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## An Actor Auditions

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AN ACTOR AUDITIONS

by

JESSICA T. JOHNSON  
B.A. Texas Southern University, 2017

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  
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## ABSTRACT

In the fall of 2020, I began one of my most demanding graduate career courses, Audition Techniques. We explored Michael Shurtleff's book, *Auditions*, to learn about his auditioning techniques. I found early on in this journey that I lacked a consistent approach to auditions. This thesis represents the process of auditioning and will serve as a tool for actors transitioning from the educational theater, seeking to improve confidence in auditioning. In a regional theater audition for the Orlando Shakes, I will evaluate my ability to apply techniques learned in educational theater training, such as Shurtleff's 12 guideposts and ways to approach Shakespeare's text. I will document my audition process for the open call and callbacks of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Orlando Shakespeare Theatre. I am searching for ways to personalize my characters by implementing Shurtleff's 12 guideposts and techniques to approach Shakespeare, such as paraphrasing, defining, scanning, playing actions, and grammatical breath. This study concluded that the method mentioned above empowered me as an actor and strengthened the way I prepared for auditions.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The theater industry is full of actors struggling with auditions. The fear of failure and judgment would be one of the main reasons actors leave the theater industry. Having experienced it myself, I am conscious of how much energy and effort an actor would devote to an audition. Rejection in auditions will sound like a judgment on our character. As humans, we often look for validation from other human beings, and at auditions, we look at auditors to tell us that we are enough and that we are suitable for the role.

Unfortunately, after several rejections, it takes a toll on one's self-esteem. While I spent four years of high school theater, four years of undergraduate B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) theater studies, and three years in a graduate MFA (Master of Fine Arts) acting program. One would think I would have a great understanding of how to be an actor. However, reflecting on my past auditions, I realized that I was not a great auditionee. I hope to enhance the way I approach preparation for future auditions by managing the anxiety that causes unsuccessful auditions. When I first started working on my thesis pre-COVID-19, my research was on race relations in American theater.

"This thesis was initially going to focus on Black experimentalism; a black progressive movement using the fusion of free jazz, theatrical text, poetry, and art." I was devising a piece inspired by Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* called *Black Clouds*. The approach would highlight the systemic deficiencies and social factors that affect Black Americans' dynamics and narratives in the media.

With a cast of nine actors, tragedy struck amid a five-week rehearsal process of black clouds. COVID-19 touched American soil, causing Americans to quarantine in their own home,

causing students to learn remotely, and forcing theaters to close their doors. Furthermore, amid this pandemic, the Black Lives Matter movement came to the forefront of the world's media, sparking anger across America in response to the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery.

This thesis was being presented right at the height of the movement. Performing this virtually, I would not have gotten the results I was hoping to get. Returning to square one, I was stumped as to what I could write about for my thesis. I had several ideas, but nothing inspired me to want to write a thesis on it. I went back and forth to the drawing table, which led to a lot of procrastination and depression, but after months of driving myself crazy trying to figure out the next steps, I realize that I was already in the practice of my thesis. Since I am a third-year graduate student, I have the opportunity of doing my internship at the Orlando Shakes, in which they offer an audition class.

I'm well aware that I struggle at auditions. To be honest, I was never taught how to audition. My auditioning knowledge extends to dressing appropriately, showing up on time, slating, and monologuing. Slating is an introduction given at the beginning of an audition informing the auditioner who you are, the name of the pieces you are performing, and your representation. I was never taught exactly how to prepare sides for an audition outside of preparing a production script. No wonder auditions would bring up an extreme amount of anxiety for me. However, most actors tend to hate auditions. I had a professor named Jim Helsing inform me that the job of an actor is to audition over and over again as best as you can. Since I am not good at auditioning, I am not good at my job. So, I was both scared and excited to take this class. I figured Audition Techniques would be challenging for me, and the assignments

proved to be so until the end. However, once I started to see improvement, I realize that auditioning was something I needed to dive deeper into studying.

Looking back on my acting career, I've noticed that I've acted in many ensemble roles. And on more than one occasion, I would have a director say to me, "You are a powerful actress," or "Next time, I'll cast you in something more significant," or "I wish I would have cast you in that role, instead." I got stuck trying to figure out what it was in the audition that had them cast me the way they did. I began to have insecure thoughts about my ability to act. Not wanting to take responsibility for the way I am perceived in the casting room led me to blame others, like society's inability to cast a black woman in American plays. I wanted to blame directors for always picking their favorites, and then I just kept saying to myself, "well, maybe I just did not fit the part." At the same time, all of these reasons can be true and play a factor in me not getting cast. In this process, I realize I had to start focusing on what I could control: What can I deliver to the room when I am at an audition? How good is my audition packet? How well did I prepare before entering the room? Did I do all I could do to perfect myself before entering?

Although there are various kinds of auditions for both film and stage, we will concentrate on two theatrical auditions in this study since Shurtleff focuses on theater practices. Most people compare auditions to job interviews with a focus on the open call and the callback auditions. As a non-equity actor, AEA (Actors' Equity Association), an American theatrical labor union for actor and stage managers, I rely heavily on open calls. Open calls, according to *23 Must-Know Musical Theater Audition Terms* by backstage writer Andrew Byrne, "... means that any and all performers are welcome to audition. There may still be procedures that need to be followed to secure an audition, but there are no union prerequisites in place." (Byrne 4). Usually, it is

considered the first level of auditions an actor will go through. It allows the auditioner or the creative team to narrow the field of actors while looking to cast particular roles in their season. The creative team is the behind-the-scenes artists such as the "director, music director, choreographer, composer, lyricist, book writer, orchestrator, set designer, costume designer, lighting designer, sound designer, and dance arranger" (Byrne 3).

When a creative team wants to see an actor again to read scenes from the script, they will call them back. The callback is where "the actor will come back at a different time to sing/dance/read again. Often, the callback will involve preparing material from the show but not always. One of the purposes of the callback is to allow more people who are involved with the show to see the actor's work" (Byrne 2). The material that an actor prepares for the callback is referred to as sides; sides can be a scene or cutting of the script. "Sides are sometimes singing (learn a song or a harmony part) and sometimes acting (learn scenes). The expectation is that the actor be as close to off-book as possible on the sides they have been given" (Byrne 4). During most callbacks, the actor will read with a reader. "In some callbacks, there will be a reader in the room who will perform the sides with the actors. Generally, the reader does the scene while sitting at the audition table rather than getting up and interacting with the actor who is auditioning" (Byrne 4).

In the article *10 Tips for a Winning Audition* by Denise Simon. Simon list tips for improving audition skills. Some suggestions listed are having "confidence," "showing your personality by having a conversation with the casting director" (Simon 1)." Making a connection with the reader," and "knowing the material." (Simon 2) In my opinion, having confidence is the essential component of a successful audition. Many audition mistakes are

due to a lack of confidence typically produced by lack of preparation, in *8 Rookie Audition Mistakes* by audition coach Philip Hernández. Hernández list some rookie mistakes made in an audition, like "showing up late," (Hernández 1). "being unprepared," (Hernández 3). "apologizing," (Hernández 3). "shaking hands," (Hernández 2). "moving for no reason," (Hernández 2). and "trying to be what they want" (Hernández 2).

Throughout my acting career, I have made all of these mistakes. At the same time, most experiences I have with auditions are community and collegiate theater, where these mistakes are more likely to happen because of lack of experience. When I audition for community or collegiate theater, typically, I will do an open call and then a callback. However, the callbacks generally are cold reads; cold reads are an audition that happens during the callbacks where an actor has little to no time to prepare the sides before reading in front of the auditioner.

In most cases, I will read with a scene partner as opposed to having a reader. In ignorance, my knowledge of readers was that readers were used for film only. I have never used a reader in theater auditions; my first exposure to reading with a reader was in the film industry. I mostly attended cold-read auditions; I did not have a method used for preparing auditions. So, when I took *Audition Techniques* with Anne Hering, I learned how to audition with a reader and acting techniques specifically for auditions.

While many actors suffer from audition anxiety, Chloe Avanasas and Kelly Soong talk about different anxiety causes in a YouTube video called the *6 Common Causes of Anxiety*. I will take critical terms in this video such as "rumination" (Avanasas, Soong 1:33-1:34), "overachieving," (Avanasas, Soong 2:14-2:15), and "insecurity" (Avanasas, Soong 3:16-3:17) to help identify audition anxieties that I faced along with many other actors.

Some of the causes of audition anxiety are "rumination" (Avanasa, Soong 1:33-1:34) and, in other terms overthinking, making a big deal out of everything to the point that every thought, feeling, or action you viewed negatively. For example, when an actor is sitting in a holding room, they notice that everyone around them fits into a type: age range, weight, size, hair color, height, etc. That actor may feel ostracized by the rest of the actor and have obsessive thoughts about not belonging. Alternatively, when an actor is in the middle of an audition, and the creative team is whispering, eating, or making subtle facial expressions, they start to think that they may not be doing a good job.

Wanting to be an "overachiever" (Avanasa, Soong 2:14-2:15) and working can cause audition anxiety. Setting high goals and failing results in disappointment, self-shame, and self-sabotage. For example, trying to find the next gig and expecting to be cast after every audition or over rehearsing audition material and making the slightest mistake in the auditions room can cause overthinking and extreme worrying, and never feeling satisfied with oneself. In an industry full of criticism and judgment, not understanding one's value breeds "insecurity." (Avanasa, Soong 3:16-3:17) Having low-esteem and viewing yourself negatively affects confidence and makes the audition room feel horrifying.

