Casting as a Pedagogical Practice in Educational Theatre Spaces

Scott Savage
University of Central Florida

This Masters Thesis (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2020- by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

STARS Citation
Savage, Scott, "Casting as a Pedagogical Practice in Educational Theatre Spaces" (2020). Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2020-. 130.
https://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd2020/130
CASTING AS A PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE
IN EDUCATIONAL THEATRE SPACES

by

SCOTT ALLEN SAVAGE
B.A. Brigham Young University, 2016

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts
in the Department of Theatre
in the College of Arts and Humanities
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term
2020
© 2020 Scott Savage
ABSTRACT

Casting might be the most exciting thing in theatre to happen off-stage. Actors, agents, directors, producers, and outside observers are keenly interested in who plays a given part. In a professional space, casting seeks to ask, “Which performer is the best fit for this part?” But what happens when an educational theatre director instead asks, “Which role will best enable the learning of this performer?” This thesis explores the process of casting in an educational theatre space as being distinctly different from casting in a professional theatre space. By examining theoretical underpinnings of casting through literature and reflexive practice, I question what factors should be considered when casting youth performers in educational theatre productions. This thesis considers concepts such as thin-slicing, cultural capital, and student-centered pedagogy as means of transforming casting from a production focused practiced to a performer focused one. This thesis examines existing literature about casting as a practice as a means of understanding the theoretical ideas behind casting. I then survey current theatre practitioners in educational theatre spaces to define current trends and practices when evaluating young people’s auditions in educational theatre. Finally, I develop and test a tool for measuring young actors in auditions, which I apply and analyze through the casting in a youth production of 101 Dalmatians KIDS. The thesis reflects the practitioner's practice as research and considers both challenges to casting as a pedagogical practice and casting issues unique to educational theatre. The reflection also considers practices to help make casting a more student-centered process in educational theatre spaces.
For Jack, Cameron, and Michael who have sacrificed a lot of dad time.

And especially for Natalie. Without her, nothing I do is possible or meaningful.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Vivek Ranadive once said, “I’ve always surrounded myself with people way smarter than me. That’s led to some success.” The list of people smarter than me who have impacted this process is much longer than I can, or wish to acknowledge, but these specific people deserve special attention for making this thesis possible.

Thank you to my University of Central Florida professors and mentors. Holly McDonald always has a smile and a welcoming presence that has been helpful to me since my first day on campus. Dr. Julia Listengarten has a wit, sensibility, and artistic flair that has led to some of the richest class discussions I’ve ever been involved with. Vandy Wood just makes things happen, regardless of outcome, and with an eye towards what can always be learned. She does so with a no-nonsense love that everyone needs, because that’s just what she does. Debbie Tedrick has been ever accessible and a true guidepost for my work. Chris Neiss, Mark Brotherton and Earl Weaver have given me good insight and opportunity to talk about our craft.

Cynthia White’s attention to detail has made me constantly raise my own bar and has pushed me to not settle for good enough. Jim Helsinger has given me a professional lens to view this work from that has been essential to its success, even up to the day this is written and submitted. Elizabeth Brendel Horn has been a role model, a friend, a mentor, and a human being who lives a real life. She has been a car trip companion, sound pedagogue, and a person who knows how to apply exactly the right amount of pressure and praise to make this all hum along. I could not have picked a better thesis chair, and I am ever grateful for her and her daughter spending an afternoon with me as I interviewed at UCF.

Thank you to my many previous educators who have grappled with me at less developed stages of my academic, personal and theatrical growth. My secondary drama teachers have been
phenomenal. Kara Poulsen gave me my first role as a Mattress Knight in Once Upon a Mattress. Kristina Holly who put me on my first Shakespeare team Kelli Allred and Spencer Moody who gave me my first lead as TonTon in Once on This Island which gave me important context for this thesis. Elaine Hansen and Sandra Millet who let me be in the casting room at my former High School and gave me my first experiences casting. Sandra has continually been a mentor and a friend. Bob Bauer was a super mentor teacher and remains a hilarious and talented human being. Brian Blackham pushed me all the way to graduation.

BYU’s Dr. Rodger Sorensen mentored my first solo directing, and thus casting, project, and has been a friend and inspiration for all aspects of my life. Teresa Love has answered so many calls, texts, e-mails, and been an uplifting mentor and an even greater friend. George Nelson exemplifies faith, pedagogy and artistry. Marianne Ohran helped me refine my craft even when things were going up in smoke. Dr. Al Merkley advocated for me as an educator and always had a personal insight that was helpful for me. Bradley and Shawnda Moss were the perfect model teachers, and without their example and words, I never get to graduate school. Dr. Megan Sanborn Jones gave me the best advice of all, which was to finish; as always, this has been the right perspective to take. Extra thanks to Christine Detweiler who sent me her gorgeous rubric to evaluate and appreciate.

I have wonderful friends. Dr. Danny Cardoza inspired me to aim higher in school and walked in lockstep with me doing so for fourteen years. Nathanael Sackett has been a huge advocate and optimist for me. Matthew Bingham gives me perspective and asks great questions. Pam Gardner showed me important thesis writing technique. Steven Blackhurst has kept me sane and engaged creatively. Rachel Skaggs has been there anytime things were breaking down. Aubrianna Hockett has pushed me to adventure. Jenn Luzader sacrificed time to make my
writing clearer. So many friends would play games, talk theatre, loved my children, and broken 
bread with me during this time, that I’ve been so grateful to have balance because I’m 
surrounded by good people.

My graduate school colleagues were incredible. Janice Munk, Joni Newman and Nathan 
Tanner Stout helped bring my worlds together and made grad school feel familiar. They have 
been everything. Brittany Caine provided amazing insight, creative friction, and is a truly 
astounding maven and connector who makes the world a better place with her questions and 
thoughts. Kate Kilpatrick’s love of puns, heartfelt goodness and distaste for pineapple on pizza 
have made her a good friend. Ralph Krumins’ football fandom may be questionable, but his 
willingness to make great art, and a lot of it cannot be questioned. Bianca Alamo’s candor, 
intelligence, thoughtfulness and faithfulness have been the glue that has made so many things 
work. John Norton gave me the chance to put my hands on his genius work and learn from a 
master writer. Ramon Paradoa and Elizabeth Fay have been impressive examples of work life 
balance and pursuing passion projects. The MFA actors are an inspiring and engaging bunch, and 
they’re going to do great things for the arts in this world. The #CoreFour made so much of what 
happened for my cohort possible and raised the bar high.

I have the world’s best family. We have a long tradition of sitting together and typing the 
last words of my dad’s books with each of us serving as scribe for a few words. The chance to 
have that happen for my own writing was fantastic. My family’s love of art, learning, and 
creative thought has been fundamental to who I am.

My thesis has come to life to the sound of remarkable artists including John Williams, 
Howard Shore, Enya, Brandon Flowers and the Killers, Camille, and more. I further listened
extensively to the audiobooks of Michael Caine, Jackie Chan, Lauren Graham, Dale Carnegie, Malcolm Gladwell and J.K. Rowling as I read, researched, wrote, and revised. Art inspires art.

Thank you to the incredible professionals who have been engaged with me on this project. Dr. Jo Beth Gonzalez has written both great literature and great emails and has encouraged my thoughts on this subject. Dr. Brian Herrera responded and guided me towards positive things as well, and it was a shot in the arm of confidence to realize I had found a subject someone I respect was unearthing as well. Thank you to the bright and wonderful Julie Woods-Robinson who let me cast with her and paved some great thesis doing pathways. Jenn Adams has been a sounding board, an open office door, and a picker-upper of down days, sometimes even with snacks.

Jonathan Schmidt Chapman and Nina Meehan gave me profound insight and positive networking with the professional theatres that I interacted with. This network sent me towards great education directors and other practitioners with theatres across the USA. These are (deep breath!): Seattle Children’s Theatre, Lexington Children’s Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Oregon Children’s Theatre, The Rose Theater, The Children’s Theatre of Cincinnati, Childsplay, Children's Theater of Madison (especially Erica Bergman!), Children’s Theatre Company, Treasure Valley Children’s Theater, Children's Theatre of Charlotte, Bay Area Children’s Theatre, South Carolina Children’s Theatre and Nashville Children’s Theatre.

Special Thank you to Gail Higginbotham, Heather Kirk, Stephen Massot and the ARIEL Theatrical team. They taught me, housed me, encouraged me, challenged me, and gave me the space to produce the practical component of this project. Their principles are sound, their people are great, and their shows are a little piece of heaven. ARIEL is an exemplary theatre company.
I have been surrounded by an incredible and welcoming church group. The Walkers, Potters, Stephenson’s, Pritchett’s, Sands, Owens, Smiths, Craikers, Millers, Coffeys, Eddingtons, Tom Dolan and Becky Baird, Karen Goldie, as well as the Choi and Perez families and more. These families have made my family their family. They have made worshipping together a joyous experience. I would be remiss to not express a special gratitude to the God that has heard my prayers, put me in the path of great people, and calmed my troubled heart.

A special thank you to Dr. John Newman. He was not a natural fit for my other groupings, but he has weaved his way in and out of my life for the last 8 years, and always happens to be part of the important things that are occurring around me. He gave me excellent guidance, he raised my bar of professionalism, and he has given me great opportunities to make new theatre, see great theatre, and talk about the power of what theatre can do. His advocacy has changed my life, my art and my writing.

Finally, a thank you that goes beyond my ability to express to Natalie Savage. Natalie has always been the better half in every way imaginable. Her intelligence, organization, dedication, talents, abilities, goodness, and sacrifice have always and will always surpass my own. She knows this, and she still stands by me every day. She makes everything in my life possible. She makes it all worth doing. At the end of the day, without her, nothing great I’ve done in the last eight years happens. May everyone be so lucky as to find someone who knows that they are the better half, and to stick around anyway.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .......................................................................................................................... III

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ........................................................................................................ V

TABLE OF CONTENTS ....................................................................................................... X

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................... 1

   Genesis ............................................................................................................................ 1

   Project Overview ............................................................................................................. 3

   Key Terminology ............................................................................................................. 5

      Educational Theatre ..................................................................................................... 5

      Youth Performer ......................................................................................................... 6

      Teaching-Director ....................................................................................................... 6

   Theoretical Underpinnings .............................................................................................. 7

      Thin-Slicing .................................................................................................................. 7

      Cultural Capital .......................................................................................................... 8

      Student-Centered Pedagogies ...................................................................................... 10

   Stakes of Casting ............................................................................................................ 11

   Limitations and Delimitations ....................................................................................... 13

      Limitations .................................................................................................................. 13

      Delimitations .............................................................................................................. 14

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .............................................................................. 16

   Overview ......................................................................................................................... 16

   Casting Descriptions and Impact .................................................................................. 16

   Universal Casting Topics ............................................................................................... 18
LIST OF ACRONYMNS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BYU</td>
<td>Brigham Young University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYA</td>
<td>Theatre for Young Audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YA</td>
<td>Youth Academy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Genesis

Are casting practices in educational theatre spaces different from those of professional theatre spaces? What tools do we use when casting, and how can we refine those tools to make casting in educational theatre spaces a more student-centered process? How can we ensure quality assessment that guides the process of making learner-focused educational theatre after casting is completed?

Casting theatre in any context is a challenging process that requires us to make complex calculations of subjective variables in incredibly short durations. On one occasion when I was working with a secondary drama teacher who had spent much of her working life in the professional theatre world, we discussed a casting choice that we were drawing different conclusions about. In deciding on a major role, it was largely down to two candidates. The part of the character in question was an iconic character who was defined by their “type” or physical description. The first was a senior who had spent a great deal of time in the theatre program and was a skilled actor and singer but did not fit the character’s type well. The other was a sophomore whose physical frame was perfect for the character but whose skills were underdeveloped. In my estimation, the dedicated senior student deserved the part. This person displayed many of the theatre skills necessary to act the part and had a certain amount of status within the program. While this actor did not look or move exactly right for the part in the audition process, we agreed that it was likely that he could learn to play the part well in rehearsals.

The leading director ended up going another direction. The director felt that whatever skills may be lacked by the younger student, their natural fit for the part’s type would make it
easy for an audience to believe they were who they said they were simply by their presence on stage. My concern with this was that the rehearsal period was not a long enough runway to help this student play the part up to the character’s potential and that the audience might see the production and think that he was a poor actor who looked right. It came down to a question of type or technique, and in this instance, type won out. As a last second plea on behalf of the senior, I opined “What if we teach the actor to play the part so well, no one cares what the performer looks like? After all, isn’t this an educational theatre?” The teacher paused thoughtfully and said, “I guess I just never thought about it that way before.”

Like many that have worked in theatre, I have spent extensive time on both sides of the casting table. The nervousness that an actor feels in his desire to perform well is matched by the nervousness that the director feels in hoping she can find just the right combination of actors to bring a text from the page to the stage. Apart from opening night, there may be no higher stakes anywhere in theatre than on audition day. In an adage so common as to be a cliché, it has been said that ninety percent of a director’s job is casting well. If the cast is right, the relationships will form, and design elements will enhance performance rather than seek to mask it.

In the professional realm, the stakes are tied to actual dollars and cents. There are books upon books which highlight incredible theatrical flops and play the “what-if” game about having just a few different people involved in the cast or casting room. Actors depend on auditions as their job interviews, and casting is a way to expand not only their opportunity to get hands-on training and networking, but also the kinds of resume building that can come with the opportunity to play a major part, alongside impactful actors or on a significant stage. Casting in a professional realm demands that the production be put first, and that if the production succeeds, everyone who was a part of it has won, much like a championship sports team.
In my experiences as a fledgling director tasked with participating in the casting process, I have wondered if these principles of “production-first casting” have trickled down to the educational realm. I have wondered what might happen if casting conversations in educational spaces no longer asked first the question, “Which performer is best for this role?” I hope to explore further the question, “What role is best for this performer?”

I view my theatrical work as deeply educational. My undergraduate degree was in theatre education and nearly all of my experiences making theatre have happened in educational theatre spaces. I knew I wanted to teach before I knew I wanted to teach theatre, and while my love for and understanding of theatre has deepened, I always have a pedagogical mindset to my practice. I am deeply curious about how we are reaching all students, and how the explicit and implicit messages of our teaching are received by the intended audience. I wonder about what the process of casting teaches, and if our practices are based in sound pedagogy or in adopted professional practices that prioritize production values.

**Project Overview**

This thesis is an exploration of casting as a pedagogical practice and is made up of three major components. The first of these is my second chapter which is a review of the available literature discussing casting. I explored books and articles that discussed teaching theatre in educational and directing spaces to searched for any mentions of practices of casting. My aim was to gain a comprehensive understanding of what teachers and directors are being taught about casting through the tools they are trained by. I also explored books aimed at those who are auditioning to search for tips that are given about what casting directors say they are looking for. My review of the literature is intended to be a framework for the experiences I have had with casting and to drive me towards better practice.
My third chapter is an exploration of my own previous practice in the casting room combined with the gained knowledge I found from practitioners in the field. I begin by exploring my own reflections on casting and the challenges I have encountered. I then share tools and lessons I discovered from practitioners in the field, as well as honest and empathetic views of the challenging and subjective nature of casting. I share, in sensitive ways, practical lessons I have learned about being a professional practitioner of educational theatre and making difficult decisions in the casting room.

My fourth chapter is practice as research in casting as a pedagogical practice in an educational theatre space. I was given the opportunity to serve as the director of a production of 101 Dalmatians KIDS at ARIEL Theatrical in Salinas California. I prepared a casting rubric to assess youth performers and planned for how I might practice casting as a pedagogical practice prior to obtaining all of the experience and research gathered in the previous chapters. At the time, I used an educational theatre lens called Zone of Proximal Development or “ZPD” to guide my thinking on forming ensemble groups and casting youth performers in roles that would challenge them. This theory and its applications are further examined in the chapter, and my conclusion includes reflexive practice as qualitative research to consider how I view the process after obtaining the further information I discovered in my research.

My final chapter is a conclusion which involves further reflection on my discoveries about casting as a pedagogical practice. I seek to synthesize the learning I had across my previous chapters to frame where I plan to go as a teaching-director based on the learning and experiences I have obtained. I discuss what an educational theatre program modeled on these principles might look like and how to implement key pieces of the research in practical ways.
Finally, I consider conversations that would need to be undertaken with teachers, directors, students, parents and audiences in order to put such concepts into practice.

Key Terminology

There are several key terms and ideas that I would like to explain in this introductory chapter that will serve as a starting point for understanding this thesis and the practice behind it. Some of these ideas will appear in each subsequent chapter while others may only appear in one or two. This section serves as a glossary for key definitions and major ideas that have influenced this thesis.

Educational Theatre

I first need to define educational theatre in opposition to professional theatre for my purposes. Educational theatre will be discussed as theatre made with youth performers as actors for the purpose of, or as connected to, an educational space. This might be an elementary or secondary school such as a junior high or high school. It could also be an organization like the Youth Academy program of the Orlando Repertory Theatre (Orlando REP). The Youth Academy is an enrollment-based community program where youth performers between grades 3-8 can audition to perform in fully mounted theatre productions twice a year. There are many such programs throughout the nation but given my exposure to and overwhelmingly positive experiences with the Youth Academy, I will refer to it frequently.

A key element of these “educational theatre” programs, however, is that the programs must consist of exclusively, or nearly exclusively, youth performers who are unpaid. For my purposes, professional theatre will include nearly anything else. Any commercial or paid theatre work is professional theatre. Community shows which do not have an explicitly educational aim would also fall into this category, as would any show that has few or no youth performers.
Youth Performer

A youth performer is a performer who is involved in an educational theatre program. These might be students or student-actors which are synonymous terms I use through the thesis. While the age of a youth performer may have some degree of fluctuation, for my purposes a youth performer will typically be grades 3-12. This is due to the suggestion of creative drama practitioner Nellie McCaslin who suggests that children under the age of eight may not be sufficiently developed to perform well in a performance-based drama program which I will discuss in chapter two. The exception to this is my thesis work with ARIEL Theatrical which opens their theatrical programming to youth as young as five. While youth in this age may also seek professional training or performance opportunities, my discussion of a youth performer is limited to an educational theatre space.

Teaching-Director

The person or persons who make casting choices that place these youth performers into production roles is usually either a licensed teacher in an elementary or secondary school, or someone hired as a director or educational director, who has been trained and prepared to work with youth performers specifically. There may also be music directors, choreographers or other theatre professionals in the casting room for these decisions. For this thesis, I will refer to these people as teaching-directors. The purpose of this is twofold.

First, after my research and practice, I feel it is insufficient to refer to these people as simply one or the other. Someone who is viewed only as a director has the primary goal of serving the needs of a production. A director must coordinate with design elements, text and dramaturgical research, as well as their work with actors who are all ultimately collaborating to serve the needs and goals of the production. Conversely, a teacher’s primary focus and aim is the
educational needs of the students. Someone who retains the title of teacher only may focus on
developing the skills and thinking of youth performers first and only. They may use theatre and
productions as a means of educating, but in the end, their works and aims are primarily
educational.

Second, my hope is that through this thesis it becomes clear that someone who casts and
directs youth performers is consistently juggling two hats of equal importance. Dr. Jo Beth
Gonzalez discusses this complicated duality in her text *Temporary Stages II* which was a
landmark text in my thinking and practice for this thesis. By using the term “teaching-director”, I
hope to infuse this role with meaning and consideration of how to push for greater equilibrium in
the role of serving both students and theatre productions.

**Theoretical Underpinnings**

**Thin-Slicing**

Beyond these key terms, there are also a few theoretical ideas that are important in
framing this thesis. The first of these is the concept of “thin-slicing.” The term “thin-slicing” was
coined by social psychologist Dr. Nalini Ambady who was a leading expert on nonverbal
behavior and interpersonal perception. The concept behind thin-slicing is that as human beings,
we make incredibly rapid observations and snap judgements that are effectively rapid-fire
calculations of what we infer in short interactions (Wikipedia, *Thin-Slicing*). In short, thin-slicing
is how we cast theatre as teachers, directors or teaching-directors. Ambady’s research was
expanded upon extensively in the book *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* by
Malcolm Gladwell which was deeply influential to my thinking and process. The need to parse
out precisely what factors could go into our decision making when casting stemmed from this
concept. It drove much of the thinking behind my extensive literature review and is a concept which I will refer to throughout my thesis.

Cultural Capital

What does it mean that someone is “a star” or has “natural talent?” In my practice and research, I push against the idea that a person is naturally gifted or has a star-quality that cannot be taught. I view what most would describe as talent as actually possessing another intangible but more clearly defined qualities. This is that a person might have more developed technique because they have an abundance of cultural capital. Cultural capital comes from life experience and is deeply impacted by the priorities of a person’s parents or guardians and their life experience. Cultural capital comes from our daily interactions and from special experiences that are not commonly shared experience. Cultural often gives people opportunities to get training and developed technique beyond what is what given to anyone who learns a skill in a traditional formal setting. Vocal skills such as projection, diction, and expanded singing range may be taught or developed as a person grows and has educational experience. Some may have more training than others, but skills and “talent” exists on a scale of how developed a person’s technique is.

