A Trauma-Informed and Consent-Based Approach to Directing Undergraduate Student Actors: The Development and Execution of THEA 351: Performance Practicum – The Revolutionists

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A Trauma-Informed and Consent-Based Approach to Directing Undergraduate Student Actors: The Development and Execution of THEA 351: Performance Practicum – *The Revolutionists*

by

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Based on my research over the last three years and my previous experience, I was excited for the opportunity to direct undergraduate students through a production process that was trauma-informed, consent-based, and compassionate. Despite numerous challenges, my efforts proved to be very successful, and far more important and meaningful than I even realized when I embarked on this journey.

My research and practice in consent, boundary practices, and trauma-informed pedagogy is heavily informed by seminars I have taken with Theatrical Intimacy Education (TIE), namely two 2-day workshops in their general practices in theatrical intimacy, a Trauma-Informed Best Practices workshop, and a Consent in the Acting Classroom workshop. I have also studied educator guides, articles, best practices, and books on the subject. My approach was adapted from TIE practices and this research for this process.

Trauma-informed approaches are not only beneficial to those who have experienced specific personal traumas, but to all involved. As educators, we may not know if our students are coming into our spaces having experienced personal trauma, and we must be mindful of the collective trauma of the past 2 years of living through a pandemic. “Trauma-informed educators and learning environments benefit everyone: those whose trauma history is known, those whose trauma will never be clearly identified, and those who may be impacted by the behavior of trauma-affected students. Through trauma sensitivity, educators can ensure all learners are given the opportunity to achieve at their highest levels” (Cole et al., 2005).

There are many elements of trauma-informed, consent-based best practices that were important for me to incorporate. I sought to create a rehearsal space and community that celebrated autonomy of the students and gave them agency, to apply specific group boundary
practices that included emotional, social, cultural, and physical boundaries, and to foster a community of collaboration. I aspired to recognize the student/teacher-actor/director power dynamic while flattening the power hierarchy.

The key strategies I brought to my approach are based in research and have proved successful in other teaching settings. Kacey Rodenbush describes in her presentation “The Effects of Trauma on Behavior in the Classroom,” “trauma-informed educators maintain a consistent schedule and classroom structure, model flexibility when faced with unexpected changes to their routine, and help trauma affected students recognize their progress by providing ongoing positive feedback in the face of obstacles and highlighting students’ strengths.” I set out to achieve each of these goals, found them to be of utmost importance in the process, and believe I was successful in implementing them. It was also imperative in this process to empower the students to achieve at high levels, encourage their agency and control in their own lives, and to check in frequently with the students (Carello and Butler, 2014; Hoch et al., 2015).

Also in this process, I wanted to address and change the overwhelming grind culture that I’ve found pervasive and toxic in theatre communities. In my personal experience in college theatre, students were expected to devote their entire selves to classes and productions. There was no room or accommodating for the occurrences of life, like traffic, family life, other classes, or illness and trauma. Furthermore, there was no culture of caring for yourself and others. I do not believe this to be a healthy environment and aimed to change it in this process. I believe that work that maintains high standards can be accomplished while recognizing that students are experts in their own lives and feelings, and taking into consideration and working around the lives of the students.
With these goals front of mind, I prepared for this process. In the first of many challenges faced, I did not end up directing my first choice of plays. Upon my first reading of Sarah Treem’s *When We Were Young and Unafraid*, I found it to be a powerful study of many important and relevant themes, including feminism, domestic violence, abortion rights, and relationships between women. I appreciated the way it looked at the growing feminist movement of its time from the perspectives of a variety of women. I was encouraged by its opportunities for diversity in the casting.

I realized that given the subject matter of the play, particularly domestic violence and feminism, there was the excellent opportunity to have post-performance discussions with the audiences. I decided that these post-performance discussions should feature experts in the fields of domestic violence effects and prevention, and feminism. There was a clear opportunity to partner with the Marriage and Family Therapy and Gender Studies departments at LMU, as well as potential partnerships with a local domestic violence shelters/centers. Not only did I want to have these experts for the post-performance discussions, I wanted them to be an early part of the actors’ character development and research. I believed it was essential to portray these characters and tell this story accurately and with sensitivity. This was all detailed in my written proposal to the theatre department season selection committee (see “Appendix A”).

I was informed that my proposal was accepted and moved forward beginning research on the play. On June 1, 2021, I met with Kevin Wetmore, head of the MFA program and thesis advisor, and Katharine Noon, department chair, over Zoom to discuss expectations and responsibilities of directing. They informed me that I would receive a budget of $500, and a student stage manager. I would have no other student or faculty support. I asked to clarify if I could recruit student designers or assistant directors, and was told no. I was disappointed to learn
this because I felt it was a missed opportunity for the undergraduate students. I thought that I would have the opportunity to work with and mentor undergraduate students interested in lighting, costume, sound, and set design.

After this meeting I continued my research on the play, and trauma and consent. On October 7, 2021, I reread the play with the lack of support or crew in mind. It was very clear to me as I reread that this play was not going to be possible under the circumstances presented to me. *When We Were Young and Unafraid* requires a full kitchen set, numerous entrance and exit points, including stairs, costume changes, on-stage hair changes, on-stage cooking and eating, and on-stage blood effects. With no assistance in design or backstage crew, I quickly realized this was not the play to do under these circumstances. It was just not going to be possible to execute in the manner that I desired.

I recalled a play that I had put in my back pocket, so to speak, that I wanted to propose once I was working as a professor and director in a college theatre department – *The Revolutionists* by Lauren Gunderson. It was perfect. It also had a very strong foundation in feminism and relevant themes of revolution, art and advocacy, equality, sisterhood, and legacy. I saw the production in my head as I reread it. I envisioned it being staged with minimal sets and production elements. It’s about the performances, the words and message, and the relationships between the characters. Directing this play would give me the opportunity to really work with the undergraduate actors to develop their skills, talents, and best performances. I informed Kevin Wetmore that I wanted to change plays (see “Appendix B”) and he requested that I write an explanation of my choice for the selection committee. I wrote a new proposal that once again laid out my values and planned approach to directing undergraduates, as well as the features of the play, opportunities for the undergraduate students in learning, and adherence to the values of
the season manifesto (see “Appendix C”). On October 29, 2021, I was informed that *The Revolutionists* had been approved.

Again, I immediately dove in to the research process. Three of the four characters in the play are real, historical figures, so there was much research to be done. I read as much as I could about the French Revolution, Olympe de Gouges, Charlotte Corday, and Marie Antoinette, as well as the Haitian Revolution and free Black people living in France at the time. There was so much stimulating history to learn about and so many historical references in the play. I knew that this would be an exciting opportunity to teach the students the value of researching a play and a character. This proved to be true later in the process when one of the actors texted me out of the blue on Spring Break, weeks after their initial research began, that she had found a documentary about her character that she was excited to watch and share her findings from. The actors became excited about their research.

I began to plan the syllabus and rehearsal process that included the elements of my research and my approach. I built in a significant amount of time on the first day of rehearsal for establishing the culture and community in which we wished to work. As the process continued and evolved, I maintained our rituals and the foundation of my approach through every rehearsal (see “Appendix D”).

It was important to me and my process to establish ritual, routines, rhythms, and community from the very beginning of the rehearsal process. We did not even read the script on the first rehearsal. We began by circling up, briefly introducing ourselves with our names, pronouns, and roles. I then led them through a brief breathing and grounding moment. I explained that we would begin every rehearsal with circling up, group breathing, and warm ups. I
made clear that this time was for them to ground themselves in the moment and come together as an ensemble. I told them that the warm ups were for them and that they should feel free to share what they needed to warm up and that while I was happy to lead them, that they should also jump in to lead if there was a particular warm up or exercise they liked. I wanted them to know that it was their time and to ask for what they needed. Later in the process I would ask the actors to lead specific aspects of our warm ups, such as alliteration exercises.

We then sat down in a circle to get to know one another. A trauma-informed space must be culturally competent (Pace, 2021) and I wanted us to understand the community of students we would be working with. I asked each actor to introduce themselves and share their story with us – where they’re from, how they got here, what they hope to do in the future, favorite foods, pets, etc. I believe it is important to get to know the people you will be working with on a deeper level than just their name as soon as possible, so this was vital time spent. It built community and community protects from harm and trauma.

As a group, we then determined our rehearsal schedule. I knew the number of hours I wished to rehearse per week, but left it up to the students to decide when we would meet. I think this went a long way in developing the culture of autonomy. In further interest of autonomy and agency, I informed the cast that I wanted them to research their characters and present their findings for one another. I allowed them to decide how much time they needed to begin this research and when they would make these presentations.

Next we reviewed the proposed syllabus (see “Appendix E”). Most notably, I left blank a section of community guidelines for them to determine how we work together and what our values are. Each actor contributed to our community guidelines and I wrote them down to add to
the syllabus and shared it with them in a follow up email. I was impressed by the values they espoused. The actors expressed immediately that they appreciated this approach.

I then shared with the actors an article titled “Instead of a Vision: Listening and Dialogue as the Work of a Theatre Director” by Charlie Peters from HowlRound that I found deeply inspiring and true to my own personal approach and values (Peters, 2021). Reading the article with the cast was an excellent way to begin to show them that I wished to de-center myself in the teacher/director position, and instead wished to be a listener and facilitator for their own creativity and ideas. The actors thanked me for sharing the article as well as for the mind set. They shared that they were excited to work in this way because previous directors they had worked with were “my way or the highway” directors that imposed their ideas upon them.

We followed up our first rehearsal with a successful week that included continuing to build community and ritual, and a first read through. I was deeply touched by how moved the actors were by the play during our first read through. I knew I had made the right decision on the play itself and the casting.

On the day of their scheduled character presentations, I planned the rehearsal to begin as usual with our ritual circling up, check in, and warm ups, followed by their character presentations, and then taking the actors through concepts of consent, explaining the self care cue word “Button” to them, and boundary practice. While it was fine for me to wait to introduce boundary practice to them as they were not doing any physical work, I now know that I need to introduce “Button” at the very first rehearsal. The concept of the use of “Button” is that it is a self-care cue word for anyone involved in a class or rehearsal process to use to “indicate that the action needs to pause for a moment” (Pace, 2020). When someone says “Button” all pause and
the facilitator asks the person what they need. They could need anything – a break, to ask a question, or to express that a boundary has been breached. As Chelsea Pace explains in her book *Staging Sex* and TIE workshops, “This tool is effective because it gives the actors a chance to breathe and something to say when their Fight-Flight-Freeze response takes over” (Pace, 2020).

Again, I learned in this process that I need to offer this tool at the very first rehearsal. During the students’ character presentations, one of the actors became overwhelmed by emotions and past trauma she was dealing with outside the rehearsal space. Unfortunately, I had not yet provided them with the tool of “Button” which would have stopped the presentations and allowed the student to immediately express what she needed. However, I had in our short time together established trust with the ensemble. Fortunately, she felt comfortable sending me a text message explaining that she was not emotionally well and needed a break. While this was not the best way for this to happen, I was encouraged that she felt brave enough to take this step. As I checked my phone for the time, I saw her text message and was able to immediately send us to a break.

At this point I was grateful to have had training and been certified in Mental Health First Aid. As the other actors went on break, I approached the actor in crisis to see what she needed. At this point she had clearly been attempting to hold her emotions in and she broke down in tears. She explained to me what she was experiencing. I asked her if she wanted me to contact Student Psychological Services (SPS) and she said yes. I took her outside to a secluded area, and called SPS only to find out that their services were closed for the night. As I attended to the student in crisis, I made sure that she felt safe, was breathing and drinking water, and was remaining present with me in the moment. I explained that SPS was closed and asked if she needed emergency services. She said she did not, so I asked her what she did need. She said
when she gets upset like this she usually speaks on the phone with her dad. I asked if she wanted me to escort her to her dorm and if her roommates would be there if she needed assistance. She said yes to both. I quickly informed the other actors that their cast mate was not feeling well and that we would be taking an extended break so I could escort her home. On the entire walk she spoke to me about how she was feeling and what was going on for her. I just listened and made sure she knew I was there for her. I was grateful that she felt comfortable speaking to me. When we arrived at her dorm, I told her to contact me if she needed anything. I asked her to assure me that she would contact SPS in the morning for further treatment, and for her consent for me to check in with her that night and the following morning via text message. She said yes to both and thanked me.

When I got back to rehearsal, I checked in with the other actors to see how they were feeling, if they had any questions, or needed anything, and if they wished to continue. They were concerned about their cast mate, but were fine to continue. We heard one more character presentation and then ended early because I didn’t want to continue without the full ensemble. I checked in with the student in crisis via text message after we wrapped up rehearsal and she assured me that she was feeling better, speaking to her dad, and thanked me for being so understanding and listening. I again asked her to follow up with SPS the next morning and confirmed that I would check in with her. Luckily, the next day we were not scheduled to rehearse, so she had a night off to rest and recuperate, but I did continue to check in with her.

This was one of the first incidents that validated my approach to this process. Although I had not yet introduced tools such as “Button,” it was clear that the actors already felt they were in a safe space in which they could be brave and express what they needed as humans, not just
actors. Again, I maintain that my Mental Health First Aid and trauma-informed training allowed me to stay calm in the moment and deescalate the situation.

Unfortunately, this was not the last mental health incident that would occur during this process. The same student went on to have two more mental health crises over the course of the rehearsal process, each one increasing in intensity. Each time I was able to deescalate the situation, keep her safe and supported, ensure that she was receiving the appropriate services from SPS, and quickly adapt our rehearsal plan to care for the whole team. This student would express to me at the end of the process just how grateful she was for how I handled each of these situations and cared for her well-being without judgment. I’m honestly not sure if she could have continued the rehearsal process and complete the performances if a director had not been mindful of trauma and mental health care. As these incidents took place in the presence of the whole ensemble, after each occurrence I was careful to check in with the other cast members to ensure that they also felt safe and supported, and were getting what they needed. I was also very proud of the bond and community that was able to form in the rehearsal process as I witnessed them supporting each other.

Our rehearsal process was also full of illnesses that often resulted in having to adjust rehearsal plans on the fly or cancel altogether. One student developed Covid, another had the flu, and almost all of the actors experienced some other sort of debilitating malady during our rehearsals. These incidents once again tested my approach to the rehearsal process and my assertion to put the actors’ health and well being first. When they would inform me of being unwell on a particular rehearsal day, I could sense their initial trepidation and desire to “push-through” despite not being well. In each case I assured them that their well being was of utmost
importance and that they should take care of themselves and not come to rehearsal. They were grateful each time and I felt positive about the culture I was fostering.

Over the course of our rehearsal process we were without two actors for a week each and canceled, shortened, or drastically adjusted eight rehearsals. While I was concerned losing all of this time with the cast as a whole, I was adamant that I would not ask an unwell student to attend a rehearsal. I was also very mindful of the other cast members whenever we faced a change in plans or cancellation. I always gave them as much notice as I could, and offered alternatives, like meeting with me one-on-one or rehearsing without the whole cast. In as many ways as possible, I left decisions up to them while making myself available. I did insist that we take breaks during the weeks, and not overload them. In the end, we only added one additional rehearsal to our schedule. I believe this kept the cast healthier both mentally and physically, and ultimately we were still ready for performances. I believe this process was an excellent demonstration that rehearsal processes can put the cast’s mental and physical health and well being first and still accomplish the goals of a production.

Aside from the success of my trauma-informed and consent-based approach to the rehearsal process, there were a number of other practices that I will repeat in my future work. I approached this rehearsal process as a learning experience for the student actors and myself. One of the biggest successes was collaborating with other theatre artists. While I knew that I wanted the production to be focused on the characters and their relationships with one another, I also believed that the actors would be deeply influenced by period-style costuming and movement. I asked a professional costume designer, Aja, with extensive period accurate experience, to join the production. I know from my own acting experience what it does to your performance to wear the appropriate period garments and to learn about the lifestyles of the character you are
embodying, and I wanted these students to have that experience and gain that knowledge. I was also keenly aware of how different the movement of the period was from the actors’ contemporary movement. I asked Christine Breihan to join the production as a movement consultant.

Interestingly enough the conversations that I had with both Christine and Aja included that while the play is set in a time period, it is not a “period piece.” It is anachronistic for emphasis of themes and humor. But I maintained that in order to break the rules one must first know the rules and why it’s significant to break them. I had also seen Christine instruct groups of students through an introduction to Laban work and wanted to introduce the cast to that as an additional vocabulary to work with. I had noticed very early on that the actors had a tendency to be afraid to both stand still and to move, and I believed that working with Christine on period movement and Laban could open the door to addressing this.

It was wonderful that I was able to bring in both Aja and Christine on the same rehearsal evening. Aja gave a design presentation and the actors learned what they would be wearing and why their character would have worn it. They were incredibly excited and took diligent notes and photos. Their interest in further research and exploration of the time period was clearly piqued.

Then Christine worked with them for the remaining two hours. She spent the first half of her time with them on period movement, including lifestyle, status, manners, and etiquette. I watched as the actors flourished and made enormous strides in embodying their characters immediately. She spent the second half of her time with them introducing them to the Laban efforts. Again, I saw lights go off for the actors as they had epiphanies about their characters and
the tools they could use to portray them. I made notes of when I saw these epiphanies and was able to bring them up in later rehearsals to remind the actors of what they were able to do.

This collaborative rehearsal was so successful. I was amazed by how much the actors continued to learn about the time period and clothing they were to wear after each fitting and in their final performances. In subsequent rehearsals, I incorporated a period movement refresher into our warm ups that immediately allowed the actors to drop in to the physicality of their characters.

This collaboration was another area in which I wanted to explore the de-centering of myself in the rehearsal process. I do not have the expertise that Aja or Christine have, but by collaborating with other artists like them, the students’ learning, experience, and performances were enriched.

Again, despite the many challenges we faced, I believe the process we undertook made for immense learning and resulted in excellent performances. I was incredibly impressed by the growth in the acting abilities of the students. I would spend as much time on table work as we did when I direct in an educational setting again. We took the time to read through the scenes all together and determine the beats. I explained to them the acting approach of assigning actions to each beat for their characters to achieve their objectives. I made clear that these were not written in stone and that they would change as they rehearsed, but that they would be an interesting jumping off place for their characters. They responded well to this concept and took the time on their own to explore what these actions could be. Later on in the rehearsal process when we would discuss notes, a number of times an actor would say, “Well, I was trying to VERB.”
Which made it easy for me to respond with, “Oh! What if you tried DIFFERENT VERB instead?!”

While we were not able to spend as much time exploring deep scene study as I might have liked, I believe the overall process, from table work to blocking to repetition with notes, taught them a great deal about how to approach a character and how to do some work on their own. Through the process I was able to address with the actors varieties of ways and tools to convey strength and intensity, and find balance and nuance in extremes. I emphasized the importance of listening to your scene partners, and the need for your character to have opinions about everything they say, talk about, and do. It was a joy to watch their acting skills develop even in our short amount of time, and I was so pleased with their performances. I believe they will be better actors for having undertaken this process.

There were certainly many further challenges unrelated to the cast with which I had to contend. It was very important to me to not share the majority of these challenges with the cast. I did not want them to feel slighted or that they were not getting the same experience as another student who was cast in another Performance Practicum course. Regardless of the stress these challenges caused me, it was the students’ experience, aside from what I could provide, that concerned me the most. However, based on what I witnessed and the feedback from the students, I was able to mostly shield them from the issues we faced, and they had an excellent experience despite the challenges.

