flyin' If you love me, don't let go (Hold) Woah	Liam: HOLD, HOLD ON, HOLD ONTO ME CAUSE I'M A LITTLE UNSTEADY x2 MY MOTHER, SHE DON'T KNOW THAT I'M TIRED OF FEELING ALONE. AND DAD, DON'T KNOW I'M TRYING TO FIGHT BUT I FEEL LIKE DYING. BUT THEY LOVE ME AND DON'T LET GO. NO, THEY LOVE ME AND DON'T LET GO. Alice: HOLD, HOLD ON, HOLD ONTO ME CAUSE I'M A LITTLE UNSTEADY x2 YOUR MOTHER, SHE KNOWS THAT YOU'RE TIRED OF FEELING ALONE. AND

If you love me, don't let go (Hold)	DAD, KNOWS YOUR TRYING HE'S TRYING TO HELP BUT YOU'RE FIGHTING. BUT THEY LOVE YOU AND WON'T LET GO. NO, I LOVE YOU AND WON'T LET GO.
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When choosing songs for my project, I determined that I wanted to include four songs, two solo's and two duets. After settling on my plot and structure, I decided that Alice's song would be the climax of the musical. Within this scene Alice receives news from her brothers who have been adopted and opens up about her past. In an Ideal world I would have written my own song for this pinnacle moment; however I lacked confidence in my abilities and chose to find a pre-existing song. When sourcing potential songs I was unable to decide between 'Control' by Zoe Wess and 'Brother' by Kodakline; both hold powerful messages that relate to Alice's emotional state. As a compromise I made the bold choice to sing both songs meshed together acapella; for this choice to work I needed to get Alice into a space to fully commit to bursting into song. I believe this paid off and conveyed the message of the grief and eternal love Alice has for her brothers. Below is the arrangement I made of the two songs together.

<u>Original-</u>	<u>My arrangement-</u>
'Control': I don't wanna lose control, there's nothing I can do anymore. 'Brother': We're living different lives Heaven only knows If we'll make it back With all our fingers and our toes 5 years, 20 years, come back It will always be the same If I was dying on my knees	'Control': AND I DON'T WANNA LOSE CONTROL, THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO TO LET IT GO. 'Brother': WE'RE LIVING DIFFERENT LIVES, LIVE IN DIFFERENT HOMES. ONLY ME AND HEAVEN ARE THE ONES THAT TRULY KNOW. THIRTY YEARS, TWENTY YEARS, I KNOW WE MAY NEVER MEET AGAIN. IF I WAS DYING ON MY KNEES, YOU WOULD BE THE ONE TO RESCUE ME. BUT IF THEY

You would be the one to rescue me And if you were drowned at sea I'd give you my lungs so you could breathe I've got you brother-er-er-er I've got you brother-er-er-er I've got you brother-er-er-er I've got you brother-er-er-er	WERE DROWNING OUT AT SEA, I'D GIVE THEM MY LUNGS SO THEY COULD BREATHE. SAY I'VE GOT YOU BROTHERS, I GOT YOU BROTHERS. I WANT MY BROTHERS; I NEED MY BROTHERS.
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Within the final draft of my script I altered my final song choice. Originally I wanted to use the song 'What about us' by Pink as a duet between Alice and Liam to close my musical. The song I switched it out for was 'Shallow' by Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper. The reason for the song choice was that I felt the first song would end the show on a low note; the second song was already a duet that I think is innuendo to life and its hardships. Due to my perceived meaning of the song I used the original lyrics; using the characters to acknowledge the fact it was a pre-existing song through improvising.

For my tracks I collaborated with my fellow classmate Millie Dyer, who is very knowledgeable on making tracks and had the software to do so on hand. I provided Millie with the songs I wished to use, instrumental tracks, sections of the I wanted as well as voice notes of me singing each song. We were unable to start the task in person as Millie was writing her own individual project; however once she had downloaded the initial tracks we discussed and amended them as needed.

Rehearsal Process-

My cast consisted of Gwern Williams, Millie Dyer and myself; I chose to be in my own project to minimise schedule conflicts. Before I set official rehearsals, I met with my cast individually to discuss my concept and their characters. This was effective as I could provide them with character profiles and songs they will be singing. I could also discuss what their character will be doing in the show. Below are the character profiles and a song list that I provided to my cast during our initial meetings.

Character Profile:

Liam Smith, age 18, works as a chef, Lives in porthcawl, has a mum, dad and sister he lives with, has a girlfriend of 3 years Alice.

Vicky Davies, age 52, works as a foster carer, lives in Bridgend, has 3 foster children and a mum she lives with, has a husband of 30 years Paul.

