2023

Ecodrama and Sustainable Theatre: A Handbook for Creating Remarkable Change

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Ecodrama and Sustainable Theatre: A Handbook for Creating Remarkable Change

*If nobody does remarkable things* dir. Carolyn Ratteray
A Senior Project in Theatrical Performance

Gabriella-Geneviève “GiGi” Buddie
for the role of Anna
Pomona College
May 14th, 2023

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Kevin Dettmar
Anna Winget
April 21, 2023

This document is submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree requirements of the Pomona College Department of Theatre and Dance.
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1 Acknowledgments

This thesis is a culmination of connection, education, creation, and dedication from the last five years of my time as a Pomona College student. I would like to thank the department for allowing me the space to create and collaborate – despite it all, I found a home within the Seaver Complex and with the talented students that are now my lifelong friends.

To Mary Rosier, for giving me my first glimpse of the department over five years ago, and for continuing to support my education and creative pursuits ever since. I’ll miss waving to you through the window. To Janelle Asti, my mentor, friend, and Sparkie, you have given me a lifetime of knowledge and laughs. You have shown me your unyielding courage as a woman in technical theatre, your unconditional kindness to your Sparkie team, and your bravery always to do what is best for yourself. Thank you for all you’ve taught me and all you will continue to teach me. To Professor Christina Hurtado-Pierson, thank you for believing in this thesis and for guiding me through this process. Even remotely from New York, you prioritized your students on the final leg of their journey. You are missed more than you could ever know. Thank you to Kevin Dettmar and the Humanities Studio fellows for supporting my interdisciplinary academic goals. This thesis was shaped by all of your thoughtful comments and feedback – thank you for the literal idea to create some sort of handbook! To Chantal Bilodeau, my ecdrama mentor and now lifelong friend, thank you for all you have given me: a job when I was on my gap year, a space to collaborate to create impactful art, and a clear purpose for my life going forward. Your passion has rubbed off on me, and I couldn’t be more grateful. To the director of my first college show, my mentor, and my friend, Professor Jessie Mills, thank you for everything you have done for me. You have believed in me from the minute I set foot on this campus – whether it be through productions, classes, fellowship proposals, or career advice, you have been instrumental in shaping the person I have become. Thank you for opening your heart to every class, every show, and every conversation I’ve had the pleasure to have with you. You have changed my life.

To Aydin, Seb, Emily, Jazz, and Emma, thank you for embarking on this remarkable journey with me. Despite it all, you brought this show to life with your talent, care, and wonderful hearts. We’re now definitely bonded for life.

To my friends who have graduated, those who are still here, and those who grew up with me, your support has meant the world to me. Thank you for showing up to every show with flowers in hand and smiles on your faces. To my family. You’ve done your best – we may be small, but we’re strong. Dad, thank you for coming to every show and for flying down when my appendix decided I shouldn’t perform in Pippin. Mom, thank you for making me resilient. I’m learning my worth because of you. To CoCo, Ace, and Ivy, I think of you often. Thank you for your love.
To the land. Aheeiyeh for holding us in your care. You are worth fighting for, and I promise to be a warrior alongside you.

And finally, to Aydin. You have made my last two years in this department unforgettable. Your love, support, and kindness have guided me through the final moments of my time here. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to share space with you and collaborate with you. Words won’t do you justice, but I’ve got a lifetime to keep trying. There and back again, kid.

All my love,

GiGi
To Jim Taylor,
for bringing me into the world of ecodrama and for giving me a new artistic purpose to explore.
You have given me a gift I could never repay.
2 Dramaturgical Exploration

I. PREFACE

The following analysis is a product of my Native upbringing and culture, in conversation with my Western and higher-education background. My viewpoint on the script, structure for the handbook, and suggested solutions are therefore informed by Indigenous ways of knowing. Native scholar Greg Cajete writes that traditional knowledge means “we understand a thing only when we understand it with all four aspects of our being: mind, body, emotion, and spirit” (qtd. in Kimmerer 47). Utilizing traditional knowledge in this investigation has allowed me to point out and challenge the shortcomings of a predominantly white college and unsustainable theatre department, while also celebrating the successes and strengths of BIPOC legacy and of an ecological story about grief, loss, nature, and connection.

To my readers, I feel entirely compelled to say this: because it was my Native body, mind, and soul inhabiting the role of Anna, and since there cannot be climate justice without Indigenous justice, our production of If nobody does remarkable things by Emma Gibson was as much about how we must care for the earth as it was about understanding and uplifting the hands that have always been tending to her, and the voices that have and will always be fighting for her. Mine included.
II. INTRODUCTION

“Perhaps the important test is this: when we leave the theater, are things around us more alive, do we listen better, care more, have a deeper or more complex sense of our own ecological identity?”

― Theresa J. May

The climate crisis is not new to us, nor are the art forms that have taken shape as vital components of the many activist movements that seek to save the planet. Yet, for the first time at Pomona College, a play about environmental devastation and our hand in it finally graced the stage of this progressive institution this past year. This mini handbook is a call-to-action (of sorts), one that stems from the idea that this should not be the last ecodrama performed at Pomona College. These chapters are structured and supported by both experience and research – formulated from what I have learned from advocating for and helping to produce an ecodrama for the college’s mainstage season. This documentation will provide the foundation for a path forward, including next steps the college and theatre department can take, and the most prominent limitations of this institution as it pertains to producing ecodramas and sustainable art.

It is my hope that ecodramas are more seriously considered in future season planning and that this mini-guide paints a path forward for progress as a department and an institution.

This push for progress is not new, and since the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (UN General Assembly art. 1), the necessity and drive for this project can be summed up in two quotes. Despite this article of freedom, Mary Robinson, author of Climate Justice: Hope, Resilience, and the Fight for a Sustainable Future, argues that “when it comes to the effects of climate change, there has been nothing but chronic injustice and the corrosion of human rights” (Robinson 13). And, in a conversation I had with political activist Angela Davis, she maintains
the notion that art is and should be at the core of any revolution or activist movement (Davis). In my experience theatre must be a powerful tool to have at the core of this revolution.
III. ECODRAMA AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM

This handbook will assess the needs, limitations, and foundations for success to produce ecodramas and sustainable art – but first, we must understand what an ecodrama is and how it fits into the world of climate and environmental activism. Our show, *If nobody does remarkable things* by Emma Gibson, is a dramatic play with a thematic focus on the environment – an “ecodrama.” As described by Theresa J. May, a director, founder and facilitator of the term ecodramaturgy, and theatre professor at the University of Oregon, an ecodrama “brings focus to ecological concerns of a particular place,” or “takes writer and audience to a deeper exploration of an issue that may not be easily resolved” (May). In the exploration of these issues, ecodramas often utilize their ability to personify and encapsulate environmental crises to increase accessibility and engagement. To do this, they are structured to allow audiences to connect with information and narratives that might not be disseminated in the mainstream media, or even addressed at all outside of their respective fields and origins. For example *Sila*, written by Climate Change Theatre Action founder Chantal Bilodeau, examines the competing interests shaping the future of the Canadian Arctic and the local Inuit population, where values are challenged by the rapidly changing environment and world. *Sila* is structured to capture the “fragility of life and the interconnectedness of lives, both human and animal” by personifying polar bears and putting the most unlikely of groups in conversation with one another (Bilodeau). *Sila’s* structure allows audiences to engage with the realities of stories, lives, cultures, and existences (embellished for the stage, of course) that we often don’t think about when we see headlines that read: “‘Devastating’: Arctic Sea Ice Shrinks to Near Record Low” (Hancock).

Furthermore, ecodrama is a unique genre of theatre that enables us to question capitalistic and anthropocentric norms by working to re-establish the connection between the human and
non-human. The power of theatre is that we may enter the theater with one belief and exit with the beginnings of a new one – the beauty of ecodrama is that the change in belief could inspire anything from individual sustainability to full-on revolution. May writes, “ecodrama stages the reciprocal connection between humans and the more-than-human world. It encompasses not only works that take environmental issues as their topic, hoping to raise consciousness or press for change, but also work that explores the relation of a ‘sense of place’ to identity and community” (May). I believe May’s explanation is a core pillar of theatrical and artistic activism.

Ecodramas often attempt to make social, political, and/or historical commentary by exploring identity and community and will capitalize on the fact that there is no greater community than the one we all belong to and rely on: our planet. However, the hardest thing an ecodrama has to do is push up against the anthropocentric and individualistic systems within modern society. How does one get “climate skeptics” into the theatre? How does one get liberal and progressive audience members to leave with a desire to pursue action? By pushing up against these kinds of barriers, possible solutions emerge from a multitude of sources: marketing, and the way the production company will spread information about a show; or tactics, and the way a playwright will utilize themes more subtly or more prominently. These questions may never fully be answered, but it’s not for lack of effort. The frustrating aspect of any form of activism is that because no one can be forced into supporting or joining a cause, a tactic that might develop is making it as appealing, pressing, accessible, and relatable as one can.

Furthermore, one of the greatest feats that ecodrama has accomplished is creating a new vocabulary and method of engaging with scientific and often inaccessible data. Doctoral student Lydia Borowicz, who studies theatre and climate change literacy, argues that “theatrical performance offers audiences diverse ways to engage with climate change through improving
scientific understanding and connecting with climate change’s effects through live, embodied performance, [because] halting climate change will require not just climate science knowledge, but a shift in values toward an ecologically sustainable future, and theatre offers vital space and tools for reimagining that future” (Borowicz iv). Theatre has the power to make environmental content that is supported by climate science more accessible, relatable, and therefore more actionable.

While unquestionably vital to our ecology, science is exclusionary in its data sharing and is often difficult to understand. For instance, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) prepares “comprehensive Assessment Reports about knowledge on climate change, its causes, potential impacts, and response options,” detailing the severity of our climate crisis and the responses urgently needed by governments and communities alike (IPCC). However, these reports are structured and written by academics for academics. Multiple articles have been published on the inaccessibility of science and, specifically, the IPCC reports. Sir Mark Walport (Former UK Government Chief Scientific Adviser) told climate change experts in 2013 that they need to learn how best to translate their findings for a wider audience because “science is not finished until it’s communicated” (qtd. in Yeo). Ecodrama provides a translation of abstract data into human relationships. When we experience and digest data as words and numbers on a page the disconnect becomes inherently easier. How do we get people to understand the gravity of climate change? One theory is humanizing and re-sensitizing the data, and by doing exactly that, theatre has become a valuable resource in aiding the increased accessibility of scientific data.

Theatre is a mechanism and artistic medium that can disseminate scientific information and knowledge and provide a more inclusive view of the climate crisis which makes it a powerful tool to have as part of this climate revolution. As an organized artistic movement, its
beginnings emerged in the “mid-1980s though its [emergence] can be traced to the 1970s and earlier. These first self-proclaimed eco theater artists acted out of political disillusionment with large corporations, environmental dangers, and existing social structures” (Slagle). This movement is not so dissimilar from the pillars of Theatre of the Oppressed, created by Augusto Boal, which took place in the early 1970s in Rio de Janeiro (Kina 241). Theatre of the Oppressed was influenced by the level of “theatrical education in slum areas and was created to engage the individuals [in Boal's society] in discovery, critical reflection, dialogue and process of liberation” (23). According to a publication in the Journal of Health Psychology poignantly titled “Theatre of the Oppressed and Environmental Justice Communities,” “these vital interactions encourage a wide spectrum of social outcomes: community empowerment and organizing, teaching concepts, building issue awareness and agendas, strategizing and rehearsing action, connecting citizens with movements, and widening coalitions” (Sullivan et al. 168). In the eco-theatre movement, the artists addressed concerns “ranging from pesticide use, to waste dumps in lower-class urban areas, to deforestation” (Slagle). These movements emerging around the same time in different parts of the globe continue to touch on the power within the arts, and of joining in community. Many of the strategies used today stem from the same ones playwrights and artists used during the beginnings of the movement, mixed with ideas and facets of progressive theatre like Theatre of the Oppressed.