For the majority of the rehearsal process we did not have a stage manager. The first student that was supposed to serve as our stage manager was unavailable to be at our performances, and then had to quit entirely because she was cast in another production. It was
only when tech week began that we actually had the help of a novice student stage manager. Her contribution in the time she was with us was wonderful, but for the overwhelming majority of rehearsals I had to act as time-keeper and note-taker, follow along in the script so that the actors could call line, all while watching the performances and taking diligent notes for growth.

The rehearsal room process within the department was unclear and unfair. Although our rehearsal schedule was set after our first rehearsal and there were rooms available at the time I requested them, we were not granted the liberty to book these rooms. When I inquired about why the rooms had not been reserved for us, I received a brusque email insisting that the department “can not [sic] commit a space to a non-season show 4 nights a week for most of the rest of the semester” (see “Appendix F”). We continued to attempt to rehearse in spaces that showed up as available on the department calendar, but were often relegated to the basement or kicked out of a space because another production had booked it mere hours before. Again, this disappointed me for the students. They deserved a space to rehearse just as much as another production. They were enrolled in a Performance Practicum course just like other students whose productions were deemed part of the season.

Which brings up another issue – the department was unclear on how to handle our production. It was not a part of the season according to the season posters and the previously referred to email when we needed space, but it was required to be approved by the season selection committee. I was not included in production meetings, but when there were not as many seats offered for the public it was referred to as a department project. This really complicated many aspects of the production. Again, I tried to shield the students from these challenges, as I felt it was unfair to them.
Another challenge arose surrounding the number of seats available for the public and how quickly the performances sold out. When I learned how few seats were available in the house, I strongly believed that it was important that the cast was able to ensure that their loved ones were able to get tickets. With only 42 seats in the house this left very few seats open to the public, and the remaining seats “sold out” almost immediately. The cast was disappointed that many of their professors and classmates were unable to get tickets. I was personally surprised that there was no process in place for department faculty and staff to reserve tickets. The students came to me with their frustrations before a rehearsal. Once again I was proud that within the culture we had established that they were comfortable speaking to me about their feelings. I heard them and addressed their concerns as much as I could. I explained that we could not add a performance because we only had purchased the rights for two performances. They had not dealt with the purchasing of rights before and understood after I explained. I promised that I would try to fit as many seats in the house as possible, but that the space was limited. One solution I informed them of was that we could have a limited invited final dress rehearsal and that they were welcome to invite guests. I also asked six members of my family not to attend the production, and these seats were made available to the public. In the end, I felt that the cast appreciated that I heard them and I was trying to find solutions and doing what I could to get as many people to see the production as possible.

It is very clear to me after this process just how important it is to have clear communication and production meetings with all productions represented. There were so many instances and issues that arose from my not being invited to production meetings. In my future teaching and directing for college departments, I will ask to be present in department production meetings. I learned that within the dynamics of a theatre department it is imperative to advocate
for oneself and one’s students. I believe I will be more prepared to do this and to identify red flags after working through this process.

Despite the challenges this process faced, it was incredibly successful. The feedback I received from the student actors was very positive. They had a highly constructive learning experience and were able to successfully mount a production they were proud of. They learned the value of researching roles from many different angles. Their performances grew exponentially from the auditions to the final performance. I saw them make great strides in their acting abilities, listening, making choices, and responding to feedback conscientiously and effectively.

I demonstrated that one can effectively direct a full production with undergraduate actors with a compassionate, trauma-informed and consent-based approach. One can put the health, well-being, and humanity of the students first and still do good work in a limited timeframe. This success is invaluable for our field. This approach is often met with pushback suggesting that there’s not enough time to be sensitive or to apply boundary practices, but I have shown that not only is it possible, it is better. Because of the elements introduced in the rehearsal process, like rituals, check ins, boundary practice, feedback for growth, and collaborative work, we were able to truly create an ensemble that supported one another, encouraged taking risks, had fun together, and did good work. This made the process and the product so much stronger.

Another criticism of this type of approach is that it does not train the students for the “real world.” To that I say that the students we, as educators, work with today are the actors, directors, stage managers, designers, and producers of tomorrow. If they have these positive experiences, and see and feel the success, they will create and work in environments with similar
values. I truly believe it is possible for our industry to change, and that experiences like this production of *The Revolutionists* will set the path in motion.


*Olympe de Gouges*. in60Learning, 2019.


When We Were Young and Unafraid by Sarah Treem
Directed by Amanda Hallman for the LMU Theatre Department Season Spring 2022

My vision for this production is for the entire process to be a learning experience, for the actors, for the production team, for myself, and for the audiences. While I believe that we will produce an excellent, nuanced performance, my goal is to focus on process over product. This is an ensemble piece all around and I look forward to building and fostering that ensemble in production meetings, rehearsals, and eventually performances and talkbacks.

I have always directed from a place of collaboration rather than authority. Given my recent studies in equity, diversity, and inclusion, anti-racism, culturally competent teaching, and trauma informed pedagogy, I seek to work even harder and with more mindfulness to flatten the hierarchy in the rehearsal room and production meetings, to provide innovative and mutual feedback for growth, and to de-center myself in the process. I’m excited to explore what I have learned in my studies and combine these practices with the values I have always upheld in the rehearsal and production process, including high-levels of collaboration, actor agency, and positivity.

I believe I have much to share with a cast of students and that they have much to share with me. One aspect of my work that I am excited to explore with the cast and team is the research I have been doing on consent based practices, boundary practices, and intimacy choreography techniques. I plan to incorporate all of these practices into the everyday routine of the rehearsal process. Given the nature of the subjects addressed in this play I believe these practices will be imperative to avoiding harm and fostering a brave space for creativity and growth. I also believe in educating young people on these practices so that they may go on to expect them and advocate for them in their future work.

I would be thrilled to work with student designers and stage managers on this production. As a learning process, I see no better experience than the opportunity to work on a production and collaborate for the most successful outcomes. Given the possible limitations in space and budget we may face, I will be excited to explore student designers’ creativity and to problem solve with them. I do envision this production utilizing elements of realism in the stage design but I do not think we will need to build a full kitchen set. There are elements that will be needed but I am excited to get creative with a team to ensure that the center of the production is the learning, growth, storytelling, and performances.

If a graduate student is cast as the role of Agnes, I believe it will be incredibly beneficial and informative for the undergraduate students, the graduate student, and me to work together. We will learn from one another in this process. The undergraduate actors will have the opportunity to act opposite a more seasoned actor with professional experience, take part in collaboration with myself, the graduate actor, and one another, and be emboldened to think critically about their own processes as well as my own and the graduate actor’s.
I envision this production to include a partnership with the Marriage and Family Therapy program and/or the Women and Gender Studies Department at LMU, and an external organization that works to support the victims of domestic violence and educate on its prevention. I hope to include these partners before rehearsals begin to educate us on the facts and psychology of domestic violence, as well as have periodic check-ins throughout the rehearsal process for questions that may arise. I aim to give those of us involved in this production as much knowledge and awareness as possible in order to serve the subject most effectively, consciously, and respectfully. Participants from these partnerships would also serve as experts during talkbacks that would be held following the performances. I hope to receive grants to provide the funding to compensate these experts for their time and participation.

This play fits within the values of the LMU Season Manifesto, and the process of production that we will undergo will strongly uphold these values as well. I believe both the process and the production itself, including the partnerships and talkbacks, will absolutely transform and educate, as well as entertain.

Written by a female-identifying playwright, the play itself specifically includes diversity in age, gender, and sexual orientation, and is open to diversity in ethnicity, race, disability, and neural status. I selected this play because I believe it has an important story to tell that is rooted in feminist themes. I appreciate that it questions what the rise of feminism in the early 1970’s meant for a diverse range of experiences.

I believe that this cast, production team, and crew will represent a talented and diverse selection of students. I am deeply committed to identity-conscious casting. I will consider each actor for the talent, unique history, and experience they will bring to the table and be mindful of the stories their identities tell within the framework of the story. While the characters in this play are not written with any ethnic specifications, I am aware of avoiding certain narrative tropes that could develop with casting choices (eg. the “white savior”) and will actively work to avoid these. I will also be mindful of telling a story that is representative of the historical context of the play. I will be highly conscious within my casting and the handling of the identities of the students who are cast.

I see many opportunities to involve a diverse range of student designers, student stage managers, and student fight choreographers (if available and safe), providing as many opportunities for the undergraduate students as possible.

This production experience would fulfill a number of theatrical forms, genres, and encounters listed in the manifesto. This would be a thorough experience with realism and contemporary drama, an opportunity to take part in community engagement, and to work with both fight and intimacy choreography. Furthermore, students will have the opportunity to engage with period costuming and theatrical make-up effects.
I am hopeful that by the time Spring 2022 arrives we will be able to work in spaces without masks, and that Barnelle will be available. I will need to address this choice if we will have limitations.

I am excited to embark on this production for my thesis as an MFA Performance Pedagogy candidate. I truly believe that the entire process will be a culmination of the work I have been doing in this program, and an educational and positive experience for the students involved. I look forward to implementing the theories and techniques I have studied and developed in order to cultivate a brave space for learning and collaboration for all involved.

Proposed Rehearsal Schedule –
I look forward to further discussing a schedule in order to better understand the typical rehearsal schedule of LMU productions, but I would very much like to work to develop a schedule in which time is not at a deficit to allow for a democratic process, partnerships, flexibility, and learning. I realize this will be challenging, but I am committed to fostering these principles, as well as an environment that recognizes the challenges of student productions and the lives of the students involved.

Spring 2022
1 week of auditions
11 weeks of rehearsal, 4 days a week, 3.5 hours per day (or 3 days a week, 4 hours per day) – evenings and/or weekends

Week 2 – 2 evenings of auditions with monologues or sides (2 nights to allow for the most opportunities for students to participate, and sides available for equitable opportunities for students without monologues prepared to participate) – can be in conjunction with other auditions

2 evenings of callbacks (if possible)

Week 3 – Community agreements, community building, consent and boundary practices, training/education with LMU/Community partners

Week 4 – Research and questions, Table work Act 1, Table work Act 2, Table Read-through

Weeks 5 – 7 – Rehearsals, LMU/Community Partner check-in

Week 8 – Spring Break

Weeks 9 – 11 – Rehearsals, LMU/Community Partner check-in

Week 12 –
Tech Rehearsals
Tech Run-through

Week 13 –
Dress Rehearsal Act 1
Dress Rehearsal Act 2
Full Dress

Performances with talkbacks following
Possible additional performance for community partners

Week 14 – Postmortem
Hello Kevin,

I have been doing a lot of work in preparation for my thesis production. In yet another read of When We Were Young and Unafraid last week, I finally came to the realization that this is not the right play to do under the circumstances of this production. There are far too many production elements and effects, eg. blood, special effects make up, costume changes, wig changes, and practical food, not to mention a set, to be able to accomplish without a design team or crew. I realized that my attention would be too removed from the experience of working with and teaching the actors.

I would like to direct The Revolutionists by Lauren Gunderson instead. This play requires far fewer production elements but the strong, challenging characters, as well as a feminist approach and critical analysis of the relationships between women, remain. The fewer production elements will allow me and the undergraduate actors to really focus on achieving their best performances possible.

I want to be clear that the values that I wrote about in my proposal for When We Were Young and Unafraid remain unchanged. I am committed to approaching this process with the focus on learning, highlighting the importance of process over product in the educational setting, and utilizing the elements of consent-based practices, boundary practices, and trauma-informed pedagogy that I have been studying these past few years. I also maintain that I will approach this production with a commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, culturally competent teaching, and identity-conscious casting.

I realize that we have already secured the rights for When We Were Young and Unafraid so we will have to see about changing the rights over to The Revolutionists. They are both Dramatists owned so I imagine we can change them fairly easily. I am happy to work Jeanine on this process.

Please let me know if you would like to meet to discuss this change or anything else I need to do to
move forward. I am happy to hop on a zoom call this week.

I truly believe that the experience of the production of The Revolutionists will be better for all involved.

Best,

Amanda

Amanda Hallman
MFA Performance Pedagogy 2022 Candidate
Department of Theatre and Dance
Loyola Marymount University
She/Her/Hers
Proposal for LMU Spring 2022 – *The Revolutionists* by Lauren Gunderson
Directed by Amanda Hallman

OLYMPE:
How can these men hate a declaration of women’s *equality* when that’s exactly what *Egalité* is!

MARIANNE:
But *Fraternité* it is not.

OLYMPE:
*Goddammit.* What the hell is this revolution about? Ugh. World changing should be easier.

...  
MARIANNE:
Ok they say write what you know, right? But what if you write what you *want.* That’s what we’re really fighting for isn’t it? Women’s agency over their own lives.

OLYMPE:
Yes.

MARIANNE:
The abolition of slavery across the planet.

OLYMPE:
Yes.

...  
OLYMPE:
Now, the first act ends with Olympe convincing the Queen to work *with* the revolutionaries to create a Constitutional Monarchy that truly embraces *Liberté, Egalité*–

MARIE:
*Sororité.*

OLYMPE:
Yes. The country is saved by its women.

Set during the French Revolution’s Reign of Terror, *The Revolutionists* pits 4 badass women from diverse backgrounds against the insanity and horror of revolution out of control and a society led by hypocritical, violent men. These 4 badass women are real-life, historical figures –
feminist playwright Olympe de Gouges, Haitan rebel and abolitionist Marianne Angelle, activist-assassin Charlotte Corday, and a confused, yet sympathetic Marie Antoinette. The script employs hilarious comedy, heart-breaking tragedy, and complex relationships to address issues of feminism, equality, theatre and activism, justice, revolution, and legacy. It asks what the limits are to art, violence, sisterhood, and revolution. Unlike many other stories of the French Revolution, it does not ignore that there were black people in France at the time fighting for freedom from colonialism. It demands that no one is free unless we are all free. It challenges us to think how we really go about changing the world.

I believe these themes and inquiries are as timely as ever. We – our students, our audiences, and ourselves – live in a time of fear, uncertainty, and upheaval. We wonder how we can continue with such a drastic wealth gap. We see people crying for “Freedom,” while harming their neighbors. We fear for the future of our democracy. As we fight for equality, justice, and freedom, we see civil rights, reproductive rights, voting rights, human rights being stripped from us. It sure feels like we are on the brink of revolution, if not a societal collapse. We wonder where and how our voices can be heard. This is the time to question the status quo, to celebrate diversity, to focus on the intersectionality of the human experience, to address systemic oppression, to examine our role in revolution, and to fight for the rights of all. This play inspires and advances these perspectives.

In addition to its relevant and timely themes, exceptional dialogue, and compelling characters, this play requires minimal production elements. I envision a set grounded by a couple of furniture pieces and large stacks of manuscripts, and costumes inspired by period-appropriate garments that the characters remain in throughout the play. Most, if not all, other elements will be achieved with lighting. This simple production footprint will allow me and the undergraduate actors to really focus on learning, developing, and achieving the best experiences possible.

This play highlights the values of the LMU Season Manifesto, and the process of production that we will undergo will strongly uphold these values. I believe both the process and the production itself will absolutely transform and educate, as well as entertain.

My goal for this production is for the entire process to be a learning experience for all involved. While I believe that we will produce an excellent, nuanced performance, my goal is to focus on process over product. This is an ensemble piece all around and I look forward to building and fostering that ensemble.

I have always directed from a place of collaboration rather than authority. Given my recent studies in equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, culturally competent teaching, and trauma-informed pedagogy, I seek to work even harder and with more mindfulness to flatten the hierarchy in the rehearsal room, to provide innovative and mutual feedback for growth, and to de-center myself in the process. I’m excited to explore what I am learning and combine these practices with the values I have always upheld in the rehearsal and production process, including high levels of collaboration, actor agency, and positivity.
I am deeply committed to identity-conscious casting. I will consider each actor for the talent, unique history, and experience they will bring to the table and be mindful of the stories their identities tell within the framework and historical context of the play. I will be highly conscious within my casting and the handling of the identities of the students who are cast. I believe I have much to share with a cast of students and that they have much to share with me.

One particular aspect of my work that I am excited to explore with the cast and team is the research I have been doing on consent and boundary practices. I plan to incorporate these practices into the everyday routine of the rehearsal process. These practices are imperative to avoiding harm and fostering a brave space for creativity and growth. I also believe in educating young people on these practices so that they may go on to expect them and advocate for them in their future work.

This production experience will fulfill a number of theatrical forms, genres, and encounters listed in the LMU Season Manifesto. Students will engage with elements of comedy, drama, farce, song, complex language and dialogue, period-esque costumes and make-up, and historical reality and fiction. The all-female characters are diverse, nuanced, and bold; truly dream roles for any actor and extraordinary opportunities for undergraduate actors. The actors involved will learn about researching and portraying real-life historical characters, explore stylistic comedy and tragedy, and delve into rich character development and relationship building.

I am excited to embark on this production for my thesis as an MFA Performance Pedagogy candidate. This entire process will be a culmination of the work I am doing in this program, and an educational and positive experience for the students involved. I look forward to implementing the theories and techniques I have studied and developed in order to cultivate a brave space for learning and collaboration for all involved.

Proposed Rehearsal Schedule –
I look forward to developing a schedule in which time is not at a deficit to allow for a democratic process, flexibility, and learning. I realize this will be challenging, but I am committed to fostering these principles, as well as an environment that recognizes the challenges of student productions and the lives of the students involved.

