

Companion Animals

University of Iowa - Gallery Production Notebook

By Melissa Trepa



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Companion Animals Spring 2019

Cast

Kyrie

Brownie

Leisa/Sue/ Kim

A/Vernelle/Ms. Schemp/Ada

B/Patsy/Ms. Ramirez/Any

Kitty/Katya/Kat/Sister Terry/Lizzy

Artistic Team

Playwright

Director

Assistant Director

Scenic and Lighting Designer

Costume Designer

Sound Designer

Dramaturg

Stage Manager

Assistant Stage Manager

Eileen Campbell

Jenna Smithson

Melissa Caminneci

Emma Bibb

Christina Ranslam

Olivia Schneider

Madeline George

Meredith Alexander

Sarah Lacy Hamilton

Merric Bower

Savanna Genskow

Ryan McElroy

Melissa Trep

Marisa Paulson

Elaina Irving

Introduction

During the summer of 2018, the Theater Building at the University of Iowa, which holds the Undergraduate and Graduate Theater Arts Studies programs of the University, began preparations for the 2018-2019 season for the University's annual productions. Of these productions, Faculty and Director correspondent, Meredith Alexander, began preparing her spring gallery production of *Companion Animals*. Written by guest Playwright, Madeline George of New York, the new play was ready to be adapted for the stage for production, which had never previously been done. Madeline George has had new plays produced at the University of Iowa in years past, and this season Meredith Alexander was interested in putting up a new play of Madeline's Georges', which had not yet gone past the reading stage of collaboration at other institutions. Through the collaborative efforts of artistic mentors and students in casting and artistic roles alongside Director Meredith Alexander and Playwright Madeline George, the University of Iowa put up the gallery play of *Companion Animals* in March of 2019 of the spring season. The play was presented over four days over a late March weekend. Melissa Trepa aided as the Dramaturg under the mentorship of MFA Dramaturgy student, Morgan Grambo.

As the production dramaturg, my primary tasks were to develop research for the cast and provide feedback at rehearsals to the director and assistant director while the play was in development. A research packet alongside daily reflections aided the entire cast in collaborative insights as well as at production meetings with the design team. In addition, some work on several props and poster and display projects also aided the team in preparation for the plays debut. Director Meredith Alexander paid attention towards my insights

and inquiries which helped her in her own directorial process alongside her assistant director, Sarah Hamilton as well as the rest of the creative team. This material reflects the show's annual production process as it took place in the 2018-2019 season.



About Madeline George, Guest Playwright

Madeline George is an American playwright and author. Her plays, including, *the (Curious case of the) Watson intelligence*, *Seven Homeless Mammoths Wander New England*, *Precious Little*, and *the Zero hour*, have been produced at theaters around the country. Madeline George's plays *Hurricane Diane* and *the (Curious case of the) Watson Intelligence*, won Madeline George a spot

as a Pulitzer Prize finalist and the outer Critics Circle John Gassner Award. She is also the recipient of a Whiting Award, the Princess Grace Playwriting Fellowship, and two MacDowell Fellowships, and holds commissions from the Sloan Foundation/Manhattan Theatre Club, the Big Ten Theatre Consortium, and the Children's Theater Company in Minneapolis. She was a founding member of the Obie-winning playwrights' collective 13P (Thirteen Playwrights, Inc.), and is a resident playwright at New Dramatists. Madeline George is currently the Mellon Playwright in Residence at Two River Theater in Red Bank, New Jersey. She has been preparing her work for the Purdue theater for her piece, *Companion Animals* alongside other works, in addition *Companion Animals* was cold read as a Big Ten Play in January of 2018 at Ohio State University. Madeleine's two novels are

published by Viking Children's Books. Her first book, *Looks*, was one of Booklist's 2008 Top Ten First Novels for Youth, and a 2009 ALA Best Book for Young Adults. Her second book, *The Difference Between You and Me*, was a Kirkus Best Teen Book of 2012, a Junior Library Guild selection and an ALA Rainbow List selection. The New York Theater Workshop recently produced Madeline George's latest production of *Hurricane Dianne* on February 6, of 2019.

Phase A: Script Collaboration

May 2018

In May of 2018, at the end of the spring semester in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Meredith Alexander began collaborations with Madeline George who was drafting her script for what would later be *Companion Animals*. In these early stages, the main collaborative work remained between the director and playwright as several drafts were shared and correspondence for collaborative direction took place. Most of this correspondence, was over email, due to the distance between Madeline George's residency in New York and the University of Iowa's location in the Midwest region. It was during this time that Meredith Alexander began in

depth research about the contents of the play and worked to better understand Madeline George's vision as the two worked together to complete a full script¹.

Companion Animals is a play with multiple story lines and complex characters, played by actors in more than one role. Across a hundred years and three continents, three young women pursue a common goal: to save the dogs they love. In London in 1907, suffragist Lizzy is writing an incendiary pamphlet exposing the torture of a little brown dog on the vivisectionist's table at the London College of Medicine. On the outskirts of Moscow in 1957, Anya is concocting a plan to set free the scrappy strays she has rounded up to be cosmonauts in the top-secret Soviet space program. And in New York City in 2017, Kyrie is on a quest to be reunited with the service dog she trained--and lost--in prison. The powerful bond between humans and nonhuman animals becomes the fuel for liberation movements in this braided story about the interconnectedness of all beings. It is loosely defined as a transformative comedy with dramatic undertones as a play in progress. The play takes place in multiple settings including London, Moscow, New York, Philadelphia, and Starbucks. A set of real historical locations reference the created world of the play by the main characters. Scenes act as individual locations within the worlds of the

¹ View script [here](#)

characters but start to fade into each other as the scenes go along until the setting is morphed into an ambiguous constellation of all the settings by the end of the play. The time periods bounce around between 1907, 1957, and present day 2019.