In the Theater careers course I took in the spring semester of 2020, Jim Helsinger, a professor of acting at the University of Central Florida and Orlando Shakes artistic director. I believe that the auditioning approach Helsinger taught me helped me conquer some of my fears by altering my perspective on auditions. Helsinger says, "The Job of an actor is to audition over and over again as best as you can." In his lecture over auditions, he offers four fundamental

components to auditioning "1. Finding the auditions, 2. Getting the audition, 3. Audition brilliantly, and 4. Repeat." (Helsing)

Since this research fits in the "audition brilliantly" category, I will dive deeper into this section. "When comparing to real jobs, employers are always usually hiring "ok" employees." (Helsing) In an industry where there are more actors than work available, the actor needs to stand out in the crowd. Helsing talks about how not to associate negative feelings with auditions. He says, "the number one reason actors drop out of the business is due to failure and rejection." (Helsing)

Looking at the statistics, according to The Bureau of Labor Statistics, during the span of the ages 18 to 50, an average person will have 12 jobs. Furthermore, according to an article in the Daily Actor *Auditioning by The Numbers* by Kate McClanaghan in 2014, "Statistics dictate that it generally takes between 150 and 200 auditions to book a job. If you are ultimately only getting two to three auditions a week from the one singular talent agent you have, then it will take you a year or more to land a single job" (McClanaghan, 2014). It is essential to learn how to live with rejection in the acting business as it becomes a part of our everyday lives.

Helsing uses a baseball analogy to explain his perspective on auditions. "Three strikes you are out, But the next time I get up, I am going to hit it, going to keep going until I get a home run." (Helsing) Just how you would strike out in the game when it comes to auditions, all you do is "Check it off the list." A summary of his example is, "I have had 20 auditions, I am denied 16 roles" You are going to check each rejected audition off the list and keep going because out of the 20 auditions, the actor got three callbacks; which is a win! How one handles the rejection is

essential by not taking auditions personally, meaning not gauging your acting based on your failure. Ultimately, if one person does not want you, someone will.

Along with changing the perspective to audition brilliantly, Helsinger says the actor needs to work on their skills. Working on your skills could be working on monologues, practicing dialects, practicing site/cold reading, practicing your slate, working with readers, or taking acting classes. He also offers habits for actors to develop; before every audition, you ask the question, "How am I prepared? What am I going to show them? And What is going to be fun about this? After every audition, you ask yourself, what went well? How am I going to improve next time? how can I be better prepared next time?" (Helsinger)

Now that I have opened my mind to view auditions in a new light. In this thesis, I will show my process of applying methods I learned throughout my academic career to successfully audition as I prepare for the Orlando Shakespeare Theater Auditions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The characters I will focus on are Titania, First Fairy, and Snout/Wall. With the use of Michael Shurtleff's 12 Guideposts: "Relationship," "what are you fighting for? Conflict," "the moment before," "humor," "opposites," "discoveries," "communication and competition," "importance," "find events," "place," "games playing and roles playing," "mystery and secret," and methods from *Acting Shakespeare's Text* by Jim Helsinger such as "paraphrasing," "defining," "scansion," and "actions." And a vocal and physical warm-up developed by Vivian Majkowski to help allow my muscles to become engaged during the audition; warm-ups tend to relieve pressure and aid in preventing physical and vocal damage, and providing more control depth to the performance.

Chapter One, I analyze audition anxiety. Chapter Two explains Michael Shurtleff's 12 Guideposts and provides definitions for paraphrasing, defining text, scansion, and actions. Chapter Three examines my process of applying Guideposts and text techniques for the *A Midsummer Night's Dream* open call audition. Chapter Four analyzes my method of using Guideposts and text techniques for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* callback. Chapter Five recounts what occurred before, during, and after *A Midsummer Night's Dream* callback. Finally, in Chapter Six, I will discuss the results and explain what I learned about acting in auditions.

## CHAPTER TWO: TECHNIQUES DESCRIPTION

### Biography of Michael Shurtleff

Born in Oak Park, Illinois, Charles Gordon Shurtleff attended Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin, and the Yale School of Drama, where he earned his MFA in 1952 in playwriting. After graduation, he moved to New York City and changed his first name to Michael. Shurtleff was a prominent casting director for David Merrick's, *The Producers*. Shurtleff partnered on *Pippin* and *Chicago* with Bob Fosse and on *Jesus Christ Superstar* with Andrew Lloyd Webber. In 1962, Shurtleff went on to form Casting Consultants, his casting service. In the initial productions of 1776, *The Apple Tree* and *Chicago*, he served as casting director. Shurtleff died at his home in Los Angeles, California, of lung cancer, aged 86. Leaving behind numerous one-acts and full-length plays such as *Call Me by My Rightful Name*. His most famous work was a self-help book about Auditioning for actors in the theater titled *Audition*.

*Audition's* primary focus is to break down the process of Auditioning, helping actors to audition brilliantly. It enables the actor to question the character's intention in a specific scene. Before going into detail on what each Guidepost reflects, it is worth noting that Shurtleff was adamant about auditioning as oneself rather than a fully formed character. He explains that actors often get caught up in auditions trying to focus on the character "The first change to undertake from your performing method in learning how to audition is to give up character and use yourself... "character" must come from inside the actor immediately" (Shurtleff 17). Ways I found to help me play myself is to refer to the character as I vs. she. This practice helped me to bridge the distance between myself and my character.

In the following section, I will quote and describe the fundamental guidepost elements outlined in Shurtleff's text *Audition*. Shurtleff's instructions will provide me with a basis for approaching and building character in the scenes that I audition for at Orlando Shakes. Later chapters will go into how I describe the technique's implementation concerning the text.

### The 12 Guideposts from Audition by Michael Shurtleff

#### *Guidepost 1: Relationship*

Shurtleff discusses establishing connections with the other characters in the scene. First, you need to discover your role to the other character, are you husband and wife, mother and son, best friends, boss, or employee? While most actors would stop at this step, he employs the actor to go beyond the surface of labels and dive deeper into where the relationship is in that moment. He asks the actor to ask the questions "Do you love him? Do you hate him? Do you resent him? How much? Do you want to help him? Do you want to get in his way? What do you want from him? What do you want him to give you" (Shurtleff 49)? Shurtleff wants the actor to put themselves into the character's position and ask questions that provoke meaning and emotional involvement. For example, in a relationship where the characters may hate each other, actors should ask where the love is in this relationship? Whereas watching two-actor play hate, the entire scene can and will get boring, finding love for each other becomes a more exciting choice.

*Guidepost 2: What are you fighting for? Conflict.*

"The more conflict they find, the more interesting the performance of the play" (Shurtleff 59). Shurtleff says that actors should find "positive motivations" (Shurtleff 58) to take all of the negative qualities about a character and turn them into their opposite. This action will lend to more substantial and more active choices. Asking the questions, "why don't you run? What keeps you there?... What are you fighting for?... Who's interfering with your getting what you are fighting for" (Shurtleff 58- 59)?

*Guidepost 3: The Moment Before*

Every scene you will ever act begins in the middle, and it is up to the actor to provide what comes before...In order to create this moment before, before he enters, the actor may have to go back ten or twenty years in the life of the character (Shurtleff 86)." What are you fighting for in the relationship in the scene you are about to read, and exactly where are your feelings at this specific moment before?... The more specific, the more focused the moment before, the better the entire scene will go. (Shurtleff 58- 59)

Other actors may identify the moment before as emotional preparation. The moment before is helpful because it sets the actor up with built-up emotions for the scene. Once the actor enters the audition room, the actor must be ready to go. The actor should be in the world of the play or scene before the audition starts.

#### *Guidepost 4: Humor*

Humor is not jokes. Humor is not being funny. It is the coin of exchange between human beings that makes it possible for us to get through the day. Humor exists even in the humorless. There is humor in every scene, just as there is in every situation in life...I have trouble believing in the seriousness of a scene in which there is no humor; it is unlike life. And yet actors will say to me, "How can I find humor in this scene? It's very serious!" For the exact same reason, one would be driven to find humor in the same situation in life: because it is deadly serious and human beings cannot bear all that heavy weight, they alleviate the burden by humor." (Shurtleff 93)

As the saying laugh to keep from crying is evident in real life, it should be in every scene. Unless this is a Greek tragedy and characters are in a constant miserable state, Shurtleff will employ the actor to find the humor of the world's flaws, human error, or the ridiculousness of the situation that they find themselves in.

#### *Guidepost 5: Opposites*

Whatever you decide is your motivation in the scene, the opposite of that is also true and should be in it... The more extreme the opposites the actor chooses for scene, the more everything in between is likely to occur instinctively, naturally, without the actor having to consider these choices. (Shurtleff 98)

Another important takeaway from playing opposites is that auditioners have seen many actors in one day, and most actors will play the scene the same way it is written on the page. Nevertheless, by playing the opposite, it wakes up auditioners it makes them pay more attention to the actor on the stage. It offers the actor more risk and choices.

### *Guidepost 6: Discoveries*

Every scene is filled with discoveries, things that happen for the first time. No matter how many times it has happened in the past, there is something new about this experience, this moment... The discoveries may be about the other character, or about oneself, or about someone who is offstage, or about the situation now or the situation as it existed ten years ago and how that affects the now. (Shurtleff 102) Ask yourself: What is new? (Shurtleff 103)

Discoveries allow the actor to come to a moment of realization. As we often do in life during conversations between friends, family, and colleagues, we find ourselves making discoveries, piecing together parts of the past to the present, and finding an understanding of moments that were once unknown and hidden under subtext, snarky remarks, or one's actions. Discoveries are the "Ah-ha" moments of life or piecing together in mid-conversation that the mystery guy your best friend has been dating is your husband.