Spring 2022
1 week of auditions
7 weeks of rehearsal, 4 days a week, 3.5 hours per day (or 3 days a week, 4 hours per day) – evenings and/or weekends

Semester Week 4 (January 31 – February 2) – 2 evenings of auditions with monologues or sides (2 nights to allow for the most opportunities for students to participate, and sides available for equitable opportunities for students without monologues prepared to participate) – can be in conjunction with other auditions, 1 evening of callbacks
Week 5 – Community agreements, community building, consent and boundary practice introduction, Table Read-through

Week 6 – Research and questions, Table work Act 1, Table work Act 2

Week 7 – Rehearsals

Week 8 – Spring Break

Weeks 9 – 11 – Rehearsals

Week 12 –
Tech Rehearsal
Tech Run-through
Dress Rehearsal

Performances (April 1-2)

Week 13 – Postmortem
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circle Up and Stretching/Breathing</td>
<td>Name, Pronouns, Role</td>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>Share your story of who you are. Questions welcome. I go last.</td>
<td>7:10 PM</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehearsal Schedule</td>
<td>Is it ok to share the schedule you shared on your audition form?</td>
<td>7:50 PM</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabus Review</td>
<td>Registration, Community agreements and expectations</td>
<td>8:10 PM</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Script, Notebook and pencil, Journal, Assignment - Research and song, when should it be due?</td>
<td>8:25 PM</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What's needed</td>
<td></td>
<td>8:40 PM</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read: &quot;Instead of a Vision&quot;</td>
<td>Read together out loud then discuss</td>
<td>8:50 PM</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch: Oversimplified French Revolution</td>
<td></td>
<td>9:00 PM</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion/Wrap Up</td>
<td>Meditation/Breathing; Thing you’re most looking forward to</td>
<td>9:45 PM</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9:50 PM</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Circle Up and Stretching/Breathing</td>
<td>How will we warm up? What do you need?</td>
<td>7:15 PM</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions/Reactions from Day 1</td>
<td>Anything that came up for you</td>
<td>7:25 PM</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create Group Chat</td>
<td></td>
<td>7:30 PM</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Act 1</td>
<td>Write down questions and key words, share questions</td>
<td>7:35 PM</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
<td>8:35 PM</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Act 2</td>
<td>Write down questions and key words, share questions</td>
<td>8:50 PM</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debrief</td>
<td>Fittings</td>
<td>9:50 PM</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion/Wrap Up</td>
<td>Meditation/Breathing; What is your biggest challenge right now</td>
<td>10:00 PM</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10:10 PM</td>
<td>175</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Circle Up and Introductions</td>
<td>Tell them about New Works</td>
<td>7:15 PM</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions/Reactions from Day 2</td>
<td>Anything that came up for you</td>
<td>7:20 PM</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fittings/Check ins</td>
<td>How’s your research going?</td>
<td>7:25 PM</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
<td>8:25 PM</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Talk about next week:</td>
<td>8:40 PM</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Journal - what does your research tell you?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>What do you want to work on as your character?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What questions remain for you?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Monday - character presentations, show presentation,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>boundary practice, song work; Wednesday - on our feet!</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion/Wrap Up</td>
<td>Meditation/Breathing;</td>
<td>8:50 PM</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is your biggest question about your character right now?</td>
<td>8:55 PM</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<td>CANCELLED</td>
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<td>Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Circle Up, Check In, and Stretching/Breathing</td>
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<td>7:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Questions/Reactions from last week</td>
<td>Anything that came up for you</td>
<td>7:10 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Character Presentations</td>
<td>with discussion</td>
<td>7:15 PM</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show Presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td>7:55 PM</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
<td>8:05 PM</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundary Practice</td>
<td>Consent - FRIES; Button - self care cue word; Show on self where consenting to touch, Fences, Gates; Each day boundary check in, can request boundary review any time;</td>
<td>8:15 PM</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
<td>8:45 PM</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakdown beats</td>
<td>Decide on beats, discuss references. Homework: Assign objective, obstacles, and possible actions you want to try to your beats</td>
<td>8:50 PM</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
<td>9:35 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breakdown beats</td>
<td>Decide on beats, discuss references. Homework: Assign objective, obstacles, and possible actions you want to try to your beats</td>
<td>9:40 PM</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion/Wrap Up</td>
<td>Meditation/Breathing; Review Act 1 for Wednesday</td>
<td>10:25 PM</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>10:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<td>Timing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Circle Up, Check In, and Stretching/Breathing, Voice Warm Ups</td>
<td>Consent - FRIES; Button - self care cue word; Show on self where consenting to touch, Fences, Gates; Each day boundary check in, can request boundary review any time</td>
<td>7:10 PM</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boundary Practice</td>
<td></td>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
<td>7:45 PM</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lia Character Presentation</td>
<td>with discussion</td>
<td>7:50 PM</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakdown Beats in Act 1, Scenes 1 and 2</td>
<td>Decide on beats, discuss references. Homework: Assign objective, obstacles, and possible actions you want to try to your beats</td>
<td>8:00 PM</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
<td>9:00 PM</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin Staging Act 1, Scene 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>9:10 PM</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin Staging Act 1, Scene 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>10:10 PM</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion/Wrap Up</td>
<td>Breathing/Shake Off</td>
<td>10:25 PM</td>
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<td>10:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>No Isabel, All on Zoom</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Circle Up, Check In, and Stretching/Breathing</td>
<td></td>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions/Reactions from Yesterday</td>
<td>Anything that came up for you</td>
<td>7:05 PM</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain Button to Quinn</td>
<td></td>
<td>7:10 PM</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakdown beats for Act 1, Scene 1 and 2</td>
<td>Decide on beats, discuss references. Homework: Assign objective, obstacles, and possible actions you want to try to your beats</td>
<td>7:15 PM</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
<td>8:10 PM</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breakdown beats Act 1, Scene 3, &quot;...&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>8:20 PM</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pages 38 - 41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakdown beats for Act 2, Scene 1 and 2, Pages 46 - 52</td>
<td>&quot;...&quot;</td>
<td>8:50 PM</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
<td>9:20 PM</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakdown beats for Act 2, Scene 3, Pages 54 - 57</td>
<td>&quot;...&quot;</td>
<td>9:25 PM</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read from Notes if time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakdown beats for Act 2, Scenes 5, 6, 7</td>
<td>&quot;...&quot;</td>
<td>9:45 PM</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion/Wrap Up</td>
<td>Breathing/Shake Off</td>
<td>10:20 PM</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>10:30 PM</td>
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Appendix D

Thursday, 2.17
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cancelled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle Up, Check In, and Stretching/Breathing</td>
<td></td>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Questions/Reactions from Yesterday</td>
<td>Anything that came up for you</td>
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<td>Stage Act 2, Scene 3</td>
<td>Lia, Quinn; 54-57</td>
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<td>Return to Act 1, Scene 1</td>
<td>Quinn, Lia, Loviisa; Act 1, Scene 1, 7-22</td>
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<td>Quinn, Lia, Loviisa; Act 2, Scene 2, 50-51</td>
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<td>Lia, Loviisa; Act 1, Scene 4, 42-45</td>
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<td>Stage Act 2 Scene 3</td>
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<td>Return and Restage Act 1 Scene 3</td>
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<td>Review Act 1 Scene 4, Act 2 Scene 3</td>
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<td>Conclusion/Wrap Up</td>
<td>Come with a line memorized to work with on Wednesday; Bring skirts and shoes; Breathing/Shake Off</td>
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<td>Character Movement/Laban Work</td>
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<td>Conclusion/Wrap Up</td>
<td>Breathing/Favorite thing you wish to explore from today/Shake Off</td>
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<td>Talia not called</td>
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<td>Circle Up, Check In, and Stretching/Breathing</td>
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<td>Boundary Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Begin staging Act 1, Pages 7-13, and Act 2,</td>
<td>Quinn and Lia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pages 54-57, and Act 2, Pages 60-63</td>
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<td>Stage Act 1, Pages 13-22, and Act 1, Scene 2,</td>
<td>Loviisa joins</td>
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<td>Pages 33-34, and Act 2, Scene 2, Pages 50-51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review Staging</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion/Wrap Up</td>
<td>Breathing/Shake Off</td>
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<td>Circle Up, Check In, and Stretching/Breathing</td>
<td>Tell them about Isabel, rehearsal skirts, Lia texted that she'll be late</td>
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<td>Boundary Practice</td>
<td>Revised schedule - Pages 31-33, 33-34, 46-49, 63-65</td>
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<td>Review Act 2 Scene 4 Pages 57-60, Run Through Act 1 Scene 1?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss memorization and coming weeks of rehearsal, practice period movement</td>
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<td>Conclusion/Wrap Up</td>
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<td>Talia out sick, Loviissa joins at 8</td>
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<td>Stretching/Breathing</td>
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<td>Invite Lia to share what she learned</td>
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<td>Practice Song</td>
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<td>Read Notes on the show/characters</td>
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<td>Rehearse beats Act 1 Scene 1</td>
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<td>Break</td>
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<td>Continue to rehearse beats Act 1 Scene 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rehearse Act 1 Scenes 2-3</td>
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<td>Schedule Fittings for Thursday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion/Wrap Up</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talia coming late if at all</td>
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<td>Circle Up, Check In, and Stretching/Breathing</td>
<td>Address no mask mandate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invite Lia to share what she learned</td>
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<td>Practice Song</td>
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<td>Read Notes on the show/characters</td>
<td>Discuss</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rehearse beats Act 1 Scene 3, Pages 38-41, from Olympe's entrance</td>
<td>Hold for Talia</td>
<td>7:40 PM</td>
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<td>Rehearse beats Act 2 Scene 1, Pages 46-49</td>
<td>Loviisa and Lia work on Act 1 Scene 4 in greenroom</td>
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<td>Rehearse beats Act 2 Scene 2, Pages 50-51</td>
<td>Start here</td>
<td>8:55 PM</td>
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<td>Break</td>
<td>Release Loviisa and Talia?</td>
<td>9:20 PM</td>
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<td>Rehearse beats Act 2 Scene 3, Pages 54-57, from Olympe's entrance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rehearse beats Act 2 Scene 5, Pages 60-63</td>
<td>Then here unless Talia joins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion/Wrap Up</td>
<td>Breathing/Shake Off; Reminder about fittings and timing tomorrow</td>
<td>10:25 PM</td>
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<td>210</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quinn called for fitting</td>
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<td>6:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lia called for fitting</td>
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<td>Rehearse beats Act 1 Scene 1</td>
<td>Lovissa called for fitting</td>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
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<td>Continue rehearsing Act 1 Scene 1</td>
<td>Talia called for fitting</td>
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<td>Continue rehearsing Act 1 Scene 1</td>
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<td>Conclusion/Wrap Up</td>
<td>Breathing/Shake Off</td>
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<td>Get out of costume</td>
<td>Discuss make up?</td>
<td>10:05 PM</td>
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<td>Stretching/Breathing</td>
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<td>Rehearse beats Act 1 Scene 4, Pages 42-45</td>
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<td>Rehearse beats Act 1 Scene 4, Pages 42-45</td>
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<td>Rehearse beats Act 2 Scene 3, Pages 52-54</td>
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<td>Conclusion/Wrap Up</td>
<td>Breathing/Shake Off</td>
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<td>Basement</td>
<td>Review tech schedule; Sunday performance time; discuss rehearsing over the weekend; ask if they would like bios in the program and program name; Discuss fittings; Kevin observing</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Practice song</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period movement refresh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stumble through Marie's entrance to end</td>
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<td>Rehearse beats end of Act 1 Scene 1, Pages 22-33</td>
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<td>Break</td>
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<td>Finish end of Act 1 Scene 1</td>
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<td>Rehearse beats Act 1 Scene 4, Pages 42-45</td>
<td>Quinn and Talia work Act 2 Scene 1</td>
<td>9:55 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion/Wrap Up</td>
<td>Breathing/Shake Off</td>
<td>10:25 PM</td>
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**Performance Practicum: The Revolutionists**
Department of Theatre Arts
Loyola Marymount University
THEA 351 Section 04
3 credits
Spring 2022
Time: Varies
Location: Varies

Instructor: Amanda Hallman (she/her/hers)
Office Hours: By appointment, please email to schedule a time
Email: ahallma1@lion.lmu.edu    Phone: 714-292-3271
Preferred method of contact: Email or text

**COURSE DETAILS**

**Catalog Description:**
The application of actor training methods and techniques to departmental productions.

**What to Expect from this Course:**
In this course we will rehearse as an ensemble for a full production of *The Revolutionists*. We will create and foster a culture and community of consent and respect. We will investigate how actors prepare, research, study, and rehearse for roles, as well as acting best practices and processes. Through exercises, reading, and discussion, we will highlight key values of theatre and acting that will resonate in all areas of your life, such as identity, self-confidence, collaboration, and communication. This course will be a fun and challenging exploration of self, others, history, script, theatre, performance, and acting.

**Prerequisite Course(s):** None

**Lab Fee(s):** None
Learning Outcomes (LO) for this Course:
By the end of the course, students will:

1. Build a supportive, collaborative community of artists,
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the art of acting and performance,
3. Develop respect and appreciation for the art of acting and performance,
4. Understand and demonstrate best practices in establishing a culture of consent and boundary practices,
5. Be able to understand and demonstrate the skills of script analysis,
6. Be able to understand and demonstrate the skills of character analysis,
7. Be able to understand and apply research, exercises, processes, techniques, and tools actors use,
8. Acquire skills that will be transferrable to their further studies and career paths, and
9. Complete a full rehearsal process and production.

Community Agreements:
As a community we agree to:

- Respect one another’s boundaries and apologize in a meaningful way if we accidentally cross those boundaries,
- Appreciate one another for each community member’s individualism and lived experience,
- Communicate in excess and ask questions,
- Recognize and embrace one another’s strengths and challenges,
- Have fun,
- Not be afraid to be ourselves,
- Take risks, make mistakes, and learn and grow from them,
- Fully engage and participate,
- Be active listeners and value what others share,
- Cultivate and nurture a judgment-free zone,
- Ask for clarity when needed,
- Approach all feedback for growth, and
- That what’s learned here leaves here, what’s said here stays here.

Required Materials:

- Script and pencil
- Notebook/Journal and pen/pencil (the writing tool you feel most comfortable with and can access quickly during class. Digital note taking is also acceptable.)
- Access to the Internet, Zoom, the class Brightspace, and the LMU Library online

As of 2/8/22

**Syllabus dates and timeline are subject to revision. All updates will be posted on Brightspace. Students will be notified within reasonable time and are responsible for staying up to date with revisions on Brightspace.**
Required Texts:
All texts will be made available via the class Brightspace, the LMU Library online, or the internet. Texts will include, but are not limited to:
- *The Revolutionists* by Lauren Gunderson
- Excerpts from *Acting and Living in Discovery* by Carol Rosenfeld

Basic Course Structure:
- Attendance and participation
- Community building, improvisation, and exploration
- Table work
- Research and character analysis
- Rehearsal and exercises
- Technical and dress rehearsals
- Performance

Rehearsal Calendar
Begins Monday, February 7, 2022 –
Mondays – 7:00 pm – 10:30 pm
Wednesdays – 7:15 pm – 10:30 pm
Thursdays – 7:15 pm – 10:30 pm
Fridays – 5:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Important dates:
Spring Break (no rehearsals): Monday, February 28 – Friday, March 4

Tech/Dress Week: Monday, March 28 – Friday, April 1, excluding Thursday, March 31

Performances: Saturday, April 2 (8:00 pm) and Sunday, April 3 (TBD)

Strike: TBD (likely following performance on April 3)

Post-mortem - TBD

Grading
Grading Scheme:
A+: 100% to 99%  
A: 98% to 90%  
B: 89% to 80%  
C: 79% to 70%  
D: 69% to 60%  
F: 59% or below

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Grading will be based on:
Attendance and Participation – 35%
Research and Worksheets– 30%
Preparedness – 30%
Journal – 5%

Class Policies
Attendance and Participation:
As an ensemble, it is vital that we are at rehearsal when we have agreed to be. Rehearsal attendance is essential to successful learning in this course and a successful production. Obviously, issues will arise however. Please notify both the stage manager and director if you will be late or unable to make it to rehearsal as soon as possible.

Work Load Expectations:
The credit standard for a 3-unit standard 15-week course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit), which includes regularly scheduled instructor:student meeting times. For our purposes these approximately 135 hours will take place over the course of the 7 week rehearsal process. Students should also anticipate needing additional time outside of class to complete assignments and prepare. The University’s Credit Unit Policy can be found here: https://academics.lmu.edu/aprc/Imucredithourpolicy/

Cell Phone Policy:
Unless specifically called for or out of necessity, cell phones are to be out of sight during class time.

Email Communication:
I will communicate with the class and individual students using campus email, so it is essential that you regularly check your lion.lmu.edu email account.

Statement on Sensitive Nature/Intimacy:
Due to the nature of this course, you may encounter sensitive subject matter or be asked to engage in content with members of this class. It is vital that all members of the course – students, guests, and instructor – maintain a high level of respect and a heightened awareness of one another. If any aspect of this course causes any level of physical or emotional discomfort, please immediately notify me and your scene partner (if applicable).

(Adapted from Theatrical Intimacy Education)
The job of the theatre artist is to truthfully poetize life. Often the content of the material in the theatre artist's work deals with life issues that may reflect personal experiences similar to that of the artist. Learning to maintain a professional attitude and instill self-care are essential tools

As of 2/8/22

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to develop to maintain a healthy balance with the work and life. We will learn and work with actor boundary and consent techniques in this course. If the work in class feels activating and/or triggering the following is some vocabulary to help you in these moments, which will be explored further in class:

- Please say, "Button" or Double Clap
- Please say, "I feel activated, please give me a moment."
- In the moment please check in with yourself, if it works for your boundaries to use what you are feeling that is up to you. If you need support beyond the instructor abilities, the instructor will support you in receiving that support.

The student is encouraged to seek out the appropriate support when subjects in the classroom, rehearsal, or performance feel difficult to balance. The student actor is encouraged to make an appointment to speak to the instructor when and if the student is having this experience. The instructor will guide you to the appropriate resources on campus. The instructor will also make assignment accommodations if needed.

**Student Psychological Services**

LMU's [Student Psychological Services](#) also offers free and confidential counseling to students who have experienced sexual and interpersonal misconduct.

- Location: North side of the Burns Recreation Center, second floor
- Phone: (310) 338-2868
- Virtual Resources can be found [here](#).

**Community of Care**

LMU's [Community of Care](#) is an interdisciplinary team of trained professionals from Student Affairs, Academic Affairs and the Department of Public Safety (DPS) that meets regularly to collaboratively address the needs of students of concern, monitor student behavior, direct students/faculty/staff to campus and community resources and consult with departments or individuals impacted by a student's behavior.

Make a Community of Care Referral [here](#).

**Caretaking Policy:**

I understand that we all have important responsibilities to others in our lives. Please communicate your needs to me as they arise. You do not need to disclose the issues you may be contending with, but please open the line of communication so that we may work together to meet your needs.

**Land Acknowledgment**

The Theatre Arts Department at LMU acknowledges our presence on the traditional, ancestral, and unseeded territory of the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples. We are grateful for the opportunity to share, listen, learn, and create on this stolen territory.

*As of 2/8/22

**Syllabus dates and timeline are subject to revision. All updates will be posted on Brightspace. Students will be notified within reasonable time and are responsible for staying up to date with revisions on Brightspace.*
We acknowledge the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (the Los Angeles basin and So. Channel Islands). We pay our respects to the Honuukvetam (Ancestors), ‘Ahihirom (Elders) and ‘Eyohiinkem (our relatives/relations) past, present and emerging. (Adapted from Kristina Wong & UCLA’s)

Please consider the following questions (Source – Angela Two Stars and Rihanna Yazi):

- What is your intent being on this land and in this community?
- How will you use the new resources you gain by being here?
- How will you replace the things that you take from here?
- How will you carry the knowledge of the native people, present, past, and future, into the work that you do?
- How will you increase indigenous power?

Find the native lands you live or study on: Native Land Tracker - https://native-land.ca/

**CFA & LMU Policy Statements**

**Attendance:**
The College of Communication and Fine Arts understands the critical importance for students to attend classes on a regular basis. Such critical importance recognizes not only the value of in class instruction, but also in-class participation as opportunity and necessity for students to practice voice and be co-creators of meaning in the educational endeavor. Such required regular attendance recognizes that physical presence and active participation is essential to engaged/embodied learning. Each department and faculty have established an “Attendance Policy” that is included on class syllabi and reflects the broader university principles on attendance. Such policies, in any given CFA department, might outline the number of excused absences a student can incur without negatively impacting the grade on an individual assignment or the final grade in a class or even the conditions relative to the consideration of an “I” (Incomplete) grade.

With that stated: In the spirit of cura personalis, CFA also recognizes the exigencies of living that impact all members of our academic community. Hence, we recognize the exigencies of living (e.g. personal emergencies, natural disaster, traumas in local culture and community, etc.), that impact the ability for students to attend class. Yet it is imperative for the student to provide timely notification of obstacles for consideration of absences to the professor-of-record. Students might then engage all the resources of the university (e.g. LMU Cares, Community of Cares, Student Psychological Services, etc.) to assist to them. Such consideration, if granted by the professor-of-record, does neither absolve nor negate the student responsibility to complete assignments and meeting course requirements. If granted, such recognition may only allow the professor-of-record to not count the absence in relation to grading practices linked with absences.