July 2018

During the summer months following the initial collaborations, Meredith Alexander began recruiting students for the production, including graduate students Sarah Hamilton and Morgan Grambo. Sarah Hamilton acted as Assistant Director, while Morgan Grambo acted as a Dramaturgy mentor for the Dramaturg portion of production work. I, Melissa Tropa, a senior undergraduate student, was offered a position as Dramaturg, and was encouraged to work alongside my mentor, Morgan Grambo. Between May and July, preparation was fairly quiet as Meredith awaited a new script from the playwright to send the first official draft to the team. On July 10th, 2018 the first official script was sent to the main artistic team so that initial thoughts and early research could begin to develop.

Correspondence remained digital, mainly relying on email chains while students and staff remained all over for the summer break of the academic school year. While this first initial script was released, recruitment for the

costumes, sound, stage management, and dialect coach began as well. Over the course of the rest of the summer each member of the production team thus collected began crafting ideas and insights from reading the script. It was an 84-page script and would later remain the final script used for production due to a lack of collaboration available between the Playwright and the rest of the production team.

Early thoughts on the script remained optimistic and perceptive while unanswered questions began to formulate and had begun to be addressed. Themes of freedom and limitation, companionships, and activism and revolution were identified but more questions remained on the intentions of the Starbucks characters and scene as well as the means of navigating the changes of time which so drastically move throughout the play. As a gallery production, how these eras would be presented also remained an important question to the entire team.

August 2018

Once the academic school year for the University of Iowa began, the production team meetings began as well. At the end of August just after memorial weekend, the cast so far included Director Meredith Alexander, Assistant Director Sarah Hamilton, Dramaturg Melissa Tropa, Mentor Morgan Grambo, as well as some additional members, Merric Bower the scenic and lighting designer and Marisa Paulson who would become our Stage

Manager. I personally began initial research for the production, although I did minimal digging due to the assumption that a newer script was in progress. However, with initial insights as well of the entire team, Meredith Alexander began bouncing concepts about what the play was attempting to say, before later developing ideas for the modes for production such as scenic work and character decisions.

September 2018

In the early fall season, the main goal of the production meetings was to develop a direction, gain the rest of the artistic team, and begin developing a sense of the play. We discussed our insights from our read throughs of the script so that Meredith Alexander could begin discussing and deliberating decisions on set and character casting. The play calls for doubling of characters, so the meaning behind who plays which characters were of vital importance, especially prior to the spring auditions near the end of the semester. Ideas for scene and lighting design as well as costumes also began to develop, and the rest of the artistic team was chosen leading up to auditions. Our newest additions to the team included Costume Designer, Savana Genskow and Sound Designer Ryan McElroy. All but Sarah Hamilton and Morgan Grambo were undergraduate students working on the play, but all

undergraduates specifically were designated to mentors of faculty and graduate students in the department to help aid in the artistic process and gain insight from those more experienced.

My initial read through of the script was full of intrigue but also questions. The themes of trust, liberty, compassion, and comfort against oppressions stood out to me amongst all three stories at play from Moscow, London, to New York. Keira was the easiest plot to follow, of course, being in present day 2017, and the main agent for symbolism with Brownie as the dog who appears in all historical eras in the other settings and time periods. Whereas A and B characters' purpose was lost with me on the first read throughs. After discussions in the early production meetings, A and B's impact became clearer to me as a tactic for foiling the other plots in the play. However, collaboration was required to see how that plot line could be made clearer for audience members. On the first read through, our team also didn't pick up on all the historical references like St. Barbra for instance, who was mentioned by Katya's character. The molding of settings and time in the final pages of the script also were being deciphered in this stage, since making it clear to the audience that these settings were molded in the final scene would remain challenging. Reading the script, the strongest characters appeared to be those directly related to Keira and brownie, but brownies' sense of consciousness to the likeness of people or likeness to other dogs wasn't

clear until the team began discussing Brownie's purpose in the piece. Brownie felt othered in character like a tool to the plot rather than their own individual self, but it worked to the advantage of the script. In my initial research I knew very little about the vivisection movements and began my work better informing myself of the references in the play.

I used the script as a base point to develop a research packet for the team, specifically the actors which would aid the cast in the rehearsal stage or production. Another concern in the script from July had been how to develop Kim as a character, because her character had been cut drastically from earlier scripts, however, she remained an essential character which shows Kyrie's dynamic transformation in the play. In addition to this, Meredith Alexander made it clear a main priority in this stage of production would also be to decide how to represent Brownie as both human and animal, since her character is a tool towards the play's goal to resonate with the treatment of all living things.

The chart below was the French scene chart designed during early production correspondence to get a better sense of time, place, and characters in October.

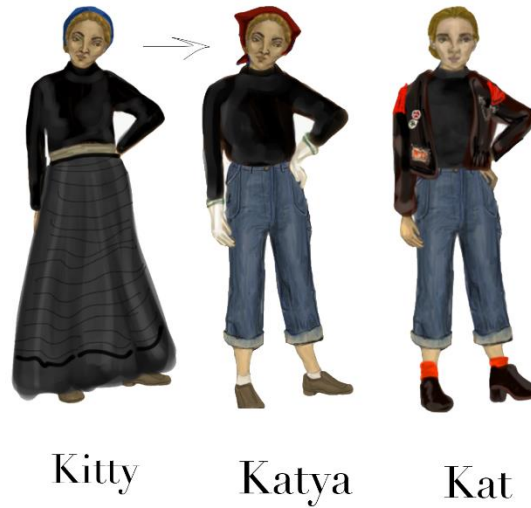
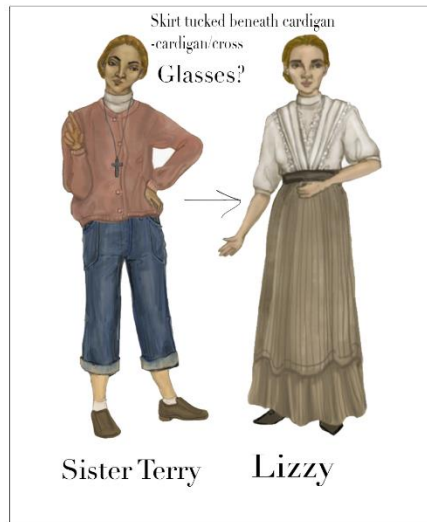
character(s)	page time/place	scene
Brownie	5 present/not placed	“Where is she?”
Kyrie, Sister Terry	5-11 present/East NY	Kyrie moves into Sanctity House, mentions dog
Lizzy	11-12 1907/London	Practicing antivivisection speech
Anya	11-12 1957/Moscow outskirts alley	Searching for animals to experiment on
A, B	12-15 present/Starbucks	Marriage, if not marriage, break up, waiting to not be devastated
Kyrie, Kim	15-20 present (night)/Sanctity House	Kim and Kyrie talk about Valhalla, Brownie, girlfriends
Ada, Anya	20-25 1957/Moscow lab	Ada says dogs don’t feel fear, Anya wants to sedate them, so they don’t feel, Ada thinks she is too soft
Lizzy, Leisa	25-28 1907/London	Lizzy still practicing, prepping for speech, Leisa wants to bring weapons

