Portraying Pointillism: An Actress's Journey Through Pointillism To Define The Role Of Dot In Sondheim And Lapine's Musical Sunday in the Park with George

2006

Chris Staffel
University of Central Florida

Find similar works at: http://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd

University of Central Florida Libraries http://library.ucf.edu

Part of the Theatre and Performance Studies Commons

STARS Citation

http://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd/983

This Masters Thesis (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact lee.dotson@ucf.edu.
PORTRAYING POINTILLISM:
AN ACTRESS’S JOURNEY THROUGH POINTILLISM TO DEFINE THE ROLE OF DOT
IN SONDHEIM AND LAPINE’S MUSICAL *SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE*

by

CHRIS ELAINE STAFFEL
B.M. Wheaton Conservatory of Music, 2004

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

Fall Term
2006
ABSTRACT

Upon receiving a role, an actor must research the major themes, concepts, and relationships associated with the play, its collaborators, and the character they are to portray. Only by layering this combination of research and analysis to the rehearsal process and performances in a detailed format can an actor cohesively transform the learned knowledge from the performer’s training and research to a finished product on stage. Many forms of art are created using a similar process.

This thesis will explore the similarities between the Post-Impressionist technique of pointillism and the actor’s process in developing a role. Upon observing the basic process of each technique, one can conclude that the method of consistently adding many specific elements eventually creates a finished product whether it is in the form of a painting on a canvas or a performance on a stage. By paralleling these two artistic techniques, a new contribution to musical theatre is made by presenting a fresh outlook for performers in their approach to creating roles.

Research on pointillism and George Seurat’s painting technique when interwoven with Stephen Sondheim’s techniques in music theory (specifically the examples derived from the score of Sunday in the Park with George), and compared to my technique and process as the actor playing the role of Dot in the University of Central Florida Conservatory Theatre’s 2006 Spring production of Sunday in the Park with George, demonstrates how the theories of pointillism and the actor’s process are clearly comparable and arguably inseparable.
“Grazie, Signore,
For Your lips twisted in love to accommodate my sinful self,
For judging me not by my shabby good deeds,
But by Your love that is Your gift to me,
And for Your unbearable forgiveness and infinite patience with me.
When the final curtain falls and You summon me home,
May my last whispered world on earth be the wholehearted cry,
‘Grazie, Signore’. ”

- Brennan Manning
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Earl Weaver and Jim Brown for serving as my thesis committee members

To John Bell for casting and directing me through this entire process

To the cast of Sunday in the Park with George: I could not have asked for a more supportive and enjoyable cast to share my final performance with in my UCF graduate experience

To my classmates: Jo Leffner, Debbie Tedrick, Courtney Winstead, Michael Swickard, and Paul Gebb for joining and supporting me through this two year journey

To Lester Malizia for your constant support, mentoring, and friendship

To Kristina Tollefson for being my thesis committee head, mentor, and friend

To Rhys for encouraging me to pursue my career even though it keeps our love on distant shores

To my family for always supporting me in following my dreams and true purpose
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES ..................................................................................................................... viii

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

CHAPTER TWO: DESIGN ........................................................................................................... 4
  The Origins of Pointillism .......................................................................................................... 4
  George Seurat .............................................................................................................................. 8
  The Technique of Pointillism ..................................................................................................... 11
  Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte ................................................................. 14

CHAPTER THREE: COMPOSITION ......................................................................................... 19
  Sunday in the Park with George: Conception ........................................................................... 19
  James Lapine ............................................................................................................................. 20
  Stephen Sondheim .................................................................................................................... 21
  The Collaborative Process ........................................................................................................ 25
  The Original Broadway Production: Reviews and Response ................................................... 28
  The Libretto .............................................................................................................................. 29
  The Score .................................................................................................................................. 31

CHAPTER FOUR: BALANCE ................................................................................................... 38
  Portraying Pointillism through Music Theory .......................................................................... 38
  Color and Light Scene Analysis ............................................................................................... 45
  Color and Light Musical Analysis ............................................................................................ 48
  Color and Light Lyric Analysis ................................................................................................ 55

CHAPTER FIVE: LIGHT ............................................................................................................ 60
  Portraying Pointillism through the Actor’s Process ................................................................. 60
  Pre-Production Preparation .................................................................................................... 60
  Character Analysis: Dot ............................................................................................................ 63
  Character Analysis: Marie ......................................................................................................... 70
  Rehearsal Process ..................................................................................................................... 73
  Portraying Pointillism in Color and Light ............................................................................... 75
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte ..................................................... 15
Figure 2: Chromatic scale. ............................................................................................................ 40
Figure 3: Chromatic Scale on the Keyboard................................................................................. 41
Figure 4: The Chromatic Circle .................................................................................................... 42
Figure 5: The Color Wheel. .......................................................................................................... 43
Figure 6: Issac Newton’s Color Circle .......................................................................................... 44
Figure 7: Hypothetical Chromatic Scale Color Assignment......................................................... 45
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Imagine sitting in a theatre and waiting for a play to begin. Before you lies a blank stage uninhibited by any scenery or props. As the house lights dim and the stage lights come up, one actor comes to center stage to deliver a line. As the orchestra begins to play some sparse accompaniment, the actor begins to speak: “White. A Blank Page or Canvas. The Challenge: Bring Order to the Whole. Through design. Composition. Balance. Light. And harmony” (Lapine I-1). As the collaborative result of Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine, this musical is based on the life and work of the Neo-Impressionist painter George Seurat whose simplistic opening lines to the musical *Sunday in the Park with George* introduces the audience to six fundamentals of Seurat’s artistic process. The collaborators bring to life the painted figures in Seurat’s famous work, *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* which serves as the impetus of the entire work. This life size painting, intermingled with the scarce knowledge of Seurat’s personal life, provides an intriguing setting for the world of musical theatre to inhabit.

This theatrical world is primarily crafted by exhibiting Seurat’s painting technique of pointillism. The American Heritage Dictionary defines pointillism as “a postimpressionist school of painting...in late 19th century France and characterized by the application of paint in small dots and brush strokes so as to create an effect of blending and luminosity” (Morris 1013). Pointillism is exemplified in both the visual aesthetics on the stage and the aural aesthetics throughout the libretto and score of *Sunday in the Park with George*. The setting of the painter’s studio and the contemporary art museum usher the audience into the artist’s environment and the replica of the painting brought in at the end of the first act allows them to visually reference
pointillism on stage. The libretto is built around George Seurat’s obsession in developing his
technique of pointillism and how this in turn affects those in his life.

Throughout the play the audience observes the character of George Seurat paint and are
immersed in detailed references to the pointillist technique, such as the alignment of the artist’s
text to his painting strokes and his lover named after the essence of the technique, Dot. The
music that underscores the action and drives the motives of the characters mirrors the pointillist
technique through its complexity of notes strategically placed together to create a cohesive score.
Due to this ubiquitous influence of pointillism, the actors themselves are subsequently
submerged in this technique through song, plot, and process.

In developing a character, an actor must combine countless elements throughout the
rehearsal process in order to breathe life and believability into a character. Only by adding many
layers of preparation, diligent practice of acting technique and vocal training, and life experience
can one transform the two-dimensional literature of a play on the page to a three-dimensional
character on the stage. Therefore, one could feasibly argue that the process of the contemporary
actor is not unlike the process of the Neo-Impressionistic painter. Observing the basic process of
each technique reveals that the method of consistently adding many specific elements (or dots as
in the case of pointillism) eventually creates a finished product whether it is in the form of a
painting on a canvas or a performance on a stage.

The following five chapters: design, composition, balance, light, and harmony are
structured around the character of George Seurat’s opening words in the *Sunday in the Park with
George*. Design contains research on the origins and technique of pointillism with a specific
focus on the life and works of George Seurat. Composition highlights the musical *Sunday in the
Park with George*, its collaborators James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim, and its references to
pointillism within the libretto and score. Balance contains analysis of musical theory and color theory in relation to pointillist technique. Light analyzes the character of Dot, George’s mistress, with the focus on my journey as an actress. In this section, I have included excerpts from my rehearsal and performance journal to incorporate all my research and further explain my process in the preparation for and execution of this role. Finally, Harmony will further layer all aspects of my research illustrating my conclusion that my process of creating the role of Dot was clarified by understanding and executed by using the technique of pointillism. The parallel of Neo-Impressionist pointillism and the actor’s process results in a new approach to the creation of a role for the musical theatre performer.
CHAPTER TWO:  
DESIGN

The Origins of Pointillism

During the late nineteenth-century, France became the cultural breeding ground for many artistic movements, most notably that of Impressionism and Neo-Impressionism. During the Second Empire of 1851-1870 and the Third Empire that followed in 1871, France flourished in a peaceful climate unlike that of its recent past (Thomson 15). Through the establishment of the railway network, Paris became the highly accessible capital of Europe’s culture. As the latest transportation technology in the 1860s, the railway network boosted tourism, commerce, education, and trade for the growing city (Thomson 21). With an increase in industrial output, the demand for the middle class worker grew and this once neglected social class started to capitalize on their growing occupational demand. The middle class reveled in its newly found societal status and spent lavishly at the emerging department stores, fashion houses, cafes, theatres, race courses, and seaside resorts (Thomson 15).

Another specific group within the emerging middle class that benefited from this economic boom was the Parisian artists. In her book, Impressionism: Origins, Practice, Reception, Belinda Thomson states that:

France was a self-confident nation, which offered artists a moderate degree of status, security, and aesthetic freedom, providing its official painters with considerable rewards. Clearly late nineteenth-century France offered the necessary conditions for an art form to flourish that were domestic in scale, devoted to sensual pleasure, and addressed to the private collector. (15-16)
Due to the influence of the Louvre and the prominence of L’Ecole des Beaux-Arts, France offered aspiring pupils rewarding inspiration and instruction in their artistic endeavors. Likewise, well-established artists were sustained by the growing number of private collector’s eager to buy their work as long as they captured the desired style of the capitalist consumer (Thomson 19-20).

As the department chair of Trinity University’s art and art history department, John G. Hutton is widely known for his scholastic focus on the relationship of art to social and political movements. In his book entitled Neo-Impressionism and the Search for Solid Ground, he explains that “Social conditions do not produce art; people do. But artists make their art for something or someone, and they produce it as part of an over determining web of social and cultural conditions” (6). He goes on to explain that the market in which the artist must sell their art and the popular values filtered though society clearly influences “unavoidable choices that the artist is compelled to make” (6). Having addressed these “unavoidable choices”, one might ask how the artists of this time clearly established their own methods and subject matter. Due to societal pressures and consumer demands, it is only natural that artists would band together and create supportive, artistic environments in which they could create their art. These groups, whether they intended to or not, led to artistic movements of great proportion.

Impressionism was cultivated in 1859 by a group of artists who prized intuition and emotion in every stroke of artistic endeavor (Piper 346). By using a palette composed exclusively of pure colors and then mixing the colors from the palette on the canvas with brush-like strokes, these artists sought to capture their surroundings as true to the human eye as possible (Goldwater 377). Norma Broude explained that “at the heart of the Impressionist enterprise was the Romantic engagement with feeling and subjectivity” (110). Motivated by
instinct and inspiration, the Impressionists strove to depict the natural essence of humanity in their art. The group of artists responsible for Impressionism was Camille Pissarro, Claude Monet, Pierre Auguste Renoir, Alfred Sisley, and Frederic Bazille (Piper 346). Led by Edouard Manet, these fellow-students assembled their common interests and talents to form a school of painting which flourished for approximately thirty years (Taylor 183). Even though their movement continued to gain a reputable following, the artists’ submissions were rejected in 1874 by the Salon - an established group of academic painters in Paris who determined what was acceptable to be shown at the public art exhibits. This rejection spurred the artists to ban together as the Limited Company of Painters, Sculptors, and Engravers and hold their own exhibition displaying the rejected works (Piper 346). This exhibition drew much attention within the artistic world and officially classified the artists as Impressionists. Between the years of 1874 and 1886, the Impressionists continued to display their influential art in eight annual exhibitions that eventually served as the primary method for other emerging artists’ reception into the field of Impressionism (Piper 346).

The Impressionist’s influence began deteriorating after their eighth exhibition due to the group’s gradual dispersion and a growing societal shift toward scientific interest (Piper 351). After working and exhibiting together for many years, the individual artists comprising the Impressionist group started to disband to tend to their own artistic interests or family needs (Wilson 174). With the group disintegrated, the Impressionists theories were not attended to and certainty could not compete with its new scientific opponent. Science was gaining power in this industrious society, which directly opposed the ideals of the Impressionists with its calculated structure and laws that had little tolerance for intuition and emotion (Herbert 306). At the time of this emergence, the term “scientific” carried two very different connotations. On one hand, to
be “scientific” meant to be a modern freethinker viewing humanity both rationally and optimistically (Hutton 19). On the other hand, to embrace this “scientific” movement was to be a godless destroyer of the established faith, order, and hierarchy of France (Hutton 20). In hopes to embrace the former connotation and defy the popular artistic establishment of the later connotation, a new artistic movement was conceived. Departing from the inspirational ideals of Impressionism, an alternative approach to painting was adapted that relied more on methodical and scientific technique. This approach, owing its primary basis to Impressionism, was named Neo-Impressionism.

If one had to pin-point a time frame for the conception of Neo-Impressionism, an acceptable date would be May 1886 at the eighth and last Impressionist Exhibition (Taylor 183). Similar to the origins of the Impressionist group, a new group of artists were faced with opposition in including their work in the current exhibition. Camille Pissarro, a member of the existing core group of Impressionists, was drawn to the new technique of Neo-Impressionism and became a mentor to these young artists by encouraging their practice of pointillism. He insisted that the works of his son, Lucien, and fellow artists George Seurat and Paul Signac be included in the final exhibition (Wilson 174). Pissarro’s Impressionist colleagues were reluctantly opposed to displaying the emerging artist’s works. When the final compromise was reached to include their works in a separate room, established artists such as Monet, Renoir, Sisley, and Caillebotte refused to participate and withdrew their submissions (Lapine II-10). In his book, Neo-Impressionism and the Search for Solid Ground, John G Hutton explained that Seurat and his group moved away from the “antiquated Romantic Impressionism, grounded in intuition and spontaneity” and moved towards “optical theories in pursuit of a grand synthesis of the ideal and the real, the fugitive and the essential, science and temperament” (36-37).
Although many artists were influential in this movement, George Seurat was to be named the founder of the nineteenth-century French school of Neo-Impressionism with the invention of the technique of pointillism.

George Seurat

Born December 2, 1859 in Paris, France, George Seurat was born into a modest, middle class family that neither encouraged nor inhibited his artist pursuits. His father, Chrysostome-Antoine Seurat, was an eccentric man who worked as a bailiff and distanced himself from the family for most of the year by living alone in a separate house seven miles away from his family (Lucie-Smith 152). Seurat was raised primarily by his mother, Ernestine Faivre, whom he remained close to long after childhood having weekly dinners with her until his death (Taylor 150).

Seurat studied at both a traditional grammar school and the municipal school of design run by the sculptor Justin Lequien. It was around this time that he was to befriend a fellow colleague Aman-Jean and together they would enter and study at L’Ecole des Beaux-Arts from 1877-1879 (Rewald 1). His teacher, Henri Lehmann, recalled the young artist as “a good student, dutiful, orderly, but not particularly brilliant” (Rewald 2).

Seurat was greatly influenced by the work of Delacroix, Rembrandt, and Francisco de Goya - all revolutionary artistic leaders that changed the course of art history (Rewald 4). Seurat’s interest in research and science led him to obsess over theories of complementary colors expounded upon in works such as Ernest Chevreul’s treatise *On the Principles of Harmony and Contrast* and Charles Blanc’s *Grammar of Painting and Engraving* (Rewald 2). Armed with the education and technique of the classic style from his training at L’Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the
current colorist’s theories, Seurat was prodded to formulate his own theories on color and technique (Hutton 37).

In 1879, Seurat left Beaux-Arts to serve his mandatory term in the army. Stationed at Brest, he coveted his free time by the sea to draw sketches of the water and vast landscapes and devoted much attention to exercises in shadow and light (Lucie-Smith 152). His military records are one of the only records remaining that describe his physical attributes with “Brown hair, brown eyes, average forehead, prominent nose, average mouth, round chin, oval face, 5 feet 10½ inch, no distinguishing mark” (Sutter 6). After his year of service, he returned to Paris to continue his artistic pursuits and made his first public debut when his drawing, featuring friend and Beaux-Arts colleague Aman-Jean, was accepted into the 1883 Impressionist Salon (Rewald 3-4).

Much like his Impressionist colleagues, Seurat found his subjects in the common places of Parisian society. Through his scientific approach he managed to vividly capture the essence of real people by blurring the lines of reality. He often painted people in performance settings such as the circus, the follies, and the theatre, yet he was equally fascinated by the solidarity of nature and the crowded suburban parks and riverbanks littered with pedestrians (Herbert 306). His work can be categorized four ways: drawings and exercises in light and shade, oil studies on wood panels, landscapes, and major paintings (A.H.B. Jr 24).

In 1884, he completed his first major painting, La Baignade (A Bathing Scene at Asnieres). Although rejected by the Salon, it was shown independently and now hangs in the Tate Gallery in London (Piper 358). His most acclaimed work, Un dimanche après-midi à l'Île de la Grande Jatte (Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte), was accepted and exhibited in 1886 (Hutton 116). As the major inspiration for Sunday in the Park with George, it
is discussed in further detail in the technique section of this thesis. From 1888 to the year of his death, he continued to conceive a painting almost annually with *Les Poseuses* (The Models) in 1888, *La Parade* (Side Show) and *Le Chahut* (Racket) in 1889, and *Le Cirque* (The circus) (See Appendix C) which was left unfinished due to his death in 1891 (A.H.B. Jr 25).

Following in his father’s footsteps, Seurat was a very secretive individual who kept information far from the public observer and closest family members. The recorded personal life of Seurat is sparse at best. By observing his works one can infer his frequent whereabouts, such as the Gaite Rochechouart, the Eden Concert, Parisian parks, and the banks of the Seine; however, there is little concrete evidence as to how the artist lived out his everyday life. So secretive was Seurat that he even found it irrelevant to inform his family of his offspring. Only two weeks before his death, the family was informed about his working class mistress Madeleine Knoblock, with whom he had a son, Pierre-George Seurat in 1890 (Taylor 150). On March 29, 1891, Seurat died suddenly at the age of thirty-one and was buried in the Cimetiere du Pere Lachaise, in Paris, France. The exact cause of his death remains a mystery. In his online article “Death of Seurat,” the New York Weill Cornell Medical Center’s resident medical scholar Setu K. Vora attributed Seurat’s death to diphtheria. He died without ever selling a painting; however his work was carried on through the Neo-Impressionist movement as it continued to acknowledge his pointillist technique long after his death. In his forward to The Museum of Modern Art’s First Loan Exhibition, A.H.B. Jr fittingly praised Seurat for the legacy that he left behind:

Seurat was the inventor of a method, the constructor of a system without parallel in the history of art for its logical completeness. What other man, artist or layman, came so near realizing the 19th century illusion of possible perfection through science? But
Seurat, the artist, was greater than Seurat, the scientist. In his work, from the least
drawing to the most elaborate composition, great intelligence is completed by
consummate sensibility. (26)

The Technique of Pointillism

At the Independent Salon of 1884, Seurat made the acquaintance of Paul Signac. As
another aspiring painter seeking innovative methods of painting, Paul Signac became a
significant disciple and colleague to Seurat (Philip 358). They would spend the next seven years
working together to develop the technique of pointillism. They adopted the same palette of
colors found among the Impressionists, but deviated from their predecessors in the method of
applying these colors. In his essay “The Color Contributions of Delacroix, the Impressionists,
and the Neoimpressionists”, Paul Signac explains that “by the elimination of all muddy
mixtures…the neoimpressionist insures a maximum of luminosity, of color intensity, and of
harmony – a result that had never yet been obtained” (qtd. in Goldwater 377-378). Signac
attributed this result to three major elements that clearly defined the Neo-Impressionist
technique: scientific theories of color, optical mixture, and methodical divisionism.

Most of the Neo-Impressionism followers were devoted to studying the popular color
theories permeating the nineteenth-century artistic front. Artists were well versed in the
theories of prominent color theorists such as Delacroix, Chevreul, and Helmholtz. French artists
even studied the works of select American physicists such as Columbia University professor
Ogden Rood’s *Modern Chromatics* (Bomford 78). In his attempts to solidify his own theories,
Seurat poured over the works of his contemporaries. He was also greatly influenced by the
works of art critics such as Charles Blanc and Charles Baudelaire. In his work, *Grammar of*
Painting and Engraving, Blanc stated that “when the Orientals, who are excellent colorists, have to tint a surface which is smooth in appearance, they make the color vibrate by putting tone upon tone” (qtd. in Rewald 2). Blanc sought foreign models of color to compare and enlighten the French artist’s use of color. Likewise, Baudelaire recorded that:

The larger the painting, the larger should be the brush strokes, but it is well not to mix them materially; the strokes blend naturally at the distance desired by the sympathetic law which associated them. The color thus obtains more energy and freshness. (qtd in Rewald 5)

Seurat agreed with Baudelaire’s stance to leave the colors separated, trusting that the viewer’s eye would mix them. The influential theories of these colorists are evidenced in Seurat’s pursuit of optical mixture and methodical divisionism.

The basis of optical mixture is that if colors were placed together, the eye would mix the two hues to make another resultant color. This theory is best explained and widely publicized by the French chemist Michal Eugene Chevreul in his treatise On the Principals of Harmony and Contrast of Color (Bomford 78). In agreeing with Chevreul’s work, Seurat hoped to demonstrate that juxtaposed colors mix in the human eye more effectively than on the artist’s palette. Therefore, instead of mixing red and yellow to make orange, Seurat placed red and yellow next to each other to let the eye perceive orange. It is interesting to note that Seurat never mixed a color with another color that wasn’t next to it on the color spectrum. He held true to this method from the precise placement of colors on his square painter’s palette to the canvas he created. He even went as far as to paint the frames of his pictures with complementary colors adjacent to the colors on the canvas. His system of applying paint in isolated dots of color upon the canvas to create a finished picture devoid of drawn lines or mixture meant that any lines that
the viewer perceives are a result of putting a line of yellow dots next to a line of blue dots for the
eye to mix and create the illusion of a line (Horowitz 93). By layering thousands upon thousands
of colored dots in a scientific method, he hoped to illuminate color by giving it the greatest
possible brilliance (Piper 358). This system of methodical divisionism quickly became the single
most distinguishing element of the Neo-Impressionist movement. Although the actual theories
were not revolutionary, the exclusive devotion of Seurat’s application of these theories paved a
new movement among nineteenth century art.

The Neo-Impressionist’s practice and commitment to the division of color automatically
labeled them as pointillists among art critics and colleagues, however rarely did they themselves
agree with this title. Seurat actually favored the term “chromo-luminarist” to bring attention to
the true focus on illuminating color. Signac tried de-emphasizing the importance of the actual
point through his explanation that “division is a complex system of harmony, an aesthetic more
than a technique. The point is but a means” (qtd. in Hutton 38).

Seurat recorded his theories only one year before his sudden death. The basis of his
theory relied on the simple truth of harmony. In creating harmony, Seurat focused on the three
components of tone, color, and line as the systematic tool and through-line for his art. He
explained these three elements as:

1. For Tone: a more luminous, or lighter, shade against a darker.
2. For Color: the complements, i.e. a certain red opposed to its complementary, etc.
   (red-green, orange-blue, yellow-violet).
3. For Line: those making a right angle. (qtd. in Goldwater 376)

Each element is made of different elements; for example, two different shades placed together
create a certain tone; two hues placed together create a certain color, and so forth. Seurat
recognized that by assembling the correct combination of these elements the viewer perceived
different moods for the overall tone of the painting such as:

1. Gaiety of tone is given by the dominance of light; of color, by the dominance of warm colors; of line, by the dominance of lines above the horizontal.
2. Calm of tone is given by an equivalence of light and dark; of color, by an equivalence of warm and cold; and of line, by horizontal.
3. Sadness of tone is given by the dominance of dark; of color, by the dominance of cold colors; and of line, by downward directions. (qtd. in Goldwater 376)

Seurat depended on the relationships between tone, color, and line, and by altering these relationships he was able to portray different moods. The largest example, both figurally and literary, of Seurat exploring these relationships is found in his painting *Un dimanche après-midi à l'Île de la Grande Jatte* translated as Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte.

**Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte**

In 1884, Seurat began painting a new work that would clearly establish his pointillist technique. After completing his first transitional painting, *La Baignade*, with suggestive hints of pointillism, Seurat was now ready to create an entire piece to serve as the culmination of his artistic endeavors to solidify Neo-Impressionist technique. Over a two-year span, he pieced together an 81 X 120-inch painting from a vast series of drawings and oil sketches. Seurat based its picturesque setting on the banks of the Seine from his original oil painting on a wood panel called *Study for La Grande-Jatte* in 1884. To this enlarged initial backdrop, he added countless figures from previous drawings such as *Three Women, Seated Woman, Woman with a Monkey,* and *The Nurse* to populate the popular Parisian weekend resort (A.H.B.Jr 24-25). With the absence of lines and a clear devotion to complementary colors, Seurat relied on optical mixture to fuse hundreds of dots together into this picturesque depiction of Sunday leisure.
Felix Feneon, a critic and biographer who ultimately gave the Neo-Impressionist’s their title, described the atmosphere of the painting:

It is four o’clock on Sunday afternoon in the dog-days. On the river the swift barks dart to and fro…A Sunday population has come together at random, and from a delight in the fresh air…Seurat has treated his figures in a summary or hieratic style, like a Puvis de Chavannes gone modern….The atmosphere is transparent and singularly vibrant; the surface seems to flicker. (qtd. in Piper 359)

The painting captured approximately fifty figures promenading through the park, yet void of any interaction amongst them. Not one figure in this cross-section of middle classes is making eye
contact with another, each frozen in their composition of dots. Perhaps this prompted John G. Hutton to comment on the philosophy behind Seurat’s intentions when stating that “another facet of Seurat becomes evident: the impression of something sinister and sad hidden at the heart of modern society” (196).

There are many speculations as to the social implication of this painting. Certain symbolic images surface that comment on the social status of the individuals. For instance, a woman carrying a fishing pole in the nineteenth century was more than likely a prostitute (Clayson 6). Likewise, the monkey was also known as symbol for prostitution, implicating that the women prominently displayed in the downright corner is this man’s mistress (Horowitz 102). Many viewers found Seurat’s straightforward depiction of the Parisian society amusingly accurate. In his review for *Le Revue Contemporaine*, poet Paul Adam stated that:

> Even the stiffness of these folk, their cutout forms, contribute to the modern tone, remind us of our too small clothes glued to our bodies, the reserve of our gestures, the British cant we all imitate…Monsieur Seurat has seen that perfectly. (qtd. in Hutton 117).

However pertinent these observations may be, Seurat had another agenda. In a letter to a friend he wrote, “They see poetry in what I have done. No, I apply my method, and that is all there is to it” (qtd. in Goldwater 375). The Belgian poet Verhaeren, a close friend and colleague of Seurat described the artist as:

> An organizer, in the artistic sense of the word. Hazard, luck, chance, the sensation of being carried away – these things meant nothing to him. Not only did he never start painting without knowing where he was going, but his pre-occupation with his pictures went far beyond their success as individual works. They had no real meaning, in
his view, unless they proved a certain rule, a certain artistic truth, or marked a conquest of the unknown…he had set himself to pull art clear of the hesitations of vagueness, indecision, and imprecision. Perhaps he thought that the positive and scientific spirit of the day called for a clearer and more substantial method of conquering beauty. (qtd. in Banfield 343)

This organization and calculation is undeniably evidenced in Seurat’s painting of the Parisian society enjoying their day off at the banks of the Seine. Seurat’s painting has been described as “an essay in the analysis of light and colour, the reduction of definable subject to almost abstract patterning” (Taylor 71). This “abstract patterning”, however, was soon to create dissent among the popular artists of Seurat’s day.

Displayed at the Eighth and final Impressionist Exhibition in 1886, this submission, tucked away in a separate room with the clan of emerging Neo-Impressionists, irresistibly stole the limelight. Critics acknowledged the work with varying degrees of acceptance. Those in favor of the piece titled it a “manifesto painting” that “every vanguard artist…had to come to terms with” (Hutton 115). It was also reviewed as “the kind of painting in which cheating is impossible and ‘stylish handling’ quite pointless” (Lucie-Smith 152). Bonafoux described Seurat’s work as “a programme. It was not a matter of feeling, but demonstration. Impressionism had nothing more to offer. La Grande Jatte was not a pointillist Grenouillère; it was the death certificate of Impressionism” (Bonafoux 53). Whether the impetus of Impressionism’s demise or mere science parading in the medium of paint, Seurat could have never imagined the magnitude of influence this work would generate. Now hanging in the Art Institute of Chicago, this painting gives the twenty-first century a glimpse into the social setting of the nineteenth century Parisian park, but more importantly documents the exquisite
calculations of Neo-Impressionist technique.

Exposition can be defined as “a setting forth of meaning or intent or a precise statement or definition” (Morris 463). At the exhibition in 1886, Seurat simplistically described his work as “the exposition of my ideas on painting” (Time Magazine 1). After working for two years on many different sketches and practice oil sketches, he was able to combine all his work into one painting that carefully detailed and defined his process and technique. In theatre, a play or musical begins with the exposition serving as an introduction to expose the audience to the setting and characters of the play. This method for drama can even be traced back to Aristotle and his structure for Greek drama explained further in the libretto section of the following chapter. Seurat’s used the definition of an exposition as a way to introduce the statement of his technique. The theatre uses the definition as a way to introduce the plot of the play. With the correlation of these two separate definitions, Seurat’s painting became exposition for two theater collaborators’ dramatic structure generations later.
Sunday in the Park with George: Conception

The summer of 1982 found two theatre professionals in two very different stages of life. Stephen Sondheim, a prominent composer-lyrist in musical theater, was contemplating his retirement from the theatre after the failure of his recent musical *Merrily We Roll Along*, which ironically explored the themes of artistic success and failure in an almost autobiographical manner (Gottfried 153). James Lapine, a young writer-director and newcomer to the successes of the theater, was eagerly seeking new projects. Through Lapine’s enthusiasm and encouragement, Sondheim was able to forge ahead in a collaboration that would last over a decade.