## *Guidepost 7: Communication and Competition*

### *Communication*

Acting is supremely a task of Communication. It is not enough for the actor to feel, if that feeling is not being communicated... Communication is a circle, not a one-way street...It takes two to communicate: the sender and the receiver... This imposes a constant obligation on the part of the sender to (1) make sure his message is clear and (2) check that the receiver has received it. And an obligation on the part of the receiver to (1) make sure he's heard the message and is able to duplicate and (2) let the sender know he's received the message. (Shurtleff 109-110)

### *Competition*

All dramatic relationships are competitive...There are two points of view an actor should imbue every scene: 1. I am right and you are wrong. 2. You should change from being the way you are to be what I think you should be. (Shurtleff 113)

For example, if we look at an argument between two people, mother and daughter or girlfriend, and boyfriend. The person who is speaking and trying to get their point across does everything possible to make sure that the other person understands their issue. Sometimes speech is slowed and emphasized vocally and physically to ensure that the other person understands what they are trying to say. Furthermore, the argument is a competition because if I win, I prove

you wrong. Therefore, nothing is wrong with me. You are placing the blame on the other character.

### *Guidepost 8: Importance*

Important does not necessarily mean significant to others. It means emotionally important to you at this moment. We make trivial things important to us at the moment... make the stakes in each scene as high as you can. Look for the maximum importance. (Shurtleff 116)

When looking at situations that could cause urgent importance to a person in particular moments, for example, your little brother breaking your iPad, this event could be significant because at the moment before, you just spent hours working on an assignment and saved it on your iPad, and now it is all lost because your little brother wanted to play with the iPad and dropped it. At that moment, nothing else mattered because when that iPad broke, it felt like the end of the world; your life is ruined.

### *Guidepost 9: Find the Events*

I call what happens in the play the events. One of the actor's chief tasks is to create the events of the play. What are events? An event can be a change. That is the strongest kind of event. An event can be a confrontation—and for every confrontation there is always a result, a consequence for the actor to present. An event can be a climax, which is a major turning point in the lives of the characters (Shurtleff 128).

Events are like the changes that happen as the scene progresses, in relationships in particular. The actor creates the events. To do this, you have to be aware of what's going on. See if your partner is conscious of what is going on between you. The more changes you have, the more the scene comes alive.

### *Guidepost 10: Place*

“Most readings take place on a bare stage, which is not the most useful environment for an actor. It's up to the actor to create a place, and it's well worth doing, for it will help him immeasurably in creating a reality for his reading (Shurtleff 138).”

When thinking about place, it's essential to map out where everything is, like a door or window, especially if the scene requires you to enter or leave or to glare out into a window. It is critical to mentally envision where the furniture or other actors in the scene may be placed and identify them throughout the performance through physical gestures.

“Once you have chosen the place, once you see it clearly in physical terms, then you must look for how you feel about it. The feeling is most important. That is what will elevate your use of emotional value” (Shurtleff 139). You need to have an awareness of the environment. Knowing the place also gives you a sense of an emotional understanding. If you are in an area that you are unfamiliar with, you will have a heightened awareness versus a place where you are comfortable and your guard is down.

### *Guidepost 11: Game Playing and Role Playing*

When we play games, it is for real; when we take on different roles, it is sincere conduct for it is a way of dealing with reality, not of avoiding it (Shurtleff 138). It helps an actor to ask himself in each scene: What is the game I am playing in this situation? What role do I assume in order to best play this game? The answer depends on the circumstance; what people want from you, what you want from them, what you are offering and what you expect. Ask what the stakes are, what you are playing for. But don't get the idea that you will therefore be unreal or insincere. Games are real, roles are necessary to deal with reality. (Shurtleff 144)

For example, if you work for your father, you will play the role of father and daughter at home and work; you will play the role of boss and employee. A person's role is forever changing depending on the environment. You can compare role-playing to code-switching. People will slip into a different language or accent without even realizing or intending to do it. To interact and communicate more like those around them. It can happen both consciously and unconsciously when we want to get something out of another person or convey a thought.

### *Guidepost 12: Mystery and Secret*

No matter how much we know about the other person, there is always something going on in that other heart and that other head that we don't know but can only ponder. And no matter how we explain ourselves to someone else, no matter how open we are, there is always still something inexplicable, something hidden and

unknown in us too. I am suggesting you add this wonderment about this other person. I am also suggesting you add, too, this wonderment about what is going on inside of you. (Shurtleff 159)

Shurtleff asks the actor to look at the character and draw from the text, connections, and present predicaments. The actor should wonder about their partner and the circumstances. You have a secret, and you tell no one, allowing the scene to be driven by the intensity of that secret. Having a secret creates more tactics for the actor to play in the scene.

#### Approaching Shakespeare texts for an audition

I will use techniques from *Acting Shakespeare's Text* by Jim Helsing to help approach monologues and scenes for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

#### *Defining Text*

When approaching Shakespeare's texts, most actors, like audience members, do not always understand the language. An actor needs to understand what the scene is about and every word that comes out of your mouth. I use defining the terms to achieve this task; one would define all of the words in a speech or scene, including "the," "and" "it," etc. If not all, then most important words. I will be using definitions when it comes to prepared monologues for auditions.

#### *Paraphrasing*

Once the actor understands what the monologue is about, it is important to place the actors' monologues in their own words. To help gain a better understanding of what is happening

and to create a relationship with the text. I will be making a literal paraphrasing of the text where the paraphrasing is closer to the actual text and a figurative paraphrasing. This paraphrasing type is where the paraphrasing is more comparable to how I would say it in real life. Both figurative and literal will help with discovering movement, alliteration, and emphasis within the speech.

### *Actions*

Using actions comes from the Stanislavski method of acting, with his work in the Moscow Art Theater in Russia. Stanislavski was an actor, director, and producer. He developed a system or theory of acting called the Stanislavski method; most actors would refer to his approach as "method acting." Actions help achieve the character's scene objective. When an actor uses an active verb, for example, to belittle, embrace, and worship, the verbs offer more tactics and variety when playing with text—it allows the performance to become alive and exciting to watch. "In analyzing an action, the actor answered three questions, 'What do I (the character) do?' 'Why do I (the character) do it?' and 'How do I (the character) do it?' This helps the actor understand the aim or main idea of the play" (Sawoski 7).

### *Scansion*

"The purpose of scansion is to enhance the reader's sensitivity to the ways in which rhythmic elements in a poem convey meaning. Deviations in a poem's metrical pattern are often significant to its meaning" ("Scansion"). Each line of verse is broken down into units of stressed and unstressed syllables to create feet. I use scansion to help with discovering meaning, breath, rhythm, and punctuation.

### *Grammatical Breath*

When you make a full stop and breathe at grammatical punctuation, it allows the actor to take in the next thought. Before you continue to the next verse line, while some sentences can be in one line of verse, other sentences can go into nine lines of the verse before taking your next breath. Each punctuation will determine how someone will take that breath.

### CHAPTER THREE: THE OPEN CALL ASSESSMENT

While working as an intern at the Orlando Shakes, we were required to audition for their performance season. Due to the pandemic, theaters are forced to having online shows instead of the customary in-person audience and actors. Theater productions would be displayed as online readings, prerecorded performances, or live online performances. Acting in the virtual theater has been an adjustment for all performers. However, some theaters have decided to re-open. The Orlando Shakes is one of those theatres. Shakes sent out an audition call for an in-person performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Before I could be a performer in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I would have to audition. In this section, I will be examining my audition for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Orlando Shakes; I found that by applying guideposts and various Shakespeare techniques, I focused less on character development and actor readiness and more on the text's execution.

For the *A Midsummer Night's Dream* audition, I was instructed to either prepare a side listed on the Shakes website or prepare a one-minute monologue of my choosing. I chose to do Titania's monologue from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 2.1 456-47. Her description on the website was, "Female-identifying, the mid-30s-40s. Any ethnicity. Queen of the Fairies. Stunning, intelligent, fiery. Seeking excellent verse speaker". (Orlando Shakes, Auditions 2021)

While considering that I contacted COVID-19 and was subjected to quarantine away from my home in preparing for this audition, I did my best not to allow my situation to dictate my audition performance. But I would be lying to myself if the stress of the situation did not

impact my headspace. While fighting through this inconvenience, I honestly had no clue what the text meant when I began to approach this monologue. But one thing I knew for sure is that the monologue extended over one minute. It was around three minutes long, so I had to do some cutting. However, before I could cut, I had to have a general understanding of what the monologue was saying. After watching a video summary of the monologue, I understood that this was a response to Oberon's defensive remark on Titania's problematic relationship with Theseus. Titania's monologue is saying that Oberon's jealousy is the cause for the destruction of nature. Within the monologue, she lists out what he's done and how it has affected their world. I began by separating the monologue into three parts. The first part was a statement of facts. Titania lists the facts and details of what Oberon has done to the Fairies. Titania says:

These are the forgeries of iealousie,  
And neuer since the middle Summers spring  
Met vve on hil, in dale, forrest, or mead,  
By paued fountaine, or by rushie brooke,  
Or in the beached margent of the sea,  
To dance our ringlets to the whistling Winde  
But vvith thy braules thou hast disturb'd our sport. (A Midsummer Night's Dream  
2.1.456-462)

In part 2 of the speech, she discusses the effects of his actions and lists out how the winds are so upset with the fairies because they could not do their jobs.

Therefore the Windes, piping to vs in vaine,  
As in reuenge, haue suck'd vp from the sea

Contagious fogges: Which falling in the Land,  
 Hath euerie petty Riuer made so proud,  
 That they haue ouer-borne their Continents.  
 The Oxe hath therefore stretch'd his yoake in vaine,  
 The Ploughman lost his sweat, and the greene Corne  
 Hath rotted, ere his youth attain'd a beard:  
 The fold stands empty in the drowned field,  
 And Crowes are fatted vvith the murrion flocke,  
 The nine mens Morris is fild vp with mud,  
 And the queint Mazes in the wanton greene, Corne  
 Hath rotted, ere his youth attain'd a beard:  
 The fold stands empty in the drowned field,  
 And Crowes are fatted vvith the murrion flocke,  
 The nine mens Morris is fild vp with mud,  
 And the queint Mazes in the wanton greene,  
 For lacke of tread are vndistinguishable. (MND 2.1.463-475)

And the last part is relatively similar to the second half, but she begins to take ownership, and it stops being all about what Oberon has done. Instead, the focus moves to how both Titania and Oberon's feud has affected everything and everyone around them.