Kyrie, Ms. Schemp	29-34 present/Puppies for Prisoners Office	Kyrie trying to find Brownie, meets resistance
Kyrie, Sue, Brownie	34-36 flashback/Valhalla	Training Brownie with Sue
Kyrie, Ms. Ramirez	36-39 present/Sanctity House	Kyrie meets w/Ms. Ramirez to try to get approval to move into her own place
Leisa, Kitty (British accent)	39-41 1907/London	Leisa goes to Kitty the alchemist for a weapon for the speech
Anya, Katya (Russian accent)	41-43 1957/Moscow	Anya goes to Katya for sedative for the animals being tested on, she gives her Valerian
Vernelle, Kyrie	43-50 present/Key Food Meat Counter	Vernelle interviews Kyrie, Vernelle has psychic communication with Brownie
A, B	50-53 present/Starbucks	Saving for a ring, "get in or get out"
Kyrie, Patsy Scarfuto	54-56 present/Queens apartment building	Kyrie trying to rent from Patsy, shows pic of Brownie

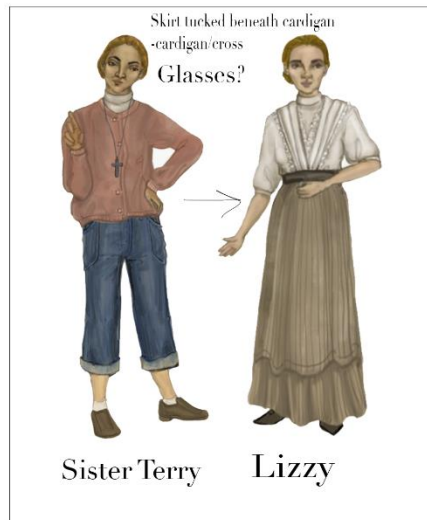
Kyrie, Sue, Brownie	56-58 flashback/training at Valhalla	Kyrie learning to train Brownie
Kyrie, Sister Terry, Ms. Ramirez	58-63 present/Sanctity House	Kyrie trying to move out
Anya	63 1957/Moscow Kennel	About to go into the kennel and sedate? euthanize?
Kyrie, Kim	64-66 present/Sanctity House	Kyrie packing to go to Philadelphia secretly to get Brownie
Anya	66 1957/Moscow Kennel	Looking for little dog
Kyrie, Kim	66 present/Sanctity House	Kyrie packing to go to Philadelphia secretly to get Brownie
Brownie	66 present/outside of time	Brownie sensing Kyrie
Kyrie, Kat	67-75 present/bus to Philadelphia	Kat trying to convince Kyrie to come to demonstration to “empty the cages”
A, B	75 present/Starbucks	Wordless scene of them talking at bistro table with SOUND of crowd in distance, can’t hear A and B over the crowd
Lizzy (V.O)	75 1907/London	We hear Lizzy giving her speech
Kyrie, Kat	75-76 present/Philadelphia	They join the crowd of protestors

Lizzy, Ada	76 1907/London 76 1957/Moscow	We hear Lizzy giving her speech then Ada picks it up replacing “sacrifice” with “valor” etc.
Lizzy, Ada, Kat	78 1907/London 78 1957/Moscow 78 present/Philadelphia	Kat joins at the end talking about the future
Lizzy, Ada, Kat, Kyrie	79 1907/London 79 1957/Moscow 79 present/Philadelphia	Kat “mic checks” - speaks about individual freedom only being possible when all are free
A, B	81-82 present/Starbucks	Wondering if they should join protest, says it’s n one of their business
All	82	detonation/liftoff
Kyrie, Sue	82-83 present/Sue’s house	Kyrie walked to Sue’s house
Kyrie, Sue, Brownie	84 present/Sue’s house	Kyrie and Brownie reunite

Phase B: Production Meetings Below are some costume design's concepts for characters:



- Piece List**
- Cuffed Capri Jeans
 - White blouse
 - High neck black long sleeve shirt
 - Cat Cardigan
 - Kat Black decorated jacket
 - Light brown skirt (thin)
 - Black skirt (detachable)
 - Loafers
 - Black boots
 - Socks
 - Kerchief
 - Gardening Gloves
 - Hat
 - Cross necklace
 - Glasses?



- Piece List**
- Cuffed Capri Jeans
 - Cat Cardigan
 - Black hoodie
 - Red graphic t
 - White blouse
 - Brown long sleeve button up (worn) rolled sleeves
 - Light brown skirt (thin)
 - Dark brown skirt (detachable)
 - Loafers
 - Black boots
 - Socks
 - Kerchief
 - Gardening Gloves
 - Hat
 - Cross necklace
 - Glasses?