These varying tactics can include highlighting the connection between the human and non-human, exposing the complexities of the human condition, imagining a dystopian future from the path we are currently on, and yearning for an ecologically healthy tomorrow. For example, the Broadway hit musical Hadestown, written by Anaïs Mitchell, is a perfect illustration of an ecodrama that exposes the complexities of the human condition within a subtly
crafted environmental theme. While this is not the only tactic used, it is emphasized to a greater degree than the others listed above. Hades, the lord of the underworld, is also a “suit-wearing boss, a slick con man who promises wealth but suckers in the hungry, poor Eurydice to a life of toil in his factory pit” (Read).

As described by Bridget Read of Vogue Magazine in her article “The Liberating, Radical Politics of Hadestown,” during the first act “in a chilling scene reminiscent of 1984, Hades describes the continual wall his ‘children’ are building—it is never quite clear whether the wall is real or a metaphor, but it is made obvious, in Fox News–style doublespeak, that they ‘build the wall’ to keep out ‘the enemy,’ who ‘want what we have’” (Read, emphasis in original). The coal miners of the underworld, the abuse of power, and the destruction of the natural world are what our main characters rebel against throughout the show, for these are “earth-devouring commodities” and real-life experiences “that are the scourge of this planet” (Read). The show is an ode to human life, learning, emotion, morality, conflict, and death—the core of the human condition (Arendt 518). Ultimately, our characters end their journeys and say, “Let the world we dream about be the one we live in now!,” a fourth wall break directed to the audience that compares the show’s existence with the same capitalist and Anthropocene societal structures we live in today.

In an engaging, flashy, big-scale production like Hadestown, it is easy to get pulled into the story, where the songs, lyrics, dancing, and effects keep the mood light and exciting, even though the story of Orpheus and Eurydice is a tragedy and the environmental theme is destructive and sadly part of the audience’s reality. We might enter the theater for the excitement of the musical, but we stay for the story. But if we take away the musical elements, the resources, and the biggest stages across the world – what are we left with? In my opinion, we are left with a
story not so different from the ones our characters face in *If nobody does remarkable things*: a journey of self-discovery and of finding hope for the “world we dream about [to] be the one we live in now.” Similarly to Mitchell, Emma Gibson utilized a range of eco-dramatical tools in crafting her first-ever ecodrama, and it is this mixture of every tactic that aims to inspire conversation, action, and change.

*If nobody does remarkable things* is not the epitome of ecodrama, nor by any account is the script perfect. But the playwright was able to create an immersive world, character depth, and a technically simple show to produce, on top of utilizing successful tactics. Gibson was able to forge the connection between the human and non-human by dramatically raising the stakes of how the characters interacted with their environment. They were completely reliant on the natural world – there was no room for error. Gibson exposed the complexities of the human condition by making forgiveness a central theme – our characters could not move forward without it. She crafted a dystopian future that stems from the path we are currently on, a future that seems entirely plausible, to grab attention and show the audience that there is a way through. Lastly, Gibson beautifully communicated the yearning for an ecologically healthy tomorrow by revealing the fragility and need for hope by the lead character, Anna. My passion for the intersectional field pushed me to advocate for an ecodrama in the mainstage season, but it was these elements that drew me to this specific text. However, finding a script to submit was only the first step.
IV. LIMITATIONS OF THE INSTITUTION

There is any number of institutional limitations that bar a show from being produced. In this section, I will attempt to highlight the biggest factors that impede ecodramas from being produced and from being produced sustainably. In the next section, I discuss possible remedies that both uphold the integrity of the department, while also embracing progress, experiences and change in order to create a sustainable path forward. Limiting factors such as budget, size, feasibility, and interest are all pieces that are considered during the play selection process. Some of these factors are easier to address than others. For example, the department and school (as of now) cannot drastically increase the budget and produce a musical every year, and it is likely that something as involved as Hadestown will probably never grace these stages. Furthermore, because of these restrictions and considerations, it is a difficult process to have a show approved and selected as one of the four mainstage season productions.

The Play Selection Committee (PSC) is made up of faculty, staff, and students who are charged with taking script submissions and whittling the selection down. At the time I was a rising senior, director preference, senior interest, and department capacity were all large factors in deciding shows for the season. Originally, If nobody does remarkable things was not selected, and it wasn’t until there were major setbacks in the department that the faculty turned to another viable option. The first big limitation in the department arises here. The PSC has a set of guidelines that they try to follow, like having at least one BIPOC playwright or holding space for a Studio Series where student-directing theses can obtain institutional support. However, the PSC lacks the consistent direction and a concrete guideline basis (a constitution, of sorts) that holds them accountable to the large platform that they have to connect and communicate with the
colleges and surrounding community. The biggest limitation here that ultimately harms an
ecodrama’s chance of being selected: inconsistent direction and unclear goals.

Jumping ahead, the next big limitation arises with the actual construction of a show due
to the veteran infrastructure of the department and school. Since theatre often requires mass
amounts of electrical energy, new sets, and newly designed costumes, it is not the most
sustainable art form (Beer 10), but as we have already discussed, theatre continues to be a
powerful medium for activism and storytelling. How then does the unsustainability of the craft
have any place in an environmental movement? The answer: greening theatre. Alex Durham,
author of Green Theatre: A Reference Guide, says,

In the face of a climate crisis, theatre has the potential to positively shift cultural norms
surrounding environmental sustainability. From plays depicting catastrophe to theatres
governed by eco-friendly practice, the health of our environment can and should be
considered in all facets of theatrical life. Theatre in the U.S., however, has lagged somewhat
in building a sustainable backbone. We have a great deal of work to do compared to the U.K.,
whose efforts include the Royal Court of London’s commitment to net-zero carbon emissions
this year, and whose arts endeavors, across the board, focus policy on climate action: [such
as] the Edinburgh Festival Fringe; Creative Carbon Scotland; Julie’s Bicycle; the National
Theatre. (Durham)

In the U.S., despite our “lagging,” local, regional, and Broadway theaters alike are all
implementing small and large green processes into their craft and construction to move towards a
more sustainable practice. Why not this theatre department that is attached to a liberal arts
college with a 3-billion-dollar endowment? (Pomona College Endowment and Investment
Information Sheet). The biggest limitation here that ultimately harms an ecodrama’s chance of being produced sustainably: veteran infrastructure and a lack of forward thinking.

Finally, the last big limitation stems from the inflated rate of turnover in higher ed, the historically high rate of turnover in theatre, and the short, four-year retention rate of students. Turnover within any department can negatively affect learning, communication, and the functionality of a department (University of Massachusetts Global) – especially if those changes are occurring mid-semester or mid-year, which unfortunately has transpired four separate times in my tenure as a student in the department. These frequent and unpredictable shifts in faculty and staff have impeded student growth, learning, and access to opportunities – not to mention it has made, and continues to make, progress that much harder. “Disruption and repetition of program planning and implementation processes” are cited as one of the negative side effects of teacher turnover – and this is where the last limitation lives. If new initiatives, policies, or methods of sustainability, or inclusivity are proposed under one administration, and then the point person for that initiative like a production manager, master electrician, technical director, or key faculty member leaves (voluntarily or not), that initiative is often halted or stopped altogether. The momentum for student-driven initiatives, projects, or policies gets lost in transition, and the burden of doing the work continues to fall on the students. For example, on a small scale, I proposed a more sustainable option to paper programs for mainstage performances, and this was implemented during the first semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. However, once the production manager left, the department went back to its old ways of programming. It’s not hard to stop printing single-use programs, but it negates “the way it's always been done.” And, without the infrastructure, forward thinking, or progressive goals to stop the cycle, something as small as the paper programs will keep happening. The biggest limitation here that
ultimately diminishes a chance to run a sustainable department or prioritize student learning: inept management and a lack of support from the college administration.
V. A PATH FORWARD

Despite all of these limitations, there is a path forward. Just like Anna, Joel, June, and the characters in their world, we have not yet reached the “point of no return” and there is still hope (Gibson 51). The best part is that the school and the department have the tools and the solutions at their disposal.

It is important to point out that many of the limitations I have identified from my experience of advocating for and helping to produce an ecdrama are not new to this department, and most have actually been called out in the past. In fact, in 2020, a group of BIPOC theatre students, led by Black students in the department, published a call to action that urged the department to reevaluate its systems and do the work to dismantle white supremacy within the department structures. The call to action was inclusive of all BIPOC bodies in its writing, but the text was written in the wake of the Summer 2020 Black Lives Matter protests and the murder of George Floyd, and thus the call to action centered a pressing need to protect and support the Black students in the department and prospective Black students to the program. On a larger scale, the call to action prompted the department with relevant questions that extended to all BIPOC legacies and even to ecological health, such as: “Are you working to maintain the status quo or are you working to dismantle white supremacist/capitalist structures?” and “is the system that we’re used to--how we’ve been doing things in the department--benefitting all students?” (“Silent No More” 2). I cannot speak to the Black experience in the department that the call to action highlighted, but as a BIPOC student, I can evaluate my experience with these questions, and in my opinion, they haven’t yet been fully addressed. For it is these types of questions that prompted this very thesis. To find a path forward, let us listen to the authors of this powerful and necessary piece:
The pandemic has created a real opportunity for us to reevaluate our systems. Do they work well for the benefit of everyone? Do we do the things we do just because we're used to them? It's really asked us to consider 'the why' and the efficiency of how we do things. Let's use this moment to build better, more effective structures. We've known for a while that the ones we've been using are broken and outdated. Let's not try to go back to 'normal'. Let's embrace this opportunity to actualize the world/society we want to see. Let's envision and build. We're artists. That's what we do after all. Reform is one thing, but building what we want to see is the thing. (1, emphasis in original)

The department has already formed the building blocks to achieving a more equitable, just, and sustainable pedagogy; after all, it’s written in its mission statement.

Through a synthesis of body, mind, and spirit, theatre excites the imagination and address[es] global issues of concern. Rooted in the values of creativity, passion, joy and collaboration, students, faculty, and staff are committed to and excited about creating meaningful, relevant, and inspiring works of art both in the classroom and in production. (Pomona College Theatre Department; emphasis added)

To remedy the limitation of “inconsistent direction and unclear goals,” the department should create a Play Selection Committee constitution that at minimum agrees to build a season that 1. Excites the imagination; 2. Addresses global issues of concern; and 3. Places emphasis on thematic relevance and community needs. However, it is not just the department that should deem what a global issue of concern is, or what themes are most relevant. It is the students who should be at the center of those conversations. If the PSC had a living document that changed with the shifts in the department community, world events, and collective needs, while also
adhering to clearly stated goals for creating a season, I believe that ecodramas would naturally arise for consideration.

However, while it is my opinion that ecodramas should have a slot in every season going forward, if the committee were to at least uphold the second suggestion above, they would be producing plays that addressed anything from climate change to inequality to food insecurity to racism to homophobia…to any number of “global issues of concern.” After all, “environmental and climate justice is a civil rights issue” (NAACP), and since there cannot be climate justice without racial justice, the two work together to strive for equity. Eco-dramatical themes live in more texts than we might think.

To address the limitation “veteran infrastructure and a lack of forward-thinking” while working to create a more sustainable artistic practice, the department should take the time to act upon policy measures described in the “Silent No More” document.