Sondheim was introduced to Lapine’s work at the New York Shakespeare Festival in 1981 with his production of *Twelve Dreams*. He found the visual aesthetics of Lapine’s work intriguing, but it was only after a suggestion from producer Lewis Allen that the two were united as collaborators (Secrest 325). Both were interested in pursuing a theme with variations, and after disregarding the original suggestion of turning the Nathanael West novella, *A Cool Million*, into a musical, they explored the notion of forming relationships by placing photographs together (Secrest 326). When this proved unsubstantial, they turned to the medium of painting. After using it in his previous work *Photographs*, Lapine immediately referred to Seurat’s masterpiece: *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* (Gottfried 155).

Sondheim recalled the discovery process by saying, “All those people in that painting. You speculate on why none of them are looking at each other…maybe someone was having an
affair…or one was related to someone else. And then Jim said, ‘Of course, the main character’s missing—the artist.’ When he said that I knew we had a real play” (qtd. in Secrest 327). After this realization, Lapine and Sondheim embarked on their first collaboration by creating the missing elements of the Aristotelian structure. The painted figures’ fictional background and the sparse social commentary implied by their positions and activities within the park quickly became a pliable playground for plot, and the scientific approach of pointillism became the infrastructure of the musical accompaniment.

James Lapine

With a background in photography and graphic design, James Lapine was the ideal candidate to tackle the task of perceiving, evaluating, and interpreting Seurat’s framed intentions. According to his bio on the PBS website “B’Way Broadway: The American Musical,” Lapine was born in Mansfield, Ohio on January 10, 1949. He left the mid-west to travel to the West Coast and attend CalArts University. After completing his Masters and working as a free-lance photographer and graphic artist, he moved to the East Coast in the late 70’s to teach design at Yale School of Drama and work as a graphic artist for their publication Theatre Magazine. This transition incidentally began his career as a playwright and stage director (Thelen 59).

During the January work term of each academic year, Yale professors were encouraged to branch out and work in different fields. After much prodding from students, Lapine adapted and staged Gertrude Stein’s short play Photograph. In 1977, a producer took note of Lapine’s play and moved it to an Off-Broadway theatre where it ran successfully and won Lapine an OBIE award (Thelen 60). After this unusual success, Lapine staged Twelve Dreams in 1978, followed by another successful staging, Table Settings. In 1982, he received much acclaim for
his production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* starring William Hurt as Oberon (Gordon 262).

Martin Gottfried, a prolific musical theater biographer, describes Lapine as “a playwright who wrote not only poetically but ‘visually’…” (155). As a graphic designer, Lapine’s writing for the stage was colored by a strong visual sense. As a photographer, his direction captured his subjects in vibrant stage pictures framed by the proscenium. As “a man with intellectual inclinations, unconventional ideas, and…a profound interest in psychoanalysis (Gottfried 155)”, Lapine found a wealth of unconventional ideas to explore. Whereas most viewers simply peruse the painting at face value, Lapine was intrigued by the social implications implied in the painting and the unconventional structure. The figures in the painting combined with his interest in psychoanalysis enticed his imagination to create a story relevant to a modern society of artists with his new collaborator Stephen Sondheim.

**Stephen Sondheim**

Born on March 22, 1930, Stephen Sondheim was welcomed into the world as the only child of the successful dress manufacturer Herbert Sondheim and clothing designer Janet Fox (Gottfried 10). His father enjoyed taking his clients to Broadway shows and introduced young Sondheim to the melodies that he heard each evening by playing them by ear on the family’s piano (Secrest 18). Sondheim started taking piano lessons at the age of six, but due to his mother’s incessant prodding, was reluctant to play in public (Gottfried 12). At the age of 10, his parents divorced, and he was transferred to the New York Military Academy. He fit well into the rigor of discipline and organization that the school provided and welcomed the opportunity to escape the problems at home with his eccentric mother (Secrest 24). During a summer break, he met Jimmy Hammerstein, the son of the famous Broadway lyricist Oscar II, and the two boys
formed a friendship that would last a lifetime. Sondheim found refuge at the Hammerstein’s	house and quickly became their surrogate son (Banfield 12). Oscar found great delight in
tutoring the promising youth in the art of composition and recalled the fourteen year old as “a
driven kid with early ambition. He wanted to get on with life. Do everything” (qtd. in Gottfried
14). It was this relationship with Oscar that determined Sondheim’s career path. Sondheim had
so much respect for his adoptive father that he would later admit “I wrote for the theater in order
to be like Oscar. I have no doubt that if he’d been a geologist, I would have become a geologist”
(qtd. in Secrest 13). When Sondheim wrote By George!, his first musical written for his prep
school, he asked Hammerstein to read and critique it as if it was a script that passed his desk
from an unknown composer. Hammerstein agreed and proceeded to ruthlessly critique the
young composer’s work for four hours (Banfield 13). Sondheim recalls learning more about
songwriting in that one afternoon than most composers probably learn in a lifetime. After their
composition session Hammerstein gave him four different assignments. He was to write three
musicals: one based on a good play, one on a flawed play, and one on a work not written for the
stage. The final assignment was to write an original musical. Although Sondheim received all
the assignments in one afternoon, it would take him the next four years to complete (Gottfried
15). He was helped along the way by his collegiate experience and professors.

Sondheim entered Williams College in 1946. After briefly considering a major in
mathematics, he dedicated his attention to composition and piano (Gordon 9). The head of the
small music program, Robert Barrows, approached music with a strict emphasis on theory and
taught his students that art is hard work (Banfield 19). This mentality would later be restated in
Sunday in the Park with George with comments like “Artist’s work…they work very hard”
(Lapine I-37) or “Art isn’t easy!” (Sondheim II-26).
While working as a gofer for Hammerstein during the summer on various projects such as *Allegro* and performing and writing during the school year, Sondheim started to tackle his four assignments (Secrest 53). For the first assignment, he adapted the comedy *Beggar on Horseback* by George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly to create his first musical *All that Glitters*. Even though it was just an educational starting point, BMI published five of the songs and out of it came the first song ever written by Sondheim to be performed live on a New York radio station (Gottfried 18). Sondheim’s second assignment took shape as he adapted the Maxwell Anderson’s flawed play *High Tor*. This finished assignment never amounted to anything as the writer himself reserved all rights in hopes to adapt it into a musical in collaboration with Kurt Weill (Gottfried 18). For his third assignment to turn a novel or short story into a musical, Sondheim chose the works of P.L. Travers. He attempted to combine the famous short stories of *Mary Poppins* into a full length musical, but he was dissatisfied with the arduous task of creating a through-line among the segmented stories (Secrest 79). Sondheim’s fourth assignment was inspired by a motto etched in Sondheim’s memory from the dormitory steps at Williams College. The steps read: “Climb High, Climb Far, Your goal the sky, Your aim the star” (Secrest 88). His original musical entitled *Climb High* followed the journey of a young man moving to New York to break into show business. Although his final assignment never amounted to any professional work, Sondheim took with him this motto as he set out on his career.

Sondheim graduated in 1950, receiving The Hutchinson Prize, the highest honor for music at the university. The award was for promising composers to work or continue their studies with a $3,000 fellowship. With the fellowship, Sondheim chose to study in New York with the pioneering electronics composer Milton Babbitt (Gottfried 19). Their daily sessions consisted of Babbitt mulling over the complexity of classical music and transferring that
knowledge into writing for the theatre. Sondheim said that he was “[Babbitt’s] maverick, his one student that went into the popular arts armed with all his serious artillery” (qtd. in Secrest 87). The training and mentorship that Sondheim received from Hammerstein paralleled the Impressionist ideals of intuition and emotion informing structure while the tutelage that Barrows and Babbitt provided Sondheim mirrored more closely the Neo-Impressionist emphasis on the application of science and mathematical theories to the arts.

With all this training underway, Sondheim started taking any and every writing job that presented itself from television scripts to commissioned songs (Banfield 23). He was commissioned to write three songs for the upcoming musical Saturday Night. Although it did not make him an overnight success, it quickly led to other projects (Gottfried 45). With this score, he was able to audition for Leonard Bernstein and reluctantly accepted the lyrist position for Bernstein’s next project West Side Story (Secrest 112). Although Sondheim had his heart set on composing, he excelled as a lyrist for this project. His success on West Side Story led to two more lyrical successes: Jule Styne’s Gypsy and Richard Rodgers’ Do I Hear a Waltz (Gottfried 23).

Shortly after his mentor Oscar Hammerstein died in 1960, Stephen Sondheim started his career as a composer with the hit A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Forum followed by the flop Anyone Can Whistle (Banfield 43). After working on the television musical Evening Primrose, he began a collaboration with Harold Prince that would not only carry him into the next stage of his successful career, but would also usher in a new era in musical theatre history (Secrest 183). The combination of Harold Prince’s master showmanship as producer-director and Sondheim’s artistry as composer-lyrist created an unstoppable artistic team. Their first musical, Company, is argued to have ended the era of the book musical with its replacement: the
concept musical. With the thematic through-line discussing the pros and cons of romantic relationships, this concept musical revolutionized Broadway (Gottfried 77). Themes of marriage, relationships, and life purpose permeated Sondheim and Prince’s work and were discussed from every angle in the structure of the concept musical. After *Company* came *Follies, A Little Night Music, Pacific Overtures,* and *Sweeney Todd* – all largely popular and uniquely different (Gordon 10). While *Follies* showcased the ghosts of the past for showgirls at a reunion of sorts, *Sweeney Todd* delved into the dark crevices of human nature. *A Little Night Music* flirted with the idea of mismatched relationships struggling to seek their true counterparts, and *Pacific Overtures* dealt with the effects of trade and commerce in a far away land. The next project was a backwards look into the present and past of a composer trying to produce art in *Merrily We Roll Along.* Unfortunately, the musical went under and took the Sondheim-Prince collaboration with it. Although the collaborators have always been reluctant to explain the reasons of their parting, Sondheim explained that it was during a period of high frustration and constant failure that eventually ate away at the collaboration. The failure of *Merrily We Roll Along* was the final straw for the dwindling composer/director team and its devastating impact severed their friendship for the next ten years (Gottfried 153). With Sondheim still lamenting this artistic and personal loss, it is amazing that he would turn around and find another brilliant collaboration with James Lapine. However, perhaps this change was exactly what the mature composer needed – a fresh look from an emerging writer untainted by the challenges of flops and theatrical baggage.

**The Collaborative Process**

Once the collaborative agreement was determined, Lapine and Sondheim began meeting
weekly for several months before the actual writing of *Sunday in the Park with George* began in September 1982. During one of the earlier meetings Sondheim noted that “the show is, in part, about how creation takes on a life of its own, how artists feed off art (we off Seurat); the artist’s relationship to his material” (qtd. in Secrest 328). Fascinated by the sparse ambiguity of Seurat’s life, Lapine strove to tell the artist’s story and hoped that the characters in his painting revealed something of his relationships to them. Through the lens of Lapine’s imagination, the characters that Seurat encountered in the park were framed within the musical’s libretto. The range of interaction varied on many levels from an occasional glance in the park to a passionate love affair to a family relation. Linking the facts to the embellished back story of each character proved a tedious, yet rewarding task for the writers. In the elementary stages of development, Lapine wrote many interior monologues for the characters in attempts to transfer them from the canvas to the script (Secrest 329). These monologues were never actually included in the final script, but served as a means to explain each painted figures’ purpose and connection with the story, much like the back story that an actor creates and explores in their process of transforming a character from the page to the stage.

As Lapine continued to sculpt the storyline, he wrote very carefully to install a sense of the French dialect in the first act by careful avoiding contractions and Latin root words. He also contrasted the language by playfully exaggerating the American’s sloppy diction (Thelen 62). He paid great attention to distinguishing the different class structures in the park as evidenced by Seurat in his painting. Lapine’s conceptual writing mirrored pointillism in regards to the relevant themes that the characters presented and the smallest details. One of the most obvious details lies in Lapine naming the heroine after the very element that comprised Seurat’s painting - “Dot” (Banfield 345). This symbolic name not only emphasized how the artist’s obsession
with his art bleed into his personal life, but it also reinforced the importance of his lover serving as his muse.

The writing styles of Lapine and Sondheim differed greatly. Acknowledging his own tendency to write “fast and sloppy”, Lapine dove into the subject matter by “plugging in and worrying later” (Secrest 329). Sondheim, on the other hand, wrote very slowly and meticulously, and rarely presented a song in-progress. Lapine pleaded with him to write at a quicker pace to have songs to inspire his writing and to help mold the plot. Regardless of pace, Lapine and Sondheim found a great sense of cohesiveness in their collaboration due to this fascination with the most minute details. These details made a significant impact on the libretto and score of *Sunday in the Park with George* in paralleling the concept of pointillism.

With only one completed act accompanied by a sparse trio of rhythm, keyboard, and trumpet, *Sunday in the Park with George* began its workshop at the Playwright’s Horizons on July 6, 1983 (Horowitz 102). The actors performed the first act and then read the sketchy outline of act two’s thematic material that was presentable. Act II originally set out to be an exploration of different variations on the theme. This idea, spurred off of Sondheim’s fascination with the compositions of Rachmaninoff, is briefly mentioned in the dialogue of two of the characters in the act. After viewing the art exhibit, Harriet explains to her confused colleague Billy that it is supposed to be a “theme and variation” (Lapine II-14). Although he specifically chose to include this notion in the text, Lapine was not sold of its validity to support the entire act. He convinced Sondheim that in attempts to keep the attention of the audience they must carry through some semblance of a plot. This created a huge challenge for the creators that delayed any assurance of a final ending till the very end of its workshop at the Playwrights Horizons. They toyed with different ideas such as paralleling La Grande Jatte to Central Park or having Dot appear nude in
the scene resembling another Seurat painting *The Models* (Horowitz 100-101). These ideas of paralleling the past with the present and having the past inform the present eventually led the creators to leap forward an entire century and explore the tension and balance of the modern art world that they were creating in. Over the course of this month and 25 workshop performances later, Act II would be conceived along with a growing public interest. Whether it was due to the star presence of its two leads, Mandy Patinkin and Bernadette Peters, or the sheer creativity and hard work of its collaborators, the musical clearly had a future (Secrest 337).

**The Original Broadway Production: Reviews and Response**

April 2, 1984 marked the opening date of previews for New York audiences at the Booth Theatre and after thirty-five preview performances it officially opened on May 2 (Gottfried 166). In his New York Times Magazine review of opening night, Frank Rich gave this perspective:

As befits a show whose subject is the creation of a landmark modernist painting—George Seurat’s *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*—Sunday is itself a modernist creation, perhaps the first truly modernist work of musical theater that Broadway has produced. Instead of mimicking reality through a conventional, naturalistic story, the author’s of “Sunday” deploy music and language in nonlinear patterns that, like Seurat’s tiny brushstrokes, become meaningful only when refracted through a contemplative observer’s mind… Sunday is a watershed event that demands nothing less than a retrospective, even revisionist, look at the development of…the serious Broadway musical. (Goodhart 199)

The musical was nominated for ten Tony Awards including best musical, book, score, and direction, but the competition of *La Cage aux Follies* proved undefeatable and the show only
received awards for best scenic and best lighting design. Despite its poor showing that evening, it later won many other awards (listed on the Internet Broadway Database) including eight Drama Desk Awards, The Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Musical and Scenery, and the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Musical. The spring of 1985 would bring Sunday in the Park with George its largest acclaim, when it was announced as the sixth musical ever to win a Pulitzer Prize for drama. Ticket sales went up twice the rate at 10,000 dollars an hour and Time magazine applauded that “Sunday in the Park, stands before its audience…a cool, unblinking object. Only a closer look reveals it as a shapely object of art” (Secrest 341). As the closing curtain came down on October 13, 1985, it marked one of Sondheim’s more successful runs with 604 performances.

After its closure, the original cast made recordings for television, CD, and DVD, and Lapine and Sondheim collaborated on two more challenging works: Into the Woods in 1987 and Passion in 1994. In 1990, the London production of Sunday in the Park with George was staged and received the Lawrence Olivier Awards for Best New Musical and Best Actor (Philip Quast). According to the Sondheim Online Reference Guide, many productions followed, including the 2002 Productions at the Kennedy Center and the Chicago Shakespeare Theater. It continues to being staged in 2006 in both professional and academic arenas including the London Revival and the University of Central Florida Conservatory Theatre’s spring production. Throughout time Sunday in the Park with George will remain a wonderful example of Lapine’s poetic structure of the libretto and Sondheim’s musical craftsmanship of the score.

The Libretto

The Greek philosopher Aristotle argued that each play is comprised of five elements –
exposition, conflict, rising action, climax, resolution and/or dénouement. A writer uses this arch of events to produce a plot line that carries through the action of the story and furthers the characters along in their process. This structure is acknowledged as the Aristotelian structure and aids playwrights in their development process where so many details have to be layered together just as the Neo-Impressionist artist must layer countless dots to achieve his painting. However, the unconventional structure of *Sunday in the Park with George* does not necessarily adhere to this design. If one had to outline the structure of the libretto, it could be explained in three different sections containing two complete Aristotelian structures:

- **Act I:** 1884 – 1st Aristotelian structure containing: exposition, conflict, rising action and climax
- **Act II:** 1984 - Continuation of Act I’s structure with the resolution in 1884
- **Act II:** Modern 1984 – 2nd complete Aristotelian structure

Lapine crafted the libretto so that the two complete stories are separated by an entire century. However, in Act II, reappearances of Act I characters transcend the established time frames that join the two plot structures. In fact, with the official conclusion for Act I found at the beginning of Act II and the dependence upon Act I characters to reemerge for the conclusion of Act II, the distinguishing lines of the two structures are further complicated.

Overall, the essence of Act I is the creation of the painting. In his essay, *A Cathedral to Art*, Frank Olley states “from the very beginning of the work, Seurat’s painting is the beginning and the end, the basis of the play’s structure from the initial white stage and portals to the white canvas at its conclusion. The painting comes together piece by piece in the first act as George sketches, and at the end of the act, literally directs the composition of the total design” (203). Seurat works diligently throughout act one to draw the characters of his life in his sketchpad and transfer them into his finished product. In the end, however, his inability to stop working
eventually drives away the ones closest to him. These characters depart the plot of his life yet remain forever immortalized on stage as he captures them beautifully on the finished canvas that appears at the close of the first act.

The essence of Act II challenges the audience and characters with pertinent themes of what it means to create art as an artist regardless of a specific time period. By following the artistic endeavors of Dot and Seurat’s great-grandson, Lapine and Sondheim are able to parallel the two worlds and show the similarities of these two artists in their two respective worlds. The character of Marie, the daughter of Dot and Seurat, is introduced and serves to redirect her grandson George in his quest to develop new work. George returns to Paris to work on his last light instillation and is greeted by an unexpected visitor. At this encounter, the two Georges from each act somehow merge as Dot somehow reappears, and the two lovers reunite without any logical explanation. Unresolved relationships of Act I, whether personal or artistic, creatively resolve at the end of Act II through the characters’ of each act transcending time to meet and enjoy an inspirational interaction. The need for an explanation of this melding of characters and time is lost in the outcome of George’s ability to finally connect, whether inspired by the characters of his past assembling to sing “Sunday” or his final reconciliation with his muse and lover, Dot (Bonahue Jr. 180). With the inclusion of the score, however, the structure is able to exist and function as a completed dramatic work. Due to the libretto’s nature, it is impossible to explain its structure in the absence of the score.

The Score

While Lapine was filling in the blanks to Seurat’s secretive story, Sondheim poured over Seurat’s theories. The book Sondheim’s Broadway Musicals accounts his process:
The more Sondheim found out about Seurat, the more he realized: ‘My God, this is all about music,’ pointing out that ‘Seurat experimented with the color wheel the way one experiments with a scale. He used complementary color exactly the way one uses dominant and tonic harmony. (qtd. in Banfield 344)

Sondheim’s pointillist research led him to parallel pointillist theories of painting with the score’s structure. Known precisely for his ability to meld musical qualities together to personify a certain subject, Sondheim adapted Seurat’s method of separating individual colors to paint a completed painting.

In developing the score, Sondheim’s compositional strategy mirrored very similarly that of Seurat’s process. Just as Seurat devised the figures in his painting by combining many previous drawings and sketches of the figures he collected from the park, Sondheim created many separate vignettes for the characters in the park. These characters represented by the twelve tone chord that is found in the beginning of the score are the primary figures featured in the painting: George, Dot, Jules, Yvonne, Louise, the Nurse, the Old Lady, the Soldiers, the Celestes, Franz, Frieda, and the Boatman (Banfield 356). The development of the score and the conception of his musical numbers developed as the composer took small segments of notes and combined them to compose motifs. These various motifs represent the characters and themes in the story and when used in repetition created the vast majority of the score. Sondheim originally featured the character’s motifs more prominently in the score with songs such as the soldier song and “Yoo-hoo!” but as the story narrowed in on George and Dot, many of the other character’s songs were cut or condensed into the park sequence of “Gossip” and “The Day Off” (Horowitz 102).

This was only one of several score revisions in the developmental process. Another
significant shift was the vocal ranges of the two leading voices. Sondheim originally wrote the role of Dot as a soprano and the role of George as a bass-baritone. However, when the actors Bernadette Peters and Mandy Patinkin were cast in the lead roles, the score had to drastically change. Sondheim quickly dropped the vocal range of Dot to an alto for Bernadette Peter’s rich, powerful alto voice and escalated the vocal range of George to a tenor to accommodate Patinkin’s full range (Horowitz 97).

Sergei Rachmaninoff, Steve Reich, and Phillip Glass greatly influenced Sondheim in the way he integrated thematic and theoretical components. A long time admirer of Rachmaninoff’s work, Sondheim not only incorporated the use of theme and variation from his acclaimed work “Theme of Paganini”, but also mirrored his use of lush, legato melodies soaring over complicated passages of tone clusters in a driving rhythmic accompaniment (Horowitz 96). While Lapine discarded the notion of theme and variation in the second act’s structure, Sondheim never abandoned his original idea and featured it in the development of the entire score. One specific example of this is in the set of parallels between the acts. The two most pointillist numbers “Sunday in the Park with George” and “It’s Hot Up Here” open each act and both explore the process of an artist’s model posing for an artist. Likewise “Color and Light” and “Chromolume #7”, two more musical selections in opposite acts, mirror each other with the same musical building blocks or cells in the accompaniment. The melodies of “Finishing the Hat” and “Putting it Together” are almost exactly the same with only a few variations in the cadences (Horowitz 98). By composing songs in each act that contained many similarities, Sondheim was able to bring together the two stories using the theories of musical composition whether the average audience member realized it or not. Even after singing the songs for a year and a half, Mandy Patinkin only realized these parallels after Sondheim mentioned them at a
party (Horowitz 99). So cohesively constructed, the score enabled the listener’s ears to hear the entire score instead of the sheer sequence of the repeated cells and leitmotifs. This crafty assembly was much like that of Seurat’s final illusion derived from optical mixture. The minimalism movement originated around 1960 at a time when Americans were highly influenced by the musical cultures of India and Indonesia. This musical style is defined by the reiteration of musical phrases or smaller units such as figures, motifs, and cells. These elements are repeated with subtle, gradual, and/or infrequent variation over long periods of time. The use of repetition is prevalent in these compositions that prize simplicity and sparsely driven motifs (Norton 877). This definition of minimalism clearly defines the musical movement’s characterizations found in Sondheim’s concept for the score of Sunday. He believed that with its use of the pure colors and diatonic harmonies, minimalism was arguably the musical equivalent of pointillism (Banfield 357). This specific genre of composition greatly influenced the musical qualities of the score. Sondheim explained that the score of “Sunday in the Park with George is very spare. And that seems right, because look what Seurat did – the score echoes the subject” (Horowitz 43). In his process, Sondheim composed in such a way as to echo Seurat’s vision and art. In referring to the collaboration process with Lapine, Sondheim stated:

Given the delicacy of [Lapine’s] writing, [he] felt that his script was so allusive, and poetic in the sense of resonance…the entrance of music would rip at it. I worried that the songs—and in particular, an applause interruption from the audience—would tear the fabric. I wanted to blend the music and the lyrics into the fabric of what he was writing so that it would be a weave. (Gottfried 156)

Sondheim did just that, therefore the lines between the collaborators work were blurred in creating one seamless story. The ingredients of song and text were creatively blended together in
the recipe of the libretto’s structure to produce a finished product similar to Wagner’s notion of “Gesamtkunstwerk” in classical opera or that of Jean Cocteau’s notion of “poetry of the theatre” in modern drama. Both these notions defined a fusion of artistic elements - music, movement, word, and gesture – in order to communicate the text to the audience (Olley 200). With that said, it is essential to examine the score’s relationship to the structure of the libretto to see how the songs further the plot.

Act I, roughly containing all the necessary elements Aristotle prescribed, could be a complete one-act play. The exposition begins with George Seurat entering a blank stage to start working on his drawings of the various people in the park, most importantly his lover, Dot. Singing the first musical number, “Sunday in the Park with George”, Dot initially reveals the conflict of her desire for George’s attention and his preoccupation with his work. Sondheim stated in an interview that he has a tendency to encapsulate all of the music for the show that he is currently composing in the opening number and this show was no exception (Horowitz 75). The opening number “Sunday in the Park with George” quickly exposes the audience to the major themes and leitmotiv of the score. The park starts to populate and we see disapproval for George’s work from his more recognized artistic colleague Jules and his wife in the song “No Life”. These interactions provided during the rising action of the libretto’s structure invest the audience more deeply with the characters as they watch tension growing between George and Dot in “Color and Light”, make connections with the people in the park during the medleys “Gossip” and “The Day Off”, and find out that Dot is pregnant with the artist’s child. They witness the need for both leading characters to connect: Dot with the artist in “Everybody Loves Louis” and the artist with his painting in “Finishing the Hat”. The lovers’ irreconcilable desires usher in the climax of the act when the heroine realizes that she will not be fulfilled by her lover.
in the haunting duet “We Do Not Belong Together”. After a brief visit in the park to reveal their child, Dot leaves George to travel abroad to America with Louis, the baker, who can provide her the financial and emotional support she needs. The falling action of the act begins with George trying to connect with his mother during the ballad “Beautiful”, and the act comes to a resolution when the artist completes his work and visually assembles the characters on stage to represent the completed painting during the choral anthem of “Sunday”.

Act II opens with the actors reviving the blocking of the conclusion of Act I in the painting, yet this time one century later. After agonizing over their fate being stuck in a painting during “It’s Hot Up Here”, the actors trickle offstage while telling the audience of George Seurat’s death. This opening serves as a continuation of the resolution to Act I. Then the scene shifts to a museum in 1984 where Seurat’s great-grandson is exhibiting his own artistic work – a light installment entitled “Chromolume #7”. During this new exposition, young George and his grandmother Marie, the daughter of Seurat and Dot, are giving a presentation on the life and works of Seurat to whom his invention, the chromolume, is devoted. The conflict in this act stems from George’s desire to develop innovative works of art that are well received by the public and artistically fulfilling. The rising action ensues with a bustling reception during “Putting it Together” and George’s interactions with his grandmother in “Children and Art”. After Marie’s death, the young George journeys to France to work on another commission and struggles to connect and move on to something new. In the midst of his introspective search during “Lesson Number Eight”, Dot, the muse of his great-grandfather Seurat, comes back to inspire him generations later. The climax of the scene comes when Dot explains to the young artist how to “Move On”. During this climactic duet, George finally connects with Dot and is reunited with the artistic figures in his lineage when the characters from the park start to reappear.
for the resolution and reprise of “Sunday”. As the park Parisians exit, leaving George and Dot on the stage, the musical ends in the very nature that it began: “A blank page. His favorite. So many possibilities” (Lapine II-45).

Marked with Lapine’s creativity and intellect, the libretto captured the essence of the characters in the painting and enhanced the themes of the struggling artist. Sondheim’s score purposefully accompanied the characters on their journey to discovering these themes. The true contribution of this work to the canon of musical theatre, however, is its carefully crafted structure that can only be fully grasped by in-depth analysis of the relationships of pointillism and music theory within the libretto and the score.
CHAPTER FOUR:
BALANCE

Gino Severini, a famous Italian painter that dabbled in Futurist and Cubist movements, acknowledged the relationship between art and music when he wrote:

Painting is like music. An art which does not obey fixed and inviolable laws is to true art what a noise is to a musical sound. To paint without being acquainted with these fixed and very severe laws is tantamount to composing a symphony without knowing harmonic relations and the rules of counterpoint. Music is but a living application of mathematics. In painting, as in every constructive art, the problem is posed in the same manner. To the painter numbers become magnitudes and color tones. To the musician, note and sound tones. (qtd. in Goldwater 438)

The analogy between music, painting, and mathematics is undeniable. The structures of these art forms, in both the aural and the visual sense, depend upon fixed laws. These fixed laws, therefore, connect the art forms together. The nature of this relationship creates both tension and balance.

Portraying Pointillism through Music Theory

The relationships between color and music theory have been studied throughout history. During the conception of Seurat’s masterpiece in the nineteenth century, many colorists were elaborating on such comparisons in their popular treatises. Two colorists, discussed in chapter two, that heavily influenced this movement were Baudelaire and Blanc. Baudelaire stated, “The art of the colorist is evidently in some respects related to mathematics and music” (qtd in Rewald 5). Likewise, Charles Blanc asserted, “Color, which is controlled by fixed laws, can be taught
like music” (qtd in Rewald 5). These theories inevitably found their way straight into Lapine’s libretto. In Act I, George is trying to explain his theories and technique to his colleague Jules in saying, “Science, Jules, fixed laws for color, like music” (I-52). Although Sondheim & Lapine’s notion to compare the theories of color and music was clearly unoriginal, the notion to parallel an entire musical score and libretto to the techniques of pointillism in this fashion was unmistakably innovative.

Comparing these fixed laws of color and music could be the topic for an entire thesis and certainly cannot be fully examined in a subheading of a chapter. However, it is important to at least touch on the parallels of music theory and color in order to understand Sondheim’s process in creating the score. In his book Sondheim’s Broadway Musicals, Stephen Banfield explains the basics of these parallels in that the two key elements that relate color directly to music are timbre and pitch.