LEISA

Sue (trainer)



SUE STUFF

BROWNIE



Cable knit sweater, worn open



Thin loose choker



Houndstooth high waisted trousers



Ankle booties or Flats



INTVL Arrival at Sanctity House & Riot/ Finding Brownie



INTVL Spare Job Interview Clothes Shirt ill-fitting



INTVL Prison Uniform layered over Interview shirt



LIZZY & LEISA ENGLAND 1907



Clothes Kyrie exits prison in are ones she went in with.
 Everything is worn, maybe a stray stain or two, pilling, ect.
 Base layer is fake chuck taylors and dull green pants.



1905



Badge, practice wear



September/October 2018

After our initial meetings deliberating these concepts, more decisions on the design, costuming, and character doubling began to be developed prior to auditions. Merric, as the Scenic and Lighting Designer, wanted to use light as a tool to shift setting as well as a simple set so that the audience could immerse themselves in the worlds more easily than if a full set with scene changes were developed. Add to the fact that scenes switch so often between time and place, the minimalistic set seemed the most logical as well as best artistic choice for the show. As a gallery production, budgeting was also limited, so this accommodated for this concern as well. The set itself had a few versions made until one worked to Meredith's liking, mainly to the backdrop of images that resembled a jail cell or city. Some shadow was also integrated into the early concepts for the show. As another important agent for the play, sound was also heavily considered for in the production meetings. This was due to the fact that the play relied on light, sound, and actors' costume and accents to switch time periods.

The process for deciding on the cast doubling was one of the more challenging elements of the production meeting process as well. Each production meeting worked to best identify the intentions that each character was working to fulfill and how characters overlapped in their agency as characters as well as motives over multiple

time periods. After many drafts, alongside my research, I also helped draft the cast doubling through a dramaturgical lens. The main thread line that determined which characters overlapped one another relied on a few decisions. The first being none of the characters could be on stage at the same time, played by the same character. In the first draft of the script, one spot where this was a problem was on page 12 when Anya and Lizzy were both on stage at the same time, and they were previously assigned to the same individual actor when picking sides for auditions. In addition to this error, it is noted in the script that one character would inevitably be missing in the final scene because we were casting approximately 6-8 actors to play multiple roles and all actors are present in the final scenes as a part of the revolutionary crowd. To help make decisions about characters I first identified descriptions for each character and through additional meetings with my mentor Morgan Grambo and the production team, we all came to a final decision on the casts doubling.

The cast continued to bring ideas for the play in the end of October, having production meetings every week in the Theater Building in the afternoons at 3 pm. Savana, as Costumes had the unique challenge to not only incorporate designs for multiple time periods, but also had to plan and accommodate for quick changes. Meredith Alexander asked that due to the fluidity of scene changes that costumes are only altered by one item or article that

doesn't take more than 10 seconds to complete but still remains clear that a shift has occurred. Savana and Ryan began adding to the insights of the design teams' concepts and Merric made a clear decision about the set's basic concept near audition season.

November 2018

The "Potential doubling" feels like a serious challenge to the audience and to the cast as deliberations continued closer to the Spring auditions. Questions about how significant it is to place one body in each of these different tracks of characters were brought up by both Morgan and Melissa during mentor meetings with one another and brought back to Meredith. This remained a concern at first, and if it was not important to have all bodies present, Morgan and Melissa felt they would try to propose a version closer to nine women rather than six. The characters doubling ideas at this time included everyone being doubled but Kim and Kyrie. The cast looked like the following: 1. Kyrie, 2. Kim, 3. Lizzy/Anya, 4. Leisa/Ada, 5. Ms. Ramirez, 6. Ms. Schemp, 7. Vernelle, Patsy Scarfuto, and Sue, 8. A, 9. Brownie, and 10. Sister Terry/Kitty/Katya/Kat. The question of whether we think that A & B could be a voiceover came up to save bodies and change the intentions, but ultimately it felt necessary they had a longstanding presence on stage as if a part of the audience as bystanders to the activist movements. The

other challenge of doubling was the limited cast. With all the other main stage productions and galleries auditioning for the Spring season, the audition pool was difficult to compete with, and as a gallery play, a smaller cast would ultimately be used. However, it actually worked to the shows advantage to end up with a cast of six, because the final doubled characters pushed the stories connected nature quite beautifully that a larger cast would not have been able to produce.

Phase C: Audition Process

November/December 2018

Towards the end of the fall semester, the Spring Semester Auditions took place in the Theater Building and the competition was naturally competitive. Assistant Director Sarah Hamilton heavily involved herself in decisions as call backs occurred alongside Meredith Alexander and Melissa Trepá during auditions. During the auditions, however, Meredith Alexander noticed a pairing of characters which would make doubling impossible. On page 12 in the beginning scene, Lizzy and Ada are in the same scene, when they had been paired together for auditions. The audition process noted the unfinished doubling casting until this correction was fixed and the team came up with a

final concept for the casted characters after casting was finalized. To avoid this error and follow the threads of the play, the final cast looked like the following, 1. Kyrie, 2. Kim/Leisa/sue 3. Brownie, 4. A/Vernelle/Ms. Schemp/Ada, 5. B/Patsy/Ms. Ramirez/Anyra, and 6. Kitty/Katya/Kat/Sister Terry/Lizzy. By combining Kitty, Katya, Kat, and sister Terry's characters the distributor in all time periods could be represented, as well as an additional kind of activist. In A/Vernelle/Ms. Schemp/Ada's characters there are often more antagonistic motivations in these characters, however Ms. Schemp asks as a key component for Kyrie to find Brownie in her vision scene of the script, so it helps to concede her insights. Having Kim/Leisa/ and sue together all help to parallel the rebellious activism of her counterparts such as Kyrie and Lizzy, taking a juxtaposing side for activism and freedom.

The auditions themselves took place on November 10th and call backs were November 11-15th. On November 16th casting decisions were made and on December 7th, the first official Non-mainstage guidelines production meeting took place for the season. In December more development to the play was in full force by all members of the team, Ryan, Savana, Sarah, Merric, Marisa, and me, all continued to make inputs as developments were underway in time for the first read through. The end of December marked the end of the official Fall semester

and the University's winter break which lasts a month. Our final cast included the following six female roles, Eileen Campbell, Jenna Smithson, Melissa Caminneci, Emma Bibb, Christina Ranslam, and Olivia Schneider. Once the spring semester began, however, the rehearsal process would then begin as well. During this month off, additional research and the full complete packet for the play was completed and edits and input was given from both Meredith Alexander and Morgan Grambo before sending it out to the entire cast.