As of 2/8/22

**Syllabus dates and timeline are subject to revision. All updates will be posted on Brightspace. Students will be notified within reasonable time and are responsible for staying up to date with revisions on Brightspace.**
Academic Honesty:
Loyola Marymount University is a community dedicated to academic excellence, student-centered education, and the Jesuit and Marymount traditions. As such, the University expects all members of its community to act with honesty and integrity at all times, especially in their academic work. Academic honesty requires that all members of the LMU community act with integrity, respect their own intellectual and creative work as well as that of others, acknowledge sources consistently and completely, act honestly during exams and on assignments, and report results accurately. As an LMU Lion, by the Lion’s Code, you are pledged to join the discourse of the academy with honesty of voice and integrity of scholarship.

Academic dishonesty will be treated as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that can range from receiving no credit for assignments/tests to expulsion. It is never permissible to turn in any work that has been copied from another student or copied from a source (including Internet) without properly acknowledging/citing the source. It is never permissible to work on an assignment, exam, quiz or any project with another person unless your instructor has indicated so in the written instructions/guidelines. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work meets the standard of academic honesty set forth in the “Academic Honesty Policy” found at: https://academics.lmu.edu/honesty/ For an additional resource, see and the “LMU Honor Code and Process” found at: https://bulletin.lmu.edu/content.php?catoid=1&navoid=18#LMU_Honor_Code_and_Process

Special Accommodations:
The DSS Office offers resources to enable students with physical, learning, ADD/ADHD, psychiatric disabilities and those on the autism spectrum to achieve maximum independence while pursuing their educational goals. Staff specialists interact with all areas of the University to eliminate physical and attitudinal barriers. Students must provide documentation for their disability from an appropriate licensed professional. Services are offered to students who have established disabilities under state and federal laws. We also advise students, faculty and staff regarding disability issues. Students who need reasonable modifications, special assistance, academic accommodations or housing accommodations should direct their request to the DSS Office as soon as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. The DSS Office is located on the 2nd floor of Daum Hall and may be reached by email at dsslmu@lmu.edu or phone at (310) 338-4216. Please visit http://www.lmu.edu/dss for additional information.

Tentative Nature of the Syllabus:
This syllabus and its contents are subject to revision; students are responsible for any changes or modifications announced or distributed in class or posted on LMU's course management system.

As of 2/8/22
**Syllabus dates and timeline are subject to revision. All updates will be posted on Brightspace. Students will be notified within reasonable time and are responsible for staying up to date with revisions on Brightspace.**
Expectations for Classroom Behavior:
All students are expected to behave respectfully, safely, and civilly at all times. Disrespectful, disruptive, or reckless behavior will harm your final grade and may be subject to disciplinary action.
As an LMU Lion, by the Lion’s Code, you are pledged to join the discourse of the academy with honesty of voice and integrity of scholarship and to show respect for staff, professors, and other students.

Reporting Requirements of Sexual or Interpersonal Misconduct:
As “responsible employees,” faculty are required to report any case of suspected sexual or interpersonal misconduct and cannot protect student confidentiality. For information about confidential counseling on campus and for general information about consensual relationships, sexual harassment, and sexual assault, please see the LMU Cares website: http://studentaffairs.lmu.edu/lmucares/.

Emergency Preparedness:
To report an emergency or suspicious activity, contact the LMU Department of Public Safety by phone (x222 or 310-338-2893) or at the nearest emergency call box. In the event of an evacuation, follow the evacuation signage throughout the building to the designated safe refuge area where you will receive further instruction from Public Safety or a Building Captain. For more safety information and preparedness tips, visit http://www.lmu.edu/emergency.

As of 2/8/22
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Amanda,

We can not commit a space to a non-season show 4 nights a week for most of the rest of the semester.

Your request is being
Looked at by Katharine and Kevin to find a fair solution.

For the time being please understand that your is one of 6 different productions that is requesting space.

R
Sent from the device with the tiny keyboard that likes to autocorrect.

On Feb 15, 2022, at 1:42 PM, Hallman, Amanda <ahallma1@lion.lmu.edu> wrote:

Hi Tania,

I wanted to follow up on the rehearsal schedule plan that I sent last week for space requests. I see that they are not yet on the calendar. Would it be helpful if I added each of them to the calendar to save you the time? I’m just worried that the spaces will begin to fill up as so many things will be rehearsing, and I don’t want to miss out on having a space to rehearse. For example, I see that “Rodriguez Showcase Rehearsals” has been added in Foley 110 this Thursday from 6 pm to 8 pm, which is during a time that I had requested.

The rehearsals for this production are a class that students are registered for and the students should have a space to rehearse.

I’m copying the original request I sent below for quick reference:

It appears that Foley 110 is available at all of these times -
Mondays - 7:00 pm - 10:30 pm
Wednesdays - 7:15 pm - 10:30 pm
Thursdays - 7:00 pm - 10:30 pm (this Thursday, 7:15 pm to 10:30 pm - Foley 100)
Fridays – 5:30 pm – 9:00 pm  
(Until the week of March 28)

Please let me know how I can help get on the calendar.

Thank you,

Amanda

Amanda Hallman  
MFA Performance Pedagogy 2022 Candidate  
Department of Theatre and Dance  
Loyola Marymount University  
She/Her/Hers

From: Hallman, Amanda  
Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2022 4:00 PM  
To: Walls, Tania  
Subject: Releasing Space

Hi Tania,

I will not be needing Foley 100 tomorrow, Friday, February 11th for rehearsal.

Please let me know when my other rehearsal spaces requested for the following weeks have been approved.

Thank you,

Amanda

Amanda Hallman  
MFA Performance Pedagogy 2022 Candidate  
Department of Theatre and Dance  
Loyola Marymount University  
She/Her/Hers
September 30, 2021

I was really moved by the HowlRound article “Instead of a Vision: Listening and Dialogue as the Work of a Theatre Director.” I think this is how I already work, but reading it express it fully was just fantastic. I will definitely be sharing the article with the cast during the 1st week of rehearsals and community building time.

October 7, 2021

Today I sat down to reread WWWYAU to start looking at the practicalities like set, props, costumes, etc. I realized that there was no way I’d be able to do this show with no designers or backstage crew. It requires a full kitchen set. They cook on stage. There are costume changes referred to in the dialogue. They are supposed to dye a characters hair onstage. There is onstage blood. I just don’t think I can do it alone.

So I’ve been thinking. I love The Revolutionists and had planned on directing it at some point once I’m working as a professor. I think it could be a really good option. I’m going to reread it.

October 8, 2021

The Revolutionists is perfect! It’s hilarious and feminist. It has some diversity. And it barely needs a set. I think I can achieve what I want with a bare set and lighting and costumes. I really like this show.

I’m going to email and let them know I need to change plays.

Week of January 10, 2022
Wrote in rough preliminary blocking. Planned layout. Should work with entrances and exits. Excited to see what the actors bring to the blocking. Need to get rehearsal props.

Week of January 17, 2022

Detailed lighting needs in script. Established detailed breakdown spreadsheet. Hope MOB plat can achieve my needs.

January 19, 2022

Costume Design Meeting

Great meeting! Totally on the same page.

Shared my vision: It’s Olympe’s story, she’s a writer, everything is inspired by, made of paper/writing, unfinished, still writing it.

Olympe’s impression of each character:

Marianne – strength

Charlotte – virtue

Marie – redemption

Lots of texture, parchment

January 24, 2022

Incredibly frustrated with trying to schedule spaces. I don’t feel like this project is given any priority. I’m trying to communicate well, but being met with minimal, limited communication in return. I don’t feel supported by the department. I should have been included
in department production meetings since last semester. The need to decide if this is a department production, and treat it that way, or not. The y can’t have it both ways. If they demand oversight, they need to support the production as a full department productions. Feeling very dejected.

Trying to get the word out about my auditions. Not getting as much support as I’d like. There has to be a better way to inform students about a performance opportunity. I’m worried what I’ll do if I don’t get more students to audition.

January 27, 2022

Today I went to Stacey’s acting class to plug my auditions. This was essentially the first time I had to teach with the new grade of more intense face masks. I’m so concerned about rehearsing a show in masks. I hope I am able to keep the cast in good spirits and comfortable. I’m experiencing a lot of imposter syndrome. I know I always feel this way before a project and then I am pleased when I’m in it, so I’m just trying to keep reminding myself of that.

I got the ground plan for MOB today. It’s not the seating layout that Jason said it was. I’m going to need to rearrange the seating risers and add more. I really wish I had support in this and someone to talk through these issues with. As with every step of this process I’m just on my own and supposed to figure it out. It would be so much easier for everyone involved if I could sit in the space with someone who knows the risers and the calendar and figure out what’s going to be there, what could be there for my show, make decisions, and then figure out when it can happen. Why is that too much to ask?

On Monday I will ask to meet with Jason and Rob in the space to discuss options.

February 3, 2022
I am now at the end of audition week. It’s been a long and trying week but I believe I have the best cast I could have under the circumstances presented. I’ll review some of the challenges here.

Getting signups was an uphill battle but in the end, I saw 26 auditions. I wish there had been a more direct way to inform students about auditions. All the majors and minors should be directly emailed at least. The next hurdle was very challenging and sensitive. There is an amazing, strong, dynamic character in the show that is specifically a black woman. It is a fantastic role and the heart of the show. Her blackness is germane to the character and story, and is celebrated. It is one aspect that drew me to the play. Early on in the signups it was clear that I was not getting any black students signing up. I don’t know if this is due to an aversion to department productions because of past issues, if my advertising didn’t speak to the black students, or if there are too many other opportunities for black actresses this semester. I’m unclear what I, a white woman, am supposed to do in this situation. In the end, I had only one black woman audition. This disappointed me a great deal because I didn’t want her to feel any tokenism.

I brought her back for callbacks as her audition showed that she had good stage presence. I felt very disappointed that she was the only actor I could call back for the role. During callbacks she showed signs of understanding and power. In the end, I cast her. For the role, she is very young and green. I will have to work very hard with her. I will need to help her find her maturity, her power, and her strength. I’ve decided to bring Christine in to do Laban work with the cast which I think will help. I will also try to work with her make simple adjustments like widening her stance and using her lower register.
Another issue that came up this week was stage management. On Monday, Jason messaged me to let me know that someone had volunteered to stage manage. I met her on Tuesday, when I was in the midst of holding auditions. It was clear that she had no experience in stage management and no idea what it entailed. I told her that we would meet more formally to review her role but, in between auditions, I tried to give her an idea of what her responsibilities would be. I was clear she didn’t know what she was signing up for. She stuck around for a while and then asked to leave to do homework. I said of course and that I would need her much more later. On Wednesday, for callbacks, she showed up about 15 minutes late. She then informed me that she has a prior conflict for the dates of the production. All things considered, I’m hoping she can start the process with us. That I can teach her how to start a prompt book, record blocking, and produce rehearsal reports. Then hopefully a more experienced stage manager (maybe from Barbeque) can step in and take the lead and teach her more about stage management. I really think I deserve to have an experienced or at least trained student as a stage manager. Again, I ask if this is considered a department production or not? And the only thing I was told I would have was a stage manager.

February 10, 2022

Rehearsals started this week. Things are going well. The cast is very eager and excited. On Monday we spent some time getting to know each other, establishing community agreements, and watching a video about the French Revolution. I think it was a good primer for them to jump off from and into their research. I informed them that I want them to give character presentations on their research and they decided to have these due the following Monday. That was not the day I had planned on but I’m glad to practice what I preach and give them the autonomy to decide.
Last night we had our first read through. It went very well and they were emotionally affected by reading the script. I will plan on introducing simple de-roling techniques, because I think they will benefit from them.

I feel like I’m floundering a bit when it comes to warm ups. I’m trying to establish ritual, but don’t quite feel it yet. (We’ve only met twice, I should give myself some grace.) But I told them the warm up is for them and they can ask for whatever they need, or lead us through a warm up they like. I’ll reiterate that again next week.

I’m losing almost 2 days due to costume fittings and an actor’s previous engagement. I’m sure it will be alright but I wish we had these days for more table work.

I’ve asked Christine to come do movement and Laban with them. I think that will really help them.

Future plans include establishing beats and assigning objectives and actions to them. I hope this speaks to them.

I continue to be stressed by scheduling spaces and technical aspects. There is just so much unknown.

February 14, 2022

Tonight during character presentations I had an actor have a mental health crisis. Most unfortunately I had not explained “Button” to them yet. It was actually on my schedule for later that evening. Very important learning moment for me to introduce that in the very first rehearsal.

The actor texted me during the presentations, but I didn’t see it because I wasn’t checking my phone. She had texted me that she was not mentally feeling well and was trying to keep it
together but struggling not to cry. When I saw the text I immediately went to break and went over to her. I checked in and said it was ok for her to go home. I asked what she needed and she said she wasn’t sure. I said that I would take her anywhere and asked if she wanted to speak to a professional and she said yes. I realized that SPS was closed so I started looking up after hours options. I realized I should have had these numbers at the ready before. I have since added the numbers to my phone.

There were no after hours services available so I asked her if she wanted to go back to her dorm. And if she felt safe there and if there was someone she could talk to. She said yes and that she could talk to her dad. I informed the other actors that I would be walking her to her dorm. And we left. On the walk she just talked and talked and I just listened. When she went inside I told her to text me if she needed anything and that I would check in on her tomorrow. I walked back to rehearsal. I checked in with the rest of the cast. We finished the last character presentation. I told them that I had other things planned but didn’t want to do them without the full ensemble. They were very understanding.

February 15, 2022

I checked in with the actor dealing with the mental health situation this morning. She is feeling better and taking care of herself. She scheduled an appointment with SPS. She thanked me for listening and walking her home without judgment.

I reached out again because my rehearsals are still not on the calendar. I received a very rude email back from Rob informing me that they “cannot commit a space for a non-season show 4 nights a week for most of the rest of the semester.” The spaces I have requested appear available on the calendar. And this is a course on the books. I just don’t understand. I don’t
understand why an undergraduate senior thesis is on the production calendar and season posters, but I’m not. Why do they get support but I don’t? I’m incredibly frustrated and stressed by this. I also feel hostility from Rob, who I’m supposed to work with, and can’t imagine he’ll take any time to support this production, which seems unfair.

I’m becoming increasingly concerned about my rehearsal time. I should have planned for 8 weeks. Especially with student issues arising so frequently.

February 17, 2022

I now have an actor out with Covid. I will lose 4 days of rehearsal with her. I’m hoping she can Zoom in for table work tonight.

I began blocking a scene last night. It is clear that the basic framework I came up with will not be enough for these actors. They are young and afraid to both move and stand still. I will need to get much more detailed in the blocking.

February 23, 2022

Tonight was a really great rehearsal. We started the evening with a design presentation from our costume designer. She went over each aspect of their costumes and its history and design elements with each of the actors, and shared sketches of the designs we have agreed upon. They were so excited to learn what they will wear and its history. I could tell this will really help them envision themselves in character. They also got their shoes which they can wear in rehearsal which will also help. They were so excited!

Then for the next two hours Christine came in to do movement work with them. It was fantastic! The first half Christine focused on period movement and status. I think having just had
the design presentation really helped. They were absolutely different actors walking around the space in a version of their characters. It was great. One of the things Christine and I discussed with them is that this play is anachronistic. But that it was important for them to understand the movement and status rules for the time in order for it to be significant when they break them. They did so well!

Then, for the remaining hour, Christine took them through and intro to Laban. I really wanted them to have this basis and common language we could all use. I think it’s a great other way in for actors, especially if they might not respond to action verbs. This was also great for them! I saw them have these beautiful little epiphanies. I think they really found moment of different elements of their characters than they expected. I wish we could have spent more time with it actually but I’m excited to see how it changes them and to encourage them to use what they learned in future rehearsals.

February 25, 2022

Tonight we finished blocking the whole show. I can already see the growth in them from the night of movement work and was able a few times to reference something Christine had taught them in order to make an adjustment. I really hope they spend a lot of time over Spring Break getting off book. It would be great to come back after break and really dive into beat work, character, motivations and actions. I have/we have a lot of work to do, but I feel like they’re in good shape.

March 3, 2022

We’re on break but today one of the actors texted me to share that she watched a documentary pertaining to her character and that she’s excited to share what she learned with us
I’m so thrilled that she’s not only continuing research but is excited about it. I feel really good about the environment I’ve created that they are excited about research. I think that will be a great thing that they have learned walking away from this project.

March 8, 2022

I’m at my wit’s end. I’m not even sure where to begin. On the way to rehearsal last night an actor texted me that she was feeling sick. I told her to stay home and get a Covid test. There are a lot of scenes we would work on without her. Originally I had called all of the actors at 7:00 because I wanted us to all regroup as an ensemble after break. But with this actor out, I realized that we couldn’t do that. So I texted another actor to tell her she could come at 8 and I could work with the 2 other actors for the first hour.

I arrived and set up in Foley 110 which was available per the online calendar and the calendar posted outside the room. One of the actors arrived. At 7:05 I told her that we were waiting for her cast mate and that I was going to give her a few minutes before I checked in with her. At 7:10 I texted her asking if she was ok and was going to make it to rehearsal. I then began working one-on-one with the actor present on a monologue. At 7:35 the missing actor texted me that she had some flight issues and didn’t make it back on time. She had forgotten to inform me. I was very frustrated but held it together in front of the other actor and texted that I hope she got home safely. I’m still not sure how she didn’t think to let me know.

I then let the actor called at 8 know that we wouldn’t be able to rehearse as planned but that I’d be happy to work with her one-on-one. She said she’d come in. I continued to work one-on-one with the actor present which was actually really nice. She is such a talented actor. I think we really made some strides with some of the comedy. She’s got the earnest part down.
Then Johnny came in to ask what our plan was because Octagon was supposed to have their rehearsal in there. I seriously do not understand how I am supposed to hold rehearsals when there is nothing on the calendar, I can’t get on the calendar, and I am just kicked out of a rehearsal space because an undergraduate senior thesis wants to be in the space. There was nothing on the calendar! Why can’t they use the calendar? I was checking the calendar all day to see if we could use the space! I feel so bad for the actors in our show. They are registered and signed up for Performance Practicum just like everyone else. Why should they be treated like second class citizens and forced to move rehearsal space and rehearse in the basement? When the actor I was working with first started our work in 110 that night she said how nice it was to have so much space to work in. And then we’re kicked out and forced into the basement because another show, a staged reading, needs the larger space? It was humiliating and definitely demoralizing for the actors.

Regardless, we found ourselves in the basement. The second actor of the evening agreed to stay for some one-on-one work. I finished up with the first actor and then the 3 of us talked about some details I had learned about one of the characters. Then I worked with the second actor. We made some very good progress and addressed her tendency to equate emotion or intensity with a higher pitch in her voice. We worked on using other tools to convey intensity and using a lower register. It was a good rehearsal despite all of the challenges.

I did however receive an email response from Jason during rehearsal that had me disheartened. He warned me that I would very likely have to work within the MOB seating configuration because New Works would be using it after us. There are so many disappointing and problematic things about this. Why, if there are 3 shows back to back, was I not consulted so that the 3rd show would use my slightly adjusted light plot and seating configuration? Why am I
constantly being treated with disdain for trying to make a good production and experience for the actors? The other problem with this is that I requested a meeting with Jason to address these issues on February 8! A whole month ago. I never got a response until I asked again yesterday. I seriously don’t know how I am going to restage the whole show. I could have done so a month ago. But I was still hopeful that I was willing to provide all of the labor to make it work.

Jason’s email also included that he had found me a new stage manager. EXCEPT she is in the dance show that is teching the same week we are! So I have no idea if she will be available to learn how to call the show. I’m not sure what the disconnect is about a stage manager who can tech and call a show, but I’m done worrying about this. Katharine and Kevin told me that I could have one thing and that was a stage manager and I don’t even get that. At this point I will bring in my own person to do it. It would be nice to have a stage manager for rehearsals, but I’ll just do it myself.