Buy from Black businesses. Carefully consider your industry connections and which economies your business and partnerships support… DO NOT buy from businesses that support the proliferation of police, the prison industrial complex, [ones] that contribute to voter suppression, and the disenfranchisement of Black and brown communities. (7)

The department’s reliance on unsustainable, big corporations like Amazon, for costumes, hair, makeup, sets, and even lighting and sound is problematic. Take a note from “Ecoscenography: An Introduction to Ecological Design for Performance ” written by the leading scholar in ecological design, Tanja Beer, and stop Amazon-shipping things and go to thrift stores or locally source things when you can (Beer). The department could also pledge to hire more sustainable designers or build stock sets that don’t require mass amounts of lumber every time a new show is produced.
Since most of these solutions require more money or a new allocation of funds, the institution could distribute more funds to ensure that the department could function in a more sustainable way. While I understand the web of bureaucracy that entangles conversations regarding funding, at a certain point there won’t be a healthy planet to sustain this institution at all. To create a thriving ecological home, taking action on progressive measures is necessary, even if it means reallocating precious money. Furthermore, since it is often the timing set up of the department that usually causes last-minute needs from Amazon, why can’t the structure be shifted to ensure that shows are getting produced in sustainable ways for the environment and the staff and students? Just because there has “always been” a show before fall break or there has “always been” a musical every other year, doesn’t mean this can’t be at least open to change. Creating a better timeline for staff might help with being able to be more resourceful and sustainable in the design and construction of shows.

Additionally, the department has connections to some of the most renowned eco-theatre artists in the world such as my mentor, Chantal Bilodeau. The department should use these connections to further their thinking and growth and push to be more progressive in their overall design. Although I have a feeling Chantal would start by saying something like “Put some solar panels on the building!” – we are, after all, in sunny southern California – let’s use it. Lastly, and this one is simple, just stop printing the programs and tickets. Why waste the paper when every person who comes to see a show most likely has a smartphone? Simply do the research about the best way to have a digital program – small steps lead to big differences.

Finally, to address the limitation “inept management and a lack of support from college administration,” start by putting faculty through leadership and administrative training to learn how to successfully run a department. Take steps to prioritize student learning and put them first
in decision-making. Additionally, the college should be concerned about the high rate of turnover in the department, and should step in to evaluate the causes through their own measures and provide support and insight into stopping the frequent and sudden shifts; for some limitations are far beyond the work of a senior thesis.

However, there is a positive, less examined side of departmental turnover, and that is the lack of institutional memory. In many cases, this is harmful to the functionality of the department because there is a clash of old and new. In this situation, however, the new far outweighs the old. It is a pivotal time to begin building a new institutional memory, one that is built from reform, justice, sustainability, equity, and inclusion. Implement sustainable marketing strategies, offer new courses with progressive curricula, organize town halls frequently for feedback, throw many more BIPOC pizza parties, invite students to open forums at faculty meetings, host de-stress and community events, openly support student theatre, invite guest artists from various cultural and artistic backgrounds for workshops, go on more field trips to experience professional theatre, create a partnership with Ecoset LA, the list could go on and on.

The first step in becoming a department and an institution that is just, sustainable, equitable, and inclusive, is to identify, acknowledge, and engineer a plan to minimize or eradicate the limitations. The second step is taking those actionable steps for the betterment of the community. This seems like wishful thinking since there was little follow-through on the “Silent No More” call to action three years ago. But if If nobody does remarkable things taught me anything, it’s that hope is the strongest thing we have as individuals, collectives, and inhabitants on this dying earth. There is no solution or tool that the department doesn’t already have. My advice? Use it.
VI. CONCLUSION

“Things which do not grow and change are dead things.”

– Louise Erdrich

This mini handbook is a call-to-action (of sorts), one that stems from the idea that we are all part of a grander community and we must do our part for the planet and for one another. Theatre is a valuable tool to have at the core of the environmental revolution, because it creates a platform that is accessible, relatable, and therefore more actionable. The selection of *If nobody does remarkable things* for the mainstage season is just the first half of the first step in explicitly contributing to progress and change for the betterment of the planet. And while I hope the ecodrama legacy persists past my time here, this handbook gives that hope a practical foundation rooted in academia and tangible goals.

This guide is merely pieces of a foundation for a path forward, and as it cannot be inclusive of every possible solution, I urge the college and theatre department to do the hard work in reflection and reform. After all “action on behalf of life transforms. Because the relationship between self and the world is reciprocal, it is not a question of first getting enlightened or saved and then acting. As we work to heal the earth, the earth heals us” (Kimmerer 340). As artists and theatremakers, we create new, exciting, imaginative, wild, and hopeful worlds every day. It’s time we “let the world we dream about be the one we live in now.”
3 Project Documentation

1. Script Breakdown

*If nobody does remarkable things,* by British playwright Emma Gibson, is an exploration of the meaning of forgiveness and the significance of the point of no return for both the characters and the planet. The play is guided by the character of Older June as she recounts pivotal moments from her early childhood and life with her mother, Anna. Fulfilling her dream of being an astronaut, June sits in the International Space Station and takes the audience through a narration of vignettes. This play is the world through June’s eyes.

June begins the show by recounting the moment her world began to change. It was the middle of a category 6 dust storm when a cargo ship had suddenly taken refuge in the local harbor. Joel, Anna’s ex and the love of her life, is on board and desperately needs somewhere to stay. Paul, Anna’s husband, and stepfather to June, isn’t sure about saving him, and to be honest, neither is Anna… not after what Joel did 14 years ago. However, Anna makes her way to the harbor, brings Joel into her home, and opens the door to let him back into her life. Thus begins a story of grief, loss, love, and forgiveness.

Young Anna is described by June as “an activist” and “a climate change warrior” (15), however after an article and photo (taken by Joel) are published about Anna and the “true” hoax of manmade climate change, she is publicly ridiculed, assaulted, and shamed into hiding. This moment in Anna’s life is particularly difficult. Not only has she been blindsided by the love of her life, but she also lost her mother, and just found out that she is pregnant. Both June and Anna regard Paul as the hero of this story. He’s the one who saved Anna when she was at her lowest, and he has been there for June since her early years. We get a glimpse of how June perceived herself the last time she ever saw her mother. Younger June makes an appearance in a scene with
Joel and briefly with Anna. She provides much-needed comedic innocence in the midst of a challenging story. All Anna wants to do is protect her, but Joel is jeopardizing the life Anna has built for herself and her family.

Fourteen years after he abandoned her, Joel has come back into Anna’s life. He is trying to persuade her to come to the U.S. and work with him on a climate campaign. He says that people can no longer look away, for the destruction of the world is occurring outside their doors. Documents were leaked from a government organization and the truth about the politics of the climate crisis had been made clear, and now, people were rallying. But, he needs Anna. Her face, the photo that he took (the one that ruined her life), had “taken on a whole new meaning,” it was the catalyst for change for a generation – “June’s generation,” he tells her in scene 10 (71).

Anna’s driving force in her life had been her activism, and when that was taken from her, she felt like she lost a part of who she was, as described by her in scene 6 and scene 10:

“People dismissed everything I said after that piece came out” (36),

“And if they didn’t laugh in my face, the nut jobs wanted to gun me down... it was bullshit. I lived with that for years, that fear, and nobody did anything about it” (37).

“I’m exhausted. By this. By you. By the storms. By everything that happened. By what I haven't done (67).

Despite this, she built a life here, away from Joel, away from the city. A life where she is complicit, but at least she is safe. However, Paul (just like always), swoops in to play the hero in her life. He can see that her complacency is slowly chipping away at what she has left. He says:

“I made a mistake. I kept you too safe. I made you slowly disappear until here we are – not laughing, not skydiving, and definitely not caring about the dead fish” (82).

Paul’s support, and his promise that he will take care of June, set Anna free. However, Paul is still not willing to give Joel a victory, so Paul tells him that Anna is not coming with him. Paul
also takes this moment to reveal the truth about his daughter. As Joel is leaving, presumably forever, Paul says:

“*She looks like you, you know. She really does*” (86)

Joel replies, “*Who?*”

“*June. It’s always been a joke between Anna and I, that she looked nothing like Anna. And I always wondered who she did take after... and now I know*” (87)

Anna writes a letter to June before she leaves. It’s too hard to face her, and “she thinks words hurt less when you read them” (89). And so, Anna is free. Free to find herself again, save the planet, and create a world where her daughter will be safe. The irony that we learn, however, is that she dies within a year of leaving her family.

At the end of the play, we are back in the International Space Station on June’s birthday. June tells us, “I’m now the age my mother was when she died. That feels profound. Like I have finally caught up with her” (88). As June recounts the day her mother left and the inevitability of the choices Anna has made, Anna appears at the door for the final time. Then, the last lines of the play ring through the space, Anna takes a breath and walks out the door.
II. **Character Breakdown**

Anna Barton, a 37-year-old mother, and former climate activist is thrust into making an impossible choice between duty and love. For the purpose of our production, we changed the setting and nationality of some of the characters to make it more accessible to the Claremont Colleges community, yet to still uphold the original intentions of American vs. non-American characters. It’s not a secret that Americans are regarded in not-so-flattering ways by the rest of the world, and that America is one of the largest entities hurdling the world toward climate collapse. Both these aspects of nationality are crucial to the tensions between Paul and Joel, and the weight of Anna’s decisions. Our version of the show was set in Newfoundland, Canada, where the originally scripted British characters became Canadian, and Joel remained American. This choice upheld the significance of nationalities, while also reiterating that this play is not specific to a certain time or place. The themes of this play, especially the theme surrounding our climate crisis, affect every inch of the globe. The fact that our changes worked so symbiotically is further proof that this show should and can be adapted to the communities engaging with it.

Anna’s dramatic function, or her purpose, serves as the propeller of the play. While June takes us through this story, it is Anna’s life and actions at the forefront of the plot. As more and more of her backstory is revealed, we learn that every decision she made, like traveling by plane when she was told not to, having June, or trusting someone again, is what led this story to even be told. The choices that she makes throughout the play continue to drive her toward returning to her calling. However, Anna cannot make the decision to leave her family without Paul’s reassurance and permission, so to speak. Selfishness hadn’t greeted her since the last time she ran away from a crying baby June. How could she even begin to think about doing that again? Paul
is the one who tells her that this is not running, this is choosing to make an impossible choice – it is strength.

During the summer of 2022, I got the opportunity to speak with playwright Emma Gibson, and we spent a great deal of time talking about Anna’s depth and perseverance. Prior to the meeting with Gibson, she sent an updated version of the script where Anna’s scene and monologues about her pain, exhaustion, and hope were cut out. During our chat, I told her that as a young climate activist myself, those moments were the portion of the script and depth of the character I was most drawn to because I felt those same feelings so viscerally. Gibson said she appreciated my experience and thoughts since it’s often isolating on the other side of the script. I asked her if she would add it back in, and she immediately said yes. She told me that she recognized the limits in this new genre she was exploring and that sometimes the actor’s own thoughts and experiences bring clarity to the whole picture. Because of her openness and generosity, I was able to bring my heart, soul, and experiences to Anna in a way that was genuinely authentic to the life of an activist.

Anna is a complex and multi-dimensional character who exists in pain. She tries her best to be the mother that June needs, and the partner that Paul needs, but it’s almost impossible when even the air around her feels “suffocating” (67). Underneath the anger and pain that clouds her reality, especially during storms like the one that commands this play, we see that she longs for hope. The irony is that Joel, the person who gave her this anger and pain, is also her source of hope. He is beginning to light that flame inside her again, and we see her go through a journey of forgiveness that is hard-traveled. There are so many things that she wants and needs to say to Joel, and once those are out in the open, she stands before him with nothing left to give. But he
knows her – arguably better than anyone. He has nothing left to say but the truth: that he changed, he’s hurting like she is for the planet, and now he is fighting for what he believes in.