Phase D: Rehearsals and Technical Rehearsals

Below on its own page is the full schedule of *Companion Animals*. Excluding cancelations due to snow and extreme weather.

Companion Animals Rehearsal Schedule
January-February-March

Version 3 1/21



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	(January) 21 No Rehearsal- MLK Jr. Day	22 1 st Rehearsal 7- 11pm	23 Rehearsal 7-11 pm	24 Rehearsal 7-11 pm	25 Rehearsal 7-10 pm	26 Rehearsal 10am- 2pm
27	28 Rehearsal 8-11 pm	29 Rehearsal 7-11 pm	30 Rehearsal 7-11 pm	31 Rehearsal 7-11 pm	(February) 1 Rehearsal 7-10 pm	2 Rehearsal 10am- 2pm
3	4 Rehearsal 8-11 pm	5 Rehearsal 7-11 pm	6 Rehearsal 7-11 pm	7 Rehearsal 7-11 pm	8 Rehearsal 7:10 pm	9 Rehearsal 10am- 2pm
10	11 Rehearsal 8-11 pm	12 Rehearsal 7-11 pm	13 Rehearsal 7-11 pm	14 Rehearsal 7-11 pm	15 Rehearsal 7-10 pm	16 Rehearsal 10am- 2pm
17	18 Rehearsal 8-11 pm	19 Rehearsal 7-11 pm	20 Rehearsal 7-11 pm	21 Rehearsal 7-11 pm	22 Rehearsal 7-10 pm	23
24 Load in- Time TBD	25 Tech Rehearsal 8-11 pm	26 Dress Rehearsal 7-11 pm	27 Dress Rehearsal 7-11 pm	28 Opening Night 8pm	(March) 1 Performance 8pm	2 Performance 8pm
3 Performance (2pm) & Strike	*Note: This is a preliminary schedule that can (and probably will) change *Each Saturday could have an added hour to make up for the hour lost on Monday. Plan for more towards tech.					

January 2019

January commenced the start of the official rehearsals for *Companion Animals* as well as the start of the spring semester. In our official cast we had taken on all women and were lucky to have a strong cast to work with. Having an all-female cast aided Madeline George's vision for her typically female casts as well fulfilled a wonderful opportunity to push for The Big Ten Theater festival initiative for the Theater Department. The Big Ten Theater Consortium has commissioned a series of plays by outstanding American female playwrights. Each play has featured at least six substantial age-appropriate roles for young women. The purpose of the initiative is to promote the writing and production of new works about women by professional and academic theatres around the country. It is also meant to draw attention to the need to produce and support such plays. Each year the theatre departments and schools of the Big Ten have the first opportunity to present the newly commissioned play. After that year, the play is available for production anywhere. This year, for the 2018-2019 season, we're among the first to produce the newest play for the Consortium, *Companion Animals*, by Madeleine George (also author of *Seven Homeless Mammoths Wander New England*, which was part of our 2017-2018 season, spring, 2018) As of August of 2017, five plays have been commissioned. *Good Kids* by Naomi Iizuka, *Baltimore* by Kirsten Greenridge,

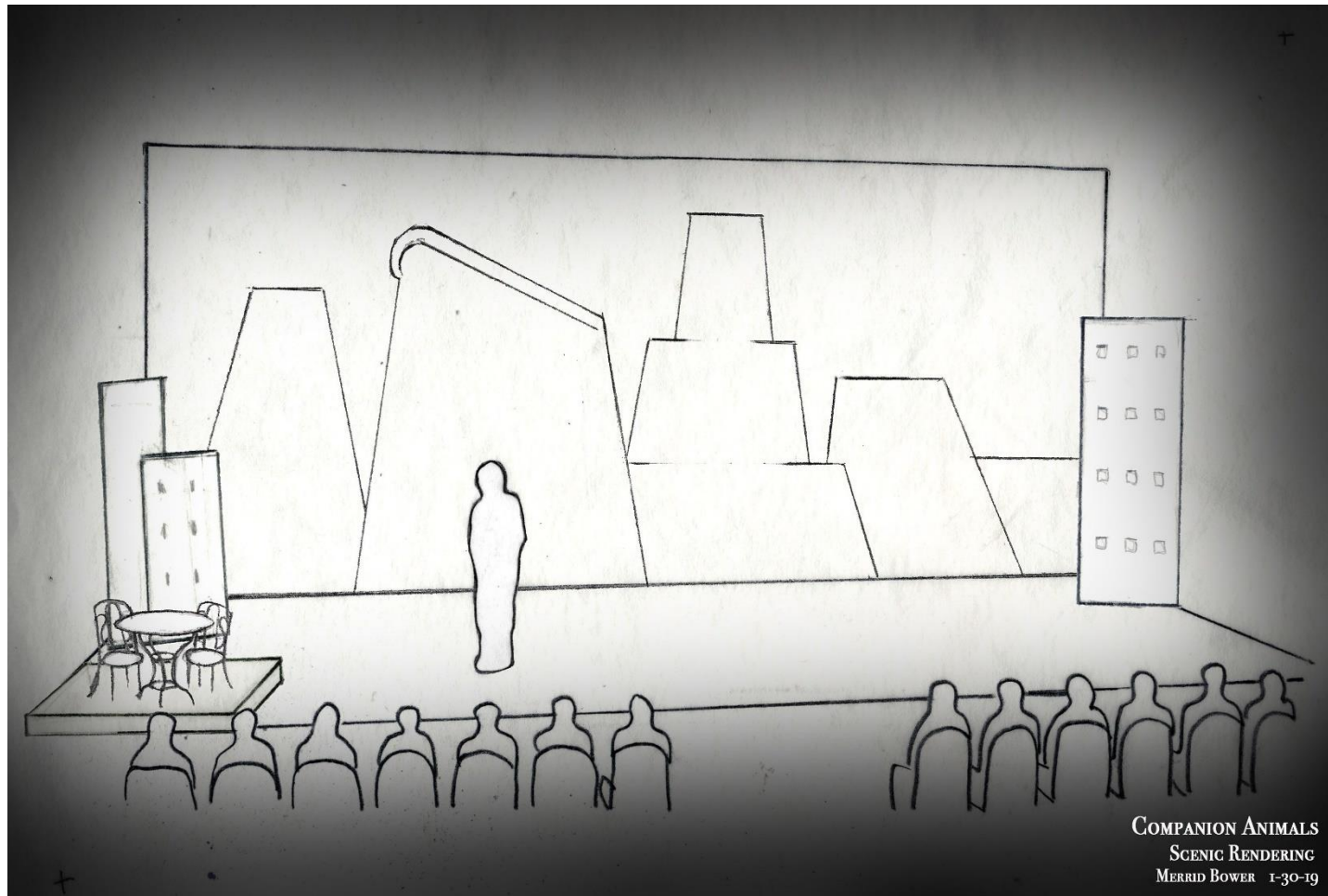
Twilight Bowl by Rebecca Gilman, *Companion Animals* by Madeleine George, and “*Title to be Announced*” by Jen Silverman.