Timbre is the quality heard from a musical note or sound regardless of dynamics or pitch. Every instrument produces its own unique timbre depending on the wavelengths of the sound and each instrumental family (i.e. woodwinds, brass, strings) is recognized by these differentiations. A saxophone has a different sound quality, or timbre, than a French horn, while a bassoon sounds different than a trumpet, even if all four of these instruments are playing the same pitch. Where timbre is the certain quality heard from a sound, a color’s value is the certain quality perceived by the viewer depending on its lightness or darkness. In fact, timbre is often referred to as tone color, especially when addressing the voice. Unlike instruments, the human voice can produce many different timbre or colors. Certain voice teachers teach their students by describing the desired timbre with adjectives such as warm or round tones. The analogy then to music is best described by the fact that both subjects, timbre and color, are defined by the
different values of their actual composition.

When a student walks into a basic level music theory class, the first thing that s/he is introduced to is a chromatic scale. A fundamental of Western music, this scale represents the twelve pitches that make up the entire musical alphabet of notes. The scale seen in Figure 2 starts on the C pitch and continues to ascend the scale by an interval of a chromatic semi-tone (or one half step).

![Chromatic Scale](image)

**Figure 2: Chromatic scale.**


As seen above, the ascending scale consists of twelve pitches (C, C#, D, D#, E, F, F#, G, G#, A, A#, & B) until it repeats the note of C an octave above. The stepwise motions on the scale are created by sharps and flats. A sharp raises a note by a semi-tone while a flat lowers a note by a semi-tone. The descending scale also consists of twelve pitches (C, B, B flat, A, A flat, G, G flat, F, E, E flat, D, D flat, C) lowered down the scale by flats.

This can also be described in relation to the keyboard. In Figure 3, the piano keyboard is illustrated to demonstrate that the notes in the chromatic scale are played in conjunction with the notes on the keyboard. The white key C starts the progression by moving up a chromatic semi-tone to the black key C# and another semi-tone movement lands on the white key D and so forth. Whereas the semi-tone is separated by a half step dividing the lines and spaces on the scale, the semi-tone on the keyboard is typically found dividing the white and black keys and always located directly next to each other. This stepwise process creating a slight, yet distinct change of pitch can clearly be compared to the color spectrum.
After much optics research and experimentation, Issac Newton derived the concept of a spectrum in 1671 and divided this spectrum into seven colors: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, and Violet (also known by its acronym ROY G BIV). Adding or subtracting these colors with the color found adjacent in the spectrum forms different colors. Likewise, by simultaneously playing two notes of music adjacent to each other in the scale, the listener hears a tone cluster. Composers use this music device to alter the mood of the music with dissonance. A new unique sound quality is created by the tone cluster just as mixing two adjacent colors on the spectrum creates a new color. Two different charts—the chromatic circle and the color wheel, can visually explain another apparent analogy of the chromatic dimension of pitch in regards to color.

As seen in Figure 4, the chromatic circle displays the relationships between pitches strung together in a continuous cycle of semitones. Starting from any point on the circle, the notes move through the chromatic scale by a series of sharps or flats depending on which direction one wishes to take.
This visual example of music theory can be compared to the visual example of color theory: the color wheel.

Just as a beginning music student would be introduced to the chromatic scale, the beginning art student would be introduced to the color wheel. This circular diagram of colors shows the primary colors and the different colors produced by mixing these hues in specific ways. When dealing with pigment, the three primary colors are red, yellow, and blue. These colors are then mixed to create secondary colors – green, orange, and violet. By combining a primary color with a secondary color, a tertiary color is formed such as red-orange, blue-green, or red-violet.
The color wheel and chromatic circle share the same method of combining the relationships of these pure elements, whether colors or musical notes, to create endless possibilities in their respective compositions. In order to make a correlation between the circular charts, a note can be assigned to each color. With twelve notes and twelve colors, the circles can be combined effortlessly. For example: C = yellow, C# = yellow-orange, D = orange, D# = red-orange, E = red and so forth.

Isaac Newton made this correlation between color and music by combining these two circles in his very own color circle displayed in Figure 6. This circular chart also included the
relationship to the solar system with the indicated markings within the circle and is superimposed on the spectral hues. The notes that are only divided by a semitone in the natural scale have half the distance of those separated by a whole note. For example, the notes E and F located at the top of the circle are joined by a semi-tone therefore share less dividing space than that of the notes F and G separated by a whole tone.

Figure 6: Issac Newton’s Color Circle


Whereas Newton brought together colors, music, and planets, Sondheim strove to combine color, music, and musical theatre performers. In a discussion on the conceptual content of the score Sondheim stated:

Pointillism is in the instrumentation and accompaniment. Originally, I had a Schematic idea…Isn’t it interesting that Seurat had, on his palate, eleven colors and white. And I thought eleven and one make twelve. And how many notes are there in the scale? Twelve. And I thought, ooh, isn’t that interesting. So I thought I would utilize that in some way, shape, or form. (Horowitz 91)
Taking the basic chromatic scale, Sondheim toyed with the coincidence of the exact amount of colors that Seurat painted with and started out on his compositional motif. He recalls “at first I thought I’d assign one note of the twelve-note scale to each color and place them in the same way, but then I realized that the entire score would have consisted of minor seconds – an unnourishing prospect” (Banfield 354).

![Hypothetical Chromatic Scale Color Assignment](image)

C: Red, C#: Orange, D: Yellow, D#: Green, E: Blue, F: Indigo, F#: Violet, etc.

**Figure 7: Hypothetical Chromatic Scale Color Assignment.**


Although systematically clever, by only incorporating the minor second interval, Sondheim would be neglecting the remaining eleven intervals and limiting the singer and composition with this exclusivity towards one intervallic relationship. He liberated the note assignments to a less structured formula and incorporated the minor second interval - equivalent to that of a semitone in the theory of music and an analogous color in the theory of color. He then shifted his use of pointillism to mirror the rhythm of the score. Adapting this route, he found endless possibilities to structure the score in a way that would enhance the actions of the painter’s technique and the physical actions of the characters on stage. One of the most vibrant examples of this is found in the scene *Color and Light*.

**Color and Light Scene Analysis**

*Color and Light* is about desire. More importantly, it is about the desire to connect. As one of the primary themes woven throughout the musical, this longing to connect is truly captured in this scene as the leading characters go about their everyday lives. The scene is
utterly dependent upon strict observance to the intricate stage directions written into the plot, musical accompaniment, and overall structure of the scene. The scene opens with Dot sitting at her vanity in George’s studio – a blatant homage to another painting by George Seurat entitled “La Poudreuse” (translated as Young Woman Powdering Herself) (found in Appendix C) in which he painted his real life mistress Madeleine Knoblock. Dot is anxiously getting ready to attend the Follies-Bergere and her movement is accompanied by a steady, persistent rhythmic accompaniment. As she powders her body and face, she thinks aloud about the artist. By listening to her spoken thoughts, the audience is informed of the tension in her relationship with George due to his compulsive work habits. The same Dot that struggled with this desire to please George as the model yet still playfully demand his personal attention in the park, is now found in the privacy of her lover’s home. Excused from the restrictions and the expectations of society in this solitude, Dot enjoys the female ritual of beautifying herself for the evening’s activities. The audience catches a glimpse of Dot’s sensual side mingled with insecurity that was not so evidently displayed in the previous park scene. As she explains that George doesn’t stop his work even to the point of sleep deprivation and often keeps secrets from her, the lights fade out and reveal George working behind one of his canvases. In the same rhythmic manner that Dot was powdering and primping, George is painting along with the mirrored accompaniment. While painting, he recites certain principles of design (Order, Design, Composition, and so on) that carries him into a song relaying his process of applying the different colors. He is immersed in the world of his painting even to the point of talking to the characters he is painting on the canvas. As he continues working, the lights dim down on his process and reveal Dot still in her own primping process. As she works, she wishes for different physical attributes in hopes of attracting George’s full attention. This melodic passage is repeated with new lyrics in another
song “The Day Off” that George sings later on in the act – another example of the theme and variation in Sondheim’s composition. In this section, Dot, like most women, takes inventory of what she would change about herself in front of her mirror. Then instead of capturing George’s attention with these different physical attributes, she envisions herself in the Follies. Whether this is simply derived from her anticipation of attending the Follies that night or created by a deeper longing for a different lifestyle with public admiration and more control, Dot dances into a daydream accompanied by an up-tempo accompaniment vastly different from any other section in this scene. Just as she gets to the climax of her dream-like state, she is brought back to reality. In realizing that she can’t have George in this lifestyle, she dismisses her thoughts of fame as an unsatisfactory setting with too much light, smoke and shady men. The lights come up on George again as he works – complimenting his figures design on the canvas before him. As he speaks to the figures of paint, Dot sings out her frustration towards George’s overwhelming work habits. As the scene goes on George gets more engrossed in his painting. This is evident in the next segment of the song which is similar to the first time that he sang his actions of dabbing the colors of red, blue, green, yellow, and violet. This time, however, his artistic process is interrupted with thoughts of Dot and the audience clearly sees his struggle to break himself away from his work to appease his lover. As George continues to sing about the colors in his painting, Dot talks about the way that George looks when he works, specifically recalling his eyes as he looks at her while she is modeling for him. In this setting where she is invited to work with him, she has experienced this connection that they are both longing for – George with his work, she with George. Dot continues to relive these moments for herself in remembering what it is like to capture George’s attention and while doing so George comes away from his painting to get more paint or clean a brush. For the first time in the scene, he glances at Dot and their eyes meet. Dot
continues to sing while George actually takes the time to study her physical attributes. This section dramatically ends with the two lovers singing together for the first time in the play with the line “I could look at him/her forever” (Sondheim I-22). The music holds the two lovers as they discuss his progress and Dot continues to get ready. When she questions him about going out that evening, he reveals that he has forgotten the offer he made earlier that day in the park. Realizing that she has been neglected once again, Dot furiously leaves him in the studio. George resumes painting and struggles with his choice to devote his attention to his work over his mistress. In the end, however, he is unable to divorce himself from his work.

Sondheim’s infamous ability to weave the subject matter of the text and music so seamlessly is highly evident in this selection. By Lapine inviting the audience inside the artist’s studio for the first time in the play, the playwright revealed the actual process of George Seurat’s technique as he works. It also reveals the strains that it places on his relationships to those closest to him. By analyzing the scene’s musical composition, the theorist is able to see how the composer mirrored the pointillist technique in his musical accompaniment. By analyzing the scene’s lyrics, the audience is able to hear the process in development. In capturing the process of pointillism by engaging the audience’s and actor’s senses, Sondheim creates an emotional experience filled with technique, subtext, and desire.

**Color and Light Musical Analysis**

In order to compose with notes similar to that in which the painter painted with color, every notation, rhythm, and dynamic of this song was intentional, much like that of Seurat’s painting. Sondheim commented on this in an interview with Mark Eden Horowitz by saying that “Everything in that picture is completely calculated: the colors are calculated, the geometry is
calculated, the costumes are calculated. There’s not a single spontaneous thing in that picture” (qtd in Horowitz 103). Likewise, Sondheim’s score was precisely calculated and planned to reflect both the painting and the painter’s technique. Each specific element of music contributes to the overall effect and explains the process of its development. In Appendix C, four examples from the score are included as a reference guide for this section. In Appendix D, a chart of the musical analysis for Color and Light outlines the format for the following analysis.

Sondheim takes the listener through a passage of key changes throughout the course of this song. The progression of keys usually signifies different emotional shifts for the characters within the song. The key changes also assist the lighting designer in directing the exchange of the audiences’ focus from either character in the work studio to the vanity table as the lights and proximity are the only things that truly separate these characters who are working on the same stage.

Color and Light starts in the key of D flat Major. In measure 50, it modulates a whole step to E flat Major when George starts getting more and more into his work while singing the second segment of his artist melody. It then modulates down a perfect fourth in measure 72 to B flat Major for a brief moment as the scene shifts to Dot speaking. When she starts singing in measure 83, the key changes to G Major. This is the first time that the song escapes the confines of a flat key and allows Dot to explore her daydreams about being a Follies girl. George re-enters at the end of this section, and in measure 144 Dot begins to sing as the key shifts to E flat Major. In measure 151 it then modulates to G Major as George sings a variation of the solo that he began earlier and eventually ends in an alternating duet with Dot. It modulates for the last time at measure 222 to E flat Major after Dot exits, leaving George at work in his studio. In changing keys throughout this progressive song, Sondheim uses modulation to add variety in the
intensity of the characters thoughts and a constant tug and pull of emotion.

The meter of this selection is also precisely controlled to create the illusion of working movement. *Color and Light* is dependent upon the strict foundation of its time signature. The piece starts off in 4/4 time with a moderato marking. However, Sondheim cleverly sneaks in many different measures of alternating time signatures. These alternations usually usher in transitions similar to the composer’s use of modulation. Different examples of this modulation can be found in measure 83 as Dot transitions into another section of the song in the key of G Major. The time signature changes right back to 4/4 once she is in the ballad section, but then changes again in measure 91 to 3/4 as she transitions into the up-tempo section that is set in 2/4 to create a completely different musical style. Just as she is taken out of her present surroundings in the studio through this daydream, the music departs from the normal studio accompaniment and reflects the music of the Follies theater in 2/4 time as Dot is eagerly anticipating in 2/4 time. As the character dismisses the idea and is brought back to the reality of the studio, the music resumes its 4/4 time. In Part III the 4/4 time signature is often interrupted with a measure of 6/4 such as in measures 152, 194, 197, and 203. Sometimes this sudden time change adds to the variation of the *leitmotiv* that Sondheim has strung together. For example, in measure 13 the composer adds a 3/2 time signature in the middle of 4/4 section to add one more series of four eight notes. It is interesting to note that the majority of the measures with alternating time signatures occur within Dot’s segments. For the most part, George’s segments stay true to the 4/4 times, which begs the question - was the composer trying to symbolize the relationship trend of Dot trying to distract George’s attention from his structured work? Or was Sondheim trying to personify and contradict Dot’s flighty and distractible personality with George’s constant and focused nature? Whether Sondheim intended this or not, the interruptions
to the strict time signature seamlessly usher in the transitions between the character’s separate segments.

Sondheim was very specific to the tempi in the selection as well. Starting out in a moderato (moderate) tempo it shifts to a faster section in measure 92 labeled doppio movimento (meaning double movement usually with the addition of the octave), falling to L’istesso tempo (the tempo from the previous section) in measure 128 and returning to Piu mosso (meaning with more motion or quicker) in measure 134. In measure 151 it accelerates to Con moto (with movement) for George’s long solo. In approaching the duet at measure 192, Sondheim notates that the tempo should be Molto meno mosso, poco rubato (meaning a great deal slower with a freedom to liberate the rhythm for expression). In measure 204, as the accompaniment and character’s emotions start to pick up it is labeled Rubato dolce, stringendo (meaning hurrying the sweet rubato section by accelerating the tempo) (Lee 28-85). In the last section with George alone in the studio, it is simply labeled moderato returning to the original tempo. The changing tempi create an exchange of thoughts and movement that inform the audience of the characters’ personalities, work ethics, and desires.

The typical musical theater song is composed of musical phrases such as a verse, chorus, bridge, or cadence. These phrases are assembled to form different structures such as the binary form (AB) and the ternary form (ABA). In the abbreviations, the A and B represent different musical phrases present in the song’s order (Manus 114-115). Due to its A section alternating with other contrasting sections, the structure of Color and Light can be classified as a rondo form (Manus 116). It begins with a brief six measure (extended if following the provided repeat) introduction section that establishes a series of notes that are the basis of the variations throughout the piece. The A section starts at measure four and continues to measure 83. The B
section starts at measure 83 and ends when the A section reemerges at measure 134. This section is carried through 192. Section C is introduced as the characters begin their duet in measure 193 and continues till 221. The song reverts back to Section A for the final part IV from measures 222 to 251. Therefore, the song structure of *Color and Light* could be abbreviated as ABACA.

The analysis of the harmonic structure of this piece is very challenging due to limited pedal tones and sustained pitches and the absence of block chords. By steering away from these traditional elements in his composition, Sondheim makes it difficult to nestle into a clear harmonic structure. From the introduction to the final cadence, this piece resembles atonal music at best with its tendency to give each note equal weight. The essence of atonal music is defined by its lack of a tonal center (Lee 7). With only a single arpeggio playing one note at a time in the treble clef, there is no clear resolution to any key sensibility. The arpeggio toys with various intervals and gradually expands as Sondheim builds on this motif throughout the piece. Another cause for confusion established from the onset of the piece is the interplay with the minor second interval. Even though Sondheim strayed from his original idea to compose entirely with semitone intervals, he still incorporated this theme throughout this song. There are many added incidentals that disrupt the tonal structure of the key. As the piece grows, the same accompaniment block found in the first three measures continues to be melded into different variations and patterns with added chords, tone clusters, and interchanging intervals. One section that breaks away from the repetition of this variation is Section B when Dot begins singing for the first time in the piece. It is only at her up-tempo section when she sings about the Follies that the audience truly hears a distinct tonal center as Sondheim writes the tonic followed by the dominant for the two beats in each measure in this 2/4 time signature. It then shifts back to atonality of the rest of the piece.
Although the atonal sensibility and modulations enhance the notion of pointillism, the rhythmic structure of this piece truly characterizes the painter’s technique. The staccato arpeggios strung together represent the painter dabbing the canvas with hundreds of dots. These pointillist notes rarely stop throughout the piece and carry the actors’ actions and emotions. The beginning starts out with only the treble clef presenting the arpeggio of notes. In measure 19, two eighth notes in a minor sixth interval are added to the constant arpeggio in an additional treble clef at the downbeat for four measures. This is followed by a tone cluster sustained and altered by a semi-tone until measure 50. As George’s solo intensifies, so does the accompaniment underneath him. Sondheim builds upon the original single note arpeggio by adding three more voices simultaneously. This addition creates harmony and dissonance intertwined. He cleverly placed the original arpeggio in the highest register so that the ear is constantly reminded of the theme. Within the structure of the piece, Sondheim commonly inserts another motif found in the score, most commonly remembered in the previous set change music to take the audience into the studio. The transitions between the different structural sections and the different character parts vary in their rhythmic dialogue. There is typically a two to three measure transitional section leading the listener to the next section where the rhythm slows down in a sense by a rare scarcity of notes or chordal clusters. In certain segments of the characters solos, the accompaniment pulls away and allows the singer to take on the rhythmic quality therefore paralleling the pointillism quality. The primary example of this is in Part III where George sings the actual arpeggio as he relays his thoughts and work to the audience. During this section, the only activity in the accompaniment is found in wide tone clusters at the downbeat of sporadic measures. Another example of this is in Section B when Dot sings small segments over sustained chords. As the two characters scenes start melding together through the altering
exchange of their text and melodies, the four voiced arpeggio reenters bringing the listener back to the established motifs. With the exception of one additional chord section sustained, the arpeggio continues till the end of the piece with an added bass clef providing occasional pedal tones.

Upon this rhythmic structure, the melody emphasizes the attention to pointillism while also playing with the emotional vulnerability of the characters. By writing the vocal ranges and intervals moderately small, Sondheim cleverly disguises the dialogue of the text and melody so that the audience barely notices the shift between when the actor is speaking and/or singing. Two parallel examples of this are when George singings “more red” and Dot sings “more rouge” (Sondheim I-17-18). Each example is composed of two notes moving up a semitone in the very way that one would speak this thought out loud with a natural vocal inflection. In trying to mirror a speech-like quality, Sondheim challenges the singer with advanced rhythm passages in his melodic lines. Once the singer passes the learning process of these passages, however, a great deal of acting preparation is already underway. The reasoning behind Sondheim’s challenging works is that he writes in a way to capture human speech. This everyday patter does not typically follow the basic musical structure of straight quarter notes or eight notes. He uses syncopation, rests, pick-up notes, and hurried sections of patter to achieve this naturalistic dialogue carried by pitch. Another method that the composer added to achieve this effect was the musical direction in certain segments to use rubato. This musical term allows the singer to take more time on certain notes in the expense of others for expression. The singer-actor can take this musical direction to liberate their acting choices as they deliver the line. It allows a certain amount of flexibility to personalize the line. The majority of the melodies in this selection are comprised of short eight notes strung together in fragmented thoughts or lengthy
sentences much like that of the variation on the arpeggio in the accompaniment. A series of
sixteenth notes and quarter notes are inserted into this pattern to create variety, but the melody is
primarily based on the inclusion of eighth notes mirroring and alternating with the
accompaniment. Sondheim provides a nice contrast from this constant eight-note drive with
soaring legato sections such as George’s sustained “Sunday” in measures 170-175 and varying
tempos that both accelerate and calm the established pace. There is a specific ebb and flow
created by the transitions into each scene as the character initiates and resolves certain passages
of melody. In addition to the complex passages, Sondheim reverts to a simplistic seven note
passage that repeats throughout the ending of Part III. Both George and Dot sing this passage of
eighth notes. By alternating with each other in repetition, the illusion of the initial eight-note
arpeggio resurfaces much like that of an image surfacing on a canvas due to many separate dots
placed together. This exchange culminates after a sustained passage to bring the two lovers
together in song as they sing the passage once more together. This is the first time in the song
that the two leads find themselves in unison through melody.

Color and Light Lyric Analysis

In the same way that Color and Light uses the music to emphasize the dramatic shifts and
thought processes of the characters, the lyrics highlight the character’s differing desires and
agendas. The characters’ text is constantly switching from speech to song throughout the scene,
although the percussive nature in which George’s lyrics are written blurs the distinction between
the spoken and sung text. The fluidity of this song creates a conversational feel even though
both characters are communicating alone until the very end of the scene. Color and Light is an
exquisite example of musical theatre writing in that it escalates to song when the character is
truly in engaged. Sondheim clearly accomplished his objective to meld the scene of song and
text together in a way that the audience does not even notice the exchange of the different forms.
This is achieved, to some extent, by Sondheim’s particular word craft. A clear outline of the
lyrics highlighting these examples is located in Appendix E as an additional reference to the
following analysis.

To encourage this conversational, thought-like process, Sondheim departed from any
typical rhyme scheme throughout the lyrics. The rare examples of rhyme are found in certain
sections such as in the two sections when George is talking to the figures in his painting:

Look at the air Miss-
See what I mean
No, Look over there Miss
That’s done with green. (Sondheim I-18)

Look at the glade, girls
Your cool blue spot
No, stay in the shade, girls
It’s getting hot… (Sondheim I-21)

Another section of rhyme combines the characters lyrics as they talk about the light that George
works with, a constant theme for Seurat that led to the title of this song:

Dot:
None of the others worked at night
How do you work without the right, bright, white, light… (Sondheim I-19-20)

George:
Color and light
There’s only color and light
Purple and white. (Sondheim I-20-21)

A faint allusion to rhyme is also formed through certain ending sounds. For instance, the
endings “er” in Dot’s sung section about her wishful attributes that would make her special
enough for George, and “ing” when George is being distracted with the thought that Dot is
“sitting” and “waiting” to go while “getting” fat while “waiting” (which is the second foreshadowing to her pregnancy in this number) both have a similar effect to a traditional rhyme. These rhyming endings lend themselves to blend nicely with the repetition and coerce the listener’s ear to find them almost undistinguishable.

The final example of any rhyme scheme is found in Dot’s section on the Follies. Being the only section similar to any typical musical comedy up-tempo selection, the nature of this section naturally lends itself to a rhyme scheme as she explores the excitement of being a Follies girl:

    Gentlemen in tall silk hats
    And linen spats
    Would wait with flowers
    I could make them wait for hours
    Giddy young aristocrats
    With fancy flats… (Sondheim I-19)

    The illusion of rhyme is carried throughout the piece by the cyclic use of repetition. Sondheim built the song by placing certain lyrics over and over again in the song much like Seurat continuously placing dots of color on his canvas. In her opening monologue of the scene, Dot repeats the certain key words “George”, “I”, and “Need” that suggestively inform the audience of her internal struggle. In Dot’s next section, she starts each sentence with “If my…” Both Dot and George carry this method of starting sentences with the same word throughout the song. In the section where she thinks about George’s glance, she repeats a word each time in her two sentence segments that interrupt George’s sung lyrics about color and light. When these thoughts elevate to song, Dot repeats one melodic line singing:

    But it’s warm inside his eyes
    And it’s soft inside his eyes
    And he burns you with his eyes…
    And you look inside the eyes…
And you drown inside his eyes. (Sondheim I-21)

The repetition of these phrases with only a few words changed to describe the quality of George’s eyes clearly lends a growth in intensity for Dot’s growing desire for engagement with her lover. The most evident example of repetition however is in George’s sections as he is painting. In fact, these particular sections are clearly built upon and utterly dependent on repetition:

More Red
And a Little More Red
Blue Blue Blue Blue
Blue Blue Blue Blue
Even Even…Good
Bum Bum Bum Bum Bum Bum
Bum Bum Bum
More Red
More Blue
More Beer
More Light
Color and Light (Sondheim I-17-18)

In mirroring Seurat’s pointillist technique, Sondheim decided to not only have the actor paint in conjunction with the accompaniment, but also sing through the process so that the audience would be able to see and hear the process, thereby combining movement, music, and text. The lyrics here symbolize the actor’s working process. The general quality of the lyrics are very short and choppy alluding to the separate dabs of paint, however the overall effect of combining these lyrics produces a fluid song similar to that of the Neo-Impressionist’s finished canvases.

Sondheim also uses alliteration in his lyrics, but in one’s analysis of the text specific caution must be used to decipher between the wide use of repetition and scarcity of alliteration. Examples of true alliteration that surface in this piece are found in two primary sections. The first example of this is in Dot’s use of the letter ‘w’ in her first sung section with words such as
“were, was, waist, warm, worked, and without’. The second example is in one of George’s conversations to the woman in his painting using the letter ‘p’ to describe her ‘perfectly proper parasol’. It could be argued that the ending also contains alliteration with George’s lyrics containing ‘c’ in ‘catches, color, and could’, but these instances are not as abundant as the previous alliteration of ‘w’ and ‘p’.

As the two characters’ melodies and text intertwine throughout the piece, a beautiful interaction occurs both musically and dramatically. *Color and Light* is composed of many small dramatic builds nestled in the melodies of two characters that provide the rising action in the structure of Act I. This series of dramatic builds eventually reach a climax during their following duet *We Do Not Belong Together*. The selection gives the audience a personal insight into their relationship. It uncovers a breadth of subtext contained in George and Dot’s relationship and serves as a love scene between the characters. As each character gets more engrossed in their activities, George with his painting and Dot with her preparations, they are able to connect on a very powerful level. The lyrics and text carry the actors through the piece to create an astounding scene. If executed with excellence, the audience would never know just how many countless details Sondheim has included. For the singer-actor, *Color and Light* is one of the most challenging selections to tackle in the musical theatre repertoire. The singer must religiously observe every intricate detail in order to achieve Sondheim’s concept. With so many layers to add upon in rehearsal, not only does this piece exemplify how pointillism parallels music theory, it also shows how the actor’s process in learning a musical scene resembles the very technique of pointillism.
CHAPTER FIVE:
LIGHT

Portraying Pointillism through the Actor’s Process

In *Color and Light*, Dot recalls her modeling sessions with George as being “studied like the light” (Sondheim I-22). Just as the artist had to study his model to accurately paint his model, so the actor must study their character to accurately portray him or her on stage. In discussing the relevance of pointillism to the actor’s role development, I must start from the beginning of pre-production work, continue into the rehearsal process, and conclude with performances. By going through my journey as the actress, a clear reference to pointillism is found.

Pre-Production Preparation

After being cast in November, I traveled to the Chicago Art Institute to view the painting as part of my pre-production research and inspiration. My journal describes the experience:

I am sitting in a large room on a bench. There are people quietly bustling around me, but I remain still. I am fixated on an image in front of me. A large painting made entirely of dots - millions of colorful dots that somehow brilliantly compose a picture. A picture of people in the park entitled *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. Seurat’s innovative work stands before me at the Chicago Art Institute. I have seen this painting many times, but now it has much more meaning to me. I am that woman on the bottom right side. According to Marie, I am many of the women in the painting. I am so amazed that I have the opportunity to play this role after desiring to do it for so long. This initial amazement is partnered with excitement, fear, anxiety, and
accomplishment all mixed together. Regardless, I am that woman in the front, with the monkey, and the hat. I am about to enter into the world of that painting, invest in many relationships with those around me, and be a part of Sondheim and Lapine’s creativity in bringing it to life. (Appendix A 95)

After returning from Chicago, I set about researching the various topics that were relevant to the play and my character. I compiled a casebook to organize different topics of research listed as follows:

Research – Casebook
- Sondheim – Composer/Lyrist
- Lapine – Librettist/Director
- Past Productions
- Concepts
- Past Performers
- Bernadette Peters
- French Culture in 1884
- America’s Art Culture in 1984
- Academic Journals and Essays on the musical
- Women’s Roles in Sondheim musicals
- Beauty Section – Dot as a model – What is art?
- Seurat
- Artist’s views at that time
- French Neo-Impressionism & Pointillism

As I was pouring through research, I also started learning my lines. In a pointillist fashion, I broke down the lines into different sections for memorization purposes. I would start page by page, then elevate it to scene by scene and then combine all these separate pages in the order of the scenes to memorize entire acts. By the beginning of January, I had a rough memorization of Act I. At the start of rehearsals in February, I had a rough memorization of Act II. Before and throughout the rehearsal process, I spent countless hours piecing together the lines in each scene to eventually memorize the entire script.
While immersed in the script to learn my lines, I started living in the situation of the characters and asking important questions in regards their needs and desires. I had to find out why these characters acted the way they did and what prompted them to make certain decisions in the context of the play. These motivations are known as objectives. A character in a play usually has a super-objective that carries through the entire play. This super-objective is sustained by many objectives that explain why the character is moved to action. These objectives are found within the beats or sections of the scene. An actor achieves their objective through many different tactics. For instance, in the opening scene, George is drawing Dot in the park. Dot’s objective in this scene is to get George’s attention. He is concentrating on her figure as he draws, but Dot wants to connect with him as a person, not as an object to draw. This objective is found in the text when Dot consistently pries for his attention by saying things like “Hello George, there is someone in this dress!” (Lapine I-6). The tactics that she uses in order to achieve her objective are simple nuances to distract him from his work. When George asks her to drop her head she drops it completely; hoping to find a tactic that worked to get George to talk to her (Lapine I-3). These tactics can, in many cases, inform the blocking. For example – when Dot desires to escape the confines of the model’s position in the *Sunday in the Park with George* number, she physically moves away from the first posing position to roam around the stage in this new found freedom (Lapine I-7). The movement of the blocking was the very tactic to achieve her objective. In order to work through these different objectives and to explore their impact, I copied the script in such a way as to write out the objectives, tactics, and blocking on the side of the page. In doing so, I was able to chart out my objectives and have them readily accessible during rehearsals. Using this method allowed me to view the lines, blocking, objectives, and tactics of Dot and Marie. By combining these four categories of elements, I was
able to flesh out these characters motivations and actions. The mundane markings and notations on this page are far from resembling a beautiful painting. However, when all the lines, lyrics, music, objectives, tactics, and blocking are lifted from the page, a beautiful picture is achieved on stage. A fully developed character is thus born out of the countless choices that the actor must make.