So then I woke up to an email from Katharine this morning saying that I had to work within the MOB seating configuration and lighting and that I understood this when I agreed to the space. So a month after broaching this topic, which should have been addressed in production meetings last semester, I am forced to change my staging 3 weeks before tech. I agreed to work with what was there, not to not change it at all. I don’t understand why they don’t want this to be successful. But I will continue to make the best experience possible for the student actors who signed up for it.

I am disheartened and sad for them. They deserve better from their department. I also deserve better. But I will move forward despite the antagonistic lack of support.

March 11, 2022
Last night I was finally able to meet with Jason. I showed him my original floor plan that was based on the original floor plan that he had described to me for MOB and my adjusted floor plan based on the new MOB floor plan he had sent me. He asked why I wasn’t going with the original floor plan. Apparently, everyone thought I wanted to completely flip the orientation of the space which I never did and would never do! All of this stress and angst was caused by misunderstanding emails, which is why I had asked for a meeting in person over a month ago!

My staging will work fine. I can’t add risers for more seating, but my staging is fine. I wish the players in the department knew that I was never asking for what they thought I was asking for. I wish I had been included in production meetings, like a real part of the team, because it affects everyone. I wanted this experience to be what it would be like to direct in academia and I’ve just been excluded. I’m also really not sure where Rob’s hostility comes from but he is definitely hostile towards me.

I also learned in my meeting with Jason that there is someone who is supposed to be doing lighting design for our show. This is great news as apparently they have worked with Rob before and can be the go between. But it would have been great to know this all along!

I realized that with all this unnecessary stress, including the fact that I have another very sick actor, it’s been difficult to focus. Last night we were able to have a great rehearsal though. We got through Act 1 Scene 1 to Marie’s entrance. Man, that scene is a beast. But the actors are doing really well with it. I feel like we made great strides yesterday.

I’m struggling to get one actor to find a middle ground between anger and just rolling over. I think in her life there is no middle ground. But I explained that she comes in hopeful and
becomes more angry as she doesn’t get what she wants and that helped her with her character arc.

I’m also very worried about their memorization. They’re doing pretty well but really need to turn the corner this weekend. I will have to cancel rehearsal again tonight. One of the actors forgot we rehearse on Fridays and agreed to a class field trip tonight. I’m trying to walk the balance between being understanding of conflicts and not ok with plain negligence/thoughtlessness on their part. It really affects the other actors too.

I’m still excited to work with them next week. Working with them is the good part. I think I’ll ask one of the actors to lead us through a few articulation drills during warm ups.

March 14, 2022

Tonight I had an actor have a panic attack during rehearsal. We were rehearsing a scene in which she leaves and when the scene was over and we regrouped she had stepped to the door for some air. I checked in with her and she was not ok. I stayed with her and asked another actor to go get her water. She was feeling faint and having trouble breathing. I had her sit down and put her head between her legs. By the time we got her water she was calming down. I tried to use my first aid training and asked her if this had ever happened to her before and she said no, which turned out not to be true. I tried to get her to focus on breathing and what was tangible around her in the present. She then called her mom and I sat with her while they talked. It turned out she was stressed about another one of her classes. When her mom prayed with her, I went to address the other actors. I asked them to take a break and then work a scene without me until I was able to return to them. I went back to the actor in crisis and talked to her about the class that was
causing her stress. I encouraged her to be herself and reminded her that she was everything that she needed to be.

Luckily, after some time she was able to return to rehearsal. As I suspected she hadn’t eaten much that day.

March 16, 2022

I’m really worried about one of the actors’ memorization. I think we need a few line rehearsals but I’m worried we don’t have the time with all of the time we’ve lost already. I’m going to ask if they would like to rehearse this weekend and get a few line throughs in. We really need them off book next week.

My stage manager is so often unavailable that I’m struggling with what to have her do other than be on book when she is there.

I’m tired.

March 18, 2022

Last night was a really great rehearsal. We were scheduled to have fitting and then rehearse in their foundation garments. We dealt with typical space issues. I had planned to be in 110 but something else was added at the last minute so we met in the sound studio which will end up being our dressing rooms. The actors were thrilled to work in their foundation garments and it really helped them with their characters.

March 22, 2022
Last night I canceled rehearsal. I had one actor with debilitating cramps and one recovering from a migraine and after a weekend of rehearsals I sensed exhaustion and burn out. I hope the night off was helpful for them.

I met with my lighting designer that I didn’t know I had. If I had known I’d have been working with her all along. She’s great and I think she’ll be super helpful and learn a lot on this production. I emphasized to her 3 times that I don’t want to change the light plot, but work as best we can with what’s available. She seemed excited to try to add things. I hope this doesn’t come back to me with push back from the department. It seems everything I do is met with push back.

March 29, 2022

I gave one of the actors some very specific notes as a hail Mary before rehearsal tonight. I explained to her that she’s confusing energy and volume with yelling. I said: That one of the lines she’s yelling on is her explanation of why she made this drastic choice, they won’t hear you if you just yell. Really explain to them that you’ve been hurt by seeing your friends die and you are resolute in your choice. There is more power in getting them to understand where you’re coming from than there is in yelling. Yelling becomes one note and everyone tunes out. This is important to you. Let it be heard. You are far more compelling when you’re imploring, explaining, than yelling. She went on to have her best performance yet!

March 30, 2022

Last night one of the actors was hurt walking off stage when she walked into a flat. It was quite the ordeal with Public Safety and the Fire Department involved. I checked in on her this morning and she is fine.
I wish we had more time for detailed scene work.

April 1, 2022

Tonight was our final invited dress rehearsal. We were schedule to start at 8. At about 7:15, one of the actors (who had the 2 previous mental health incidents) came downstairs from the dressing room yelling and shouting on her phone. She went outside. I walked out to check on her and she was just standing outside shouting into her phone very upset. I did not interrupt but continued to keep checking on her. Finally at around 7:30 she got off the phone and I went to speak to her. She was starting to have another panic attack. I was sure that we would have to cancel our final rehearsal.

I tried to keep her calm. After one of her previous incidents she had mentioned that when she was like that she needed a hug. I asked her if I could give her a hug and she said please. I hugged her and she broke down and confessed a lot of what she was going through. I listened and assured her that she would be alright. We talked for a while and she calmed down. I asked her if she wanted to continue and she said yes. I gave her a moment to gather herself and she proceeded to go on to have a wonderful performance.

April 2, 2022

Tonight our little show opened. It was wonderful! They gave their best performances ever. I am so proud of them and all of the work we did together. It looked great and the audience seemed to really enjoy it. I’m very happy with how it came together.
Four badass women lose their heads in this irreverent, girl-powered theatrical adventure set during the French Revolution's Reign of Terror. This grand and dream-tweaked comedy is about violence and legacy, art and activism, feminism and terrorism, compatriots and chosen sisters, and how we actually go about changing the world.

What to prepare for auditions:

Please read the play, *The Revolutionists*, attached in these documents.

Sign up for an audition timeslot here:

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C49A8A62CA5FEC16-therevolutionists

Please prepare a 1-2 minute contemporary monologue. It can be either comedic or dramatic. (If you do not have a monologue prepared, please select a favorite excerpt from the play and familiarize yourself with it. It does not need to be memorized. Just have fun with it!)

Submit your Audition Form.

For call backs you will be reading scenes from the play with other students who have also been called back. NOTE – You will be measured for costumes at callbacks.
Character Breakdown:

CHARLOTTE CORDAY – Badass country girl and assassin. Very serious, hardened by righteousness.

MARIANNE ANGELLE – Badass Black woman in Paris. She is from the Caribbean, a free woman, a spy working for abolition. Tough, classy, vigilant, the sanest one of them all.

MARIE-ANTOINETTE – Less badass but fascinating former queen of France. Bubbly, graceful, opinionated, totally unaware, unintentionally rude, and oddly prescient. Never had a real friend.

OLYPME de GOUGES – Badass activist playwright and feminist. Theatre nerd, excitable, passionate, a showwoman.

NOTE – All actors should be comfortable singing a capella.

Link to Sign-Up Genius: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C49A8A62CA5FEC16-therevolutionists
PLEASE DOWNLOAD THIS FORM, FILL IT OUT IN ITS ENTIRETY, AND EMAIL TO AHALLMA1@LION.LMU.EDU OR BRING TO YOUR AUDITION

The Revolutionists

by Lauren Gunderson
Directed by Amanda Hallman (MFA '22 Candidate)
THEA 351-04

Auditions –
January 31, 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm
and February 1, 7:30 pm – 11:00 pm
Callbacks – February 2, 7:15 pm – 10:30 pm

The Theatre Arts Department is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion in all areas of our work, including the casting of our plays. We seek students in all areas of theatre (actors, designers, historians, etc.) who reflect our world.

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COVID Restrictions Disclosure:
Please answer Yes, No, or Need More Information to the following questions: (these restrictions are subject to change.)

1. Due to Covid restrictions, LMU requires students on campus to be vaccinated, are you vaccinated?

2. Due to Covid restrictions, you will be required to wear a mask during all indoor rehearsals, do you agree to wear a mask?

3. Due to Covid restrictions, you will be required to stay 6 feet apart from others when possible, do you agree to stay 6 feet apart?

4. Actors may be permitted to perform without masks while on stage during performances only (Performances will be in the Barnelle Theater), are you comfortable with performing without a mask?

Background and skills:

1. What is your previous LMU Theatre Department experience and role(s)?

2. What is your previous experience outside the LMU Theatre Department?

3. Are you comfortable singing a capella?

4. Any other special skills (singing, dance, accents, etc!)?

Roles:

1. Is there a role that you prefer?

2. Is there a role you would not accept?
**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING DATES:**

**Rehearsal Schedule:** Begins on Monday, February 7, 2022 (Monday-Thursday approx. 6 – 11 pm, Saturday and/or Sunday approx. 12 – 4 pm; 

*NOTE – exact times subject to change based on actors’ schedules* 

**Spring Break (no rehearsals):** Monday, February 28 – Friday, March 4 

**Tech/Dress Week:** Monday, March 28 – Friday, April 1 

**Performances:** Saturday, April 2 (8:00 pm) and Sunday, April 3 (TBD) 

**Strike:** TBD 

Actors must be available for the above dates. Will you be able to attend all these times and dates?  **YES** or  **NO** 

**Conflicts:**
Please put an “X” in the boxes for the times you **ARE NOT** available on a weekly basis during the rehearsal period. Any additional conflicts (specific meetings, trips, clubs, responsibilities, etc.) can be listed in the space below the table.

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**Additional conflicts:**

**Thank you!!!**
THE REVOLUTIONISTS

ACT ONE

PROLOGUE.

In the dark.

The hum of "Our Song" faintly wafts in.
The sound of a scared breath that we are breathing.
It's our breath—we are trying to steady our breath.
Breath—

Then a sharp white light on, or the engorging shadow of...
A guillotine, its blade rising to the top.

A gasp.

Which slams into:

Bump Lights up on Desk. ONE.

OLYMPHE. Well that's not a way to start a comedy.
With an execution? That's just basic dramatic writing: Don't start with
beheadings. Audiences don't want plays about terror and death—
not they want...hope. Yes, I have to write about...grace and power...
Slow fade up to Study

in the face of crisis. Artistic defiance. Yes. That's good. There we go.

Spitting now. testing out ideas as they come.

OK, what if I write a play that is the voice of this revolution, but not
the hyperbolic, angry-yelling kind. I will write the wise and witty
kind that satirizes and inspires and says to the held breath of a rapt
audience... "something... profound."

So yeah. We're gonna have to cut the guillotine.

Marianne has entered with a bag—luggage.
She wears a red protest sash that reads: "Revolution for all!"

MARIANNE. Cut that thing! Serves it right.

OLYMPE. Oh my god, Marianne! 0 x to Mn

MARIANNE. I know this is crazy to just show up like this but hello
and surprise!

Hugs!

OLYMPE. Hello and surprise! Oh my god, for a second I thought
you were the national guard.

MARIANNE. Are they coming for the writers already?

OLYMPE. Only the important ones. I should be fine. Come in,
come in. What are you doing here?

MARIANNE. Many things including, I hope, staying with you. Is
that OK?

OLYMPE. Of course! Oh my god. Stay as long as you need.

MARIANNE. Thank you thank you.

OLYMPE. Don't thank me. I'm so glad to see you. I thought you
went back to the Caribbean.

MARIANNE. Vincent went back, I stayed in Nice.

OLYMPE. Ooh Nice is nice.

MARIANNE. For some. For me? A lot less beach and a lot more
political reconnaissance.

OLYMPE. What does that mean? interessé

MARIANNE. Gathering intelligence to send home. That's why I'm
back. Things are heating up and we need an eye in Paris and I'm it.

OLYMPE. So wait. I've been restarting the same play for a month
while you became a damn spy?!

MARIANNE. I mean...

OLYMPE. GIRL.

MARIANNE. I know.

OLYMPE. Look at you!

MARIANNE. Well, we decided we needed our own intel, really tap into the political machines or we'll never figure how to break them.

OLYMPE. You are my spy friend! God, you make me so much more interesting.

MARIANNE. Well don't get comfortable, I'm also here because I need you.

OLYMPE. Playwrights love hearing that. It's so rare.

MARIANNE. I need you to write for us. Pamphlets, articles, treatises about slavery—

OLYMPE. Monologues? Excuse me?

MARIANNE. Abolition human interest stories.

OLYMPE. But as monologues?

MARIANNE. Just—sure. Help us! You're the best writer I know.

OLYMPE. How many do you know?

MARIANNE. (Lying.) So many: (Not lying.) And you can help people understand what we're fighting for, freedom, justice, humanity, come on.

OLYMPE. Of course I'll help! But why don't you write this?

MARIANNE. Because I'm a better spy than I am a writer. Please,

OLYMPE. Yes, I'll write anything you want... as soon as I write my play.

MARIANNE. The play you can't even start? I'm rebelling against slavery and you're battling writer's block.

OLYMPE. I'm not blocked. I'm just... mentally... hibernating. There's a lot of pressure to write something profound these days. And then I keep thinking if I come up with a good title it'll get me started. Something tantalizing but really vague like... "The Revolutionists."

MARIANNE. You could do better. /do it out.
OLYMPE. I know. Nothing's working. There is drama everywhere you look these days, why can't I write any of it?!
MARIANNE. You can! Pamphlets! For me! Write the truth that needs writing.
OLYMPE. But that's your truth. Which I will totally write, I will, but I also really need something of my own. I need a play that's good and important and annoyingly prescient.
MARIANNE. Then write the truth of an artist staring down a civil war.
OLYMPE. And end up with a play about a playwright writing a play? I'd rather watch a guillotine.
MARIANNE. So would everyone.
MARIANNE. That's not what I meant.
OLYMPE. Setting: Now. Paris, France, 1793. Guillotines are very big these days. Actually they just came out with small ones too, for kids to kill mice and for wives to make salad.
MARIANNE. That's so messed up.
OLYMPE. It is. Everything is. Which is why the people's revolution has risen up with force enough to remove the king from power—
MARIANNE. and from his own head.
OLYMPE. Exactly. Danger, unrest. An epic battle for freedom and peace—
MARIANNE. For white men.
OLYMPE. Exactly. Which is why my play... (A great idea.) Could be about women showing the boys how revolutions are done. Yes! Fighting for their rights to life, liberty, and... divorce.
MARIANNE. Divorce and decapitation? (Slipping into couplets.) I hope it's better than it sounds.
OLYMPE. It's comical yet quite profound.
MARIANNE. Just doesn't sound like comedy—
OLYMPE. I know, but that's what it could be.
MARIANNE. You know it's always in the timing,
OLYMPÉE. Are you hearing all this rhyming?

_Gasp._

*Maybe I'm writing a musical!*

MARIANNE. Oh god, no one wants a musical about the French Revolution.

OLYMPÉE. Probably right. How about a solemn, bracing political exposé—

MARIANNE. You're losing me.

OLYMPÉE. How about a thrilling, hilarious political exposé that will gather us as one community, to be inspired by great French art and—

MARIANNE. To boo at whichever new play they want.

OLYMPÉE. *They did not boo my play.* The abolition one from last year? No. That sound was the natural cathartic release from years of repressed racism and misogyny.

MARIANNE. So you're writing fantasy now?

OLYMPÉE. The people leapt to their feet.

MARIANNE. And to the exit.

OLYMPÉE. To tell their friends.

MARIANNE. That it was... "interesting."

OLYMPÉE. My plays piss off just the right kind of people thank you very much. Excuse me for trying to do something revolutionary during this revolution. This is our time to make a better world for everyone... who sees my plays.

MARIANNE. You’re always so close to selflessness.

OLYMPÉE. Thank you, see now you’ve got me thinking. What about a passionate sociopolitical comedy about women’s rights and—

MARIANNE. A feminist comedy? Girl, *don’t.*

OLYMPÉE. OK, what if my play starts out as a comedy, but it’ll end as a drama. That’s fresh, right? We don’t even have a word for that but...

MARIANNE. Like... "Life"?

OLYMPÉE. Just go with me on this: At first the play is witty and fun, maybe some puppets.
MARIANNE. Why do you always add puppets.
OLYMPE. Because!
MARIANNE. You might as well go back to the musical.
OLYMPE. OK I'm trying to do something important here.
MARIANNE. Which is maybe why it's sucking so bad.
OLYMPE. Sometimes conviction sucks.
MARIANNE. I'm just saying that nobody wants to be told what to feel.
OLYMPE. I'm not telling them what to feel, I'm forcing them.
MARIANNE. That's what pamphlets do! Look. Most people don't have time for the grand dramas, it's the intimate ones that matter. So write your political theatre but remember that for most people it's not about being righteous, it's about being real. So find the heart. Not the...art.
OLYMPE. Why are you better at this than me? I've been trying to come up with a cute couplet like that for days, but I keep dreaming of guillotines and resorting to puppets. I have to write something! This is a revolution! Everyone is making history without me!
MARIANNE. Listen—
OLYMPE. I can't listen when I'm whining.
MARIANNE. You're just blocked. Writers get blocked. It's not a tragedy. Being ripped from your country, stuffed in the belly of a ship, carted across the world, and forced to break your back to make sugar for French pastries is a tragedy. The French are fighting a revolution for freedom while running a slave colony in the West. That's why I need you writing pamphlets so we can expose the immoral and hypocritical actions that—
OLYMPE. Oh my god I can write about you!
MARIANNE. —was not the point I was going for.
OLYMPE. Yes! You're gorgeous, and empowered, and seem to have a very clear character motivation.
MARIANNE. We're not gonna stay friends if you write a play about me.
OLYMPE. (Narrator voice.) Marianne Angelle: Activist for freedom from slavery in the Caribbean, lover of cheeses and universal human rights, strong yet sardonically sympathetic.

MARIANNE. No, she said, sardonically. Pamphlets.

OLYMPE. I am! I will! It will be great research for the play. What you're doing is bold and important. You're a goddamn spy for freedom! That's box office gold! Come on. You make me believe that a better world is possible. If people listen to you. And a lot of me.

MARIANNE. OK they say write what you know, right? But what if you write what you want. That's what we're really fighting for isn't it? Women's agency over their own lives.

OLYMPE. Yes.

MARIANNE. The abolition of slavery across the planet.

OLYMPE. Yes.

MARIANNE. Maybe you don't need to dress your ideas in drama. You can write a monologue? Why don't you write a manifesto.