During this month of rehearsals, the main objective was to begin creating the set, sound, costumes, and developing the actors’ sensibilities. In the first read through at the end of January on January 22nd, the artistic team presented their concepts to the actors and a full read through of the script was read. My research packet was passed out via email to the cast and presented in the read through. In it, the packet included the playwright biography, relevant reviews of the playwright, the Big Ten Theater Consortium, summary and context of the play, the production history, the world of the play, where, when, play timeline, a French scene chart, origins of names, character analysis, activism, and demographic information, London 1907 content, Russia 1957 content, space race and dog content of 1957, New York, Philadelphia, and Starbucks research, Women’s rights overview, prison and legal Processes, definition of terms of all the unfamiliar terms in the script with page number, and additional points of interest to read, watch, listen, as well as words from the Dramaturg.

While this all was occurring, production meetings continued as decisions were being finalized.

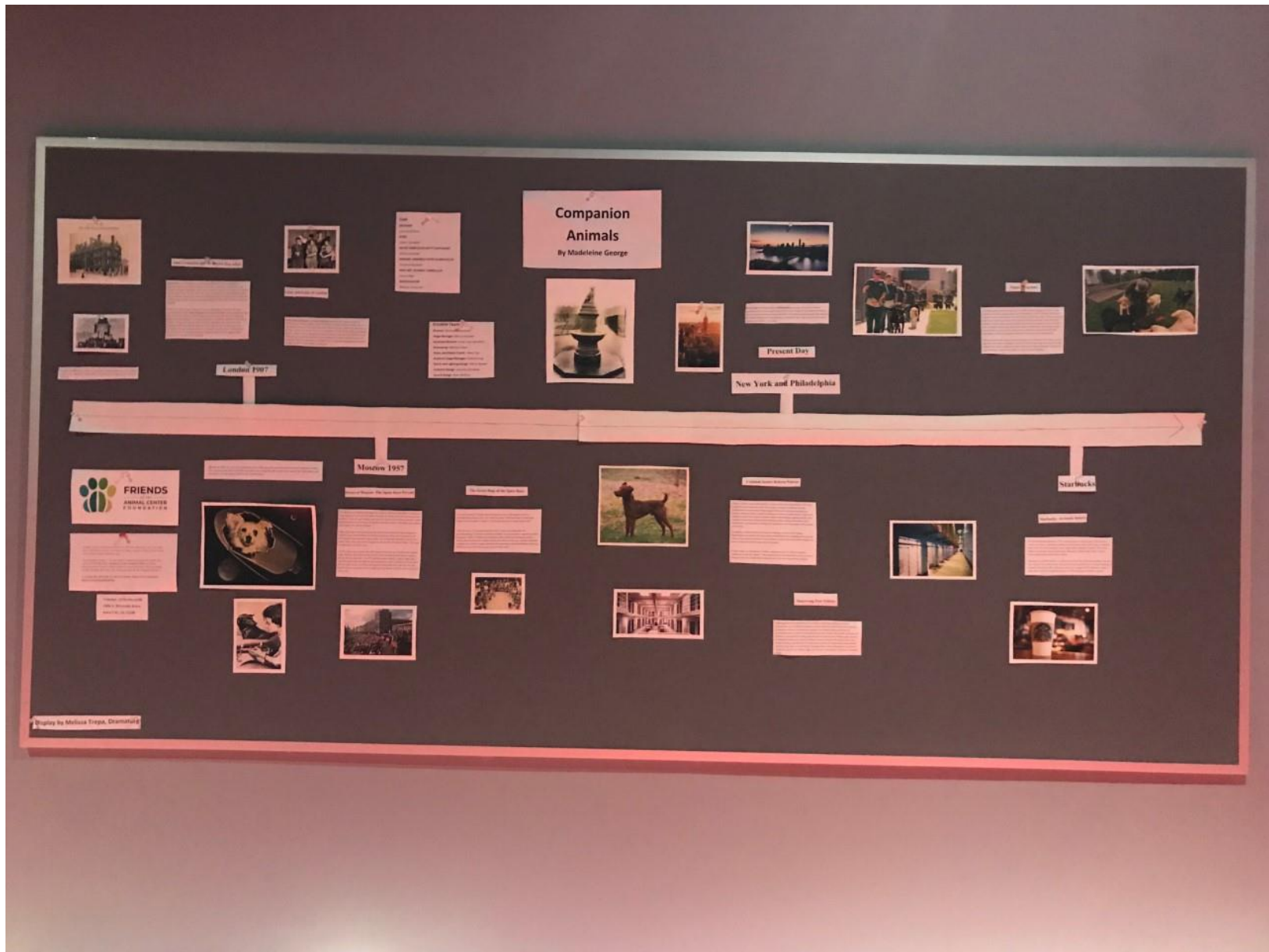
Merric Bowers had trouble obtaining blocks for the scenic design, which would act as main set pieces and furniture due to the minimalist concept the show was going for. The reason they were harder to obtain was due to their shared use within the theater department spaces and Merric had to pull a few strings before permission to use them was officially granted. Sound designer, Ryan McElroy, worked hard to find what sounds to echo Brownie's character between scenes and in sounds for the final explosion at the end of the play. He especially worked with Meredith to get just the right combination of reality and tension in the soundscape. Savana continued to play with the costumes to accommodate for changes in time and quick changes and developed a skirt for Sister Terry and Lizzy's characters which could quickly appear. Sarah Hamilton, as the assistant director also took over the work of directing the Starbucks scenes as they worked to give agency to the revolutionary characters through their thread line in the play. All the while, Meredith Alexander continued to try to correspond with the playwright, Madeline George, but had trouble hearing back so ultimately the final script used for rehearsals was the initial script that was presented in July to the cast.