The concept of cultural capital, which I was taught in my multicultural education courses at Brigham Young University (BYU), has to do with the ability to understand the world and communicate in a way that goes beyond technique. When we think of capital, typically we think of economic capital; dollars and cents allow us to make exchanges that we view as favorable. Cultural capital is another sociological theory that seeks to explain what factors “promote upward mobility in stratified society.” In other words, how well do I know how to act like I know what’s going on? How immersed in the society and traditions of a group am I? How do I
use knowledge, skills, and experience in my interactions with others to successfully make exchanges with other people?

Theatre is rich with legends, traditions, expectations and our own language. Everything from understanding that good wishes are meant in the phrase “break a leg” to knowing proper ways to work with a reader or accompanist in an audition fall under the umbrella of cultural capital. Just like currencies vary across nations, the cultural capital that matters in one theatre may be less important than another. At any rate, the possession or lack thereof of cultural capital deeply impacts how directors view auditioners.

A good example of this is how to behave prior to beginning an audition monologue. Imagine one auditioner who enters the room perfectly. This performer projects the proper demeanor with which one should enter the room, chooses the right spot for to stand relative to the casting table, introduces themselves or slates clearly and confidently, and makes subtle adjustments to prepared material to suit the space. These are all choices veteran actors make when auditioning. Someone who knows what to do in this way is described as professional. They know what to do and how to make the right unspoken choices. When they audition after a professional entrance, we view them as being more supremely talented for things that have little to do with technique. Our thin-slices of such a person tells us that we will not have to work hard to teach them in rehearsal because they already know so much. Thus, we view their auditions more favorably because of their abundance of cultural capital.

By contrast, a performer who delivers a great monologue without a formal slate, or who stands too close to the director may have done a great job. However, our inclination is to penalize them for their awkwardness and unorthodoxy to auditioning norms. It’s weird to have someone stand too far away or too close to the casting table. A person who says things like “I”m
so sorry, I have a cold,” is making off-putting statements before they even begin and ultimately places themselves at a disadvantage. Even if they audition perfectly from there on out, we already have begun to perceive their work as lower quality because of their lack of cultural capital. In short cultural capital enables a person to understand how to be perceived as being a higher caliber person in a given context.

In the thesis, I will explore traits that theatre literature and practitioners value when making casting decisions, particularly in my second and third chapters. Some of these traits have long been viewed as talent based, and some have thought talent to be unteachable. I intend to steer the conversation away from talent, and towards technique. I hope that when we see auditioners in educational theatre spaces behaving awkwardly because they do not know what to expect, we consider how to help them obtain the skills to acquire more of cultural capital rather than penalizing them for it.

Student-Centered Pedagogies

In order to view casting as a meaningful pedagogical practice, I spent time considering how casting could be to the benefit of the students as individuals and as a collective. Traditional casting practices in educational theatre spaces may hope that students take what they can from the part that they get just from learning skills that serve the needs of the production. I view casting as a pedagogical practice differently than casting as a production-centered practice. I think there are many components which traditionally are only considered as they benefit the director or the production, but which can be flipped to be more student-centered.

This includes how I go about assessing youth performers in auditions. It includes what guides my vision for the opportunities I give to youth performers and what roles they are put in. It also includes how I announce the auditions, and how the information gathered in the casting
process impacts the rest of the production period. I am influenced by the student-centered pedagogy of Lev Vygotsky Dr. Jo Beth Gonzalez, and Dr. Joan Lazarus. I will discuss these practitioners and their work in later chapters. Student-centered pedagogy ultimately prioritizes the needs of students first and puts considerations of production value, audience expectation, and directorial interest second. Through the coming chapters, I explore ways that casting is and is not student-centered, including choices that may break with casting norms and reach towards creative casting choices that provide opportunities that will challenge youth performers and foster growth.

What it does not mean, however, is that casting should be innovative for the sake of being innovative. It does not mean or setting a youth performer up for failure by placing them in a role they cannot realistically perform or in a role so easy and unnuanced as to not challenge them. A production that flops, an audience that is alienated, or a director who cannot create a cohesive ensemble learning experience through a production may not be serving the educational needs of the youth performers. Casting as a student-centered pedagogical practice is not about art for art’s sake as much as it is about art for the learner’s sake. In the thesis, I seek to explore ways to think about how to make the traditionally production-focused practice of casting into a more student-centered process.

**Stakes of Casting**

A professional director will nearly always default to selecting who the best actor is for the production. Does casting this actor represent a social statement? Does this actor bring something dynamic to the role that may yet have been unseen? What is the type of this character, and which actor fits that type best? Does this actor draw a strong audience and attention to the production through their branding and, yes, cultural capital? A professional director asks, what
can cast this actor do for the production? The danger of casting youth performers in an educational theatre space using this template is that we create chasms of cultural capital and opportunity which do not help those with the least access to training to succeed in our theatre spaces or theatre spaces of the future.

Yet, if I choose to think like a teaching-director, what happens in the casting room when I seek to place the educational needs and objectives as the first priority and the needs of the production second? A teaching-director might instead ask, what will this youth performer learn in this role? Does this role provide the youth performer a chance to learn something they may not learn in another context? How does this production provide opportunities for a youth performer that is distinctly different than their previous experiences? Am I type-casting this youth performer, or am I enriching them with new cultural capital by teaching them to play a part outside themselves?

Significantly, if a casting is to be a student-centered pedagogical practice, the values and interests of youth performers and other stakeholders must be considered. Youth performers often tie social status and perception of their own skills and abilities to the roles they are cast in. Participation in productions and being cast can be part of a youth performer’s journey into the arts or into another field based on their experiences. How can challenging long-held ideas about casting impact students positively? What needs to change about the experience to have youth performers embrace being cast in non-traditional ways?

Further, how do we ask audiences to view the final product if we are casting with the educational goals of youth performers as the first consideration instead of matching production values? Some people already view educational theatre as a lower quality production, and intentionally making casting choices that might not serve the production first may alienate
audiences. This is especially true if parents or other stakeholders view their children as stars and are displeased with a casting decision that does not highlight those already endowed with greater access to technique development and cultural capital. In asking any question about changing casting norms, it is important to ask how you are communicating that vision to the producers, the audience and to the community.

Ultimately, I believe it would not be in the best interest of the students to entirely ignore the needs of the production, as students benefit from being part of work that they can be proud of. After all, actors thin-slice as well. Anyone who has ever gone to read a cast list can probably recall how they thought the cast list might have come together, as opposed to how it really went. Instead, it is useful to consider how we can make productions that cast in student-centered ways while still delivering quality experiences. Can we slow the thin-slicing process down and in so doing make casting choices that more intentionally serve the needs of students involved in the production? Can we find ways to place students in roles that will push them to develop theatre skills and even stretch through social learning? If we do, how does a production thrive when a teaching-director makes what might be perceived as unorthodox casting choices?

Limitations and Delimitations

With a pair of topics as expansive as casting and educational theatre, there is truly more to discuss than could realistically fit in a single thesis. As such, there are places where I lack the tools to explore the question fully. There are also topics that are closely connected to the thesis that I have willfully abstained from in much of my discussion.

Limitations

Part of my limitation stems from who I am as a person. In this thesis, I discuss highly-charged issues surrounding race, gender identity, age, ability and so forth as factors in casting
decisions. It is important to note that I am a white, male, heterosexual, married, father of three. I am a licensed teacher which adds some credibility to my discussions of pedagogy, learning objectives, and so forth. However, I am not an expert in topics I discuss such as sociology, neurodivergence, statistical analysis and so forth. I have sought to better understand these topics through my research but must own my limitations in understanding these fields.

I also would note that the subjective and personal nature of casting is something that many people who I hoped to learn from in this process declined to discuss. At other times, people had candid discussions but sought to not be singled out for experiences or comments they shared which informed my practice. My network of practitioners I drew from surely influenced my process, and while I think my qualitative research is sound and useful, it is hardly comprehensive. Given how many gaps there are in this literature, I know much more research must be conducted on this topic.

One other important limitation to this thesis is the issues in the process of the practical component in chapter four. The first issue is that the practical component was completed prior to the rest of the qualitative research. My thinking through that process was limited to what I knew and the earliest stages of my reading and research, and as such does not reflect some of the terminology and considerations developed in the preceding chapters and the concluding chapter. Second, the process itself was compromised by factors beyond my control that I detail at length in the chapter. These were not insurmountable and highlighted important factors relevant to my thinking about casting but led to suboptimal practice as research.

Delimitations

One of the first areas that I have opted to not examine in this thesis is audition practices. While we may be able to thin-slice effectively in a number of situations, audition practices vary
greatly. Auditions can be impacted by how many people are behind the casting table, what is expected of auditions in the process, and other constraints and limitations of auditions. I make practices relevant to my thesis, but do not explore the implications of how changes in audition practices could impact casting observations or decisions.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Casting earns a subheading of a chapter in a vast number of texts on the practice of directing, producing and otherwise making theatre. While the ways this topic is addressed is woven through many narratives and instructional texts, there is not at this time, to my knowledge, a text that is centered entirely on the topic of casting. In my research, I learned that Princeton scholar Brian Herrera is working on a text about the material practices of casting in US performances called *Next!: A Brief History of Casting*. Otherwise, I know of no extensive history of casting, or text devoted to casting practices. Moreover, this thesis is one of the first texts devoted specifically and singularly to casting youth performers. The thesis seeks to piece together a discussion of a topic without a centralized body of text in a field that has much to be navigated.

This literature review explores books, scholarly articles and texts, public sources such as news and public cast lists as well as online sources including pop culture websites. In order to explore casting, it is important to consider significant discussions around public casting decisions. Texts regarding tertiary ideas such as auditioning practices, non-theatrical pedagogical topics, and well-known issues of casting were reviewed as well. I begin with sources that discuss overarching views of casting as a practice. From there, I explore various casting criteria in the literature and universal topics in casting. I then narrow the scope to challenges specific to casting in educational theatre and discussions about student-centered pedagogy in theatre.

Casting Descriptions and Impact

“Casting is a decision-making process akin to walking a tightrope. It is an axiom if not a cliché that casting may account for 80 percent, 90 percent or even 99 percent of the production's
ultimate quality. A mistake can hamper a production irreversibly, but an inspired insight can elevate the show to unexpected heights” (Catron and Shattuck, 159). This notion is expressed repeatedly in literature and practice. The importance of understanding what goes into such a decision cannot be understated.

Teaching-directors in training have long looked to books that teach how to direct as a universal practice. Many more recent articles that are written respond to these texts as pedagogy evolves and we adapt to the realities of teaching and practicing the arts in the twenty-first century. One important article in the literature is written by Princeton’s Dr. Brian Eugenio Herrera. His work “There is Power in Casting” is a poignant open letter to all directors of youth performers. In the text, he points to the influence teaching-directors wield through their casting. The act of casting creates the narrative of the stories we tell has a profound impact upon the young people in our stewardship. Herrera highlights the leverage a director has over their youth performers by stating, “Your directorial privilege to cast—to allow one actor and not another to pass through the creative checkpoint of the casting apparatus—is formidable” (146).

His invitation to all practitioners is to, “undertake a critical, ethical interrogation of your personal philosophy as to how you wish to exert your directorial privilege in casting” (147). He further begins to unpack some of the key casting criteria that directors have relied upon for generations and have stated in their own texts as being critical guidelines to casting. One term Herrera problematizes is casting based on “reliability” of youth performers. Reliability is a vague term that teaching-directors sometimes use to determine if they are willing to trust a youth performer with a role or responsibility.

This is one key example of how privilege and cultural capital are leveraged as performance criteria when casting. A youth performer may live in a single-parent home and have
unreliable transportation, but the youth showing up late to rehearsal is viewed as being “unreliable” rather than overburdened. Herrera further extends the discussion to invite directors to consider gender identity, ability/disability, cultural background and more, and especially highlights the need for community and educational theatres to consider how we use the power in our casting.

**Universal Casting Topics**

Some topics in casting are specific to educational theatre spaces. The way these spaces are funded, how their performer pools are created, and other topics make educational theatre casting unique. Other topics are going to be addressed regardless of the context. Their universality makes discussing them complex and essential to understanding what matters in casting situations. This section explores many of these issues and the conversations being had in literature surrounding them.

**Type Casting**

The question of typecasting is of ancient origin, relating back to the topic mimesis, or the act of resembling. Should a performer be required to be in some way representative of the character they play on stage? Is it in the artistic or practical best interest of players or performances to do so? Peterson and O’Connor suggest that type is the starting point of casting.

You usually start by narrowing to those who are physically right for the various roles. But occasionally casting the opposite way ("against type") can yield fascinating results. Sometimes the little guy can be a much more frightening villain than the big guy. Or the lanky cutup will reveal a tender side that's marvelous for the strong hero (Peterson and O’Connor, 109).
McCaslin states that “The director is obligated to do a certain amount of typecasting.” In part, this is because she believes, “To cast for any reason other than theatrical effectiveness is a questionable practice” (311). Part of this is due to the fact that the art of playwriting is in creating characters a certain way.

Many characters are designed to evoke a specific emotional response in the audience. The success of the production depends on casting performers capable of awakening those emotions. To illustrate this point, imagine a Fiddler on the Roof starring an unlovable Tevye or an Othello in which Iago is perceived as a more virtuous person that Othello or Desdemona, a Glass Menagerie with a Laura who evokes no sympathy, or a Doll’s House whose Nora is so irritating the audience silently prays for her to fail in anything she attempts (160).

While some developing some of the attributes may be the product of character study and acting or directing skill, it can be easy to associate characters with physical attributes that make up their given type.

**Race**

Once typecasting gets to be specific, it can be messy. One type-based topic is casting based on race. As one might expect, this is a subject of intense discussion across the board. An incredibly valuable recent addition to the literature of directing is Louis E. Catron and Scott Shattuck’s *The Director’s Vision: Play Direction from Analysis to Production*. In the text, the talk about the state of this issue in modern casting as follows:

The question of ethnicity has evolved rapidly in recent decades on the American stage. When ethnicity is an issue in a play's plot and theme there is no room for variation; a white actor playing Troy in August Wilson's *Fences* would be both ridiculous and deeply
offensive. When ethnicity is not integral to the play, directors now have a wider range of
performers to choose from than ever before in an effort to approach "perfect casting;'
audiences are thrilled to see an actor as justly acclaimed as Denzel Washington play
Brutus, as he did some years ago in a fine production of Julius Caesar on Broadway
(Catron and Shattuck, 168).

A cursory look at the major Broadway and film casts of the recent past reveals that
narratives regarding race, representation, and the way characters may be cast are shifting.
Characters that have been made famous while portrayed as white such as Ariel in Disney’s The
Little Mermaid and Hermione Granger of Harry Potter and the Cursed Child are being portrayed
by Halle Baily and Noma Dumezweni who are both women of color. On stage Hamilton’s west
end director Thomas Kail made it clear that casting that, “there was ‘no question’ multiracial
casting would be at the core” of the production, saying, “We are very conscious of what we are
doing here. This is not colour-blind casting. It felt essential” (The Guardian).

In the professional realm, this is not only possible given the pool of actors, it is socially
necessary to have a theatre that reflects society. In the text The Theatre of Teaching and the
Lessons of Theatre by Domnica Radulescu and Maria Stadter Fox, this issue in the realm of
educational theatre is problematized in an essay within the text by C. Henrik Borgstrom. He
posits the following:

One of the most prickly questions that comes up in staging sub-Saharan African or
Caribbean theatre in the United States is, of course, that race-specific casting. Unless one
is working in a school with a significant number of African-American students, the
possibilities of producing a play by a black African author with an entirely black cast are
slim. The idea is, of course, that race-specific casting will make the production of a play
by an African author "look more African." Such an attitude leads to nothing more than the detrimental reinforcement of racial Othering.

Selecting exclusively African-American students for the principal roles of the production does not make the performance any more authentic, as the casting has been made based solely on the color of the actor's skin. Even if one happens to have in one's program international students from sub-Saharan Africa, does this mean that they should be principally featured in a play by an African author? Indeed, it is difficult at this time in the United States for race not to become a politicized issue on the stage.

American mainstream theater automatically defaults to white; therefore, a white actor on the stage is read directly as the role he or she is playing: his or her race seems invisible. A black actor, on the other hand, will almost always be read as a black person first, and as the role second. Performances that highlight a majority of actors of color tend to happen in the margins of the theatre world, usually as a response to the lack of racial representation on the Boulevard (Borgstrom, 115).

As issues of race remain in the spotlight of professional art making, the conclusions and experiences will surely impact how we consider casting in educational theatre settings. Sometimes casting according to race seems like a necessity. Sonya Baehr felt these considerations were crucial to her casting in an educational theatre production of *Ragtime*. “To produce Ragtime, a school needs to have sufficient students of color to cover extensive chorus and four solo parts. Directors must also be ready to work through the tensions that often go unrecognized, but are inevitably present, in any multi-racial community” (Baehr, 9).

Plays which seem to have racial issues at the core of their story, such as *Ragtime, Once on this Island* and *Hairspray*, make a logical place to consider the viability of producing, much
less casting, a show in an educational theatre setting where ethnic diversity within the pool of youth performers is limited. *Hairspray*’s creators penned the following open letter regarding *Hairspray* for educational theatre programs that is available on the Music Theatre International website when considering obtaining the rights for this production. The letter states the following:

Dear Audience Members,

When we, the creators of HAIRSPRAY, first started licensing the show to high-schools and community theatres, we were asked by some about using make-up in order for non-African Americans to portray the black characters in the show.

Although we comprehend that not every community around the globe has the perfectly balanced make-up (pardon the pun) of ethnicity to cast HAIRSPRAY as written, we had to, of course, forbid any use of the coloring of anyone's face (even if done respectfully and subtly) for it is still, at the end of the day, a form of blackface, which is a chapter in the story of race in America that our show is obviously against.

Yet, we also realized, to deny an actor the chance to play a role due to the color of his or her skin would be its own form of racism, albeit a "politically correct" one.

And so, if the production of HAIRSPRAY you are about to see tonight features folks whose skin color doesn't match the characters (not unlike how Edna has been traditionally played by a man), we ask that you use the timeless theatrical concept of "suspension of disbelief" and allow yourself to witness the story and not the racial background (or gender) of the actors. Our show is, after all, about not judging books by their covers! If the direction and the actors are good (and they had better be!) you will still get the message loud and clear. And hopefully have a great time receiving it!

Thank You,
Marc, Scott, Mark, Tom & John (Music Theatre International).

This letter provides an open invitation to teachers and producers to mount and cast the show as they see fit based on their community needs. It is interesting to consider that all five signers of the letter are, like myself, white men. I will discuss my own experiences in casting situations regarding this topic in the fourth chapter addressing my process for developing an appropriate casting rubric for my own purposes. Suffice it to say that the considerations of race in casting are both present in the discussion of casting today and have support for a few differing approaches to the topic.

Beauty

While beauty may be in the eye of the beholder, it is also often under consideration in the casting room. When discussing casting for or against type in this way, on text posits “Where does the truth lie? In describing the sorts of actors he would like to play his roles, Bertolt Brecht specifies "potato faces" for his women” (Hodge and McLain, 310). Some modern sources have even argued in favor of preserving roles about ugly people for ugly actors. An article from the website “The Ringer” titled “We’ve had it With Beautiful Actors Pretending to be Ugly” describes many situations of subjectively attractive actors made up to play homely parts.

What about the actual ugly people? Do they not deserve those roles? And if not those roles—if not the roles of ugly people—then what roles? Because they aren’t being cast in the attractive people roles. That would be a sight. That would be real art. That would require real dedication and talent (Serrano).

While modern views on the need to cast beautiful people may differ from those of our artistic predecessors, even foundational TYA figures such as Charlotte Kay Motter stated the following in her 1984 text Theatre in High School: Planning, Teaching, Directing.
What should the director observe as he conducts tryouts? In real life, overweight girls with buck teeth DO fall in love, marry, and live happily ever after; but on the stage, Emily Webb must be physically attractive if a production of Our Town is to succeed. Although typecasting is not wise, the director must consider whether or not makeup and costume can make an actor look acceptable in his role (Motter, 143).

Casting based on beauty raises serious questions, particularly when concepts like “attractiveness” or “cuteness” are brought up with adults casting children. There is not a great deal of theatre literature regarding the adult gaze upon children, but questions about type in a hyper-sexualized society do deserve thoughtful consideration by all teaching-directors.

Body Type

Body type is another common consideration for casting. In one 1984 text, Directing Amateur Theatre, by Keith Slater, he indicates that body type must be considered because even costumes and makeup cannot:

...change height or make someone overweight look thin. Even the converse is tricky. Fat people and thin people just don't think the same way about movement because they have different needs in terms of balance, energy consumption and locomotion and so on. Thus, it's almost as difficult for a thin person to portray a fat character as it is for the fat one to play someone slim. If the part you're casting has definite needs with regards to size, think twice before you stray too far from an actor's natural build. The same thing is true to a lesser extent about height. If some character has to be tall, you can manage to create an illusion of height by casting all the other parts with small people if the option is available, but there are limits beyond which the exercise becomes ludicrous unless you have at your disposal a troupe of midgets from the local circus (Slater, 37).
In educational theatre, McCaslin discusses how “a giant must be played by a very large child; a dwarf or elf by a child who is small; other characters who may have certain specified physical characteristics by children with similar characteristics.” There are countless examples of how difficult casting can be when character relationships or stage pictures do not look right when a male student is shorter than a female one, or when other body-type expectations are not considered in casting.