Anna’s trajectory toward forgiveness is a web of both internal and external struggles. It’s partly what drew me to play her for my thesis. Her character arc is a true illustration of the human condition, and her force is precisely what makes her “one hell of an activist” (44). The intricacy of knowing she reached her point of no return yet still persists, is an excellent parallel to how humanity must interact with the state of our world. This play is a glimpse into our future and our current reality, and these characters are brief looks into our own internal struggles with grief, loss, love, and forgiveness. Our version of the story ended with Anna and June connecting for the first and only time in the play. I decided that Anna should look up, see her daughter, and know that her sacrifice was worth it. June lived. She fulfilled her dream. And perhaps, this is what brings Anna peace¹. In this theatrical world, Anna is given the luxury of seeing into the future and knowing that her choice was the right one. We, humanity, don’t have that luxury, yet we still must make choices that ensure that there will always be a tomorrow.

¹ Refer to Appendix for annotated version of the script.
III. Objectives and Tactics

To find my objectives and tactics, I decided to follow Stanislavski’s seven questions and given circumstances. These seven questions help to orient the character to the people and world around them and provide insight into how the character is existing at any given moment (Sawoski, 6). It’s important to note that while I appreciated and ended up using Stanislavski’s technique for my character work, I didn't consistently use his inside-out acting technique. This character work gave me something to ground into and helped me understand the complexities of Anna’s experiences and life. This particular method of thinking about objectives and tactics was useful for my process, because I fleshed out the motives, wants, and needs before we ever got up on our feet and started blocking. With the character work already beginning to be built, it was easier to motivate action when we started rehearsing blocking and getting into the dynamics of the play, as a whole, and individual scenes.

I formatted the seven questions as such:

1. Who am I?
Pick apart the script to find out what type of person your character is; what they look like, what they believe, how others describe them, and so on. Think about your character’s past and the significant events/people that influenced them and made them who they are in the script.

2. Where am I?
The script will usually tell you where you are but the important thing for an actor to consider is how the character feels about the place they are in. The space your character occupies can determine how they behave during a scene.

3. What time is it?
Think about how the specific time of the play changes the character’s action.

4. What do I want?
This is a character’s primary motivation for everything they do in a scene. All actions should be executed with the goal of getting what you want from the other characters in the scene. This is also called a character’s objective.

5. Why do I want it?
There must be a driving force behind your objectives which is your justification. Give your character a convincing reason for acting and you automatically generate high stakes which lead to tension.

6. How will I get what I want?
Use your dialogue, movements, and gestures to try to influence the other characters to give you what you want (to accomplish your objective). This is also called a character’s tactic. If one tactic fails, try a new one and see if that works.

7. What must I overcome to get what I want?
There is always something stopping you from achieving your objective. Usually, there is someone or something in the outside world impeding a character’s advancement and also some internal conflict with which they struggle. This is also called a character’s obstacle.

Ultimately, by answering these questions and tracking the arc of Anna’s character journey, I was able to deduce that her overall objective in the play was to find hope. She feels as though she has lost part of herself, and subsequently, her hope for the planet and her own life. We see this in her actions like walking down to the beach every morning to watch the sunrise and search for birds. I believe this was her grasping for any semblance of hope that may be in front of her. She does actually achieve her overall objective, although it’s not in the way that she suspects. As I’ve mentioned in an earlier section, Joel is the force that provides her with hope, and this creates internal struggle after internal struggle for Anna. How could the thing that took away her hope in the first place, be the thing that brings it back? In my scene analysis and
objective/tactic breakdown, it became clear how Anna navigated her relationship with Joel, and how that finally cleared the way to allow hope to seep back in through Anna’s broken parts.

Below, you’ll notice that some scenes are filled with multiple objectives. For this play in particular, there are a couple of reasons why it’s not uncommon for Anna to have multiple objectives in one scene. First, Anna is having contrasting wants because her conflicting emotions are bringing up not only current wants and needs but also past ones that she has been sitting with for 14 years. Second, these scenes are long, and encapsulate layers of the characters finally peeling away aspects of their past. On multiple occasions, Joel or Paul might have inadvertently fulfilled Anna’s want, but this often catches her off guard, or it turns out not to be the answer she wanted, and so the objective switches to accommodate for the complexities of Anna’s humanity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene by Scene Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scene 2</td>
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| Scene 4 | I want to urge Paul to support me  
I want to make Joel feel uneasy, but I want to make him stay. |
| Scene 6 | I want to make Joel give me the answers that I want to hear.  
I want to make Joel understand even an ounce of the pain and heartache that he has caused me. |
| Scene 8 | I want to save June from this madness. |
| Scene 10 | I want to get Joel to understand how much he has messed up for me and my life since he got off that boat.  
I just want Joel to understand the pain he left me when he abandoned me 14 years ago.  
I want to get Joel to understand how much he means to me even though my heart hurts when I look at him. |
| Scene 12 | I want to tread carefully to get Paul to tell me the truth.  
I want Paul to tell me it’s okay. I want him to let me go. |
Scene 13

I want to keep June safe.
I want to give June the life I never had.

On the next pages, I have examined the specific character work in scenes 2, 6, and 10, because I believe these specific scenes contain elements that make it a pivotal scene for Anna’s character. In addition, whether she achieves her objective in these scenes or not, is indicative of how the story is further propelled.

Scene 2:

What do I want?
I want to get Joel to tell me why he’s here. I want to get him to reveal his motivations and intentions.

Why do I want it?
I want to get Joel to tell me why he’s here in order to find a way to heal the part of me that he broke.
I want to get him to reveal his motivations and intentions in order to have the power to find a way to deal with the situation and never be blindsided by him again.

How will I get what I want?
I acquaint you, I allow you, I assess you, I caution you, I’m direct towards you, I divert you, I exploit you, I humor you, I judge you.

Anna doesn’t achieve her objective in this scene; however, by not yet obtaining the reason why Joel has shown up out of the blue, she allows him to stay longer. Her curiosity and need to know why he was there, pushed her into tolerating him staying in her home. This ultimately drives the story forward, because the longer he is there, the more chances he has to
interact with both Anna and the other family members – ultimately propelling the conflict forward.

**Scene 6:**

What do I want?

I want to make Joel give me the answers that I want to hear.

I want to make Joel understand even an ounce of the pain and heartache that he has caused me.

Why do I want it?

I want to make Joel give me the answers that I want to hear, in order for me to fulfill my fantasy of having this pain diminished with the words “I’m sorry.”

I want to make Joel understand even an ounce of the pain and heartache that he has caused me in order to heal the parts of myself that he broke when he left.

How will I get what I want?

I afflict you, I allow you, I entertain you, I anticipate you, I corner you, I bait you, I challenge you, I charge you, I chastise you, I check you, I confide in you, I criticize you, I discourage you, I dodge you, I dominate you.

Joel point-blank tells Anna that he is not there to apologize, but Anna isn’t willing to give up the opportunity to hear those words and so she finally starts to say all the things she has been sitting with for 14 years. She opens up about her life after his photo ruined everything – striding towards making him understand even an ounce of the pain that he has caused. Per her objective, he doesn’t end up giving her the answers she wanted to hear. In fact, he lets her in on his perspective and reveals information that actually puts blame on other people and entities. But Anna has tunnel vision… all she can put together is that he took the photo that ruined her life, and then abandoned her at her lowest.
Scene 10:

What do I want?

I want to get Joel to understand how much he has messed up for me and my life since he got off that boat.

I just want him to understand the pain he left me when he abandoned me.

I want to get him to understand how much he means even though my heart hurts when I look at him.

Why do I want it?

I want to get Joel to understand how much he has messed up for Anna and her life since he got off that boat in order to finally be able to let go.

I want him to understand the pain he left me when he abandoned me in order to no longer feel alone.

I want to get him to understand how much he means even though my heart hurts when I look at him in order to have a moment where I can breathe with him, just like we did 14 years ago.

How will I get what I want?

I challenge you, I address you, I antagonize you, I beg you, I blame you, I confide in you, I entangle you, I dodge you, I free you, I humble you.

In this beast of a scene, we watch as an exhausted Anna finally lets her walls down. We get a glimpse of what she longs for as she confides in someone she once loved. In this scene, Joel calls Anna out on her unwillingness to see beyond her pain. Her response is to open up. He gets to see the broken parts of her that have only been stressed more since his arrival. He begins to understand just how hard this is for Anna. Anna goes on to recount the morning that he left 14
years ago, and at last, Joel fully realizes the extent of his selfish actions. She is stunned when he mentions forgiveness, but she does not shy away entirely.

When the storm clears, a weight is lifted from Anna’s shoulders. Perhaps she can see more clearly, perhaps it’s a sign – whatever the case, she shares a drink with Joel and, for the first time in 14 years, looks at him with honest and compassionate eyes.
IV. **Special Training and Skills Required**

**Vocal Quality**

To prepare for the vocal demand of my scenes with Joel, and for the amount of talking Anna does in the show, I had to create a vocal plan. It just so happened that, for the semester, I was in Professor Talya Klein’s class; The Speaking Voice. In Klein’s class, I was already consciously working to rectify bad habits that were inhibiting healthy voice techniques. Specifically, we worked to combat my habit of using a higher pitch when talking. My natural register is quite low, and because I’ve had a complicated relationship with the deepness of my voice, I had to cultivate an awareness of when I was falling out of my natural register (and therefore failing to resonate fully). Just by creating an awareness of this habit, I was able to almost entirely get rid of it. Similarly, to stop tension from occurring in my throat when I was yelling, I was instructed to work on guiding awareness to let my throat, jaw, and neck be free, while also using a focus technique that I learned in class. When I raised my voice in the show, I was not yelling at the audience, the room, or the set – I was yelling at Joel. While it was important for the audience to hear me, a narrowed focus wouldn’t change that fact if I was resonating fully. I narrowed the focus on where to send the sound: directly to Joel (Mallery). The product was a healthy technique that I was able to sustain through tech week and the run of the show. My vocal warm-up process, my vocal plan, and my technique training all helped to support my role in my thesis.

**Intimacy Training**

During the rehearsal process, an intimacy director (Carly D.W. Bones) was brought in to facilitate and guide us through the process of creating moments of safe intimacy. There were
specific moments of intimacy called for in the script, and there were moments that we decided needed to be carved out with an intimacy director.

The script called for a kiss between Anna and Paul three times. However, we ended up only having two lip contact kisses because it was the best choice for the flow of the scene and the energy we were creating with these characters. For this process, we established general boundaries between me and Seb Barnhill (PZ ’25), with the agreement that we would check in about any other boundary we had at any given time in the process. Bones was clear that our boundaries could change at any time. Bones guided us through a visualization exercise to connect with the full lives of our characters that existed beyond the stage. This was to help situate our moments of intimacy in something concrete, like their 10+ year marriage. The kisses were choreographed so meticulously that we knew each step, the duration, the pressure, and the movements so that it could not only be replicated in every performance, but also so that Barnhill and myself always felt safe. The purpose of establishing clarity of boundaries and a repeatable process is so that the actors are safe with each other, but also comfortable with the action.

Intimacy direction is a relatively new field, and it is all about consent. In a piece about intimacy direction from the University of Idaho, interviewee Tanya Thompson, a Master of Fine Arts candidate in performance at U of I, says that “this is theatre’s answer to the #MeToo movement.” She continues, “your job is to do everything you’re told to do. Before this [intimacy direction] came out there was no mechanism to say ‘No, this makes me uncomfortable’” (O’Neill). Bones prioritized our safety at every step of the process and made the rehearsal room a welcoming environment. Bones worked with me and Barnhill to create backup plans in case boundaries changed. This ensured that every performance had a plan that we could initiate if the original plan was no longer safe for either actor.
For the moments of intimacy that we decided needed to have a director, Bones approached them with the same care and process that she did for the kisses. Anna and Joel had moments of almost touch, touch, and charged touch. We started with the same visualization exercise to situate our characters in their shared past. These moments were also choreographed so that when there was pressure or connection between me and Aydin Mallery (PZ ‘24), we knew that we wouldn’t hurt or cause harm to each other. Even in the intense moments where there was clear anger behind an action, as an actor, my priority was to keep Mallery and myself safe while going through our scenes and intimate moments.

