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Myrrha Now: Reimagining Classic Myth and Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses* in the #metoo Era

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**MYRRHA NOW:
REIMAGINING CLASSIC MYTH AND MARY ZIMMERMAN'S *METAMORPHOSES*
IN THE #METOO ERA**

by
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**SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS AND POMONA COLLEGES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS**

**PROFESSOR MILLS
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Please note that this thesis contains material which some readers might find triggering. This includes discussion of suicide and sexual assault/violence. First and foremost, this project is dedicated to survivors.

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CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT

One of the wonderful trademarks of theater is its fluidity. Theatrical texts can be adapted and restaged to fit new cultural contexts. Mythology too is inherently shaped by cultural context. Often created in collective, oral traditions, a myth's story might keep the same basic framework while its values evolve over time. There is a certain power in combining theater and mythology, in bringing myths back into the oral tradition. Both forms epitomize the power of adaptation and showcase how we can utilize entertainment forms to connect to the past and project our desired futures.

In this paper, I seek to understand the history behind the myth of Myrrha. At the level of language, an ambiguous yet charged view of the character is constructed. The original poem by Ovid leaves some room for audience interpretation of her morality by allowing Myrrha to voice her conflicted inner thoughts. However, changes to her circumstances in Mary Zimmerman's adaptation, *Metamorphoses: A Play*, alter Myrrha's relationship to the audience, removing the ambiguity of the original Ovidian text. I believe that Zimmerman's piece is largely a product of 1999 creation; my modern, feminist interpretation reveals an undercurrent of sexism throughout the play. In 2019, evolving, contemporary discussions about sexual violence and trauma shapes the way that audiences understand a new staging. By incorporating the consciousness of the #metoo movement in the character's portrayal, my adaptation pulls the classic myth into the modern psyche. It also opens new inquiries into societal treatment of trauma and survivors of sexual violence.

The myth of Myrrha was originally shared through oral traditions. Mary Zimmerman based her adaptation of Myrrha on the Roman poet Ovid's interpretation, from his book *Metamorphoses* in 8 AD. The structure of Ovid's and Mary Zimmerman's adaptations differ

slightly which impacts the audience's interpretation of Myrrha's character. In the original Ovid, Orpheus, a singer hailed for the seductive quality of his voice, narrates the story. Intending to show the civility of his own unnamed western society, he describes a princess named Myrrha, the daughter of a king Cinyras of Cyprus, who possesses a strong lust for her father. Ovid provides no definite source of her lust. Myrrha, distraught and morally anguished, attempts suicide but her Nurse stops her. The Nurse agrees to help Myrrha fulfill her desire to prevent another suicide attempt. During a festival in which her mother is away, Myrrha sleeps with her father several times, under the cover of darkness. Cinyras eventually grows curious and lights a lamp, discovering his lover's identity. He violently attacks Myrrha, but she escapes. Pregnant and in exile, she begs the gods for forgiveness and they transform her into the first myrrh tree. She gives birth as the tree and her son, the mythical beauty Adonis, survives.

Ovid uses "ritual language [which] announces and enforces Myrrha's deviant marginality" thereby protecting and distancing "an audience from the story itself" (Resinski, 275). He at once presents a Myrrha who is conflicted, logical, and resolute in her desire. Most notably, he does not indicate the origin of her desire. He makes a distinct point not to put the blame on any one entity saying "Cupid declares his weapons never caused an injury to Myrrha and denies his torches ever could have urged her crime. — one of the three bad sisters kindled this, with fire brand from the Styx, and poisoned you with swollen vipers" (Ovid). Even Orpheus's allusion to the Fates is a guess on his part. "Ovid depicts Myrrha as a mortal at the mercy of either the passions or the gods, both of whose workings are inexplicable. Myrrha can thus be seen as a victim as well as a perpetrator" (Resinski, 278). Myrrha logically debates following through with her desire, rationalizing with examples of incest in nature and the lack of written laws forbidding it. Myrrha names her desire as criminal even as she tries to justify it.

She is allowed a conscience and ingrained sense of honor which keeps the audience from viewing her as a hysterical sexual deviant. Myrrha's, in terms of language, "faces rather than disguises her desire, and her self-awareness includes an understanding of her social context. In staying engaged with her society, in recognizing its structures and demands, Myrrha refuses to become the solipsistic arbiter of her desire—and this allows an audience to remain connected to her" (Resinski, 278). In the original Ovid, her desire to commit suicide comes from a sense of piety and shame, again, showing her awareness as a character. Despite her awareness, she is punished for entertaining her desire and is violently forced to flee. Her metamorphosis draws her back into the natural realm, physicality separating her from society. "Myrrha embraces such exile; impatient of gradual transformation, Myrrha plunges her head into the bark rising on her body" (Resinski, 279). "By having Myrrha blame herself, Ovid gives his audience the option to focus its attention not on assessing her guilt but on recognizing that her debt has been discharged" (Resinski, 280). The audience can choose to interpret this myth in many ways. They are allowed to feel disgust, sympathy, discomfort, pity, and many emotions in between. So, while Ovid pulled from oral traditions, his codification has served as a basis for the adaptations and reproductions throughout history.

Zimmerman's adaptation follows the same broad strokes of Ovid's version. The tale is set within a vignette style play and key changes are made to Myrrha's story. Zimmerman reduces the story's ambiguity and interjects humor, making it more difficult for the audience to empathize with Myrrha. For example, when the Nurse offers the young girl to Cinyras, he first asks, "she's attractive?" (Zimmerman). When he asks how old the girl is, the Nurse responds, "your daughter's age" and the uncomfortable irony of her statement is not lost on the audience (Zimmerman). The need to codify the source of Myrrha's desire fundamentally changes the

relationship of audience to character. She turns from a woman conflicted and considering her options to one who outraged a goddess and damned herself. Because of its construction, Myrrha's story turns into a spectacle of ruin, a moment of deviance that is immediately brushed aside.

Zimmerman has the nature god Vertumnus narrating the story. The convention of the imbedded narrator persists but the context is changed. Removing Orpheus and situating Vertumnus as the narrator positions the story instead as a cautionary tale of what happens when women refuse accept love. Vertumnus's framing of the story is intended to serve his own motives in seducing the nymph Pomona. Vertumnus reinforces confining stereotypes about the necessity of marriage and relationships in a woman's life. In our rendition of the play, a woman portrays Vertumnus, which further complicates the character's relationship to Myrrha. With this change, I see Vertumnus and Zimmerman as analogous; they are women perpetuating damaging narratives about women.