**Character Analysis: Dot**

The character Dot, named after the very essence of Seurat’s concept, is the model that affects Seurat’s work, life, and future ancestors. In his essay, *The Sung and the Said*, Thomas P. Adler best described the correlation between her name and the concept of the piece: “Her very name, of course, indicates that she will be “studied,” objectified, and distilled into the dots of “color and light” that Seurat put on his canvases-so that the viewers’ eyes would fuse and harmonize them-in a technique that came to be known as Pointillism” (Goodhart 52). As the female lead with five songs, the musical’s plot clearly studies her character and centers on her relationship with the artist. The musical revolves around Dot and George’s love affair in Act I and eventually resolves at the end of Act II.

At the beginning of the play, Dot is George’s subservient model and sensual lover. However as the play unfolds, she finds that she cannot handle being placed second to George’s work and longs for a deeper connection. She occasionally entertains the thought of leaving him such as during the Follies daydream segment and when she parades Louis around in the park. Her decision is finalized after she gives George one last chance to take her back. When George admits that he cannot give her what she needs, her decision is made that they “do not belong together” (Sondheim I-56). In choosing another man who is able to give her the attention that
she craves Dot leaves behind the artist to start a new life in America. However, her connection with George is never completely severed. Although the two lovers are far apart both emotionally and geographically, they each have a constant reminder of their unconventional love affair. Dot brings George’s child into the world and raises her with Louis. George strategically places Dot in several different places of his painting forever immortalizing her in his art. At the beginning of Act II, Dot appears in the painting with all the other characters from the park. She finds herself once again stuck in a pointillist musical selection depicting the confines of being an artist’s subject. This theme cleverly parallels the first number of Act I, *Sunday in the Park with George*. Similar to this introductory song, she is able to break out of the staccato mold of *It’s Hot Up Here* to sing a legato section of contemplation. As the muse of George, she is able to transcend the confines of the painting and comment on her relationship with the surrounding characters frozen in the painting. After her eulogy for Seurat’s death, Dot does not reappear until the final scene. At this time, she reappears as a mediator between the past and the future to encourage the young artist in a way that melds the two artists together. After learning so many valuable lessons from her relationship with Seurat, she comes to impart this experience to the aspiring artist struggling to connect. However, the lines between the young artist and his great-grandfather are blurred, leaving the audience without a clear perception as to which character is before them. Dot could easily be related to as both a mentor and lover as she challenges George in the final duet to “Move On”.

The main predicament that this character faces is the choice between a life with her lover or a life with a man who can support her financially and emotionally. In her essay “The Musical Stops Singing and Finds Its Voice” Joanne Gordon elaborates on Dot’s decision:

As ‘We Do Not Belong Together’ develops, the paradox of relationship, of
individual need and separate identity, is poignantly dramatized. Dot recognizes the precious quality of their love but finally must accept its destructiveness. This painful realization is conveyed in an exquisite melody that suggests both the hurt and the romantic desire. She hungers for his love, but knows that what he can offer is not sufficiently nourishing. His obsessive creativity is what makes him special. It is the source of her passion, but it eventually drives her away. Dot progresses from an initial pleading for George’s attention to a growing sense of self-worth. (283)

Far from the typical heroine’s predicament, Dot must make a life-altering decision to step out of her present situation and move on to something new. She is a character who is willing to take risks in order to achieve a better state of being. Throughout the play she is constantly trying to improve herself. Whether it is the simple act of applying make-up and fixing her hair in “Color and Light” or the daunting task of teaching herself to read, Dot continuously finds ways to learn and improve herself. Some would say that Dot does these things in order to please or impress George. However, if this was truly the case, she would never have left him. The final act in her path to a better life is ultimately found when she leaves George for the last time, therefore debunking the argument that she did it all for him. If anything, she did it for a connection – to be found beautiful and educated in her society. In her essay “Broadway Babies: Images of Women in Sondheim”, Laura Hanson discusses the evolution of the female character throughout musical theatre history. She uses Dot as her primary example in saying that:

In the past thirty years, the musical heroine has grown up, as exemplified by the women in the musicals of Stephen Sondheim and his collaborators. Sondheim’s women tend to be more realistic and multi-dimensional than their more traditional counter-parts. Their choices are not so clear-cut, their motivations not so predictable. They express
doubts and fears about life and love and are not always so sure about what they want, as they proceed haltingly along the road to greater self-awareness. Dot is all too familiar with the painful, yet necessary process of accepting and taking responsibility for one’s own self. She expresses this eloquently and seems to speak for so many of Sondheim’s women as she sings: ‘I chose and my world was shaken – so what/The choice may have been mistaken/The choosing was not/You have to move on. (Gordon 31)

If based off of Seurat’s real life mistress, the physical appearance of the actress was altered greatly for the libretto. In his painting, *Jeune femme se poudrant*, Seurat captures his mistress Madeline as she is seated at her vanity (Rewald 116). This painting is located in Appendix C for further reference. With the changing fashion of body image and type, the ideal of beauty in the 1880’s has morphed considerably in the last century. The actress’ playing Dot, such as Bernadette Peters who originated the role and Maria Friedman who played Dot in the London production, look nothing like the real-life mistress. Based on the script, Dot is a small woman with beautiful features. When George admires her in *Color and Light*, he notices “the round face, the tiny pout, the soft mouth, the creamy skin, the pink lips, the red cheeks, (and) the wide eyes” (Lapine I-22). As Dot surveys her assets, we are informed that she is short, busty, not too thin, and curvy (Sondheim I-18-19). As I sat at the vanity during rehearsals night after night, I was surprised at how much I resembled the character that Lapine had sculpted in the script. My physical attributes aligned with the playwright’s intentions and resembled the descriptive lines referring to Dot.

Dot’s movement is clearly defined by two central factors in her life – her outfits and her strong will. Naturally, the clothes she wears will alter her movement. With corsets, undergarments, bustles, and weighty dresses, her movement is stifled by the period dress of the
1880’s. The corset provides her the physical ideal for the period - a very feminine stature of petite elegance and poise. Throughout the play her center is found in her chest and she leads from this position. Her walk is motivated by her decisions and her emotions. However, during her pregnancy, her movement is altered tremendously. She gravitates to a lower walk and leads with her hips to support her frame.

Each objective plays a role in shaping her physical demeanor as well. The weight of her movement is affected by her objective. For instance, when she is hurt by George not stopping his work to fulfill his promise to take her to the Follies, her movement is strong and tense - mirroring the frustration and anger that she experiences. The tempo is equally affected by the character’s objectives. At times she is able to relax into a steady pace, such as when she is getting ready to go out for the evening with George; yet other times she is fidgety and anxious, such as when she is modeling for George in the hot sun. The shape and direction of this character’s movement is typically straightforward. Dot uses different tactics to achieve her objectives but tends to move straight to the subject at hand. This is found towards the middle of the play when Dot confronts George during the pregnancy scene and when she approaches him in the studio. It is difficult to pinpoint an exact rhythm to this character’s movement; however, it is clearly noticeable that she tends to break out of the rhythmic mold surrounding her. During songs such as Sunday in the Park with George, Everybody Loves Louis, and It’s Hot Up Here, Dot clearly breaks free from the confines of the staccato arpeggios and finds her true rhythm in the slower ballad sections. Her sensual side is better suited with the slow rubato rhythm of Everybody Loves Louis as she taunts George with her experiences with Louis such as “the bread…and then in bed…I mean he kneads me”. Another example of this contrasting rhythm is found as her longing for connection interrupts the frustrated patter to admire George in her
opening number by singing:

“Your Eyes George
I love your eyes George
I love your beard George
I love your size George
But most George of all
But most of all
I love your painting” (Sondheim I-8).

Ironically, the very thing that she admires most about George is the very thing she is struggling against. Her fluid rhythm is never compatible with George’s structured rhythm and clearly contradicts each other’s internal rhythm through the musical score and the physical demeanor of the character. George tries to capture her as his muse in every aspect of his painting as Dot continues to struggle free from the confines of his work. The spontaneous, playful nature of Dot cannot thrive with the rigorously steady nature personifying George’s character.

Dot’s temperament is colored by the events in the play, however it naturally gravitates to a cheerful, grounded, and energetic demeanor. She is eager to embrace all that life has to offer. She struggles to find acceptance within her society, yet she also tries to break free from the very confines it places on her. Her will is best described as unbridled determination. The audience views her struggle to escape the confines of George’s obsessive work schedule yet still remain in his life. Her primary desire is to connect with him on the very level he connects with his art.

Throughout the play, Dot explores different tactics to achieve this from the compliant model eager to please him and be a part of his work to the unfulfilled lover unashamed to fight for what she needs.

Dot experiences a breadth of emotion over the course of the musical. These emotions are stimulated by the events occurring in the play and the events that have happened previous to the action of the play. Her range of emotions varies from frustration to excitement to anger to hurt
to loneliness to happiness. With an open-minded point of view, Dot unashamedly states her opinion of those around her. Just as she is used by George in his painting, Dot uses those around her to get what she wants. The main example of this is her initial relationship with Louis as she parades him around the park in hopes of getting George’s attention. Her attitude is somewhat selfish in this regard, yet the words that Marie sings about her indicate anything but a self-centered nature. As her daughter, Marie gives us valuable insight into what Dot was like after leaving Paris. Marie recalls her mother in America as “beautiful”, “funny”, “fun”, frivolous with money, encouraging, “smart”, and that she “shimmer(ed) from the heart” (Sondheim II-34-35). Dot encouraged her daughter to listen to her heart and find enjoyment out of every task in life. Dot’s encouragement did not end with her daughter. The encouragement eventually resurfaces when she is reunited with her great-grandson George and prods him to continue his quest for connection.

Any character analysis would not be complete without mentioning the effects of the character’s back-story. Little of Dot’s back-story is explained, therefore leaving a blank page for the actress to hypothesize upon. As the play starts in the middle of her relationship with George, there is much speculation as to how they met, how long they had been together, and what their relationship was like in the beginning. We also know nothing of her family life, previous relationships, or what Dot did previous to working as Seurat’s model. In the pre-production stages of my research and analysis, I spent a great deal of time imagining the logistics of her back-story to fill in the gaps of the script. The main topic I personally had to sort through was the moments that kept her committed to her relationship with George. One of the most prominent critiques of Sunday in the Park with George’s flaws is that the relationship between the lovers is clearly one-sided as George rarely shows moments of love for Dot. The dialogue of
the script rarely provides an opportunity for him to expose his true feelings for Dot. In order for the love story to be believable, this must be compensated for in the characters’ back-story and subtext. I had to conjure up moments in the past that Dot clings to in order to find this relationship worth fighting for.

**Character Analysis: Marie**

In some musicals, an actor may be called upon to play more than one character. In *Sunday in the Park with George* the same actress who plays both Dot also plays her daughter, Marie. Therefore, the actress must analyze two separate characters. Marie appears for the first time in the second exposition located at the front end of Act II. She participates in the Chromolume exhibit at the modern art museum with her grandson George. Easily distracted from the task at hand, she deviates from her dictated speech with note cards to color Seurat’s story with her own personal memories. Amidst her dozing, she enjoys the reception afterwards in honor of her grandson and is taken care of by Elaine, George’s former wife. Towards the end of the evening when she and George are alone, she tries to explain to him his legacy with this painting one final time in the duet “Children and Art”. The audience later finds out that Marie has died right before the trip that she and George were scheduled to take to France.

Marie’s external characteristics are best described as an elderly woman in her nineties. As the actress playing Marie, I was costumed in a frumpy blue floral dress with a white collar, white cardigan, glasses, white hat, and grayish white wig. The movement of this character is limited due to her age. In a rehearsal on Wednesday February 27th, I recorded my initial steps to discovering Marie’s’ physical characteristics which in turn affected her internal characteristics. In my journal I wrote:
It was great to work through the characterization of Marie. I played with many different props and mannerisms such as:

1. Wheelchair
2. Hunched shoulders
3. Hands crossed/mingled
4. Looking up to everyone
5. Slowing down movement
6. Limited range of voice and movement
7. Limited range of focus
8. Dosing
9. Napping
10. Enjoying the party
11. Watching the party goers
12. Talking with Elaine
13. Talking with Rocky
14. Saying no to food from the waitress
15. Looking for George
16. Admiring the painting
17. Twitching
18. Responding to the chaos of the party
19. Being mindful of my opposing nature to the party
   - Marie = Still, Grounded, Content
   - Party = Frantic, Flustered, Working/Making Connections

All these elements were explored in order to create Marie’s character and physically portray her on stage. Being in a wheelchair, she would not have much movement in her body but would still be agile and use her hands in slight gestures as she spoke. Even though she cannot lead with a specific area of her body, her center is found in her head. Her thoughts are still acutely active. Her rhythm in activity is slowed from the aging process, yet her internal rhythm is still very strong. She exhibits this through her quick recollection of stories from her past and her ability to describe her mother during “Children and Art”. Marie’s speaking voice is weathered by time, going in and out with a constant tired quality. Marie’s temperament is very calm, accepting, and honest. She will be the first to lovingly accept you as well as the first to tell you exactly what she thinks. She will put up a fight when prodded, but usually she would rather enjoy the time
with loved ones in peace. She brings with her many valuable lessons from her mother and is frustrated when George dismisses her. Ironically this relationship between her grandson and herself in Act II is very similar to that of Dot and Seurat in Act I. In each relationship, the female seeks to tell the male that there is more to be had in and of their relationship, while the male barely acknowledges this, as he is busy trying to find his own way.

Right after being born in Paris, Marie left France with Dot and Louis to start a new life in America. Hardly any other information is given about Marie’s earlier life except for memories of her mother and random facts from her sidetracked presentation. The audience finds out that she was married two times, and traveled in between her marriage as a Floradora girl. According to her memories, she had a wonderful relationship with her mother. Knowing she probably doesn’t have much time left on this earth, Marie’s super objective in the play is to try to show George the important things in life. She is constantly motivated to impart wisdom she has learned from her mother and her own life experience. Although she never lives to see it, George eventually understands what she was trying to tell him when he visits the Parisian park and finally reads the little red grammar book for what it truly was meant to be.

The thought of transforming into a character so many years older than me was at first daunting. However, as I became more familiar with the character of Marie, I found the transformation delightful. As the daughter of Seurat and Dot, Marie enlightened her proceeding generation of the family legacy. As the grandmother of Act II George, Marie became the family patriarch to inspire and encourage the young artist in his future direction.

The tedious yet rewarding addition of all these different elements steadily composes a character. Just as the woman in the painting is composed of hundreds of different colored dabs, the woman on the stage is composed of hundreds of different objectives and experiences. Upon
completion of the character analysis, the actress is armed and ready with valuable information to proceed into the creativity of the rehearsal process.

Rehearsal Process

Due to its academic setting, the rehearsal process for *Sunday in the Park with George* was quite lengthy. In professional theatre, a company will typically hold rehearsals for two to three weeks depending on the nature of the show. If it is a really heavy dance musical, extra weeks will be added to learn the choreography. Universities extend this rehearsal process to allow the students time for classes throughout the day, therefore only rehearsing at night and on the weekends. *Sunday in the Park with George’s* rehearsal schedule stretched for seven weeks from the first read-through on February 10 through the last dress rehearsal on April 5 (with the exclusion of the students’ Spring Break). Most of the rehearsals for *Sunday in the Park with George* were held in the actual theatre – a luxury to the actors accustomed to rehearsal spaces. It gave the actors much more practice in the thrust space to explore the acoustics, entrances and exits, and nuances of the space. The rehearsal schedule went through a series of changes due to the director’s absence at the beginning for a family emergency. However, it still followed the general outline of a musical rehearsal process. The different chronological elements that comprised the process were as follows:

1. Music Rehearsals
2. Improvisation Rehearsals
3. Costume Fittings
4. Blocking Rehearsals
5. Work-through Rehearsals
6. Run-through Rehearsals
7. Sitz-probe
8. Dress Rehearsals

Similar to pointillism, all these elements had to be added in order for the actor to be able
to make the necessary connections with learning the character, learning the music, learning the text, and learning the structure in which their character functioned. As a result, the audience was able to view the larger picture on opening night. However, what they didn’t see was the amount of work added by each individual to make this performance a reality. On April 2\textsuperscript{nd} in our second dress rehearsal I explained this thought in detail:

After the long run and the extensive costume fitting afterwards, I do not have much to report in detail from this evening’s work. Once again, the constant work of adding so many more layers of rehearsal into one final performance is about to be exhibited. I truly feel like Dot in the painting when she breaks out of the pose to talk with George or the audience. There are so many points of this musical that I feel only transfer to the actual actors that go through this process. When I truly think of all the work that must go into this musical (and all the training necessary for the actors to have had previously in order to tackle the material), I wonder how much the audience actually realizes is there. Do they know the extent of the reference to pointillism in the music theory of the score? Do they imagine the entire back story that must exist in order for this love story to truly make sense? Do they care about the characters in the way that each one of these actors does after spending months in the rehearsal hall with them? Or is this show designed more for the actors and musicians in mind? (Appendix A 161-162)

Only the director, designers, stage management team, and fellow cast members, experienced this divisionist technique in their process of applying all these elements throughout the seven weeks. A more specific look into the rehearsal process reveals this theory. By looking at the breakdown of one scene, one rehearsal, and various performances, one can clearly see how the technique of
Portraying Pointillism in Color and Light

As evidenced in the analysis section of the previous chapter, Color and Light is an extremely complex piece that demands absolute precision from each of the two actors on stage. I have focused on it because it is a selection that can prove my entire thesis argument. In truly leaning towards the actor’s process in relationship to pointillism, this song and scene has a wealth of information to support this theory. An absurd amount of elements must be combined in order to present what’s written on the page to what’s seen on stage. Learning this musical scene is incredibly daunting due to its rhythmic fluctuations and demanding multitasking. It is very difficult for the actors to combine all these elements into one scene with ease and enjoyment. The blocking is relatively simple, as the two actors do not move a great deal. Dot primarily stays seated at her vanity, only moving away during her small dance segment. George primarily stays behind his canvas until the end when he goes to change paint brushes and happens to notice Dot. However, the motions of the actor’s sequence are extremely specific and must be timed perfectly with the orchestration. Both character’s movements must happen simultaneously with the accompaniment. As George’s painting is heard through the staccato series of notes discussed in the musical analysis of chapter four, Dot’s preparation is heard through the music as well. As the actress, I had to coordinate when the powder puff was applied to my body to match the notes played in the orchestra. These actions were scripted and planned down to the very last detail. A basic sequenced order of Dot’s events in Color and Light is as follows:

1. Powder puff
2. Powder body
3. Repeat
4. Rouge
5. Tweezers
6. Follies Dance
7. Nails (File)
8. Perfume
9. Hair Brushing
10. Hair pinning to up do
11. Focus on George

With the accompaniment mirroring the pointillist characteristics of the character’s actions, another element was now ready to be added – the text. Dot begins the scene with a fragmented monologue. As she speaks her thoughts out loud, she is following the sequenced order of events in getting herself ready. As the actress, I had to remember lines and objectives for why she was speaking these lines, while also mirroring the orchestration with my movements. I had to learn how to layer these different elements together and once this was accomplished another layer entered the scene – the music. Now I had to add pitches, lyrics, and rhythm to the equation. The entrances were occasionally hard to find because along with doing the movement and speaking the text, I had to count the measures as to know where my entrance should be. The melodic lines consisted of many legato lines that conflicted with the sharp staccato sounds in the accompaniment. If charted in an outline, my routine would have looked something like this:

1. Text – Fragmented monologue of thoughts and questions
2. Melody – Pitches with unclear references for the singer and legato contrast
3. Lyrics – Repetition and Elevated Speech
4. Rhythm – Entrances/Exits, Tempi, Rubato, Rhythmic Structure
5. Movement –
   - Dab Powder
   - Powder Chest
   - Powder Arms
   - Dab Powder
   - Admire in Mirror
   - Dab Powder
Once I had started combining these five different categories of elements, I experienced another layer – the emotions. Dot experiences many different emotions throughout this piece. In the rehearsal hall, I explored with countless different qualities of emotions to bring this character to life. Some of the emotions sprung naturally from the text, transitions, and accompaniment, while others were discovered further into the rehearsal process. Regardless, the emotions that surfaced in this piece made a vivid contribution to the scene and the character. A list of the different emotions experienced is as follows:

- Playfulness
- Enjoyment
- Excitement
- Suspicion
- Frustration
- Happiness
- Calm
- Frantic
- Doubt
- Judgment
- Insecurity
- Bewilderment
- Desire
- Fascination
- Curiosity
- Lust
- Longing
- Disbelief
- Hurt
- Anger
These emotions prompted the character to engage in this scene composed of blocking, text, music, and objectives. As the actress, I had to combine all these elements together in order for this scene to flourish. Where I was constantly working to keep all these elements distinct and precise, the audience was able to experience a theatrical optical mixture. Seurat and his colleagues argued that the eye would mix two colors together to create one. In a similar fashion, the audience’s eye mixed all my elements together to create one scene. During one of the blocking rehearsals primarily devoted to this scene, I wrote:

Every time I rehearse *Color and Light* I am floored by the intricate detail that Sondheim and Lapine paid to the culmination of music theory and pointillism. These techniques capture the very essence of George’s activities in painting and Dot’s activities in beautifying herself to go out and bring them together into an intense love making scene without either individual ever touching each other. (Appendix A 126)

*Color and Light* is the very essence of pointillism - with the individual parts never touching each other yet coming together to create something absolutely beautiful.

**Portraying Pointillism through Rehearsal**

Monday, April 3, 2006 marked the first dress rehearsal. It was the biggest challenge I had faced so far in the rehearsal process. It was a perfect example of tying in the pointillism theme to rehearsal. There were so many new elements thrown together in the mix that it clearly resembled Seurat’s technique. Overall, eleven different elements of tonight’s rehearsal were influential in the make-up of the rehearsal’s comparison to pointillism. These elements in outline form are as follows:

1. Costumes
2. Make-up: Dot’s & Marie’s
If viewing it in this light, the rehearsal started as a blank canvas and through a series of events and additions produced a completed work of art.

The first and most obvious addition to my work in this first dress rehearsal was the costumes. Up until this point in rehearsals, I had not had to add the element of costume changes. The women were required to wear corsets and skirts from the very beginning of rehearsals, however the actual costumes added much more to work with. I had a list of costumes posted on my dressing room mirror to sort through the changes and time schedule in which to make them. As with all period pieces, I had multiple undergarments including a corset, camisole, bloomers, and a petticoat. I started out in a green dress, undressed to my undergarments, put the green dress back on, changed to the pregnancy outfit, changed to the dress in the painting, changed to Marie’s costume with a wig and make-up adjustment, and then changed back into the dress from the painting. I had a lot of accessories such as parasols and glasses that had to be added and removed throughout the play. Due to efficient assistance from two different dressers, I was able to make all five of my costume changes without much difficulty. Whereas models combine all these changes to walk silently down the runway, I had to quickly make them while still remembering my lines, objectives, and songs for the upcoming scene.

Another interesting addition to this rehearsal was make-up. Usually on the first dress
rehearsal, the actors start to apply make-up for the director and costume designer’s approval. Once again, the essence of pointillism appeared through the process of make-up - applying different colors of paint to the face to achieve an overall picture or effect. The picture of Dot was created by using concealer, foundation, blush, eye shadow, eye-liner, mascara, lip-liner, lipstick, shadow, highlight, and blush. Make-up also aided in the effect for Marie’s aging process. By adding some wrinkles on the face and highlighter to crack the lips in the short amount of time allotted for her change, I was able to add to the illusion of Marie’s age.

One of the most impacting elements of this rehearsal was the addition of the orchestra. It was the first night of working with them on stage, and the orientation was a difficult one. The orchestra was dragging through most of the songs. It was so sluggish that I felt as if I had to push them along. Sunday in the Park with George was not an up-tempo number tonight, and I found myself in a ballad instead of the normal patter section. Color and Light was slow, We Do Not Belong Together was monotonous, and Move On was a disaster. As a singer, it is thrilling to work with an orchestra and feel the weight of this collaboration carrying your song to new levels. However, at times, it is a difficult process in cohesively joining so many different instruments together. I had to rid myself of the comfortable collaboration with the rehearsal piano and invite many different instruments into my songs. This is what rehearsing is all about; working and reworking difficult passages that beg for attention through mistakes and adjustments.

Another new element significantly affecting my perception as a musician and actor were the monitors. In both the stage right and stage left corners of the audience, monitors were set up so that the actors could view the conductor who was actually located behind them. In many sections of the play, I had to watch the conductor through the monitor to know when to start singing and when to cut off certain passages. With the text so entwined with the music,
passages had difficult pick-ups. By watching the monitors, I was able to make my pick-ups and cut-offs. Yet, watching the conductor from a different angle shifted my focus to these far corners of the room where it was previously focused on my scene partner or more center-stage. I had to be constantly aware to add the monitors into my process.

One of my favorite layers to tonight’s rehearsal was the lights. It provided a completely different feel in these new surroundings. There were different visual effects and different sightlines for the actors. Where we were used to seeing the entire space in rehearsal, now the actors could see the audience at times, and it was completely dark at other times. I enjoyed certain scenes much more with the lighting, particularly *Color and Light*. I was able to enjoy the dark atmosphere at my vanity with only the moonlight streaming in from a window pane in the studio. I liked the way I looked under the lights. I felt very safe in the dark studio and very sexy under the lights in my underwear. The lighting, another prime example of adding many different complimentary shades to create a general atheistic and mood in a pointillist fashion, transformed each scene into the next. With a minimal set, the lighting provided the atmosphere for various settings in the play from the park, the studio, and the museum.

Set pieces were also added to tonight’s rehearsal. In addition to growing accustomed to the costumes, the actor’s had to work with on and move around new set pieces. Different canvases were brought in and out to provide the background for the studio and to cast different light projections upon. Certain members of the cast were assigned to move these pieces on and off stage, creating a series of patterns only noticeable to the stage manager and director that orchestrated them.

Although the set pieces were minimal, the props were quite extensive. Each actor had to find his or her new props on different prop tables in the backstage wings. My props included a
pastry from Louis, parasols, the red grammar book, the vanity, a perfume bottle, brush, and a mirror. While working with the actual props was a relief, just like the costumes, they took some adjustment to get accustomed to.

On top of all these new elements, I still had to consciously focus on my lines and the songs. With the difficulty of this music, the actress must always be thinking about the melodic and rhythmic structure that accompany the lyrics of ballads and patter alike. While still concentrating on these elements, there was an added awareness that more people were observing this rehearsal than the previous ones. The lighting designer, stage crew, dressers, orchestra members, and set designer were all present to work out the logistics of their designs.

One element that I can never seem to overlook is the mistakes made in rehearsal. If rehearsal is truly about practice, taking risks, and working through new material, it is only natural to make mistakes. By assessing them during and after the rehearsal, the actor can learn from them in order to improve upon the material. Each minor and major error tells the actor what they need to work on. For instance, at this particular rehearsal, I made the majority of my mistakes in Move On. I messed up the sequence, skipped to the second patter section, and gave up. I couldn’t get back on and left a whole section of silence. I then proceeded to mess up the second patter section and the final patter section at the end. After this mix-up, I knew that I had to rehearse this song more. There is nothing worse than having that sinking feeling of letting a ball drop. In this rehearsal there were so many different balls to juggle and unfortunately Move On was the ball that fell to the ground.

With the addition of these initial elements, there was so much to constantly think about at the first dress rehearsal. Rehearsals like these make you grateful for all the previous rehearsal time to really solidify your lines, objectives, and songs. When so many new things are thrown at
you, you have to rely on a firm foundation built during the formative weeks of rehearsal. In my journal on this night I recorded:

I felt fairly confident the entire time until *Move On*. I held my own, kept going through the sluggish orchestrations and unclear cues, and didn’t let the costume changes frazzle me. However, during *Move On* I just could not keep it together. How ironic that this very song should give me the courage to keep moving on. I cannot look at where I am or what I’ll be. I have to look at what I’ve done and what I want. I have had a great rehearsal process and put loads of work into this role. I have to now look at what I want which is a personal, vivid, and strong connection to these characters and my relationship to the others and the themes in this play. I want my journey to grow deeper and my investment to blossom. I want to be able to access emotions of love, grief, and anger in abundance. I want to concentrate. (Appendix A 159-160)

In the same way that Dot had to learn what it meant to concentrate, I had to learn how to concentrate in order to successfully get through the first dress rehearsal. There were moments when I was able to focus while adding countless elements to enhance my performance. When the elements became too overwhelming I had to rely on that focus to stay in the moment of the scene despite all the distractions. The rehearsal demanded constant concentration from the actors in order to carry through the passages that fell apart and to prepare for the upcoming performances.