While I had worked with an intimacy director before (during Circle Mirror Transformation in 2021) each process for intimate moments will be different from the next. However, the experience that I entered the room with, ultimately allowed me to feel more confident in my ability to voice my boundaries and express any concerns that I had.
4 Project Execution

1. Pre-Show Preparation

During performance week for the show, I would arrive at the theatre an hour and a half before start time. I would begin with a vocal and body warm-up. This show wasn’t director/ensemble facilitated for warm-ups and grounding moments like other shows I’ve been in at Pomona. I mainly warmed up on my own, often accompanied by Mallery.

I followed a vocal warm-up that included elements from two Pomona voice professors (Professor Talya Klein and former Professor Meagan Prahl). Since my role in this show was very vocally demanding, I gave myself ample time to properly warm up and get my voice show-ready. My warm-up was split into two sections: Connecting Body to Voice, and Waking up the Resonators. In the first section, I would allow myself to hang over my hips with my knees slightly bent. By hanging in a ragdoll-type position, I was allowing my neck to be free and my body to focus on breathing. I would then roll up my spine, going up on a melodic scale using “huh” as the vocal sound. Next, I would complete a series of four spine rolls that were intended to shake up the sound and begin to warm up my resonators. With each exercise, I focused on keeping my sound unforced and my body engaged.

For the next section, I would start by massaging my jaw to break up any tension I was holding. From there, I would shake out my jaw, and stretch my tongue. As an actor, I’ve come to recognize that these are the areas in my body that hold the most tension. To combat that, I would spend a decent amount of time making sure my jaw and tongue were properly warmed up so I wouldn’t trip over any lines during the show. Next were the teeth and hard palate. I would follow these sound placements with rhetoric practice “tongue twisters” (patterns of alliteration) to focus on controlling my sound and placement. To finish the vocal warm-up, I would individually go
through all four body resonators and focus intently on doing them in a safe, healthy, and sustainable way. Beginning with my nose, I would concentrate the sound to my nasal passageways – which would produce an entirely nasal sound. This was done using “me” as the vocal sound. Then I would move the sound into my mask (the center of my face). For this resonance, that flows from my face, I would use and elongate vocal sounds like “my, may, way, bay” to drive the open sound forward. Then I would take the sound up into my skull. This exercise focuses on the head voice and mix sound that “lives in the skull.” The sound often has a breathy yet strong quality. To do this I used the “ki” or “gi” sound and envisioned the sound traveling from the tip of my head to the ceiling. Last was my chest resonator. To engage my chest resonance, I would ground myself, breathe in, and pound on my chest, (“Tarzan” is the best way to describe this motion) while letting my vocal sound release unforced and in my natural register.

To end, I would say some of my most vocally demanding lines. I would practice them as a way of practicing a good vocal technique that was healthy and sustainable. Outside of the show and during my pre-show ritual I wanted to keep my vocal cords healthy and hydrated since I raise my voice quite a bit in the show. I was able to successfully complete tech week and the run of the show without losing my voice or inhibiting any vocal quality.

My body warm-up was based on grounding techniques that also allowed the connection from my body to my voice to be free. I would stretch in ways that my body needed, focusing on any tightness or unwanted tension. I would do an 8-count shake down, getting energy and blood flow to every part of my body. This would also help to clear my head and get some of the pre-show jitters out. Next, I would go down my body and isolate a muscle group/part of my body to stretch and loosen up. Beginning with my head and neck, I would gently roll my head from front to back and side to side. Then I would move to my shoulders and arms, rolling them
forward and backward. Then, using techniques I learned in my Corporeal Mime class with former Professor Thomas Leabhart, I would isolate movements in my chest and hips. Moving to my legs, I would stretch out my hamstrings, quads, and calves. Lastly, I would roll my feet and ankles to maintain my mobility and strength. Since I spent a portion of the show barefoot, I wanted to make sure that my feet were safely warmed-up. I found this helped me feel more grounded and increased the trust I had in my body to perform and function in the way that my character needed it to.

Before showtime, our stage manager (Emma Lemire PO ’23) would run and manage the fight and intimacy call. During this time Barnhill and I, and Mallery and I, would connect on boundary changes and tap into the mindset of our characters. We began with Anna and Paul and would run each of our moments of intimacy, with frequent check-ins by Lemire after each one was completed. Next, Mallery and I would run our moments of intimacy, going at fifty-percent speed for the moments of contact and anger. Then Barnhill and I, and Mallery and I, would reconnect and tap out of our character mindsets, ready for the show and for our intimate moments.
II. **Acting Techniques Utilized**

My performance was greatly influenced by Konstantin Stanislavski and Stella Adler. I found that the Stanislavski method, specifically the use of the “Magic If,” paired with the imaginative technique of Adler, gave me the greatest sense of understanding of my character and her actions. I was constantly pushing up against, and trying to answer, what would I do in this situation? Often, I realized that my answer was reactive, yet still logical, and I questioned why and how Anna could make vastly different choices. This is where my given circumstances came into play. Anna had an objective and a need that she was working to fulfill, and this sometimes didn’t quite align with my own answer, *but* this paved the way for in-depth character analysis that ultimately made my performance more truthful.

For example, let’s examine Anna’s choice to let Joel stay with her and her family. My initial reaction was *I would never allow him near me again*, and the truth is Anna was also probably having a similar thought; however, her intense curiosity and *need* to know why he was there was overpowering this initial reaction. In this specific instance, this created a tension of being curious yet staying guarded, being perceptive yet keenly alert. These building blocks helped me to create a character that was both internally and externally struggling. These building blocks also kept me, as the actor, safe in my exploration of an angry, hurt, and grieving character.

Ever since learning about Trauma Informed Theatre and Consent with Anaïs Gonzalez Nyberg in her production of *Daphne’s Dive* (2020), I stayed clear of using emotional and sensory memory to access the emotional needs of a character (Leahey et. al, 12). I knew that using my own memories of emotions and situations to fuel Anna’s would not be sustainable, safe, or healthy for me. However, there was *one* moment in the show when I used this technique
willingly. In scene 10, we finally see Anna’s walls come down. Under her guarded exterior of anger and hurt, she reveals exhaustion and emptiness. She says,

“I’m exhausted. By this. By you. By the storms. By everything that happened. By what I haven’t done. And life keeps churning up more and more as I get older and every year I carry around the weight of the year before and the year before that… and every morning I walk down to the sea and I watch the sunrise and I breathe in the air that smells of salt and hope and I try to let it in but it doesn’t work

It suffocates me”

As an Indigenous young woman, artist, and activist, I have felt these feelings. I have seen and lived and existed with this exhaustion. It’s a particular exhaustion that runs bone deep, but somehow I, and Anna, kept going. This was the kind of emotional memory that has been at the core of the truth of any social, environmental, Indigenous, etc., justice movement. In that moment, I lent my humanity and my experiences to Anna, and the payoff was a genuine moment of truth for both myself and this character. I didn’t have to believe it was an actuality, because beyond the stage it was.
5 Performance Evaluation

1. Significant Discoveries

I recognize that this show took a lot out of me, and I would find myself breathing a sigh of relief when it ended for the night. I attribute a lot of this to the state of my character, Anna. This show was an emotional rollercoaster for her, and the content of the show can begin to take an emotional toll on an actor as well. As I learned with Nyberg in Daphne’s Dive, and with Professor Jessie Mills in Circle Mirror Transformation, I had grounding tools that could help relieve me from Anna to re-inhabit myself and this reality. Despite the intensity of this role, I am proud of the performance I gave for each show. Each performance brought forth new discoveries for me, and I feel that over the course of the rehearsal process and the run of the show, I made leaps forward in my abilities to act upon actor instinct. My rehearsal journal details the more intimate parts of my process and how I navigated this show and all its challenges and successes.

Preview Night: Wednesday, October 5, 2022

This was our first time sharing the show with an audience. Preview night was almost sold out, and was filled with students from acting classes and friends. This audience was particularly vocal and responsive. They thought the comedic moments of the show were hilarious, and it slightly threw me off since I had become so used to the silence of those moments. However, playing with the laughter for the first time was an exciting discovery to navigate. My performance shifted from night to night, but preview night was specific in that I found myself moving with the rhythm of the audience in those moments of comedy, and leaning into them in a way that I hadn’t yet done in rehearsal. It felt surreal to finally get to share this show with our

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2 Refer to Appendix for redacted rehearsal journal notes.
community, and after preview night, I walked away with more confidence in my ability as an actor, activist, and collaborator.

**Opening Night: Thursday, October 6, 2022**

Opening night was nerve-wracking for me. I tell myself that the nerves just mean that I love what I get to do – if I still get nervous after years and years of acting, I must love and care for it. This performance went particularly well for me. This audience wasn’t as vocal as the one from the night before, but the new parts of Anna that I found during the last performance, I brought into this one. This only helped to shape and strengthen the complexity of her humanity throughout her character arc. I think it took less time for me to drop in and “find” Anna to become grounded in her character and in the world on opening night, because I was finding and grasping on to more and more qualities and attributes of her that were relatable and undoubtedly human. It helped that the response to the show had already been overwhelmingly positive and heartwarming. This gave me strength and hope, and by proxy, gave Anna some as well.

**Second Show: Friday, October 7, 2022**

The start of this show was unfortunate, and it briefly took me out of my character and the world, and it became difficult to try and get myself back on track. Unfortunately, there was a sound issue at the top of the show, so the pre-show announcement played four times and the sound cues weren’t able to be fixed until the second scene. This show relies heavily on sound to help build the world, and it was frustrating to sit by and not be able to do anything to help. However, the emotions I was feeling for the reality of live theatre were not far off from similar emotions Anna was experiencing: annoyance, irritability, and alertness. The new discovery evolved from this connection, and although my performance felt thrown at the top, I did my best to latch onto Anna’s arc and dig my heels in to follow it for Anna and my scene partners.
Matinee: Saturday, October 8, 2022

Sometimes, the matinee of a two-show day can have less energy or power – *but*, I was determined to do what I could to keep the show energy heightened and at pace. The significant discovery here is that often the Saturday matinee at Pomona brings in community members. A lot of the surrounding Claremont community are older, wealthy, white people who enjoy supporting the arts and supporting the Theatre Department. *If nobody does remarkable things* is about climate change, and the message was about the choices we can make every day for the betterment of our world. Generally speaking, the Claremont Colleges community is mainly made up of young, liberal, progressive students who are or have been involved in social justice movements. However, the surrounding community is an entirely different demographic, and arguably, they are the ones who need to engage with this content and receive this message. This is not for their lack of care, but rather their lack of education about the steps they can take to do more for the environment. Both the colleges and community are not immune from ignorance, and it is my hope that this show helped to spark new thoughts, dialogue, and action from all individuals to some degree.

In eco-theatre conversations, I’ve inquired a lot about how we can get climate deniers to come to see these shows. Almost always, the conversation follows the hard-hitting truth that that population of people likely will not come to see the show; however, the people who will are often more engaged and willing to be pushed into action (if they haven’t been already) by the content of an ecodrama. But here, at the Saturday matinee, a population of people who potentially don’t engage with such realistic climate change content was filling up the seats of the Allen Theatre. Our show had the chance to be a catalyst for change – especially with these community members in the audience.
Third Show: Saturday, October 8, 2022

This show tested my acting ability in an exciting way. Mallery messed up a line during a pivotal point in the show. Our characters’ exchanges were often high stakes, fast-paced, and differed from performance to performance. When the momentum and adrenaline of the scene switched his lines around, I had to quickly find a solution and mend the flow of the exchange. It’s quick-thinking moments like that one, that reiterate the most important part of acting: 
listening. Actors are always told that it has to be about their scene partner, and my work throughout the rehearsal process was focused on doing just that. It was an exciting moment! It’s one of the reasons live theatre is so thrilling to be part of and to experience.