Another point that Zimmerman changes is specifying the source of Myrrha's lust. Aphrodite curses Myrrha with the lust for her father after Myrrha spurns her suitors. Though Myrrha is still is conflicted and understands how her lust is wrong "the desire itself has already been presented as an unavoidable and inevitable punishment. Because Myrrha has brought her situation upon herself, her resistance to her incestuous desire does not necessarily raise her in the audience's sight" (Resinski, 282). The audience is now prepared to see the lust as a punishment well deserved, her penance for denying love. "Zimmerman's Myrrha does not think of the effect which she may have on others; she is not self-conscious about the way in which she will or will not fit into human community" (Resinski, 283). Myrrha is cast into the victim's role in this adaptation; she is objectified, given little autonomy in her own story, and is consequently a pawn

for others' desires. This version ends with her transforming into a pool of tears, directly connecting Myrrha's story with the show's signature technical element, a large pool of water that dominates the stage. "Zimmerman's Myrrha returns to the anonymous, amorphous stuff from which she came, but at a cost: she receives no honor, and no marker is left in the world as a tangible memory of her suffering" (Resinski, 284). The audience watches an uncomfortable spectacle as Myrrha disintegrates instead of becoming an edificial tree. The play quickly continues at the end of Myrrha's story, banishing it "like a bad dream" (Resinski, 273). Although we adapted the ending to show Myrrha being supported by female narrators offstage, the original intent was to have her depart silently.

I have largely recounted my own and others modern feminist analyses of the original story and Zimmerman's play. But what I think is even more important is how the story has been interpreted in larger society. The play was well received in its time. First performed in 1998 at the Lookingglass theater company in Chicago, it was praised for its "eclectic potpourri of theatrical images featuring avowedly low-tech but strikingly innovative staging practices" (Jones). Reviews of performances across the last 20 years, especially its Broadway residency, praise how "in Zimmerman's hands, the unwieldy epic becomes a collection of moving and emotionally compelling tales" (Jones, *Variety*). The ancient and confusing text is handled with "delicate layering of reverence, storytelling agility, tongue-in-cheek wit and sophisticated skepticism" (Rawson, *Post-Gazette*). Specifically, reviews have referenced many of "a dozen or so tales" from the "hundreds of tales in Ovid, ... [in which] stories are embedded within stories" (Rawson, *Post-Gazette*). Reviews of the play are generally positive, admiring the use of language and the striking visual images created in the performances.

Each review is trying to paint a picture and capture a swath of images from across the play, but few mention Myrrha. Even reviews of our own production of *Metamorphoses* did not mention Myrrha's story. And when they do, the language that the reviews use to speak briefly about her reveals biases. One only mentions her as the "young girl who lusts after her father" which "haunts the mind long after the end of the show" (Jones, Variety). Notably, the review does not mention Myrrha by name. While not condemning her story overtly, this review also preps the audience to be disturbed by or pensive about this tale. Another review specifically addresses the tale's obscurity when describing the "less famous ... tale of Myrrha, whose disdain for romance so angered Aphrodite—portrayed as a blowsy hooker—that the goddess cursed the girl with an incestuous passion for her own father" (Williams, Chicago Reader). This phrasing further evokes the motif of Myrrha bringing this punishment down on herself. Even if this is the way that the goddess was portrayed in the production, the incredulous tone and language of this review prepares the audience to distance themselves from the characters.

One juxtaposes her story against the pool of water saying that the pool "brilliantly evokes natural and emotional turbulence, as in the tale of the daughter who seduces her father in three nights of sensuous embraces that end, as many of these tales do, in removing a blindfold and truly seeing" (Sommer, Curtainup Review). This review is rather vague and colorful in addition to excluding Myrrha's name. The writer chooses an active verb in "seduces", a word that connotes manipulation. In Ovid she has an active stance in her desire but in Zimmerman's play, Myrrha is reluctant and tricked into sexual violence. This review also emphasizes the physical nature of the story, focusing on the act more than Myrrha's inner conflict. It mentions "emotional turbulence" in general but this review is otherwise unclear. It is also vague about what the audience is truly seeing when the blindfold comes off. Are they gaining a deeper

understanding of human nature or simply seeing a horrible passion staged? These many strategies, from removing Myrrha's name to describing the tale's obscurity, distances the audience from the story and reinforces damaging perceptions of taboo and female desire.

As detailed above, I have interpreted that there is a sexist undercurrent throughout Myrrha's section of the play. In the construction, she is both the perpetrator and the victim of her own misdeeds, against the Roman interpretation. The underlying themes fit into larger discussions of rape culture, a systematic structure that creates "an environment in which rape is prevalent and in which sexual violence against women is normalized and excused in the media and popular culture" (Marshall University Women's Center). This piece presents a horrific story of violence against a woman, perpetuated by Aphrodite, a female character. Blame for the horrific event is placed squarely on the female characters in the scene. Vertumnus is not held accountable for his conjuring of the story and Cinyras receives no punishment for attempting to kill his daughter. Working within the structure of Zimmerman's play, our adaptation also placed blame on the female characters. With our gender switch of Vertumnus, Cinyras is the only male character in our scene. Cinyras's cheating is excused as he is indirectly coerced by a godly power and we removed his attempt to kill Myrrha. Mary Zimmerman may be an influential female playwright, but she writes from the perspective of the male gaze, excusing male characters while sexualizing and condemning female characters.

The story of Myrrha, at its most dangerous extreme, can become a scopophilic fever dream, portraying elicited desires to an audience that can largely remove its own positionality. Scopophilia is defined as "the pleasure in using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight". It is the pleasure found in watching. Inherent to the medium of theater is the pleasure of viewing. Theater can reinforce and codify audience's views members at a

subconscious level. Media has an incredible power in that it can “portray a hermetically sealed world which unwinds magically, indifferent to the presence of the audience, producing for them a sense of separation and playing on their voyeuristic fantasy. Moreover, the extreme contrast between the darkness in the auditorium (which also isolates the spectators from one another) ... helps to promote the illusion of voyeuristic separation” (Mulvey, 269). These views of desire in looking are tied into the perspective of the viewer, usually assumed to be an active male gaze. I believe that Zimmerman constructed the piece from the perspective of the male gaze. Myrrha fulfills the “the traditional exhibitionist role [where she is] simultaneously looked at and displayed, with [her] appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness” (Mulvey, 270). Cinyras, as the male figure, “cannot bear to be the burden of sexual objectification”, this weight falls largely on Myrrha and Cinyras is a pawn in the female characters’ scheme (Mulvey, 271). But Myrrha must be brought low because, within the scopophilic perspective, it is too unsettling for a woman to exert her power and desire. “The female figure poses a deeper problem ... [she implies] a threat of castration and hence unpleasure” (Mulvey, 271). Since the male gaze can’t bear the subconscious discomfort of Myrrha’s autonomy and female desire, Zimmerman creates an “avenue of escape from this castration anxiety ... [including] the devaluation, punishment, or saving of the guilty object” (Mulvey, 271). All three avenues of escape apply to Myrrha. Analyzing scholarship around women’s construction in media is useful for understanding Myrrha as a difficult object to grapple with. It is because of the invisible influence of larger systems like the assumed male gaze and rape culture.