**Age**

Age is a growing topic in professional theatre, particularly regarding ageism and creating opportunities for the oldest and youngest members of a population. In educational theatre, where developmental stages change rapidly, the topic has been discussed for ages. Nellie McCaslin states explicitly that while all children can experience and benefit from engaging in process drama work, production based creative drama should not include children under the age of eight as they are developmentally unprepared to perform for an audience in most cases (McCaslin, 311).

Davis and Evans open up that to the interpretation of a producing organization to set their own limits, but state that they, “endorse the CTAA [the now-defunct predecessor to AATE] suggestion that children below ten years of age should not be in formal plays; (173).” While this age threshold is usually defined for neurotypical children, the mainstreaming of non-neurotypical students and children with disabilities into educational theatre programs provides great opportunities for programs to embrace diversity of ability in youth performers.

These discussions of age also only address the age of who may *participate*, not how casting for type considers if the performer is of the playable age of a character. Views on mimesis matter when considering how one might cast according to age. When casting, it is often
noteworthy to consider if a performer is the playable age of a part. In an educational theatre where there may be no actors within the playable age of any character, these questions are further complicated, and are perhaps deserving of more exposure in the literature.

**Ability and Able Bodies**

Joan Lazarus’s *Signs of Change* features a chapter entitled “Socially Responsible Practice” that ought to be required reading for any teaching-director to work with youth performers. The chapter addresses issues of race, language, culture, gender, sexual-orientation, privilege and other social issues that impact casting and theatre in numerous ways that I wish I could cite extensively. Instead, I would like to highlight as a prime example of relatively limited literature around being able-bodied in casting a few examples that Lazarus shares from the field of theatre teachers. In one instance, a director had a youth performer that she found a way to cast that would be within her scope of abilities with limited accommodation. Another director cast a hard of hearing actress as one of the witches in *Macbeth* who then taught the other witches key phrases in ASL to use when performing (Lazarus, 260).

One practitioner Lazarus gives a platform to states, “To draw out each student’s strengths, Tal Gribbons (2010) pairs students - a student with low vision or a student with Asperger’s syndrome - with students who are capable and comfortable accommodating to their partner’s needs. Tal had a shy student with “a profound speech [disorder]” who he insisted audition for an advanced class because he “knew she was smart and capable.” After voice and diction work alongside other class members, she performed a monologue in a recent production and was “amazing!” This student is now a leader and is more involved with school and other students (Gribbons 2010)” (Lazarus, 237). In a world of ADA guidelines, extra resources for
teachers, and practical examples such as these, finding ways to cast youth performers is increasingly practical and important.

**Sex and Gender**

Similarly, sex and gender are issues of casting more pertinent to a twenty-first century director than perhaps at any other time in human history. It was not until 1660 that Margaret Hughes, the first known woman actor, punched through the glass fourth wall and performed on an English stage (McIntosh, 2018). There are certainly more women on stage today, but the roles made available for them tends to be fewer than the number of available female youth performers to play them. Ames highlights how this discrepancy in her own program by sharing, “The competition is always stiff for the women because there are always more female actors than male actors. There are far fewer young men who audition, so more of them get cast” (51).

Peterson and O’Connor address the problem this way: “Often girls can be cast to great advantage in boys' roles” (109). They do point out that given common developmental differences between adolescents, “occasionally you just can't avoid casting a leading girl who's five feet six inches and a boy who is only five feet. Since the disparity is very common around ages eleven to thirteen you have to adjust when you're staging the show” (110). These gendered norms that tend to mirror the adult world are often of concern to directors who are casting youth performers. This does not, however, explore the hesitation of some directors to cast men in women’s roles except for comedic effect such as in productions of *Matilda, Hairspray, The Little Mermaid* or *Charlie’s Aunt*. All of this is further complicated as more and more youth are identifying as non-binary or gender-non-conforming.

The solution to the question of “How to Cast Gender Non-Conforming Kids in School Plays?” according to one author: “Ask Them” (Schlemmer 2019). Catron and Shattuck point to
the director’s vision of a production being a critical factor in interpreting these decisions. “The social conventions of the era must dictate the gender of a character called "the Doctor" for example or "The Police Officer", if the actor best qualified for the role is female. As with ethnicity, the relevance of the character’s sex to the story is surely an important guide (Catron and Shattuck, 172).

While issues of gender identity and expression, particularly among children, remain highly contentious and politicized, it will be noteworthy to consider what family researchers, medical experts, educators and artists continue to discover about this issue and how it pertains to this and other fields. There is little that is concrete in the literature related to casting gender non-conforming students at this time, but this is certainly an issue to consider going forward.

Audience Reception

Ultimately, many questions about type have to do not only with the director’s perception of actors, but with anticipated audience perception of productions. In an educational theatre space, McCaslin posits:

The audience must believe in the reality of the characters; and if they are too obviously different from the description or implications in the script, an audience cannot find them acceptable, and so the good that the experience may do them is negated by their own feelings of inadequacy (McCaslin 311).

Catron and Shattuck urge directors to ask themselves if their casting decisions will be received. “What will the audience feel about this person or that? Here you are not looking only at acting ability but also into the performer's personality, temperament, and presence” (161). They indicate that such factors may impact ticket sales or create other practical issues when casting in
a professional realm. It has been said that to make theatre, all that is required is an actor, an audience and a venue; if so, alienating the audience is certainly a factor in casting decisions.
Skills

While type considerations may be generally beyond the control of a performer, there are skills and traits which are not. These traits break up into categories of vocal and musical, movement and dance, and acting skills. There are further considerations for skills that include directability, intellectual and emotional qualities, as well as so-called “talent” which has connections to cultural capital.

Vocal and Musical Skills

Common vocal attributes include “projection” (Catron and Shattuck, 155) and diction, or asking if the actor “speak[s] clearly? Are there dropped syllables or sound substitutions? Does the actor stress the syllables, words, and phrases necessary to make sense of the text?” (157). Vocal skills also include things such as groundedness or use of breath. Vocal viewpoints from The Viewpoints Book include, “pitch”, “dynamic”, “tempo and duration”, “timbre”, “shape”, “gesture”, “acceleration/deceleration”, and the use of silence and breath” (Bogart and Landau, 106-114). Hodge and McLain discuss “hearability” that help to “declare character qualities (310).” Hearability is like the “pleasant and distinctive vocal quality” which Davis and Evans seek (Davis and Evans, 172).

Many of the skills listed above apply to actors' voices in both singing and speaking. For consideration for many musical parts, an actor is required to have a certain vocal range which is listed in the materials available for licensing some productions. Singing specific skills can also include styles such as opera, belt, pop, rock, and so forth. Many productions list the kinds of voices needed to play the parts within the show.
Dance and Movement

Catron and Shattuck indicate that specific characters such as the titular character in *Cyrano de Bergerac* or *The Elephant Man* may require actors to be able to move a certain way. To ascertain these qualities, a director may seek actors who have passing answers to the questions, “Is the performer physically free and flexible? In good control physically? Spinally aligned? Grounded? Available and willing to move as needed to express a character?” (157). Further shows that require dance and movement styles such as *Fiddler on the Roof* or *Bring It On: The Musical* may require casting actors with specific skill sets.

Intellect and Emotional Qualities

Certain attributes are difficult to articulate but are part of the thin-slicing calculus of directors. Rosenberg and Prendergast’s text on directing adult actors to perform TYA productions, *Theatre for Young People: A Sense of Occasion*, state that in their practice as TYA directors they seek actors who have,

Honesty, warmth... a sense of playfulness. You can be honest and warm, and you can be really dull, unless you have that spark of creativity. When you meet the person, you see it in their eyes. It's a creative spirit. There's playfulness and there's sparkle. But they're talking to you and they're who they are. And when you are who you are, usually, if you're a certain kind of person, you're warm (102).

Hodge and McClain indicate that some roles may require an actor who is “warm” or “cool” (311). Davis and Evans describe actors, particularly those who act for children, as needing “sincerity” and “the tangible quality we call empathy” (170). They indicate further that through objective observation directors can find actors with “vitality” (171). Such observable traits include, “The actor's bearing, facial animation and vocal projection [which] are all
indicators of the presence or absence of energy and zest” (171). Off-stage personality, which will be discussed in a later section, may influence this, but the conveyance of such emotions is considered an acting skill.

**Directability**

A trait universally sought between educational and professional theatre practitioners is flexibility or the willingness to take direction, which Motter calls, “perhaps the most important quality” (143). This trait is often unearthed in callbacks according to both Catron and Shattuck as well as Jon Jory whose text *Tips: Ideas for Directors* encourages directors to, “Give several adjustments to see how the callbacks take direction…. Try some of the most emotionally demanding scenes. If it's beyond them, don't assume rehearsal will make the difference (Jory, 12).” In advice given to actors, Ed Hooks in *The Audition Book* reminds auditioners that directors, “don't want to see a final performance in auditions. In fact, if a director thinks he or she is seeing a final performance, a frozen performance, you will likely not be cast” (Hooks, 104).

**“Talent” and Cultural Capital**

In Sir Michael Caine’s 2018 book on acting *Blowing the Bloody Doors Off: And Other Life Lessons*, he describes actors who have something that he says can only be called “star-quality” (Caine, 141). When an actor is described as ‘talented’ it may refer to having any of the skills listed above or having a certain sense of culture and theatre. The Improvisation Duo T.J. and Dave say in their text *Improvisation at the Speed of Life* that a successful performer must, “live an interesting life and share it with your stage partners” (Jagodowski, et. al., 26). These traits are linked to the idea of cultural capital -- that understanding the world helps you to be more successful in it.
Casting Practices

In order to make effective casting decisions, many casting directors utilize knowledge and collaboration to ensure high-quality casting. It can be difficult to recall everyone who appeared, and there are ways that directors have developed to recall what they have thin-sliced with greater efficacy when it comes time to make the final casting decisions.

Rubrics, Catalogs, and Coded Language

Catron and Shattuck advise ensuring that any tool used gives your focus to the performer and not to the tool itself.

Choose a note-taking method that allows you to spend most of your time looking up at the audition. If you use a computer or digital tablet instead of paper, take care to keep your use of the technology unobtrusive, avoiding distraction from clattering keyboards and the like. Your notes should be well organized. Develop a form that allows you to make quick entries, perhaps using a chart or spreadsheet with the categories listed above, or something similar, so you do not have to spend a great deal of time writing (Catron and Shattuck, 157).

Jon Jory describes creating his own form of shorthand to do this more effectively. He will use symbols or letters to infuse meaning for traits he saw quickly. “B” can mean ‘best so far’ while a “T” might mean that an actor is a ‘good type’ for a given part. Other codes might mean “hated her”, “handles text badly”, or “seems crazy” which might be a vulnerable note to have seen by someone the director did not trust with that information. In order to ensure equitable opportunity in educational theatres, several practitioners encourage developing a “computer catalog system” (Conte and Langley, 165), or some kind of “permanent record of attendance at
tryouts and participation in production” (Davis and Evans, 190). In later chapters I will discuss casting rubrics I and others have used to ensure we are evaluating well the auditions.

**Casting Decision Makers**

The primary decision maker must also consider who can be in the room when casting decisions are made. Jory ensure that his reader is respected and can share insight on casting because, “very often, they know something you don’t” (9). Ames discusses entrusting a stage manager who can help organize scheduling conflicts (30). In educational theatre, she also encourages bringing in parents and teachers who can vouch for fairness and equity in the process of casting (34). In the professional realm, casting directors or producers may have major input in the casting process.

**Ensemble Casting**

While casting decisions may center on individual actors being placed into specific roles, actors are not evaluated in a vacuum. Catron and Shattuck discuss that when an actor lacks directability, “you may prefer to cast a cooperative team player over an actor who may be a slightly more skilled performer in isolation but will not become an integral part of the ensemble” (159). They indicate this as being justification for callbacks as part of the casting process.

You seek to cast a unified group, not solo performers, so you need to look at combinations of the top candidates. For example, if you have three candidates for Juliet and two for Romeo, your decision-making process involves not only which is the best Juliet and which is the best Romeo, but also which pair will work together most effectively (153).
Certain factors of type such as “sameness” impact ensembles as well. Ames describes one situation casting a production of *The Diary of Anne Frank* where she ensemble-driven casting choices based on type.

I felt the families needed to look as realistic as possible. I wanted children to look younger than the parents, and I also wanted to assemble families that looked right together. I had a good actress, but she was especially tall and looked very German. Even if I cast her as Miep, she was too tall to fit into the picture (Ames, 33).

Ensemble casting is also one of the primary objectives of pre-casting as it is considered to be easier to find actors that fit together at the same time. Motter explains, “If you cast early, you may not be able to match people to your pre-cast character. It's about fit of pieces together” (142). The next sections will discuss precasting, double casting and using understudies.

**Precasting**

Precasting is choosing an actor for a role prior to the formal audition process. This is often viewed as problematic, particularly when such a decision is not announced during the audition process.

Casting one or more performers (usually the leading roles) before the regular audition process is called pre-casting. If this is kept secret and performers audition for roles that are not actually available, the director has participated in fraud. Pre-casting is an unethical practice unless it is announced before the auditions (Catron and Shattuck, 170).

A soft version of pre-casting is not without its proponents, however. Ames says it would be, “foolhardy to choose a play completely oblivious to the fact that you have no actors who could play the roles” (34).
**Double Casting**

Feelings about double casting are often the same. Catron and Shattuck explain double casting and the underlying issues:

Double casting means putting together two complete, or at least partially complete, casts for one production. The casts take turns performing. Some school administrators urge school directors to double cast because it allows more students to participate, but this practice presents a number of difficulties and few if any artistic or educational advantages. There is no point in letting more people perform in a production if it becomes a disaster because neither cast is adequately prepared (Catron and Shattuck, 171).

David M. Conte and Stephen Langley’s thick volume *Theatre Management: Producing and Managing the Performing Arts* responds to some of these concerns, particularly as they relate to casting in an educational setting.

Double or alternate casting can substantially increase the number of acting roles available to students. Of course, directing two casts for the same production is difficult and time consuming, costuming is more expensive and time consuming, and so on. But some educators feel that the advantages of alternate casts performing on alternate nights far outweigh the disadvantages.

Another valuable educational technique is to switch the roles that actors in the same cast are to perform, to give them experience in different roles on different nights. While such policies may bring about somewhat uneven or inconsistent performances, the actors’ development must be considered at least as important as the audiences' reactions. Most campus audiences, even when they pay admission, understand this (166).
While Conte and Langley’s statements particularly pertain to college and university settings, their insight is still impactful in all educational theatre spaces. In the conclusion of this thesis, I will address further the ideas of considering the actor’s view of their own experience and managing audience expectations when considering the ramifications of casting as a pedagogical practice.

Just as Herrera urges directors of youth to consider their obligations to their performers, these admonitions surely apply to students in university programs where fledgling professionals invest in the program they select. In turn school administrators set thresholds for admittance that ought to lead them to consider how their casting choices impact their students.

Understudies

Dr. John Newman’s article “The Show Must Go On” highlights practical realities underscoring the need to consider understudies and strategies for using them in educational theatre. For actors one strategy is to have a traditional understudy assignment that requires an actor to prepare for a role just as the lead actor does. Other strategies include utilizing audio prompters and utilizing mini-scripts as backups that actors can hold. Newman also discusses preparing with backup props, understudy technicians, and designated troubleshooters that give students a wider range of roles and responsibilities in an effort to be more inclusive in practice (Newman, The Show Must Go On, 12). These practical considerations seem useful for any theatre, much more so a theatre that trades free labor from actors and technicians for educational opportunities.

Even so, resistance to using understudies or double casts within educational theatre settings is high. Ames empathizes with the desire to utilize understudies but concludes that she has “never been a fan of understudies” (35). She lists inter-cast rivalry, actor and cast cohesion,
under preparation of the understudies, and uncertainty of actor status as factors for her distaste for using them and stated that if an incident occurred in which she would need one, she would rather, “choose an understudy when necessary than having one form the start, even if the replacement had to use a script during the performance” (35). Catron and Shattuck echo many of these concerns, and state that in educational theatre settings, “it is probably best to forget about casting understudies and focus on working with the regular performers” (170).

Final Overarching Considerations

There are many ways to consider what is most important to the story that is being told. As has been discussed, the possibilities for evaluation of performers, construction of casts, and variables that can be addressed in the rehearsal setting are incredibly nuanced. The next section seeks to explore more of the conversation surrounding the obligations of those tasked with casting and what to do when casting has been decided upon.

Ethics of Casting

While Catron and Shattuck decry practices such as precasting as being fraudulent, Jon Jory devotes pages of his text to the ethics which include expectations for directors to be punctual, polite and professional (Jory, 4). Brian Herrera invites directors to “to reflect critically and ethically on how you plan to use casting as a tool in building your production or your program” (Herrera, 146). While these practices are tied to what a director ought to do and be, Davis and Evans encourage programs on the whole to practice good ethics in their vision for casting in educational theatre environments. “No ethical children's theatre wants to build a star system, and most organizations try to give opportunities to as many children as possible” (190). With the power that exists to influence the entire casting process, considering ethical practice is viewed as essential in the literature.
Scheduling and Reliability

In all casting situations, schedules come into consideration when casting. Catron and Shattuck state that before getting far into casting, a director must ask about each actor, “Does the actor have any conflicts with performances? If there are any conflicts with rehearsals, are they minimal and manageable?” (157). Ames highlights this challenge in educational theatre programs by saying:

You may have students you would love to cast, but they are booked solid with other extracurricular activities. At my second school, policy dictated that all extracurricular activities would be after school instead of in the evening. Students prioritized and only joined a few activities during the year (36).

While the roots of scheduling conflicts may vary between professionals and youth performers, the impact of schedules on the ability to cast is experienced through all levels of casting. Ames continues, “…the decision has to be made whether to cast students who have conflicts. Students also work, so how do you deal with it?” (36). To engage in every opportunity, youth performers may over-commit and begin to miss rehearsals or be viewed as unreliable because of commitments of the stage.

It becomes further complicated for the “unreliable” students Herrera discusses in “There is Power in Casting. “While there is certainly a reality of youth performers in the arts who have unreliable living situations, there is little literature that discusses casting considerations for such students. Other than Margaret Johnson who states in her text The Drama Teacher’s Survival Guide: A Complete Tool Kit for Theatre Arts, “It is better to have dependability than talent that drifts in and out!” (Johnson, 61). there appears to be a noticeable gap in our literature for ways to involve these unreliable students into educational theatre programs.
Announcing the Cast List

Finalizing the casting list can be an emotional experience for those on both sides of the casting table. The literature has many descriptions of practitioners who experience both “the agony and the ecstasy” (Peterson and O'Connor, 106) of casting. Many describe the anguish of making the final decisions that ensures, “someone will be unhappy” (Ames, 33). A critical text to this thesis and understanding casting in educational settings is Dr. Jo Beth Gonzalez’s article “The Cast List” which highlights a story from her text Temporary Stages. In the text, she relates how she chose to change her practice after a particularly volatile response to publicly posting a cast list for one show in her educational theatre environment.

I announce auditions this way. At the end of the school day, students who auditioned pick up an envelope containing two items: an evaluation rubric, including hand-written comments, and a letter that identifies their specific role or states they’ve not been cast, written in an encouraging tone. The day after students receive their personal notices, I post a cast list for everyone to see. Preparing notes can take three hours or more, but for me, spending this time is well worth the effort. Student response has been positive. Actors cast in larger roles appreciate the feedback; constructive criticism about their auditions that keeps everyone oriented towards improvement. Auditions remain competitive, yet students learn that casting is difficult, and directors make decisions for multiple reasons, none of which is, ‘you’re no good” (Gonzalez, The Cast List, 30).

Opelt similarly suggests every child who auditions should receive a letter and a ticket to see the production (39). Catron and Shattuck describe, but caution strongly against, the practice of posting a “tentative cast list” that allows them to reserve the right to make changes “for a short time after rehearsals begin” (171). Ultimately, once the cast list is posted, the process is usually
complete barring unforeseen circumstances. While this is true across professional and educational theatre programs, educational theatre programs have other considerations to take as when casting.

Educational Theatre Challenges

Educational theatre models have limits to participation. In a school setting, eventually one ages out or graduates from the school and is then usually not considered for parts in the productions any further. There are also many considerations of pedagogy, legality, and practicality when considering what working with youth performers in educational theatre spaces might value.

Program Status

Peterson and O’Connor recall that they, “gave students who were graduating first choice for the leading roles, because it was their last chance. But that's up to you” (109). Regarding programs in Higher Education, casting this way being ‘up to you’ may not be the case as Conte and Langley point out. “What do faculty directors do... when academic policy requires that acting majors be cast a certain number of times each year, even to the exclusion of others who gave better auditions? ...the solution often lies in adopting a standard departmental casting policy, of making this well known to the students, and then sticking to it” (165). In either circumstance, the literature tends to view this as a secondary factor that might sway a close choice between two actors rather than a primary factor of consideration.