Closing Night; Sunday, October 9, 2022

Closing night was tremendously emotional for me. Not only was it my last time performing this role with these people, but it was my last time on a stage at Pomona College. I think this ended up giving my closing night performance a new quality. The essence of the entire show is Older June replaying all of Anna’s lasts, and my response to this realization on the brink of many of my lasts for this show and my time at Pomona produced a desire in Anna to hold on.

In my last scene, during the final moments of the show, I walked onto the stage for the last time. And, for the first time in the run of the show, I began to cry. While Anna had every reason to cry as she left her daughter and her life, it wasn’t Anna’s tears on my cheeks. They were my own. Suddenly it was me on that stage – it was all my life experiences, all my moments at Pomona, all my trials of activism, and all my past selves. With a head of swirling thoughts, I held Anna’s hand, took one last look at the space, and walked out the door.
II. **Challenges and Successes**

This play, the genre, and the specific story were significant factors in why I strongly advocated for this show for the 2022-2023 mainstage season. When the show was chosen, and I auditioned for and was cast in the role of Anna, I imagined a process that was nurturing of the characters’ and actors’ experiences, bodies, and stories. Unfortunately, from my experience, this process was undercut by a lack of sensitivity and care on the part of the director. The challenges for our production began on day one in the first rehearsal. The director’s decision to cast Older June and Younger June as two different actors of two different races prompted a conversation between the castmates and the stage manager. As a collective, the cast decided to talk to the director and express our concerns and thoughts about what it meant for the character(s) to be a person/people of color vs. white. Our argument was that an actor’s body will inherently tell a story and that suspending one’s disbelief of race cannot ever be fully realized. Unfortunately, our concerns were met with hostility, insensitivity, and harm. For example, when voicing my own opinion and experience about what it means to have a certain identity and inhabit a character, I was interrupted and my Native identity was publicly diminished by the director. Their comments, mixed with the power dynamic, left me feeling unsafe, invalidated, and overall nervous to continue with the show.

I was not the only person in the room that felt this way, and from my perspective, this immediately stunted the team’s ability to show up and be vulnerable. From this point on, there was clear tension and a lack of trust in the room. Since we only had four weeks before opening night, we knew that we had to work through the proper channels, talking to the production manager to establish actionable steps to repair the harm done and get to a place where we could create as an ensemble.
At the start of the second week of rehearsals, a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) coordinator, came in to facilitate a conversation between the cast, stage manager, and the director. While aspects of this conversation were productive, I felt there was still a barrier between how we felt and the director’s level of understanding. However, now we had lost a full week of rehearsal, and our time to create a show that we were proud of was quickly dwindling. This script meant so much to me, Anna meant so much to me, and so, instead of fighting anymore, I powered through the rest of the process. Therefore, my ability to tackle this script and character with vulnerability and all aspects of my being including my experience as an Indigenous woman, artist, and activist was severely undercut. This was an extremely challenging part of my thesis process. My expectations were not met, and my process suffered because of it.

My expectations for what a rehearsal room should look like are derived from my work with Professor Jessie Mills – where she often says that we should always protect the most vulnerable person in the room. This brief explanation of the first part of the rehearsal process is necessary to understand the challenges that impeded me from reaching my full potential as an actor in my thesis, and the challenges that I felt restricted this show from being the best version of itself that this cast and crew could create.

However, it was from these challenges that I learned about the ways that I best exist and thrive in artistic, collaborative spaces, and the ways I could implement safety and trust in rehearsal rooms. Going forward, I have a more concrete conception of my boundaries and I know how I would treat my rehearsal spaces and fellow collaborators (as an actor, director, designer, or producer): with empathy, care, and support.

In spite of these challenges, the impact that this show mostly had on audiences was what I had hoped for all along. As I stated in my dramaturgical exploration, ecodramas have a specific
purpose that affects the way they ultimately impact audiences. Ecodramas are designed to bring hope, to propel people into conversation, community, and action, and to make aspects of the climate crisis more accessible. While the school had many opportunities to produce a climate-related play and should have taken them, it’s still a success to have this show be the first ecodrama ever presented in a mainstage season at Pomona College, and it’s a success that the response was filled with emotion both for the characters and our planet.

Even if just one person emerges from the theater as a slightly different version of themselves from when they walked in, I’ve done my job. I’ve communicated the pain, the joy, the hope, and the helplessness that comes with fighting for environmental and social justice. And just like Anna, I’ll never stop fighting.
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If nobody does remarkable things
By Emma Gibson

Directed by Carolyn Ratteray

ALLEN THEATRE
October 6, 2022 at 8pm
October 7, 2022 at 8pm
October 8, 2022 at 2pm with ASL interpreter & 8pm
October 9, 2022 at 2pm
Production Stills:
Program:

If nobody does remarkable things

By Emma Gibson

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OUR PAST AND COMMITMENT TO OUR FUTURE

The Pomona College Department of Theatre and Dance is situated on the unceded ancestral homelands of the Gabrieleno Tongva peoples. We recognize and honor the past, present, and future elders and stewards of these original homelands. This acknowledgement takes care to also honor the myriad cultures, languages, and traditions of all Indigenous Peoples and First Nations those that are still being practiced, and those that were forcefully taken, destroyed, and otherwise harmed by direct colonization and settler colonialism. This acknowledgement is the first step in carrying out our moral imperative to continue supporting, building relationships with, and amplifying the voices, histories, and rights of all First Nations and Indigenous Peoples. We have much to learn from the rightful communities of these lands. Learn more about the Gabrieleno Tongva Tribe, Indigenous Sovereignty, and land stewardship by investigating some SC-based programs, resources, and initiatives which include the Indigenous Peer Mentor Program, Native Initiatives, and the Tongva Living History Garden, which is within walking distance from the Pitzer College campus. We need to protect, honor, and celebrate the history and ongoing legacy of the Peoples of the land on which we stand. This has always been, and always will be, Indigenous land.

POMONA COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE FOR THE CLAREMONT COLLEGES

The Pomona College Department of Theatre and Dance is committed to the highest levels of professional training within the context of the liberal arts tradition. Our commitment begins in the classroom where an emphasis on the quality of learning informs all that we do. A friendly and highly skilled faculty and small class size encourage students to work creatively in exploring the history, theory, literature, and techniques of theatre and dance. Our commitment is furthered by our diverse and dynamic production season. We view productions as important teaching tools, both for our students and for the rest of the College community, and therefore choose works reflecting a wide range of periods and styles. Our commitment is strengthened by the exceptional financial support of The Claremont Colleges, which has given us a strong professional staff and a gorgeous facility in which to do our work. Ultimately, our commitment is inspired and enhanced by the energy and commitment of our students, who bring intelligence, creativity, and verve to our challenging and exciting endeavors. This commitment to the highest quality of teaching and learning, plus an attractive climate and the 5-College liberal arts setting, makes the Pomona College Department of Theatre and Dance an exceptional place in which to work and learn.

POMONA COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE FOR THE CLAREMONT COLLEGES PRESENTS:

If nobody does remarkable things

By Emma Gibson

Directed by Carolyn Ratteray

Lighting Designer Shannon Barondeau
Seenic Designer Alex Calle
Costume Designer Angela Balogh Calin
Sound Designer Nayla Hull
Intimacy Coordinator Carly D.W. Bones
Vocal Coach Talya Klein
Stage Manager Emma Lemire PO ’23
Fight Coach Mikael Mattson
Production Manager Alison Andersen
Technical Director Bobby Gutierrez
Costume Shop Manager Suzanne S. Reed
Head of Lighting, Sound & Projection Janelle Asti
Program Administrator Marja Lina Kay
Administrative Assistant Mary T. Rosler
DIRECTOR’S NOTE

From Jackson, Mississippi to the Sindh Province in Pakistan, the climate crisis is here, often standing marginalized communities at the intersection of environmental emergency and racialized capitalism. While we challenge government/corporate alliances which privatize profit at the expense of the good, rich and shine light on the toll of industrial agriculture, our vibrant ecosystem is suffocating. Simply put, we live in a social and economic value system cut of with life-giving principles and practices.

So, how do we make it through this storm? The answer to that question lies first in acknowledging the long line of indigenous leaders who have always fought against these systems of colonialism and capitalism, and for the right to a life of integrity for all humanity.

We have the marches, petitions, speeches, pleas, and direct actions from peoples across the world. We also have the artists. We have this play, beautifully written by Emma Gibson, which is an appeal to the heart. This is a play about a daughter trying to understand the choices of her mother. It is a story about how a heart can heal and soften even when it has been held over the racks of disappointment and disillusionment. It is a story about unwilling heroes and how it will take acts of forgiveness to heal ourselves and the earth. It is about the small yet impossible choices that can actually change the trajectory of humankind. The need to act is clear.

What will provide us the motivation? This play offers its answer: love.

Carolyn Rateray

CAST

(in order of appearance)

OLDER JUNE.................................Emily Cummings PO ‘23
ANNA..............................................Gigi Buddy PO ‘23
PAUL............................................Seb Barnhill PZ ‘25
JOEL.............................................Aydin Malley PZ ‘24
YOUNG JUNE......................................Xiangyi “Jazz” Zhu PO ‘24

SETTING

Newfoundland, Canada

TIME

Sometime in the future. Not too far away, but far enough that the world has changed.

SPECIAL NOTE

For this dystopian play set in a future time, I have opted to cast the roles of older younger June and the family members across racial and ethnic lines to demonstrate how this story about climate change affects all communities across the globe.

Carolyn

This performance is approximately 90 minutes and will have no intermission.

The flash photography, videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

PRODUCTION

Hair and Makeup Crew.................................................Grace Lyde SC ‘23
Lightboard Operator..................................................Ash Ahsanpourer PO ‘25
Run Crew.................................................................Fai Tungcharavanon CMC ‘23
Run Crew.................................................................Renny Williamson SC ‘23
Soundboard Operator...................................................Nicole Powers Kirschen SC ‘26
Wardrobe Crew Head....................................................Jayce Garner PO ‘23
Wardrobe Crew..........................................................Sade Cooper PO ‘23
Wardrobe Crew.........................................................Kate Olson PO ‘23
Wardrobe Crew .........................................................Sydney Yates SC ‘23
Box Office
Box Office Manager....................................................Lila Murphy
Michelle Aguilar-Delfia, Brynn Anderson, Elise Boucher,
Mia Griggs-Vye, Selese Ell, Maria Jose Najar, Giselle Ustomni,
Claire Van Note, Ember Yanez

Costume Shop Assistants
Clarissa Aqino, Thea Barovic, Miranda Clements y Caridad, Iris Ducker,
Lilly Haue, Phebe Mason, Hannah Murphy, Emma Sae, Grace Valaisti

Front of House/Ushers
House Manager ..........................................................Edwina Polynice
House Manager .........................................................Clare Van Note
Box Office Manager ....................................................Claire Van Note
Belis Abebe, Richard Amouah, Elise Boucher, Harrison Brown,
Zabei Frank, Mia Griggs-Vye, Marcelo Marte, Maria Jose Najar,
Tricetha “Pine” Nchunuzeng, Nick Russell, Sabrina Wang,
Minghee “Wendy” Zhang

Lighting and Sound Technicians
Lighting Supervisor .....................................................Gigi Buddy
Lighting Supervisor .....................................................Rose Curr
Lighting Supervisor .....................................................Ash Ahsanpourer
Lighting Supervisor .....................................................Lizbeth Betances
Lighting Supervisor .....................................................Ethan Diar
Lighting Supervisor .....................................................Lena Farley
Lighting Supervisor .....................................................Isla Hane
Lighting Supervisor .....................................................Anna Lee
Lighting Supervisor .....................................................Avery Smith
Lighting Supervisor .....................................................Abbie Wilson
Lighting Supervisor .....................................................Yun-Zie "Zhe" Xie

Publicity and Outreach
Publicity Manager.....................................................Kendall Puckman

Tina Adelakun, Tiana Jackson, Kimseong Sohn

Scene Shop Assistants
Ash Ahsanpourer, Bengt Kalur, Zac Cooper, Juliette Des Rosiers,
Lena Farley, Isla Hane, Carson Hambuch, Emma Lenzer, Aviva Miller,
Kayla Park, Valentina Payza, Soozi Shrikir, Nina Sintuna,
Tahila Stack, Taylor Tsoumis, Rosalie Weber

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Seb Barnhill PZ ‘23 (Paul) is a second-year at Pitzer College pursuing a double major in Theatre and American Studies. When not on stage, Seb can be found doing watercolors, working with kids, going on adventures with friends, or thinking about their dog, Penny. Seb’s most recent credit is in the 2022 Minnesota Fringe Festival, where they performed in their hometown of Minneapolis as Essie in the new play Unbelievable! They have been seen performing with Pomona College last semester as Orsino in Twelfth Night, as well as previous-year’s Children’s Theatre Company as Freddie in Carrie: the Musical, Youth Performance Company as First Man in A Woman Called Truth, the Sojourner Truth Story, and Minneapolis South High as Mama Morton in Chicago. Seb would like to thank their family for supporting their performance endeavors, their friends for being on-the-ground backup through this process and everything else, and their dog Penny again, because she deserves a second mention.