The humane mortals want their winter heere,  
 No night is now with hymne or caroll blest;  
 Therefore the Moone (the gouernesse of floods)

Pale in her anger, washes all the aire;  
That Rheumaticke diseases doe abound.  
And through this distemperature, we see  
The seasons alter; hoared headed frosts  
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson Rose,  
And on old Hyems chinne and Icie crowne,  
An odorous Chaplet of sweet Sommer buds  
Is as in mockry set. The Spring, the Sommer,  
The childing Autumne, angry Winter change  
Their wonted Liueries, and the mazed world,  
By their increase, now knowes not which is which;  
And this same progeny of euills,  
Comes from our debate, from our dissention,  
We are their parents and originall. (MND 2.1.476-492)

So, I cut the monologue by omitting most of parts 2 and 3 out while still leaving most of the necessary information. In the end, I came up with:

Titania. These are the forgeries of iealousie,  
And neuer since the middle Summers spring  
Met vve on hil, in dale, forrest, or mead,  
By pauled fountaine, or by rushie brooke,  
Or in the beached margent of the sea,  
To dance our ringlets to the whistling Winde,

But vvith thy braules thou hast disturb'd our sport.  
Therefore the Windes, piping to vs in vaine,  
As in reuenge, haue suck'd vp from the sea  
Contagious fogges:  
The humane mortals want their winter heere,  
No night is now with hymne or caroll blest;  
The Spring, the Sommer,  
The childing Autumne, angry Winter change  
Their wonted Liueries, and the mazed world,  
By their increase, now knowes not which is which;  
And this same progeny of euills,  
Comes from our debate, from our dissention,  
We are their parents and originall. (MND 2.1.456-492)

#### Defining text

Now that I have cut the monologue, I started defining some essential words to understand what was said. For these definitions, I used the Arden version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Oxford Language.

**beached.** (Beachéd) Covered with beach or shingle (Chaudhuri 152)

**blest.** Archaic spelling of blessed. So spelt, indicating pronunciation in one syllable (Chaudhuri 154)

**brawls.** Clamours, disputes; but here, perhaps a king of dance 2a), more energetic and raucous than ringlets- a subtler invasion of Titania's space than open dispute. Whiter suggests a play on both scenes (Chaudhuri 152).

**brooke.** (Brook) “Creek” (“Brook”) **Creek** “a natural stream of water normally smaller than and often tributary to a river” (“Creek”)

**change.** Probably meaning 'exchange' (Chaudhuri 155)

**childing.** Fecund, fruitful; teeming [i.e. pregnant] autumn, big with rich increase (Chaudhuri 155)

**contagious.** Pestilential, breeding disease (Chaudhuri 153)

**Carol** A carol could be either a religious or a secular song; here perhaps Christmas carols, popular from the least the fifteenth century. (Chaudhuri 154)

**debate.** Quarrel (Chaudhuri 155)

**dissension.** Usual 4-syllable pronunciation of time. disagreement that leads to discord (Chaudhuri 155)

**forgeries.** Fabrications, lies (Chaudhuri 152)

**fountain.** Spring (Chaudhuri 152)

**here.** Here and now, right away. The summer is so bad, that men wish it were winter (Chambers). They have missed out on the festivities of summer but are not getting those of winter either. Whatever the precise meaning, the situation reverses Titania's vaunt as queen of eternal summer (Chaudhuri 154)

**human mortals.** Apparent tautology citing a fairy speaker. Whether fairies were regarded as mortal is unclear. Some certainly suffered death including Oberon in *Huon of Bordeaux* (Chaudhuri 154)

**hymn.** A solemn song (Schmidt et al. 2020; vol 1)

**in vain.** Because Titania and her train could not dance to the piping winds *Matthew 11.17*- we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced (Chaudhuri 153)

**margin.** OF 'Margent' was the usual form at the time, and always in Shakespeare. Border or edge (Chaudhuri 152)

**mazed.** (mazéd) bewildered (Chaudhuri 155)

**mead.** Meadow (Chaudhuri 152)

**middle summers spring.** Start of midsummer, but the juxtaposition of summer and spring suggest the confusion of the season described (Chaudhuri 152).

**original.** Origin (Schmidt et al. 230; vol 2)

**parents and original.** This links Oberon and Titania with Adam and Eve: their quarrel re-enacts the fall (Chaudhuri 155)

**paved.** (Pavéd) with a pebbly bottom (Doran) (Chaudhuri 152)

**piping.** Whistling, howling, but also in a musical sense (Chaudhuri 153).

**progeny.** Offspring sinisterly born of dissension rather than union (Chaudhuri 155)

**ringlets.** Circular dances (supposedly creating fairy rings): earliest citation (Chaudhuri 152)

**rushy.** Full of or covered with rushes (Chaudhuri 152) **rush.** (rushes) any of various monocotyledonous often tufted marsh plants (as of the genera *Juncus* and *Luzula* of the family

Juncaceae, the rush family) with cylindrical often hollow stems which are used in bottoming chairs and plaiting mats (“Rush”)

**sport.** Diversion, recreation; merriment, mirth (Chaudhuri 152)

**their increase.** The produce or crops of the seasons (Chaudhuri 155)

**we.** Titania does not mean herself and Oberon, but herself and her train (Chaudhuri 152).

**whistling.** Piping, as though in accompaniment (Chaudhuri 152)

**wonted liveries.** Accustomed garb or appearance (Chaudhuri 155)

### Paraphrasing

Now that I defined the monologue's words, I could paraphrase Titania's speech into my terms. I did two paraphrasing versions: literal paraphrasing, closer to the text word-by-word synonyms, and a figurative one closer to the language that I would use in everyday speech. To dive deeper into Shakespeare's meaning behind this text:

### Literal paraphrasing:

You are lying because you're jealous.

And since this confusing season is changing.

When my train meets on the hill, in the valley, forest, or field

By the brick fountain or by the water near the grass

Or on the edge of the sea

To dance and sing in a circle

You keep showing up and disturbing the peace

The wind is all upset

And as revenge, it dried out the sea  
People want it to be winter Now  
Every night there are no songs or spells  
The Spring, the summer  
The life of Autumn, winter is angry it hasn't changed.  
Their appearance has confused the world.  
The food doesn't know what season it is  
And this nasty problem.  
Is happening because of our argument our disagreement.  
We are their parents and the cause.

Figurative Paraphrasing:

You are lying because you're feeling some type of way.  
And since this weird ass season is changing.  
When me and my crew meet at the mall, in the club, bar, or school  
By the street corner or by the park  
Or on the edge of the beach  
To twerk and sing in a circle.  
You keep showing up and disturbing the peace.  
My boss is all upset.  
And in retaliation, he's taking all my money.  
No customers

People want it to be winter NOW.  
Every night there are no songs or rapping.  
The Spring, the summer  
Them kids in the fall, Hell winter is mad it hasn't changed.  
Their appearance has confused the world.  
The food doesn't know when to come.  
And this issue  
Is happening because we can't get our shit together  
We are the adults and the owners.

Once I was done with the paraphrasing, I began to practice with the original text side by side. Saying it first, either using literal or figurative paraphrasing, I found that using literal paraphrasing brought me closer to the text that I once felt distant from. And the figurative helped me find different inflections and movements, which helped me keep the language from sounding monotonous. I hope that if I were able to understand the text, then so would my audience.

#### Actions and Guideposts

My super objective is to fix the seasons and the world, while my objective is to end this feud with Oberon and keep the changeling boy. I used active verbs to shame, explain, expose, demand, guilt, convince, and embrace with the hope that I persuaded Oberon to give me what I wanted. Reflecting on my rehearsal process, I realized that I never actually practiced applying these actions to Titania's speech, although I marked particular actions in my script. This process also would have been more satisfactory had I practiced this monologue with the scene partner. I

wished I would have chosen stronger attacking verbs like ‘to attack’ and ‘accuse’ when I reviewed my audition tape to see what actions worked and didn't work--manipulating verbs such as to tempt, turn, and own or to beg. Moving into the guideposts, I feel like my moment before was not very strong, specifically when Oberon jealously accuses me of sleeping with Theseus because I called him out on having affairs with Theseus fiancé, Hippolyta, and several other women.

OBERON. How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,

Knowing I know thy love to Theseus? Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,

Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night

From Perigouna, whom he ravishèd?

And make him with fair Egles break his faith,

With Ariadne and Antiopa? (MND 2.1.449-455)

I believe a stronger moment before would be to feel a desire to challenge his argument. However, the way I originally played it came off as if I was in shock by what was said. I played it as if this was my first discovery of his act of jealousy, which is why everything has gone to hell.

My relationship with Oberon is that we are King and Queen of the fairies, basically husband and wife. It would be easy to blame my Changeling Boy for our relationship issues because Oberon wants the boy, and I won't let Oberon have him. However, Oberon and I have been having problems way before the changeling boy came into the picture. While it is clear I love Theseus and Oberon both; I'm in love with Theseus because he is kind and gentle; he is also a mortal, so we never have to compete with who's in power. I love Oberon because he offers

excitement and challenges me. His jealousy makes me feel wanted. He's good in bed, but he also can't keep it in his pants. His infidelity and my revenge are what cause me to turn to Theseus. I wanted him to feel the pain that he caused me.

But because Theseus is getting married to Hippolyta, Oberon's mistress, I began to wonder if we could make our relationship work again. I know Oberon loves me because he won't leave me alone. I think my question is should we get back together? And if we do, will we change, or would it be the same toxic relationship as before? I tried to place the subtext of our relationship on the line, "These are the forgeries of jealousy" (MND 2.1.456).

I then use humor to poke and shame Oberon at his ridiculous attempt to win me back by stopping me and the fairies from doing what we are supposed to do.