I don’t believe that Zimmerman necessarily wanted to perpetuate harmful themes against women in the piece. The context in which this piece was born, both ancient Rome and 1998,

allowed those systems to thrive. In the 20th/21st centuries, the conversations about women's desires and sexual violence have evolved. News of the Clinton - Lewinsky had just broken earlier in 1998, publicly showcasing American perception of sexual violence and power. The above concepts have been in scholarship since before Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses* was created. The difference between then and now is that the public conversation around the portrayal of women and sexual power dynamics is changing. The #metoo movement specifically has highlighted these systematic discrepancies.

What does it mean to stage Zimmerman's play for a modern audience, especially in the context of the #metoo movement/public understanding of rape culture? This is a world in which sexual violence is now big news and it recognizes that "there is a spectrum of abuses of power, some tiny and some huge, that all add up to a world where women's voices, women's work, and women's sexual desires are ignored or devalued" (Jaffe, 84). The #metoo moment is about bringing the individual voices together to publicly display the widespread problem of sexual harassment/violence. Combining this movement with Myrrha's story "we can see that violations are not purely or even mostly about sex ... Patriarchy spreads the lie that there are rules we can follow that will keep us safe—that if we wear the right clothes, say no loudly enough, walk away, don't laugh at men, work hard, no harm will come to us" (Jaffe, 83). Myrrha dares to reject her suitors, an expectation placed on her by society. This story reinforces the idea that the act of living life on your own terms will bring about the wrath of powerful figures. It was never about sex in the first place; sex and desire are tools levied against Myrrha to remind her of her place. Rejecting the powerful because you have autonomy and free choice will not only bring you retribution, but you will simultaneously be labeled the perpetrator of the violence against you. Comparatively, not that much time has passed between the play's creation and today. But

current social movements are bringing language and conversation these issues in public spaces. Social media especially has propelled these conversations to the forefront.

We have a responsibility to understand our play affect in our current context. Modern audiences are bringing this framework understanding into the space with them. As a result, this context is something that I kept in mind when performing this role. I focused on Myrrha's trauma and her transformation. I didn't want the audience to dismiss Myrrha as guilty or disturbed as has been done in the past. I wanted the audience to see her as a product of her situation and subjected by the powers that have an incredible amount of control over her. There is not just the power of Aphrodite but also the stipulations of society that causes her internal turmoil. The support of the Nurse (changed to Cousin) is also a key aspect that we emphasized. The Cousin is someone who believes and accepts Myrrha. She genuinely listens and tries to help ease Myrrha's suffering. The importance of support for survivors from the community is an aspect that I want the audience to walk away appreciating.

Much like the transformations in the show, Zimmerman's play has a historical record of adaptability to the time and place of performances. This piece has not only been performed but transformed many times. One notable instance was when it first moved to New York City to make its Broadway debut at the Circle in the Square Theater. The city was still reeling from the 9/11 terrorist attacks just a month before. The transformation and resilience of the characters proved to be cathartic for a city under siege. During its initial run, "the show's ritualistic portrayal of love, death, and transformation somehow seemed to flow directly from the collective unconscious of a stunned city. *Metamorphoses* became a sold-out hit, and every night you could hear the sounds of men and women openly crying" (Brantley, New York Times). Though the same text, the context of being in NYC softened and changed the meaning of the production.

“The production of *Metamorphoses*, with its movement outside of secular time and its mythic stories and ritualistic gestures, provided the audience a pattern of experience by which to examine feelings of loss and grief” (Chirico, 149). Just like in NYC, our production of *Metamorphoses* tonally shifted to adapt to the times. As is true in the oral tradition of myths, we shaped and transformed this story to meaningfully reflect the values of a modern audience.

In an interview, Zimmerman states that she believes the power of these myths are in the way that “they speak to us and they seem to speak to any situation you are in. There’s always something in the show that feels like that’s me or that’s my beloved, that’s the person I lost ... It feels deeply personal” (Walker). This show is deeply personal to me because of my investment in the themes that we explored in our production. I have developed a connection to antiquity as a result. These myths and their characters are vividly alive in an incredibly modern feeling way. Despite the underlying problematic elements of the text, there are beautiful, personal, impactful meanings to be found in Myrrha’s story.

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CHARACTER THEORY

In the following section, I detail the thought that went into the vision for my characters. My role was not conventional in the sense that I did not portray the arc of one character throughout the course of the show. It is necessary to outline who each of my characters were in the vignettes and how I approached playing each of them. Together, they provided an opportunity to challenge myself mentally and physically as an actor while playing with themes of taboo, horror, power, and stereotypes.

As the primary topic of my thesis, and the role that I held for the longest, I put the most thought into Myrrha. I auditioned for her in October 2018 and was immediately attracted to the intense emotionality of the role and thematic exploration of taboo topics. In her story arc, the princess Myrrha refuses all potential suitors and is cursed by a vengeful Aphrodite to fall in lust with her father. She is distraught and confused by her desire. Her Cousin, seeing her desperation, devises a plan to help Myrrha sleep with her father. With a blindfold over his eyes, her father, Cinyras, sleeps with her for three nights. On the third night, he removes his blindfold to discover the horrible truth. Myrrha escapes the palace and begs for the gods to transform her; she dissolves into a pool of tears.