Gigi Buddy PO ‘23 (Anna) is a Tongva Indian and Mescalero Apache “tupet” senior at Pomona College performing in If nobody does remarkable things for her thesis. Over the past four years, she has followed a course of study and pursued a passion at the intersection of theatre and environmental justice. This show is meant to be a little piece of her heart and soul, paired with her dedication to use theatre as a catalyst to inspire people to act and foster climate resilience. While she has spoken on a world stage at the UN (the UN Climate Change Conference 2021), her home is on smaller stages — like this one. It’s here that she can tell real and create community. Gigi’s time on these stages is coming to an end, and she wants to thank all those who have supported her journey at Pomona. To her mom, who gave her strength, to her friends who always showed up, and to Jessie Mills for always believing in her. She started under the stars in Metamorphoses, and she’ll end under the stars of If nobody does remarkable things.
CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Emily Cummings PO ’23 (Oleander) has greatly missed being part of Pomona College’s theater department during the chaos of the pandemic. Since deciding to major in theater as a first year, she has performed in several plays within this community, her favorites of which were Red Velvet during her first semester, and the student-run production of The Twelfth Night during spring of 2022. While she loves acting, she also works in costume, and spent the past summer in Deer Isle, Maine as the wardrobe supervisor for a production of Much Ado About Nothing performed in a field. Now, she is excited to be back in a collaborative theater space this year, working alongside the amazing actors performing if’s, nobody does remarkable things. She is so grateful to be able to act with this cast, and hopes the audience enjoys and feels the impact of this show.

Ayda Mailley PO ’24 (Ted) is a poseur singing and music. Some of her favorite roles include Lauren in Circle Mirror Transformation and Jack in Into the Woods. As an active participant in student theatre, he was recently seen in Spotlight Musical Theater’s Don’t Tell Mama and Corona Civic. Ayda is grateful to be a part of fff nobody does remarkable things cast and crew for their dedication to the community. Enjoy the show.

Xiangyi "Jazz" Zhu PO ’24 (Younger Jane) is a junior theatre major at Pomona from Changsha, China. She is thrilled to be making her Mainstage debut with this remarkable cast and crew! Like Jane, Jazz grew up dreaming about a life elsewhere. Unlike Jane, she fears at the sight of crowsfoot. Currently, she’s directing a Chinese tragedy called Thedreamer, which you can see on November 19 and 20 at the Large Studio. She dedicates her performance to her mother, who gave birth to her on October 5 twenty something years ago.

CREATIVE BIOGRAPHIES

Carolyn Ratterny (Director) is an Associate Professor of Theater at Pomona College and an Emory-nominated actor and director based in the Los Angeles area. She has appeared in off-Broadway and regional theaters such as The Griffin Playhouse, Pasadena Playhouse, A Noise Within, Antaeus, Boston Court, and the Mark Taper Forum. Some of her film credits include Lincoln Lawyer, Seasons of Love, Riley Farm, Ncis, All My Children, Castle, The Young and the Restless, Law and Order: Criminal Intent. She has voiced several video games and an animated series for Netflix as well. Her play, Both And, (a play about laughing while black) premiered at Boston Court Theater this past May and won the Los Angeles New Play Project award, and her episodic (UNSCLAMED) which has been touring the festival circuit this fall won Best Screenplay and Best Web Series at the Downtown LA Film Festival. In addition to performing, Ratterny has directed By The Way Meet Vera Stark, In Love and War, and Midsomer Night’s Dream for Pomona College. She is a resident artist at A Noise Within Theatre and a member of Antaeus Theatre Company.

Alex Call (Scenic Designer) is a graduate of The California Institute of the Arts (BFA scenic Design) and USC’s Marshall School of Business (EMBA). Alex takes a unique approach to design, utilizing his background in theatre to above all, sell a story. He has designed and produced award-winning work for Film, Television, Theater, Themed Entertainment, Theme Parks, and Public Art Installations all over the world. Alex serves as Principal of hiddentones, a firm that designs and produces Branding, Icon Attractions, Themed Experiences, and Live Shows. Alex also sits on the Executive Board for Invigorating Dance Theatre, an institution at the forefront of Los Angeles dance, and has been involved with the company since their 2009 season.

Naaya Bull (Sound Designer) was born and raised in Los Angeles, CA. She’s an Alumna of California State University of Los Angeles. She’s an artist of many hats from acting to singing. The self-taught composer has released original compositions for her first design project on all-streaming platforms. She is an award-winning Sound Designer receiving a Legacy Award from the Kennedy Center. She loves music and continues to learn to create, design and share her musical creations with the world.

Shannon Barondeau (Lighting Designer) is a freelance lighting and projection designer in the greater Los Angeles area. Recent lighting design credits include Unfrocked for Wild Room Dance and The Adventurer of Wendy & Peter for The O’Clock Reps. Recent projection design credits include Both And (a play about laughing while black). Assistant credits include associate projection designers for A Trip to The Moon at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, which was shortlisted for the DTS Award for Projection Design from Live Design’s inaugural KOS USA Awards. She got her BFA in Theatre Arts from Simpson College and her MFA in Lighting and Projection Design from the University of Missouri Kansas City.

Angela Balloqui Call (Costume Designer) is pleased to be back at Pomona College. She is a costume and scenic designer based in Los Angeles with over 120 productions in local and regional theaters. Her recent credits include House of Desire at Pomona College, Animal Farm and Alf’s Well That Ends Well at A Noise Within Theatre, In the Upper Room at Denver Center Theatre, Into the Breeches at Asolo Theatre and Cleveland Play House, Mamma Mia at Hollywood Bowl, Outside Mullingar at South Coast Repertory. Angela is a resident artist at A Noise Within Theatre. Her work has been seen at South Coast Rep., Old Globe, Milwaukee Rep., Denver Center Theatre, Alliance Theatre, Pasadena Playhouse, Orlando Shakespeare, Georgia Shakespeare, Arizona and various other theaters in Southern California. Angela’s designs garnered L.A Drama Critic’s Circle, Ovation, Backstage and Drama Logue Awards. She has 16 film production credits in the US and her native Romania and she holds an MFA in Costume and Costume Design from the Academy of Arts “N. Grigorescu” in Bucharest, Romania.

Carly D. Weckstein (Intimacy Choreographer) is a theatre director, intimacy choreographer, sex educator and community facilitator based in Los Angeles CA. She creates at the intersections of theatre, community building, sexuality, gender, and art as activism. Carly currently works as an intimacy director for various theatre companies (A Noise Within, The Road, Son of Semele) and university theatre programs (UCLA, USC, Pomona College, CLU), as well as facilitating workshops for Art With Impact and facilitating spaces for theatre companies to work toward building cultures of consent and accountability. Contact: Carly@carlydweckstein.com

CARLY D. WECKSTEIN

POMONA COLLEGE THEATRE & DANCE

THEATRE FOR THE CLERMONT COLLEGES

SHANNON BARONDEAU

Angela Balloqui Call

Buddie 63

FACULTY

Alison Andersen, Lily Batenstein, Gleenon Bauer, Kevin Dettmar (Co-Chair), Monica French, Ernesto Gonzalez Jr., Christina Hurdado-Petem, Lindsay Jenkins, Talya Klein, Jill Knox, Joyce Las, Omar Madkour, Jesse Mills, Ross Pentola and Carolyn Ratterny (Co-Chair)

STAFF

Alison Andersen, Janelle Asi, Bobby Gutierrez, Marfa Lisa Kay, Suzanne Schultz, and Mary T. Rosier.

8

8

10

11
STUDENT THEATRE

The Green Room (TGR) is the largest student run theatre group at the SCs. All of our productions are directed, designed, performed, and run by students. We support student directors, playwrights, performers, stage managers and technicians in building a varied and exciting season of shows each semester. In addition, we host events and workshops to build community among artists across campuses and majors. Email thegreenroom47@gmail.com for more information and to get involved.

Spotlight Musical Theatre is the Claremont Colleges' student musical theatre company. We are a community-driven organization, meaning we are producing musical theatre by the community, for the community; both the SC community and the greater community of Claremont. Follow @spotlightmc on Instagram for more info.

HOME: A RIPOC Musical Showcase
October 21-23, 2022 with two evening shows (8pm) and two matinees (2pm)
Produced by Spotlight Musical Theatre
Seaver Theatre Large Studio
Join us as we honor resistance and pursue release, finding community and solidarity through performance. Come witness our truth!

Rocky Horror Picture Show
Halloween, Oct 28-29
Friday at 9pm, Saturday at 11:59PM
Produced by The Green Room, Spotlight Musical Theatre and SC5
Conceived by Ellis Griffin & Abby Wilson
Follow @rockyhorrorSC on Instagram!

Come see the 1970s cult classic in all its shadow-cast, lip-synched glory as two squares encounter Frank 'N' Foster, a queer, sexually expressive alien, and the boy try he just built, Rocky!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pomona College President: G. Gabrielle Starr
Pomona College Dean of Faculty: Yaqing Melanie Wu
Pomona College Dean of Students: Aris Hinson
Department of Communications

SPECIAL THANKS

We’d like to extend our gratitude to the following:
Cal Poly Pomona Department of Theatre and New Dance,
Maria Alvarez and Gary Gleeson

POMONA COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE FOR THE CLAREMONT COLLEGES
2022-2023 SEASON

Head Over Heels
Songs by The Go-Go’s
Based on “The Arcadia” by Sir Philip Sidney
Conceived and Original Book by Jeff Whitty
Adapted by James Magruder
Directed by Gleason Bauer
Performances: November 17-20, 2022
Seaver Theatre

Claremont Colleges Ballet Company presents
Excerpts from The Nutcracker
Performance: November 20, 2022

Fall Dance Concert: In The Works
Performances: December 1-3, 2022
Penelope Dance Studio

Three Sisters
By Anton Chekhov
Translation by Sarah Ruhl
Directed by Talya Klein
Performances: March 2-5, 2023
Seaver Theatre

Machina
By Sophie Treadwell
Directed by Ellie Griffin
Performances: April 7-9, 2023
Allen Theatre

Spring Dance Concert
Performances: April 27-30, 2023
Seaver Theatre

Check out our Instagram! 
Buddie 67

Paul knows, I'm lying but you don't.

Jill:
Do I need express a emotion?