Song List:

'Read all about it' by Emeli Sande
(Vicky and Alice)

'Unsteady' by X Ambassadors
(Liam and Alice)

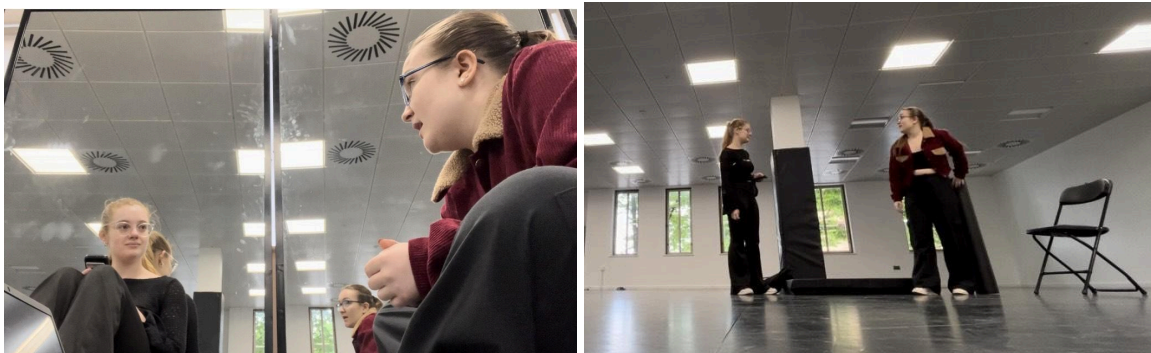
'Control' by Zoe Wess/ 'Brother' by
Kodaline (Alice)

'Shallow' by Lady Gaga and
Bradley Cooper (Liam and Alice)

During my first official rehearsals, I was unable to have the complete cast. As Millie's character Vicky only appeared within the first scene, this did not pose an immediate problem. However when nearing the end of the rehearsal process Millie was

experiencing challenges with her own individual project. As a result she would often leave the rehearsal space to amend her own projects when I was working through scenes she was not a part of. This stunted the productivity of my rehearsals in terms of running my project as we had to wait for Millie's return. If I were to do this project again, I would be firmer in my role as both stage manager and director and discuss these issues professionally and not feel guilty because of my friendships with the cast.

At the beginning of my first two rehearsals I conducted a table read; this allowed time for my cast to express any concerns and ask questions about the show. I worked with both members of my cast individually to block the opening scenes.



This rehearsal with Millie Dyer who played Vicky went well. I managed to block the entire scene and the song. Millie had a clear understanding of her character's relationship to Alice, and made effective acting choices with her character. By the end of rehearsal I felt confident in both the blocking as well as that Millie would be off script for the official showing. We needed to further work on the song to boost Millie's confidence and finalise tracks for the cast to rehearse with. I felt that Millie was overly expressing Vicky's reassurance and dismissed Alice's concerns; the context for this is that Vicky was reassuring Alice that she has all the tools to excel at

university. The note I gave Millie this session was to not 'mother' Alice, she worked on this note and we got the scene to where I wanted.



These are images from a rehearsal with Gwern Williams who played the character Liam. During this rehearsal I was able to block two scenes; I was ecstatic with this and planned to run through what we had blocked in the next rehearsal. Gwern is a first year at WAVDA and is on the BA Perfformio course, he expressed his concerns of speaking in english but willing to take on this personal challenge. To build his confidence we also worked through the script and discussed the vocabulary he was uncertain with.

One of my rehearsals was a music call, during which I supported my cast with learning songs and discussed why I had re-written some of the lyrics. I approached this task by teaching the songs using the call and response method. Gwern was unfamiliar with a few of the songs, however picked them up quickly with call and response. When running his songs this rehearsal I supported him by singing the song with him quietly; this helped him retain the tune and perform them independently during the final rehearsals and the performance.

My final rehearsals consisted on finalising blocking and running the show repeatedly.

Within one of these rehearsals I chose to alter the blocking of the final scene. I felt that the original blocking ended the show on a low; to boost the energy and relieve the characters negative emotions I decided that the characters would have fun during the last scene. I did this by allowing the characters to dance and improvise while one another was singing. After watching my final run of the musical I believe my last minute alteration created the desired effect and added much needed comic relief to the show.

Tech Rehearsal-

It was surreal seeing my desired set within the space which made me eager to start playing with lighting. For my sound and lighting I partnered with Gracie Mason, a fellow classmate. To make the process easier for Gracie I included most cues within my script; I provided Gracie with her own copy of the script for her to make any technical notes she wished. My tech rehearsal was extremely productive and I was able to achieve my coveted outcome.