Opportunities and Previous Opportunity

A typical high school student may only have three or four years of possible time in an educational theatre program before they graduate. This can create circumstances where teaching-directors feel an obligation or kinship to certain students, often those aging out of a program.
Ames states, “If your sophomore is really the better actor for the part, you have to choose to cast the best actor or make concessions and give the part to the upperclassman because of seniority. Both philosophies are valid, and both offer rich opportunities for students” (33).

In an audition, it may be easier to give preference to casting someone whose work you know better as well. Catron and Shattuck dedicate several pages to helping directors navigate challenges that occur in auditions, such as an actor being “so nervous that the reading is badly affected” (155) or “physically stiff” (156), that may just be products of how difficult auditioning can be. The literature has many examples of how experience or program status are considered when making casting decisions.

Catron and Shattuck discuss that in educational theatre, an actor may be cast because they have "earned" (166) an opportunity on stage. “For example, suppose that performer A has auditioned frequently and worked backstage but has rarely or never gotten a role. If she is not clearly a lesser candidate than others, educational casting would give A the nod. She has paid her dues” (166).

Favoritism

A common topic of concern in educational theatre spaces is favoritism, perceived or otherwise. Conte and Langley advise educational theatre programs to have policies in place to create standardization in casting (165). Ames spends considerable time addressing this topic in her text, including cautions against accepting favors from parents who may expect special treatment of their youth performers (35). She does concede that given the specific interactions theatre teachers have with their students, favoritism can be hard to avoid.

If drama directors know the students really well, how can they avoid favoritism? There will always be somebody accusing you of picking your favorites. Teachers are human.
There are going to be some students we automatically like, and there will be some who drive us bonkers. The more time you spend with students on extracurricular activities, the more you get to know their quirky eccentricities, and it is hard not to develop attitudes.

The trick is to keep from showing them (Ames, 8).

Catron and Shattuck advise having clear audition practices to avoid “suggestion of favoritism” (144). If a director can prioritize “fairness” they say, actors will respond more positively” (144). “Try to avoid words or actions that could be interpreted negatively. The point is that you should not only be impartial -- that is important -- but also that you should be seen as impartial” (145).

**Educational Theatre**

Educational theatre is described in the literature as being necessarily different for many reasons. The ethical commitment of time asked of performers, the content of production materials, and the considerations when made in casting are described throughout literature as notable distinctions. Ultimately, what is discussed most often is the vision and mission of an educational theatre. Ames relates this directly to casting.

Casting is really contingent on your objective for the drama program. If your objective is solely to introduce students to theatre production, you might choose to spread the wealth around and give everyone a chance to be on stage. If you are looking to push the envelope for quality in high school theatre, casting takes a different focus (31).

Davis and Evans value first the opportunity that educational theatre gives to children. Their view is of the whole of production.

Play production should provide opportunities for children to experience the many facets of theatre in order that they may learn that it involves much more than acting -- that
actors can only function with the support of a diversified team whose contributions are all of equal significance (173).

Ultimately, a core tenant of educational theatre is that the purpose is to serve the youth performer population first. The goal is not a better financial statement, glorification of a director or producer, or individual star treatment as it might be in a professional setting.

Student-Centered Theatre Pedagogy

Finally, educational theatre serves the purpose of teaching by placing youth performers at the center of the process. Two of the most influential texts on the subjects, Dr. Jo Beth Gonzalez’s *Temporary Stages* and Dr. Joan Lazarus’ *Signs of Change*, underscore practices that make educational theatre production different from any other kind of theatre. Gonzalez’s work centers on making production democratic. She discusses how some productions enable students to cast amongst themselves, and how this delegation of responsibility opens up meaningful opportunities for students to learn in a safe environment.

Lazarus’ text is a survey of the field of theatre education. Throughout the book, scores of practitioners share personal experiences about making theatre that reaches young people by caring for their concerns first. This includes helping students to lead as Gonzalez discusses, but also explores how educational theatre stretches beyond classrooms and into communities. The text explores why modern educational theatre needs to be student-centered and is a keystone for modern dialogue on prioritizing student experience in educational theatre.
CHAPTER THREE: PRACTICES FROM THE FIELD

Introduction

The evaluation of art is a subjective practice. In educational settings where grades must be assigned to the creation of art, this subjectivity becomes even more complicated. While I might be able grade a creative writing project on technical skills such as punctuation, grammar, transitions, and so forth. In a class that is not graded on a curve, everyone *might* earn an A, but their work is evaluated on its own merits. Casting for productions in educational theatre spaces, however, is inherently the art of acting in an audition space graded on a subjective curve of the cast list. Not everyone gets the chance to be evaluated as “best” by getting a lead. It takes the complexity of subjective assessment and then begins to evaluate competitively where there can only be so many winners.

Educational theatre settings do not eliminate the reality that casting requires teaching directors to make permanent decisions quickly that will immediately be available for the scrutiny of all involved in the audition process. In my second chapter, I explored Dr. Jo Beth Gonzalez’s article *The Cast List*, in which she describes a rather volatile response to the posting of a cast list (Gonzalez, *The Cast List*, 30). Mindful directors take careful measures to ensure that the tender feelings and egos of the actors are cared for in the process of casting. Doing so makes the theatre the safe space it needs to be and in turn makes casting at all possible.

In the previous chapter I explored many of the theories and criteria that directors consider when casting. I sought to understand what teaching-directors are taught in literature. I hoped to unpack what experts in the field find to be meaningful to put down in writing for consideration when casting. Through this chapter I branch into the practical tools theatre practitioners use in casting rooms.
Chapter Breakdown

The writing of this thesis has enabled me to penetrate some of the most vulnerable and delicate of casting spaces. This chapter of my thesis will be divided into three distinct sections. First, I will reflect on my own experiences in casting rooms as both an actor and a director. I will describe how my interactions with several directors have led me to seeing varying priorities across theatre spaces. These reflections will be expanded further in my fourth chapter describing my casting of *101 Dalmatians KIDS!* at ARIEL Theatrical.

The second section will be an analysis of casting tools that I have obtained through the process of developing this thesis. These casting tools essentially consist of three things. The first is casting or performance evaluation rubrics that are made publicly available through organizations that adjudicate youth performers or other online sources. A casting rubric essentially serves as an assessment tool for a director to write scores and make notes about an actor during auditions; examples of which are available in Appendix H of this thesis. The second is a collection of casting rubrics that I obtained through reaching out to my network of theatre educators and TYA/USA member theatre organizations who have programs like the Orlando REP’s Youth Academy. The third part is other tools that have been shared with me for the purposes of casting. Some of these will be made available to reference in Appendices A-E at the back of this thesis.

The third section will consist of a set of reflections about casting I have had with people who cast in the process of doing this thesis. This includes a wide swath of teachers, directors and teaching-directors who have shared with me personal experiences with casting. Some of these are recent, some are not. Some are in educational theatre spaces and others are not. All of them
highlight challenges involved with casting that are part of the authentic practice of artists seeking to make theatre work in complicated spaces.

Privacy

Owing to the privacy and sensitivity of the material shared with me, none of the material in this chapter will be cited or attributed to anyone. I will also use as little specific context as I can when illustrating points. While some artists have given me explicit permission to share emails, quotes, and ideas, in order to protect all the information shared, I will not make specific reference to anyone who shared information with me. With that said, I do not share any of the information in this chapter without the express permission of the people who shared these stories with me, and they are, to the best of my knowledge, true to real life experiences. The pool of people I reached out to include artistic and education directors of TYA companies, university professors, secondary teachers, and others who have directed in a myriad of contexts.

My Experiences with Casting

The first time I ever had the chance to play a leading character was in tenth grade. I knew next to nothing about the musical that my drama teacher had selected for our spring musical, and while I was pleased with how my improvisation went in my audition, I was later unsure what it revealed to the teaching-directors beyond my ability to be loud and humorous. Being cast in this part gave me the chance to experience the lights going up on just me as I sang the opening line of the musical *Once on This Island* as the character of TonTon Julian.

My school was a charter school in Spanish Fork, UT that would graduate seventeen seniors that year. Southern Utah County, being something other than a bastion of diversity at the time, did not provide the teaching-directors much in the way of authentic casting for this show. My character was a robust, elderly, black, French Haitian who had experienced infertility. I was
a slender, sixteen-year old, white American who had not had my first kiss. In terms of type, I could not be much further from the part.

I wondered years later if I had somehow been part of cultural appropriation by playing that part. In chapter 2, the argument was proposed that a white actor on stage defaults to white -- but what of the context when my character speaks and sings that I am not? Clearly the producers of *Hairspray* felt differently with their letter. Having not been in the audience, I may never know how my acting was conveyed. I do know what the part meant for me as an actor, however.

What I gained from playing TonTon was priceless. I had to experience firsthand the process of thinking what it would be like to find a child and lose them. Playing that part gave me a love of the story of *Once on This Island* and TonTon. It made me ask what the story was about, and how to grapple with narratives I did not live. My role put me in the shoes of being a minority and being turned away and spit upon, literally, because of my race. I had to lead, think, and act in the role of someone whose experience was unlike any part of my life. Even if my teaching-directors refined my skills through the rehearsal process enough to make me Broadway bound, a socially aware professional theatre with a deep pool of diverse actors will likely never select me to play that part again.

In another experience, as part of a casting team, I watched a youth performer slate who exuded a level of awkwardness that felt palpable. She made no eye contact, tripped badly over her words, and seemed doomed to have a poor performance in her monologue. Yet, she snapped into character in a way that surprised everyone in the room. I have often heard it said that you are auditioning from the moment you walk in the room, but the contrast was so stark in this case! Clearly what this performer needed was some coaching through the slate and an understanding of
the expectations of an audition room -- she needed cultural capital. Could this be taught during the audition or rehearsal process in an educational theatre space?

During one casting experience, the creative team was stuck on a choice of three actresses for the two leading female parts. It seemed as if one talented actress could play either role well, but her skills did not complement the other actresses well. On the other hand, each of the other actresses had skill sets that were only suitable for one of the other parts. In the end, the actress who was likely the most versatile was left out in favor of two others who matched the type of the characters better. One of the leads was a singer, and the actress chosen had little theatre experience but extensive vocal training. The other lead required characterized movement and dancing, but less rigorous singing and was given to the actress with the strongest dance skills. It made me wonder what would have happened if the roles had been reversed, and we had sought to cast youth performers who would be stretched to utilize their skills to bring new traits to a character that was written to be fairly single-trait dominant.

In other settings, I have been asked as an adult to play minor characters in educational theatre spaces alongside youth performers. Typically, these roles have been the parts of elder statesmen, and my requirements for rehearsal attendance were relatively limited. I was profusely and kindly thanked by the directors who cast me in these parts for what I brought to the process. Since engaging in this thesis work, I have wondered more what exactly that is. I am not at this point in my career an artist of such note that playing alongside me would bring credibility to a production that lacked it. I was asked to do less in rehearsals, not model more rigorous habits. Further, I was taking performance opportunities from youth performers in the dedicated pool of the educational theatre spaces.
Upon reflection, I would likely defer on the acceptance of such parts again. The youth in these productions would be more benefited by having the opportunities to play roles themselves and perhaps have me or someone like me mentor them. I could talk to them about the kinds of cultural capital experiences they may not understand such as being a parent, getting married, obtaining higher education or dealing with adult challenges and circumstances. If educational theatre casting is a pedagogical practice, it should stand to reason that parts should be given to those we intend to teach.

Finally, in a recent instance, I was brought in to cast a show at a private school alongside two other working professionals. The director hired us to be impartial judges to a casting process that featured youth performers who we had not met, but some of whom were working professionally. This was an opportunity for me to work in a new space and be paid well for my time doing practical research for this thesis. We were instructed that the casting should represent a professional model in that we were to cast the actors who we thought would do the best work in the best parts and fill in the rest of the actors from there. We were told, however, that our notes would be shared with the actors as feedback for their work and justification for the casting.

In this instance, unlike all others described in this section, I was given a casting rubric to evaluate on. The rubric included with a four-point scale to evaluate acting, singing and dancing. The auditions featured youth performers sharing prepared monologues and 16 to 32 bars of music. There was no dance portion, however, so we changed the dance score to a characterization score. One of the challenges in evaluating was that we were all evaluating on a Google Sheet which allowed us to see one another’s notes in real time. When I reviewed the notes for this chapter, I noticed there was little standard deviation in our scores, and we became more homogenous as auditions went on. Of the 107 times my colleagues and I input a score, we
only deviated by a point or more four times. We did have a few .5-point deviations, but those diminished with time.

I did not think much of it at the time, but with further reflection I have felt that I ceased seeking to evaluate according to my own perceptions. I felt uncomfortable at the time with someone seeing me evaluate much higher or lower than them with so few participants. There was only a baker's dozen of auditioners, so casting became a creative mix of casting actors in multiple parts and ensuring that we came to a consensus on these parts. With our scores being so similar, it seemed as though once one idea was proposed, it was difficult to dispute the idea. There were only so many combinations that would make sense in terms of the practical demands of the characters such as vocal range and gender that the casting fell into place easily once one or two parts were set.

This experience made me wonder about the section in chapter two about who is invited into the casting-room. I believe the value of impartiality was needed in this space. I learned only after casting that certain auditioners had had meaningful professional work, and I wondered if casting with impartial judges allowed for justification of casting with such a small cast. As Dr. John Newman has pointed out in his article “Welcome to Our Theatre: What Guest Directors Can Do for You,” having outside eyes helps in any circumstance as do some of the practitioners from chapter two. Most of my experience in casting has been as an outsider, and I wonder how my perceptions may shift when casting in one place for an extended period.

There’s much to think about regarding the use of technology in the casting space. When I could see notes in real time, I found myself pausing to see what other judges input rather than trusting my own thin-slicing of the experience. I did not want to be overly critical or positive next to two practitioners whose credentials I respected. Later conversations revealed my
colleagues both felt the same. Perhaps having a digital, but private, way to record scores may have gone further towards authentic evaluation.

One last casting experience centers on an email exchange. I was asked by the teaching-director to submit a full cast list from which she would adjust based on her own cast list. This was quite the opposite of the previous experience. Being new to casting in this space, there was much to consider that was unknown to me. When I received feedback about my proposed cast list, there were given three key responses that helped us negotiate casting more clearly.

The first was that I was not utilizing many of the youth performers who were senior girls when there were many of them to be cast in what would be their last show at the school. This teaching-director liked to grant opportunities to those who were entering their last year in the program. The second was that several of the parts I had cast youth performers in were nearly identical types to those they had played previously. The question was if we could find ways to push the performers to stretch their abilities by playing a new subset of character. The third was that, while not a deal-breaking consideration, the show was to be double cast due to the number of youth performers and the relatively small cast. Ideally, youth performers of similar size who could fit into the same costume would be cast in the same roles in each cast. Thus, if, say, Steve, DeMarcus and Pedro were all under consideration for the role of Hamlet, but only Steve and Pedro were similar build, could we cast them as Hamlet to not have to procure more distinct costumes?

Each of these are valid practical considerations for casting. They speak to the reality that when casting an educational theatre show it is not as simple as picking the right people for the part. We must consider if or when we will get to work with these people again, and what our mutual goals are for involvement. It speaks to the practical reality of resources being limited and
needing to consider this when casting in educational productions. It also speaks to a teaching-director who looks not only at this show, but her whole season, and possibly even further out than that. I wonder what it would mean for us to consider casting in the context of all the available shows for a youth performer, and not just the one we are casting for today.

**Professional Casting Materials**

Appendices A-E include several notable rubrics that have been given me for consideration in my thesis. These are solid examples of tools that many theatres use to ensure a fair and equitable casting process and have served as a major inspiration to me in my work of developing my own casting tools as I will describe in chapter four. These are shared with the permission of the companies they represent and are some of many templates that exist in literature, online, and in-house for many professional theatre companies. I wish to address briefly my process in obtaining them, and then some observations about the rubrics themselves.

When seeking to understand what is important to theatre practitioners, I wanted to see not only what is done in theory as is much of chapter two’s discussion, but what is done in practice. I reached out to any theatre practitioners with which I had a network to ask. This included licensed elementary and secondary teachers, university professors, artistic and educational directors of children’s theatres, and Facebook groups such as ATHE: Directing Focus Group and U.S. Theatre Director Resources.

Rejections of requests for materials primarily received two responses. The first was that many theatre makers do not use codified casting resources like rubrics. They feel that casting is an art that is so subjective in nature that it cannot and should not be quantified. They feel that numbers narrow casting and prefer to rely on their intuition and insights; that is to say, they thin-slice and trust their recollections of those thin-slices. The second group either took casting notes
during previous productions but had destroyed them, or they retained them for their own purposes but felt they were too subjective or private to share. In many cases, people were willing to discuss casting generally, but not specifically.

Neither of these responses surprised me very much. As an artist, one of the choicest parts of making art is being able to have a vision that is difficult to articulate until it is realized. It’s nice as an artist to just know when something is right. Further, keeping casting notes, much less sharing them, puts at risk the safety that a casting room needs in order to operate. If I can pinpoint why did or did not get cast, I may take exception to the reasoning that I had previously made peace with. Thus, the notes and tools that were shared with me are incredibly valuable.

One of the first things that struck me about many of the rubrics was how the choice to break down certain skills was determined. On some rubrics, vocal skills such as projection and diction were in a musical score, and others listed them as acting skills. Nearly all of the rubrics assessed musical scores in some way, even if it was just a place to rate “singing.” A few included some reference to pitch or tone, while others included references to vocal quality, range or characterization and so forth.

Other acting breakdowns considered skills like relationships, objectives and tactics, focus or engagement, stage presence, acting choices and blocking. Dance rubrics were often the briefest, but included traits like flexibility, skill or technique, rhythm, and speed of learning choreography. I was interested to note how many rubrics for youth performers included scores for things such as behavior, listening or professionalism. This seemed to trend more commonly with those whose work centered on theatre with youth performers whose age indicates they would probably be best served by process drama work rather than production-based work.
I was also interested by those rubrics which thin-sliced intellectual skills. The ability to take direction, understand text or subtext, and make choices as an actor were highlighted in various rubrics. It made me think about how this extends into literacy or coaching that may be available to youth performers with greater cultural capital. Some evaluations were on topics that were vague such as energy, enthusiasm, creating a reality, and realizations. In rubrics that gave clear definitions of these skills it was easier to understand this terminology.

An intriguing discovery was the range of scores we use to evaluate. Much of the time a scale ranging from one to five was used. Other systems used a scale utilizing checks, plusses and minuses with plus being “great”, a check being “good” and a minus being “poor.” In researching score ranges I discovered research by Dr. Jeff Sauro, a sigma six trained statistical analyst, who questions the efficacy of a 5-point scale. His research indicates that there are marginal benefits to using a larger scale when evaluating multiple criteria for something such as a casting rubric. The reasoning behind this is that if I only have a four-point scale for three different traits, that only gives me twelve possible outcomes of scores. If there are twenty, forty, or one-hundred youth performers audition, there might be many scores that are the same -- and that’s assuming the teaching-director would use the whole scale. I have a hard time imagining most would give many scores of three out of twelve (with twelve being the highest). One might split the difference by not using one or two, but also using something like four plus and five minus. Either way, Sauro asserts that a seven-point range might provide a clearer picture than five, and certainly than three.

Some of the rubrics were attached to audition packet materials that a youth performer might turn in like a professional actor would submit a headshot and resume. I do not know how to respond authentically to this practice other than to say that it gives a teaching-director more
information to draw from. One nuance of it, however, is that some scores ask students to self-evaluate. In some cases, this is just asking what their vocal range is. In others, it asks students to evaluate their own dancing out of the following options:

1. I am a trained dancer.
2. I’ve been known to bust a move.
3. I can move ok.
4. I have two left feet.

I wonder how much cultural capital goes into the answering of this question. It would be possible to assume that, much like practice of evaluating on the same Google Sheet as others, I might take a moment to watch others dance before asking. At any rate, there is great potential benefit to having students self-evaluate if the teaching-director has a way to match their own evaluations as well. In the same way that I might ask for a self-assessment on a classroom assignment and yet still make my own evaluation.

Nearly every casting tool or rubric had a place to make commentary. This connects well to the information I already had about casting materials. Many of us believe that while thin-slicing may involve rapid calculations of quantifiable traits, even writing numbers associated with those scores may not suffice for evaluating everything we see.

Sometimes we need to write notes to remember who the auditioner was, such as the piece they auditioned with, or the clothing they wore. At other times we do as Jon Jory suggested in chapter two and use our own codified shorthand to make assessments of auditioners in a way that does not fall within the scope of a rubric. This may be noting a character break or lack of memorization. It may be highlighting a specific moment or choice that connects to the production we are auditioning for. Whatever it is, this commentary section seems to be the most
likely section to be returned to at later stages of the audition process. It certainly has been essential for my casting practice.

My final observation is that rubrics tend to serve a specific kind of audition in a way that is difficult to articulate without examining each rubric. Some rubrics lend themselves to musical auditions due to their careful notation of singing and dancing skills. One rubric was specifically geared towards placement on a competition team for the Utah Shakespeare Festival, and highlighted attributes that would be needed to utilize Shakespearean text. Some of these tools were intended to help with placement in more than one show at a time. This represents the kind of repertory auditions that happen in a professional theatre. It also underscores the repertory nature of pulling from the consistent performer population that a school or educational program might have. These rubrics help guide youth performers to the programs, classes or productions that may be best for their current zone of proximal development.