Anna:
Is it just being?

Jill:
It's 살아서 고요한

Anna:
Tense

Jill:
I wandered if I needed to turn something on

Paul:
Is the power out?

Anna:
I need to turn

Paul:
Will I turn that on?... halo?

Anna:
Just

Paul:
Like I said

Jill:
It's a reflex. Like joke

Paul:
I'm Paul. One reflex too. You look odd. Are you cold?

Jill:
A bit

Anna:
Want to hold the keetle?
In a word, we are not doing anything. That's all there is to it.

The phone rang. It was Buddie.

Buddie: Hey, how's it going?

Me: Not too bad, thanks for asking.

Buddie: Yeah, I hear you. Listen, do you have a minute to talk?

Me: Sure, what's up?

Buddie: Well, I just wanted to check in and see how things are going. You know, what's new?

Me: Not much, I'm just kind of in a funk. Everything seems so gloomy and hopeless.

Buddie: I can understand that. Sometimes life can be tough. But I think the key is to keep pushing forward. We can't give up just because things aren't going our way.

Me: Yeah, I agree. I just need some motivation to get going.

Buddie: Absolutely. You know, you can always count on me to give you a boost.

Me: I sure can. Thanks, Buddie. You're the best.

Buddie: Anytime. Talk to you later.

Me: Alright, take care.
Buddie 71
Buddie 72

Joe: Hey, Bud. What’s up?
Buddie: Just got out of the shower. Thought I’d drop by.

Joe: Yeah, sure. Come on in.

Buddie: Thanks.

Joe: So, what’s new from the office?
Buddie: Not much. Just been doing the usual.

Joe: What kind of usual?
Buddie: Meetings, reports, emails, the usual.

Joe: And the kids?
Buddie: They’re doing well. School seems to be going okay.

Joe: That’s good to hear. Are they getting along?
Buddie: Yeah, they’re getting along fine. Thanks for asking.

Joe: And your wife?
Buddie: She’s doing well, too. Just been busy with work and the kids.

Joe: I see. Well, let’s sit down and catch up.

Buddie: Sounds good. Thanks, Joe.
Buddie 74

I stood next to him as we walked down the street.

Buddie: What happened?

Me: I don’t know.

Buddie: You looked nervous.

Me: It was nothing.

Buddie: You were at the bus stop, weren’t you?

Me: Yeah.

Buddie: Why are you here so early?

Me: I wanted to catch the early bus.

Buddie: You’re always so friendly.

Me: I try to be.

Buddie: You’re a good friend.

Me: Thanks.

Buddie: See you later.

Me: See you.

I waved goodbye as he walked away.

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I was standing outside the coffee shop when I saw Buddie.

Me: Hi, Buddie.

Buddie: Hey, what’s up?

Me: Just wanted to see if you wanted to hang out.

Buddie: Sure, what do you have in mind?

Me: I thought we could grab a coffee and catch up.

Buddie: Sounds good to me.

Me: Great, let’s go.

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Buddie: You know, I was thinking about starting my own business.

Me: That sounds exciting.

Buddie: I’ve been saving up for a while now, and I think I have enough to get started.

Me: That’s great. I’m sure you’ll be successful.

Buddie: Thanks. I appreciate your support.

Me: Of course, I’m always here for you.

Buddie: You’re the best friend.

Me: I’m just glad I can be there for you.

Buddie: So, what’s new with you?

Me: Not much, just trying to keep busy.

Buddie: That’s good. I bet it helps to have something to keep your mind off things.

Me: Yeah, it’s definitely keeping me busy.

Buddie: Any new movies you’ve been watching?

Me: Yeah, I just saw a really good one last weekend.

Buddie: What was it?

Me: It was a thriller. I won’t spoil the ending, but it was pretty intense.

Buddie: Wow, you must have been on the edge of your seat.

Me: Definitely. I couldn’t take my eyes off the screen.

Buddie: You’re a true movie buff.

Me: I try to keep up with the latest releases.

Buddie: Well, I’ll have to recommend something to you.

Me: Sure, I’m always looking for new movies to watch.

Buddie: Have you seen the new sci-fi movie?

Me: No, I haven’t. What’s it about?

Buddie: It’s about a group of scientists who discover a way to travel through time.

Me: That sounds interesting. I’ll have to check it out.

Buddie: You won’t be disappointed. It’s a real page-turner.

Me: Thanks for the recommendation.

Buddie: Anytime. I’m always happy to share my favorites.

Me: I’ll definitely add it to my watchlist.

Buddie: Great. I’ll see you later.

Me: See you soon.

I waved goodbye as he walked away. I felt good knowing I had a friend like Buddie.
Not sure if that's a place that can remain life
Then there's some kind of pledge
And that knowledge
It's essential
And we're only one man we walk

Oh, yes, Patti will
Light on the fencer. That's bigger

Did you hear, untold?
Although it doesn't sound too
too bad
Especially not with the fencer.

And I'm so glad! Then, living with me, do you, I mean, are in the middle of nowhere. Nothing
gonna get me

You've changed! I never you, and you are, and you look at me

Why wouldn't I? That you and me, and you're. What? Why?

Not getting, just the tagline. And something bad and
And some such in the day

You still here?

That's right!

Well, of course, I've changed, I'm glad. Look at me

Nothing by the sight that goes out of you

You can't get up

Yes, more than that. You're on the dish box at the beach and you don't say anything
Anyway, and when the sun moves, you look at me and realize how life is. And that I still can't bear to see anything you look at me. But it may

It's here

I can't believe it.

But still... the self-born would have jumped out of a plane

I can't express you the words. Not anyway, who's got enough cotton shoes to do that?

That was the point

That was the point

I don't say anything with, just end in the camping

Dean asks for a

You're still

Patti, Patti?

What's going on? She?

What's the matter?

What's the matter?

Why are you scared? Why aren't you doing anything about it?

Dean asks for a
Buddie 76

Where was I? 

Light came up after the letter

16

I was lost in thought. My mind was wandering. I was trying to remember what had happened earlier.

23

Then I remembered. It was the night before the big performance. I had to memorize my lines.

30

I started practicing. I went over my lines again and again. I couldn't wait to get on stage.

37

Finally, the day arrived. I was nervous but determined. I had to do my best.

76

But what was I thinking when I was first told it? Was it something I had remembered later?

93

I don't know. But I do know that I have learned a lot from this experience. I will never forget it.
Rehearsal Journal:

- Did you ever stop being, yes?
- How can the tragic man? Now is she even able to be coached?
- Does she go through the 6 stages of grief throughout the show?
- And is still mourning the loss of her son?
- How we treat each other is reflected in how we treat the earth.
- Hope—always there but it’s not the foremost
- Is this a common reminder for Anna.
- Duty vs. love is so painful.
- True point of no return.
- A perspective
- Having a child after losing a parent.
SUBJECT: Table Work Day 2

- What memories/moments need for roleplay climax
- Dropping into the depth of all of this
- What is the trying to do so get?
- Table work has been really helpful — it's such a gift to take my castmates questions and find/start to find clarity for Anna too. I'm learning a lot about these characters and their potential history.
- It's painting a fuller picture of the complexity of their relationship, history, and humanity. I leave every night with more questions and that's a good thing! I talk with my castmates about the show when we see each other around campus. This show is dealing with so many complex/intricate and while it makes it challenging, it's also so exciting.

SUBJECT: Intimacy into Session

- Consent and boundaries
- Supporting the mental health of actors — especially within sensitive stories.
- Characters are in unsafe situations, but actors aren't.
- Physical storytelling or the lens and the importance of finding the moments.
- Physical, bodily language of the two characters.
- Charged, emotional, expansive, it includes some of Anna and Joel's moments.
- Not as collaborative as "yes, and."
Today's rehearsal was actually great. Being up on my feet, in the space really made a difference. I feel like I'm clarifying things for Anna and motivated for me as an actor. There is just so much complexity to these characters and story, and we are finally beginning to play with them.

I should think about holding the space - don't push too much. It shouldn't be uncontrolled. It's not about projection, but energy and focus. I think that once my lines are a little softer (more memorized) I will be able to grasp that idea and play it.

Anna is really going through it, and tonight we really tried to understand how the points and peaks in these 2 scenes are different. I appreciate Carley's directorship and process of leading me play with myself, my silent partner (usually spoken) and the space. There is so much dynamic energy. We are finding, and I think the moments of stillness that we find are powerful. It feels so rewarding to see these moments because of where we take each scene and each moment. I've also talked with Tolga about my voice and dynamic emotions that take me to being under, yelling, crying. I need to be bolder about warming up my voice.
**Subject: Intimacy**

Today went very well. I think almost all the moments of intimacy are really on the money for the characters and specific situation. Seb and I actually found some great moments for Anna and Paul, and that gave me more confidence for our scenes as we continue to work.

**Subject: Work through stumble**

-I think today went relatively well. It was the first stumble through and even then I made a few great discoveries. We got to work through each scene twice, which I really enjoyed because I got to go deeper and play more to try and push through what my 

**Subject: Reminder of show stumble**

-today went okay—the last scene is still confusing to me as an actor.

Working with Ofelin, it is usually pretty great. He is such a great scene partner and really tries to give me his all.

**Subject: Scene work**

-Last minute change of plans, but I felt like I got more specific crafting scene work time, which is what I was craving. I think I need a director who will ask me the why of my choices because it is clear to me (which sometimes it slips) it means clear to the audience. I care so deeply about this story—I want this show to be impactful.
transitions + run
- despite my back being in pretty bad pain, I really tracked Anna’s journey through this show. It moves the ending where she looks at June that much more revealing to what her story is.

scene work

I learned a lot about how Anna might be coming on after talking with Carolyn and asking a bunch of questions.

Designer Run

Now tonight went so well (for me, at least). I felt dropped in and eager to chase after my objectives and listen to my scene partner. Honestly, I feel so much fun up there. I think tracking her words from scene to scene and her emotional status at any given moment is so important to following her journey through her eyes. I think listening to scene monologues are really helpful. They are clues to how Anna was and is feeling and honestly they are proving to be vital in my process. During the show, I had fun and I felt very confident about my work. I’m excited to keep exploring and giving up!
**Subject: Notes from Designer Run**

- Scene 2:
  - Good drive = taking at breath
  - steady beats
  - keep pace
  - paused build with moments
  - at the end "that's post run"

- Scene 4:
  - don't ask for permission with
  - pain killer line

- Scene 10:
  - physical reaction to company
  - run other direction
  - run away from her when she
  - yells at me.
  - exhaustion monologue:
  - do it again baby
  - try to let fall and hope in.
  - don't mean what "not more that
  - he (ped) knows.
  - sit off him.

- Scene 9:
  - "Can't put both feet forward.
  - no more drama.

**Subject: Scene 10 Script**

- Today was pretty productive.
  - I wasn't feeling the best, but I updated blocking that keeps the scene dynamic and also allows more of my face to be seen by the audience during my intense monologues and moments.
  - We also kept playing with the exhausted
  - monologue: I was told to keep playing with the confession of this interaction.
  - Sometimes I don't exactly understand Carolyn's notes. How do I play fighting a confession while making the hope painful?

**Subject: Last Dress**

- This genuinely felt great. I felt dropped in for almost the entire time and Carolyn says that
  - I've taken my voice extremely well. I just need to keep pushing towards my
  - objectives and patch and
  - continue trying to deliver.
  - My partner, Anna, has
  - different sides that we
  - get to see — keeping her
  - vulnerability but making
  - sure we don't lose her
  - badass vibes. She is sharp
  - and the tension she holds upon, that part
  - of her comes through. I want
  - to earn all my moments
  - and I want this story to
  - land with every person in
  - the audience.
  - It's all about my scene,
  - partner. It's about realizing
  - the back wall. It's about
  - dropping it. I'm pretty so
  - blessed.