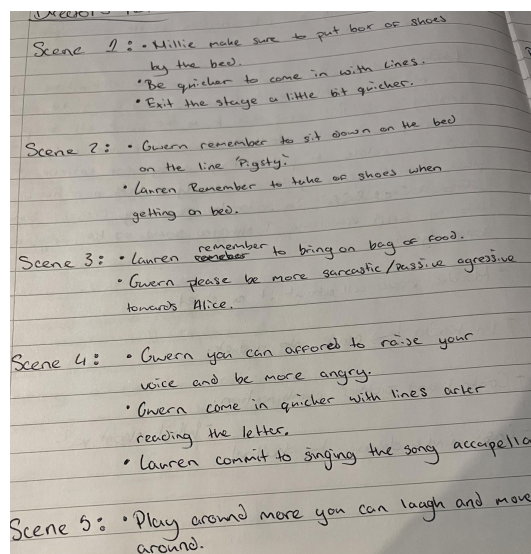


I used the app Qlab for all of my tracks and additional sounds; I was not optimistic in my ability to complete this task. However once I explored the app I was pleasantly surprised by the ease of use. Gracie was able to follow my script and press on the pre-set cues on the app; this helped save time during my tech rehearsal.

One of our tutors, Nick, who introduced me to Qlab, helped me programme all the lighting cues for my project. I explained my goals for a warm light main state; we then went through my script and cued the blackouts and light dims. This process took about half an hour of my allotted tech rehearsal time; we then spent the remaining time running the show with Gracie and the cues. This rehearsal not only allowed me to watch my show come to life, it meant I was able to see how blocking worked within the space and amend as needed.

Directors Notes-

These are the notes from my final run of 'Lucky?'.



Final Script Development-

Throughout my individual project I edited two versions of my script. I worked best when I came up with a short synopsis of a scene before writing; I then drafted each scene on paper before editing and adding to a document. This was the main reason I only partially edited most scenes. Listening to my scene read aloud was beneficial and allowed me to visualise them; it also raised concerns and plot holes. Originally I wished for my character Alice to have a monologue which I created and placed below.

Alice- Lucky? Everyone always tells me I'm lucky, and I know that's how I'm supposed to feel but I don't. How can I feel lucky when I have been betrayed by the people who were supposed to protect me... love me? I have been abused physically and mentally. For years I was practically begging social workers to believe me when I told them what was happening; one finally did, and I am eternally grateful for that. I'm also thankful for Vicky who took me in and cared about me. I was failed but people still think I am lucky.

Liam- I am sorry. I know you work hard, and you deserve more than money for what you went through; I am sorry I brought it up. I love you and I will take care of you.

Alice- Yanno the saddest thing? Once we got out, we were happy until we realised that we would be split up, torn apart as a family. It broke my heart when I realised my younger siblings were being adopted. I am happy they are safe and that they were young enough to start over; but a bit of me felt jealous that I was unwanted, unloved and pretty much alone. I wish someone wanted all of us together, I wish someone would've realised that half of my DNA is half their DNA... siblings. And now they are nowhere to be seen... to me at least.

Liam- It's gonna be okay, you are gonna see them again someday.

Alice- But I might not! I think about it constantly, how they might not want to see me; wondering if they even remember me. It makes me angry and sad and sometimes I feel like I am just gonna burst.

Once realising that most of the information she was saying her boyfriend would have already know; I used the stimulus of the letter I received from my brother's adoptive

parents to write a scene instead. I have selected the relevant sections of the scene and will link the full script in the links section.

Alice: “Dear Alice, both boys are doing great; John has taken up rugby and he is becoming quite a player. Rhys has been asking questions about you and his bio parents; he is struggling with the answers we have told him and requested we stop sending letters updating you on how they are getting on. We are sorry about this but hope you will respect his wishes, taking comfort in knowing that he is safe. From, adoptive parents.”

Alice: Lucky? Everyone always tells me I am lucky. Lucky, I got placed with Vicky, Lucky for getting money from social services, Lucky I got letters from my brothers, and Lucky I even got into university! But if I say otherwise, I am ungrateful.

Alice: But what if I don't? And I don't know the questions he asked, did they tell him his own father used to hit him whenever I done something wrong? Or did they tell them about the time he publicly shamed me for pissing myself I was so scared? What if he pities me too? What if they think I am too damaged to ever be a part of their lives?

Reflecting back on both versions of the same scene they both follow the same emotional pattern. However, if I were to make my musical into a full scale production I would include more detail into the scene that I used within the monologue.

Links-

Script-

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fOCrRf9SNca2gpaFsDiarZuT9CSu6JsxmFGZZ4jPyB0/edit>

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