I was impressed by the care and specificity that was consistent throughout the tools. These tools highlight the ways in which a theatre which knows its population can plan to evaluate them. A theatre that has many opportunities can listen to the wants and needs of their youth performers and guide them towards placement that will give them success. In all ways, keeping a record of these evaluations that can be kept on file allows an educational theatre space to mark the progress and growth of any youth performer. In the next chapter, I highlight ways in which I crafted my own tools for casting that enabled me to consider how I could slow down my own thin slicing, eliminate some degree of bias as I considered what cultural capital students brought to their auditions, and made adjustments to my directing through the rehearsal process as a result of my casting notes.
Conversations from the Field

In an educational theatre setting one unavoidable reality is the presence of other stakeholders beyond the teaching-director and the youth performer. Consistently, one of the issues addressed in conversations with practitioners has been how to navigate the influence of parents and guardians in the casting room. Some of these adults provide meaningful service, funding, and mentorship to productions and youth performers. Inevitably, sometimes this leads to parents feeling empowered to ask for special treatment or consideration of their youth performer. While the practitioners in the previous chapter push strongly against this practice, it is still something that one artistic director said is an issue, “all the time.”

Even when parents are not explicitly involved in the casting process or nudging the teaching-directors responsible for casting in a direction, our relationships with them enter the room. One director discussed how she tried to not factor it into her decision making, but she was aware of children in her program whose parents performed in film, regional theatre and even Broadway. When issues of performer reliability are brought up, the child of a drama teacher who attends every meeting inevitably is hard to ignore when compared to a child whose parent makes a scene, consistently brings the child late, or has had other interactions with the teaching-directors. These are factors that youth performers often cannot control as Dr. Brian Herrera addresses in *The Power of Casting* cited in chapter two. Yet, they still often matter in our casting considerations.

Sometimes the codifying of terms addresses things that we would prefer to not be discussed at all. More than once in the exploration of this thesis actors and directors brought up how they were told to their face that they were not attractive enough to play a certain part. Sometimes this happened in front of other cast members, and at other times, it was more implied
than direct. Evaluating students on the grounds of being “attractive” or “pretty” or even “cute” and “adorable” raises important questions about how the bodies of youth are perceived. In my literature review research, I searched for articles that discussed the problematic nature of the adult gaze upon an adolescent performer. In the light of recent movements such as #MeToo, this is particularly important to consider.

This conversation extends further into discussions about ability and bodies. One director discussed the difficulty of casting a someone who was new to the program and had auditioned exceptionally well. The director thought this youth performer was skilled but hadn’t worked with them before and was unsure they would be able to carry a main role. This was complicated by the fact that she was about to age out of the program and would only ever get to be in this show. The decision was made to find a meaningful supporting role for the actress.

The initial thought was to cast her as a witch. The director described the actress as “lovely” but had a mild physical defect. The director grappled with the concern that this new actress might be teased by her fellow youth performers for her physical defect if she was cast as a witch. Ultimately, the plan was to give her the part and address unkindness if it came up, which it did not. This single casting decision highlights several ways how we often, intentionally or not, ask questions about status in the program and mimesis in casting. Does what we see on stage, particularly an educational theatre stage, represent reality like the idea of mimesis suggests? Should it? What does it say when someone white, like me, plays TonTon Julian, or someone like this actor plays a witch?

One director mentioned how one of his collaborators uses the term “iceberg” on casting notes and rubrics in certain situations. The reasoning stemmed from the collaborator seeing a production of Titanic: The Musical in which the climactic moment was compromised by a cast
member whose line was “Captain, Iceberg ahead!” but whose flamboyantly effeminate diction interrupted the seriousness of the moment. Thus, “iceberg” became a coined term for a man who was perceived to not be masculine enough to play a straight male character. Is this something that we should even be evaluating in educational theatre spaces, where voices are changing, and young people are in the process of self-discovery? Is it the job of a teaching-director to make their productions have perfect representation of shifting societal ideas of normalcy?

This question becomes more nuanced when programs intend to serve certain demographics of the youth performer populations of our communities. In a conversation with one teaching-director whose program highlights the value of showing diversity of the community on stage, I asked how that mission was actualized through casting. This teaching-director explained that when casting seemed to be close to solidified, the creative team would look at a spread of the actor profiles and headshots. If the cast was determined not to be diverse enough, they would go back to the drawing board and find places where they felt certain demographics of sex, race, and so forth were underrepresented on their stages. They would consider if roles could be represented with an actor who would provide a greater vision of diverse casting. In such cases these casting factors are closer to “auditioning from the moment you walk in the room” than “evaluating your audition performance.”

At other times, the ways in which youth performers conduct themselves off-stage can impact casting. I have had discussions with directors about the challenges of casting youth performers who are dating one another. This impacts a surprisingly large age range and is more prevalent than at previous times according to several directors. Youth performer relationships exacerbate existing developmental challenges regarding personal space and focus that youth performers often exhibit. And while intimacy coaching falls outside the scope of this thesis,
youth performers who are asked to kiss each other or show physical affection on stage is its own challenge to casting.

Similarly, friend and family relationships can impact casting on the level of who can participate. In programs that do not allow all auditioners to participate, sometimes casting decisions involve the choice to include siblings who might have otherwise not been included. This enables parents and guardians to engage all their youth performers in programs that allow for carpools and other practical realities of participation in youth theatre programs. This is most prevalent at initial stages of screening auditions and is often viewed as being uncommon as a factor at the point of call backs or setting casts. The exception to this, as one director noted, is that directors are hesitant to give leads to siblings for a number or practical reasons such as perceived favoritism or staged intimacy.

Some directors have expressed conflicting thoughts about casting performers who are new to their programs but are about to age out. In one example, a director mentioned that because this might be the only opportunity for them to work with a gifted youth performer, they wanted to take a chance on someone who might be seen as a risk by others. Other times, a director would rather not cast someone in an important role, regardless of the success of their audition, owing to the uncertain nature of working with someone new.

Often our thin-slicing leads to trying to get inside the head of a youth performer. What begins as a question about a performer’s ability and willingness to take direction may lead further into analysis of student motivations or desire. Just as a play may have archetypes, narratives about where youth performers fit in hierarchies often becomes a part of the closed-door conversation of casting. We wonder if a student is a leader or a troublemaker. We question how much a student is motivated or “wants it.” Sometimes we think that a student’s off-stage
persona is an indictment of the types of characters they play on-stage. Whether that means that someone who is nice “cannot play mean” or someone who is flirtatious “would struggle to be in a serious role,” our evaluations and conversations often lend themselves to asking questions about who we believe these people are.

Ultimately, I wonder if these conversations shift the work of casting onto the actors to change their noticed behaviors, or if we as teaching-directors can push and challenge students to learn and develop new skills and mindsets through the roles that we play. When I was cast in the role of an overwhelming optimist during a time of personal angst, I found parts of who I was as a person in the roles that I play. Whatever the outcomes are of closed-door casting conversations, I hope we can be intentional in thinking about where our words land, and what impact they might have, intentionally or otherwise, on the thin-slicing we do when casting.

Conclusion

I would like to end this chapter by highlighting an exercise in thin-slicing that Malcolm Gladwell addresses in *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*. The following is the condensed version of a story told in the book as recorded in an article Gladwell wrote for Slate in 2015:

Prior to the 1980s, auditions for top orchestras were open—that is, the auditioning committee sat and watched one musician after another come in and play in front of the judges. Under this system, the overwhelming number of musicians hired by top orchestras were men—but no one thought much of this. It was simply assumed that men were better musicians. After all, what could be fairer than an open audition? And were not the members of audition committees, “experts” in their field, capable of discerning good musicians from bad musicians?
But then, for a number of reasons, orchestras in the 1980s started putting up screens in audition rooms, so that the committee could no longer see the person auditioning. And immediately—immediately! —orchestras started hiring women left and right. In fact, since the advent of screens, women have won the majority of auditions for top orchestras, meaning that now, if anything, the auditioning process supports the conclusion that women are better classical musicians than men.

Clearly what was happening before was that, in ways no one quite realized, the act of seeing a given musician play was impairing the listener’s ability to actually hear what a musician was playing. People’s feelings about women, as a group, were interfering with their ability to evaluate music (“The Biases and Delusions of Experts”).

If this could happen with the greatest practitioners in the world with a skill so technical and codified as music, why couldn’t it happen to us? While theatre may require that evaluators see the faces and bodies of the humans we are adjudicating, this story, the examples from peers, and the reluctance to share subjective responses made me question further what the “screens” are that I can put up in my own casting to eliminate my biases.

How can I ensure that youth performers are being given the fairest casting evaluation? And how can casting be a pedagogical practice that informs how the rest of the production process goes? My fourth chapter explores the dynamic of how the information from chapters two and three became synthesized into my own practice.
CHAPTER FOUR: CASTING AS PEDAGOGY IN PRACTICE

Introduction

I have always been curious about why we make the decisions we do as people. As a life-long student, artist, educator, and even as a person of faith, I am struck by how much the choices of one impact the choices of many. It may be impossible to ever fully grasp the rippling effects our choices have, but the fact that we must day to day continue to make choices and let the consequences follow has always fascinated me. With my background as a teacher, director, student, and actor, I found the curious topic of why we cast the way we do to be rich with research potential.

The first three chapters of this thesis cover a lot of ground surrounding ideas that impact casting. My first chapter highlighted some of the unique factors that make an educational theatre space a fundamentally different arena than a professional one. It also underscored ideas that have occurred to me through the writing and revising of this thesis work. The second chapter was a literature review that explored extensively the available literature about casting, and, when possible, casting youth performers in educational theatre spaces. The third chapter was an exploration of my own experiences and conversations about the messiness of casting. This fourth chapter explores the practical component of how I first sought to cast as a pedagogical practice, where challenges arose, and, significantly, what I did not know at the time.

While this is the fourth chapter of the thesis, it is not chronologically the last piece of my practice and research. Rather, it is the first major piece. The majority of my synthesizing chapters one, two, and three came in the months after I had the experiences of this chapter. Through this reflexive research of my practice and experiences, there will be situations which I highlighted as potentially problematic in the first three chapters. This messiness underscores the development I
needed to undertake and still am refining as I consider ideas and methods regarding casting as a pedagogical practice.

ARIEL Theatrical

I would like to briefly introduce the theatre company I had the opportunity to work with for the practical component of this thesis. ARIEL Theatrical is a children’s theatre in Salinas California housed in the Karen Wilson Children’s Theatre. The venue has a single, 200-seat performance theatre that hosts nine plays starring youth performers each year as well as a summer community show for its main season. ARIEL’s mission is to help young people lead principle-centered lives. Theatre is the vehicle of artistic director Gail Higginbotham who has been making theatre with young people to help them develop strong on- and off-stage character for over 30 years. She feels that the education of the program is both based in developing theatre skills and, more importantly, life skills to grow up as people of integrity and moral fiber.

During the summer, usually a pair of youth performer productions are mounted. These often consist of a three-week and a two-week day-camp style rehearsal period during the summer with a one or two weekend run of shows. Rehearsals always begin with a quote or proverb of the day that is tied to an ARIEL principle such as “I can do hard things” or “the way to get things done is to not mind who gets credit for doing them.” After the quote, there is always a discussion with the cast members about what real life applications of the quotes and principles are, and then there is a moment of stillness for the cast to reflect before rehearsals begin.

ARIEL shows are made available to youth performers ranging in age from six to eighteen, or younger if the licensing agreement does not allow for older participants. The youth performers often perform the one-act or shortened shows such as the “Jr.” and “KIDS” productions made available by MTI. Performers sing with a live piano player instead of tracks.
Technical design support includes unique set pieces, a repertory lighting plot, microphones and, of special importance, full costumes for each youth performer. The rehearsals run Monday to Friday from nine am to three pm each day with a sixty-minute lunch break to eat and play at a nearby park.

Methodology

My practical component of the thesis work grew out of my academic internship required for the Master of Fine Arts program. In the summer of 2018 Higginbotham hired me to co-direct a two-week production camp of Winnie the Pooh KIDS. I spent three weeks in June 2018 familiarizing myself with the organization, its values, and learning the educational priorities and the artistic aesthetic of their youth programs. “ARIEL Theatrical is committed to helping young people learn to lead principle-centered lives” is the mission statement of the company. After the three weeks were up, we planned to work together again the following summer when I would engage in the practical component of my thesis work.

As part of the 2019 internship, I negotiated that one of my responsibilities would be directing one of the two- or three-week summer camp productions that would feature youth performers. As director, the plan was for me to have the opportunity to have the final say in casting decisions. This would enable me to utilize the practice as research when casting youth performers in an educational setting, and after the process use reflexive practice to evaluate my experiences more analytically. I had three main objectives in the beginning of my research.

First, I wanted to cast the show in a way that focused on youth performers’ needs rather than just the needs of the shows. In my first draft of my abstract, a guiding question was “How can we cast youth performers in a way that intentionally plans for opportunities to foster growth by playing the part we cast them in?”; similar to the way in my first chapter I have discussed if
the teaching-director is prioritizing the production or the youth performers. I intended to make casting choices that I could say were determined by how I felt they could stretch the youth performers by the roles they were cast in.

Second, I needed a way to evaluate what areas a youth performer needed to grow in, so I planned to create my own casting tool. Through courses on directing and my own previous practice, I decided that I would do a character breakdown to understand what might be challenging about playing any given role. I also decided to create my own rubric. I had seen examples online, but I wanted to create a rubric that I felt would capture many traits and give me a wide scope of what I thought I could use to justify casting choices for.

Finally, one of my early goals was to recognize my own bias. Later I have come to think of this as rewarding cultural capital and casting to type. I do not think of myself as an overtly prejudiced person, but I knew from my experiences in casting rooms that if I was not careful, I may make choices that rewarded youth performers that had nothing to do with what they might learn. When I evaluated, I wanted to make notes of things that I thought might unfairly cause me to privilege actors who, for whatever reason, appealed to me more as people rather than as youth performers needing opportunity.

Zone of Proximal Development

In the early stages of writing this thesis, one of my guiding theories was Lev Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development or ZPD. The theory has many nuances as an educational theory, but its application in educational theatre had two main tenants that I thought lent themselves naturally to thinking about casting as a pedagogical practice. The first is that when considering the ability of any person in a given skill set, there are things that they can already do without assistance, there are tasks they can do with assistance from a more skilled mentor or peer, and
there are things that they cannot do until they have more development. A concrete example of this would be addition. My five-year-old son can do one- and two-digit mental addition for numbers up to approximately thirty without help or guidance. When I assist him, he is able to use the same skill up to one hundred. However, at this stage of his development, getting into three digits is something he cannot do. Even with my guidance, he makes many mistakes and often begins to guess rather than work through the problem.

This is an important consideration for casting because casting as a pedagogical practice using ZPD as a lens means that a student does not stand to benefit from playing a part that will not give them some kind of challenge and they also will not learn if they are set up for failure by being asked to do something too difficult. The aim for casting a youth performer would be to cast them in a role that would have the right amount of rigor for our short rehearsal period.

The second principle builds on the first. That is to say that in order for learning to be most successful, there should be guidance from a more capable mentor or peer. When considering casting as a pedagogical practice, this had two applications in my mind. The first is that a rehearsal process after casting is a natural ZPD model. If the goal is to hone theatrical skills towards the final assessment of a production, the teaching-director is inherently a more skilled mentor and can help guide youth performers to learning once they are cast in roles that suit them. The second is that growth may be enhanced for all participants if ensembles consist of youth performers across a range of skill levels. Having a few more skilled peers who can teach and mentor their peers in rehearsals will foster growth of skills, and the practice of teaching and mentoring would hone the craft of those more skilled peers as well. I think there may be no more valuable learning that occurs than the learning that comes when one is trying to teach and
collaborate. Applying this principle would be an important way I would view the casting of ensembles in the production.

**Preparation**

One of my first tasks was to familiarize myself with the text that I was to direct. In my early conversations with Higginbotham, we had discussed my directing *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory TYA*. I spent time leading up to the internship re-reading the original text as well as familiarizing myself with the Music Theatre International script that I was able to procure. When I arrived at ARIEL in Salinas, CA in June of 2019, I was given a packet of materials that included a script for *101 Dalmatians KIDS* that would end up being the script I was to prepare.

Fortunately for me, the script drew heavily from the 1961 Disney Film, and in regard to plot, characters and music. It did put me behind in my preparation with only three days between my arrival and the casting day. I used this time to make a character breakdown matrix which appears in Appendix F of what I knew about the characters according to the text aligned with what skills I thought performers would need to have to play the characters well. By having this tool, I began to think critically about how roles might provide proper educational rigor for youth performers who I would cast. When I made this tool, I made notations about each of the named characters, as well as each of the ensemble groupings.

**Developing Casting Tools**

“How is it possible to gather the necessary information for a sophisticated judgement in such a short time?” (Gladwell, 46).

Malcolm Gladwell posits this question in his book *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*. The answer is a psychological phenomenon coined by Dr. Nalini Ambady called,
“thin-slicing.” Thin-slicing is described as, “the ability of our unconscious to find patterns in situations and behavior based on very narrow slices of experience.” In short, this is the reason that we can cast a show at all. As I explored in my previous chapters, there is a vast array of factors that can influence why a casting decision might be made.

As mentioned previously, my timeline had not led me to much of the research on what was possible to consider when casting in June of 2019 when I came to ARIEL. In Appendix G, there is a sample of the rubric I developed for this production had eleven traits and skills which I would score on a 1-5 scale and hoped to find ways to evaluate in the audition process. After the research and practice of the thesis were completed, I developed a refined rubric found in Appendix H. These eleven were dance ability, singing range, voice acting, characterization, grasp of text, focus, experience, active listening, energy, trait matching (or type), and personal bias. At the time, I felt each of them were sufficiently self-explanatory and given that I was the director I felt that they would suffice.

ARIEL Principles as Pedagogy

While I had been at ARIEL the previous summer, I was not as well versed in the principles at the beginning of June 2019 as I was by the end of my second summer. I considered making an ARIEL principle part of the criteria of casting, particularly within ensemble groups. What I came to find was that I did not have a clear plan for how I might assess these principles in auditions. I kept in mind goals to teach the principles to specific groups through the rehearsal process, but ultimately opted to not make it a factor in my casting.

Casting

Audition day at ARIEL is a relatively quick process. The Saturday before the rehearsal period begins, a two-hour meeting is held for participants to audition and be evaluated and
parents to be given needed information. All participants arrive and have a morning meeting with a quote and moment of silence as usual. They are then divided into three groups by age with one group going to individual singing auditions, another to a group dance audition and the final group to an acting audition. Each group also had an adult volunteer assigned to help them rotate between spaces. Each group is given about twenty minutes to be evaluated and then they rotate through the rehearsal spaces to the next audition. For the final portion of the audition, the director and artistic director speak to parents about the rehearsal process, expectations for parents and participants, and so forth. At the same time, the youth performers are organized into a height line and photos are taken of the group for reference for costuming needs.

Prior to this setup the director meets with the artistic director, choreographer and music director briefly. I had hoped during this time to collaborate on a plan for casting guidelines. What I found was that each of my collaborators had a system of evaluation that they had used for years. Each used their thin slicing skills and would use a system of plusses, checks, and minuses that amounted to a 1-5 scale for a composite dance or music score. Given that my rubric at this stage effectively said the same thing, I did not push for trying to add scores that might overlap, such as characterization or focus, to their scores.

I facilitated the acting portion of the audition and engaged them in two activities. For the first activity I had the youth performers individually stand far away from me in the space and deliver an audition slate stating their name, how old they were, and something about themselves. This enabled me to check basic projection and diction skills or “voice acting” For those who struggled on their first attempt, I side-coached them to see how they would perform with direction. I made a mark on the “bias” score if the youth performer said or did something that
made me laugh or if I found myself wanting to favor them for another reason. I wanted to note my own potential for bias as I love working with those who are humorous on their own.

For the second part I had them recite couplets in various emotions and side coached them to make strong physical and vocal choices for exaggerated effect. The intent of this was to enable me to see characterization, energy and active listening skills. For example, I would have students repeat a couplet such as Dr. Suess’, “I do not like green eggs ham // I do not like them Sam-I-Am” (Seuss, 9). Once they had repeated the couplet several times to get the words correctly, I would have them say it sadly, happily, angrily, sleepily, excitedly, and as if they were confused. This allowed them to make choices, play, and to take directions.

While I did not have time during auditions to evaluate type fit or experience in real time, I knew I would have the photo height line to make evaluations about type fit for. Only eight actors would be playing human beings anyway, with thirty others being in identical dalmatian puppy costumes type was not a major consideration for most parts as will be discussed. I also knew that if needed I could access records to see which performers had been in ARIEL shows before to get a sense of theatre experience.

One of my first challenges to this was trying to ensure I was evaluating everyone by the correct name. The production was comprised of over fifty youth performers between the ages of six and seventeen, nearly forty of whom were under the age of 10. The first activity did not provide much trouble for this as I would make notes as kids did their slate and I had scores going as they practiced. The second activity where I was actively facilitating made this trickier to evaluate, and I did not have total confidence in my evaluations because of it.