Myrrha's opening monologue, and her first words in the show, convey a fascinating duality. It showcases both her intense taboo desire as well as her societally ingrained sense of decorum. She clearly knows what she desires is wrong according to society but can do little to tame her desire. Love as a topic is deeply explored by this show but this story showcases a different side to it, one that is confusing and manipulative. In thinking through my portrayal of her, I created a central concept. It is not just Myrrha's conflicted nature that drives the shifts in her intentions, but it is Aphrodite herself physically controlling Myrrha. Internally, I framed

Myrrha as a survivor of sexual and psychological assault. The real perpetrator of the story's violence is Aphrodite, not Cinyras. In modern terms, Aphrodite gaslights and emotionally manipulates Myrrha. Through this structure, I played with ideas of control, autonomy, and the nature of power in narrative. What was so special about this show was that this guiding concept framed not only my perceptions of the character but also physically how we changed, interpreted, and blocked the scene. We see Aphrodite physically throw Myrrha around to display the control that she has over her mind. We cut Cinyras's attempt to kill Myrrha to shift blame away from him. We made it tonally tragic, showing that no one comes out of this scene unharmed. Although Myrrha is cast as a victim with little autonomy, I felt that it was acceptable for the audience to witness primarily the horror of her story. Unlike full length shows, this was only a metaphoric snapshot in time, a highly condensed version of what could be a full play. To sit in this place of darkness for 10 minutes was manageable. And there wasn't time in the story to show her recovery. But, from the very beginning, we also conceptualized the image of her final transformation. She wouldn't dissolve into a helpless pool of tears, as the narration suggests. Instead, the narrators descended to support her through this transformation, and eventually through to the other side in healing. I'm glad that the final image we left audiences with is that last moment of support after trauma.

Key to Myrrha's portrayal was both Meisner and Strasberg's emotional preparation acting theory. We first utilized Meisner which focuses on the creation of intense emotional fantasies. "Meisner's approach trains the actor to 'live truthfully under imaginary circumstances,' to discover or create personally meaningful points of view with respect to the (written or improvised) word" (DeSotelle). Because of the dark places that this scene goes to, I attempted to create a devastating fake memory, one that would hopefully trigger a real emotional

response without being based from real memory. Using real memories can be damaging to the actor's mental health. I tried this method of accessing intense emotions for most of the rehearsal process but did not feel like I was making progress. When Meisner didn't produce as intense of a reaction as I needed we switched gears into Strasberg. His method asks actors to live "within the fiction of the story as if it were true and happening now ... [it] trains actors to use their imagination, senses, and emotions to conceive of characters with unique and original behavior, creating performances grounded in the human truth of the moment" (The Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute). As I had already been living in Myrrha's head for so long that I was tapped into the emotions that her scene created in me. I found this method to be much more successful. I utilized mantras personal mantras, music, and intense focus to access Myrrha's emotions.

The role of Hunger was a wonderful compliment to Myrrha because it contrasted the emotional work required for Myrrha. Hunger is all about the physical realm and I took great joy in playing this character. In the story of Erysichthon, Hunger is a dark, primordial entity that commanded by the goddess Ceres to torment Erysichthon with an insatiable appetite. His hunger grows so great that Erysichthon eventually consumes himself. The thing that guided my conceptualization of the character was the costume design. From the first rehearsal in working on the character, I learned that my costume would be a skintight black catsuit with a black lace mask. Knowing that I would be like a living shadow, a nightmare onstage, shaped how I created this character. I didn't think of Hunger as a hollow and decaying being, like the narration suggests, but more like a hallucination. The sensation of hunger is a base feeling that everyone intrinsically understands. The idea of being consumed by hunger, unable to make the gnawing feeling leave, would make anyone scared. On top of this internal body fear, imagine a horrific shadow creeping into your bedroom while you slept to curse you with these amplified feelings. I

think the combination of sensation and image is what makes the scene so terrifying. Physically, Hunger had several consistent characteristics. I made her movements jerky and twitchy to suggest panic and a lack of control. Hunger moved with varying speed to be unpredictable, like a crouched animal. Her movement could become fluid when it needed to be but was mostly bizarre, primordial, and uncontrolled. Hunger's stayed crouched most of the time but her erect walk was inspired by several sources including Butoh dance from Japan. The walk was also drawing from various horror characters including zombies, Frankenstein, and Samara from *The Ring*.

I especially enjoyed portraying my final character, Zeus in Baucis and Philemon's story. After the intensity of Myrrha, it was an incredible catharsis to step into the powerful role of Zeus. In terms of my arc as an actor through the play, Zeus contrasted Myrrha. With Myrrha I am at my most distraught and out of control. With Zeus, I reclaimed strength and power through divinity. I was incredibly calm, controlled, and still as Zeus to directly contrast Myrrha's fraught and panicked movements. Zeus was also a site of reclamation in terms of narrative. Zeus is the most notorious womanizer in mythology. To have the chance to bring that raw strength into a female space was incredibly fulfilling. I gave her a feminine, maternal energy as she brought her son Hermes down from Olympus to interact with real people. Disguised as beggars, they were turned away from hundreds of doors until an elderly couple, Baucis and Philemon, treated them with great kindness. The two gods revealed themselves and granted Baucis and Philemon's greatest request. The elderly couple died at the same moment, transforming into intertwined trees. The imagery of the tree was especially powerful considering that Myrrha metamorphoses into the first myrrh tree in some stories.

Collectively this was an emotionally fulfilling and exhausting experience. I grew as an actress through these characters and enjoyed portraying them in tandem.

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REHEARSAL JOURNAL

1/30

Today was the first time that we got to work on Hunger. I have been really excited to approach this character since I learned that it was a possibility that I could also be playing her. I think just the idea of Hunger being paired with Myrrha is appealing since there are some thematic connections between the two. The idea of an emotion taking total control over someone. To be taken over by a feeling and to also play a character who represents that feeling is interesting. Today we did the basic blocking for the scene. I essentially crawl up from hell and get to make an arc across the whole stage to reach the sleeping Erysichthon. I have just been crawling for the moment, but I want to figure out if there is something I can devise for this scene. Anais suggested looking at Butoh dance from Japan. Then I worked independently with Alex to devise what the movements of Hunger and Erysichthon would look like. I haven't worked with Alex before, so it was a little awkward at first being in such intimate contact. He is a nice guy, so I think it will get more comfortable as we work together. I am wrapped around his back the whole time, whether it is on the ground or he is carrying me. We came up with a four-armed feeding motion. It gets more frantic and then he resists until I force him back into that pattern. I liked being able to play with the power dynamics of the scene. My ideas for Hunger are further influenced by the design of my costume, which I learned more about today. I am going to be in a full black bodysuit, head to toe, with a lace mask covering my head. So excited!