And never since the middle Summers spring  
Met vve on hil, in dale, forest, or mead,  
By pauled fountaine, or by rushie Brooke,  
Or in the beached margent of the sea,  
To dance our ringlets to the whistling Winde, (MND 2.1.457-461)

But then I find conflict when I reflect on what his jealousy has cost our world

But vvith thy braules thou hast disturb'd our sport.  
Therefore, the Windes, piping to vs in vain,  
As in revenge, haue suck'd up from the sea  
Contagious fogges: (MND 2.1.462-465)

I stay because I hope I could influence him to end our feud, therefore, getting the weather and seasons back to normal. On the line "And this same progeny of euills, comes / from our debate, from our dissention, / We are their parents and originall" (MND 2.1.490-492).

I discover that this quarrel is not Oberon's fault alone; I began to take ownership and include myself as a problem in this equation with Oberon. Since it takes two to tango, this is not just a 'his problem'; it's a 'we problem,' and 'we' need to fix it.

### Scansion

While I'm not the best in scansion, I still attempted to perform the task. While most of Titania's monologue is in iambic pentameter, I found a few lines without ten syllables. Line 17 has nine syllables and is called a half foot, which is rare. "And this same progeny of euills" (MND 2.1.490), and line 18 has 11 syllables with a weak or feminine ending, "Comes from our debate, from our dissention" (MND 2.1.491), Which also led me to believe she was in a moment of discovery and reflection.

### Grammatical Breath

The last method I applied to this monologue was grammatical breath. Constructing grammatical breath in the original text, I would have had to speak the first seven lines, all in one breath, before the punctuation motivated the next thought. Then the next five on another breath, and continue for the next set, a group of three, five, two, five, four, and three lines, each group of lines with one individual breath. I have constructed the monologue where the first seven lines on one breath, three lines on the next breath, two, four, and ending with a group of three lines on one breath. The grammatical breath would have to be one of my biggest obstacles when I

submitted my audition; I could not conquer this task. I believe it was due to my lack of not working daily on my breath and not warming up before recording.

### Open call Reflection

As I examined my vocal technique, I realized how much I would have benefited from warming up. At the same time, I was able to use forward placement with my voice. Forward placement is when you target your voice in a particular region of the face and neck to generate more volume and a firmer tone. When you sense the resonance sensations between the neck and the face vibrating, you are hitting performance effectiveness. I did not have control over my breath. I did not hit all of the plosives and consonants. I was in a constant fight to remember not to drop the ends of the lines. A lot of the lines in this monologue had commas. Commas show a change of tactic or separation of ideas; there is no pause. But habitually, not only do I want to pause at the end of the line, but I also want to drop inflection at the end of the line. I used an exercise taught in my voice class to use small gestures to remind you of where the energy needs to be. For instance, for a comma, I would curl my finger upward or move my arms from left to right as I began to list things reminding me to continue. For a period, I would gesture forward and then firmly drop my gesture at the end of a line to make a full stop.

I found some complete moments in reviewing my audition because I showed variety and versatility within the character. I had good beats and moments, and I believe this is due to planning out my actions. I had good moments of conflict showing the issue between Titania and Oberon's relationship and Titania's battle with herself. There were moments when you would see

me challenge Oberon on his authority in the monologue; I believe I implemented the use of pathos, ethos, and logos reasonably well and made useful discoveries along the way.

An incomplete moment would be developing physicality for Titania. Titania is a Fairy Queen, and I didn't consider that the way she would carry herself would be completely different from how a regular fairy or mortal would carry themselves. Her physicality should be intense, especially in this monologue when she is standing up to Oberon because there is a lot at stake. Finding the humor in the piece was also hard for me to execute. I found myself focused on achieving the grammatical breath technique so much that I was not present at the moment, and I didn't allow myself to play with this piece as much as possible. By focusing on every technique in such a small-time frame, I felt I had no room to have fun. And because I knew who one of the auditors would be and their requirements for an "excellent verse speaker" added more pressure than I should have allowed. This burden instilled in me the belief that I had to be perfect; in my mind, there was no room for mistakes leaving no space for me to learn, have fun, or enjoy my work.

Next time, I will improve the breath; I want to master taking deep, wide, long, and sustainable breaths. That should help strengthen my verse line breath skills and allow me the flexibility to play. That way, I do not have to worry about running out of breath. I'm going to include imaging and physicality into my preparation to help guide the audience along with the text. If it's another video submission, I want to play with movement concerning the camera. Even if it's in person, I want to enable my character's psychology to affect their emotional physicality; I plan to do so by finding physicality within the character's given circumstances and allowing the character's emotion or mood to inform my posture, expressions, and movement in the scenes.

Something I'm going to take into account so that I could better prepare is time management. When I get the audition call, I should start prepping as soon as possible, especially when it comes to Shakespeare. I'm also going to make sure I schedule warm-ups before I begin my rehearsal process. These processes shine a light on how important it is for one to warm-up—even auditioning from the comfort of your home. A warm-up helps one stay ready and on their feet for anything. Types of warm-ups I would include would focus on breath, voice, and movement. Breath warm-ups would target three planes side to side, up and down, and front to back. A voice warm-up would target the flood gates, neck and shoulder, jaw, lips, tongue, soft palate, and exercises that activate the voice's woofer and tweeter. While the tweeter generates high-frequency sounds, the woofer is responsible for certain low-frequency sounds that the voice can create, so we must warm up the muscles that make up those sounds to produce the range we intend. When looking at physical warm-ups, I would focus on stretching areas of the body such as hips, shoulders, and ribs—allowing flexibility and mobility by adding these techniques to strengthen my audition.

## CHAPTER FOUR: CALLBACK PREPARATION

I received a call back for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on Tuesday, February 16, 2021, for Snout and the First Fairy. The callback would be on Monday, February 20, 2021, at 5:50 pm, and I had three sides to prepare in four days; this time, the audition would be live over Zoom. At first, I was disappointed because the roles I was a callback for were not parts I was hoping to get. I have been a part of three *A Midsummer Night's Dream* productions.

The first time I was a part of the lighting crew, I was in control of the spotlight. The second time, I played Peter Quince, one of the six mechanicals and the author and director of "*The Most Lamentable Comedy and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisbe*" (MND1.2.11). The play that the mechanicals are rehearsing in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Theseus and his wife Hippolyta at their wedding. The third time I was Helena, Helena is in love with Demetrius, who does not love her back; Hermia's father, Egeus, promised Hermia, Helena's best friend to Demetrius.

This time around, I was hoping to either play Titania. The fairy queen, Titania, is currently having work and relationship issues. Or Puck, a mischief servant of Oberon. Puck messes up everything involving the lovers. I also would not mind trying out for Hermia, one of the lovers who ran away to be with Lysander—I am firmly leaning for a mystical creature since I have yet to play one of those. At the same time, it is still possible to be in the running for Titania, Puck, or Hermia because one can never tell what the people who are casting could be thinking. So, I did my best to keep a positive and open mind while excepting those feelings of disappointment but not allowing them to affect my performance.

### First Fairy Sides

While I had every intention to start immediately, the pull of procrastination was strong, so I did not begin until Thursday the 18<sup>th</sup>. I treated the First Fairy monologue in the same manner, I approached Titania's monologue. Such as defining, paraphrasing, scansion, and guideposts. However, this time around, I tried to spend less time preparing the text and more time experimenting with various approaches to deliver the exchange between Puck and the First Fairy.

I had to remember that this was an audition and not an actual performance of the entire play. Looking back, I know this was a mistake that I made when I was working on the Titania monologue. I prepared for Titania's monologue as if I had six weeks of rehearsal to play around with when I barely had four days in reality. Titania's monologue took me two days to understand, cut, and learn, and still, the memorization and choices made were not strong in performance. All around, I wasn't as comfortable with the piece as I wish I would have been.

Orlando Shakes already cut the sides for the First Fairy, a step that saved me a lot of time. So, when I approached this monologue, I immediately went into defining terms I did not know. The scene in Act 2 Scene 1 is a conversation between Puck and the First Fairy. This scene happens right before Titania and Oberon enter to have their spat. The First Fairy monologue had a similar flow to Titania's, where Titania was listing places. They could not perform their duty because Oberon would show up and interrupt. The First Fairy listed places she has been and the type of work she is performing.

PUCK. How now, spirit! whither wander you?

FAIRY. Over hill, over dale,

Thorough bush, thorough brier,  
Over park, over pale,  
Thorough flood, thorough fire,  
I do wander every where,  
Swifter than the moon's sphere;  
And I serve the Fairy Queen,  
To dew her orbs upon the green.  
I must go seek some dewdrops here,  
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.  
Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I'll be gone.  
Our Queen and all her elves come here anon.  
PUCK. The King doth keep his revels here to-night;  
Take heed the Queen come not within his sight;  
....

FAIRY. Either I mistake your shape and making quite,  
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite  
Call'd Robin Goodfellow. Are not you he?

PUCK.           Thou speakest aright:  
I am that merry wanderer of the night.  
I jest to Oberon, and make him smile  
But room, fairy, here comes Oberon.

FAIRY. And here my mistress. Would that he were gone! (MND 2.1.1-59)

### Definitions

**anon.** soon, in no time (Chaudhuri 146)

**dew her orbs.** usually taken as water fairy rings with dew. fairy ring are round patches of mushrooms growing in the field, talk to because my fairies dancing in a ring (qtd. in Chaudhuri 146) berries or say to part the circle on which they dance this theory may be appointed to water them. 'But Dew her orbs' might also mean to dewdrops. (qtd. in Chaudhuri 146)

**elevs.** as Foakes notes, used broadly of all fairies of both sexes (Chaudhuri 146)

**everywhere.** stress by and exhausted (qtd. in Chaudhuri 146)

**keeps.** hold, observe (Chaudhuri 147)

**lob.** bumpkin, lout; also a type of fairy, sometimes identified with hobgoblin to which Robin is allied (qtd. in Chaudhuri 146).