OLYMPE. Or...a declaration?

MARIANNE. Sure, yeah. Like the Americans.

OLYMPE. Like the Americans! "We hold these truths and the fact that women-are-people to be self-evident."

MARIANNE. That sounds pretty revolutionary to me.

Also no risk of puppets. Everybody wins.

Pause. Olympe likes this. Then she thinks. Seriously.

OLYMPE. Marianne. Do you dream of guillotines? Every night?

MARIANNE. No. Chains.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK on the door.

Olympe and Marianne freeze. Oh no. Then...

Knockknockknockknockknock—like a hummingbird knocking, fast and fluttery.

Marianne gets on one side of the door with a book held as a weapon if needed, through the door...

OLYMPE. Who's there?

CHARLOTTE. Who's...there?
OLYMPE. Well, you're the one at the door, who are you?
CHARLOTTE. You're obviously at the door too, and I'm here for a writer.
MARIANNE. Did she say a writer?
OLYMPE. I think that's what she said.

Charlotte bursts in with a book.

CHARLOTTE. Yes it's what I said, I said a writer, I need a writer, who is the writer and what's my line? Are you a writer? If not—(Turning to Marianne.) are you a writer? This isn't a complicated question. Where do they keep the writers, I need a line.
OLYMPE. I'm sorry, you need a line?
CHARLOTTE. That's what I said, but I don't care what I'd say, I wanna know what you'd say. Isn't that how this works? I need that to be how this works.
MARIANNE. And I need you to back the France off. What do you want? Who sent you?

CHARLOTTE. I sent me and, I want some dialogue. That's what you do right? You're that real live lady writer guy? You write plays and stuff.

MARIANNE. And pamphlets about the rights of Caribbean slaves, which means she's very busy and we have no idea who you are or whose side you're on, also you're very loud and immediately unsettling, so why don't we do this another time and/or never.
CHARLOTTE. I don't have time for another time and/or never. I have a guy to murder, which will land me on the scaffold, which is why I came to you, which is why, as I yelled upon arrival, I NEED A LINE. My actions will be talked about for centuries and I don't want to sound like a dingbat. I need something that will sink into their memories for all time, something with a lot of "fuck you" in it.

So. Playwright. Write. Desk

OLYMPE. I mean...thank you for your enthusiasm but this isn't really my thing—

CHARLOTTE. COME ON. How many feminist playwrights do you think there are in Paris. ONE. YOU.

OLYMPE. And trust me that turning down an opportunity to tell
someone what to say is really hard for me but I’m already juggling a lot now.

CHARLOTTE. Aren’t we all: life, revolution, impossible beauty standards. Help me.

OLYMPE. I’m trying to help a lot of people…without leaving my office.

CHARLOTTE. Please. It’s rare to be in the company of like minds in like corsets, and I know you’re a “writery” kind of writer. So. If you write it? I’ll say it, I’ll shout it, I’ll sing it.

OLYMPE. Sing it?

MARIANNE. NO.

CHARLOTTE. YES.

OLYMPE. Can you just gimme some context here. What exactly do you need written?

CHARLOTTE. Last words.

MARIANNE. Last words?

OLYMPE. Like…for a toast? Are you going to a wedding?

CHARLOTTE. No. I’m going to kill Jean-Paul Marat. By stabbing. Because he’s awful.

MARIANNE. You’re going to kill the journalist Marat?

CHARLOTTE. Yeah. Because he’s awful.

OLYMPE. And by stabbing?!

CHARLOTTE. Yeah. Because he’s awful.

OLYMPE. OK. Well. Now I have to write a play about her.

MARIANNE. What about my pamphlets?

OLYMPE. What about a torrid romance between a gorgeous assassin and a narcoleptic judge!

MARIANNE. No.

CHARLOTTE. What? No. I need one line, not a whole (and obviously troubled) play.

OLYMPE. (Making a note.) No I’m really seeing this. A woman willing to risk it all for vigilante justice. Yes.

10x in front of desk
MARIANNE. Should you maybe ask her why she's going to kill this guy before you make her a hero?

OLYMPE. I'm sure it's a good reason, look at that face. Now what if we call the play: "The Young Assassin."

Charlotte and Marianne make a "meh" sound.

Or maybe just, "Stabbing: The Musical"! Oh this is gonna be great.

MARIANNE. Not anymore.

CHARLOTTE. Hold on, is she quoting me? Are you quoting me?

MARIANNE. Oh, theatre people don't quote, they embellish.

CHARLOTTE. Which would normally just be annoying, but this city is more than a little pissed off at the embellished or have you missed the last few beheadings. They don't like flourish.

OLYMPE. Theatre isn't flourish. It's fundamental.

MARIANNE. Here she goes.

OLYMPE. Story is the heartbeat of humanity and humanity gets really dark when the wrong stories are leading the people.

CHARLOTTE. Well I'm not here to make a story, I'm here to make history.

OLYMPE. History is a story. Just with...an extra..."hi."

MARIANNE. Stop.

OLYMPE. (Using her hand as a puppet.) Hi, Story!

MARIANNE. We said no puppets.

OLYMPE. Sorry.

CHARLOTTE. I don't think I was being clear. I'm an assassin. About to assassinate.

OLYMPE. And we'll get to that, but we have to do some character development first—

CHARLOTTE. I don't understand—

MARIANNE. It's all part of her creative process.

CHARLOTTE. I did not sign up for this.

OLYMPE. Because it's a new play—

CHARLOTTE. Oh god.
OLYMPE. Set during the French Revolution!

CHARLOTTE. I don't have time for—
OLYMPE. Starring lots of furious women!

CHARLOTTE. (Being a furious woman.) I said I do not have time for such frivolity. I need some last words, and I need to sharpen my knife.

Charlotte reveals a long steak knife. C @ armchair
Pause.

MARIANNE. Yeah. I'd watch a play about her. don't go anywhere.

OLYMPE. Right? What if she wears a sparkly mask?

CHARLOTTE. I'm not wearing a mask. I want people to know that I did it. Just. How long do I have to sit through this stupid play until we get to the murdering?

OLYMPE. Well, the exposition, rising action, it'll probably be a while.

MARIANNE. While we're waiting you could tell us your name?

CHARLOTTE. Right. Hi. Charlotte Corday.

OLYMPE. Spot on Charlotte Corday, a soon-to-be-killer in revolutionary France.

CHARLOTTE. Well don't say it like that. Not in that "You're a killer!" kind of way. Marat is a sick, fundamentalist, political pundit who has caused the deaths of thousands of innocent people with no tool as brave as a sword, no, he uses words. So really, I'm an editor.

OLYMPE. I wish I was that young and angry. quicker

CHARLOTTE. Thank you, but you don't seem to get that I am on a deadline. That is not a pun but it could be. And I'm sure this performing art we're in the middle of is lovely but not lovelier than justifiable homicide, and I'm not sure if this is the play or if we're still in the prologue, because plays are only for rich people and chandeliers and I'm on a damn mission to maim, so if we're not actively avenging, can we get to the pointy point?

Pause. hold ( casinos

OLYMPE. It's not for rich people.
CHARLOTTE. Theatre?

MARIANNE. I mean... \textit{what does it mean?}

OLYMPE. No. It's just... I mean the chandeliers came with the space—CHARLOTTE. So did the starving peasants outside.

OLYMPE. But I—no—the revolution just opened the theatres to the masses. Playwrights can finally write what they want. Theatre is democracy! Really pretty democracy with great hats and—Am I really writing for rich people?

MARIANNE. I mean... \textit{Mn sits in desk chair}

CHARLOTTE. Yes. The ones who aren't fled or dead. Vigilante mobs always ruin the party. Isn't theatre just another party?

OLYMPE. No. It's culture.

CHARLOTTE. Isn't culture just another party?

OLYMPE. Culture is civilization! It's definitive, it lasts, the French are really into it! And I write pamphlets too, and we do a little community outreach and—oh god you're right.

MARIANNE. Ooh. She never says that.

OLYMPE. But art is all I know how to do. Truly. I'm useless in the sunshine. (Getting annoyingly dramatic.) Only theatre gives my soul—

CHARLOTTE. Ohmigod is this going to be a play about a play?

MARIANNE. \textit{That} is the worst.

CHARLOTTE. That is the worst. Art about the rich is one thing, but art about rich people's art is too far.

MARIANNE. Agreed.

OLYMPE. Now wait just a minute, the performing arts are a vital part of—

CHARLOTTE. Art and anything else that fakes its way through this life is useless to real human beings trying to fix the goddamn world.

\textit{Pause. Taken aback by her tone.}

OLYMPE. Well. It might be fiction, but it's not fake.
The beating hearts in front of you are real.
The gathering of people, the time spent is real.
MARIANNE. Agreed.
OLYMPE. The story is real when it starts.
And this story will capture our hearts.
CHARLOTTE. WHILE THE REIGN OF TERROR TAKES OUR
HEADS.
Which I saw them do. To a hundred of my neighbors in one day.
Because Marat told them to.
This revolution is not for the people anymore, it’s for the zealots.
They are taking over, and they are cruel, and you want to tell me a
story? Do you see how insane that seems to a woman who is going
to kill a man with her own hands? What the play is about does not
matter. What is your life about? That matters.
Because sometimes? One man, every once in a while, really needs
to just die.
Forget the line. I’ll do it myself.

*Charlotte starts to go.*

MARIANNE. Are you in love with someone who doesn’t love you
back?
MARIANNE. I sense the short temper of the unrequited.
OLYMPE. Oh that’s what it is.
CHARLOTTE. I AM NOT THAT. You theatre people—you are
so loose.
OLYMPE. *(Offended.)* I beg your— *(Not offended.)* That’s accurate.
MARIANNE. So many egos, and tempers, and onstage heavily
choreographed embraces.
OLYMPE. It’s bound to spill over.
CHARLOTTE. Yeah. No. I’m gonna go.
OLYMPE. Don’t go now we just started liking you.
CHARLOTTE. The nuns were right. Theatre is the devil’s art.
OLYMPE. Because we get to decide who the real heroes are.
MARIANNE. The clergy just hate that.
CHARLOTTE. And. Who are the real heroes?
OLYMPE. We are. If I’m writing it.

CHARLOTTE. I could stay for a sec.
OLYMPE. Great. Now. My question is about plot.
MARIANNE. Me too. You're just gonna walk up to him and stab him? I mean just, stab stab? quick
OLYMPE. And because I'm seeing sequel potential, I'm worried about killing off our heroine so quickly.
MARIANNE. Agreed.
CHARLOTTE. No, I have to do this. I'm the only one with enough guts and cuteness to get away with this, so I will curl my hair, strap a steak knife to my thigh, use my sweet voice to infiltrate his house, stare him down and kill Jean-Paul Marat.
With said steak knife.
In his bathtub.
MARIANNE. His bathtub?
CHARLOTTE. He lives there. Skin condition.
OLYMPE. Ew. Quick
CHARLOTTE. No, it'll be great. Intimate. Bloody. The water swirling red, the nudity. It'll be so...dramatic.
OLYMPE. Aha!

CHARLOTTE. Not like that.
OLYMPE. Drama wins!
CHARLOTTE. I said dramatic not theatrical.
OLYMPE. All the world's an audience.
CHARLOTTE. All the world's a mob.
MARIANNE. Sometimes it's hard to tell the difference.
CHARLOTTE. You know what? Never mind, I shouldn't have come.
OLYMPE. Charlotte, stop.
CHARLOTTE. No, no, the stories you trot out are distractions, and placating the rich, and full of yelling and bosom and terrible dialogue!

MARIANNE. (Terribly serious.) THEN WHY THE HELL ARE YOU HERE.
You know that a good deed needs a good story or else it might vanish like nothing ever happened.
You know that or else you wouldn't have shown up. You also know that her words are dangerous, she is putting her life on the line—

OLYMPE. I am?

MARIANNE. To tell a story that is good and good for the world—

OLYMPE. My life is on the line?

MARIANNE. She is risking everything for her art. So be nice to the playwright, because she holds fiction like you hold that blade and I know her weapon is sharper.

CHARLOTTE. Than a knife?

MARIANNE. Than any metal you've got. You tell me which one you want running the world.

Pause. Olympe smiles at Marianne.

Charlotte looks at both of them...changes her mind.

CHARLOTTE. I mean.

Sorry for the yelling.

MARIANNE. Uh-huh.

CHARLOTTE. And the aggressive entrance.

MARIANNE. Uh-huh.

CHARLOTTE. It's just. You two might be the first women I've ever liked...liked. You're...interesting in like a...human kinda way.

MARIANNE. Thank you, young assassin.

OLYMPE. Such a good title.

CHARLOTTE. Do you mind if I hang here for half an hour until my appointment? You can maybe write my line while I practice my stabbing and scary eyes.

OLYMPE. Also a good title.

MARIANNE. Wait. You have an appointment to murder Marat?

CHARLOTTE. Well he doesn't know that's what it's for.

So don't let me get in your way. I don't know how this whole "drama" thing works. What do you—like—do all day?
OLYMPE. Well, I guess I…think up interesting people with enormous backstories and lots to lose and force them into action—

Marie enters, looking lovely and startled.

MARIE. Marie enters! Is she late? Or lost? What were they talking about? Was it her? It's always her. Or is she being her again? It's a confusing time. Hello. Marie… (Whispered like it's a bad word) Antoinette.

CHARLOTTE. Holy crap you're Marie-Antoinette?

MARIE. Isn't it exciting I'mSoFamous.

MARIANNE. Infamous.

MARIE. Famous.

MARIANNE. Infamous.

CHARLOTTE. Wait. You're the real Marie-Antoinette?

MARIE. I am so real (Sigh) Sometimes I say it instead of doing it. It used to be so good to be real. Or did they always hate her? Did she mention her general confusion about this? She has no idea what's coming next, except that one day she woke up in a palace and went to sleep in a prison—not exactly prison—it was one of their lesser bedrooms—with gunmen outside and no dessert! The fear in her children's fancy eyes, trying to explain it to the dogs. The pressure, the amount of sudden exposition. It's all too much for Marie!

MARIANNE. And everyone watching her.

OLYMPE. Is there anything I can do for you, Majesty?

MARIE. I'm not even a “Majesty” anymore, the jerks.

MARIANNE. You're all Citizens now.

MARIE. But who wants a Citizen for a queen? That's ridiculous. (To Olympe) I'm here for a rewrite.

OLYMPE. Oh god.

MARIE. Yes girl I need some help. First step: Make me Majesty again!

CHARLOTTE. Marat's the one who wanted to toss the monarchy. It all goes back to him.

OLYMPE. Exactly. There can be real reform without torching centuries of history.

MARIE. Thank you.
MARIANNE. But, come on, the royals aren't ready to change.
MARIE. No thank you.
MARIANNE. You aren't. You're dancing while Rome burns.
MARIE. First: It's Paris. Second: I had people dance for me. Third: We used to like me, the whole country would celebrate my birthday. How did it all turn into this rudeness and...murder.
MARIANNE. There's your title.
MARIE. Title? Whose title? I have so many titles.
OLYMPE. Not that kind of title.
CHARLOTTE. A play title. For a play.
MARIE. A play play? Which play? I'll play!
MARIANNE. It's her play. She's writing it.
OLYMPE. Yes. Olympe de Gouges. Your Majesty. Young playwright, activist, you might...hard of my moving political dramas—
MARIE. That's cute, no, I've heard you're the only lady playwright left in Paris.
MARIANNE. And you need to rewrite your history because it makes you look bad.
MARIE. Most of it does make me look bad! You're hilarious.
MARIANNE. Not on purpose.
MARIE. Which is still hilarious! (To Charlotte.) You're pretty. And young. That must be fun. What are you?
CHARLOTTE. An assassin. It is fun.
MARIE. And who is your funny friend?
MARIANNE. Marianne Angelle. Not funny, not your friend, and we need to talk about colonization in the Caribbean right now.
MARIE. Caribbean? Oh my god I love you guys. Wait. Are you a...? Like a real live...? Like A Slave?
MARIANNE. No. I'm a free woman. My husband and I came to France to demand full and recognized civil and political equality. We want slavery abolished across the entire French Empire.
OLYMPE. I am so for that. CHARLOTTE. Yes We Can!
MARIE. You know it's the funniest thing, when I walked in here I could have sworn that you were my servant—

MARIANNE. I AM A FREE WOMAN OF MEANS LIKE YOU AND YOU AND YOU. I AM NO ONE'S SERVANT, I'M JUST STANDING NEARBY.

CHARLOTTE. I like her so much.

OLYMPE. She knows.

CHARLOTTE. (To Marianne.) I like you so much.

MARIANNE. I know.

(To Marie.) And you, Citizen, should know right now that the men and women of Saint-Domingue, who are dying in the sticky heat of your greed and oppression, the slaves who have suffered under your lash, have started a revolution of their own.

MARIE. Two revolutions? At once? Someone should have called ahead.

MARIANNE. It's the same revolution, the same rights, the same freedoms, just applied to your slaves instead of your peasants.

MARIE. I don't remember any of the other colonies acting this way.

MARIANNE. We know you need us. You people love our sugar, and coffee, and indigo—

MARIE. Indigo! For ribbons!

MARIANNE. So we have leverage. A country of our own and you get your coffee.

CHARLOTTE. AMAZING.

OLYMPE. DAMN RIGHT. YOur coffee is really good.

MARIE. I wish there was something I could do to help. But. I mean, I couldn't even start a youth fitness program at the palace, and don't get me started on my rebranding ideas—*which were good.* I mean what is a fleur-de-lis? A sad flower? A terrible fork? No one listens to me unless I say something stupid, then it's the talk of the damn town.

MARIANNE. I feel your pain.

MARIE. Thank you.

CHARLOTTE. That was sarcasm.

MARIE. I realize that now.
OLYMP. WAIT. Wait. I've got it. This is it. This is it!
THE QUEEN. CAN BE. IN THE PLAY.
CHARLOTTE. MARIANNE. MARIE.
My play? My play?! Oh hell no. What? I would likely make
UH-uh. it more interesting.
MARIANNE. Olympe, no. You were writing about revolution no
royalty.
OLYMP. Now wait, you said to write the intimate stories, that's
what this would be. A woman at the edge of history, with everything
to lose and nowhere to hide—
MARIE. Can it be a musical?
OLYMP. Under all that vanity she's still just a person.
MARIE. Just a fabulous person.
OLYMP. I mean it's not her fault that she's the
queen.
MARIANNE. Can we please not call her that anymore. She's not my
queen and she shouldn't be yours. She bankrupted your country!
MARIE. I mean we reduced a lot.
MARIANNE. The people have no food, and she had a palace!
MARIE. So did the dogs—mini ones—hilarious.
MARIANNE. She is everything wrong with a class of people so
vacant-hearted that they can't see the horror of their own luxury.
MARIE. OK I had no choice in becoming royalty, it was thrown at
me. And by that I mean a mountain of free stuff and undeserved
compliments. What would you do? You'd take them. They're free.
But just to be very clear, I did not say that bit about the cake. That
was out of context. I thought I was ordering lunch.
CHARLOTTE. Cake for lunch?
MARIE. Uh, all lunch comes with cake.
MARIANNE. And all cake comes with sugar and all sugar comes
from families dying in the drowning heat a world away. Figurehead
or actual head it's hers that should roll, not ours.