1/31

Today we worked with the beginning and ending of the play. First, we went into the Allen to create the entrance moment. It was originally devised in our auditions, so we had the basic framework from which to work from. It is highly symbolic and more than anything, simple. I

think what I appreciate the most is that it is about bodies and how they move through space. It's not trying to show anything too literally. We also created the whole ending sequence through Baucis and Philemon. I got to play Zeus for the first time today which I am also so excited about. To cast the powerhouse of the gods as a woman is something unique and different. But it is also thematically interesting considering the dalliances of Zeus in classical mythology. We made a lot of cuts to the text as we went through this scene. It's something I appreciate since I already have problems with how many characters are portrayed in the show. Some directors believe that the text is sacred and that every word is placed there for a reason. I am happy that at least with this we're not doing that.

2/1

Today was the first time that I got to work on Myrrha. We began with the opening monologue and Jessie sent Maya and I off into another room to work on establishing a movement. We are running headlong with the idea of control and possession, so it makes sense for Maya to be controlling me as Aphrodite in some way. At first, we were just playing around with a kind of force movement where she had me in an invisible grip. We structured her opening monologue so that she was pressing me from standing down to the floor. Then during my monologue, she threw my body from side to side to indicate a change in emotion. It was fun working with Maya because I had not worked with her much before and she had great ideas. We then brought what we had back into the space and showed Jessie the opening sequence. The movement during Aphrodite's monologue stayed the same as we created it, but we changed the monologue's movement. Instead of a side to side we made it a vertical movement where Aphrodite was picking me up and dropping me to the floor to release me. I liked that it was such a dramatic and violent shift between the personas. Today's rehearsal was great because it feels amazing to

finally be diving into this character I have had in my head for so long. It is great to not only start working on her myself but shape what she will look like with others.

2/4

It was a long rehearsal and the first time that we got to tackle Myrrha as a full group. We blocked almost the full scene with everyone in the room. There are a lot of people involved in this one from the narrators, characters in the scene, and Pomona/Vertumnus who are watching. What was amazing about this rehearsal was that it was an extremely democratic process. We tried multiple versions of the blocking and movements. We also talked about thematically what we wanted to emphasize in our telling of Myrrha. The first things that we did was cut a lot of the humor that had been written into the script. Mostly we just changed the tone of lines for example, the humor at Aphrodite dropping the noose when Myrrha decides upon suicide. But other things we completely cut. Lines between the Cousin (formerly Nurse) and Cinyras were cut because of the cringe factor when he turns into a creepy pervy father. The biggest change that we made in the story itself was cutting Cinyras's attempts to kill Myrrha after the blindfold was removed. We blocked the full scene, but it may be changed later. I appreciated that it everyone got the chance to put input into what is a very difficult scene for everyone. It makes it feel like we all have a personal stake and ownership of what this ultimately ends up being. We also reviewed Zeus and the blocking at the end of the show.

2/5

Long day today. We worked on the blocking for Ceyx and Alcyone. I am a sailor in the scene, so I come in briefly and then quickly die. We began the initial blocking and worked on the stage combat elements. It was a lot of fun working with Ally on this scene because she kills me as one

of Poseidon's henchmen. We sketched out the rough blocking for this scene and then ran through Erysichthon to prepare for the stumble through tomorrow.

2/6

I can't believe that we are already doing a stumble through! It feels like we have learned this blocking super-fast and somehow, we are ready to put it together. It's not a long show so it makes sense that we would be able to run the full thing. It was not perfect in terms of the finer details, but we got through the whole show. Roei and I were called in early to work on a movement sequence for Myrrha because we needed something more specific to convey the horrible act that takes place. We also worked Erysichthon and the beginning to refine the blocking before the run. We didn't really stop but it wasn't perfect. Still I'm proud of the work that we have done collectively as a cast. It was also nice to watch other scenes and see the shape of the show come together.

2/7

Today was a big day for the Erysichthon scene because we really worked to get the scene moving and work on the blocking. Instead of having me on Alex's back through the whole scene, I beckon him more and we crawl after each other. It is simpler and cleaner because it requires a lot of effort for Alex to lift me and although he can do it, the movement is not clean and consistent across runs. I think it will work just fine and still looks good. We worked on the hand movements and getting the pacing up as well as figuring out when we wanted to speed up and slow down. I feel good about this scene.

2/8

Ok so confession. Before rehearsal today I had the 100 days party for seniors at Scripps to celebrate 100 days of school left. So before coming into the theater I had just had a big dinner

with my friends and the wine was certainly flowing. But nonetheless I, being a good theater student, still came to rehearsal in my party dress, changed, and got to work. Today we worked the Alcyone and Ceyx scene but specifically the stage combat portion where the sailors battle the henchmen and Poseidon takes down Ceyx. So, coming to this rehearsal with wine in me was FUN.

2/11

Today was a big day for Myrrha as we are working through ironing out the kinks Myrrha's scene after the stumble through. I worked with Maya and Yan Ru each for a little while refining the blocking and the connection to each other in the scene. We then spend the end of rehearsal running the full scene with everyone there. We made the movement sequence more elaborate with Roei.

2/15

Today was a more formal run through incorporating the notes and changes of the last few days. It is still by no means a perfectly formed piece but at least the framework is coming together. I am super happy that everyone in the cast is very dedicated to making this happen. I couldn't ask for a better support system.

2/17

We did another run through again today and one thing that really stuck with me was what Jessie said at the beginning of the run. She told us to appreciate the time that we have left with one another because we will be opening this up to the world soon. A sobering thought but a reality that is fast approaching. I am certainly not ready to yet but am excited for when the time comes.

2/19

It was a very long rehearsal today because we are cleaning and running through every scene to perfect movements. It's hard sometimes to wait around between scenes, especially when I can't really go anywhere unlike those that can go back to their Pomona dorms. Its ok though but just means I am active and out of my room essentially all day. Had some time to rest today which was helpful. We had a little break, so I was pleased to get a chance to work on Hunger more. She's a character that I haven't had much time to spend on but really wanted to work on devising movement for. I have this wonderfully luxurious amount of time to walk around the stage and be creepy. We talked a lot about what kinds of movements are the scariest and I think it's probably going to look like a Thriller zombie. I like the idea of jagged movements while she is walking. I don't know if I exactly figured out what I want to do with her in the space, but it was certainly good to get the movements in. We also got a chance to work on Myrrha at the end of the night and I think I am starting to feel her more but it's hard to tell. It sort of feels like I am making progress on her but at the same time I can't exactly quantify into words what progress I am exactly making.