**Portraying Pointillism through Performance**

If the actor’s process in creating a role mirrors the pointillist technique, the performances represent the final stages of the painting. In regard to the painter’s studio, perhaps it is the final
touches of color being added or the frame being painted to compliment the canvas. For the actor, it is a continuation of the rehearsal process to share with an audience. It is difficult to chart just one performance because the subtle differences and elements added during the performances are unique for every night and contribute to the discoveries of the character as a whole. In taking a look at the performances as a whole, one is able to assess the final stages of character development. Before any performance, an actor goes through a warm-up ritual. On opening night I recorded my process –

After all this hard work and preparation, I found myself ready to open the show. There is still work to be done, but the show must open regardless. I spent the day in preparation by going to the gym to get my breath engaged, meditating over the show, relaxing, warming-up vocally, and trying to occupy my attention primarily with the show to come. I got to the theatre quite early to get ready. Michael and I had a photo shoot for the newspaper an hour before curtain so we had to get ready before the rest of the cast. It was nice to have the dressing room all to myself to be able to focus and put on my make-up in quiet solitude. (Appendix B 165)

The act of preparation and warm-up in itself is symbolic of pointillism. The actress must bring together all the techniques of make-up, focus, costumes, vocal warm-ups, and prop checking in order to be ready to perform.

As with all performances, the set blocking and script rehearsed in the rehearsal hall stays the same. Directors will often continue to take notes and leave them on the callboard for the actors to read as the performances go on, but rarely does the movement or delivery change. However, the exciting nuances that surface in the performance occur when the text and music
and blocking are so ingrained in the performer that they can move away from this focus to find new meaning and relationships in the text.

The most obvious element that is added to the performance segment is the audience’s presence. After rehearsing in front of the cast and the production team for so long, the addition of the audience is both welcomed and feared by actors. The actor must not be largely affected by this presence, but must acknowledge them and move on with their work.

Some performances are clearly focused on troubleshooting. On the Saturday April 8th performance, I was feeling vocally fatigued. This rehearsal provided a perfect performance to note for pointillism, because I had to rely on all the other points of rehearsal, muscle memory, and vocal training to be able to get through this performance. It was as if all the elements added to the rehearsals were already permanently on the canvas and I had to correct certain colors of the painting that I did not find just right such as my voice. The set elements that I was able to rely on were the routine blocking, the order of the show, the songs, the text, and the orchestra. Even with the vocal limitations that I experienced that evening, I was still pushing myself to take new risks.

In performances actors can sometimes fall into the role of the critic. On the fifth performance Thursday night, I clearly experienced this. If my work during this performance was that of the artist painting a pointillist piece, I would have had many moments of working really specifically with a small section of color. I would have had many moments of looking at the painting from a farther angle to get a different perspective. In doing so, I would have disliked much of the work that I saw and start to correct and paint over many of the spots of the performance. If only actors could step back and look at their work with the advantage of being able to fix what they didn’t like. Instead, we dive head first into the material only to find that we
will inevitably mess up at one time or another in front of an entire audience.

Many of the performances felt as if I stood back from the pointillist painting of my journey in rehearsal and performance and saw what was working and what wasn’t. It was another interesting step in my thesis discovery of examining all the points so far, accessing what is there and what needs to be added, and delighting in the process. The product is so desirable only because the process was so challenging. The difficult struggles made it so much more enjoyable in the end when it all came together. The performances were the final touches to the painting of the characters Dot and Marie.
CHAPTER SIX: HARMONY

George Seurat compared the laws of painting to the laws of music in order to achieve his technique of pointillism. Stephen Sondheim compared the technique of pointillism to musical theater orchestration in order to compose his score of *Sunday in the Park with George*. Having portrayed Lapine’s character living in Sondheim’s orchestration, the actor’s process in developing a role parallels Seurat’s technique of pointillism just as the music parallels Seurat’s color theories and the plot parallels Seurat’s life. The actor has to place hundreds of components together in order to execute the performance of scenes and songs just as Seurat added different colors of paint together to create one finished work of art. By layering these different elements into their process, the actor creates a more vivid and radiant performance. Throughout each step in the process, the actor takes on the role of the pointillist painter as their processes align.

In the artistic process of pointillism, the actor first and foremost begins with the very essence of who he or she is. The actor becomes the blank page that George talks about in the exposition and resolution of *Sunday in the Park with George*. This enables the actor to embark on the process of developing a role. To this blank page the actor initially adds four essential elements that they have to offer: body, mind, soul, and voice. They offer their body to the role to resemble the character’s many different physical attributes. They offer their mind to engage with the character through intellect and instinct. They offer their soul with its unique emotions and personality to experience how the character thrives and reacts in the world that they are placed. Finally, they use their voice to speak and sing the text of the character.

To this natural base, the singer-actor then adds education and training. A trained actor
brings with him varied levels of training from voice lessons, dance lessons, and/or acting lessons that contribute to the process of creating a role. Education at universities and conservatories provide the actor knowledge and experience to use musical resources, acting techniques and dance skills that are relevant to their process.

Another element that inevitably colors the actor’s perception of the character is their life experience. The actor approaches a new role with an artistic palette of different experiences that they can draw from in order to access different emotions and understanding. By paralleling the situations of the character with situations in their own life, a more realized character emerges. These experiences aid the actor in empathizing with their character and significantly affect the line delivery of the scenes and songs of the musical. All these experiences drastically brighten the actor’s portrayal of the character by aligning their own experiences with that of the character on stage.

With the actor’s innate attributes and training present, the actor must now add the preliminary dabs of research during the pre-production process. The actor must understand the design of the show with its themes, concepts, and characters. Next, the actor must understand the composition of the musical by analyzing the structure of the libretto and score. Adding a general knowledge of the composer/lyrist and librettist life and works, helps the actor understand the basis of the work and the driving force behind its concept. The actor should also research the production history of the work in order to know what preceded his performance in hopes of learned insights from his predecessors. It is imperative that the actor understands the compositional make-up of the text and the music in order to find depth and meaning in their delivery of the language and song. This structural exploration creates a relationship of tension and balance as the actor searches through the parallels and conflicts of the musical’s concept.
throughout the piece. A helpful element to aid in this process is analyzing the actor’s songs to find the relationship with the music theory and the themes of the work. After all this is completed, the actor still can spend countless hours pouring over additional research in her process to gain a better grasp of the character and their setting.

The next selection of color to be applied in the actor’s process is the character analysis. In order to fully understand the character, an actor must delve into the character’s history, psychology, body image, occupation, instincts, desires, and belief system. The more realized a character is in the mind of the actor, the more realized it will become on stage. The actor explores the internal and external characteristics of the character in order to know this person through and through. Just as George talked to figures in his painting during *Color and Light*, the actor should be so immersed in the character that they know the character well enough to have conversations with them.

The actor relies on many tools to develop the character. An important element from the very developmental stages to the final performance is diction. The librettist’s choice of words is symbolic to the painter’s choice of color, as the actor’s process in delivering speech is symbolic to that of the painter’s collection of color onto the canvas. The very act of combining the vast amount of consonants and vowels to produce a cohesive speech pattern and dialogue parallels diction to pointillism. This requires that one place the right syllables and parts of the English language together to create a line of dialogue just as the neoimpressionist artist place separate colors together to create one picture. However elementary this concept may be, it is also evidenced in the actual script of *Sunday in the Park with George* as Dot teaches herself to read. Whether the authors were actually implying the correlation of diction and pointillism through the scene when Dot is learning to read, or it is clearly an assumption, the beginning reader would be
most likely to acknowledge this parallel. Immersed in the process of ciphering through the grammatical structure of consonants, vowels, articles, nouns, verbs, etc, the beginning reader is hypersensitive to the process of language. The actual use of language is extremely relevant with the notion of pointillism in reference to the actors’ process.

With the complexity of diction acknowledged, a new element is added to the canvas of the musical theatre actor – singing. The act of singing is comprised of hundreds of different elements coming together to produce one sustained melody in a song. Trained vocalists take for granted the vast combination of elements in vocal production. It is usually only when they experience difficulty that they fully recognize all the elements combined in order to heighten the vocal mechanics that work to disguise the ones that are not working. On a night such as this in my own process, I recorded in my journal that this performance “was an exercise first and foremost for my ability as a trained vocalist to rise above any vocal inequalities and push through those long legato sections and belting passages with breath control and proper placement. I do not usually think about all the elements combined to produce one cohesive sound as much as I did tonight.” In charting the points that must be combined for the voice to work, some of the most necessary elements would include:

Vocal Production:
1. Breath
2. Placement
3. Nasal Cavities
4. Head Cavities
5. Dynamics
6. Support
7. Vocal Cords
8. Words
9. Vowels
10. Consonants
11. Legit
12. Belt
13. Constriction
14. Legato
15. Staccato

These fifteen elements are just a sampling of basic terms associated with vocal production. A singer is usually required to combine many different techniques and placements throughout the course of the musical. The singer must demonstrate all the elements in order to produce sound and more specifically the quality of sound desired for various songs in the score.

As the music is strategically placed upon the actor’s canvas, the practical method of learning the lines, scenes, and acts also begin. The tedious process of line memorization relies on the actor drilling countless words strung together to make sentences that make dialogue that turn into scenes that eventually create entire acts of the play. In conjunction with the text, the musical theatre actor adds music to their process. In addition to the text, the singer must learn pitches, dynamics, accompaniment, rhythm, counting, breath support, and vocal styles to incorporate them into their process. As the actor adds these lines and melody to their process, they also incorporate objectives and beats. These objectives create varying emotions that inevitably color the actor’s presence and the character’s existence. The emotion that is inevitably invoked in the lines and lyric greatly assists the actor in carrying the energy. It lets the actor ground into the objective of the scene and pushes the tactics that the actor needs to use in order to achieve these objectives. An actor must combine all kinds of different tactics to achieve one objective. There are inevitably different objectives to each scene and many combined throughout the journey of the entire play.

After all these individual elements of the actor pre-production preparation are underway, the actor then adds a director, musical director, choreographer, designers, cast, and stage management into their rehearsal process. The actor continues to work on all these previous
elements such as diction, line memorization, and objectives, but they are now influenced and expounded on by the director and fellow cast members. As if the amount of elements added above were not sufficient, now a cast and production staff of unique individuals is each bringing years of detailed experiences to the table to make one collaborative product. A new perspective on pointillism in the process of art is derived from the collaboration of many different artists. This perspective can be perceived both harmoniously and dissonant depending on which context it is placed. As each individual sings together in the choral ensemble selections, they produce a harmonious anthem of melody. A nod to pointillism is found in the symbolism of combining each individual voice singing together to create a holistic sound. If you listen closely you can hear individual voices, but if you let it wash over you and take it all in, you hear a cacophony of cohesive sounds. The parallel between choral singing and pointillism is clearly evident and is musical synonymous with its color counterpart of optical mixture. However, this collaboration of sound is not always pleasing to the ear. Tension can be created through the addition of so many different voices and is used for effect by the playwright and composer alike. A brilliant example of this in Sunday in the Park with George is the cadence to the park scene with the pregnancy confrontation. In this scene when Dot reveals to George that she is carrying his child everyone is singing full blast in different keys with different motifs of previous songs. This cacophony of sound is also a powerful nod to pointillism. Instead of individual dots creating a beautiful painting, the combinations of individual motifs create a confrontational chaos to create a chaotic situation as a whole.

As the actor travels through their process in collaboration with the cast, the rehearsal elements continue to layer. The actor journeys through music rehearsals, improvisation rehearsals, and blocking rehearsals. The blocking is another element added to the actor’s agenda
by the director. This addition clearly structures the actor’s orientation to the space in which his character dwells. With every scene containing many different movements and directions, the actor layers his blocking next to the lines, objectives, and tactics they must perform. Each element is enhanced by the other elements, therefore creating a brighter product much like the shimmer that Seurat was always striving for in his painting. Occasionally the individual elements align next to each other to create a more vivid product. A certain example in my own process was documented on March 21 in my journal:

Tonight I brought something to the table that enriched the scene tremendously. We were roughly blocking the final scene where Dot comes back to talk with George right before Move On. John had me circle around George and land near center stage right. I noticed that it was the exact same spot that I had stood in at the very beginning of the show for Sunday in the Park with George. It instantly hit me, because I’m so familiar with that spot. I have a lot of memories in this spot during previous rehearsals. I need to play with this notion of Dot remembering this spot in the park where she modeled and learned concentration. What are the things that pop out in her memory? What are the memories, the emotions, and the sensory details that surface? How do I as the actress reveal this physically to the audience? Or is it merely subtextual? (Appendix 138-139)

By placing these two different sections of the play in proximity with the same space of blocking, a general arch is achieved. A similar color or picture is painted for this character.

After the blocking is engrained in the actor’s process, the actor is challenged to add all these previous elements to rehearsals that cease to stop for mistakes or further additions. This next step in their process is known as the run-through rehearsals. Run-throughs combine all the
previous elements simultaneously, therefore forcing the actor to cohesively meld their research, training, and rehearsing. The run-through rehearsals are a clear culmination of so many details necessarily brought together to present a play. These details include: memorization, text, lines, melody, rhythm, a multitude of pitches, multiple solos, blocking, staging, props, relationships, subtext, objectives, gestures, emotion, entrances, and exits. All these elements must be present for one scene of the play to exist. Even the lines themselves have to align perfectly with each other. For example, I missed one line in the ending of opening song entitled “Sunday in the Park with George”, and the entire patter derailed. It was extremely frustrating not being able to recover. All of the elements rely on each other for the full picture to be painted.

In the absence of stopping to correct mistakes and problems during the run-through, the director takes notes to distribute to the actors afterwards. This method allows the actor to take account of what needs to be reworked and what should be honed for a finer performance. The actor has to observe the different notes and add them into their process. Layering all these notes into the actor’s mindset as she goes through the acts again creates a new level of work. After the cast has learned to co-exist on the stage, a new challenge is added in welcoming the orchestra. During the first orchestra rehearsal, also known as Sitzprobe, the actors must transfer their experience of singing with the rehearsal piano to singing with an entire orchestra. This transition is difficult, as the actor now has to work together with many different instrumentalists versus just one piano player. There are moments of fascination and surprise and equal moments of frustration and confusion to find the beat or pitch or rhythmic continuity. The addition of the instrumentation, orchestration, and the singers’ involvement in stepping into this role is a large step in the process that must be made very quickly. There are all kinds of new discoveries to be made by the actor in listening to the orchestra. Accustomed to hearing just the rehearsal piano,
the whole orchestra joins in and produces many different kinds of sounds and experiences. The underlying accompaniment of the orchestration beneath the singer is a constant presence and inevitably pushes the actor in places that they are not expecting and have yet to travel in their process.

The next addition to the actor’s pointillist piece is tech week. At this stage, the actor is met with the challenge of adding costumes, props, set pieces, sound, and light in a new space on the actual stage of the performances. The countless number of elements that have to be executed for the play to exist are temporarily set aside to focus on adding the new elements introduced during tech week. This process demands a firm foundation of these previous elements in order for the actor to fully engage and bring together the new elements of the dress rehearsals.

The final stage of the actor’s process is layering all the elements to present in front of an audience during the performances. The actor has to deal with the addition of nerves, excitement, and the added pressure from the outside viewers and critics. The actor also is rewarded with the added element of an audience’s response. The addition of laughs, sighs, or applause can aid in the actor’s process on stage, yet must not greatly affect the performer.

In my own personal process of developing the role of Dot, I constantly found myself paralleling the technique of George Seurat as I continuously added thousands of colorful elements into my rehearsal process. I also emphasized with the contemporary George in Act two as he learned the importance for an actor to patiently piece their process together “bit by bit” in “putting it together” (Sondheim II-21). Just as Dot learned how to concentrate through her lover’s work ethic, this show has truly taught me all about concentration. In doing so, I have improved my motivations, my objectives, my diction, and process. All my training, especially that of my graduate studies, has come together to produce this role. I was able to pull from so
many different class times, practice times, social times, and life experiences to culminate into the characters that I portrayed on stage. The very essence of pointillism was exhibited in my work as everything in my life was brought together and referenced to add depth and life to the two characters that I created. It’s not just a set time to rehearse in order to create art. It is the culmination of a lifetime of different points, experiences, and colors to paint these characters upon the canvas of the stage. It is essential to combine all these ingredients from the formative stages to the final performances of a performer to create the whole picture. It would be impossible to construct a play without the countless hours of rehearsal and countless moments of revelations that in essence piece together the finished project just as it would be impossible to create Seurat’s painting without the countless dots of color and preliminary sketches that eventually composed his manifesto painting. Therefore, by approaching character development through the theatrical perspective of pointillism, an actor can tackle “The Challenge” and “Bring Order to the Whole” as the character of George sought to accomplish while walking out on Act One’s blank stage to create “So Many Possibilities” as mirrored in the end of Act II of *Sunday in the Park with George*. 
APPENDIX A
REHEARSAL JOURNAL
I am sitting in a large room on a bench. There are people quietly bustling around me, but I remain still. I am fixated on an image in front of me. A large painting made entirely of dots - Millions of colorful dots that somehow brilliantly compose a picture. A picture of people in the park entitled *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. Seurat’s innovative work stands before me at the Chicago Art Institute. I have seen this painting many times, but now it has much more meaning to me. I am that woman on the bottom right side. According to Marie, I am many of the women in the painting. I am so amazed that I have the opportunity to play this role after desiring to do it for so long. This initial amazement is filled with excitement, fear, anxiety, and accomplishment all mixed together. Regardless, I am that woman in the front, with the monkey, and the hat. I am about to enter the world of that painting, invest in relationships with those around me, and be a part of Sondheim and Lapine’s creativity in bringing it to life.
January 1, 2006
Preproduction Preparation

It’s a new year with many new possibilities, many shows to perform, and one semester left of my graduate studies to complete. Most importantly, I have a thesis to write. I am using the role of Dot in *Sunday in the Park with George* as my thesis role to be performed in April. Rehearsals start February the sixth so I have approximately a month left to research, establish a committee, and solidify a topic. I have asked Kristina Tollefson to be my committee head and have met with her on two occasions to discuss a topic. I have compiled a research folder with information on topics such as Sondheim, Seurat, & previous productions of the musical. I am in the process of picking a topic, which with more in depth research and sifting through the play, I am merely left with more questions and options than a clear, concise thesis. My initial idea was to write about Sondheim and Seurat’s portrayal of beauty through the painting and the play. Now when I read the play and immerse myself in the lines, character, and themes, I find that the more obvious themes are centered on relationships, unrequited love, progression, the pursuit of art, and work vs. relationships. Would one of these themes be more appropriate and clear? I am stuck. I need to think more about it and do more research. Once again, I’ll reread the script for the 150th time in attempts to “Move On”.
January 14, 2006
Daydreaming on Dot

The more I get to know this woman, the more I fall in love with her. I love the way she looks. I love the way she prims. I love her ability to let herself love someone so completely. I love her ability to choose. I love her courage to pick a man that would be better off for her in the long run. I love her intuition. I love her consciousness of her surrounding and those inhabiting her environment. I love how she cares what people think, but at the same time doesn’t at all. I love that she loves physical intimacy and hungers for emotional intimacy. I love that she doesn’t abide by the standard social norms. I love that she struggles to make an unconventional relationship work. I love that we get glimpses of her in Act II from her daughter Marie that weren’t presented in Act I. I love how she recognized a need and started teaching herself to read. I love her ability to admire and antagonize George all at the same time. I love this character.

What motivates Dot?
1. Emotional intimacy
2. Physical intimacy
3. Monetary needs
4. The need to support a child
5. A desire to be independent
6. A desire to impress George
7. A desire to fit in
8. A desire to stand out
9. A sense of adventure
10. A desire to please
February 10, 2006
First Rehearsal

Friday Schedule:
Introduction
Read-through

Today was the first rehearsal. They have officially begun! After all the pre-production work, character analysis, and research, it has officially begun. Throughout the night, we read through the script (including the lyrics), saw the design concept and watched the chromolume projections rough draft. John Bell, the director, explained his directing style and Justin Fisher, the musical director, generalized the overall sensibilities of the music and his rehearsal techniques. I really gained great insight from reading the text in this setting. It was nice to not worry about trying to memorize lines, but rather be able to fully take in the text. It was also very good to read the text in its entirety again. Recently I have been jumping to the Dot parts. It was helpful to see the overlapping arch of the story. I came across one of the lines that I’ve brushed through and never really experienced before in light of my thesis. In Act I, George tries to explain his technique of painting to Jules by saying: “fixed laws like music” referring to his scientific approach to art and painting. What a perfect way to transition from the design (art – painting) section to the composition section of my thesis! I really enjoyed speaking the lyrics to the songs. They always instruct you to do this in acting class, but rarely do you present it in front of an audience. My preparation on the songs helped me with the acting choices, but also made it difficult to divorce myself from the rhythms and melodic nature of the line.

On another thesis note, the lines and melodic contour lend themselves to the actor (Dot-Light) and the pointillism quality (Design). The rhythmic nature is so reflective of the speech patterns – in sporadic punctuations that come together to form a distinct whole (pointillism,
music theory, form/beauty).

I had a moment of relief with the character of Marie tonight. Although I have a far journey to cross with this character and large strides still to be made, I was able to explore the nuances of her voice and speech pattern. By creating glottal attacks and a forced hesitancy of inflection, my voice matured and altered from the character voice of Dot. Adding a breathy quality to the mix and slowing down the diction and phrasing seems to help personify the older grandmother figure as well. Over all, the first rehearsal was exciting and a wonderful way to welcome a new season of discoveries and production!
February 13, 2006
Music Rehearsal

Monday Schedule:
Sunday (End of Act I)
It’s Hot Up Here (Act II Intro)
Sunday (End of Act II)

Rehearsal went well tonight. It is always wonderful to sing in an ensemble again. I miss this tremendously after taking so many choir credits in my undergraduate studies. The music to this score is absolutely gorgeous and a delight to sing – the initial learning of the rhythms can be quite difficult, but after they are learnt – they assist the actor so much in acting the line that it seems well worth it to spend the time and energy learning it. I was struck by the strict parallel to pointillism with the song “It’s Hot Up Here” in the choral parts and the tone clusters in the accompaniment (lots of notes clumped together to create a sound of dissonance yet equally unifying) The staccato feel of the chorus parts was an alarming reference to pointillism – Was Sondheim purposefully trying to make the music nod toward this theory since the only ones singing it all those composed of dots in the picture? I also found it interesting that Dot’s solo breaks away from the staccato/dot sensibility – what does this convey? Was Sondheim trying to have George separate Dot from the others and/or from the art work?
Tuesday Schedule:
Sunday in the Park with George
Children and Art
Everybody Loves Louis

Today I rehearsed three songs with Justin – *Sunday in the Park with George, Children and Art*, and *Everybody Loves Louis*. It went very well, because we have rehearsed it before in a lot of my accompaniment sessions previous to the beginning of rehearsals. I was surprised however by many of the musical corrections that I had failed to catch. There was a segment in *Children and Art* that I was completely at a loss with the pitches. I made a note to work on this passage. I also had a hard time getting a certain section in *Everybody Loves Louis* – which was very bad because it repeats. I have switched over to the vocal score instead of the melody line copies we received. Unfortunately, there are a lot of discrepancies in the copies, but it is much easier for me to follow along with the accompaniment of the actual score.

My actor conference with John was amazing. We had a similar meeting before rehearsals even began while I was working on my pre-production research. This conference, however, was more about the objectives and tactic of Dot versus her back story. We went scene by scene through the play and discussed her actions, relationships, and motivations. Themes were discussed that will be very relevant to my process and thesis. I particularly liked our discussion on Louis, Marie, and the joy/orgasm/zone of getting prepared or prepping to go out on the town (or in Dot’s case – the Follies). I totally know what this preparation is about – it’s so familiar and such a constant joy in my life whether it was for prom, talent shows, banquets, performances, dates, or Belvoir nights. I love taking hours to get ready, getting in that zone on making your
appearance absolutely as perfect as you can, and feeling that Zen provided in the place of being completely alone. I was encouraged by his response to my reading of Marie during the reading. I also learned a lot from our discussion on elderly mannerisms, speech inflection, and patterns. I also got a lot of encouragement to raise the stakes in certain places such as asking for the painting, the disappointment over the follies, and the subtext of “the bread George” in Everybody Loves Louis.
February 16, 2006
Music Rehearsal

Thursday Schedule:
Color and Light
We Do Not Belong Together
Everybody Loves Louis
Move On

The biggest challenge I have found with the music is the ever-changing rhythm and time signatures. Just when I get into the sense of established time, Sondheim changes it on me.

Regardless, it is much better to read out of score with the piano accompaniment than guess what the accompaniment is doing and how I relate to it.

It was great to sing with Michael tonight after practicing alone for so long. It was a rush to be actually singing with someone else. Sondheim intentionally captures the power exchanges between the leading characters in their duets whether through a lovemaking session as in Color and Light, an argument as in We Do Not Belong Together, or an epic reunion as in Move On.

Combining our two voices did present some problems though – the music is so interwoven with contrapuntal melodic lines that you must constantly hit the rhythm precisely accurate in order for it to work. We got everything quite quickly and were able to go on and accomplish what Justin had assigned for Friday night’s rehearsal. Preparation always pays off!
February 17, 2006
Music Rehearsal

Friday Schedule:
Music Review

Tonight’s rehearsal was somewhat pointless for me. I got there at eight o’clock, but did not sing until 8:45. Then we reviewed Sunday in Act I and Sunday Finale in Act II. It was a good realization to have remembered and retained all the musical notes from Justin at Monday’s rehearsal, but the rehearsal was not very challenging in the least. I really enjoy having the first, second, and third year graduate students all together for this production. This process is a great opportunity to get to know them, spend time with them, and share insights about the graduate process with one another. It also raises the bar significantly for the professional demeanor, respect, and work ethic of the entire cast as far as I am concerned. Theatre is such a collaborative endeavor and it is very difficult at time to be so isolated from the other students in the program. I love the fact that we are doing this play and bringing in a plethora of people to join us in this process. It is the perfect analogy to pointillism in a way because in this sense the director acts as the painter and the actors as the colors of paint. In the casting process, the director has to pick the right colors of actors to assemble the picture of the painting on stage. I believe that this show is quite well cast. I also couldn’t have imagined ending my graduate career with a better show and role.
February 20, 2006
First Sing-through

As with all firsts, I came into this rehearsal with mixed emotions – particularly fright, excitement, and curiosity. I was scared at the daunting task of performing all the music in a public setting after primarily working on it in private. I was excited to sing with everyone and hear the musical selections I haven’t heard. I was curious to see where I would encounter errors in my songs. It was a great rehearsal to gauge where I am in the process and what areas I need to drill, learn, or perfect. I was glad that Justin did a quick review of some of the songs so that I could warm-up to the fact that I open the show with my solo. *Sunday in the Park with George* went well. I need to work on breathing deeply and perfecting the diction. It would also help to elongate the vowels and not anticipate the endings. *Color and Light* went fine, but I got “more rouge” completely wrong as far as pitches and the entrance to “if my” was too high. It’s very interesting how with the pointillism mirrored in the music it creates the opposite effect on technique for the singer. All the dots/notes are supposed to come together, but I find, as the singer, that it makes it very hard to find the pitch exactly. However, now that I write it out, I realize that maybe it does accomplish the point. By bringing all the dots/notes together – it makes it impossible to select only one dot/note. I will have to think that over some more in order to flesh out this concept. *Everybody Loves Louis* was disastrous in my opinion. I really need to drill the notes. No one in the cast could tell, because it sounded fine; however I know what the right notes are, and I was not getting them. *We Do Not Belong Together* went well, however I need to experiment with vocal qualities that will allow an angry/frustrated/argumentative emotion without tensing or straining the voice. On the song, *It’s Hot Up Here*, I still need to drill those pitches as well (especially the first line). *Children and Art* went very well. I feel like I
finally get to relax with this song. I am able to enjoy it more because of the slow, reflective nature of the accompaniment. *Move On* went well, and this time I didn’t mess up at the contrapuntal section with Michael. I need to work on sustaining the vowel throughout the phrase with breath and intensity. Overall, it was a productive rehearsal, and I now have the recording to listen to and rehearse with on my own.
February 21, 2006
Blocking Rehearsal

Tuesday Schedule:
Stage Scenes:
  1-3 – 1-9
  1-15 – 1-17
  1-17 – 1-23

Today was the first blocking rehearsal with our musical director, Justin Fisher, filling in as the director. John Bell had to leave due to a family emergency. Due to his absence, the rest of the week will be spent in character work. It was more like a “get up and start moving/playing/experimenting” rehearsal than anything else. We sang through the songs completely with the lines at the piano and then we moved away and did it in the space. Justin had some great direction to offer and it was a good start to get out of the book and allow life to breathe into the text and song.

I had two somewhat hellish realizations however. First of all, I’m carrying the show. Secondly, if I want to make any form of discovery while in rehearsal – most of (if not all) my repertoire has to be memorized. I’m quite close to being memorized, but still have a long way to go as far as complete memorization. Memorizing is such a weird process. I go over things by myself and I think that I have it down, but then if I transfer it to a different setting everything changes. This show has some crazy memorization trip ups, whether the long repetitious songs or the songs with thought patterns that make no logical sense. *Sunday in the Park with George* went well. It was good to stumble upon realizations in the text and to have George as an active scene partner. *Color and Light*, on the other hand, was quite frustrating for the fact of trying to mirror the pointillist quality in the music with the movements and continue to keep up with the score. I have to memorize this section. It was very difficult looking and primping into a mirror
that I couldn’t see myself in. It became me as the actress trying to find my eyebrow to puck, rather than Dot thoroughly enjoying the fact that she is getting ready. This piece is very difficult to establish a rhythmic nature to – the rhythm is so dictated, yet it is hard to try to figure out how to anticipate the orchestra’s onsets with conjunction to the next physical move. It will definitely be one of those pieces that will require a lot of time outside of rehearsal. I loved the moment when I got to get out of the chair and more towards George. I had never thought of this moment as similar to the dress coming off, but it really is. To be able to actually get lost in his eyes was terrific. To let my body subconsciously move through the space towards him was very powerful and to not be able to touch him was even more symbolic of their relationship. I enjoyed the aspect of intuition and spontaneity that came from this rehearsal. I need to play with the contrast of George dismissing me and George pleasing me. I also need to let the annoyance and the accomplishment meld throughout the piece.
February 22, 2006
Blocking Rehearsal

Wednesday Schedule:
Stage Scenes:
1-10 – 1-15
1-23 – 1-48

It was so nice to have a rehearsal that I had time off-stage to take breaks. We worked a lot of the group numbers: *The Day Off*, *Park Scene*, and *No Life*. So basically I just got paraded around with Louis. I was pleasantly surprised by his interaction with me. It is so weird to add other actors to the process after working on my part individually for so long. He added an element of surprise. I felt like I was a prize to be won, and Louis was estatic that he had won me at this point in time. I felt like I almost had to subdue him. His eagerness to please me while wrapped around my arm provided a nice contrast to my confidence. It boosted it in all reality. Without a primary director, it was interesting making decisions and choices. Of course, you always are making choices, but without the presence of the director you don’t worry about the director’s approval.

