

UVU DIRECTING CLASS WORKSHOP

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT(/COLONIZER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT):

Working today on the traditional lands of the Núu-ágha-tʼévvá-péé (Ute), Goshute, and Eastern Shoshone peoples.

I also recognize the stolen lives of the enslaved Africans brought to Utah by early white settlers, and acknowledge that their subjugation and forced labor helped to establish the cities that exist in this area today.

These acknowledgments are only one step in anti-racist theater, film, and television. I strive to de-colonize my work through careful project selection, meaningful collaboration, ongoing conversation, and self-education.

I am also currently re-thinking how I do land acknowledgements. I'm working on finding specific actionable ways of supporting the native folks I'm acknowledging, instead of just performatively naming them. In the meantime, I acknowledge my role as a colonizer and the ways I benefit from white supremacy.

MY BACKGROUND

- Training and working in intimacy direction since 2019 (Theatrical Intimacy Education, Intimacy Directors & Coordinators, Intimacy Coordinators of Color)
- ~100 hours of training
- Come to this work from a place of:
 - PASSION FOR THEATRE
 - MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY
 - SOCIAL JUSTICE
- My job has two parts: Consent work and Choreography
 - I'm not the sex police or HR on steroids
 - I'm here to give you tools to do amazing work

HIRE AN INTIMACY DIRECTOR.

- They have training and expertise in both consent and physical storytelling
- Helps mitigate power dynamics
- Helpful in any show with touch
- Absolutely required with scenes of simulated sex or nudity (industry standard)

WAYS YOU CAN MAKE YOUR DIRECTING MORE CONSENT-BASED

- Audition disclosures
- Time/space for warm ups and boundary check ins
- "Yes/no" questions → "How do you feel about" questions
- Follow union breaks
- Time/space for closure
- Clear system of support

<<< SWITCHING GEARS: NOW WE'RE GOING TO IMAGINE THAT YOU ARE THE ACTORS AND WE'RE GOING TO REHEARSE THESE SCENES >>>

- Choose scene (*Beau Jest* or *Mary's Little Monster*)
- Choose actors

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COMFORT ZONE – GROWTH ZONE – TRAUMA ZONE

- For years, there's been this idea that you have to be in the trauma zone to make good art
- That's not sustainable or true; we're focused on keeping you in the comfort or growth zone

CONSENT

- FRIES!
 - Freely given
 - Reversible
 - Informed
 - Engaged
 - Specific
- If unsure, ask if you're thinking of yourself or others

YOUR BOUNDARIES ARE PERFECT EXACTLY WHERE THEY ARE

- We can tell any story that we need to tell with your boundaries in place
- During COVID, I did 2 pieces of intimacy where the actors didn't even touch each other
- Sex should always be simulated (acting and sex work are two different jobs)

OUTSIDE OF REHEARSAL

- I can't tell you what to do outside of rehearsal
- Do not meet with your scene partner in private or use substances while trying to get to know them better
 - Not necessary
 - At best, complicates the work
 - At worst, can perpetuate abuse
 - Alternative: Coffee date, walk in a park, texting

TOOL #1: BUTTON

- Used to express a need (five minutes, find another way to do something)
- Response to "button" is always "What do you need?"
- Used to help bypass "Yes and" training (change it to "no but")
- SIMON SAYS, then discuss
- Use for visible signs of arousal if they are affecting your work (//giving you time to catch your breath if we were doing a big dance number)(double up underwear if it's an ongoing occurrence)

BOUNDARY PRACTICE/WARM UP

- Warm up body
 - Dance/shake/shimmy/march in place
 - Stretch
 - Other warm ups as desired (vocal, etc.)
- Get present in the room
 - One hand on stomach, other hand on sternum
 - Take a few deliberate breaths
 - Notice 3 things about the room you're in (sounds, colors, textures, location of doors/windows, etc.)

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- If rehearsing intimacy or other close contact, complete any necessary hygiene
 - Listerine strips
 - Chapstick if needed
 - Wash hands
 - Put on rehearsal clothes if needed
- **Boundary practice**

TABLE WORK

What's the story we want to tell? What are important details about this relationship and this moment?