2/20

Today was fantastic because I only had an hour of rehearsal! It was great to spend some time with friends and relax a little bit. I also got a chance to go to yoga, something I haven't been able to do for a while. It ended up being really helpful during rehearsal because I felt very limber and flexible. We ran Erysichthon for an hour, but it was helpful to cement the work that we had done yesterday on Hunger. I felt so much more in control of my body and able to isolate individual parts. This heightened the zombie like walk that we established yesterday for the character. I'm really happy about where Hunger is going and it's the most fun character to play.

I like that my characters in the show balance my experience of being in Meta. Hunger is a very physical character while Myrrha is very cerebral. Zeus is just fun to play because she's so regal and who wouldn't want to do a stage fight in the water as a Sailor.

2/21

Today ran through almost all the scenes in the play in the Large Studio because they are installing the pool in the theater. So exciting! We ran every scene that I am in, adding and editing sound cues within the pieces. It's certainly nice to get sound teched in before having to deal with costumes and lighting. I must admit I was a little frustrated tonight just because four hours of rehearsal is a lot for anyone and, although we were productive, I was getting worn out. It was a lot of sitting around this evening and then working pretty hard when we were on stage. It's been a very full week of rehearsals as this is already our fifth rehearsal this week. I'm glad that we have the time to refine our work but it's still long days. I guess I'm getting a little frustrated with Myrrha because I feel somewhat stagnant in my progress with her. I am doing the emotional prep work, but I don't feel as if I have cracked it yet. I haven't found the fantasy that is going to set a very emotional reaction off. I really want this performance to be good. It's my swan song in a way.

2/22

WOWOWOW! Exciting Day! We have water in the space for the first time! It's so exciting and awesome to see the full effect of having water in the pool. I think people are really going to be awed by this show. However, today was not the best day for us as actors. The water is safely in the space now, but it is not heated yet, so it was absolutely freezing. At first, I thought it was going to be rough, but we would just deal with it. However, when I needed to be fully submerged in it, I realized what an impediment it would be. It was so cold that my body kept

instinctually trying to protect itself by recoiling. It was almost impossible to stay in the water for any length of time. Eventually I just really needed to say something because it was getting dangerous to work in the freezing water despite the towels that we had all around. I really did not want to run Erysichthon or Myrrha because of how submerged I would need to be for those scenes. I really don't want to go back into the pool until the heating system is installed. Today I also got a costume fitting, trying on a few more of my outfits. I was so excited and relieved that the catsuit for Hunger came! It fit like a glove and was exactly what I imagined for the character. We also played with the costume for Zeus, trying on accessories. I was also fitted for my sailor costume.

2/25

We did another run through today and I think it's really starting to come together! It was nice to have the weekend to rest because we are really going at it with intense long rehearsals. Working in the cold water is tough as I have to get so wet during the show. I am still not capable of doing all my movements. I still feel a little stagnant with Myrrha and I got the chance to talk to Jessie about it. I think that we are going to switch tactics away from Meisner because I don't feel like I have been making progress with that method. I'm going to try Strasberg instead.

2/26

The water is still cold but getting more manageable. They have been adding boiling water to try and bring the temperature up. Today Roei and I got there early to finally run the Myrrha movement and I think its going to work in the water. We also perfected the sailors walk and row with Anais and then ran Ceyx and Alcyone in the water. Did another run tonight, and I think I'm starting to feel like I'm actually making progress on Myrrha. Ive been frustrated with her lately but am getting there.

2/27

God tonight was a night. I really don't know how to feel about everything that has happened today. Started off the day working with Jessie on Myrrha and the emotional connection. Since we have shifted the focus of the acting method from Meisner to Strasberg we worked on shaping how I can get into the life of Myrrha to feel her world more fully. In that session I don't think I got entirely to where I wanted to go but it was helpful to get feedback. I think I just need to spent time alone working on it, but I feel like Strasberg method might be a better way into the character instead of trying to fantasize into it. Then in the evening we had the designer run of the show. Though the water is still FREEZING it is manageable and is at least not tortuous getting out of it. And, through the run, I think this is the best run that I have had in portraying Myrrha onstage. I felt good about the depth of emotion that I got to. However, when we got to the end of the run, Jessie asked my scene partners and I to come up with an alternative to Myrrha's intended suicide given all that is going on campus. And I didn't say it out loud as I probably should have but that was really tough for me. It caught me completely off guard and emotionally destabilized me to be told to change anything at this stage. I want to be sensitive to what is going on in our community, but it's hard to make these changes. I also in this moment did not appreciate the communal aspect of our devising method. I didn't want anyone but my creative team and scene partners involved in the process of making that change. I know I need to say something to Jessie, but I just don't know what to do at the time. And I did not feel comfortable objecting to the change in the space with everyone there even though making it did not feel comfortable to me.

2/28

I'm still feeling emotionally destabilized from yesterday's change. I have been thinking about it all day and I can't compartmentalize these feelings. I'm now really realizing the full emotional extent of my investment in this character. I have been working on it almost constantly in my head for the past two months and I think I'm driving myself into an emotional hole. I am looking forward to Friday to reset.

3/2

It was certainly nice to get a little bit of a break on Friday and I took that time to rest and have some fun before we got into everything. Today was the first day of tech and it was an extremely long day to say the least. I started off the day being able to talk to Jessie which was a relief after Wednesday, hadn't had a chance to catch up since. I'm glad that I was able to at least communicate that I was really thrown by the way that things were handled in changing the scene. It was a hard change to ask for and I didn't feel that we handled it in the best way in the space. It was certainly a good learning experience about knowing that there will be sometimes things you can't account for and will need to change accordingly. It's fine now and I'm not as upset about it, but it was hard to do undoubtedly. I'm worried sometimes that I've put a little too many real emotions and personal stakes into my performance and the production. I need to take a bit of a step back. Tech itself was very long. It took us several hours to tech through the first few scenes and the heater still wasn't installed so the water was very cold. It looks amazing though and I can't wait to see what this all looks like with costumes. The biggest breakthrough for me came with working with Megan Phrall in the Allen on voice work. I haven't signed up for a chance to work with her so in the downtime I'm happy that I got the opportunity. She was able to help me be even more powerful with Hunger's three lines and I learned to send my voice out instead of

hooking it back in. We also added a snake like S trail to the “Yes” lines. I also had a chance to work with Myrrha’s opening monologue, something that I haven't been able to touch as much. It was amazing how, with just changes in intonation and breath, I was able to craft a more distinct personality and demeanor for the controlled parts of the monologue. I was able to get so deeply into believing and discovering the things that the alien voice was saying that I completely forgot my lines which is something that I have been working towards. It was an adjustment to do it in the Seaver, but I am confident that I can do it in that space. Another funny story was when we were teching the show, at the end it got so much faster than it had been before that I changed out of my swimsuit right before I was supposed to go onstage for Myrrha!! I ran out in real clothes and almost had to get into the water before Marissa called hold. I then ran backstage to put on my suit and we teched half of the scene before finishing the day. Totally exhausted and need to sleep before another long day tomorrow.