I had a hard time getting a sense of who was focused or not because of two factors. First, I was facilitating the activities and due to the short span of time, one of my goals was to keep
them engaged and focused. This was so close to universally true that I never made notation of anyone lacking focus. Even if I had not kept the group moving, I was trying to make notation of my impressions while facilitating creative drama activities and could not watch those who might not be engaged other than to use side-coaching to re-engage them. I asked the adult volunteers for each group to make notes of things they saw, but I there had not been any time to formally train them to look for specific attributes and the notes I got did not reflect much nuance to what I had already made record of.

I also realized at this point that there were scores that would be difficult or impossible for me to evaluate with this group. While I could get a sense of how people learned couplets, I was not learning if they understood them. I did not have any time to have them read and thus had no score for anyone’s grasp of text. Later Higginbotham would point out that this was fine given how many of the youngest participants could not read at all as it was.

When I came together with each of my collaborators, I found that the choreographer had not made any written notes at all for me to evaluate. She had delegated to an adult volunteer who had only made a few notations and spent most of her time facilitating the activities and helping youth performers to learn the choreography. The music teacher had scores for each performer that gave a stronger sense of each individual performer’s ability, but she felt concern for the overall low achieving of the youth participants.

Ultimately, this meant that I had reliable scores for singing and voice acting. I had the tools to evaluate type fit in situations that it might matter according to the instructions in the script. I would be able to make annotation to consider previous experience to help form groups of varying skill levels. I also had made a note of any bias I might have felt but was uncertain that it mattered much for this casting exercise. I ended up with incomplete or unreliable scores for the
remaining six traits of characterization, active listening, dance ability, grasp of text, energy, and focus.

From Evaluation to Casting

I sat down after rehearsals and began to discuss casting with the casting team consisting of Gail Higginbotham, Diane Chatwin, Diana Rosett and Lia Harty; the artistic director, music director, choreographer and costume designer, respectively. In this conversation, immediately a few situations arose which began to make casting more complicated than I had originally planned.

Complication One: Pre-casting

The first of these was the report from the music director that one of the youth performers had been gloating that she had been cast in a prominent role already and therefore did not feel stress about auditions. I was disappointed immensely to find out that this was true not only for her, but for four other main characters. Several of the older youth had volunteered extensively to facilitate other shows through the year, and unbeknownst to me prior to this meeting, several of them were being rewarded with specific parts in this show. This was a blow for several reasons. First, it eliminated the possibility of those roles being cast for any pedagogically based reason. Even if they would ultimately push the youth performers, which I later recorded in my journal that I felt the roles had done, the act of me evaluating was wasted on those performers and with those roles.

Second, it had the possibility of tainting anything I said about casting to the youth performers from that point forward. How could I make any pretension to evaluating fairly when I was not evaluating at all? While we discussed as a group the possibility of revoking this and other pre-casting choices due to the violation of ARIEL principles and what I viewed as fair
treatment, the conclusion was ultimately reached that the casting decision would stand. As I would later read, pre-casting without announcement of such things is viewed as poor practice, but I did not fight for it as I lacked the theoretical background or nuanced understanding of how this show fit in the bigger picture of the programming. While I feared for cast morale, ultimately, we hoped that it would blow over in the big picture of the rehearsal process.

Complication Two: Costuming Needs

ARIEL’s model cares deeply about each child being assigned a high-quality costume that fits for each youth performer. Part of the reason the seasoned and sensible costume designer was in the casting room was to provide insight on which performers would fit into costumes. With only a two-week period, planning for costuming fitting and assignment needed to be streamlined into the rehearsal process. Thus, as I began making casting calls, sometimes I ran into times when I would see that a child was too large or small to fit into a certain costume. This had minor impact on most ensemble groups or performers but was a more important casting consideration in this venue than I had anticipated.

This was a frustrating time. I was running into unanticipated obstacles, felt uncertain of my own evaluations given the tight windows of assessment, and I was trying to make decisions about youth performers whose names I was not totally certain of, even as I referred to printed images and notes in front of me. Ultimately, my goal at this point was to put together ensemble focused casting combinations that would push the youth performers to learn and develop new skills by having interesting mixes of ability. The aim had been to finish casting Saturday, but I knew that I needed more time to process. I requested a recess and took the weekend to review my notes, the show, and the casting list with the hope to have a cohesive cast list Monday when rehearsals began.
**Double Casting**

I came away from this time with a few new ideas. The first was that I could not get hung up on the things I could not control. While pre-casting and casting based on technical needs was not what I had in mind, I had experienced them both before and still could make some decisions that I felt were creative. The second was that building good ensembles was going to be eminently important to me. I wanted to find a way to put groups together that would allow for learning and extended growth during the rehearsal process. At this point, I still viewed ZPD based ensemble groups of mixed skill groups to be an important way to naturally infuse educational opportunity into my casting.

What I came up with after further studying of the text and casting materials I had compiled was that there was a way to functionally double cast two main ensemble groups. When I discuss double casting, I refer to what Catron and Shattuck indicate in my literature review chapter. They describe double casting as, “putting together two complete, or at least partially complete, casts for one production. The casts take turns performing.” Double casting seems to spread opportunities for students and lessen the burden of performance. While it might take greater coordination by the creative team to achieve, I wondered if double casting might serve a practical educational benefit to the youth performers.

The story of *101 Dalmatians KIDS* centers on the kidnapping of many puppies. Half of these puppies appear in the home of humans Roger and Anita with their parents Pongo and Perdita. This first group was called the “family puppies.” The second group consisted of puppies who were only seen in the latter parts of the play in the antagonist’s “fur vault,” where she planned to kill the puppies to make coats out of them. The family puppies appear on stage with the fur vault puppies from the first time the vault puppies enter the stage. From that point
forward, they are all on stage the entire time together and share musical and choreography responsibilities within the production.

My thought was that it would be manageable to cast all the puppies into ensemble groups that would play both parts on alternating nights. For example, family puppy group “A” could appear in the first and last performances, and group B would perform in the second and third shows. They could spend their rehearsal time together for the most part, and their singing and choreography of each youth performer would remain static in the combined numbers. Everyone would get the chance to learn the family puppy only songs and dances, but this would not be complicated to parse out. This would allow me to not cast the most skilled puppies in one group or the other, but to mix them together to create ensembles with more skilled peers and less experienced performers who would grow more from them. The only difference in their costumes would be a dog collar which would have been easy enough to switch.

If given a longer runway between auditions and the time to post a cast list which was slated for Monday morning, this may have taken hold. As it was, I came to the idea over the weekend, and when I proposed it Monday morning this idea it was met with great consternation from the artistic director. At one point, the question was asked if I was leveraging my thesis against the good will and production needs of the organization. It was a fair question which I had asked myself as well. Was I hoping to make a creative casting choice to have a more exciting thesis?

Ultimately, I felt that double casting would have met both the goals of the performers, the organization and the production. It asked more of the organization and production than was typical to highlight the benefit to the youth, but I felt this was a fair request. While this opportunity was denied, it gave me a great chance to reflect on how our ideas of casting practice
are deeply ingrained in the culture of our schools and organizations. Sometimes these can be a beautiful part of the tapestry of the art we create and at other times they may be real impediments to student development and artistic growth. There are real logistical challenges to seeking to shift the “90% of the work a director does is casting” mantra towards creating more work before and after casting must happen. While my character groups were not as ZPD diverse as I would have hoped, we still had a strong cast with clear group goals.

Casting Decisions

All of this led to a traditional casting process. The leads were largely populated with older youth performers who had more experience and looked the part. An ARIEL aesthetic is that adults play adults and children play children. The ensemble groups had some skill mixing, but my lowest rated auditioners all ended up in the vault puppy group with the least stage time, and thus the least opportunity to learn and practice. I ultimately made a handful of casting decisions that I felt were particularly made towards what I thought the youth performers would learn, but these reflected less than twenty percent of the cast. At the time I was exceptionally frustrated and wondered if I had completed a practical component of my thesis at all.

Announcing the Cast List

Once the cast list was set, the next great challenge is relaying that information. Dr. Jo Beth Gonzalez suggests in her article *The Cast List* that writing an individual note to each youth performer is a personal and effective way to ensure that youth performers can process their part in their own way. It also serves as a practical place to share feedback that casting tools can share with youth performers. My goal had been to utilize this method which some of my undergraduate professors had spoken glowingly of in their own practice as teaching directors in secondary schools. This did not occur for two practical reasons.
The first was that casting decisions had to be re-configured into Monday. My planned ensembles were viewed as too sporadically cast and I reverted to a largely hierarchical casting model which took time to reconfigure. Given that as the director of a two-week rehearsal period that led to a fully mounted production, I did not have time to write personal letters, or even group letters to my five-character groups. The second is that I was working within the framework of a theatre company that had their own practices that were key parts of their artistic fabric. It had been a long-standing pattern at ARIEL that parts were read alphabetically to the whole group, and that youth performers were to demonstrate respect for their fellow actors by not reacting emotionally to the part they were given.

The other reason is due one of the cultural capital traditions of ARIEL that reflects some of the playful spirit of the artistic director, Gail Higginbotham. For years, the director announced the cast list in order of appearance while youth participants were asked to not react positively or negatively to their part. Once the list was read, the youth performers were given ten seconds to dramatically cry about not getting the part they wanted. Everyone involved enjoyed it immensely, and it gave an excited spirit to getting into the work of producing the play after casting was done.

Outcomes

This thesis aims to ask how casting can function as a pedagogical practice. I began with the intent to develop a useful casting too, take the time to note careful assessments, hand pick suitable parts for every performer before making final decisions, and do so without falling victim to my own biases. These objectives all pointed to asking the question of how I can cast with a mind towards student growth and learning. Rather than casting performers in roles they can already do, seeking to cast them in roles that would push them.
Frustrations

After casting was completed and we moved into the rehearsal process, I came away from casting feeling incredibly frustrated. My tools had been inefficient for my aims for three reasons. First, I did not anticipate well the amount of time I would have with each performer. I assumed more of a traditional audition process with each performer sharing a cold read or monologue while singing sixteen or thirty-two bars of music in the style of the show. I assumed I would have a few minutes with each performer, and I had barely one minute per youth performer, most of which was in groups.

Second, I had not prepared as well as is necessary to cast well. I did not study the right script until three days beforehand. I did not have a clear plan to work with my casting collaborators, which meant they did not know my aims and I did not know their considerations. We were not using the same tools to evaluate, and in the case of some, all casting notes were based on mental recall which is questionable in the best of circumstances.

Finally, while I had a general idea of what I was looking for as a theatre maker, I had not defined these things well enough. I came to realize after much more research that things I might be consciously biased towards in this demographic included youth performers that had one of three traits: previous experience given how few of them I knew, my perception that they were funny, and a response of how cute or adorable they might be. It has been said that when seeking for the best people, sometimes we fail to choose the truly best, but rather the prettiest of the best, which is not the same thing. I also did not think to break down traits like voice acting to include the hard skills of projection and diction, or how my aim for “grasp of text” was to try to cast people who would memorize quickly and not need training in conveying subtext.
Successes

That is not to say it was all bad. Through the rehearsal process and into the productions I felt the show was successful and had not suffered for seeking to match youth performers to suitable roles and not the opposite. Even in casting, I made three choices that I felt exemplified what I was looking for. The youth performer cast as the cat, Sgt. Tibbs, who helps break the puppies out of the fur vault, was someone I went to bat for due to my view that he had positive moments of characterization but lacked energy. He was panned as a poor mover and singer, but by casting him, we were able to focus on these traits in rehearsal and I noted growth at the end of the production.

Another successful match of role to performer came in the character of the nanny fitting a newcomer to the ARIEL program. She had mentioned that she had no theatre background and did not have strong characterization scores. She did, however, sing and dance at a high level and had a clear speaking voice. The choice to cast her, rather than someone who had more experience or seemed like a more natural type fit, allowed her to begin getting the experience of applying her skills. It would have been easy to overlook this opportunity to bridge a cultural capital gap by saying that her first show would be fine as one of the puppies, but I thought she both played the part well and spoke with more confidence about acting as rehearsals progressed.

One major success was trying to find a fitting role for one of the oldest performers whose neurodiversity was a major concern for the youth performer’s mother. Her son had no theatre experience, but she felt by his being in a production would help his social and cognitive skills in a meaningful way. His auditions reflected low evaluations across the board, which meant there was ample room for him to grow! I chose to cast him as the dog catcher, a character who only appears in the opening number and the last few pages to trap Cruella de Vil. The role had no
dedicated singing or dancing and only a few solo lines, but the youth performer had a strong speaking voice which made the role a good fit for his skills. The role was important because one of the character’s few lines was a moment of action that effectively brings resolution to the story. However, the traits typical with his particular neurodivergence were made evident at times as he would seek to hide during group numbers and the cast photo. His discomfort with the idea of an audience grew each day and as we got closer to performances with audiences he began to refuse to come on stage.

I worked with his mother and the creative team on solutions to encourage him to participate. Ultimately, I worked with the surrounding youth performers in the final scene on a contingency plan if he was over-stimulated and did not feel comfortable going out on stage. The youth performer playing the Police Officer would cover the crucial line and arrest all three villains herself. When we proposed this plan, he felt at ease that he had a choice in the matter. That he had begun to interpret his role as being important to the production meant he felt a great deal of pressure to perform. When we made this clarification to his understanding of his character, he was relieved. He ultimately came on for all but one performance, and his mother wept in delight at his level of participation.

One other major area of success, however, came in the public praising of growth in the youth performers. Long rehearsal days, large groups, and young youth performers led to some typical challenges in behavior. This was especially true for those many who, in the opinion of McCaslin and others, were likely too young for a production-based theatre experience. There were melt downs, incidents of biting and other demonstrative actions that showed the challenge developmentally for a process that took 30 hours a week of rehearsal.
After a string of these incidents, I went back to my casting notes and considered how I had seen growth in every individual student. I made a record of this growth and decided that it would be useful to give positive praise to the youth performers and recognize their growth as individuals within a greater whole. After our final run through before we had audiences, I took the time to praise every student by name for an area of growth I had witnessed.

For each of them, I made clear that I knew where they had grown in the two weeks we had worked together. They had developed. The youth performers were able to see not only that I was invested in their growth, but that my casting evaluations were not final judgements of their abilities at such a young age as young performers tend to feel. All casting, after all, is grading on a curve. There are only so many parts, and rarely are they given to more than one person at a time.

Reflection

My writing of these events comes long after I experienced them. To recall the events and my thoughts on them correctly, I reviewed journals, my director’s binder, my first casting rubric, and other materials gathered in the process of casting this production. In the intervening time, I have spoken to dozens of professionals in formal and informal settings about their casting experiences. I have attended several more casting sessions, read extensively, and overall gained a better grasp on what I was trying to do, and where some of my short comings truly lie. Truly, my vision of casting generally, as well as of this experience, through the doing of this thesis has shifted. I would like to point to a few places where my current reflexive practice looks differently at my experiences.

The first is that I missed an incredibly critical point of casting as a pedagogical practice until much later in the process. If casting is to be a pedagogical practice, it cannot stand alone as
an assessment. Casting feels like the end because once the cast is set, it usually takes a catastrophe to change it. Really, casting is just the beginning. The decision at the end of my process to review my casting notes and let that influence how I managed my rehearsals should have been done regularly, not just towards the end. I was not keeping in mind what I had assessed, and as such I certainly lost opportunities to be a truly teaching-director.

The second realization is that casting is mainly a product of the organization’s overall mission. I could have brought a well-refined casting rubric with a clear scoring method and a shorthand that I knew perfectly. I could have studied the script well enough to have rich insights about how every role could challenge anyone. Ultimately, however, the standard operating procedure of ARIEL dictates that auditions happen just so, and that factors of status and type are going to be major considerations. As I mentioned in my third chapter, there are high quality, social-justice-oriented professionals who are type-oriented as well because of their beliefs about mimesis and representation in casting. If representation on stage is the goal, it will impact the way that I thin-slice and may even be a tie-breaker in certain situations just as affirmative action and other types of profiling might be. These are complex and nuanced subjects! However, casting as a pedagogical practice must be part of the vision of the organization, and that must be refined to serve the organization in clearly defined ways that all stakeholders understand and accept.

Third, I do not know that I was willing to be as critical about my own bias in the beginning as I might need to be. In Ed Catmull’s book *Creativity Inc.*, the topic of candor is discussed through a whole impactfulful chapter.

People have an easier time talking about their level of candor [as opposed to honesty] because they don’t think they will be punished for admitting that they sometimes hold
their tongues. This is essential. You cannot address the obstacles to candor until people feel free to say that they exist… Of course, there are sometimes legitimate reasons not to be candid…But that’s not to say a lack of candor should be celebrated. A hallmark of healthy creative culture is that people feel free to share ideas, opinions, and criticisms. Lack of candor, if unchecked, ultimately leads to dysfunctional environments (Catmull, 86).

When I wrote bias as a factor I wanted to consider, I didn’t want to discuss some of my own tendencies to favor people, places, and traits that I’m most comfortable with. I value humor because I know if someone has humor, they will understand me when I speak and be willing to help me diffuse tension when it comes up. I have my own set of beauty standards which would surely be different than someone else’s if I were looking to cast an attractive character based on type. I also see the world through the lens of the person I am and experiences I have had, even as those shift and change. In Appendix H is a rubric that does a more thorough job of exploring areas I could be biased about, such as whether or not I default to white on characters, or if age or body composition are relevant to the story and my vision of the characters and show. I’m still grappling with my own biases which are a natural part of the art I create. I hope that in educational theatre spaces, I am not choosing my artist’s aesthetic over an educational need.

**Conclusion**

In my concluding chapter, I explore what it might like to develop a program based on the concepts I have begun to unearth in the process of developing this thesis. While I think the exercise has given me a better sense of myself as a teaching-director, I want to conclude this chapter with two final thoughts about why this concept in its entirety may not be something that would be universally adopted amongst educational theatre practitioners.
The first is that my practical experience does not demonstrate great deviation from the kinds of practices that typically happen in casting. Many practitioners use casting rubrics, whether standardized or not. Any director who does not study a typical script-based production to analyze character needs is unprepared to cast a show. I did not make radical shifts in the connected tissues that go along with casting such as audition practices, casting announcements, or even extensive follow through in the rehearsal process. Once my show was set, I mistakenly just let it be without utilizing the information I had, and I still produced quality theatre that benefitted the youth involved. I imagine in the future as I practice and research further, more noticeable distinctions in my casting, and the way I talk about casting, will show more distinctive practice, but to this point, I have merely done much of what has already been part of the oral tradition of casting.

The second reason is that the implied conclusions involve a great deal of work. One director who I spoke with about giving individual casting letters with feedback on their audition said that such a practice is tedious and impractical. Further, if I’m committed to not casting the right person for the role, I’m beginning to roll the clichéd “ninety percent of a director’s work is casting” back towards fifty or less in order to put youth performers in roles that will challenge them. It means that every casting choice carries the implied risk that they may not learn enough to succeed during the run. Numerous texts spoke about the danger of having one supposedly weak leading actor, and this seems like an invitation to have many!

Further, it includes making sure casting notes are both well thought through, clearly articulated, and shareable. I would either need to make a separate copy of my notes, eliminate sensitive thoughts from feedback, or develop a culture of such clear candor that things which may be taken hurtfully by still developing minds is deemed necessary. None of those are easily
palatable options and includes still more work when I have not given conclusive qualitative
evidence that it works to prioritize youth performer learning over production demands.

I agree that often teachers are overworked, underpaid, and highly scrutinized. I think,
however, that a student-centered approach to the work of casting would serve all parties well. If I
have taken the time to get to know the youth in my program inasmuch as is reasonable, if I have
planned an audition process that enables me to accurately assess skill, and if I have found ways
to qualify my bias towards those I have more experience with, who I like more, or who fit the
type better, I may bridge gaps of cultural capital and also enable students to chart their own
growth. I can cast and lay out expectations for on day one. If this is done, an empowered youth
performer will take ownership for their growth and rise to the occasion.

This kind of casting might shift the pedagogy of productions altogether by making the
final assessment the production and not the casting. Hierarchies might be broken down as youth
performers begin to see peers they respect in a myriad of roles, and not only as the leads. The
opportunity to receive training and thus bridge cultural capital gaps might change our
perceptions of our lowest performers and do so in an educational theatre space which makes it
still safe to fail. There may need to be extensive conversations with decision makers in the
organization, audiences, parents and other stakeholders, and with the youth performers as well. If
these conversations shifted the paradigm of what casting and productions in educational theatre
spaces are all about, the rippling effects may be incredible. After all, casting already has
immense power. Why not use it to educate?
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Herbert Spencer once said, “The great aim of education is not knowledge, but action” (Carnegie, 24). So it is with this thesis. When I began this thesis, I thought that if I understood all there was to know about casting, I could do something to improve it. In my second chapter I wrote extensively about the topics that come up in the literature that discuss casting and found that there was much that has been said on an art that has mostly been practiced and taught through oral tradition and necessity. At some point, someone decided that Thespis would have the honor of walking out on the Greek stage, and thus someone cast Thespis in the role that Aristotle made him the first actor. Since that time, whenever a play has been produced, someone somewhere has made choices that impacted casting, and often has done so without a handbook teaching them how to do what they do.