I have to take charge with entrances and exits. There is this unusual sense of necessary duty that I should probably carry over into my everyday rehearsal technique. I love mingling with other actors. I love being surrounded by people, feeding off people, being inspired by people, and communing with like-minded people. It is such a wonderful environment to work in.

It was weird having Jules and Yvonne invade our space in the park. It gave me a lot to play with as I was standing dead still for posing. I’m not sure if that was translated to the audience though. I had a very cool experience when I moved from the poise tonight. Michael looked at me very distraught and said, “You moved! I was drawing you.” It gave me this sense of duty as I thought “Oh, he really was drawing me!” The rest of the scene in rehearsal I felt a
great, realistic sense of duty. He is drawing me. I have to try and be still. I instantly went to this place that Dot lived in constantly as his model. I need to take more time in the Lesson Number Eight section. I must make the realizations as she is learning - as I am learning.
Thursday Schedule:
Stage Everybody Loves Louis

Notes from Rehearsal:
All About George
Moments of brain working ahead of her
Play with Pastry at the end
Drag around Louis

Tonight we rehearsed *Everybody Loves Louis* in a very improvisational manner. We first sang through it and after practicing alone, I was far more confident on the exact pitches. The song has a weird interchange with minor third intervals that are not always consistent. I have a much better feel for the pitches. I cannot add any space or pauses to the song. I must sing through “the bread” and “we lose” sections. It was great to play around with the song in an improvisational style. Michael stepped in as “the dream” Louis and I got to play with the idea of parading Louis around to showcase him to the others in the park, but more importantly get George’s attention or at least try to get his attention. Where is he? How will he react? How much do I flirt with George? How much do I flirt with Louis? It helped so much to have that tangible person to caress, cajole, and keep by my side. It also made the moments more clear when she was thinking in her own world versus when she was convincing herself and others that she really likes Louis. At this point, I am not convinced that she likes Louis. We still have not gotten to *We Do Not Belong Together* where I believe is the final straw with her for George. This song is a ploy for her to get George’s attention. This time she is using a different tactic than before. She is no longer trying to accommodate him, but rather trying to make him jealous.
Today I was sick so I entered rehearsal quite cautiously. I did fine, yet it was hard to conjure up ample energy required for the scenes. We worked on some of the scenes in the park and then on the *We Do Not Belong Together* scene. It was great to walk through this scene. I couldn’t get Michael’s attention. He simply would not listen to me. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn’t distract him. I struggled for it with words, but it was only till I reached for it with emotion that I got some sort of response. However, this didn’t work every time. It was a good challenge to try different tactics to see which ones worked. It was interesting to see how I kept myself engaged. Sometimes it was hard and I found myself waning, but other times it was absolutely effortless.

My scene with Yvonne was intriguing tonight. I’ve always seen this as Dot’s release to tell her what she has felt towards this woman for a long time, but never expressed it directly to her. However, as I walked through the scene, I realized that Dot is changed in this scene and through this interaction. She meets a different Yvonne in George’s studio that day than she has previously known in the park. As she sees her in a much different light, she is transformed through the encounter. Yet she goes straight back to her former self when addressing George. I need to ponder this further in order to find ways of melding the scene together. I had conflicting feelings about arguing with George. At times it felt very natural and then some segments just felt incredibly forced. I think having my book in hand handicapped certain moments making them feel forced. The times that I truly connected was when I got out of the book, stopped
worrying about the notes and mistakes, and gave George my whole attention. Keeping eye contact was a key element to making this scene work. I felt as if the minute his eyes disengaged from me I was sunk. However, it did help with my objective to try to get him to listen to me. Even though I want John to be here, this time has not been wasted. Moving through the material in a very improvisational-like manner has been truly beneficial.

The song *We Do Not Belong Together* is quite low making it difficult to add healthy intensity in this a low range. Although it would be unfitting for her character to have a random soprano aria in the middle of the show, it would be a whole lot easier to add intensity to a song in a higher range. I must keep working on experimenting with this song to find a happy medium of proper voice technique and proper emotional intensity.
February 26, 2006
Costume Fitting

I always go into costume fittings excited and scared. Costumes provide so much for the actor, and I always want to feel comfortable living in them as the character. I liked the first dress I tried on. It was green and built especially for me. The color was stunning and it fit quite well. The undergarments are crazy. I like them; however they are so foreign to our century that it changes everything about your demeanor, posture, character, movement, etc. I felt like I was in “Meet Me In St. Louis” when the sisters are getting ready for the Christmas Ball and tugging each other into their corsets. The designer had her knee in my lower back and was pulling away. It will be very interesting to sing in. I have done operas and operettas before in corsets so I’m not too worried. However, the sooner I can start practicing in it the better. I loved the corset actually. It makes everything look so put together and accentuates the female form. It makes the waist look wonderfully firm and small and lengthens it in a very attractive way. It also makes the breasts look amazing! I hate the draws of my underwear though. They are huge, baggy, and provide no shape whatsoever. I didn’t like the dress that I will probably be wearing for most of the play unfortunately. It’s a weird 1980’s top with a weird mismatched elastic skirt for the bustle/pregnancy outfit. The next costume that I tried on was the dress in the painting; however it fails to match the one in the painting. I cannot believe that I am wearing a costume that looks nothing like the painting. It is a nice costume, but it is maroon and pink where as the painting is a black bodice and a purple skirt. The hat looks very fake as well. I suppose a lot of people won’t know the exact colors of the painting, but I do and it bothers me. It also bothers me that I look rather frumpy in many of my costumes when I’m supposed to be the pretty love interest. It is amazing how a costume can enhance or distract from your performance so much. I did like
the Marie costume and enjoyed the fact that they had to seriously alter the outfit to make it look older and unattractive. The wig however is hideous, but the hat was cute. Overall, I agree with at least half of my costume choices, but have things to address with my director.
February 27, 2006  
Character exploration/Improvisation with Nick

Monday Schedule:
Music Review  
Stage 1-59 – 1-69

At the start of rehearsal, we sat in a circle and talked about our experience with art. We discussed the different themes that surfaced throughout the show and what that meant personally for the members of the cast. I enjoyed hearing people’s stories about how theatre and art have moved them on a specific occasion. It was interesting to hear about difficult challenges that cast members have gone through and how they enjoyed certain rewarding victories in the end. Once again, it brought a new perspective on pointillism in the process of art. Here are nearly fifteen individuals each bringing years of detailed experiences to the table and once combined made a beautiful product derived from experience and process.

Even though the situation was quite forced, it was nice to hear everyone talk. I was very reluctant to share a story because it always seems like there are no words to accurately describe and relay the story. It is a very personal thing that never transfers well to other people. I need to explore this about myself. Is it censorship, is it worrying about others, is it keeping secrets? I’m not sure.

I enjoyed walking through Putting it Together and getting wheeled around in the wheelchair. It was great to start trying to form the character of Marie by playing with many different mannerisms. I have listed them as to easily reference them:

Marie Rehearsal: 1st steps to discovery

20. Wheelchair  
21. Hunched shoulders  
22. Hands crossed/mingled
23. Looking up to everyone
24. Slowing down movement
25. Limited range of voice and movement
26. Limited range of focus
27. Dosing
28. Napping
29. Enjoying the party
30. Watching the party goers
31. Talking with Elaine
32. Talking with Rocky
33. Saying no to food from the waitress
34. Looking for George
35. Admiring the painting
36. Twitching
37. Responding to the chaos of the party
38. Being mindful of my opposing nature to the party
   • Marie = Still, Grounded, Content
   • Party = Frantic, Flustered, Working/Making Connections

Being in the wheelchair was a new experience for me. It was scary for a twenty-three year old to be subjected to this method of movement. I’m sure that for a ninety-eight year old it is much more appreciated, but there still has to be that initial level of fright that comes from not being able to move yourself around. The thought of having to depend on others is very frightening. I was annoyed when Elaine didn’t move me or take me in the direction that I would instinctively go in. I had no control over my blocking or physical instincts. I was very fascinated with watching the people rustle about from my perspective in the wheelchair. I hope this doesn’t die down after the initial rehearsal.
February 28, 2006  
Review Rehearsal with Lester

It is the last day of February and the best rehearsal I have had so far. I cannot begin to describe the feeling when you find yourself on a bare stage completely enamored with your scene partner. Everything else fades away and you find yourself moving through space – creating art – connected, energized, intrigued by the eyes of someone whom you want to love, but must chose not to. That’s what I had with George tonight during *We Do Not Belong Together*. This rehearsal was all about taking risks, trying, exploring, feeling, listening to subtext, and being moved by what my scene partner has to offer. This environment was created by Lester Malizia who came in to direct tonight’s rehearsal. It was so amazing to have a seasoned director come in and work with us. As much as I want John to return, Lester is the first person that I would want to step in for John during his absence. It amazed me how much his direction helped me. We talked about how Dot desires George yet refuses to settle for being second in his life. Dot is such a sensual being. I need to remember every moment of sex with George. I need to relish every moment of physical content/context/contact. Lester warned me not to fall into the trap of reporting the lines at the beginning of *Color and Light*. It is far more effective when Dot is in her own world talking in the mirror about it to herself. I must remember everything about George. I must yearn for George. When I look into his eyes and make that connection, then I am truly beautiful. He told me that when someone loves you so much it is difficult to not see yourself as beautiful in their eyes. He directed me to use every asset of figure and beauty to get him, because that is all that I have.

I have to get off-book. There is nothing more frustrating than to sacrifice being in the moment in order to look through the script for lines. I’ll incorporate memorization into my
morning routine at the gym. I must work on it every chance I get. I love this show, this role, this amazing opportunity, but I wish it was the only thing that I had to do. I’m so tired of juggling tons of balls with grad classes and shows and nailing down future engagements and jobs. Oh, I almost forgot another note from rehearsal. When I ask for what I want in the *We Do Not Belong Together* scene, separate the “George” from “I would like my painting”. She really wants George, but ends up setting for the painting to get out of this vulnerable spot. Lester has a wonderful way of pushing you – encouraging you – working with you. I want to work with him for a long time starting in the near future and beyond.
March 1, 2006
Character Work/Improvisation Rehearsal in Nick Wuerhmann

Tonight the whole company was here for some improvisation work. We worked on the park scene for the majority of the evening. This scene encompasses many snippets of the character’s solos intertwined. All of the characters are introduced in the park as they mingle in and out of George and Dot’s lives. Both George and Dot have defining moments in this sequence with George singing *Finishing the Hat* and Dot singing *Everybody Loves Louis*.

Due to all the other elements of this large *Day Off* scene, I did not work that much this evening. It was mainly devoted to the characters in the park working on their individual solos and the transitions into all the others. I did, however, work through *Everybody Loves Louis*. It was difficult as I was not completely off-book, and this song presents many challenges to the actor with its mental gymnastics for memory.

In an improvisational game, Nick had me stand in the middle of the stage while all the characters in the park circled around me. He instructed them to turn away in disgust and never catch my attention when I looked at them to try to tell them why Louis was so wonderful. This choice of improvisation was not helpful to me, because I did not need to feel any contempt or disapproval from the cast while trying out this song. At that moment in my process, I needed support from my cast members, but all I found were sneers and disgust. I have never felt more isolated on stage before in my life, and here I was supposed to be singing a fun patter song about a lovable guy that everyone was fond of. It was one of those times when improvisation does not fulfill or add to your process, so you just have to shrug it off and move on. If anything it reinforced the theme of *Move On* to convince myself to not worry what other people think of me, but continue to work and take risks. In this process, I have to take Dot’s advice to “Look at what
you want, not at where you are, what you’ll be.” Move On Chris.
March 6, 2006
Blocking Rehearsal

Monday Schedule:
Stage I-10 – I-15 & I-23 – I-48

I felt like a leading lady tonight at rehearsal. I felt like my actions set everyone else in
motion. It was a very, very weird feeling of control and responsibility. It was throughout the
entire night, but climaxed at the heightened pregnancy encounter with everyone whirling around
me, avoiding me, watching me, and sending energy toward me. I love playing with the ever-
changing men in my life. There are new and exciting repercussions that happen every time I step
on to the stage in the arm of Louis and in the arm of George. There are comparisons and
contrasts between the two men and the times when I have a man on stage with me and those
when I don’t. It’s very interesting for me to be constantly paraded around. Dot doesn’t
necessarily demand this; it just happens. It was weird to experience the guy always leading me
and how it affected me when he wasn’t. We worked many of the park scenes this evening –
mainly the transitions in and out. It was good to go through the scenes that we had already
walked through in improvisation. It was good to block at a quick speed and finally have an
overall sense of where we were setting things. I found it amusing that most of the set blocking
was directly opposite of the walkthrough blocking with Justin. When in doubt in the future – go
the opposite direction. I loved John’s directing style. It was concise, efficient, and thought
provoking. He didn’t falter around with directions. He told us exactly where to go and what he
wanted. He kept on yelling out – more energy, don’t let the vocal line drop, don’t get to vocally
intimate, keep the intimacy but wrench up the volume. The blocking will not be difficult to
remember – it is very intuitive. I love doing this, I love this role, and I love working under
John’s direction. I am so energized by working on this play. I am in the right place.
March 7, 2006  
Blocking Rehearsal

Tuesday Schedule:  
Sunday in the Park with George  
Color and Light  
Stage I-3 – I-9, I-15 –I-17, & I-17 – I-23.

How do you sit down and record a night of very hard work and concentration down on paper? How do you articulate the energy that is required of you to stay in the moment when there are fifteen thousand different things to think about? I am completely drained. My feet are aching. My arms are sore. My brain feels like mush. Tonight’s rehearsal required 100% attention from the moment I stepped on stage till the time when I was finally able to leave it. I had many different revelations tonight. I’ll start by listing and then expand.

1. I work 95% better when off book
2. I am off book for these two scenes! Yes!!!!
3. Breath is such a controlling factor in acting as well as singing.
4. Get out of the room for the break
5. Find your breath when you lose it for the singing
6. Acting is like dancing – you always have to think of what is coming next
7. Powder Puff = Beauty = Dot who is controlled by Music in this scene = Pointillism
8. Working with the notion of the mirror being my confidant and friend
10. Subtext at the end of the scene

Tonight was a good realization for me as an actress that I have to come into rehearsals 98% off book – if not completely. I was able to make so much more progress in the process of the scene and subtext and objectives because I wasn’t thinking about the lines and what came
next. Of course there will always be that factor, but tonight I felt assured that I knew what was coming next and could move on in a sense. I could move on from the process of remembering which lines to say to the process of discovering what make-up I should apply or where I forgot to powder or why I get so mad at the end of the scene.

It is very pleasing to know that I am completely off book for these first two scenes. What a relief to know that my diligent work has paid off. I can now go on to memorize Act II. Ugg. I want to be off-book from here on out with every scene that I have coming up in rehearsal. It will make the process far smoother.

I noticed how breath was such a controlling factor for me during rehearsal. Putting all the other aspects aside, I really was aware of when I needed more breath, when I was riding on the breath, and when the breath escaped me. I found myself using as much as I could. I couldn’t get enough. I found myself digging for different vocal tricks and techniques to utilize the breath better. I used the same techniques to carry the line in singing as I was to carry the speaking line. To some actors, this might be a simple common day occurrence, but for me, in my process, this was a breakthrough. I find that when I utilize the breath to deliver the lines, I don’t have difficulty enunciating or projecting. I felt like I had to take a lot of short breaths this evening and I’m wondering if that is due to drinking caffeine right before rehearsal. I went to a nutritionist recently and she said that caffeine causes your lungs to only be able to take in short amounts of air therefore creating short inhales. How scary for a singer! I also had to swallow a lot to get through some the longer phrases. I will continue to monitor that. It was rewarding for me to work through those moments in rehearsal tonight when I was clearly losing control of my voice and the vocal line, yet I was on top of it through experience and training and could find my way back to the right technique and pull through the song. I know that it was ever so slight, and few
people would have caught any of these moments, yet because I know my voice so well it was very easy for me to decipher these moments and work through them. It is so exhilarating to work through things on your own by applying the things that you have learned over the years that have brought you to this place. It sometimes seems like this rehearsal period is so many moments or dots that if placed together create a beautiful outcome or painting. It is the perfect analogy to my thesis of paralleling the ideas of pointillism and the rehearsal process. It would be impossible to construct a play without the countless hours of rehearsal and countless moments of revelations that in essence piece together the finished project just as it would be impossible to create Seurat’s painting without the countless dots of color. It is essential to combine all these ingredients to the whole.

I usually stay in the room for breaks – talking to fellow cast members, writing down notes, and working on the upcoming scene. However, tonight I left the room for a drink of water, and it made a huge difference. It felt like there was different air in the lobby of the theatre. I experienced this weird sense of getting out of the environment of work and concentration and being still for a moment. Clearing all that just happened with silence and stillness revived me in that short time to begin work again. I need to make a point to step out of the room for breaks.

As I was sitting at my vanity on stage, I was constantly thinking about what came next. It felt more like I was in dance class trying to remember a combination than trying to act through a scene. Acting is so much like dancing – you always have to think of what is coming next. There can’t be a moment of when you start to ease up and let things go along without some sort of meditation. There is no such thing – you have to be in control of each moment and be constantly pushing the scene forward – always keeping the energy and the stakes high. I find that the two
elements that help so much in this process to be able to carry the energy are the emotion that is inevitably invoked in the lines and lyrics and the underlying accompaniment of the orchestration beneath you. It is a constant presence and inevitably pushes you in places that you weren’t expecting. It helps you as the actor explore the objective of the scene and highlights the tactics that you need to use to achieve these objectives. Once again I am brought back to my thesis and realize that the culmination of the objectives and tactics in itself is synonymous to pointillism. An actor must combine all kinds of different tactics to achieve one objective. There are inevitably different objectives to each scene and many combined throughout the journey of the entire play. Every time I rehearse Color And Light I am floored by the intricate detail that Sondhiem and Lapine paid to the culmination of music theory and pointillism. These techniques capture the very essence of George’s activities in painting and Dot’s activities in beautifying herself to go out and bring them together into this intense love making scene without either individual ever touching each other. It in itself is the very essence of pointillism with the individual parts never touching each other yet remaining together to create something absolutely beautiful. At the end of this scene, I found myself experiencing a intensity that I had rarely felt of stage. It was that excitement mixed with exhaustion and lust. When Michael and I finished our song, I felt like I had just made love to him in a sense. I found the rhythm of my breathing very different – fast paced like I had just run a mile of pleasure. It excited me to spend the rest of the night with him at the Follies and then it was perfectly set up for me to get so angry at him when he forgot his promise to take me to the Follies. I really was angry when he left the room. Even without all the subtext of the back story that is developing through my research, I was so engaged in that moment, and it floored me that he could simply walk away. I loved the moment when the chair flipped over as I left. I have to try to recreate that moment. I revel in the
opportunity of play and experimentation in rehearsal, because you can try things and fail and start over and find what truly works. It is difficult when it doesn’t work, but it is exhilarating when it finally comes together or when simple discoveries surface.

I need to continue to work with the notion of the mirror being my confidant and friend. Hopefully this will look right and help me not merely report the lines as Lester warned. I left rehearsal tonight without dreading Color and Light as I usually do. It is definitely improving and settling well after working through it for the third time now. I am able to find an arch for the scene. The spaces seem longer now for speech and breath - providing more time for the subtext to play more freely in these spaces.

I need to work on a more realized subtext for Sunday in the Park with George and fill in the blank spaces during the poise section. I also need to keep drilling Color and Light to get all my activities clear and precise.
Wednesday Schedule:
Music Review
Park Scene with ELL I-23 – I-48
We Do Not Belong Together I-48 – I-59

Today’s rehearsal was sluggish yet productive. We started out with a vocal warm-up which was very nice and new. I can’t remember the last time that we started rehearsal with a vocal warm-up. I usually just know to warm myself up before rehearsal. It was great to sing vocalizes with the whole cast. I really do miss singing in an ensemble or choir. I need to look for more opportunities around this area for choral singing. We sang Sunday at the end of Act I. There is a certain type of energy and focus created by this piece. It is the stillness of all of our voices joined together waiting to erupt in a crescendo at the final measures. Once again I have found another nod to pointillism with the symbolism of combining each individual voice singing together to create a holistic sound. If you listen closely you can hear individual voices, but if you let it wash over you and take it all in, you hear a cacophony of cohesive sounds. I never really thought of this parallel between choral singing and pointillism before this rehearsal.

We reviewed the park scene again from Monday night and spent a little more time working out spacing and timing issues. Certain notes that I received were to make the line “That’s George” more rhythmically percussive and precise, and to speed up the lesson number eight section. I found this a relief, because I personally felt like it was too slow. I need to remember to over-enunciate the words as a beginner reader. I felt like the confrontation with George in the park went really well today. There was a certain hesitancy that worked well between the both of us. We played off of each other very well. I love working with Michael, because he provides a lot of unspoken dialogue for me as his scene partner. I can always find
something to react to. I don’t really know what to do with Louis, because he is always so accommodating. I enjoyed working *Everybody Loves Louis* tonight. It was farther along than the last time we worked on it, yet I’m still having difficulty memorizing it. The patter makes perfect sense at times, and then some of the transitions just don’t land well for me in my memory bank.

One thing that has landed well is the format of the play. I have not had a moment where I have wondered what comes next. It just naturally flows from scene to scene as the work gradually evolves. This is very different, because usually it is the transitions that give me the hardest time in piecing together a show. Maybe it is because I am constantly in the scenes; however I’m not quite sure of the exact reason.

I really enjoy those moments when you are completely captivated in a moment of the scene and you lose yourself in the pleasure of simply being there. Tonight that was the moment when Louis kissed me. It almost surprised me as I was singing even though I knew that he was going to do it. It felt perfect and helped me in the interpretation of the song. It became harder for me to simply play the single objective of making George jealous. Louis became a real lover to me. He became another male on equal footing with George, yet without the advantage of the entire back story that George and I have gone through. It made him real to me for the first time. I also love the idea of the cream puff at the end of the scene. I need to play with the timing of this as well.

The pregnancy encounter was rehearsed to end the entire park scene. I need to be less confrontational and more pensive. I must plan a careful revelation, yet just enough to shock him. This scene with everyone singing full blast in different keys and different motifs of previous songs is also a powerful nod to pointillism. Instead of individual dots creating a beautiful
painting, the combinations of individual motifs create a confrontational chaos to reveal a chaotic situation as a whole.

We worked on the scene leading up to We Do Not Belong Together right after the park scene. I like the fact that I do not move during the scene change, but remain in the exact same place as everything swirls around me. I am completely off book for this section, and the blocking was simple enough to memorize on the spot. I love this scene. Everything from the initial confrontation with George to the scene with Yvonne to the ending with George is so perfectly timed to escalate into an emotional tirade. I found it ironic that the first time she hears the “bum bum bum bum bum bum bum bum bum” from George while sitting at the vanity, she is excited knowing that if he is happy with his work, he will be happy with her. This time when she hears that melody sitting in the exact same spot she is outraged. She cannot believe that she has fallen second to his work yet again.

I found it hard to sing the song We Do Not Belong Together at times. My voice got stuck in that place where it is too low and I’m pushing to sustain the notes. I need to remember to keep my voice forward at all times and to not push. I cannot and will not be locked in this trap again. I don’t know if I also need to lighten up on some of the phrases. I’ll experiment with this on my own outside of rehearsal. Overall, it was a fulfilling rehearsal with a lot of engaging and disengaged moments. It felt interrupted in a start, stop, start, stop motion compared to that of last night’s fluid rehearsal.
March 9, 2006
Blocking Rehearsal

Thursday Schedule:
Everybody Loves Louis

I arrived at rehearsal mentally prepared to rehearse Everybody Loves Louis; however John approached me with a completely different schedule. He wanted to work Sunday in the Park with George, Color and Light, and We Do Not Belong Together. It was very interesting for me because I was fine with doing all those numbers, but hadn’t previously prepared or looked at the scenes since Tuesday. I dived right in and surprisingly enough it went beautifully. I had the advantage of not being over rehearsed and beaten up about previous mistakes. I was able to simply live in the text and the lyrics and the music and the emotions. It was a vital realization for me to be able to rely on my intellect and instincts to add layers to the songs.

Sunday in the Park with George went better than I could possible imagine. We started at the top of the scene and made a few adjustments to the opening which worked very well. Instead of a heighten sensibility with George ushering me in, it was simple time to work. I got into place and started the scene like it was any ordinary day. I enjoyed the time with Kate Ingram during master class, because she has inspired me to not be afraid of language but rather enjoy it. I have always tried to talk fast as to not bore someone with my speech. Kate assured us to take time with words and live in the word. It reminded me a lot about George and concentration. I can live in the moment when I say “I feel foolish”. What great alliteration and rich vowels to start the play off with! I felt like I had a playful and vibrant relationship with this man tonight. Even though he is uncaring at times, I love being with him and want to know him. Every time that he would see me meant something tonight. The playfulness comes naturally for this character. It wells up within me, perhaps because she is stifled by the poise. I need to remember to get
frustrated during the first patter section. I need to remember to look at George when I am supposed to. I love jumping away from him and going off into my own world. I love playing with him and circling around him while singing “Your Eyes”. The pattern came naturally today and the words were readily available. My breath was also much more present and easily accessible tonight. It felt really good to get a compliment from John that this rehearsal tonight could have been opening night material.

We then moved to Color and Light. There was still the creative impulses and growth, but it didn’t seem as organic as the previous song. I had to stay very concentrated on the lines and the accompaniment. I need to nail the pitches on “more rouge” and be less tentative about the pitch and onset. I worked Gary’s choreography into the piece which surprised me that I remembered it on the first try and that I was able to execute it for the most part. I really enjoy the poises and hope to be able to execute them with style and a sense of playfulness. I need to get them into my body more. It was effortless to sing to George and get lost in his eyes tonight. I need to pick up the brush when I deliver my lines at the end so to be ready for the final slam down.

We Do Not Belong Together was somewhat difficult to get into without going through all of the scene and emotional preparation, but the work-through brought many revelations. We started the line at “George, George, bum bum bum”, played through the scene, and went into the song. The general note was to get away from the parallel and play out to the audience more. I started crying the first time that I turned away from him and was no longer obligated to stay strong in front of him. I was free to release and I did effortlessly. However, the second time I was not able to recreate the tears. I need to explore this. How do you as an actress rekindle those emotions that surface sometimes unexpectedly? Sometimes when tears well, I know exactly
why. Sometimes, like the first time tonight, I did know. I did not feel like I was pushing this time through the song. Hopefully this was due to my breath being more accessible. Justin gave us a compliment (which was rare) on the execution of this song! I need to incorporate a walk around in a circle in the blocking – probably at “no one is you George”. I will keep the run off stage, yet I have to remember that I am pregnant throughout this whole scene. I must use that to my advantage.

A couple of final things to work on from this rehearsal: Keep working on diction, projection, musical integrity to the score, and playing to all sides of the theatre. I have to fine tune the parts where it is rubato and where it is not. John seemed very delighted with this rehearsal. It is very encouraging to be able to deliver work at a level that he is thrilled with. I felt very confident after tonight’s rehearsal. If anything, it was a great realization that I can take direction very well. I love getting a note and trying it, playing with it, and working it into my process. This rehearsal instilled a confirmation of that fact that I am a professional actress. I have what it takes to rehearse, process, and perform.
March 10, 2006
Blocking Rehearsal

Friday Schedule:
Music Review
Stage I-59 – I-69

Tonight we staged the finale of Act I with the chaotic scene in the park where everything heats up in the park and George orchestrates the chaos into a beautiful scene during the choral ballad of *Sunday*. I was very curious to see how John was going to tackle this beast of a scene. Once again, I was completely amazed by the efficient creative process that he approached the direction of the scene. He first gave us stage pictures that instructed us where to be with reference points within the score. Next we worked through each of the main sections of the piece with much repetition.

The park scene was tedious, because Louis and I basically just walk in and freeze. However, everyone else has a lot of business on stage so we had to walk in and out numerous times while other people were getting adjusted to the blocking and so forth. I love the moment of the freeze followed by the orchestrating of the stage picture. I love how George moves everyone away from me so I am revealed behind the crowd and thus separated. This moment culminates everything that I so eagerly desired throughout the whole act – George’s complete admiration and full attention. His focus is finally solely devoted to and focused on me. I love the interaction that we are able to have while everyone else is frozen. I feel so validated and esteemed by George in this moment. The moment of giving away my baby to Louis was very emotional for me, but when George quickly regaining my focus through a physical gesture I completely forgot about the exchange.

We worked very hard for the entire three hours before spring break. The time flew by,
and it was not difficult to concentrate for the entirety of rehearsal. I was surprised that I had the song *Sunday* basically memorized. That was a nice little realization. It was also very peaceful to be able to take in the lights, space, and mood of the stage – to be aware of everyone else on stage, but to be so in the moment that I only wanted to connect with George. It was a very productive rehearsal even if my part in the song was not extremely difficult or taxing.
March 20, 2006
Blocking Rehearsal

Monday Rehearsal:
Putting it Together

Tonight was a comparably easy rehearsal for me. While everyone else was scrambling around to find pitches, blocking, rhythms, and character, I was instructed to say a few lines and then fall asleep. I never had to move anywhere on my own as I was being pushed in a wheelchair for the entire evening. The dynamic of being ninety-eight years old is a strange one. I don’t want to appear too youthful, yet I don’t want to rid Marie of characteristics that she would have regardless of age. It is a very detailed process of trial and error to adjust one’s age accordingly and justly. I am quite worried about portraying the legitimacy of her age and how it will play on stage. When I was first wheeled out in our entrance to the museum gallery with George and Elaine, the first thing that hit me was just how bright it was on stage. I know that these are not the real, official lights, but I still had this thought of, “Wow, these people are really going to be able to see everything about me. Will they buy into the fact that I’m really elderly?” I suppose that will be aided by a willing suspension of disbelief. I hope.