3/3

It's the second day of tech and today costumes were the hurdle to conquer! It is always an exciting day when we get to add costumes because it really helps complete the final transformation. My costumes did not go exactly smoothly though. We started from the top of the show and I changed into the pink ensemble dress that I had been fitted for. I've never liked that dress during fittings, but you can't always wear what you want. I quickly became confused and upset though when I realized that the other girls' ensemble dresses had been changed from shifts like mine to fitted A-line dresses. I was about to be the only person to go out in the old version of the base costumes. I'm not sure what happened but they just seemed to overlook changing my costume. It also didn't help that I really hated the pink dress I was wearing, it just wasn't a good look on me. So, I went back to Suzanne and she happened to have a tan ensemble

dress in my size so at least it was an easy change to make. After the ensemble entrance, I wore my sailor costume of a white t-shirt and grey quick dry pants. That costume worked just fine. Then I had to change into Hunger in the voms. A little awkward since I needed to strip but I found a secluded location to make the change. And just as I expected, the costume was not as functional as I needed to be. Firstly, the mask was still just a pair of tights that I pulled over my head and the legs were still attached! They twirled around my head like sad helicopter!! The cloak also kept getting in the way and the first time I went out it fell from my body and I had to haul the soaking garment off stage. I passed it off the costume to be worked on. Then I went on as Myrrha in the tan ensemble dress for now. Finally, I went on as Zeus in the white dress and a HUGE cloak without a hood that I'm told is temporary. Emotionally, not the most powerful run as we were focused on making the costume changes happen. It was a lot to figure out as we ran the show straight through while figuring out the changes. Kudos to the costume crew for rolling with the punches. We then went back into certain scenes and adjusted the lighting. For Erysichthon, we ran the scene for at least an hour and I got a chance to try changes to Hunger's costume. We tried option two for the mask which I loved but I'm not sure if Angela will let me stay in it. Suzanne also pinned the cloak together, so it would stay but it inhibits my ability to crawl, something I will have to work around. I'm glad that at least we got out early, but it's been a long and wet day. Costumes have been a bit of a personal headache in this show, so I hope the changes are sorted soon.

3/4

Today was the first full dress rehearsal with all tech elements. We added hair and makeup today. It was hilarious because the guys just got Chapstick for their makeup. The girls got a few more elements like eyeliner and lipstick but it wasn't much compared to the usual load of stage

makeup. We decided on a braid for my hair because we need something that will stay fairly put together through my repeated dunks in the water. We started a little late cuse fight call ran late but otherwise the dress ran smoothly. I really felt like I was able to step into my character tonight and it helped to have all elements. I think I am still working on how to get into that emotional state for Myrrha. I need to start thinking about her before Hunger because if I don't prepare then I won't have enough time between Hunger and Myrrha to slip into the right mindset. I am glad I am learning this now before going up before audiences.

3/5

Disaster has struck! Luckily a solvable disaster. We arrived and started preparing for our final run before we get an audience. We were waiting to go out for fight call and then Nora comes in and tells us that there is something wrong with the pool. Word quickly spreads, and we learned that the pool was twice as chemically basic as it should have been. It was unsafe for us to get in the water. Those that had gotten in to run some scenes quickly showered. So, the directive for tonight was to run the show as best we could not in the water. I think as a cast we are very ready for tomorrow, but it is unfortunate because tonight is picture night. I worry that were not going to have good shots of the show. It was hard to get emotionally invested in the scene when I was more worried about improving blocking, but we made it through the run. I feel bad for Steve because he must figure out how to drain, refill, and reheat the pool before tomorrow's show. At least it happened now and not later.

3/6

WOW. It's a very surreal feeling to get this in front of an audience. I almost forgot that this is what we have been working towards, sharing it with the world. I have been so caught up in the process over the last couple of weeks that I didn't think of what the audience is going to see and

feel during the performance. More importantly, how it was going to feel for me presenting these characters to the world. The cast's energy was very high going into the show, which is to be expected on the first night with people. I think we put on a very good show overall. A small crowd but that is to be expected with preview night. No major mishaps although I did have my classic costume malfunction! I always have a costume mishap during preview at Pomona! This time my dress wasn't zipped up all the way on my Myrrha costume. There was some laughter during the Hunger scene, particularly when I wrapped around Alex which I wasn't expecting. There was definite tension during the Myrrha scene, but the audience was quiet which I expected. It's an uncomfortable moment. I love the energy backstage and can't wait for the rest of the week!

3/7

Wow. I am still shaking from this performance. Something about tonight really clicked. It was undoubtedly the best performance I have done, and I have never experienced anything like tonight onstage before. Firstly, coming into the show my emotional prep work was going very well. As I was thinking about Myrrha, I found a mantra that helped center me in the character and proved very effective in unlocking my emotions. I came onstage fully in the moment and I felt like the audience was ready to embrace the performance. I could feel their tension throughout. I could hear their reactions to the events of the scene and I absorbed this in the performance. The collective burst of energy when Cinyras's blindfold came off was explosive. I don't know what it was about this crowd. Maybe it was because I had friends in the audience. But I felt so alive after I got off stage. My whole body was buzzing, and I had to run backstage to release energy. I was incredibly euphoric and I'm proud of my work. I hope I can feel this way again.

3/8

In mime class today, Tom led us in a discussion of the show. He loved the show and gave it very high praise, something that I don't take lightly because it is not an empty compliment. He remarked about the audience's responsiveness last night and how rare that was. Going into tonight, I was looking forward to it but tonight was its own curveball. I wasn't as happy about my performance because the audience had a very different energy. We were sold out and there were a lot of high schoolers in the audience. They were also reactive but in a rowdy way. Instead of embracing the emotions of Myrrha, I felt like they dropped them and didn't know what to do with them. When I rose up after the discovery, I felt angry and defensive. I realize why I felt that way is because I am very protective of Myrrha I almost see her as a person who I don't want to get hurt. I will try to just let myself be more open and vulnerable going forward.