Below in the coming is one of Merric's scenic designs for the play.



As rehearsals begun to become finalized and the final touches to the play were made, the show still remained present in its objectives to give Madeline George efficient feedback for her play, as well as give insight to audience members related to the themes of companionship, activism, and interconnectedness that touch the play. As the dramaturg, alongside insightful feedback with the directors, I coordinated with the Stage Manager, Marisa Paulson, to design the slides for the biography in the lobby. I also created a full lobby display with a timeline and research on all the time periods and created the posters for marketing. During tech week when the show was in its final rehearsals, I in addition, helped design all the paper material props like the flyers and leases presented in the play to assist the production.

Below are those materials, paper props, and display, created by me, Melissa Tropa, Dramaturg. The lobby display is complete with dates and historical content alongside images which remained in the lobby for audiences to read before and after the show.



The flyer prop and main production poster are seen here.

KEY FOODS NOW HIRING



HIRING MEAT CUTTER

EXPERIENCE IS PREFERRED BUT NOT REQUIRED
NO HIRES FOR FELONS WE USE KNIVES
DARNELLE IN LOADING MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING FOR FELONS
FLEXIBLE HOURS
PAY 15 PER HOUR NO BENEFITS

RESPONSIBILITIES:

MUST HAVE A GOAL TO PROVIDE AMAZING CUSTOMER SERVICE IN EVERY INTERACTION YOU HAVE

REQUIREMENTS:

MUST BE A HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE
NOT FAINT TO BLOOD AND COMFORTABLE WITH COLD CONDITIONS
ABLE TO USE KITCHEN KNIVES PROPERLY
EFFICIENT WITH ASSEMBLY LINE PROCESSES

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COMPANION ANIMALS

By Madeleine George

A University Theatres Gallery Production



Performances Thursday- Saturday 8:00 p.m.
and Sunday at 2:00 p.m.
Feb. 28th-March 3rd, Theater B

Tickets are \$5.00 and Free for UI Students with a valid ID. Tickets may be obtained at the door beginning one hour before the performance.

Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to attend all UI sponsored events. If you are a person with a disability who requires a special accommodation in order to participate in this program, please contact the Theatre Arts Dept. in advance at 335-2700.

Please note this show contains strong language and discussion of cruelty to animals.



Paper lease and prayer props are seen here.

Lease Aggrement

Queens NYC, NY

Dear Kyrie,

Please read and reply to the following to follow up with your rental property.

Tucson, AZ 857 _____

For a period of: _____ months, beginning _____ and ending _____.

2. **Monthly Rent shall be \$** _____ due in advance on or before the _____ day of each month in check or cashier's check, or money order. **(NO CASH ACCEPTED):**

Payable to: **COUVRETTE 2954 N. Campbell Box 146 TUCSON, AZ 85719**

3. **Security Deposit** shall be: \$ _____ plus pet deposit of \$ _____ for a total deposit of \$ _____. **Non-Refundable \$** _____ for carpet steam cleaning and/or floor resealing, **minor** paint touch-up, **minor** cleaning and locks re-keyed. Deposit may not be applied towards last month rent.

4. **Funds Received** to date towards rent: \$ _____; deposit: \$ _____; Last Month Rent \$ _____; totaling: \$ _____. Last Month's Rent is held as additional security deposit and not used as rent if resident moves out prior to completing lease term (Broken Lease). **Move in date** shall be _____. A balance of \$ _____ is due by _____.

5. **Daily Rent** (rent x 12 / 365) equals \$ _____ per day. Second month's pro-rated rent for _____ days is: \$ _____.

6. **Late Payments:** Late Charge of 10% if rent (or balance due) is not received by _____ (Due date + 2). **Late rent and fees must be paid in the form of a cashiers check or money order.** Mail post marked more than two days after due date shall be treated as late. A Daily Late Charge of 1% of the amount unpaid will then be assessed for each additional day late thereafter until rent or balance due is paid in full.

7. **Bad Checks:** \$25 per returned check. **All late charges shall apply.** Payment due immediately in the form of a **cashiers check or money order.** All future payments to be paid by cashiers check only.

8. **Utilities:** Electric (_____), Gas (_____), Water (_____) shall be put into residents' name by move in date. Resident responsible for utilities not in residents' name by move in date or turned off prior to move out date.

9. **Rules:** Residents have received and agree to comply with all rules on separate sheet.

10. **Occupancy** of this residence is limited to _____ person(s). No additional residents or roommates allowed.

11. **Continues Tenancy after Lease Expiration:** Continued occupancy after Lease expires shall create a renewal of the Lease with the same terms & conditions applying on a monthly basis.