**moon Sphere.** the innermost (carrying the moon) of the crystalline spheres thought to revolve around earth in the Ptolemaic system; but here, perhaps simply the moon. The fairy must travel faster than the moon to complete her task before it sets. (qtd. in Chaudhuri 146) for the speed, and the time allowed it for fairy activity (qtd. in Chaudhuri 146).

**pale.** fence, boundary (qtd. in Chaudhuri 145)

**pearl.** pearl earrings were a male fashion of the time (qtd. in Chaudhuri 146) ... **dewdrop.** the idea that pearls originated from dew steam from a miss reading of *Pliny Natural History*, 9.45 (qtd. in Chaudhuri 146) *Dodypoll* has fairies' hanging on euery leafe an orient pearle' (qtd. in Chaudhuri 146).

**puck.** is it compounds of many item call of English fairy mythology, of both Celtic and Teutonic origin. He can change shape like the Puck or Pouka; mislead travellers, again like the Puck but also the hobgoblin and will-o'-the-wisp; perform domestic tasks like the brownie (Chaudhuri 44).

**spirit.** the term is repeatedly used to cover the varied population of the fairy world...the fairy is addressing a supernatural creature of another sort (qtd. in Chaudhuri 146).

**Robin Goodfellow.** a creature of many role and guises. His closest links are with the brownie performing household chores and the hobgoblin spinning illusion and knaveries and leading travellers astray... His name is Robin, with 'Goodfellow' as a sobriquet (Chaudhuri 44)

**shrewd and knavish.** mischievous and roguish. Any more sinister sense seems inappropriate... For Robin's activities in relation to fairy lore (qtd. in Chaudhuri 146)

#### Figurative Paraphrasing:

PUCK. Hey Girl, where are you going?

FAIRY. On I -10 and 45

Through the hood, and through the trap

At the park, at the club

In the rain, and in the heat

My ass has been everywhere

Faster than and everything

And I do what my Mama said

To help her grow the garden

I got a find some seeds here

And pimp out the flowers with pearls  
Bye, you Menace II Society, I'm gone  
My Mama and her kids are on the way  
PUCK. The King booked this space for tonight,  
Bet not let him see the Queen  
FAIRY. You look like somebody I know  
Are you that badass little boy  
Named Robin Goodfellow, is that you?  
PUCK. You right, that's me  
I run these streets at night  
I be joking with Oberon; he be smiling and shit  
But go on shawty, Here Oberon come  
FAIRY. And my Mama, I wish he would leave

After defining and paraphrasing, I began to scan the monologue. I went through each line looking for patterns, words that start with the same letter, or the words that repeated that could help indicate the state in which she was or what mood she might have had at the moment. Like “whither wander,” “wander,” and “where,” “thorough” repeated four-time, “park and pale,” “swifter,” “sphere,” and “serve” than there was “shape,” “shrewd” and “sprite.” You could decipher that she has been to many places and was doing many tasks and was tired and exhausted. If you are looking at ending words in the verse “dale,” “brier,” “pale,” “fire,” “where,” “sphere,” “Queen,” “green,” “here,” “ear,” “gone,” “anon.” It sort of paints this gloomy picture of the atmosphere.

### Guideposts

Once I felt like I was at a stopping point in the textual analysis, I began putting the scene on its feet. I wanted to play with feeling such as joy, happiness, misery, disgust, lust, and annoyance. I used the guideposts to help play around with these moods—my moment before I picked the action of panting as if I was out of breath. And when Puck asked, "How now, spirit! whither wander you?"(MND 2.1.1) and in my head, my response to Puck was, "Brah... Let me tell you" Then I vocalize the lines:

FAIRY. Over hill, over dale,  
Thorough bush, thorough brier,  
Over park, over pale,  
Thorough flood, thorough fire,  
I do wander every where (MND 2.1.1-6),

I chose to emphasize “every where” (MND 2.1.6) with body language. I allowed my body to collapse, and I rolled my eyes. In the next section, I played with the opposite directions that I started within the first five lines. I wanted to show my happiness and appreciation for what I do. “Swifter than the moon's sphere; / And I serve the Fairy Queen, / To dew her orbs upon the green” (MND 2.1.7-9).

I wanted to play around with these eight lines. When I started to approach the guideposts, I want to make sure I allowed this character to come from me. I know I'm a silly person at times, and this, in my opinion, is one of those "laughs to keep from crying." I am miserable having to

do all of this work, sad that the season is not changing correctly, people and the fairy world are not happy in the current climate. So, I am attempting to find the humor in this section.

I attempted to say the top half in different ways. I did it straight and regular; then I tried to make it as dull as possible. I also played with saying it funny and childish, and then I tried to give in to the rhyme. I sang it like a song with an interpretive dance. Then I choose to use rapping while grooving along with the text; rapping is closer to something I would do in real life if I were in this situation. It reminds me of an Issa Rae moment from *Insecure* every time something terrible has happened or when Issa needs a pep talk, she goes and finds a mirror and raps to herself about the situation. Doing this allows Issa to build her confidence or vent. So, I chose to use rapping to have a cathartic moment for the First Fairy.

For the next section, in response to Puck's line, "The King doth keep his revels here to-night; / Take heed the Queen come not within his sight" (MND 2.1.19); I use the guidepost of discovery. Because this is the moment that things are starting to make sense about his identity. This moment is when I respond to Puck with the line, "Either I mistake your shape and making quite, / Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite / Call'd Robin Goodfellow. Are not you he? (MND 2.1.31-34)

Another moment I wanted to play with the opposite, in the line "thou lob of spirits" (MND 2.1.16); I played as if Puck when I had no clue of who he was, he disgusts me. But once I discovered his identity, I developed a strong attraction for him. I like "bad boys." I started lusting over him, playing with flirtation and sexuality. I thought this could be a more substantial choice over choosing to play on the negative version of the creature I described.

For the last line of the scene, the first fairy says, "And here my mistress. Would that he were gone" (MND 2.1.59)! The Guidepost 10: Place helped me play the action of confidence. I need to identify the space I was in; I was in the forest. This location is somewhere I felt comfortable, because I know the trees and the grounds, I knew this is where I would find dewdrop and where the cowslips were to hang pearls on them. Which explains why I was so comfortable speaking to another fairy I never met and whose appearance is a little suspicious. And when Oberon comes into this scene, I'm upset because I know he comes to disrupt. I'm also so comfortable in this location, so much so that I don't mind telling Oberon's servant that I don't want Oberon to be here, in this space around my Queen. This is something I could get in trouble for saying.

#### Snout/Wall Sides

Approaching Snout, one of the mechanicals, Snout is a tinker who plays the wall in "*The Most Lamentable Comedy and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisbe*" (MND 1.2.11). Instructed to prepare two sides, I started to attack Act 5, Scene 1 of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Snout's speech while in his wall role. Snout says

In this same interlude it doth befall  
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;  
And such a wall as I would have you think  
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,  
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,  
Did whisper often very secretly.

This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone, doth show  
That I am that same wall; the truth is so;  
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,  
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper. (MND 5.1.154-164)

There were not many words I felt that I needed to define for this particular speech. However, I did want to define two words to understand Shakespeare's intention for his use in the story. "**interlude**. An interlude was usually comic, making the term inappropriate for a *lamentable tragedy*" (qtd. in Chaudhuri 258) and the word "**sinister**. Literally 'left', can't flashing with 'right': a joke for the levitate among the audience on Shakespeare position vis-à-vis the elite audience and the humble actor, in his own theater as well as Pyramus and Thisby" (qtd. in Chaudhuri 259).

In this speech, Snout clearly defined that he is a wall. He conveys to his audience how important the role of the wall is to the storyline. Without a wall, Pyramus and Thisby would not meet through a "crannied hole" (MND 5.1.157). Before I started working on this speech, I read all of the scenes involving the mechanicals. I attempted to apply Guidepost 11: Game Playing and Role Playing.

During the scenes, the mechanicals had a prevalent fear of scaring the women because one false move could lead to death. In Act 1 Scene 2, Peter Quince says to Bottom, "And you should do it too terribly, you would frighten the duchess and ladies, that they would shrink, and that were enough to hang us all" (MND 1.2.70); the next time, that the mechanicals meet is in the woods. They have a conversation about censoring the killing of Pyramus and things that can

potentially scare the royals. They settle on having a prologue, which explains the concept that they are trying to achieve.

BOTTOM. Not a whit. I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue, and  
let the prologue seem to say we will do no harm with our swords, and  
that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and for the more better assurance,  
tell them that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver.  
This will put them out of fear. (MND 3.1.15)

Fear is also mentioned in my second side for Snout in Act 3 Scene1, which has been pre-cut for this callback. Snout alludes to his concerns for the lion part in the play.

SNOUT. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

STARVELING. I fear it, I promise you.

SNOUT. Therefore, another prologue must tell he is not a lion (MND 3.1.25-31)?

Since Snout has the first lines in the play after Peter Quince delivers the prologue. In my opinion, when it came to Snout performing the role of the wall in front of the Royals, he had stage fright. He was scared that if he messed up, this could be his end. You see a difference between Snout in rehearsal verses Snout as the wall in front of an audience. Chaudhuri says that “Snout the name alludes to the sprout of a kettle, a utensil a tinker would commonly mend. It probably also indicates the length of his nose” (Chaudhuri 119).

If Snout identified, having a longer nose is something that would not be invisible. A person could not hide a long nose; he would most definitely stand out in a crowd. He was probably picked on and or bullied, but I don't believe he is shy or timid. Snout has enough confidence to join the artisans in being a part of this play. Snout could be proud of his nose. Snout's nose could be the physical element he chose to lead within when in motion. Since the wall is personified in the play. He is also the nosiest person in direct contact with Pyramus and Thisby storyline because they whisper all of their secrets through the chink in the wall.