This thesis is not a handbook. It is a collection of written word, oral tradition and personal experience, and it asks the question, how can we prioritize the needs of students when making casting decisions? Out of this practice and research, I have honed and refined my own casting tool that I intend to use and continue to refine with the aim of making my continued practice of casting more student-centered than before. I hope to consistently refer to the notes I make in the casting room as a guide for my rehearsals and pedagogy through the production process. I will certainly seek to question my own bias and preferences, and even ask if we cannot change organizational patterns and structures that limit student growth potential by dictating casting decisions that do not take into account the needs of youth performers.

What I would like to address in my conclusion is a set of concepts that have been guideposts to me through the revising and honing of this thesis. These three guideposts are, first, if I were to develop an educational theatre model based on what I have learned in this thesis,
what would it look like? Why is it a meaningful break from standard practice in casting and theatre making in educational theatre settings? How do I envision it going and what are the challenges or limitations it might face?

Second, I must address what kinds of conversations come up because of addressing casting. As long as casting continues to be viewed like a season of *The Bachelor* where one person gets to make a subjective value judgement while everyone else works to play the game so they can have the glamor at the end, casting conversations will continue to be “what-ifs” without any change. If casting is to instead shift its focus, and possibly some of its power, there are conversations that need to be had. First, conversations should be had with teaching-directors who cast. What changes can or should be made? Why change at all? What happens when you do, and how do you go about doing it? Next, conversations must be had with students who are on the journey and who may feel that we are shifting the goalposts by shifting casting from a professional model. Finally, audiences, parents, and administrators will need to be kept in the loop as to why these changes are deemed valuable, and their concerns must be addressed.

### A Vision of a Program

What if I applied what I learned to the creation of an educational theatre program? In an ideal world, what be some of the big picture choices that came from seeking to view casting as a pedagogical practice? I would like to highlight a few ways in which an educational theatre program might develop if it were to view casting as a pedagogical practice.

#### Keeping Records

One of the first realizations that I came to when pondering this question is that in an educational theatre space, a show cannot be cast in a vacuum. Next month or next semester we are going to be casting another show from relatively the same pool of actors. If casting is to be a
pedagogical practice, it means that part of my decision making is the consideration I give to the opportunities I make available to the people in my program. In a professional model, I might cast an actor for many shows because I find creative ways to use their gifts, they audition well, or I know that in order to secure their talents, I need to offer them the security of parts in multiple shows. The actor may come and go at their leisure and is free to find acting opportunities that suit them. In many educational theatre settings, the opposite is true. Outside of major cities, many areas only have their school program or a local theatre or two. Even large cities with educational theatre programs housed in professional theatres tend to only have so many opportunities available and tend to draw from the same pools of youth performers.

In an ideal program, I think it would be important to follow the guidelines of Davis and Evans who suggest keeping, “A permanent record of attendance at tryouts and participation in productions” (190). The idea is that anyone who comes back is investing in the program, and deserves the chance for us to ask, “what opportunity would best serve the growth and development of this person?” I would add to that keeping a record of casting notes to mark growth and note areas that have stagnated and could be focused on as teaching points in productions or connected classes. A theatre program seeking to make casting a pedagogical practice needs to know who they are interacting with and make plans for their growth.

Season Selection

Similarly, by knowing who is involved, trends and patterns can be noticed that push not only youth performers to learn, but teaching-directors as well. A major consideration in a program seeking to cast as pedagogical practice should have wide variety in the kinds of shows they cast for. Perhaps my strengths lie in directing rock opera style musicals and tragedies. With the immense canon of style, genre, and era to pull from, I would want to consider how many
styles could be engaged with over a series of years to grant opportunities across years. Perhaps I
do a classical piece every year in fall. By rotating from comedy to tragedy and between
playwrights, or countries of origin in four years I could produce *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*,
*Fuente Ovejuna*, *The Servant of Two Masters*, and *Othello*. Even just in that range of renaissance
and neoclassical texts, I have a range of characters, styles, and stories I am telling. How much
further could you go if you dedicated a show every four years to working with puppets? What
about devised work, mixed-media, staged readings or including short play festivals of student
written work? Each of these provides a broader scope of casting opportunity and can cater to
students whose work may not fit what has traditionally fit into their pool.

Programmatic Decisions About Type Casting

My experience as TonTon Julian and the letter from the creators of *Hairspray* raises an
interesting question about type as a consideration for both season selection and casting. Spanish
Fork Utah’s demographics for its population of just under forty thousand people include a
population that is eighty-five percent white alone and another nearly eleven percent that is of
Hispanic or Latino origin (DataUSA). These demographics would make it difficult to make a
representational type-cast of *Once on This Island* or *Hairspray*. So, are these stories that should
not be told on the stages of these communities?

It’s probably fair to say that not all type-casting choices are created equal. Some
typecasting choices impact the storytelling like the characters of Trudy and Seaweed in
*Hairspray* whose girth and skin color are lyrics in songs and key plot points. Particularly where
people who are often denied parts because of their body shape, size, color or ability, it would be
prudent to consider a theatre’s population and individuals before making a firm decision about
using type casting in a show. It can be an uncomfortable decision to make.
In any event, there are two ways in which a theatre that viewed casting as a pedagogical practice might address type casting. The first is to consider asking students what roles they would be comfortable playing, and how they think they might grow as a performer playing a part that is unlike themselves. If a youth performer does not feel comfortable playing the opposite gender, a sexual orientation that they are not, being cast as another race, it might be helpful to understand those things. Conversations could be had with students about what might be learned from these parts, but even professionals have difficulty playing characters whose values do not align with their own. Actor Michael James Scott was in the original Broadway ensemble of *The Book of Mormon: The Musical* who felt so uncomfortable with the blasphemy and profanity in the song “Hasa Diga Eebowai” that he is quoted in the *Book of Mormon: The Musical: Annotated Edition* as saying “We definitely did pray before the presentation at the Vineyard -- all the Ugandans who sang the song, we got in a little circle and were like, ‘Lord, this is not how we feel. We are just acting’” (Parker 28). A professional can and must make their own choices about how they are willing to be represented on a stage. A youth performer with no other options ought to be given the opportunity to express their thoughts without losing opportunities to be cast.

Second, if any kind of typecasting is to be done, it should be made clear before auditions begin to both those casting and those auditioning. I would add that any specific factors that could tip casting such as special skills or parts that have been pre-cast should be announced in advance. In a model I would create, type would not be a tie-breaking consideration that would reward those whose physical development in high school matches a vague ideal of beauty, brawn, or characterization for parts in plays. I would be interested in rewarding skill to play the part, and not visual tropes. If I’m going to make sweeping casting choices based on type, it should be clear, and be done with a pedagogical reason in mind. I should be able to articulate what I expect
to be learned and understood by the performers by being cast based upon the way they look, and I should be able to sleep at night knowing they know.

Priorities

Another guiding principle of an educational theatre program that viewed casting as a pedagogical practice would be that it would need to ask hard questions about what is being prioritized in any decision. When casting a youth performer because there was not an available fitting costume, it would be prudent to ask if the costume takes precedence over the performer. If there is concern that a director would have to work harder to train two or more actors in the same part, the question should be asked if the extra work will benefit the performer. If the question might be asked of how a parent will respond to their “star” student playing an ensemble role, it would be wise to question if the student placed in that role is having their educational needs met and the choice can be justified. In any event, priorities for the production should not supersede priorities for the youth performer’s growth and opportunity.

Announcements

If casting is to be a pedagogical practice, the act of announcing the cast list should be intentional and pedagogical. I personally have a great appreciation for the time and value it would take to follow the model of Dr. Jo Beth Gonzalez who writes individual notes to each auditioner with feedback and an offer of a role. It was suggested to me by one of my committee members that creating a template that plugs in feedback based on certain casting rubric evaluations would expedite the process while still giving a feeling of personal response. For example, someone who scored between a four and six in projection may always be given a sentence that says, “projecting is an area you will need to continue to develop in rehearsals and
on your own before you can earn a part with many solo speaking and singing lines.” Framing the attribute with a goal will help youth performers to plan their growth based on feedback.

Other considerations may include a brief explanation of growth opportunity in the role. I might say, “all of my performers cast in ensemble group B had high marks in dancing, but I wanted to give you the opportunity to develop your singing range by being part of this challenging musical number.” Having objectives associated with the announcement will provide vision and focus for casting that may well serve the youth performers and help set goals in rehearsal for both youth performers and teaching-directors to develop certain skills.

Rubric Adjustments

Additionally, an educational theatre program that viewed casting as a pedagogical practice needs a way to assess that aligns with their program’s mission, vision, values and goals. I should know what I hope youth performers get out of the program and be able to chart that growth. I have in Appendices A-H of this thesis several solid rubric templates, as well as a current draft of the rubric I have been honing and revising. A casting tool when casting is a pedagogical practice is a rubric. I am making an assessment, and then associating a value with that assessment. The assessment should be authentic. It should take time to consider, and it should cause me to consider where my pedagogy goes next for the individual and the group of students I work with. It should also be drawn from information about the productions or courses that youth performers are auditioning for.

Each show might require a new rubric. The examples from Seattle Children’s Theatre, Syracuse High School and Diamond Fork Junior High School all highlight a focus on what might be different for this casting process than another casting process. A classical comedy requires different criteria for casting than a contemporary musical. I would suggest that an educational
theatre program ought to compile a master rubric akin to a CV; something that holds every possible criterion that might matter for their program. For traits that can continue from one to the next, it might be useful to find a way to pre-fill rubrics that consider factors of type or experience. From there, it would be useful to pull from that master rubric to create a smaller and more concise rubric for each production.

Further, a teaching-director and the casting would benefit from developing their own coded language and symbols that can be used to protect the kinds of conversations that should be kept within a casting room. Casting as a pedagogical practice does not mean having an open-door policy to allowing casting decisions to be made. Rather, it is about being intentional about what can or should be done to enhance student learning through the process of productions. Drawing from Jon Jory’s codified language or developing symbols of their own would be a useful practice to ensure that casting decision makers can evaluate with candor and still deliver meaningful evaluations to youth performers.

While it might be difficult to implement in some situations, this could even carry into helping youth performers develop portfolios that chart their growth and experiences. What an incredible thing it would be to be able to walk away from a program with goals, growth, and materials that can be used for their future auditions, interviews, and applications. By taking the time to evaluate properly when casting, and sharing those results in appropriate ways, youth performers could have a map and a habit of considering their own progress after they move on.

**Practice, Practice, Practice**

If casting is a pedagogical practice, an ideal program would create low-stakes opportunities to audition often. Some educational theatre programs already do this. Orlando REP offers a free audition workshop in the weeks leading up to their Youth Academy Auditions, and
the structure of the class teaches expectations and skills used in auditions. Music Theatre International even has play in a day set-up where there are no auditions at all, and parts are merely assigned and played. Considering what might happen by making assignments at random creates possibilities for growth and elimination of potential bias.

Events, experiences like these tend to work in a vacuum. An audition class may teach how to audition generally, and a pop-up play gives the chance to play a part. But what if a program did more mock casting to teach both professional and educational models for auditions? Could not auditions for a theoretical production of a show be used, even if the show was never produced? What if there were multiple rounds of auditions for productions to ensure that each performer was evaluated at their best, and not on what they could bring on the convened audition day. Reducing the possibility that a youth performer just had a bad day might go a long way in equalizing opportunity, and multiple auditions even matches with some of the highest levels of auditioning at the professional level.

Beyond the Program

Finally, casting as a pedagogical practice means considering what matters outside of the production as well. Somewhere in the world, the next Josh Gad, Leslie Odom Junior, Auli’i Cravalho or Alex Newell is enrolling in an educational theatre program for the upcoming year. On some occasions, you may run into a student who from day one is so consistently ahead of the curve that it would feel wrong to suppress them by not granting them every opportunity. However, I wonder in these cases if there are not ways to look towards helping such blossoming stars look beyond our programs. In baseball, there are minor leagues and major leagues, not to mention high school, college, little league and so forth. Most players who end up in the NBA have been playing in AAU tournaments and being scouted since before their voices had finished
changing. While there is no formal structuring of theatres, it would be worthwhile to say that an educational theatre program might do best by those that come through their program and excel to point them towards what comes next at the appropriate time.

Similarly, the overwhelming majority of youth performers are not going to pursue careers in the arts, or at least not as actors. An educational theatre program that truly viewed casting as a pedagogical practice might consider what foundational skills all youth performers should take into their futures because they have been involved in the educational theatre program. Would not it make sense to consider how theatre teaches collaboration, soft skills, and public speaking and plan some time to share in rehearsal how to apply those skills beyond the educational stage? If education is intended to prepare youth to enter the professional realm, we should help them forge the connections between what they are learning and doing to what they could do with this power, knowledge and cultural capital in the future.

Reality

Dr. Moses Goldberg wrote his doctoral dissertation on how child development theory should inform the kinds of plays that TYA companies present to young people. For nearly three decades as the artistic director of the Stage One Company in Louisville, he put his theory into practice. I have not done a close dissection of each season as related to his work, but my presumption is that at least once or twice in the time he was selecting seasons he had to consider a show to produce for reasons beyond the ideals he espoused to be optimal. Even in the context of a perfect program, there would be circumstances which arise that might make any of the things I suggest challenging, impractical or impossible.

I don’t presume to dictate how casting should be done. On the contrary, I feel that I’ve discovered many divergent ideas on casting rather than one convergent theory of casting. In
doing so, I simply hope that teaching-directors will be more thoughtful about the power we wield when we cast. Find what resonates in the thesis, apply it, and then if something else applies, try that too. Certainly my thesis drove my casting decisions in a certain direction. As I refine my casting tools and philosophy, I hope to continue to find ways to make productions more educational and positive experiences for all youth performers.

Conversations to Have

Viewing casting differently has vast ripple effects. If the work of a director is no longer ninety percent casting, but now rather fifty, and perhaps a more rigorous fifty, a teaching director will need to understand what is expected of them with these shifts. In my defense, I was asked how I would communicate the use of my rubric and vision to another teaching-director, the youth performers, and the audiences and other stakeholders.

Teaching-Directors

I would begin by saying that casting as a pedagogical practice means taking more time from the beginning. In order to create a casting rubric tailored to a show, they need to study the show and each part. In order to fairly assess a youth performer, it probably makes sense to see them try to take directions. If warmups are part of the process for one group of auditioners, ensure they happen for everyone. Plan for days or a week rather than an afternoon. Give each performer the amount of time you deem necessary to see what they may truly be capable of.

This also means making plans for auditions to highlight the best in youth performers. Help them to succeed. Allow them opportunities to try again, to take direction, and to feel that the audition process is not a final judgement. Casting can feel like a determination of worth. A teaching-director who views casting as a pedagogical practice sees the opportunity to develop technique, teach cultural capital, and allow for spectacular failure.
Another key consideration for teaching-directors is a willingness to stretch their vision of what is possible in casting. Would it make sense to double cast the whole cast, or part of it? Could understudies be used and rotate in like bench players in basketball game? What about casting some roles with one person, and other roles with multiple people? Could you cast a lead the way Fiona is cast in *Shrek* where there is an ogre Fiona and a human Fiona; and instead show different sides of a character by having them played by multiple people? In order to consider casting a pedagogical practice, I had invited a teaching-director to stray from orthodoxy in casting as much as licensing and text will allow.

I would also encourage the teaching-director to view auditions as the first day of rehearsal, and the rehearsal period as a unit of curriculum. One day of rehearsal, one performance or one formal assessment in a standard unit of lesson plans is not a final assessment of a student’s ability. Actors are malleable and take direction. They form characters with time. It would be valuable to refer back to casting notes and say, “when you were auditioned for this part, one of your strengths was such-and-such. In this moment in the scene, can you replicate that?” Allow time after the production to revisit rubrics and discuss growth or stagnation with performers to discuss how the next unit might enable them to grow further or what inhibited growth during this production process.

Finally, a teaching-director must recognize that as long as they have the final say on casting decisions, they are effectively gatekeepers of opportunity. Just as financial capital tends to breed more opportunity to grow financial capital, cultural capital and experience usually lead to more opportunity to grow. If we do not create opportunities for those who cannot afford or know how to obtain outside training in order to prepare for major parts or other critical experiences, where will they get them? Math classes do not give opportunities to problem solve
only to the students who can already do the work, and educational theatre should not only give opportunities to those that will make their leaders look good.

Youth Performers

Perhaps the most difficult conversation to have is with youth performers. Especially the first time casting becomes a truly pedagogical practice, there may be resistance to change. If I’m a graduating senior who nailed my audition, should not I get the “best” part? If I spent all summer working out to play Conrad Birdie or Gaston, should not that come into consideration? What if this is my “last shot?”

It is important to understand what casting means to the youth performers. There is status, social standing, cultural capital, and a sense of self at stake that all comes from seeing where one is cast. Often people begin to form ideas about themselves and their abilities based on the kinds of roles they are cast in playing. In other words, type almost becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. While some teaching-directors seek to mitigate the hierarchy that comes in casting leads and ensembles by announcing cast lists in alphabetical order, or in another non-hierarchical structure, many times youth performers thin-slice for themselves what the part they were given says about them. In order to make casting a pedagogical practice, the conversations we have about what being cast in a given role means may need to shift dramatically and with candor.

The conversation with youth performers would have to begin with helping them gain a long-term vision not only of the educational theatre program, but also for themselves. Maybe a star student has had two leads already and will learn most from an ensemble role. While it might not help their resume to be Narrator Three, the letter of recommendation, experience of being a peer mentor, and reminder that even the most celebrated actors play ensemble and supporting roles may help them to see that playing a lead is not the consummation of an acting career.
Further, just as professionals in all stages collectively bargain to create equity for the most successful and least successful in the trade, a conversation with students should remind them that the goals of the program involve serving all students. This might mean someone who moved as a senior to your school and program gets an opportunity despite their lack of status. It might mean that there were several “better” auditioners for a part, but none had as much growth potential in a role than another. It might even mean having important conversations about who can play Emily in Our Town, even if she is overweight with buck teeth (Motter, 144).

Audience, Parents, Administration and Other Stakeholders

Casting has power, and it also carries risk. Casting in a way that is too radical for your community might alienate them and cause them to think the program has become the true to life version of the Saturday Night Life “Drama Club” sketches. Perhaps a parent who is a major contributor of time, money, or labor has expectations, spoken or otherwise, that their sacrifices will get something extra for their child. Administrators may question or altogether stop casting choices that are controversial in one way or another. These people who invest in the program’s success have a right to express their feelings and thoughts about the program. What a teaching-director cannot do, however, is please everyone.

The teaching-director has power in the casting room, rehearsal hall, director’s note and pre-show speeches to discuss candidly how important the educational components of a show are. A director who chose to double cast a Shakespearean play with one all-male cast as Shakespeare did and one all-female cast that modern practitioners have done could point to a myriad of representational challenges in the texts and in our audiences. It will be important to recognize that tying casting pedagogy to history, dramaturgy, theory or research may serve well.

Challenges
However, there may be times when any or all of the above groups resist casting individuals, ensemble groups or entire casts in certain ways. Some people will never be happy with a skinny Trudy Turnblad or a blonde Anne of Green Gables. Some students might express buy-in to a program but be frustrated feeling like their opportunity to shine has been squashed by idealism. Some teachers may think that taking extra time to audition, assess, cast and review does not deliver the product they are seeking. I do not blame anyone for seeing value in the traditional model and seeing that as teaching towards the ultimate goal. My belief, however, is that a production that values the opportunity for the student and minimize the personal glorifying of the director is what educational theatre is all about.

Reflections

Casting is not a well-researched practice. It is a craft that is largely taught person to person, production to production. This is what makes the job of a casting director so essential and may be why books like Auditioning by Joanna Merlin seek to demystify what casting directors want actors to do. Actors want to perform, and to do so at the height of their craft. Yet there are no objectively perfect patterns to getting cast in the part you hope for every time. This may be because even the smallest of differences may tip the scales of a director’s thin-slicing and lead to a different conclusion. Did I prefer the actor in the afternoon to the one in the morning because they were more recent, or because they were superior? How can I tell why I thought what I did? In casting, there are many questions and few answers.

While I initially suspected I could create a comprehensive rubric that would be universally applicable, I think I accidentally created something entirely different. Just like a dictionary contains words that can be combined in infinitely different combinations, what I have begun was a process of expanding the vocabulary of what matters in casting youth performers in
educational theatre settings. I think Jory’s inspiration to create my own code was deeply influential, and I think it will be important to create and use such short-hand as I refine my casting process and encounter new and unexpected challenges in the casting process.

I found using casting tools such as a rubric and character breakdown to be helpful, but I intend to continue refining my casting tools not only when I direct in the future. Each show has different needs, and as a teaching-director, I understand better that I must align casting decisions with the organization’s mission, the language of my collaborators, and, most essentially, the needs of the youth performer populations I work with. If I worked with ARIEL again, I would know better what ARIEL needs, and what young people in Monterey County, CA need as well.