—— Marie is silent. Marianne didn't mean to go that far.
MARIE. (Sincere.) I know what most people think of me. It's not very
nice. And I deserve...some of it. And I have a feeling I might die sooner than later, but I would very much like later to know that I was a real person. Who bled and gave birth in a closed room with two hundred people watching so give me a little credit here. I just... I care. I care so much about my people and my country. I just need better press. You can do that for me Madame De Gouges. I was hoping that you would. I would be honored to be in your play. (To Marianne.) And try to earn your respect. Via meaningful connection...and minor revisionism.

OLYMPIE. I know I shouldn't but I kind of like her.

MARIANNE. She's not worthy, Olympe. She doesn't belong with us. She is not a revolutionist.

CHARLOTTE. Yeah, what would your declaration be? "We hold these jewels to be self-evident."

MARIE. Well they are.

CHARLOTTE. So shiny.

MARIE. Did you say declaration? Like the Americans? They do great declarations. I know Thomas Jefferson if you want any advice. He'd like you. (To Marianne.) Actually he'd like you.

MARIANNE. I feel like that should make me really mad. You need to go.

OLYMPIE. Wait—What if she could help us?

MARIANNE. Help us? Help us? No.

MARIE. I mean sometimes a revolution needs a woman's touch.

CHARLOTTE. Or you know...stabstab.

MARIANNE. It does need a woman's touch, but that is not a soft thing. Citizen Cake.

MARIE. (Showing her dominatrix side.) Oh. I know it's not. Not at night, not in secret, not when you're a tall, red-haired American diplomat in my goddamn country. Then it is a hard hand that knows your every weakness, and is firm and red and shuts you up and makes you sit and you better do what it says or else you're damn right there'll be a revolution.

Pause. The others are surprised and impressed.

MARIANNE. CHARLOTTE. OLYMPIE.

I mean... She is kinda awesome. Yeah I really like her.
MARIE. Question. Are there snacks? I'm used to a lot of snacking. Treats? Sweets? Anything? Nothing?
CHARLOTTE. I have a mint.

_Charlotte takes out a plastic-wrapped mint._
_Hands it to Marie._

MARIE. A mint! How darling. Merci, mademoiselle! Now tell us of our play, Madame De Gouges.

OLYMPE. Oh. Well I haven't started writing anything just yet but—

MARIE. Let the synopsis begin!

OLYMPE. OK. Um. Well. Think of the power of a play that shows the entwined lives of real women—

_Marie starts to open the mint—the wrapper crackles._
_Olympe stops, Marie stops._

Women who, even through their differences—

_Marie's mint wrapper crackles. Olympe stops. Marie stops._

join forces to protest the deep injustice of—

_Marie crinkles the hell out of that wrapper—_

MARIANNE. CHARLOTTE. OLYMPE.

That is so loud. Ohmygod, stop. Can you figure that out, Your Majesty?

MARIE. Sometimes good things make a lot of noise.

OLYMPE. See? Musical.

MARIANNE. CHARLOTTE. MARIE.

No. No. Yay!

_Marie frees the mint, pops it in her mouth, smiles._

OLYMPE. OK look. I don't know what I'm writing just yet, but I know that our voices deserve the stage. We deserve to be our own heroes, everyone's heroes. We're all of us more alike than we are different, and if this revolution is what I think it is? This is our time to be known, and heard, and—

CHARLOTTE. (Checking her watch.) Oh crap I have to go kill a guy.

OLYMPE. Come on, that speech was getting good.

MARIE. You're killing a guy? Which one?
MARIANNE. Marat in the bathtub with a steak knife.
MARIE. Oh kill him! I hate that man! He put my name on a list. With other people. Can you imagine? You know my husband, he always said Marat was a bloodstirring wacko. And then he chops my husband's head off. That shows how right he was.
OLYMPE. OK but—Charlotte. What if you miss? What if he gets you first?
CHARLOTTE. Steak knife pretty much always beats naked-guy-in-a-bath.
OLYMPE. And he deserves it, but you don't. We don't want to lose you. Don't do this.
CHARLOTTE. Then who will. The entire city is scared of him. Well I'm not.
MARIANNE. That's right, girl. I got your back.
OLYMPE. Marianne.
MARIE. Me too, me too! StabStabStab!
OLYMPE. Would you stop encouraging her. I'm trying to save her life, because there is no doubt that she will die for this.
CHARLOTTE. AND THAT DOES NOT SCARE ME.
Not for this.
I am not afraid to die for this.

Pause.
OLYMPE. What's that like?

Pause.
CHARLOTTE. Like knowing your lines.

Pause.
MARIE. Does she love someone who doesn't love her back?
CHARLOTTE. OLYMPE. MARIANNE.
WHY DOES THAT YES she does. THAT'S what I said.
MATTER? God, that has nothing to do with—
MARIE. Is it your tutor? Is his name Jacques? I know these things.
OLYMPE. Just wait, Charlotte.
CHARLOTTE. No. Jacques knows what he did.
OLYMPE. I'm talking about Marat. The little assassination you're about to attempt. Have you really thought this through? Have you thought about Madame Guillotine?

CHARLOTTE. Well yeah, who hasn't.

MARIE. I hate that bitch.

MARIANNE. It's the efficiency that most offends me.

MARIE. Too quick.

OLYMPE. Too easy.

MARIANNE. They say it's egalitarian.

MARIE. Bullshit, it's cheap.

OLYMPE. I mean take some care.

MARIANNE. We're not cattle.

CHARLOTTE. To them we are.

OLYMPE. Carting you through the city to your doom.

MARIANNE. In a wagon.

MARIE. No grandeur.

OLYMPE. Trash at you.

MARIANNE. They cut your hair.

CHARLOTTE. They cut my hair?

OLYMPE. Weren't you aware?

CHARLOTTE. No! That's not fair!

MARIANNE. Maybe it could be a musical. \(\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\)

OLYMPE. (To Charlotte.) Just think about this. If you die? They could vilify you, call you witch or make him a martyr. Then it's like Marat wins.

CHARLOTTE. Which is why you have to tell my story so they understand it.

And do not let them cut my hair.

OLYMPE. But. We didn't get you your last line. It might take a while.

A long while.

CHARLOTTE. Then I'm gonna have to go with: "May God have no pity, you motherfuckers."

OLYMPE. Lemme work on that.

MARIE. Hilarious!

MARIANNE. I mean...
CHARLOTTE. A song? That's not a bad idea.
OLYMPE. You said no musicals!

MARIE. What about the writer's last words? That must be a lot of
pressure since that's kind of your thing.
OLYMPE. I don't need last words, I am of the theatre, we just go
on and on. And on.
MARIE. But you must've thought about what you'd say if they—
OLYMPE. I DON'T KNOW.
I don't know.

Pause.

MARIE. Well. I do hope that my last words are sympathetic. I just don't
want to sound silly because I AM STILL THE GODDAMN QUEEN
OF FRANCE NO MATTER WHAT THOSE FUCKERS SAY.
And I. Will die. Royally.
Do you have another mint?

CHARLOTTE. No.

MARIE. Shit. M sits

OLYMPE. Charlotte we can find another way to stop Marat—a
protest, a scathing farce—\( \) starts\( \)s
CHARLOTTE. Thank you, but...it's what you said. We're all in a
play that someone else is writing.
OLYMPE. Did I say that?
CHARLOTTE. And I am certain that this is my cue.
MARIANNE. A word of advice, young assassin, aim high and strike
deep.
OLYMPE. Wait. Charlotte—
MARIE. And tie back your hair. I know a little about stabbing.

_ Marie gives Charlotte a red ribbon like it's a secret weapon._

OLYMPE. Charlotte.
CHARLOTTE. Thank you, ladies. Gotta go make some...
Hi, story.

_Olympe smiles—that was her line!—as Charlotte exits._

C exits UL
Marianne grabs paper and pen and she follows Charlotte.

MARIANNE. OK. I think this might be worth writing home about.

(To Olympe.) You, keep writing.

(To Marie.) You, keep quiet.

(Exits after Charlotte.)

MARIANNE exits after Charlotte.

MARIE. Enjoy your exit. Marie picks up the book Charlotte left.

Oh, the little murderer left her book, Plutarch. Parallel Lives. Hilarious.

Olympe thinks and thinks...

Marie is expectant but still.

"...

I generally just wait until someone comes to get me...

Oh I hear trumpets. I usually have to go if I hear trumpets.

She listens. No trumpets.

I'm good.

OLYMPE. (Distracted but polite.) Uh-huh.

MARIE. Or maybe I'm not good at all. Is it hot in here or is that just... mortality. Or sudden lack of sugar. And coffee. And husband. Not a great king, but a man. He's at least a man, you know? You shouldn't need to be great to be spared.

OLYMPE. (Distracted but polite.) Uh-huh.

MARIE. When did it all turn so cruel? Did I do this? Be honest, you seem honest. Is all of this because of me?

OLYMPE. Not... exactly.

MARIE. But did I make it worse? I did, didn't I. Am I... too pretty?

Olympe is on thin ice...

OLYMPE. Definitely too pretty.

MARIE. I thought so. Maybe if I change my hair, or perhaps less bosom?

OLYMPE. That would be a public service.

MARIE. Ugh. God. It's always the women who have to do the changing, isn't it?

OLYMPE. What did you say?
MARIE. Oh you know. Change this. Change that.
ChangeYourEntirePersonalityAndAllegiance.
What about what we want? You know? I could tell you a few things
I'd like to change and they are not my last name.
Now for the play, would you write me with different hair? I'd like to
do my part for the cause.
OLYMPE. I don't think...I'm going to write a play anymore.
MARIE. Oh. I thought this was scene one?
OLYMPE. It was. And then it wasn't, then it was, now it's not again.
MARIE. That makes sense.
OLYMPE. (An idea is forming, a good one.) It does actually. Because
we don't write what we know, we write what we want. And you're
right, we don't need to change, they need to change.
MARIE. I'm right?! Gasp! Sometimes I say it instead of doing it.
OLYMPE. Yes. I can't waste time on a play—Marianne's right—A
Declaration! For the Rights of Women! I could just take Thomas
Paine's declaration and switch the gender. Oh that's great. See? OK—
MARIE. I starting to think this might not be OK.
OLYMPE. I will not only write this Declaration, I will declare this
Declaration!

OLYMPE. Theatre and politics coming together!
MARIE. You thought they were separate?
OLYMPE. I will go to the National Assembly myself, and stand up and—
Hold up. They're awful, they're overrun by Jacobins, like frothy mean
Extremists that killed my husband. They will not like this.
OLYMPE. What good is a declaration if everyone already agrees?
MARIE. Yeah I'm really not seeing this ending well.
OLYMPE. It never ends well unless you write the ending yourself.
If I have the right to die by their hand, I have the right to speak my
mind. And I will.

Olympe starts to write...and write...
MARIE. I mean... Sigh.
Transition...

TWO.

_Quick Faded up to C (7) Zone 3_

Charlotte...
Standing beside a bright white claw-foot tub
full of water.
She holds the knife. She wears her red ribbon.
She recites her letter.

CHARLOTTE. It is to you, the good people of France, that I must
define these actions. I am doing this with the full knowledge that I
will be soon in the quiet arms of Madame Guillotine, but... Jean-
Paul Marat, by eight o'clock tonight, shall be dead.

Switch to Olympe...

_Quick Faded Lights up on O_

Olympe stands at a podium in a loud, cavernous room
full of angry men.
She reads with verve:

OLYMPHE. When will women ask ourselves... What has this Revolu-
tion given us? And if the answer is _nothing_? When will we take it
for ourselves?

CHARLOTTE. Until Marat is silenced, you, my friends, will live in
danger. So, I will avenge us all.

OLYMPHE. So, I now present this Declaration of the Rights of
Woman and the Female Citizen.

Article One: Woman is born free and lives equal to man.

_Male objection resounds! Olympe stands there, breathing in
the moment._

CHARLOTTE. As the murderer Marat draws his final breath, there
will at last be peace in France.
You're welcome.
Charlotte Corday.

_With a swift strike Charlotte "kills" Marat_

_Lights Red on C (9)
and the water in the tub bloodies.
She stands there, bloody, breathing in the moment.

Switch to Marianne...

Lights Upon Mn
Marianne reads a letter.

MARIANNE. My dear Vincent,
We fight for this better world together even if we are a world away.
I fight harder with you in my heart.
More news of the Paris revolution enclosed. Be safe and write soon.

She stands there breathing in the paper and the memory of her husband.

Blackout on Olympe. out 2 (1.1)
Blackout on Charlotte. out 3 (1.1)
Blackout on Marianne. out 4 (1.2)

Switch to Marie...

Quick fade up or I (1.3)
To no one...except maybe her ribbons.

MARIE. So here's what I don't get. Isn't the definition of a revolution
"the turning about of an object on a central axis thereby landing its
journeyman in the same exact spot whereon they started"? Because
that seems like a waste of everyone's time.

Which transitions to... Bump to blue (12)

Lights fade up on study (13)
THREE.

Marie still waiting, playing with some ribbon.
Marianne runs in...
They had both hoped to not be alone with each other.
They make each other nervous...

MARIANNE. It's happening. It's all happening. Olympe?
MARIE. Nope. Lady writer left a while ago.
MARIANNE. So. It's just...me and Marie-Antoinette.
MARIANNE. Is it ever just Marie-Antoinette. Ribbon?
MARIENNE. Why don't you keep it.
MARIENNE. Oh, I was going to.
MARIANNE. Excuse me, I have to go do something useful.—
MARIANNE. Please Don't Leave Me I'm Scared. M jump up
Marianne stops.
It's so lively out there. M look out
Unless you're Marat.
MARIANNE. Touché, Citizen.
MARIENNE. I made a touché?! I've always wanted to do that.
MARIANNE. That means she did it? She killed him? Did you see it? Was it awesome? She is such a badass. Or a crazy person. I mean, the cholera of that girl. And such good hair. Tell me everything.
MARIANNE. I mean... OK, she walks right in, front door, I'm watching from the street, it's quiet for a few minutes, and then I hear her yell "FOR FRANCE!" then this scream and splash, and the white splotches spackle red. Commotion in the house, the housekeeper wails, the authorities rush in, then they take a perfectly collected Charlotte Corday to prison in a cart. She was amazing. Perfect form, flawless execution. wink, wink
MARIENNE. Touché too!
MARIANNE. Touché too.
They smile. They don't mean to become friends but perhaps they are.
Marie is oddly profound...
MARIENNE. I fear we shall not know the rightness of our revolutions nor the heroes of our stories for generations to come.
Marianne registers this profundity with surprised respect. Pause.
MARIANNE. Uh. Yeah. Exactly. That was—
MARIENNE. Unexpectedly profound. It happens sometimes.
Marie might play with her ribbons like a kitten...
And...you're, like, not a queen?
MARIANNE. No. Revolutionary... And a mom.
MARIE. A mom, me too! I forget about that sometimes, but I am. How old are your kids?
MARIANNE. Well Annabelle is ten. Counterclockwise.
MARIE. Awww. Lots of bows?
MARIANNE. She loves bows. On everything—the cat, the teacups.
MARIE. Me too! Teacup bows are the best!
MARIANNE. And Vincent is eight. He’s named after his dad.
MARIE. So are mine. Isn’t it funny when they start talking alike—father and son? I just think it’s so funny. They sneeze the same. They say “spoon” the same. Hilarious. And now sad.
MARIANNE. The world found it just despicable. No nation, no matter how revolutionary, should kill a king that way.
MARIE. Aw, thanks. I mean. He was a lumpy man, but he had good moments. I didn’t dislike him. In fact I liked him, when he would just stand there looking serious. He was best when he was just...standing.
MARIANNE. How did you meet?
MARIE. On our wedding day. I wasn’t supposed to marry him, you know. But all the rest of my sisters had smallpox so it fell to me. Which was fine. I mean the finery was exquisite. Everything else was a bit strained. You know we didn’t consummate the damn thing for three goddamned years? Can you imagine? The tension? And the whole country blames me! And I’m like “nuh uh! I’m totally down! He’s the one who—” Turns out? He had to have an operation on his Little Prince before he could—Yeah. So that was anti-hilarious. Then finally little Marie-Thérèse came along, then little Louis-Joseph, then little Louis-Charles, then little Sophie poor dear. Then they killed him. In the square that used to be named after his grandfather. The rest is... I talk too much. What about your husband?
MARIANNE. Oh. We don’t have to...
MARIE. No please tell me. It’s so nice to pretend nothing is wrong in the world. Is yours a love story? I love love stories.
MARIANNE. It is a love story.
MARIE. Brava, then. Allons-y.
MARIANNE. Well. Vincent is a catch. He's strong, and tall, with those eyes that just make you tell him every little thing.
MARIANNE. Ooh.
MARIANNE. And he doesn't walk. Oh no. Vincent strides. Long legs and swinging arms, you know.
MARIANNE. (Getting a little too excited.) Uh-huh.
MARIANNE. And when that man wears a suit? Just give up, just don't even try to look away. But when he takes it off? (w) to her
MARIANNE. TELL ME EVERYTHING.
MARIANNE. He courted me for months, but the truth is I thought he was too handsome.
MARIANNE. Too handsome is not a thing.
MARIANNE. Well, you don't want them that dashing, it'd make me worry.
MARIANNE. Not me—Dash Dash! OK, Vincent is a dream, he swings his arms, when is he smooch?
MARIANNE. Well I kept thinking "yes, he's very nice" and "yes he's from a good family." But I just wasn't sure I really knew him. Until; he let loose this laugh. We were talking about—I don't know—and out comes this rumbly, and loud, and big-old-stupid laugh.

_Might we hear this laugh?_

And that's when I agreed to marry him.
MARIANNE. That is literally hilarious!
MARIANNE. They're perfect when they're just a little flawed. You know?
MARIANNE. I do not know, but that sounds so fun!
MARIANNE. I miss him. And our kids, they're with my mom. Revolutions aren't for children.
MARIANNE. Work-life balance, I get it.
MARIANNE. It's hard. When Vincent went back to Saint-Domingue last month I...I knew it was the right thing. But even when we're apart for a day, I miss him.
MARIANNE. What's that like?
MARIANNE. Like. Sending a letter to your best friend that keeps getting returned.

Marianne's expression darkens. Something's wrong.
Marianne awkwardly pats Marianne's hand.

MARIE. I don't usually comfort other people, am I doing it right?
MARIANNE. You're doing fine.

MARIE. Love letters lost...that is the saddest thing in the world.
You know you could use one of my ships to find him? I think I still have some ships. I used to wear them in my hair, little ones with sails and everything, which does seem a bit excessive in retrospect. Anyway, we'll find out what happened—Marie turns back to Marianne.
MARIANNE. I think... I think he might be dead. to M

MARIE. What?
MARIANNE. I think they might have killed him.
MARIE. Oh my god.

MARIANNE. I don't know if they did but I swear I can tell that something is wrong, is profoundly and terribly...gone. And I don't know what to do. What do I do? Do I leave? Do I stay? What do I do?

Marianne hugs her like a best friend. A perfect comfort.

MARIE. I understand this feeling. Don't go.

Marianne is surprised by the relief she feels telling someone.

MARIANNE. We each carry a final letter to the other in case something happens to one of us. So we know.

Marianne takes out a red-ribboned letter—hers to Vincent.

MARIE. This is his?
MARIANNE. No. Mine to him. I haven't seen his yet—
MARIE. Well there you go. Hope. Because we will not give up on him, we will find him.
And I will help you with everything I have left, Citizen Marianne.

She hands her some ribbons. Marianne actually means this...

MARIANNE. Thank you, Citizen Majesty.

Marianne is stunned and appreciative.
Olympe enters with— O enters UL
OLYMPIA:  Goddammit. Goddammit. Goddammit. I'm gonna let you know how my little solo show at the National Assembly went?