3/9

Today is the biiiiig day. TWO! SHOW! DAY! I'm already tired after the long days this week but today has been a time. I'm just a lump in bed right now ready to go to sleep. Got brunch with a few castmates and then went to the theater for our long day. Signed in and did the hair and makeup as usual in the morning. The Saturday matinee show was alright in terms of previous performances, I could have done more emotional preparation work ahead of time. It was hard to summon the character when it came time to do so. I didn't think it was a bad performance though. I almost fell during the curtain call though! My foot caught on the hem of the wet Zeus dress as a stepped onto the deck and I smacked my knee. I recovered just fine, only my pride was wounded. The evening performance was very important to me because my whole family was in the audience. I was worried it was going to feel strange doing Myrrha in front of them,

but I let that discomfort and panic fuel me through the character. The audience wasn't as reactive during the evening show compared to Thursday and Friday, but I think it still went well.

3/10

Gosh I can't believe the day is here already! It's the last day of the show. God it's a weird feeling to be here already. After a month and a half of work the final day is here already. I have a lot of feelings about this show, most of all how I am going to miss this wonderful cast and how I'm not going to be coming to the theater every day for hours at a time. Through this final performance, I tried to be as vulnerable as possible. This performance was not about the audience and it was not for the audience. It was for the cast and my Myrrha performance was for me. Because through the process of applying method, she became such a part of me and I have an intense, almost indescribable love for her. I think this was one of my best performances because I let myself feel everything she feels and just let the audience experience those intense emotions. Instead of trying to defend her and myself, I just let us exist in the space and I think it was a powerful performance. I am very proud of the work that we have done, and I am proud of what has come of my work. There were a lot of powerful emotions standing for my final curtain call at Pomona College. Maybe a few tears shed. I will miss this a lot. But we finished a great run then jumped right into strike. We thought it was going to be a difficult strike and it certainly was. But everyone was moving efficiently, and we really came together and finished everything. I learned a lot about lighting as I have been helping the Sparky crew on the last several strikes. Added to my knowledge base today. And with that it is time to rest and endure the sickness I can feel creeping up on me. Myrrha, Hunger, Sailor, and Zeus signing off.

POST-SHOW REFLECTION

Being a part of *Metamorphoses* was a truly transformative experience. Not only did I grow substantially as an actress, but I also developed close relationships with the creative team, cast, and crew. We created something that we are extremely proud of and had the opportunity to share it with the world.

I took a journey with the character Myrrha. I have come to understand so much more about her and the nature of portraying trauma onstage through the process of this show. My understanding of what it means to portray taboo topics has also shifted through the course of physically embodying trauma onstage. This story and its content touches something deeper that I could never quite put my finger on. It is incredibly uncomfortable but hypnotizing at the same time. We considered so many things while framing this story to be engaging yet palatable. Despite our consideration, the most striking moment in terms of the audience's reaction was not the act itself but the removal of the blindfold. Audiences were audibly yelling in horror. I think the one thing I will never forget about this show was the audience reactions. I have never felt an audience's collective emotion be as powerful as I have through the run of *Metamorphoses*. It shows the power of this scene that a normally quiet audience is compelled to react. This story raises implications of our relationship to trauma, violence, and spectatorship. Until the show, I didn't think about how people would see me personally after seeing me onstage as her. Largely, people barely acknowledged the part. It was recognized but people felt uncomfortable talking about it. At most they made a few jokes. It was interesting that I got lots of wonderful compliments for my physicality as Hunger but scarcely any mention of Myrrha.

This show was an incredibly emotional experience because of the dark content it contains. When diving into Meisner and Strasberg method acting, I accessed darker parts of my

psyche to authentically summon the emotions of the scene. These emotions ranged from deep despair to panic through trauma. I felt supported through the process and was at no time told to put myself into dangerous mental states. However, I cannot deny that this was a difficult part to prepare. Despite this being an incredibly dark role, I have unending love and appreciation for Myrrha as a character. I feel very connected to this character from antiquity. At the end of the day, I am glad that I went through the process of studying and incorporating method because my acting improved. Because of this project, I now have a new toolkit from to pull from and it is easier to access these emotions on cue.

The process of performing with method was difficult. I spent two months taking careful time every day to access those false memories and emotional states in comfort and without being rushed. Accessing the emotions during the rush of a show proved another hurdle to overcome. If I was not onstage for another of my brief scenes, I was changing or running to another entrance. This allowed for little quit time to get in the right headspace. Some performances I was more successful at accessing that state than others. I found that the moments that landed with the audience the best, and created performances I was pleased with, were inspired in the moment. Coming on stage I largely didn't know what my reactions to specific moments of emotion would be. For example, when I walked away from Cinyras. When I did what felt right in that moment it created a more powerful performance.

Aside from method, one of the most valuable things I learned as an actor through this process was the ability to roll with changes. Due to recent events in our community, the creative team and my scene partners came to the collective decision that it would be best to cut Myrrha's suicide from the show. This was to protect our audience members who would be particularly sensitive to the suggestion of suicide, even if the act was not carried out. The last thing that we

wanted was for the integrity of the scene to be compromised by the audiences' painful reactions. While the decision made sense, it was still a big change to make a week before the show. The pain of making that change brought me closer to the character. I feel so much love towards her that the shifting of her scene forced me to reconcile my own emotions with the ones she feels in the show. However, by calmly handling and implementing the change in a collaborative way, I was able to feel supported through making that change and incorporating it into the show.

The ensemble was the most important part of *Metamorphoses*. It was wonderful to have my character ahead of time, having the chance to dive deeply into her, but the work really started when we got the full cast. It was an incredibly special group of people and I will treasure the bonds that I have with them. As an actor, it was a wonderful opportunity to collaborate with talented actors. The ensemble became even more important as we built our version of the show. From the very beginning the text was not sacred. We cut it up as suited our needs and the needs of our community. I learned about collaboration through working with our creative team and my scene partners. There was an incredible sense of ownership as cast members had equal opportunity to contribute our thoughts to the direction of the overall show and each scene. I have never felt that personally invested or valued as a cast member and appreciated the chance to input thoughts and feel supported by those around me. It made for a safe and comfortable space to explore difficult themes as an actor. And I couldn't have imagined what the response to the show or my scene would be, but it was good to know I had the support of those around me, creatively and personally.

This was an incredible experience and a fantastic journey. I couldn't be more grateful that it was my last show at Pomona. I believe that this show will leave a lasting impact on the department as well as everyone who worked on it. I know that it has left a lasting mark on me.