Just as I seek to refine my practice, thoughtful organizations will seek to do the same. For those who stay in one place for most casting, continuing to create rubrics that align with what is being taught and experienced in the community matters. For those like me who have yet to lock into one place, I think it will require even more preparation to cast authentically to the needs of the youth performers.

In my process I sought to be excruciatingly honest with myself. I tried to ask myself about my perceptions of how I interpret a script, how I perceive people, and what things make me more or less excited to work with someone on a production. Ames suggested that the best way to deal with favoritism, perceived or real, was to ignore it; an idea which I scoffed at initially. And yet, through my process, I have more questions about the practical ways of acknowledging my own biases and preferences than answers. It is difficult in many ways to extract the position you are in as a human being and the role you play in a production from the way you view a successful production.
I cannot change that my role has been as a teaching-director in this process, nor can I change the fact that I am a thirty year old, white, male, heterosexual, father, sports-fan, reader, grad-student, member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Some of those are more concrete parts of who I am than others. Yet, I still found great personal value in trying to slow down the thin-slicing processes related to casting to challenge my own notions of what might be the best casting decisions. I found that by focusing on the essentials, I could justify my casting, at least to myself, in more authentic ways. If casting is an assessment, I sought to make it as authentic as possible. By so doing, I hope to make casting decisions that will push youth performers to grow in ways that it would be difficult for them to do outside of an educational theatre space that practices casting as a pedagogical practice.

**Final Thoughts**

I think there are other areas of casting in educational theatre that I have not addressed but which may need be explored further. For example, while the scope of this thesis is limited to elementary and secondary aged youth performers, are there crossovers to higher education? What casting practices should be revisited in undergraduate and graduate programs to ensure fair treatment of learners who have self-selected to schools and have been admitted to programs?

Further, how does a paradigm shift about casting impact the connected events of season selection and planning for auditions? I highlighted my own challenges with failing to match my rubric to the practical realities of auditions at ARIEL Theatrical. How can I shift my audition practices to be student centered, and how can these be educational in and of themselves? Further, how much does the selection of my season already limit what I may be able to do in casting? How am I considering how my season selection is a direct representation of my vision for what is possible for the actors in my educational theatre space?
Even with what I researched and practiced, I still have extensive need to grow and
develop my thinking as a practitioner and artist. I am still learning. Hamlet may as well have
been speaking about me and this thesis when he said, “There are more things in heaven and earth
than are dreamt of in your philosophy” (Hamlet, 1.5). I do not believe there is a universally
perfect way to cast. I’m much more certain that good people who care about making exciting art
available to rising generations are intent to do their best to provide opportunities that are
enjoyable, educational, and enriching. I hope this thesis continues to be considered in the
conversation of how casting works in all spaces.

Particularly, I hope those of us who are teaching-directors continue to be more practical
and considerate of our practice and how we can be intentional in using the “power in casting”
that Brian Herrera discussed to empower youth. It would be easy to learn to cast well and have
ninety percent of the work done for you. I do not know that such a practice promotes greater
learning and exploration of possibilities in casting. If a rehearsal process is to be work, perhaps it
ought to be work for both the youth performer and the teaching director who casts them. Maybe
we can cast our shows in ways that only educational theatre allows and not simply make our
shows look the way traditional casting practices based on type, cultural capital and past
opportunity dictate we should.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>CB</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gr</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Energy</th>
<th>Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>CB</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Gr</td>
<td>Pitch</td>
<td>Musicality</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Auditions: TUESDAY 2019

GROUP 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>CB</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gr</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Choreography</td>
<td>Character</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General Youth Audition Form

Please complete this form and give to the monitor with your photo. If you do not have a photo, please tell the monitor so they can take a photo of your young actor. Please print clearly. Thank you!

Young Actor Information:

Name: ______________________ Age: ______________________ Height: ______________________ Pronouns: ______________________

Voice Type (sop, alto, etc.): ______________________ Vocal Range: ______________________

Please list any theatre experience and/or training:

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Please list any dance experience you have along with the number of years you have danced:

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Contact Info (Guardian):

Name: ______________________

Email: ______________________ Phone: ______________________

Address: ______________________

How did you hear about this audition?

________________________________________________________

Would you like to join IRT’s email list to hear about classes and productions?

________________________________________________________
APPENDIX C: LEXINGTON CHILDREN’S THEATRE CASTING RUBRIC
The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical
Student Audition Form

Name: ______________________ Date of Birth: ___________ Age: ______

Address: ________________________________________________

City: ___________________ State: _______ Zip: _________

School: ___________________________ Grade: __________

Auditionee Email: ____________________ Auditionee Phone: ___________

Parent/Guardian 1 Name: ________________ Parent/Guardian 2 Name: __________

Parent/Guardian 1 Cell: ________________ Parent/Guardian 2 Cell: __________

Parent/Guardian 1 E-mail: ____________________

Parent/Guardian 2 E-mail: ____________________

I (circle one) AM / AM NOT auditioning with a family member

If so their names are:

I (circle one) CAN / CANNOT attend callbacks the evening of MONDAY, September 23rd

I (circle one) CAN / CANNOT attend callbacks the evening of WEDNESDAY, September 25th

I (circle one) HAVE / HAVE NOT listed any conflicts which cannot be moved or missed on the provided tentative rehearsal schedule

I (circle one) DO / DO NOT receive LCT audition announcements via email

I can attend (circle one) THREE / SIX school day performances.

Please list conflicting personal activities on the provided tentative rehearsal schedule and return with this completed form to the Stage Manager (Info sheet is yours to keep).

PLEASE READ:
I understand that during the rehearsal period performers may miss only one unexcused rehearsal and may only be tardy twice or they will be replaced. I understand that LCT does not have understudies and I will make every effort to fulfill my commitment even if cast. No performers may be absent from rehearsals beginning November 24th.

In addition, I understand that parents/guardians (who have students cast in the production) will be asked to volunteer at least 6 hours of time over the rehearsal and performance period.

I am aware that all performers are asked to provide their own make-up kit, and at least shoes, socks, undergarments, leotards, and tights. It is further understood that actors may be asked to provide some additional clothing items or shoes.

My signature also grants permission to Lexington Children’s Theatre to use a photographe, likenesses, and/or voice of the participant in any way that would reasonably portray LCT programs. I further release LCT and any of its employees or agents, from any damages in using photographs, likenesses, and/or voice.

I understand that LCT celebrates people of all ages, ethnicities, cultures, gender identities, sexual orientations, and physical and cognitive abilities and agree to help LCT create an accepting and kind space for all people.

I do further certify that I am of full legal capacity to execute the above authorization and release.

Student Signature: (under 18) __________________________ Date: __________

Adult/Parent signature: __________________________ Date: __________
## Previous Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Show Title</th>
<th>Role or Duty Performed</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Training

(Include acting classes, music or dance lessons, voice lessons, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Title</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please check one box below and list any formal dance classes under Training:

- [ ] I am a trained dancer. (List skills above)
- [ ] I've been known to bust a move.
- [ ] I can move okay.
- [ ] I have two left feet.

I would like to be considered for the following technical positions: (Must be age 14+)

- [ ] Assistant Stage Manager
- [ ] Deck Crew
- [ ] Wardrobe Crew

Please contact me about future technical/crew opportunities not related to this production

Yes / No

(Do not write below this line)

Name: ___________________ Age: ______ Height: ______

Articulation: ___________________ Projection: ___________________

Pitch: ___________________ Stage Presence: ___________________

Stage Directions: ___________________ Implied Movement: ___________________

Direction: ___________________ Behavior: ___________________

Focus: ___________________ Creating a Reality: ___________________

Realizations: ___________________ Plays with Others: ___________________

Yes

No

Call Back
APPENDIX D: SEATTLE CHILDREN’S THEATRE CASTING RUBRIC
# SCT Drama School Auditor Form Summer 2019

**Student Name**  
**Auditor Name**

## Rubric Key
- **+** = great  
- **✓** = good  
- **-** = poor  

### Voice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>✓</th>
<th>-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Projection</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diction</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

### Movement / Body

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>✓</th>
<th>-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Energy Level</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically Connects to Acting Choices</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

### Mind

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>✓</th>
<th>-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understands Text</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes Risks &amp; Makes Choices</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes Direction</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

### Singing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>✓</th>
<th>-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pitch</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range / Control</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projection / Diction</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts Through Song</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall Audition (Circle One):**  
+ ✓ -

**Class Recommendations:**  
- Acting 2, 4 - 12  
- Acting 3, 7 - 12  
- Comedy Troupe, 5 - 8  
- Sketch Comedy, 7 - 12  
- Musical Revue, 4 - 12  
- Physical Comedy, 3 - 10  
- Act for the Camera, 4 - 12  
- Shakespeare, 3 - 12  
- Improv, 3 - 12  
- Creating Character, 6 - 12  
- One-Day Seminars, 4 - 12  

**General Comments:**

**Areas of Improvement:**

---

**Casting Recommendations:**  
- **+** = strongly recommend  
- **✓** = good  
- **-** = do not recommend

If you give a student a ‘+’, please list possible roles for callbacks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production</th>
<th>CASTING STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the Forest Grim, Grade 4+</td>
<td>+ ✓ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Wrinkle in Time, Grade 6+</td>
<td>+ ✓ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 Dalmatians/Aristocats, Grade 5+</td>
<td>+ ✓ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymouse, Grade 6+</td>
<td>+ ✓ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathers - High School Edition, Grade 8+</td>
<td>+ ✓ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstage Production, Max. Age 17</td>
<td>+ ✓ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOUNG ACTOR INSTITUTE, Gr 10 - Age 21</td>
<td>+ ✓ -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# SCT DRAMA SCHOOL AUDITION FORM SUMMER 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>GRADE in 2019-20</th>
<th>AGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DATE OF BIRTH</td>
<td>HEIGHT</td>
<td>SCHOOL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PARENT / GUARDIAN NAME(s)**

☐ CHECK IF YOU WANT THIS AUDITION TO ALSO BE A PLACEMENT AUDITION

**SINGERS - PLEASE CHECK YOUR VOCAL RANGE:**
- BASS
- BARITONE
- TENOR
- ALTO
- MEZZO
- SOPRANO

## AVAILABILITY: PLEASE CHECK THE PROGRAMS FOR WHICH YOU WANT TO BE CONSIDERED

Grade ranges are approximate; do not leave anything blank based solely on your grade level. If you do not check a program, we will assume you are unavailable for that program's schedule. Show schedules are available at: www.sct.org/School/Classes/Summer-Season-2019

- ☐ **IN THE FOREST GRIM, Grade 4+**
- ☐ **A WRINKLE IN TIME, Grade 6+**
- ☐ **DISNEY’S 101 DALMATIANS KIDS/DISNEY’S ARISTOCATS KIDS,** Grade 5+
- ☐ **ANONYMOUS,** Grade 8+
- ☐ **MAINSTAGE PRODUCTION**
  - Age 9—17 as of 2020
- ☐ **HEATHERS — HIGH SCHOOL EDITION,** Grade 8+

Attach your résumé to this form OR list previous classes/productions below. *Please do not do both.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS/PRODUCTION &amp; ROLE</th>
<th>WHERE</th>
<th>TEACHER / DIRECTOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

117
APPENDIX E: SYRACUSE HIGH SCHOOL CASTING RUBRIC
Syracuse 2020-2021 Productions Class Audition Form

Name: ___________________________  Audition #: ____________

Age: ______  Current Year in School: _________  Height: ________

Hair color: _________  Eye color: _________  Gender: _________

Phone Number: ______________________  Email: ______________________

Are you interested in participating in: (please circle)

FALL PLAY  SPRING MUSICAL  BOTH

Previous Theatre Experience:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Previous Dance Experience:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Previous Vocal Experience:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Are you willing to accept any role? (Circle one)  YES  NO

What role would you like? (Circle one)

ENSEMBLE  SPEAKING PART  LEAD  NO PREFERENCE

Preferred Role in Play: ____________  Preferred Role in Musical: ____________

Voice Part (Please circle one):

SOPRANO  ALTO  TENOR  BASS

Are you proficient in any dialects?  YES  NO
If so, describe: _____________________________________________________________
Special skills:

Are you willing to cut/grow/color hair for a production?
YES    NO    Comments:

Are you comfortable kissing a member of the opposite sex in a production?
YES    NO    Comments:

Are you comfortable pretending to smoke? (Not actually smoking)
YES    NO    Comments:

Are you comfortable making references to deity and/or using minor swear words? (d**n, h**l, etc.)
YES    NO    Comments:

Rehearsal Commitment: As part of the school play, students will be required to attend after school rehearsals and must attend all mandatory tech/dress rehearsals and performances. There is no makeup available for missed mandatory dates. Students may miss up to 2 rehearsals without it affecting their grade (this includes in-class rehearsals.) In order for an absence to be excused, students must give notice at least 1 week beforehand (except in cases of illness or emergency). Please make every effort to schedule doctor’s appointments, reunions, etc. at alternative times. I understand that everyone’s time is precious, and so if you are called for rehearsal that means I will be working with you. Please come to rehearsal focused and ready to work. If everyone missed 2 rehearsals, that is the equivalent of 160 hours of lost rehearsal time! Rehearsals points may be made up for excused absences by getting any missed blocking from the stage manager and spending an equivalent amount of time at home rehearsing missed material. In cases of habitual tardiness or missed rehearsals, I reserve the right to reassign roles as necessary or remove a student from the production.

Rehearsals will occur during class and after school from 2:30-4:30 Monday through Friday and 2:30-5:30 as we get closer to the production opening. Please list any known after-school conflicts below (sports, lessons, weddings, doctor’s appointments, etc.)
Mandatory Dates:

Fall Play:  Painting Party: October 26
           Technical Rehearsals: November 7 & 8
           Dress Rehearsals: November 11-13
           Performances: November 14-16, 18, 21-23, 25
           Strike: November 26
           Drama Fundraiser Performance: December 7

Spring Musical:  Painting Party: March 21
                   Technical Rehearsals: April 9&10
                   10 out of 12-April 11
                   Dress Rehearsals: April 13, 14, 16
                   Performances: April 17, 18, 20, 23-25, 27
                   Strike: April 28
                   Senior Showcase: May 20

Rehearsal and class expectations:
   • Attend each rehearsal for which an actor is called on time
   • Fully engage in and participate in rehearsals
   • Listen to and follow instructions
   • Do not leave rehearsal without permission
   • During rehearsals when actors are not on stage they should be quietly
     waiting backstage or at the front of the house
   • Actors should not bring any outside guests to rehearsal without permission
   • Actors should not bring any food into the auditorium
   • Exhibit a good attitude on stage and off
   • Support and encourage cast and crew
   • Contribute to an overall positive rehearsal atmosphere

If an actor consistently fails to demonstrate expected rehearsal behavior, their
assigned role will be filled by an understudy and they may be removed from the
class and receive a failing grade.

I have read and understand the productions class audition form and rehearsal
expectations. I am available for all mandatory dates.

Student Signature:  Date:

Parent/Guardian Signature:  Date:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Name / Quantity</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Height Relevant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persico</td>
<td>Roger</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persico</td>
<td>Anita</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persico</td>
<td>Cristal de Vila</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persico</td>
<td>Horace</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persico</td>
<td>Jeeves</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persico</td>
<td>Nanny</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persico</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persico</td>
<td>Stmgatcher</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Damself</td>
<td>Narrator 1 Pug</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Damself</td>
<td>Narrator 2 Afghan</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Damself</td>
<td>Narrator 3 Poodle</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Damself</td>
<td>Narrator 4 Spaniel</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Damself</td>
<td>Narrator 5 German Shepard</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat</td>
<td>Teba</td>
<td>Adult Cat</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salutation (Fars)</td>
<td>Perdita</td>
<td>Adult Dog</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salutation (Fars)</td>
<td>Pongo</td>
<td>Adult Dog</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Fugles</td>
<td>16 Puppies</td>
<td>Adult Dog</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vault Puppies</td>
<td>109 Puppies</td>
<td>Adult Dog</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sower</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX G: 101 DALMATIONS RUBRIC
| Last | First | Age | Gender | Characterization | Movement | Dance Ability | Voice Acting | Singing Range | Group of Text | Test Matching | Reliability | Theatre | Focus | Experience | Listening | Bias | Compliance | Energy | Key |
|------|-------|-----|--------|-----------------|----------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-----------|--------|-------|------------|----------|------|-------------|--------|-----|
|      |       |     |        |                 |          |               |              |               |               |              |           |         |        |            |          |      |             |       |     |
|      |       |     |        |                 |          |               |              |               |               |              |           |         |        |            |          |      |             |       |     |
|      |       |     |        |                 |          |               |              |               |               |              |           |         |        |            |          |      |             |       |     |
|      |       |     |        |                 |          |               |              |               |               |              |           |         |        |            |          |      |             |       |     |
|      |       |     |        |                 |          |               |              |               |               |              |           |         |        |            |          |      |             |       |     |
|      |       |     |        |                 |          |               |              |               |               |              |           |         |        |            |          |      |             |       |     |
|      |       |     |        |                 |          |               |              |               |               |              |           |         |        |            |          |      |             |       |     |
|      |       |     |        |                 |          |               |              |               |               |              |           |         |        |            |          |      |             |       |     |
|      |       |     |        |                 |          |               |              |               |               |              |           |         |        |            |          |      |             |       |     |
|      |       |     |        |                 |          |               |              |               |               |              |           |         |        |            |          |      |             |       |     |

Key:
1. Undeveloped
2. Emerging
3. Average for peers
4. Advanced
5. Exceptional
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocal Trait</th>
<th>Description — Mark a score with: (X)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Projection</td>
<td>Does this performer speak loudly enough to be heard at the back of the space without straining or technical support (i.e., Mic)? (1 = needs significant help, 5 = moderate help, 8 = minimal help)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distortion</td>
<td>Does this person speak clearly? Do they carry the sound of their words and sentences to the end? Do they articulate and enunciate sound for stage? (1 = needs significant help, 5 = may be taught in rehearsal, 8 = no help needed)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacing/Cadence</td>
<td>Does this person speak slowly enough to speak to be engaging, but not so slowly that each word is understood? (1 = viscosity off-pace, probably related to preparation, 5 = Pace is off but may be coached through rehearsals, 8 = appropriate pacing)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textual Understanding</td>
<td>Does this person understand the literal meaning and subtext of the monologue or cold read? (1 = Voice disconnected from language meaning, or serious difficulty reading, 5 = Literal message and key words understood, but lacking subtext)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characterization</td>
<td>Did this person bring a character to life? Did I sense their objectives, motivations, and desires? (1 = No, 5 = Yes, 8 = Very)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comedic Acting</td>
<td>Did this person use acting technique to make me laugh, connect with their character? (Simple scale)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comedic Timing</td>
<td>Did this person properly set up their lines for comedic effect? (1 = Not teachable if context, 5 = teachable within certain role)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Acting</td>
<td>Did this person use acting technique to make me dramatically connect with their character? (Simple scale)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Line</td>
<td>Was I hooked by their first line? (simple scale)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accent</td>
<td>Does this person’s accent impact my perception of their performances? (1 = Accent was clearly false or put on, and detracted from the character vocal work, 5 = The person’s accent made the performance intelligible for me, 8 = No noticeable accent, 10 = Accent, but clear language makes for enriching character)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Strength</td>
<td>Does this actor convey strong emotional depth? Do I feel what I am supposed to feel here? (1 = No, 5 = Not going to make meaningful progress, 8 = Yes, 10 = No)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Trait</td>
<td>Description — Mark a score with: (X)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technique</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluidity</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characterization</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facial Expression</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Accomodation</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Description — Mark a score with: (X)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Reliability&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Experience&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show Count</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Comfort</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed of learning choreo</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>Focused on foot or seeming to have fun</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial Awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attentiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score for each style</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriage</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to try</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSIC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparedness / Memorization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitch?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty of Place</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style appropriateness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characterization in singing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musicality</td>
<td>Pick up on melodies, can sing harmony, have some music training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genderedness of role (didn’t matter except the pre-cast parts)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Dance) Muscle control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical choices</td>
<td>Gestures and blocking make sense for the character. Seem motivated and not just rehearsed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type Fit</td>
<td>Assign a role to each number and then</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Trait</td>
<td>Description — Mark a score with: (X)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitch</td>
<td>Can this person read music? Can they follow music as they sing? Are they hitting the correct notes?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone (Color or Timbre)</td>
<td>Does this singer sound like what I imagine the character sounds like? Is their color or timbre aligned with the style or</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Does this person have the vocal range to play the part(s) they are trying to play?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technique</td>
<td>Does this person have training? Do they understand music terminology? How much do I have to teach to begin teaching?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breathing</td>
<td>Does this person breathe well? Is their voice supported? Do they breathe in the right places in the music?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diction</td>
<td>Can this person's words be understood when they sing? Do they articulate consonants? Do they finish word endings? Do words sound like they're supposed to?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume</td>
<td>Can</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characterization</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belting?</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


Jagodowski, T. J., David Pasquesi, and Pamela Victor. Improvisation at the Speed of Life.


McIntosh, Sita. “8 Facts You Didn’t Know about Women in Theatre | WhatsOnStage.”


“Spanish Fork, UT | Data USA.”