You can see the comfortability he has around men he knows. You can tell how he chooses to question Peter Quince's writing or how he sometimes values Bottoms' suggestions over Quinces. These actions make me think he is not as shy as one would have you believe. I also had to keep in mind Guidepost 10: Place, the setting of the performance takes place after the Duke and Duchess's wedding; they are now in unfamiliar territory and being present in front of royalty creates stress. Even the most confident man could choke up, especially if the audience dislikes the play.

Placing all this weight on Snouts shoulders, I chose to play nervousness at the beginning of the speech. Moving into the rest of the address, I used Guidepost 9: Find the Events to add variety. Now the easiest and the most boring choice would have been to act nervous the entire time. I wanted to find the moment where Snout settled into his role and enjoyed performing.

The first event, “In this same interlude it doth befall / That I, one Snout by name, present a wall” (MND 5.1.154-155), is where I played with nervous actions, being soft-spoken, stumbling over lines, and possibly speaking too fast. The second event

And such a wall as I would have you think  
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,  
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,  
Did whisper often very secretly. (MND 5.1.156-159)

I often looked over to the side as if I communicated with Peter Quince for help with my next line or affirming that I am doing my part correctly. I added a physical moment of humor where I forgot to put my arm up to identify the symbolism of me being a wall.

In the third event, I began to play the opposite of nervousness; I played Snout's confidence on stage. I started to relax and allowed the role to take over; this is my moment as Snout becomes larger than life. “This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone, doth show / That I am that same wall; the truth is so” (MND 5.1.160-161); Then the wall is feeling the moment at this point, which leads to the final event. I, as Snout, start to play with the idea of role-playing the acts of Pyramus and Thisby whispering through the cranny. “And this the cranny is, right and sinister, / Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper” (MND 5.1.162-163).

### Snout's Sides

This scene takes place in the woods; this essentially is the mechanicals first rehearsal. Before this point, Bottom has just mapped out the area for the stage and dressing rooms. Bottom addresses some concerns about the play with Peter Quince. Snout intercedes with his own opinions and suggestion.

SNOUT. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

STARVELING. I fear it, I promise you.

SNOUT. Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

QUINCE. Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things- that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

SNOUT. Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

QUINCE. Then there is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

SNOUT. You can never bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom? (MND 3.1.26-60)

I had a hard time figuring out what to do with this particular side. I did not know what direction to take to make this an exciting scene. I did not paraphrase or define terms because I

thought what is happening in this scene was pretty self-explanatory; I started to list out guideposts. Reminding myself about what Shurtleff said, "giving up character and use yourself" so this analysis may not be 100% accurate to the play. Using the questions that Shurtleff asked in the book, I answer them according to what is given in this scene.

### Guidepost 1: Relationship

#### **Do you love him?**

Yes, I am a huge fan of Quince's work, and I'm excited to be a part of this production.

#### **Do you want to help him?**

Yes, I want him to have a successful production; this would be Quince's first significant production, which is my first time on the stage. The way I see it, it's a win-win situation.

#### **What do you want from him?**

I want Quince to ensure my safety; I understand that he is the Playwright, and he's brilliant at what he does. But doing the play as is, is a significant risk. It has a lot of dangerous elements attached. And I want to make sure that my first time acting is not my last.

#### **What do you want him to give you?**

I want him to agree to the suggestions that Bottom and I are presenting to him.

### Guidepost 2: What are you fighting for? Conflict

#### **Why don't you run?**

I do not want to continue to be the person who runs every time there is a problem.

#### **What keeps you there?**

I see the control Bottom has, how he commands the space he goes after what he wants. If I could do this too, maybe I could persuade Peter Quince to fix the script's issues.

**What are you fighting for?**

I'm fighting for some directions in the script to be adjusted. Because If they are not, I would have to leave the production, which I do not want to do. But I also do not want to put my life at risk for a play.

**Who's interfering with your getting what you are fighting for?**

Quince is interfering, he listens when I make a suggestion, and he agrees and makes the change, but he also comes up with another absurd idea that we have to figure out how to fix.

Guidepost 3: The Moment Before

**What are you fighting for in the relationship in the scene you are about to read, and exactly where are your feelings at this specific moment before?**

I'm fighting for Quince to respect me in the same way he respects Bottom. The Moment before, I was relieved that Bottom was able to solve the problem of Pyramus death. But then I remembered that we had another issue on our hands. We had to figure out what to do with the lion's part, for the ladies would get scared if they saw a lion on the stage. So, my emotions went from a relieved state to being hyper-aware that this is my opportunity to fix a problem.

Guidepost 4: Humor

**How can I find humor in this scene?**

I admire Bottom, and I begin to adopt some of his bad habits. Bottom is like the class clown. So, he gains attention by making a fool of himself. He's bold and outgoing, but he is also a control freak, a bit of a diva, and a little rude. I attempt to have his personality but failing because that's not who I am. I play with placing humor within my last two lines. When I say "Doth the moon shine" (MND 3.1.46), I want to play with the word Doth and put the same tone I would use when I would say the word "Duh." Turning the question into a rhetorical question, and for my last line, I laughed at Quince's absurd idea of bringing a wall on stage.

#### Guidepost 5: Opposites

Along with humor, I chose to play the opposite on "Doth the moon shines that night we play our play" (MND 3.1.46)? Because I'm using a cut script, I didn't think asking this question, as you would typically say it in the script, makes sense. In the cutting, once I asked the question, Quince goes onto another topic. What made sense to me was turning the question into a rhetorical question instead of asking a real question and expecting a response.

#### Guidepost 6: Discoveries

##### **What is new?**

When Quince suggests bringing in the wall before my last line, I discovered maybe Quince is not suitable to be the director. This discovery is why I consult Bottom for a solution. At this moment, I understand the relationship between Bottom and Quince. Bottom often oversteps his role as an actor and tries to direct situations. At first, I saw this as a negative trait of Bottoms, but now I realize he does this for the show's success because Quince cannot do his job correctly.

### Guidepost 7: Communication and Competition

Communication:

“(1) makes sure his message is clear” (Shurtleff 110). As the sender, I inform Peter Quince that there is a problem with the lion part of the play. “(2) check that the receiver has received it” (Shurtleff 110). I wait for someone to respond once the company agrees, I offer a solution.

Competition:

Peter Quince is wrong when he writes in a lion’s part because that could get us killed, and he is crazy to think that it is possible to bring in a wall on stage. However, I know the right way to handle this issue with the lion by writing a prologue, and hopefully, Bottom can bring some sense into the conversation about the wall.

### Guidepost 8: Importance

Snout thinks being heard is essential.

### Guidepost 9: Find Events

**What are events?**

The first event happens when I mention the situation with the lion. The second is figuring out how to bring the moonlight to the chamber. And I tell Quince in a rhetorical question to use the actual moon because it shines on the night we perform. The third is when Quince suggests bringing in the wall. And the fourth event is when I refer to Bottom.

## Guidepost 10: Place

### **Where is this place?**

The woods are where we were rehearsing, the stage sits to the left of me, and I am standing where the audience hypothetically would be placed. Trees and logs surround me. The ground is a mixture between dirt and grass. There are fallen sticks on the ground, and you could see the long tree roots.

### **How do you feel about it?**

Peter Quince picked this location to be away from people so that we could have privacy. I think this location offers a neutral place away from the city to rehearse without being disturbed or judged, which provides a source of comfort for me. But there is still a risk lurking because we were in the woods away from everyone, and anything can happen.

## Guidepost 11: Games Playing and Roles Playing

### **What is the game I am playing in this situation?**

The game of persuasion

### **What role do I assume in order to best play this game?**

This game is Director vs. Actor. I must speak in a way that gets my point across and persuade him to lean in my favor. I need to level the playing field, bring him out of his fantasy world and show him the reality. I start by asking a simple question; I present a problem I then follow up with a solution. And because of this, he gives me more problems to solve, allowing a problematic situation to turn into a happy resolution.

Guidepost 12: Mystery and Secret

**What secrets are you keeping from your partner?**

Secretly, I want Bottom to direct the show, and if things don't work out, I'm only following his directions.

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE CALLBACK

### The Warm-up

Before the audition, I start with a 15-minute warm-up focused on the body's general needs—taught by Vivian Majkowski, my professor at the University of Central Florida. The warm-up begins with placing the feet underneath the body and finding alignment. Saying "Hi" to the body by moving around, figuring out what the body needs at this moment. I want to bring my mind into the space surrounding my body, gaining a sense of my surroundings: sounds, smells, taste, touch, sight. Accepting and acknowledging outside thoughts with deep and wide breaths, then releasing them.

I wake the body up with physical movement starting with releasing the shoulder girdle. Placing one foot forward, bending the knee, and using the opposite arm of the bent knee, swinging my arms in a circular motion, slowly increasing the speed, repeating with the opposite arm, and vocalizing an "ah" or an "oh." Now moving on to leg kicks, finding a focal point in front on the floor. Take a leg, raise it, and then gently begin to swing the hips from front to back, counterbalancing with the arms. Gradually increasing the speed, then switch to the opposite leg. Afterward, shaking the whole body, fingers, wrist, arms, head, legs, toes, etc., for 10 seconds ending in a standing X.

Releasing the breath placing the feet back underneath the body, I then focus on the five flood gates. The first is Neck and shoulders. I bring my chin to the chest, leaning my head to my right shoulder, nodding and creating sound. As I vocalize, focusing, the body's energy allows the sound to go through the spine and out of the third eye. I am repeating on the opposite side. I bring the chin to the chest, letting the head float up, keeping the neck soft and long.