Certain things that I learned through this process tonight were as follows:
I must project while speaking in the voice of Marie. Even though her voice is fraught with shakiness and glottal attacks, she must have a clear projection for the audience and the actors to hear on stage.

I need to play with different places to fall asleep in the number and with different methods of falling asleep. How much does Marie want to stay up and watch everyone at the party? Will her body let her or will she succumb to her drowsiness. It was fun ad-libbing with Courtney throughout the party scene. I usually am quite intimidated by improvisational scenes
but found it very easy with Marie. Due to the nature of her speech, I was able to go quite slowly and think through what I was going to say. It provided a safety net of sorts for my ad-libs which I found freeing.

I hated talking up-stage to Billy and Harriet for my lines. Later I got a note saying not to do this, which I am thankful for, but I still don’t think that Marie wouldn’t look at the people that she is talking to. This annoys me and could be simply fixed with an adjustment in the blocking. The physicality of the character was surprisingly strenuous. I basically slouched the entire three hours in a wheelchair, and by the end of the evening I was definitely in pain. I need to play around with positions to relieve this burden, without sacrificing the slouched look.

It was a nice experience to have the opportunity during rehearsal to simply be in the room and enjoy the space. I was able to feel out the different angles of the stage and to absorb the lights and characters circling around me. It was such a different perspective being in that wheelchair while everyone else was clamoring around me. It was almost like I was set apart from the crowd, because I knew something they didn’t. In all reality, Marie does probably know more than that crowd. She has been there before. I wonder if in her “Flora Dora girl” days, she was a Harriet or Betty type. She has played the game of life and can sit back and admire the things close to her – the painting, her mother’s book, her knowledge, and George. I love it when the blocking and physical space of the rehearsal parallels the experience of the character. It is blessing that can only be revealed through rehearsal.
March 21, 2006
Blocking Rehearsal

Tuesday Schedule:
Stage II-35 – II-43
II-9 – II-14
II-33 – II-35

Tonight was the last rehearsal of the duet sequences. I have really enjoyed the intimacy of these Tuesday/Thursday rehearsals. Having only Michael and I with the stage management, Justin, and John creates an almost tutorial like setting or private coaching for us as actors. It has been such a privilege to be immersed in John’s direction and to have so much of his attention. I have never once felt devalued or intimidated by his presence. He has a unique way of lifting up his actors and encouraging them to always give more. He does not give vague examples or direction. Everything is precise, clear, and accessible. He is not afraid to let his actors take risks or share their discoveries and process in hopes of discoveries. Tonight I was able to bring something to the table that enriched the scene tremendously. We were roughly blocking the final scene where Dot comes back to talk with George right before Move On. John had me circle around George and land at center stage right. I noticed that it was the exact same spot that I had stood in before to pose during Sunday in the Park with George. It instantly hit me, because I’m so familiar with that spot. I have a lot of memories in this spot during previous rehearsals. It works towards this notion of an actor’s process paralleling pointillism. By placing these two different sections of the play in proximity to the same space of blocking a general arch is achieved. A similar color or picture is painted for this character. I want to play with this notion of Dot remembering this spot in the park where she modeled and learned concentration. What are the things that pop out in her memory? What are the memories, the emotions, and the sensory details that surface? How do I, as the actress, reveal this physically to the audience? Or
is it merely found in the subtext?

I have to memorize *Move On*. It is so frustrating to be on book for this penultimate scene. However, I was happy with the smooth transition to the blocking. I can see a lot of progress in my ability as an actor to pick up blocking and incorporate it almost instantly. I also have noticed that I love the challenge of fulfilling the director’s direction.

I really must keep reiterating this notion of enjoying language. To improve my diction, I must relish the text as I am speaking and living in it. *Children and Art* went well. The simplicity of the moment and the nature of the text aid the actor so well. It is a beautifully written piece that speaks for itself. There are so many acting nuances incorporated and written right into the text. It makes my job much easier, but it also serves as a jumping off point to make new discoveries all along the way. We concluded the rehearsal by watching the visuals that will be played during the presentation of the *Chromolume*. They were really fascinating. The images moved and faded and melded into one another.

The text of this section was not difficult to read through. It went very well. I need to remember to heighten the stakes of the argument with George in the second part over his disapproval of me bringing my mother’s book. I love the moments where Marie departs from the note cards and talks with the audience. It is so genuine and endearing and equally fun as the actor doing it. I left this rehearsal with conflicting feelings – I feel that I am so far from having Act II memorized and daunted by this realization, but I also feel like I was able to make realizations along the way in this rehearsal and enjoy my time on stage. I never feel rushed or lost in these rehearsals. Maybe I have learned all about concentration.
March 22, 2006
Blocking Rehearsal

Wednesday Schedule:
Review Putting it Together
Stage II-1 – II-19 & II-43 – II-45

Tonight’s rehearsal went very well. It was crammed packed with many different objectives to accomplish. For the most part, everything left to block in Act II was touched on and figured out. We started with the final scene of Sunday. I enjoyed the blocking. It really showcased the intensity of this new moment with George and Dot. It reminded me very much of the finale in Act I. It is a nice remembrance of the painting and the evolution of the unconventional structure of the piece. I enjoyed the fact that I was assigned to now say the last line of the piece. I selfishly enjoy this very much. It brings a new element to the scene and brings completion to my character. I have the final words.

We then went straight into reviewing Putting it Together. This automatically meant that I got to take a nap on stage, however there is so much more too it. I never thought about how many different ways there are to nod off or to position your hand to lean on when you sleep. I know this sounds quite arbitrary and almost comical, but it is quite an interesting exploration of human behavior when you have all that time to simply focus on one action. I need to work on these lines more. The thought of working through Act I and Act II in the next few rehearsals is quite daunting. I can’t believe that we are to this place in the rehearsal process. I feel like I have a pretty good grasp on the material, but so far it has only been shown to a couple of people and tomorrow night my entire process will be exposed. It is somewhat of that jumping off the diving board mentality. I just have to go for it and hope for the best.

After reviewing this number, we went on to work It’s Hot Up Here. It is not a difficult
number to block, because we stand completely still for the entire number. I liked the realizations that occurred when we were forced to remain still with this song. It created a sense of true frustration and delight when we were able to move out of the freeze. I need to play around with the new blocking that was thrown at me to circle around Jules during my solo moment. I also desperately need to memorize this scene. There is so much to memorize that I think it will never happen. Hopefully I can use this weekend to really solidify the text. I cannot imagine if I hadn’t worked on the lines sooner. I came back from Christmas Break with a rough memorization of the first act, yet I am still having trouble with getting the entire score and libretto memorized. This show is a monster for George and Dot to memorize. Once again, they completely carry the show and have to be at the top of their game all the time. This is very frustrating for a person who is also in school and rehearsals. I wish this show was a job so that I could focus on only the show. But alas, I am not complaining because I love this role and would kill to have this role no matter what the circumstances. I will endure the stress along with the rewards.

We finished the rehearsal by running through the scene at the end of *Putting it Together* between Blair and Marie. I had this scene pretty well memorized so that was encouraging. I still need to play with Maries’ tempo of speech and speech inflections. I sometimes feel like she is too quick, and I need to slow her natural rhythm down. The scene went well with Debbie, but I felt as if there was so much more to discover. We also rehearsed the breakdown of the chromolume machine, which I was basically useless for because of Josephine’s hilarious entry with “No Juice”. I just lost it and could not regain composure for the life of me. I have to not look at her in future references.

Overall, it was a great rehearsal with many new directions and blocking to learn and absorb. I love this business, I love rehearsals, and I love working on this part.
March 23, 2006
Run-through

Thursday Schedule:
Stumble Through Act I

Tonight went much better than I actually thought it was going to. During dinner I went over lines and made a cheat sheet of all my entrances and exits. This proved very helpful to my process throughout the rehearsal. I did not have to look at my book once to try to figure out where I was going. Overall, I was able to make strong acting choices and remember most of my lines. It was a great gauge of where I was in the process and how much work I needed to get done. My vocal intensity was very strong throughout the entire evening. I kept placing my tone forward to keep the sound in the mask of my face which helped from clenching and/or tensing up. I wasn’t vocally tired or strained at the end of the rehearsal in the least. I was surprised to see how much time I spent on stage versus how much time I spent off stage. I had to decipher or mock through a lot of my costume changes which take the majority of my time off-stage.

Once again I was absorbed in this notion of how pointillism relates to the actor’s process. Tonight’s rehearsal was a clear culmination of so many details necessarily brought together to present a play. Musical theatre actors have to combine so many different elements to carry a scene. Tonight the elements included: memorization, text, lines, melody, rhythm, a multitude of pitches, 4 solos, blocking, staging, props, relationships, subtext, objectives, gestures, emotion, entrances, and exits. All these elements must be present for one act of the play to exist. Without these elements, there would be nothing. Even the lines themselves have to align perfectly with each other. For example, I missed one line in the ending Sunday in the Park with George and the entire patter derailed. I was not able to recover and it was extremely frustrating. All of the elements rely on each other for the full picture to be painted.
In combining all these elements for the first time throughout the act, I had many successes and many failures. The notes that I received after the run were as follows:

1. Watch pitches on “More Rouge”
2. Take more time on Sunday with the lyric – “Your Eyes George”
3. Review the last part of Sunday patter
4. Don’t forget the line – “If my bust was smaller”
5. Don’t drag the end of Color and Light
6. Watch the rubato in We Do Not Belong Together
7. Look at the endings of “Pass” and “Park” in the Sunday Finale
8. Continue to work for more sound in speech and singing through grounded breath
9. Find more motivation for many of the movements such as fist clenching in Sunday in the Park with George
10. Shift down one whole panel on stage for the poise section
11. Circle around so that the whole house can see that George won when he says “We will go to the Follies”
12. Work articulation and precision on Color and Light
13. Raise the book for the Lesson #8 scene and memorize those lines.
14. I need to motivate the turn away from George on We Do Not Belong Together

Once again it was a great method to see where I was in the memorization of the piece and in smoothing out the entrances and exits. This play has a complicated yet structured way of moving along. It makes sense after a while, but you always have to be thinking ahead.
March 24, 2006
Run-through

Friday Rehearsal:
Stumble Through Act II

Tonight was not as smooth as last night. That’s about all I can say. I went into this
rehearsal with far more trepidations than the last one. Act II has not settled in for me yet, and it
probably doesn’t help that we just finished blocking it the previous night. The blocking was not
enormously difficult, but I haven’t had time to really process it. I am also behind in
memorization for this Act. I feel quite confident about Act I, but there were moments tonight
when I felt like I was flying by the seat of my pants. I hate that feeling of panic when you know
that you have to bring everything together but just can’t seem to stay ahead. It is ironic that I
was very concerned about getting Marie’s character right and thinking that she would be my
greatest challenge. However, I have found her character quite natural, and Dot to be my largest
challenge with Act II. Move On is very difficult for me, and I am still not sure why. There is not
a very concrete explanation, except for the fact that we have not rehearsed this scene as much. I
need to really work on the memorization, and then the rest will hopefully fall into place.

Certain notes that I received this evening were:
1. Make “Furthermore” in It’s Hot up Here more percussive
2. Crescendo – Forever
3. Hot – count to 9 and cut off T on 10
4. Children and Art
5. Review timing for the first two “Children and Art” segments
6. Too early on “You would have liked them”
7. Only 4 “There she is” – Not 5
8. “Isn’t it lovely” – too soon
9. Memorize the ending order
10. Take the cue from Justin on Move On
11. Combine the short eighth notes as one phrase
12. Slow down the ending of Move On
13. Turn Out Diagonal on It’s Hot Up Here
14. When Marie is reading off the note cards, I can slow down her speech
15. Keep directing Elaine to move the chair  
16. Activate the text of *Children and Art*  
17. Don’t enter late on *Move On*  
18. In the *Move On* scene keep the language elevated – it needs a more heightened sensibility  
19. Work on *Move On*  
20. Don’t forget a parasol in this scene – that will help me with gestures or lack there of.  
21. During *Sunday* – recognize the people before you turn George around.

At first I thought that rewriting all these notes in my journal would be quite redundant. However, I am finding it extremely helpful to be able to rehash all the notes, and further engraining them in my memory. Along the pointillism theme – a new level of work is created by layering all these notes into my mindset as I go through the acts again. I have to place all these notes next to the right scenes to improve the color of the scene just as Seurat kept adding different shades of paint together to fuse one entire painting.
Sunday Schedule:
Orchestra Rehearsal
George and Dot with John

Today Michael and I were called to rehearse the show in addition to the other rehearsals. Justin wanted us present at the orchestra rehearsal to sing through our numbers with the orchestra. We ended up singing most of the other parts too - as if we didn’t have enough to do already. It is so interesting adapting to the orchestra and transferring the rehearsals that you have almost perfected with just the arrangement and relationship with the piano to the whole of the orchestra. There should be no surprise that it is actually more difficult to work together with eight players versus one, but it always is. There are moments of fascination and surprise and equally moments of frustration and confusion to find the beat or pitch or rhythmic continuity. In my thesis, I need to include a section about the addition of the instrumentation, orchestration, and my involvement in stepping into this role. I also want to include the orchestration example as it refers to the vocal production of speech that Kate Ingram introduced in her diction master class. This goes along perfectly with the notion of pointillism in reference to the actors’ process.

We had an hour break in between rehearsals so I went to the theatre to work on some individual moments that needed running through. I worked at my vanity for the majority of the time – working through the timing of the different elements in getting ready at the mirror. I found myself in this comforting space of getting ready and enjoying the process with no pressure from people looking on and having certain expectations.
March 27, 2006
Run-through

Monday Schedule:
Work Act I

Tonight’s rehearsal took us through the entire first act without the pressure of a run-through. It was very helpful to work through all the different transitions and scenes with comments from the director interjected. I met with Gary previously to work through some of the choreography of Color and Light. We smoothed out certain areas and then went on to add movement to Sunday in the Park with George. The basic movement that he added was an operatic poise with two shoulder pops at “Well if you want bread”, two modeling poises with hands on hips for the pause, a right leg extension on “expression” and a slide in on “affection”, and finally a left hand sweeping gesture for swans. I feel much better having something set there and the movements felt very natural.

Once in rehearsal with the whole company, we spent the first hour of the rehearsal working out the different nuances of movement for the final scene of Sunday; however my movements did not change at all. It was good to sing through it though and be able to work on the connection and fascination with George and with Louis. It is amazing how telling that moment is when her attention is diverted from George to Louis and Marie and back to George again.

When we started the actual work through, I was surprisingly confident to try to connect more with the acting and motivation at the expense of the technical side of the production. John gave Michael and me that note in a previous rehearsal and I will try to fulfill that. It just seems quite weird when I want to be getting everything right. I have to divorce myself of that mentality at this stage in the process and concentrate on working through the objectives of the scenes and
lyrics and songs.

I could technically write my entire thesis on *Color and Light*. If I am truly leaning towards the actor’s process in relationship to pointillism, this song/scene has a wealth of information and could very well be the basis of this theory. The amount of things that I have to combine in this song is absurd. While brainstorming I came up with (and later on in my thesis I will spend an entire chapter on analyzing this selection through a chart of all the layers that create this song):

Accompaniment – mirroring pointillist characteristics
- Text – fragmented monologue
- Melody – Pitches with unclear references for the singer

Movement –
1. Dab Powder
2. Powder Chest
3. Powder Arms
4. Dab Powder
5. Admire in Mirror
6. Dab Powder
7. Powder Face
8. Brush Hair
9. Examine Clothing
10. Tweeze Eyebrows
11. Follies Dance
12. File Nails
13. Perfume Spritz
14. Pin up Hair
15. Study face in mirror

Emotions
1. Playfulness
2. Enjoyment
3. Excitement
4. Suspicion
5. Frustration
6. Happiness
7. Calm
8. Frantic
9. Doubt
10. Judgmental
11. Insecurity
12. Bewilderment
13. Desire
14. Fascination
15. Curiosity
16. Lust
17. Longing
18. Disbelief
19. Hurt
20. Anger

This song is so complex and very difficult for actress to combine all these elements into one scene with ease and enjoyment.

For the most part, the work-through felt like a run-through due to very little starting or stopping. I made all my entrances and exits without the help of my cheat sheet. *Everybody Loves Louis* went really well, because I was able to connect with the text and in doing so brought more physicality to the process. I had a very hard time connecting with *We Do Not Belong Together* for some reason tonight. I explored more of the anger side of the song which did not carry me towards the hurting side of this piece. For me personally, I will go to the hurt side before the anger side in real life. It takes a lot for the anger to finally kick in and once it is there, there is no turning back. Because I gravitated towards this choice in the piece first, it was somewhat impossible for me to revert to the hurt, broken state that Dot is obviously overtaken with in this piece. I really wish I could see myself on stage. It would inform so much about my acting. I hate the fact that I can never observe myself and see if my acting choices are reading correctly. I know that is why the director plays such a crucial role in the rehearsal process; however it would still be beneficial to be able to screen yourself.
Some notes that I received from Dr. Steve about the music are as follows:
1. “Pass” off on 4
2. “Park” off on 4
3. 2\textsuperscript{nd} Pass off on 3
4. Clarify vowels on “on an ordinary”
5. Enjoy the safe place of the vanity in \textit{Color and Light}
6. Don’t go too forward downstage during \textit{Everybody Loves Louis}
7. Deliver the line “did someone carry you around” with a meaner tone.
8. Give more space before -
   - Your Eyes George
   - Warm inside his Eyes
   - Seems we never know, do we.
9. More emphasis on “George”
10. Match the voice quality on “And I need” to “Someone”
11. Place the punctuation on “No one is me. We do not belong together.”
12. Make the silence before “I have to move on” more definitive and stronger by raising the stakes
Tuesday Schedule:
Work Act II

Tonight’s rehearsal just felt right. It was the epitome of a working rehearsal. A working environment was created to explore, challenge, grow, and discover. I feel as if the process has hit a place in where I can really work. I can try things out. I have permission to change the blocking. I can find motivation for my lines. I can search for other characters to interact with and find out what makes them tick. I can observe my surroundings when I am on stage now. I can remember things – especially as Marie. It is such a joyful advantage to be in a wheelchair. It frees me first of all of having to physically walk like a ninety eight year old and second of all allows me to enjoy the environment without the worries of where to go next. I get to invest all that energy into where Marie’s thoughts are going next.

In this rehearsal, I felt a sense of joy, a sense of worth, and a sense of completion. It’s a breakthrough moment for me in my journey. Through this process, I have come to the full realization that I am completely competent in doing this, and furthermore, absolutely love where I am. I love hashing through this rehearsal process. Tonight’s rehearsal felt as if I stood back from the pointillist painting of my journey of rehearsal and saw what was working and what wasn’t. It was another interesting step in my thesis discoveries of examining all the points so far, accessing what is there and what needs to be added, and delighting in the process. The product is so desirable only because the process is so challenging. Act II ushers in many difficult passages and much work has to be done, but it is so rewarding to actually have gone through that. The difficult struggles make it so much more enjoyable in the end when it all comes together. I feel like George in Color and Light when he is so absorbed in his work, in his painting, that even
other things that he loves has to be sacrificed to continue his passion. Right now in this time, I could give up almost anything to be rehearsing this role. That is honestly how I feel about it all. I am so content, so fulfilled, so intrigued, and so turned on by these rehearsals. There is this tugging connection with my process in this art form that cannot be denied. I love the challenges.

Some specific notes from this evening’s rehearsal were as follows:

1. Don’t get flat on “It’s Hot up here”
2. Let the uncomfortable/nasty/sweaty nature show forth in the music
3. Take the consonants way too far
4. Learn and nail the end of *Children and Art*
5. Work on the pronunciation of to – “I was to understand” and “give us more to see”

Certain items of homework that I need to work on are:

1. Move On
2. Children and Art – Ending
3. Activate – It’s Hot Up Here solo
4. Color and Light – Practice movement with Tape
5. Sunday in the Park with George – precise subtext

Another realization that I had during this rehearsal (and that I have started to learn throughout this process) is that I cannot (and will not) enter a rehearsal with fear. I must enter the rehearsal with the mentality that I am here to work and in working you make mistakes. It is only through those mistakes that you can make discoveries and progress. If I go into the rehearsal with that mentality I am able to divorce myself from worrying about having to call for lines or what other actors are thinking. I get in this wonderful zone that allows me to work and to concentrate. I believe that this show has taught me all about concentration and in doing so improved my motivations, my objectives, my diction, and so forth. All my training is coming together. I am able to pull from so many different times in class and practice times and social times and life experiences to culminate into these characters that I portray on stage. Talk about pointillism for the actor. Everything in my life is being brought together and referenced to add
depth and life to these two characters that I am creating. That has to be the ultimate example of pointillism. It’s not just a set time of rehearsing to create art. It is a lifetime of different points, experiences, and colors to paint these characters.
March 29, 2006
Run-through

Wednesday Schedule:
Trouble-shoot

Tonight was a very discombobulated rehearsal. Going into the rehearsal, I had no clue what we were doing so it was impossible to prepare anything ahead of time. I know why directors need TBA rehearsals in theory, but tonight’s rehearsal felt like a hurried smattering of events that didn’t expend energy efficiently. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that this form of rehearsal could be classified in the tension section of my thesis. In this section, I hope to discuss the pitfalls and/or conflicts of using pointillism in the process and structure of the rehearsal and musical. This rehearsal would fit appropriately. Due to the nature of combining a lot of different scenes and bits and pieces of the troubled spots, the rehearsal could have been its own pointillist piece. However, because there was no sense of movement or cohesiveness – the actors lost steam, could not fully engage in the action, and the rehearsal proved unfulfilling. I did not have much to do. We ran through It’s Hot Up Here, We Do Not Belong Together, and a couple of the park scenes. I slept through Putting it Together. I left the rehearsal disappointed with the progress that should have happened this evening. It was disparaging to have two great rehearsals previous and then to be stilted in the process during the middle of the week.
March 30, 2006
Run-through

Thursday Schedule:
Run Show

We ran through the show in its entirety this evening for the first time. It went quite well considering this was the first time ever to attempt this. At the beginning of rehearsal, John individually distributed notes to each cast member. I really benefited from this directorial method. It was great to have some specific tasks to accomplish, motivation to remember, and encouragement at the beginning of this daunting first.

I personally felt like the rehearsal went really well technically. I remembered all my lines with great ease. The songs were clear, correct, and pliable. I was able to think about objectives and subtext instead of lines. I was able to explore, test, and execute most of John’s notes.

However, I struggled with a shortness of breath and connection tonight. I could not engage in the moment, especially in *We Do Not Belong Together*. I don’t know whether it is the repetition or the vocal demands, but I just feel like I am singing it when there needs to be so much more emotional connection. I’m just not taping into what once moved me, and I don’t know why? It is so frustrating for me. Another source of frustration is vocal fatigue. I feel it creeping up and hindering my experience. I am worried about this and worried about the notion of not using microphones. I feel like my voice is getting very fatigued.

This rehearsal journal is so accumulative in many different facets. I feel tired, yet energized. I respect the choices of the direction, and yet I fight against it. I am constantly trying to add more and more points to this pointillist union. I feel somewhat daunted and somewhat excited. I know the things that I need to work on and just hammer out on my own. It was a great run and only will continue to improve.
March 31, 2006
Run-through

Friday Schedule:
Run Show

I will never forget tonight’s rehearsal, because tonight was the first night that I truly fell in love with George. Previously I had expressed frustration with connection, but that frustration was replaced with concentration tonight. I started noticing him as my lover from the very beginning park scene to the Act II Finale. It was a very emotional night, because I connected with the text and my scene partner on a new level. *We Do Not Belong Together* was effortless and abounding with surging emotion. I fell apart in this scene, because I had laid all the ground work of subtext beforehand and allowed myself to experience that need for George to tell me not to go. I gave him one last chance. I begged him to take it. I could not handle his rejection. Being able to burst into tears was so freeing to my acting and to this scene. I know that I cannot recreate this by forcing it to happen. I must simply allow myself to experience these emotions by concentrating in the situation. Divorcing myself from the chaos of backstage and distracting social energy of other actors, I was able to watch George during the moments that affected me as a character and a human being. During *We Do Not Belong Together*, I was overcome by the fond memories at my vanity. I missed being in his studio and preparing to go out with him. I missed my safe spot. I got so angry and hurt when I heard that familiar working melody and knew that he forgot me once again. I couldn’t stop the tears from flowing. I did not have any difficulty singing over them however. If I could have one wish for the entire show, it would be for that scene to carry as much intensity, weight, and emotion every night as it did tonight.

Another surprising element to my process tonight was the surge of emotion that I felt during the *Sunday* Finale when I turned George around to look at the people in the park. I, in
turn, faced them and caught a glimpse of each of my classmates shining faces. It was the first
time that I truly realized that I will be saying goodbye to them shortly. After spending two years
with the same six people, you form bonds that are unspeakably strong. There is no denying how
much I will miss these beautiful people. It is also difficult with all the residency conflicts and
unsettlement that in a sense tear us apart. I do not want to end my time with these people in a
final competition for roles or slots. I want to savor this show and these individuals for all that
they have given to me. At that moment in the show tonight, I felt so proud and blessed to have
called them friends. It took everything in me to hold back the tears again.

John has made it a habit to distribute notes to us. Once again it references the pointillist
notion, and I am adding every single note to my performance in the process. Hopefully by
layering on all these different notes in the process, I will create a more vivid and radiant
performance. I am the painter painting with direction, objectives, language, and song.
April 2, 2006
Sitzprobe

There is truly nothing more fulfilling than singing with an orchestra. This show is a dream come true to be able to sing so many numbers with the orchestra. I love the combination of the strings, piano, percussion, and brass. This is a very difficult score to execute and it will take time to get everyone on the right page. Unfortunately, we do not have that much time.

It was such a grand feeling to stand for most of the rehearsal and sing all my numbers. I sang all my numbers for memory which was very reassuring to me in this stage of the process. There were all kinds of new discoveries to be made by listening to the orchestra today. You get so used to hearing just the piano and then when the whole orchestra joins in, there are all different kinds of sounds and experiences. Yet another pointillist experience.

Speaking of that I need to research Milton Babbitt, whom Sondheim studied with in regards to pointillism. I also want to include that notion of the voice being an orchestra with vowels and consonants – that Kate Ingram brought into class. This would tie in perfectly with pointillism and sitzprobe. Overall, it was a very enjoyable afternoon of rehearsal.
April 3, 2006
First Dress Rehearsal

Tonight’s rehearsal was the biggest challenge I think I have faced so far in the process. It was a perfect example of tying in the pointillism theme to rehearsal. There were so many new elements thrown together in the mix that it was actually a miracle that we kept going. I think that in my thesis I will chart out various stages of my process that directly relates to pointillism with the following sections:

1. Musical Scene Analysis: Color and Light
2. One Rehearsal: Tonight’s – First Dress
3. One Performance: TBA
4. The overall process of the entire play: Preproduction work till closing night.
5. Elements of tonight’s rehearsal that need to be charted are as follows:
6. Costumes: list of costumes, accessories, people helping me, costume changes, props. Somehow I managed to make all my costume changes with no problem – great assistance.
7. Make-up: Dot’s, Marie’s
8. Orchestra: first night of working with them on the actual stage – dragging through most of the songs, sluggish, I felt like I actually had to push them along. *Sunday in the Park with George* was not an up-tempo number tonight and I had to ballad through the patter section. *Color and Light* was slow, *We Do Not Belong Together* was dragging, and *Move On* was a disaster for me.
9. Monitors: watching the conductor from a different angle
10. Lights: Completely new surroundings. Different visual effects. Different sightlines. Could see the audience sometimes and was completely dark at other times. I enjoyed *Color and Light* much more with that lighting. I was able to enjoy the dark atmosphere of the window pane streaming with light. I was liked the way I looked. I felt very sexy under those lights with my underwear and all. However, I felt like the “dance” went awful. I need to work through this and hope that orchestra will pick up the pace.
11. Set Pieces: Canvas’, George’s studio
13. Lines
14. Songs
15. More Observers: Lighting Designers, Stage Crew, Dressers, Orchestra, Set Designers
16. Mistakes: *Move On* – just skipped to the second ramble section and gave up. Couldn’t get back on and left a whole section of silence. I then proceeded to mess up the second ramble section and the final ramble section at the end. I have to rehearse this more. There is nothing worse than having that sinking feeling of letting a ball drop. I feel like there are so many balls to juggle and I’m not quite sure how I’m going to do it.
There was so much to constantly think about tonight. It is times like these where you are so thankful for all of that rehearsal time to really solidify your lines, objectives, and songs. When so many new things are thrown at you, you have to make due the best you can. I felt pretty confident the entire time until Move On. I held my own, kept going through the sluggish orchestrations and unclear cues, and didn’t let the costume changes frazzle me. However, during Move On I just could not keep it together. How ironic that this very song should give me the courage to keep moving on. I cannot look at where I am or what I’ll be. I have to look at what I’ve done and what I want. I have had a great rehearsal process and put loads of work into my personal rehearsal for this role. I have to now look at what I want which is a personal, vivid, and strong connection to these characters and my relationship to the others and the themes in this play. I want my journey to grow deeper and my investment to blossom. I want to be able to access emotions of love, grief, and anger in abundance. I want to concentrate.
April 4, 2006
Second Dress Rehearsal

Tonight’s process was more efficient than previous nights, but it still reeked of a first
dress. It took so much concentration to sort through different costume changes and new props
and lights that it was still hard to transfer all that previous work in rehearsal to this run. There
was also a lot of unnecessary activity backstage that was difficult to navigate through when you
are demanded to remain fully engaged throughout the entire play.

I had wonderful moments of connection with George however. With all the chaos of
these new elements, I have found George to be my support through this process. Of all the
people on stage, we can relate to each other the most due to our similar positions. Whenever I
am on stage with him, I feel like I am home and at ease. I can relax because I trust him to give
me the things that I need as an actress. I can actually concentrate.