12. **Move Out:** Residents must send a written and signed notice of intent to vacate the residence thirty days before move out date. No written notice will result in rent being due until re-rental of the residence. To receive refundable portion of security deposit, resident must be in full compliance with this Lease Agreement and the residence must be left in **ORIGINAL CLEAN AND RENTABLE CONDITION.** Residents shall be charged daily rent until residence is restored to clean and rentable condition. Smokers may be charged for smoke damage and repainting. Residents will be responsible for all cleaning & repair costs even if they exceed the deposit. Residents may be present at the move-out inspection. Balance of Security Deposit will be sent to forwarding address within 14 business days.

13. **Damage & Inventory Sheet:** to be completed and returned within one week from move-in date.

14. **Pets** Residents will be allowed: _____. See Pet Addendum hereby included []

15. **Owners** of this property are: _____ Phone(s): _____

16. **Other Provisions:** _____

17. **Any discrepancy** between this Lease Agreement and the accompanying rules, the Lease Agreement shall prevail. **Any breach** of this Lease Agreement may result in: termination of this Lease Agreement; all or part of the security deposit being kept; and any appropriate legal actions. Moving out before the end of Lease Agreement will result in: **BROKEN LEASE PENALTY EQUAL TO ONE MONTH'S RENT:** \$ _____; as well as residents being charged for **all expenses incurred** to re-rent residence including but not limited to: ads, credit checks, cleaning, **lost rent until re-rented** and all court, legal, attorney and collection costs associated with any actions against the resident. A free copy of the Arizona Residential Landlord and Tenant Act is available through the Arizona Secretary of State's Office.

19. To insure personal contents from damage or loss, tenant must obtain separate Renter's Insurance

20. **I/We agree** to all terms of this Lease Agreement.

Residents: _____

DATE: _____ **Owner/Manager:** _____

ORACION A LA VIRGEN Y MARTIR SANTA BARBARA

Soberano y Eterno Dios, admirable en tus Santos, especialmente en la gloriosa Virgen y Mártir Santa Bárbara, a quien preveniste con tu gracia, por cuya fé a los doce años de edad padeció cárceles, azotes y otros crueles martirios, hasta ser degollada por su mismo padre, en cuyo tránsito te pidió le hicieras gracia, que los que se valieran de su intercesión fuesen libres de todo mal, sócorriéndolos en la hora de la muerte, no permitiendo muriesen sin los Santos Sacramentos y se la otorgaste, asegurándola que había sido oída su petición; ruégote, Señor, por los méritos de tu querida esposa Santa Bárbara, a quien fortaleció tu Omnipotencia e ilustró tu sabiduría y abrasó tu amor, me concedas fortaleza para resistir las tentaciones para conocer y llorar mis culpas y amor tuyo, para que abrasado en él merezca el patrocinio de esta Sagrada Virgen, y en especial en la hora de mi muerte, en que fortalecido con los Santos Sacramentos y por medio de ellos y la intercesión de la Santa, gozar en su compañía contigo en la gloria, en donde vives y reinas por todos los siglos de los siglos. Amén

February 2019

Rehearsals were almost every night from 7-11 pm in the Theater Building rehearsal spaces, aside from Sundays and Saturdays' schedule always varied. Almost every night almost all, if not all of the cast was called to run scenes. Each day Meredith would work up to 30 or more pages worth of the script. Often in the rehearsal space, Meredith made decisions alongside the rest of the cast by playing with different scenes. The majority of rehearsals took place in February, since full rehearsals began at the end of the month, and opening night was February 28th. The cast took the first two weeks to memorize the script and get off book. At the beginning of rehearsals, the weather had extreme blizzards causing Meredith Alexander to lose a total of six rehearsals due to dangerous weather conditions. Because of this set back, rehearsals were always run diligently and with efficiency. Meredith Alexander, Sarah Hamilton, Marisa Paulsen, and her assistant Elaina and myself all attended rehearsals on a regular basis alongside the actors. Rehearsals were lively with ideas and Meredith continued to use my insights from my research to try new things in the rehearsal space with the actors. The last several weeks props and costumes were added and there were two separate design runs so that Merric, Ryan, Savana, and the rest of the team could make decisions for logistical purposes for the show as well as for artistic reasons.

After all blocking was finalized the tech week arrived the week prior to the show, and the cast and crew set up in Theater B where sound was officially tested for the first time alongside the freshly completed set, lighting, and cast in full attire. The final design had the Starbucks table always present on upstage left, while the backdrop resembled many different city skylines to reflect London, Moscow, and New York, as well as Philadelphia throughout the play. The lighting helped as well as sound to distinguish the flashback scenes when Brownie is trained by Kyrie in a field as well as when they reunite at the end of the play. The lighting is dim but focused to help characterize changes in time and place, and the actors' strong dialects help to bring the molded worlds into focus. Even up to the final nights, Director Meredith Alexander continued to make minor changes to sound and scenic decisions and included to give actors feedback.

Phase E: Production

March 2019

On February 28th through March 3d *Companion Animals* was showcased in Theater B of the theater building as one of the Spring Gallery plays. Madeline George attended the Friday night showing and discussed her experience watching the play first hand afterwards with the entire cast. The entire cast and crew had an enjoyable experience and with the help of mentors, collaboration, patience, resilience, and artistic drive, *Companion Animals* remained a success through its entire run and remains an experience I will personally never forget.



Special Thanks and concluding remarks

Special thanks to the entire Cast, Crew, and Artistic team for all the support and insight this season as I shadowed the entire process of being a production dramaturg. To every individual I worked with in various capacities, Eileen Campbell, Jenna Smithson, Melissa Caminneci, Emma Bibb, Christina Ranslam, Olivia Schneider, Madeline George, Meredith Alexander, Sarah Lacy Hamilton, Merric Bower, Savanna Genskow, Ryan McElroy, Marisa Paulson, and Elaina Irving. Thank you to Professor Art Borreca for your insight in our independent study, and for Meredith Alexander for extending me the opportunity to be a part of this experience. Additional thanks to my Dramaturgy mentor, Morgan Grambo for all her feedback and advice throughout the entire 2018-2019 season, and to Madeline George for her visit to view the play this spring 2019 season. I look forward to future production notebooks to come.