The second flood gate is the jaw, using my fingers to massage the cheeks, temporomandibular joints, temporalis, the hairline, and the scalp and then scraping the fingers along the jawbone. I placed my thumb into my mouth, where it reaches the jawbone and pinching the cheeks. I start shaking the cheeks and pulling down until I get to the corner of the lips. Flood gate three: the lips, I took the upper and bottom lips, squeezing and twisting with my fingers. Massaging both lips and place the pinkies inside the corner of the lips, pulling up and down to making happy and sad faces and diagonal and ending with a vocal trilling.

Flood gate four: the tongue, while poking the tongue out, moving it up and down, and side to side, then I lick the entire surrounding of my mouth, placing the blade of the tongue behind the bottom teeth, I release the root of the tongue, dropping the jaw down and forward. I am pulling the front of the tongue outward and slowly start bringing it back into my mouth. For the last flood gate, five: the soft palate, I exercise a professional yawn. This action essentially is when the tongue's blade is behind the bottom teeth, and the center of the tongue is in a scoop, then I yawn.

I end this warm-up with blending. To help with the forward placement, I chew on the "M" sound, trill the lips, and release the sound with a "Ha" developed in the transverses. I will do this three times in different pitches. Then I will move to the articulators hitting plosive sounds such as "P and B," the alveolar ridge "Ta and Da," and the soft palate "Ka and Ga" sounds.

(Majkowski)

### Before Auditions Questions?

These are the questions an actor must ask themselves at the beginning of an audition, according to Jim Helsinger. These are my answers before attending the Orlando Shakes Zoom auditions.

#### **How am I prepared?**

I learned and rehearsed all three sides from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I understand the language and how to play the verse.

#### **What am I going to show them?**

I will show them a fun and creative actor who controls classical texts and knows how to make the text personable and relatable.

#### **What's going to be fun about this?**

This audition is an opportunity to perform in front of a group of people, something I haven't done in a long time.

### Audition Performance Reflection

Walking into this audition, I have to say I felt good. I did not feel nervous or anxious; I was confident and felt in control of my emotions; I felt ready as if it was opening night. I warmed up my voice, and I was comfortable enough with the material. I went into the audition with my mindset on having a good time. Once it was over, I felt confident about the decisions I made. I did not care if they cast me or not because all that mattered at that moment was that I

achieved the goal I set for myself, which was to let go and have fun doing what I love. The choice they choose to make after my auditions was not in my control; what was in my control was to audition brilliantly, and in my opinion, I did just that. Now that I have had some time to process the work, I was able to identify my strengths and weaknesses during the audition.

Starting with the First Fairy, I note that I performed the monologue a total of three times throughout the audition process at the director's request. During this first attempt, I had a lot of fun, and I could tell that everyone enjoyed it. However, upon further review of the transition from the slate to the scene, I found that I was physically out of alignment and struggled to become present in the scene. Three lines into the monologue, I started to find my footing, but I still wasn't actively present in the moment. While in rehearsal, I met obstacles with my diction, pronunciation, and adding extra articles not initially in the script. During the performance, a part of me actively thought about this issue, ensuring that I did not make that mistake. In doing so, this affected the way I played specific actions. I could have played transitions from beats and moments stronger had I been present from the beginning. I felt this was due to not taking an initial breath; when I went from actor to playing the character, the transition was abrupt and without thought.

The director asked me to do it again, but he wanted me to slow down the rhyming because it was hard to follow." Just have fun" (Helsing). He also asked me to play every emotion that the fairy experienced intensely. "When they are happy, they are super happy! When they have an attitude, they have super attitude! Their emotions are fast they jump from one emotion to another" (Helsing). During the second attempt, I did as he asked. I slowed down and intensified the emotions. In addition to the change of my tempo-rhythm I impose onto the

character, tempo-rhythm, according to Eric Barr in *Notes of Acting*, means "the speed and beat of a person, place, or thing" (Barr). This unpracticed change caused me to forget lines despite the audience lacking awareness of my brain processing slowly. I used the idea of the fairy's exhaustion as a placeholder until I could get back on track with the lines. I was able to keep the audience oblivious and actively engaged.

However, my new tempo-rhythm and motivations no longer worked for the scene. When I attempted to recreate the motivation, showing general pleasure and enjoyment in the scene became a challenge. Although the transitions were not as smooth as I would have preferred, my tactics improved and became more effective once I adjust the tempo-rhythm. While the director thought I did a great job with my interpretation and added contemporary style to the First Fairy's monologue. At his request, he wanted to see it done again, this time in the period of the piece. He asked that I make the rhythm less contemporary and more classical but with the same feeling. I thought that vocally I could achieve this because I had practice performing the monologue both ways.

My vocal support improved in each attempt. I began to implement forward placement actively. However, during times of uncertainty of the lines, my voice's placement would return to its habitual state. Fighting habits were a challenge throughout the entirety of this audition. When not speaking, I did not demonstrate listening with the breath. Actors can get in the habit of focusing on words and not the intent of the lines said. Active listening is essential because, as the receiver, it lets the sender know I received the message, improving my presence within the scene. Also, it shows the auditioners my ability to participate when not speaking actively. This task was more demanding because I had never practiced actively listening without a scene partner.

While I do not believe my lack of movement will determine whether or not the audition was good or bad, when looking at things that needed to be improved, activity is at the top of the list. Physically, there was little to no work placed on the monologue in comparison to text and voice. Whereas fairies are freer than other characters in the play, I was stiff with obsessive and unmotivated hand jesters. I did not practice with mystical movement, nor did my warm-up cater to the needs of movement for fairies. The movement will be something I keep in mind for my next auditions.

In addition to the First Fairy, I audition for Snout / Wall; I only performed the speech and the scene once, and, in my opinion, it came out how I practiced. I did the monologue in classical style, and in The Wall speech, I incorporate some movement. These are moments where stiffness is intentional. Vocally I was fighting my inner tempo-rhythm. For example, during The Walls speech, I start nervously speaking fast, then the tempo should shift dramatically to a slow and steady pace as Snout gains confidence. Whereas I slightly slowed down the tempo and emphasized more words. While I did present vocal variety, I felt I could have played with pitch, rate, and volume more in these scenes. I had good beats and moments; I just wished I could have found more creative delivery methods.

#### After Auditions Questions

According to Jim Helsinger, an actor should ask themselves these questions at the end of every audition. Below is my response once I completed my audition for Orlando Shakes.

**What went well?**

I was able to perform my sides to the best of my ability, and I had a lot of fun doing it. I was able to recover my mistakes while staying in character and show versatility in my acting.

**How am I going to improve next time?**

Next time I will include physical movement as a part of my rehearsal.

**How can I be better prepared next time?**

I can practice doing the sides or monologues in different styles and tempos.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Throughout the project, Helsinger and Shurtleff's impact on the audition process was noted. These theories helped interpret the audition material and the emergence of myself and the characters' embodiment by providing me with the tools to integrate the character's given circumstances with my characteristics. Overall, both Shurtleff's auditioning process and Helsinger's textual analysis and audition perspective proved helpful during my Orlando Shakes audition training.

This project taught me that an actor might not need to require an intellectual knowledge of an audition role but instead a special relationship with the character. It forces me to focus on the character's wants, desires, and relationships. Shurtleff's techniques inspired me to develop my approach to the given circumstance and accept my impulses as a legitimate consideration while seeking to create characters' behavior patterns, allowing me to blend myself with the character's traits, experiences, and ideas.

Helsinger's textual analysis taught me how to acknowledge the blank verse; it forced me to concentrate on expressing emotion through Shakespeare's language. With this technique, I established an emotional engagement with the text by recognizing overstressed lines and showing the weight given to what is being said.

Furthermore, Helsinger's audition perspective helped me not put too much focus on my self-worth. When I stopped thinking of an auditions as a barrier to performing and started think of an audition as a performance, I enjoyed and appreciated them more.

My role as an actress in this project taught me a lot about myself. This project challenges the lazy actor. There were times where I was puzzled by moments of perplexity. I did not know what to do with particular events and how or what actions to play on certain lines. There were moments where technique or exercises did not help. And habitually, I wanted to give up and just perform it as it reads on paper. I was motivated by the desire to strengthen my weaknesses. I will make a conscious effort to recognize these moments when they come and not be afraid to work outside of the method and try other techniques.

An area where I wish I would have applied myself was physicality. I needed to impose a physical presence. If a character's presence does not read to the audience, the audience won't understand the characters' role in the situational circumstances played in the scene. We naturally read body language first. And while I had displayed a low level of physicality in my audition, nothing about my body movement and posture conveyed status, personality, or emotional vulnerability in the scene.

After putting these methods into practice, I entered the audition with confidence; I was prepared and showed versatility. I was cast in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a result of this experiment. I will be portraying First Fairy / Mustardseed, and I also will be understudying Egeus and Peter Quince. As an actor, the feeling of an auditioner invested in your audition is exhilarating and addictive. I felt that fascination during this audition. However, I am reminded that other auditioners may not reciprocate the same attention. And through this process, I have learned to accept that fact.

The most significant benefit to applying these methods is that I no longer have to use them exclusively in auditions. I'll be able to bring them into effect at the rehearsal stage. From the way

I approach Shakespeare's text or how I choose to develop a character from any play, I could apply these methods and manipulate the techniques to aid me depending on the text's demands. I believe that, through continuing constant practice and self-reflection, my auditioning skills will continue to reflect my talent more accurately. While I have failed on more than one occasion, my success in future endeavors will eventually outnumber those failures. Of this, I am sure.

It is easy to discover what you don't measure up to or are not good enough for in auditions. My biggest takeaway from this experience was learning how to care less about the thing I have no control over. But paying more attention to what's immediate, essential, and in my power. My new motto for life has become "it is what it is," meaning if they want me, then they want me; if they don't, it's their loss. Following this allowed me to be confident it provided me with the power I needed to have fun. I hope that my research, practice, and performance with "**An Actor Auditions**" will encourage current and potential actors to not give up on their dream because of rejection and instead motivate them to continue to develop their skills.

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