After the long run and the extensive costume fitting afterwards, I do not have much to
report in detail from this evening’s work. Once again, it is the constant work of adding so many
more colors of rehearsal into one final performance that is about to be exhibited. I truly feel like
Dot in the painting when she breaks out of the pose to talk with George or the audience. There
are so many points of this musical that I feel only transfer to the actual actors that go through this
process. When I truly think of all the work that must go into this musical (and all the training
necessary for the actors to have had previously in order to tackle the material), I wonder how
much the audience actually realizes that is there. Do they know the extent of reference to
pointillism in the musical theory of the score? Do they imagine the entire back story that must
exist in order for this love story to truly make sense? Do they care about the characters in the
way that each one of these actors does after spending months in the rehearsal hall with them? Or
is this show designed more for the actors and musicians in mind?
April 5, 2006
Final Dress Rehearsal

Tonight could have been a show as far as I am concerned. I had a wonderful talk with John about my struggles in the process at this point. I shared with him how I was frustrated with all the additions and the backstage distractions and that I felt I wasn’t able to carry over all the wonderful work that I started and have grown accustomed to in previous rehearsals. He gave me some wonderful advice. His insight was to take all that frustration and apply it to my character to really find that place of concentration. In essence, my character’s situation could be quite applicable to my own journey through the rehearsal. Take in all that surrounds me and use it instead of ignore it. Take the need to perform into Dot’s need to perform for George. Take the frustration of a lost connection in acting and transfer it to Dot’s lack of connection with George. Use everything in application to the process. Isn’t that the essence of pointillism – to combine all different colors of contrasting natures to create one harmonious picture that tells a story?

I took John’s inspiring advice and flew with it tonight. In every moment I made a conscious effort to stay engaged. Even during costume changes I tried to keep my mind in the story, the character, and the process. I watched George as much as I could. I studied him, I reminisced about him, and I really saw him when I was one stage with him. It paid off during We Do Not Belong Together. I lost it, because I was fully engaged with him. I was able to conjure up emotions within the play and within my own personal experience of lose that brought me to that place of fear and tremendous lose. John’s notes from tonight were very encouraging as well.
APPENDIX B
PERFORMANCE JOURNAL
April 6, 2006
Opening Night

After all this hard work and preparation, I found myself ready to open the show. There is still work to be done, but the show must open regardless. I spent the day in preparation by going to the gym to get my breath engaged, meditating over the show, relaxing, and trying to occupy my attention with only the show to come. I got to the theatre quite early to get ready. Michael and I had a photo shoot for the newspaper an hour before curtain so we had to get ready before the rest of the cast. It was nice to have the dressing room all to myself to be able to focus in the quiet solitude. The act of preparation and warm-up in itself is symbolic to pointillism. The actress must bring together all these techniques of make-up, focus, costumes, vocal warm-ups, and checking props in order to be ready to perform.

I tried not to let the excitement and panic of opening night affect me. I went into tonight hoping to carry on rehearsing, make deeper connections with Michael, and make new discoveries. I was very anxious right before curtain as I was waiting in place. I had to pace to keep myself focused. I’ve decided that I enjoy shows much more when it starts out with a large chorus number so you can get on stage and test the waters before you have to go solo. This show however, was not conceived in that way, and I have to start out the entire show.

Once I was out on stage, I did not find it that difficult to focus on what was going on on stage. I acknowledged the audience, but had to distance myself from them at the same time in order to carry on working. My voice is tired from the constant run of rehearsals carrying over into performance. This show is so demanding. The adjustments that I am making for the Marie voice and the absence of microphones are taking a toll of my voice. I am going to have to be very judicious about how I use my voice during the day and after the show in order to have the
stamina to do this show. It is very challenging to decipher how to use and sustain your voice in a run of this nature.

It was some what of a relief to get to Act II. All of the challenging Dot moments went fine, and now I could relax into Marie. It is ironic how the character that scared me the most going into the process has actually turned out to be my comforting security in a way. *Move On* went very well. There were moments throughout that flowed effortlessly, and then other moments needed more attention and caressing. In conclusion, I felt good about the opening; however it felt more like a preview than an opening night. It was a safe performance. I hope to be able to take more risks eventually. Safe is good, but not intriguing and honest. Everyone can be accurate and technical. I want to be intriguing, genuine, and invested.
April 7, 2006
Performance #2

I approached today’s performance with dueling emotions. I was very excited to perform tonight, because after last night I knew that I could function with an audience present. Due to this assurance, I was eager to take more risks, delve deeper into the character, and explore on stage. Once that initial night of the audience’s presence is over, almost as a diver must jump off the diving board head first into the water, I can return to my process. However, despite the excitement, I was somewhat nervous about my voice. It has been extremely tired and weak in the past couple of days. I have never been in a show that is this vocally demanding before. I have done operas, operettas, musicals, and cabarets, but this show requires me to constantly go full force with very low belting material. Even the patter songs present many challenges. If it is not the mental challenge of remembering an endless flow of chattering lyrics, it is the vocal awareness to use different techniques for different qualities and adjustments of the character.

I am not quite sure what the cause is for this vocal weakness. It could be a number of things or the combination of the whole. So many elements have been taxing on my voice such as nightly rehearsals, Marie techniques, singing the majority of the show, belting low passages, etc. There is not much I can do at this point. I have the challenge of being disciplined to get a lot of sleep during the run, drink as much liquids as possible, and take all precautions for vocal rest.

I felt like the actual run went very well. It was an exercise first and foremost for my ability as a trained vocalist to rise above any vocal inequalities and push through those long legato sections and belting passages with breath control and proper placement. The entire act of singing could be clearly related to pointillism. I do not usually think about all the elements combined to produce one cohesive sound as much as I did tonight. It is only when I am
experiencing difficulty that I have to really think about everything combined in order to heighten
the mechanics that work to disguise the ones that are not working. In charting the points that
must be combined for the voice to work it would have to include:

Vocal Production:
  16. Breath
  17. Placement
  18. Nasal Cavities
  19. Head Cavities
  20. Dynamics
  21. Support
  22. Vocal Cords
  23. Words
  24. Vowels
  25. Consonants
  26. Legit
  27. Belt
  28. Constriction
  29. Legato
  30. Staccato

I was frustrated again with *We Do Not Belong Together*. I cannot find a true connection,
and I cannot seem to tap into that previous connection that has brought me to tears during many
rehearsals. I do not know how to be consistent with the material and situation. I know that I
cannot recreate those kinds of emotions, but I know that I can be in a place that fosters them. I
have to find this place for me as the actress. This role continues to present many challenges with
so many layers continuing to layer on each night. I could do this role for a long time and still
find things to work on and develop. Overall, it was a triumph vocally for me to stay consistent
with the score throughout the entire evening and I learned a great deal from it. It is always when
you are at your weakest that you gain and learn the most.
At this stage in my life and training, I can gauge how healthy my voice is. During this performance I could tell that my voice is seriously going out. I warmed up without much of a high register and did not know how my belt was going to be produced or remain solid throughout the evening. It was a perfect performance to chart for pointillism, because I had to rely on all the other points of rehearsal, muscle memory, and vocal training to be able to get through tonight’s performance. It was as if all the elements added to the rehearsals were already permanently on the canvas and I had to correct certain colors of the painting that I did not find just right (my voice). Different elements that carried me through this performance to take note of were:

- Routine Blocking
- Routine Order of Show
- Songs
- Text
- Adding new risks
- Orchestra

During *We Do Not Belong Together*, with all my doubts, anxieties, frustrations, and fears brought to this performance, it was easy to tap into the scene with George at the encounter to tell him I am leaving for America. It was only natural for me to burst into tears. I was finally allowed an outlet to do so – after holding so much emotion in throughout the night.

I made a couple of mistakes which is only natural in the aftermath of having to work so hard vocally. For instance during *Move On*, I completely messed up that line – “Look at all the things you’ve done for me” – and so on. During *We Do Not Belong Together* I saved the song with improve when Michael did not come in with his line. I simply repeated “tell me not to go” in order to catch up and continue through the song. I slowed down on the line “And you look
inside the eyes” during Color and Light and was also too slow in Sunday in the Park with George on the line “I think I’m fainting”.

Despite all the minor mistakes, I took great risks and had a great emotional connection throughout the evening. While there was so much going on underneath me as the undercurrents of past rehearsals and experience, there was a constant battle to keep caressing my voice to function in a way that was pleasing to the audience and workable to my health. Had I not had the proper vocal training, years of technique, and a solid awareness of my voice, this performance would not be able to happen. I changed many of my normal vocal positioning in various songs in order to adjust the sound and create a more balanced tone throughout the piece. I added a lot of head voice to relieve my chest voice in places that it was going out – such as the patter section in Sunday in the Park with George and the legato sections Everybody Loves Louis. Not only did it create more layers (or dots if you will) to my voice, it also created more layers to my character. There was a great versatility with Dot when she incorporated more of her head voice intermingled with the belt. It was fascinating making that discovery tonight during the performance and just goes to prove that you learn so much when obstacles present themselves and the learning and discoveries should not stop at rehearsals but rather continue on throughout the performance process.
April 9, 2006
Performance #4

I always look forward to matinees. There is just something about a show being in the middle of the day and having the rest of the day afterwards to get stuff done that excites me. Today, however, I was still quite nervous about my voice being able to execute the show. I went in with a positive attitude to try my best and make new discoveries. Justin had called a music rehearsal for Michael and me to try to work out the problems that occurred last night. The rehearsal went well. A lot of the errors were worked out by a simple shift of the blocking in order to see the monitors, and a work through of some of the difficult rhythmic passages and tricky lyric passages. As I approached the performance, I had all these different tips and new rehearsal bits to add to my process on short notice.

The performance went well and despite all my fears, I was able to sing much better today than yesterday. I don’t know exactly what it was, but my voice seemed much more consistent and stable. I would even go as far to say that it has regained some of the strength that it had previously lost. I enjoyed this performance tremendously. Without the constant added stress of having to attend to my voice with such intensity, I was able to return to the process of really seeking out my objectives. Most of the spots that we fixed during rehearsal transferred over to the performance, however Children and Art had a minor train wreck when I could not figure out when to come in after the vamp and was given a pick up. I panicked, and in my attempts to come in with the orchestra, I skipped a section. I suppose that this is what happens with live theatre, but I cannot stand making egregious errors like that. People in the audience did not pick up on it, but I know and the orchestra knows and it has to be fixed.

I have a hard time with trying to let mistakes go in rehearsals and especially in
performances. I hate the fact that you have worked on something for so long and still have every capability to completely mess it up. There is something to be said about collaboration and having everyone working together to get so many details put together whether it is a simple song or a complex musical in its entirety.

If I am going to discuss the entire musical process of Sunday in the Park with George then I am going to have to start from the very beginning with all the rehearsals and preproduction work and reference my journal to start adding all the different points to this pointillist process of creating the musical – but rather I think that I should hone in on the process of creating my role throughout the process of rehearsals and performances. I can easily show how all the elements (dots) were painted on a large canvas (my rehearsal journey) to illuminate a beautiful painting (my performance). If this is the cause, Marie was definitely right in singing, “There she is, there she is, there she is, there she is, Momma is everywhere.” I am everywhere in this musical painting and have used everything to create this role.
April 13, 2006
Performance #5

There are some nights when you really question why you didn’t choose to go into dentistry. There are some nights when you wonder why you did not think teaching scuba diving lessons was the career for you. Heck, there are some nights when you just want to hop into a postal car and change to a mail delivery occupation. That was tonight. If I had to rank performances this would be the lowest of the low. I could not remain engaged. I could not find hardly any connections. I could not let go of mistakes and enjoy work. I couldn’t even work.

My largest fear of messing up on Everybody Loves Louis came true tonight. I got mixed up in the patter some-how and recovered amazingly enough, but stood in front of a bunch of people looking like a complete idiot for a brief moment of silence which seemed like an eternity for me. It is so difficult to regain composure after having a mistake of that nature. The perfectionist in me simply cannot let it go. I know that I must, but I do not know how. There is a sense of complete failure that accompanies these actions, but I must step away from it and reason with myself that I am only human and will make many mistakes.

I just want to be a consistent and reliable performer. I want to be able to deliver every time. Tonight was such a struggle with the problems of fatigue on my voice and the constant tending to it that I could not engage in the heart of the characters that I was portraying. I had moments of success mingled in with the moments of failure. Why is it that the moments of failure always overshadow the moments of success? If I could just reverse this mentality my art would truly benefit with a great sigh of relief.

If my work tonight was that of the artist painting a pointillist piece, I would have had many moments of working really specifically with a section of color. I would have had many
moments of looking at the painting from a farther angle to get a different perspective. In doing so, I would have hated much of the work that I saw. I would proceed to start to over-correct and paint over many of the spots of the performance. If only actors could step back and look at their work with the advantage of being able to fix what they didn’t like. Instead, we dive head first into the material only to find that we will inevitably mess up at some time in front of an entire audience to see.

Well, even though I am tempted to enroll in the army and leave all this behind, I will rather take Dot’s advice instead and move on – “Look at what you want, not at where you are, what you’ll be”. This song went very well tonight. It is amazing how this musical can speak to you so fervently. “Art isn’t easy”. I am learning so much in the process and will continue to grow as an actress and a person from the challenges and demands of this role. I must remember that at the end of the day, this is a training program and this role is the perfect challenge to stretch me to the limit this semester. Right now if I had to give an answer, I would say that the greatest challenge for me with this role is keeping up the stamina to do this role throughout each performance and the run itself - vocally, mentally, and emotionally.

I know what I need to work on for tomorrow’s performance, and I will try to focus on really engaging myself in the character rather than focusing on the vocal issues. I do not want to sacrifice the show for pretty singing. I want to dive into the real issues of the piece with a strong voice that is able to remain constant but not in need of constant assistance and nurturing.
April 14, 2006
Performance #6

Despite all the odds, I was proud of tonight’s performance. I took everything that I had and pushed it to the limit. They always say that when one sense is impaired, the others are strengthened to compensate for it. I did not know what that truly meant until tonight. My voice is to the point that it is almost completely gone, and yet I still have to produce sound for an entire musical. I’ve never been in this position before. My voice needs rest, yet it simply cannot happen. This is the challenge of live theatre. It is definitely something in my process of putting it all together that I did not foresee experiencing. All the sudden a huge conflict has presented itself, and I do not know what to do with it except to keep pushing through.

From the very beginning line of the play, my voice was unsteady. I had to use so much more breath than usual. I had to yet again concentrate on my use of breath which is usually easily left on the back burner. I had to adjust between head voice and chest voice to keep a steady pitch.

I worked on the connection with the other members of the park today. I had to navigate through the vocal issues to a point where I knew that I must simply force that aside and concentrate on the relationships and the connections, and the motivation of my character. There was a sense of relief as I exited the stage that I was able to get through that scene vocally and then a sense of excitement for my character to be able to engage in another scene. I got through Everybody Loves Louis with confidence and ease tonight - which was a huge relief after last night’s mistake. I was so excited at the end that I had once again made it through and overcome that fear of failure that the cadenced smile was completely genuine. It was just like achieving that perfect landing that the gymnast wants. I had done it.
I started to cry during the scene when I asked him for the painting. There was such a sense of loss and trepidation in seeing him in his studio again. How many times must Dot have had to ask him for things that he could not provide for her, whether for attention or tangible things, in that exact spot? I really had the realization that I could not have what I really wanted as I spoke the line tonight. There was a great sense of loss mingled with hope for one last chance to salvage this relationship.

At the end of rehearsal, the decision was made to cancel the matinee for tomorrow due to the state of my voice. I approached this news with mixed emotion. I feel completely incompetent for having an entire show canceled, because I cannot handle the vocal demands as of right now. At the same time, in knowing this, I am relieved to only have one more performance. I have been very concerned as to how I was going to get through two performances knowing the state of my voice. Even though I would never wish this route, I do believe that it is necessary. I think that only by looking back upon this experience will I be able to further assess it. I am extremely grateful to have a cast and director in this process that constantly surprise me with their support and understanding. It has made all the difference in the world.
I can’t help but think back to one of the earliest rehearsals when we talked about our experiences about art and how it has molded and shaped us. Somehow the triumphs and the failures and the struggles and the hard lessons learned creatively enhance our existence in this world. I remember not knowing exactly which story to share with the cast at that particular rehearsal, but if you asked me the question now I’d know the answer in an instant. It would be this process of creating Dot. I have lived with this character for so long now – practically five months. I have learned so much, taken so many risks, and given it my all. I have pushed myself to the limit and over the limit vocally. I now have a better grasp of my vocal limitations and how to cater to my own particular vocal needs in the future. I have struggled to really understand and execute this role and it has paid off in the performance process. The pay-off was particularly large tonight.

After resting the entire day and barely speaking a word, I was able to regain my composure and focus to tackle tonight’s performance. I came into the theatre cautiously in regards to my voice, yet filled with an overwhelming sense of anticipation and excitement knowing that I had to relish every moment on stage as it would be my last. Although, my voice was not nearly as strong as I would have preferred it, I got through the performance just fine with constant attention to vocal placement and altering different registers to create a mix that worked for my strained vocal chords.

I entered each scene with a different eager serenity that only avails itself on a closing night. I didn’t want the scenes to end. I didn’t want to say goodbye to all the work that I had poured onto that stage. I didn’t want to say goodbye to the characters that I embodied and the
characters that I related to in the scenes. I didn’t want to leave the safety of my vanity. I didn’t want to leave George. I didn’t want to exit off stage with Marie and Louis to go to America. I wanted to stand in the center of that stage and take it all in. I wanted to be frozen in the accomplishment of my process. I wanted to stay up there even if it was “Hot Up Here”.

*Children and Art* had a new meaning for me in the realization that I left behind a piece of art as the actress playing Marie in the debut of this new theatre. *Move On* has never been more powerful to me as it was tonight. I had to tell myself as the actress to “Move On” to other projects, other regions, and other steps in my life. In the final scene when all the characters are entering that park for the last time, Michael and I completely lost it. We were so engaged in each other, and the full connection of our achievement mingled with the realization that this was the culmination of all our work was far too overwhelming. As our eye’s welled up with tears for this final goodbye there was a sense of completion. My second act Dot had reconnected with George in a way that I was never able to in the first act. I had learned more about concentration than I ever imagined I could and in a small suburban park I left George once again with his favorite: a blank page. I have so many possibilities to pursue.
APPENDIX C
EXAMPLES OF SEURAT’S WORKS
APPENDIX D
COLOR AND LIGHT SCORE SELECTIONS
COLOR AND LIGHT (Part I)
(DOT; GEORGE)

George's studio. Upstage, hidden at first, he stands on a scaffold, behind a large canvas, which is a scrim. He is painting. Downstage, Dot (in a likeness of "La Poudreuse") is at her vanity, powdering her face.

1st Time - Powder Puff in Base
2nd Time - Powder Chest

(Last time) DOT: (As she powders rhythmically.) George taught me all about concentration. "The art of being still," he said.

Moderato (J = 126, strict tempo)

I guess I did not learn it soon enough.
(Dips puff in powder) George likes to be alone.
(Resumes powdering)

Sempre staccato

Sometimes he will work all night long painting. We fought about that. I need sleep.

I love to dream. George doesn't need as much sleep as everyone else.

1. Example of the pointillist quality of the accompaniment mirroring the action of the actress.
2. Example of the Follies Section that shifts in rhythmic and harmonic natures to resemble the music that Dot would hear played at the theatre later that evening.
3. Example of the text mirroring the dots of paint used in Seurat’s technique of pointillism.
4. Example of the common interchange between text and song.
APPENDIX E
COLOR AND LIGHT MUSIC ANALYSIS
Music Analysis
Color & Light
Composition by Stephen Sondheim
Analysis by Chris Staffel

Part 1 No. 8

D flat 4 INTRO C1 :|| Enter Dot Dialogue
4 1-3

A Dot Dialogue
C1 Variations on C1 C1 + treble clef C1 + treble clef
4-6 7-------------18 19--------20 20---------22

Dia. Cont. George Singing 1st seg
Variations on C1 + treble sustained E flat
23-----29------------------------49 Variations on C1 + tone clusters
50-----------------------------67

George Singing 2nd Segment cont
Scene Change Music from Previous Transition
68-----------------------------71

Part II No. 8A

B flat Dot Dialogue & Song Variations on C1 B G Major Dot Ballad Section
72--------83 Slow Sustained Chords
83-------------91

2 Dot Uptempo Fantasy 4 Dot Ballad Section A George Dialogue
4 Can – Can Music 4 Slow Sustained Chords Variations on C1
91--------126 127-----------134 134-------143

E flat Dot Song Segment Transition to Part III
144---------150
Color & Light Music Analysis Cont.

Part III No. 8B

G Major

George Singing C1 Variation

C1 Variation mirroring George

Tone Clusters & Rests

151----------------------157

158--------167

Dot Dialogue

George repeating A 2nd Song Segment

Sustained Chords

Variations on C1 + tone clusters

168--------171

172----------------------192

C

Dot Sings C2 arpeggio

George Sings M2

Minimal Chords alternating with 6/4 & 4/4

193----------------------197

George Dialogue

George Song Segment

Dot Sings C2 arpeggio :||

George & Dot

In Unison

Sustained Tone Clusters

Variations of C1 + 3rd and 2nd intervals

198--------203

204--------204--------210--------216

217--------221

Conversation Dialogue between George and Dot

Part IV No. 8C

E flat

George Dialogue +

C1 :||

George Singing 1st A Segment V

Variations on C1 + Treble Clef Sustained Chords

222-225

226--------234--------241

Variations on C1 + tone clusters

242--------251
APPENDIX F
COLOR AND LIGHT LYRIC ANALYSIS
COLOR AND LIGHT

LYRIC ANALYSIS KEY

RHYME

REpetition

ALLITERATION
COLOR AND LIGHT
LYRICS BY STEPHEN SONDHEIM
LYRIC ANALYSIS BY CHRIS STAFFEL

DOT:

George taught me all about concentration.
“The art of being still,” he said.
I guess I did not learn it soon enough.
George likes to be alone.
Sometimes he will work all night long painting.
We fought about that.
I need sleep.
I love to dream.
George doesn’t need as much sleep as everyone else.
And he never tells me his dreams.
George has many secrets.

GEORGE:

Order.
Design.
Composition.
Tone.
Form.
Symmetry.
Balance.

MORE RED.
AND A LITTLE MORE RED.
BLUE BLUE BLUE BLUE
BLUE BLUE BLUE BLUE
EVEN EVEN....
GOOD....

BUMBUMBUM BUM BUMBUMBUM
BUMBUMBUM BUM
MORE RED....
MORE BLUE...
MORE BEER...
MORE LIGHT!
COLOR AND LIGHT.
THERE’S ONLY COLOR AND LIGHT.
YELLOW AND WHITE.
JUST BLUE AND YELLOW AND WHITE.
LOOK AT THE AIR, MISS—
SEE WHAT I MEAN?
NO, LOOK OVER THERE, MISS—
THAT’S DONE WITH GREEN…
CONJOINED WITH ORANGE…

DOT:

Nothing seems to fit me right.
The less I wear, the more comfortable I feel.
MORE ROUGE
George is very special.
Maybe I’m just not special enough for him.
IF MY LEGS WERE LONGER.
IF MY BUST WAS SMALLER.
IF MY HANDS WERE GRACEFUL.
IF MY WAIST WAS THINNER.
IF MY HIPS WERE FLATTER.
IF MY VOICE WAS WARM.
IF I COULD CONCENTRATE –
I’D BE IN THE FOLLIES.
I’D BE IN THE CABARET.
GENTLEMEN IN TALL SILK HATS
AND LINEN SPATS
WOULD WAIT WITH FLOWERS.
I COULD MAKE THEM WAIT FOR HOURS.
GIDDY YOUNG ARISTOCRATS
WITH FANCY FLATS
WHO’D DRINK MY HEALTH,
AND I WOULD BE AS
HARD AS NAILS…
AND THEY’D ONLY WANT ME MORE…
IF I WAS A FOLLY GIRL.
AH, I WOULDN’T LIKE IT MUCH.
MARRIED MEN AND STUPID BOYS
AND TOO MUCH SMOKE AND ALL THAT NOISE
AND ALL THAT COLOR AND LIGHT…

GEORGE:

Aren’t you proper today, Miss?
Your parasol so properly cocked,
Your bustle so perfectly upright.
No doubt your chin rests at just the proper angle from your chest.
And you, Sir.
Your hat so black.
So black to you, perhaps.
So red to me.

DOT:

NONE OF THE OTHERS WORKED AT NIGHT…

GEORGE:

So composed for a Sunday.

DOT:

HOW DO YOU WORK WITHOUT THE RIGHT BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT?
HOW DO YOU FATHOM GEORGE?

GEORGE:

RED RED RED RED
RED RED ORANGE
RED RED ORANGE
ORANGE PICK UP BLUE
PICK UP RED
PICK UP ORANGE
FROM THE BLUE-GREEN BLUE-GREEN
BLUE-GREEN CIRCLE ON THE VIOLET DIAGONAL
YELLOW COMMA YELLOW COMMA NUM NUM NUM NUM NUM
BLUE BLUE BLUE BLUE
BLUE STILL SITTING
RED THAT PERFUME
BLUE ALL NIGHT
BLUE-GREEN THE WINDOW SHUT
DUT DUT DUT
DOT DOT SITTING
DOT DOT WAITING
DOT DOT GETTING FAT FAT FAT
MORE YELLOW
DOT DOT WAITING TO GO
OUT OUT OUT BUT
NO NO NO GEORGE
FINISH THE HAT FINISH THE HAT
HAVE TO FINISH THE HAT FIRST
HAT HAT HAT HAT
HOT HOT HOT IT’S HOT IN HERE
SUNDAY!
COLOR AND LIGHT!

DOT:

But how George looks.
He could look forever.

GEORGE:

THERE’S ONLY COLOR AND LIGHT.

DOT:

As if he sees you and he doesn’t all at once.
GEORGE:

PURPLE AND WHITE…

DOT:

What is he thinking when he looks like that…

GEORGE:

AND RED AND PURPLE AND WHITE.

DOT:

What does he see? Sometimes, not even blinking.

GEORGE:

LOOK AT THE GLADE, GIRLS,
YOUR COOL BLUE SPOT.

DOT:

His eyes. So dark and shiny.

GEORGE:

NO, STAY IN THE SHADE, GIRLS.
IT’S GETTING HOT…

DOT:

Some think cold and black.

GEORGE:

IT’S GETTING ORANGE…

202
DOT:
BUT IT’S WARM INSIDE HIS EYES…

GEORGE:
HOTTER…

DOT:
AND IT’S SOFT INSIDE HIS EYES…
AND HE BURNS YOU WITH HIS EYES…

GEORGE:
Look at her looking.

DOT:
AND YOU’RE STUDIED LIKE THE LIGHT.

GEORGE:
Forever with that mirror.
What does she see?
The round face,
The tiny pout,
The soft mouth,
The creamy skin…

DOT:
AND YOU LOOK INSIDE THE EYES.

GEORGE:
The pink lips,
The red cheeks,
DOT:

AND YOU **CATCH** HIM HERE AND **THERE**.

GEORGE:

The wide eyes. Studying the round face, the tiny pout…

DOT:

BUT HE’S NEVER REALLY **THERE**.

GEORGE:

Seeing all the parts and none of the whole.

DOT:

SO YOU WANT HIM EVEN MORE.

GEORGE:

BUT THE WAY SHE **CATCHES** LIGHT…

DOT:

**AND YOU DROWN** INSIDE HIS EYES…

GEORGE:

AND THE **COLOR** OF HER HAIR

DOT AND GEORGE:

I **COULD** LOOK AT (HIM/HER) FOREVER….
Performance Chart
Color & Light
Stephen Sondheim

Part 1 No. 8
Enter Stage Right & Sit at Vanity
Powder Arms Powder in Base Powder Face Powder in Base
D flat 4 INTRO C1 :|| Enter Dot Dialogue
4 1-3

Powder Chest Remain Still Examine Self in Mirror
A Dot Dialogue
C1 Variations on C1 C1 + treble clef C1 + treble clef
4-6 7-------------18 19--------20 20--------22

File Nails
Dia. Cont. George Singing 1st seg George Singing 2nd Segment
Variations on C1 + treble sustained E flat Variations on C1 + tone clusters
23-----29------------------------49 50------------------67

George Singing 2nd Segment cont
Scene Change Music from Previous Transition
68---------------------------------------------71

Part II No. 8A
Slide hands down Notice Blush
sides & stomach Body Tweeze Eyebrows
B flat Dot Dialogue & Song B G Major Dot Ballad Section
Variations on C1 Slow Sustained Chords
72-------83 83------------91

Rise from Vanity for Follies Dance
Buff Nails Beveled Poses Notice George Sit Cont. File Nails
2 Dot Uptempo Fantasy 4 Dot Ballad Section A George Dialogue
4 Can – Can Music 4 Slow Sustained Chords Variations on C1
91--------126 127---------134 134-------143

Pick up Perfume Spray Perfume
E flat Dot Song Segment Transition to Part III
144--------150
Part III No. 8B

**Brush Hair**

**G Major**  
George Singing C1 Variation  
C1 Variation mirroring George  
Tone Clusters & Rests  
151----------------------157                158----------167

Arrange Hair in Updo  
Stare down Stage Left Monitor

George repeating A 2nd Song Segment  
Sustained Chords  
Variations on C1 + tone clusters  
168--------171                       172----------------------192

Look at Him/Look Back to Mirror  
C  
Dot Sings C2 arpeggio  
George Sings M2  
Minimal Chords alternating with 6/4 & 4/4  
193----------------------197

Study Face in Mirror  
Look at George

Dot Sings Dialogue  
C2 arpeggio :||  
George Song Segment  
George & Dot  
In Unison  
Sustained Tone Clusters  
Variations of C1 + 3rd and 2nd intervals  
198------------------203             204---------------------210----------------------216  
217------------221

Resume Finishing Touches  
Storm Out of Studio

Conversation Dialogue between George and Dot

Part IV No. 8C

**E flat**  
George Dialogue  
C1 :||  
Variations on C1 + Treble Clef Sustained Chords  
A  
222-225  
226---------------------234----------------------241

Variations on C1 + tone clusters  
242----------------------251
REFERENCES


<http://kingfish.coastal.edu/marine/reseach.html>


<http://jcgi.pathfinder.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,778022-1,00.html>.