CHOREOGRAPHY

- We'll do this layer by layer
- I'll tell you what I'm envisioning, guide you through, and if there's something you'd prefer not to do, say "button" and "I'd like to find another way to do this"
- Director: share thoughts if desired
- Kisses: Touch noses as placeholder

CLOSURE

- Work it out of your body
 - Shake and shimmy out your whole body
 - Use your fingers to massage your face
 - Alba emoting step out if needed
- Face your partner or the group and take turns saying the following:
 - As the character of ____, I am feeling/thinking/doing ____.
 - As myself, I am feeling/thinking/doing ____.
 - After rehearsal, I'm looking forward to ____.
- When you're done speaking, hit your own thighs and say "hup!" and then clap your hands once. Then your partner or the rest of the group repeats this action
- After everyone has finished speaking, do three thigh hit/hup and claps in unison, then all shout "yaaaaaay!"

Q & A

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BEAU JEST

Sarah is a schoolteacher with strict Jewish parents. She's hired Bob, an actor and male escort, to play her fake Jewish boyfriend "David" to attend functions with her family. They've just spent Passover together, and her family has left for the night. Sarah and Bob have been sitting and talking on Sarah's couch.

SARAH

Would you like another drink?

BOB

No, thank you. One vodka and four glasses of wine is my limit. I guess I should be going.

SARAH

Oh. Yeah, well...let me get my checkbook.

BOB

No, no. Sarah. Seriously, I can't.

SARAH

I have to pay you.

BOB

No, you don't. You allowed me to spend Passover with you and your family. It was wonderful.

SARAH

You're sure.

BOB

Absolutely.

SARAH

Well, thank you.

BOB

And thank you for the dinner. I don't expect to be hungry until Tuesday.

(beat)

BOB

Well...

SARAH

Yeah.

BOB

I hope everything works out for you.

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SARAH

Thanks. You, too.

BOB

Thanks. Listen, would it be okay if I gave you a call sometime? Just to keep in touch?

SARAH

Sure. You have to let me know when you're in a show.

BOB

Right...right...well...

SARAH

One thing I wanted to ask you.

BOB

Sure.

SARAH

The first night you were here...when my father took our picture...and you kissed me?

BOB

Yeah?

SARAH

Was that a David kiss or a Bob kiss?

BOB

Oh. That was a David kiss.

SARAH

Oh.

BOB

This is a Bob kiss.

(Kiss)

BOB

Listen, uh...last week I escorted a very nice elderly lady to the theatre. I really love going to the theatre. May I, some evening, escort you to the theatre?

SARAH

I'd like that.

BOB

I'll call you during the week.

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Okay. SARAH

(kiss)

I'll call you tomorrow. BOB

Okay. SARAH

(kiss)

I'll call you when I get home. BOB

Okay. SARAH

(Kiss)

Why don't we talk about it now? BOB

SARAH
Why don't you take off your coat and stay awhile?

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MARY'S LITTLE MONSTER

The play takes place in 1816, when an intimate group spend several months together in confinement in a Swiss Mansion. Mary Shelley, her husband Percy, her sister Claire, Lord Byron, and Byron's doctor Polly are all in polyamorous relationships with one another. In this scene, Mary questions what they're all doing there.

(Mary stands alone looking out at the lake. Percy appears and stands behind her, kissing her passionately on the neck. Mary doesn't turn.)

PERCY

It's me.

MARY

I know it.

PERCY

You didn't turn to see who it was. It could have been Polly, or Byron.

MARY

(Turning to him) I would know you blind in a hurricane. Would you know me?

PERCY

Let me close my eyes.

(He does then he kisses her passionately)

PERCY

Mmm, I recognize the flavor. Delicious. Is it "my dearest love"? (He opens his eyes) It is! (Noticing) My god, you're dripping wet.

MARY

We're at sea.

PERCY

More metaphors.

MARY

Not up to your standard?

PERCY

He was probing through my papers.

MARY

And did you try to stop him?

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PERCY

Why should I?

MARY

Because they are OURS! Because they are between US. Isn't anything just between us?

PERCY

Why is what's between us closed? I am proud of us. What we are.

MARY

I haven't the vaguest notion of "what we are."

PERCY

We are for liberation. We are for abandoning superstition and stepping into the light of reason.

MARY

I know what we're FOR, but I have no idea what we ARE.

PERCY

We are a love that, gleaming through the world (pulling her close), wards off the poisonous arrow of its scorn.

(She turns away from him, face in her hands)

MARY

I'm sorry. I'm always conjuring imaginary misery.