MARIANNE:  Um... Poorly! Game show?

OLYMPIA:  Poorly does not properly convey the reviews it received. They booed me. Hundreds of men booed me as I spoke.

MARIANNE:  Well, what good is a declaration if everyone already agrees?

OLYMPIA:  Well they could agree a little. How can these men hate a declaration of women's equality when that's exactly what Egalité is!

MARIANNE:  But Fraternité it is not.

OLYMPIA:  Goddammit. What the hell is this revolution about? Ophelie! World-changing should be easier.

MARIANNE:  I mean, my wig choices have done it on numerable occasions. We were just talking about Vincent, but we were just talking and Marianne is confused about...

MARIANNE:  (Deliberately not talking about Vincent.) Marie don't,

MARIANNE:  What?

MARIANNE:  There's no need to say anything—

OLYMPIA:  What's going on?

MARIANNE:  Her husband.

OLYMPIA:  What about him?

MARIANNE:  She's worried that something might have happened to him.

OLYMPIA:  Marianne, what's she talking about?

MARIANNE:  I... I haven't heard from him in weeks. Something's not right. I don't know anything for sure but—

OLYMPIA:  Have you seen his last letter? The last letter he keeps for you?

MARIANNE:  No, but—

OLYMPIA:  Then I'm sure he's fine. You'd know if he wasn't.

MARIANNE:  Yes, but it's just strange that he hasn't—

OLYMPIA:  Don't worry before there's a problem. There's enough pomp and ceremony there. You should have seen the way those men at the Assembly glared at me. One guy threw a shoe. I mean it's so obvious.
what I was asking for and they wouldn't even hear me out. Maybe I
start killing people like Charlotte. That seems to make them listen.

MARI. It's making people talk, not listen.

OLYM. I just can't believe she actually did it.

MARI. I can. That girl. She has some—

OLYM. Conviction.

MARI. Cheekbones.

MARIAN. Upper body leverage.

OLYM. I wish I had her certainty.

MARI. You mean cheekbones.

OLYM. (To Marianne.) Ladies, I can't help but think this revolution
might not be for us anymore. But I want it to be, I want to have faith
in justice.

MARIAN. I do.

OLYM. In common sense.

MARI. I do not.

OLYM. In a good story. But what are they doing for us at the
moment? Not much. Makes me want to abandon everything

MARIAN. No. Don't say that. You need to remind yourself
what we're fighting for: conviction, sacrifice for the greater good.

Come with me to see Charlotte.

MARI. To a prison? Oh no. I'm afraid they'll never let me out.

MARIAN. Olympe, come on. She needs us.

OLYM. She needs us to be implicated and die with her? I don't
think so.

MARIAN. She needs you to tell her story.

OLYM. I will. From here.

MARIAN. You're really that scared.

OLYM. I'm not scared.

MARI. You sound a little scared.

MARIAN. And you cannot give up now, none of us can. Because
it seems like it's going to get worse—

MARI. A lot worse.
MARIANNE. Before it gets better.

MARIE. Not that much better.

MARIANNE. And that’s when this country is going to need us the most. Especially the writers. When they give up all is truly lost.

OLYMPE. I mean I’d like to tell her story, I liked her, but it stopped being fun when she actually killed someone. Now it’s totally different than I was going to write it. Reality messed up my narrative.

MARIE. I hate when that happens.

MARIANNE. You don’t always get to pick the ending but it doesn’t mean it’s not a good story. She needs her friends now.

OLYMPE. Well we really just met her.

MARIANNE. She needs a dramaturg.

OLYMPE. Don’t we all.

MARIANNE. She needs the last words you promised her.

Pause. Olympe writes on a slip of paper and gives it to Marianne.

OLYMPE. OK. Give her this. If I’d had more time it would’ve rhymed.

MARIE. Is she good on ribbons? ‘Cause I have a few extra if, y’know, that might beat back the tide of fate coming hard against us all.

MARIANNE. (To Olympe.) I’m just saying…for a dramatist you seem awfully scared of drama.

Marianne exits. Mn exits UL

MARIE. Ooh. Would you write me an exit line like that? I’ve always wanted to be like—”blab blab blab RETORT” and then just leave and the scene is—like—over.

Pause. Olympe glares.

Blackout.
FOUR.

Charlotte in a prison cell.
Marianne is visiting her.

Lights up on Jail cell (bars?)

CHARLOTTE. And after all the shoving and the yelling, they get me to the prison. And I'm exhausted right? And then they had to check my *virginity*, of course. And they were like “She's a virgin!” And I was like “not after you checked, I'm not.” And it wasn't the intimate violation of it that bugged me—though I swear to god some guy hit on me on the way to prison—it was that they were sure there was a man involved. “She wouldn't have avenged her people on her own, she must have been fucked into it.” I mean Jesus Christ a girl can't even assassinate someone without judgment. I'm joining Olympe's group.

MARIANNE. What's Olympe's group?

CHARLOTTE. I heard that she declared something at the Assembly. Some big women's group? For girls to go scouting or something?

MARIANNE. I don't think that's what she was—

CHARLOTTE. Oh yeah, that's what they were saying in my virginity check.

MARIANNE. No, it was a Declaration for all Women. *Égalité* means equality for everyone, that's her point.

CHARLOTTE. Exactly what I'm saying! Who checks the boys' *virginity* when they go to prison for murder, huh? *No one.* That'd be...equality, that'd be...something...good.

MARIANNE. You OK?

CHARLOTTE. Me? Fine. Good. I mean... I did the deed. Stabbity-Stab, he's dead, what I wanted. So...yeah.

MARIANNE. You know, they're calling you the Angel of Assassins.


MARIANNE. Yeah, kind of a girl-next-door-meets-Joan-of-Arc vibe.

CHARLOTTE. Nice. Wait. They think I'm crazy?
MARIANNE. No.

CHARLOTTE. Because Joan of Arc was kinda crazy. I'm not crazy, I'm fed up, I had to kill him, it was a civic duty...that felt fucking awesome. I mean the feel of it? Of righteous vengeance is just...floral, like a blooming of power and rightness and—goddammit it's what sex must feel like.

MARIANNE. I mean...

CHARLOTTE. The way that man looked at me with my knife in his chest. I was this close to him, his breath on my lips, leaning into him, and I said—I actually said this—"You. Die. Now." But that's not crazy that's...just very literal.

MARIANNE. I mean...

CHARLOTTE. Did I tell you some guy's painting my portrait? That's kinda cool. Wait till Jacques sees that. Fucker. And people are reading my letter? The last line might have been a bit much but I didn't have Olympe's help.

MARIANNE. Yes it's circulating in a pamphlet. Widely. But...

CHARLOTTE. What.

MARIANNE. There's also some...celebration...of Marat.

CHARLOTTE. Wait what?

MARIANNE. Now this was bound to happen, but some idiots are trying to turn him into a martyr.

CHARLOTTE. Some? I mean...not many, not some. A faction. A small but vocal faction? Right?

MARIANNE. ...right.

Hard pause.

CHARLOTTE. Well. Sometimes history judges slowly. / My trial is tomorrow. It'd be nice to see a familiar face. I am preparing my Steely Look of Unwavering Calm, but I may need a high-five before I go onstage.

MARIANNE. You mean on trial.

CHARLOTTE. Same thing. All the world's an audience.

MARIANNE. Are you quoting Olympe at me?

CHARLOTTE. Am I? Oh god. Never tell her this.
MARIANNE. I would never. 

_They share a smile._

And I’ll be at the trial. You’re an example for us all to keep fighting, do what we have to, even if it means being very... literal.

_Charlotte lets the upset overwhelm her—tears even._

CHARLOTTE. Would you. Please fight for me too. I don’t think I finished the job.

MARIANNE. I don’t know if we’ll ever finish it.

CHARLOTTE. But I don’t even know if I helped. _Like at all._ What if I just made it worse? Oh god, am I crazy? Did I do the right thing? I mean I know technically murder is wrong most of the time but—oh god this is not—oh god—

MARIANNE. As a wise and _weird_ woman once said: We may not know the rightness of our revolutions nor the heroes of our stories for generations to come.

But I think you’re one of them. And I will carry you into every fray I can find.

_The sound of approaching men unlocking steel doors._

_Look Up Right_

_They’re coming for her._

CHARLOTTE. OK tell people—tell them—I don’t know. I’m not great with words. Tell Olympe to find the words.

MARIANNE. She found these.

_Marianne hands her a slip of paper._

CHARLOTTE. For me? Really? Oh thank you, _thank you._

MARIANNE. Don’t thank me. Or her. It was literally the least she could do.

CHARLOTTE. No it’s not. It’s everything. Absolutely everything.

MARIANNE. _Re: her new line._ Now when you say that... Look up, find your light, and say it loud. 

CHARLOTTE. OK. Um. I’m really scared.

MARIANNE. Of course you are. And that’s OK.

CHARLOTTE. I’m so scared.

MARIANNE. I know. But don’t let anyone else know it. You’re brave, and ready, and not alone. Good work, young assassin.
CHARLOTTE.  Thank you.  Thank you.

Beat.  The ending builds out of Charlotte's preparing for death.

OK.  OK.

Lights fade up on O, M, M, study.  Zavel 10

Across town Olympe holds her pen, trying to tame her ideas.
Across town Marianne holds her final letter to Vincent.
And Marie listens for trumpets and caresses her ribbons.

MARIANNE.  CHARLOTTE.  OLYMPE.  MARIE.

OK.  OK.  OK.

Quick Blackout.  - bump to blue 17

House Fades up 10.  End of Act One

Pre-Show
Trying to convince yourself it's ok

House to half 10

House out 20
ACT TWO

ONE.

Lights fade up on Study

_X

Olympe starts this scene in a rush, writing in her study with furious inspiration...

OLYMPE. OK, yeah, this is going to start moving really fast now. Marat's death has made things very bad, very quickly. The revolution has turned violent, anything done or said against the Republic is now treason and treason is punished by death. There are mobs in the streets, Marat's a martyr, Charlotte's on trial, and I've finally found something to write about—!

Marie reads over her shoulder.

MARIE. Marie! OhMyGod, is that me Marie? The Queen Marie? The Me Queen?! OLYMPE. Yes, can you not yell all of your revelations as you have them.

MARIE. Gasp! Sigh! Retort! Oh that seems like such the right move.

OLYMPE. Well the declaration was a bust and you're really interesting.

MARIE. Right?

OLYMPE. Back to plays. Fiction I can fix. Reality is way too hard to write. At least drama has some structure. We're headed somewhere clear. And I have to admit that this play might be good. I like actually good.

MARIE. And it's really about me? That's hilarious!

OLYMPE. Actually, it's a very serious epic historical political drama with a few songs that will be a vindication for generations! Because it will last five hours.

MARIE. Ugh. But the title. Something cute, something that says "She's Innocent!" Perhaps, "The Lovely Queen" or maybe, "Braveheart." OLYMPE. NO. It has to be sweeping and profound. Something like... "France Preserved!"
MARIE. Sounds delicious.
OLYMPE. (A better title.) OK maybe... "France Saved."
MARIE. Oh that's nice. I'm thinking "Ooh, is France an ingénue tied to a train track? And what are trains?"
OLYMPE. (The extended title.) "France Saved; or, A Tyrant Dethroned."
There we go, that's it. xto desk chair
MARIE. De-WhatNow? Dethroned? Who's dethroned?
OLYMPE. I want a country that owns itself and I don't think we can do that with a monarchy so this play—
MARIE. Silence. No queen? That is not—no—wait. Do I die in the end?
OLYMPE. Well I haven't written the end.
MARIE. You said "we're headed somewhere clear, drama has structure." Well where the hell are we headed and why is it not a beach?
OLYMPE. Look—
MARIE. No you look. I'm the main character of this thing, right? So let's make me stay queen and not die, OK? Let's do that.
OLYMPE. Sometimes the story tells itself.
MARIE. THEN YOU BETTER TELL THIS DAMN STORY TO BEHAVE.
I have precious little time to force history to like me. Now tell me what you're writing.
OLYMPE. I don't have time to go back, I'm halfway through the story.
MARIE. Aren't we all. Tell me.

Pause.
OLYMPE. Setting: The queen's private chamber in the palace on the eve of the fall of the monarchy.
MARIE. That's a bad day to set a romantic comedy.
OLYMPE. It's not a romantic comedy.

Marie whines, Olympe pushes through it.
You're desperate. You're plotting any way to uphold the crumbling royal institution while the revolutionary forces are at your door.
MARIE. (Like she's talking to a scary movie.) Get away from the door Marie!
OLYMPE. Then a woman comes to you, to convince you to let go of the old ways and embrace the new, to compromise. Her name is Olympe.

MARIE. Hold the throne. You're writing about yourself now?
OLYMPE. It's a character.
MARIE. Named after you.
OLYMPE. Well yes but—
MARIE. Isn't that confusing? I'm confused. I hate when theatre confuses me.
OLYMPE. I call it "Meta Theatre." The point is to be a little confusing.
MARIE. I hate it. I already hate it.
OLYMPE. You don't hate it.
MARIE. The play is trash!
OLYMPE. *The play could save us both.*

Pause.

MARIE. *Comment? (French: "How?")*
OLYMPE. By showing you learning a goddamn lesson for starters. By showing people that revolutions needn't be so bloody.
That they can be kind and creative. I'm telling you, Your Majesty, This play. Will be. Important.
MARIE. If it's not a romantic comedy nobody will come.
OLYMPE. I'll add a butler.
MARIE. Hilarious!
OLYMPE. Now, the first act ends with Olympe convincing the queen to work with the revolutionaries to create a Constitutional Monarchy that truly embraces Liberté, Egalité—
MARIE. Sororité.
OLYMPE. Yes. The country is saved by its women.

Beat.
MARIE. That I like. Keep writing. And if you want...the production may borrow my wigs.
OLYMPE. I'll make sure to thank you in the program.

*Marie suddenly hugs Olympe like a child hugging a mother.*
Olympe is shocked, then hugs her back.

MARIE. It’s finality that scares me most.
OLYMPHE. That’s the hardest part. Writing the ending.
MARIE. Oui. C’est vrai. That was my fear as a child. Never seeing people again. Or dogs. How are you supposed to understand when you’re so young? Never? What is “never”? Never is now, Young Marie. Never might be now.
OLYMPHE. I don’t know, Your Majesty. Never might not come to you. You’re a very compelling woman. I’m the one that should worry. My attempt at immortality is on paper, scripts in actors’ pockets. It’s not as glamorous as it looks.
MARIE. Oh, don’t worry, it doesn’t look very glamorous. But I like your stories. I’ll remember them. And I’ll tell my grandchildren and they’ll tell their grandchildren, and their grandchildren will invent new ways to watch never-ending plays on ever-tinier stages. May I naps on you?

Marie fills her lap with the growing pile of ribbons that are now a pillow for Marie.

OLYMPHE. A play that doesn’t end. If I’m writing what I really want? That’d be it.
MARIE. Then tell me that story, and let’s not have an ending. shall we? A cliffhanger will do. Something that makes you want to come back for more and more and...

Olympe inhales to begin her a story but—
Marianne runs in.

MARIANNE. They lied—there was no trial—Charlotte’s headed to the scaffold. Right now.

Oh god. Blackout.

Bump to Blue 22
TWO.

Lights on
The guillotine.
Marianne joins Olympe.


OLYMPIA. Oh god. Oh god! Oh god, I can't watch this.
MARIANNE. You have to. If you don't capture it, they will. Write it down, Olympe.
OLYMPIA. I can't. I do fiction, this is way too real.
MARIANNE. That's why you need to write it.
OLYMPIA. I need to stay alive, and that's becoming harder and harder because of her. She's made them scared and they're taking it out on half of the human race. Our half. We have to get out of here now.
MARIANNE. I'm not leaving her, and neither are you.
OLYMPIA. She doesn't need us now! All the sane people are leaving. Only the heartless wacks are left.
MARIANNE. And if you don't put the heart back in this revolution, who will? If you don't write this down, who will? They will. And that's how they win. And you don't want them to win. So stay right where you are, buck up, and witness this. That's what she deserves. What we all deserve. You said we're the heroes if you're writing it. So write.

Olympe really wants to go—makes herself stay.

OLYMPIA. OK. Yes. OK. Scene: Charlotte Corday mounts the scaffold.
Charlotte mounts the scaffold.
The crowd is rowdy.
She wears a white bonnet and dress.

The red thing creaking as she stands tall against the grain. The crowd is rowdy this morning. They heave fat words at her, they bark. But she is not marred. The hem of her white dress flaps in the wind like a ring of small fish at her feet.
I'm loving this narration, perhaps I should write novels.
MARIANNE. Focus please.
Marianne and Olympe wave to Charlotte.
Charlotte delights when she sees them and waves back. Then goes back to her Steely Look of Unwavering Calm.

OLYMPH. The young girl, a fair and beautiful creature in white, looks out towards the horizon, with posture braver and taller than any man gathered below the scaffold to watch her...die... Oh god. I can't. I can't. I'm sorry—

MARIANNE. Olympe, don't— But Olympe runs off—she can't take it. Charlotte doesn't notice...but Marianne starts narrating to cover.

Uh. So. The executioner yells: "Does the condemned have any last words?"

CHARLOTTE. Uh. Yes. I do...

MARIANNE. And. With confidence, and clarity, and a voice like a church bell ringing across the city—

CHARLOTTE. I KILLED ONE MAN, TO SAVE ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND.
VIVE LA REPUBLIC! VIVE LA FRANCE!
TELL MY FATHER I'M SORRY I DIDN'T GIVE HIM GRAND-CHILDREN.

A sound of the guillotine, cheers, and a blackout cut her off...

Immediatley a bright-white spot on Charlotte. 
A moment alone with Charlotte...breathing...a moment suspended in this purgatory.

So so softly she sings...or her voice plays around her...

(Sung so softly, simply.)
Who are we, without the riot?
What is a song, without a band?
What plays on, during the quiet?
Is the beat of the beat, and beat of the heart,
and the heart in our hand.

Blackout on Charlotte.
Which gives way to...

Olympe in the corner of the city—breathing—scared.
That was too much to handle.
She's losing it. A gunshot or clamor in the distance startles her and sends her running off again.

THREE. Fade Blackout.

Olympa's study. Marie holds a letter—wrapped in blue ribbon—she's stunned by it, scared of the letter, can't look away.

A sound of trumpets in the distance. Marie whips to the sound.

Uh-oh.

Trumpets

7:10

MARIE. Trumpets.

Marianne runs in; she heard the trumpets too.

MARIANNE. I heard them, they're coming for you, we have to—

Marianne sees the letter Marie holds.

What is that?

MARIE. It just arrived, and I—I think it's—

MARIANNE. No—

MARIE. I'm so sorry—

MARIANNE. Oh god. staring

MARIE.

I'm so sorry, my friend, I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry.

MARIANNE. Oh god, oh god, oh god. Oh god, oh god, oh god.

Marianne grasps the letter and falls on her knees. Vincent is dead. She knows this now.

Marianne immediately cradles her, holds her, a true and great friend in this moment of terrible truths becoming known.

MARIANNE. We worked so hard. And fought so hard. But right now, in this moment, I really don't know what I'd say if you asked me if I'd rather have the cause or have him here. In this moment? I might just toss all the revolutions for one more...anything.

Stride.

MARIE. Stand.
MARIANNE. Laugh.

MARIANNE. (Reading the note.) "Teacup bows are the best. Love, Marie."

MARIANNE. They really are.

MARIANNE. Thank you.

MARIANNE. You're very welcome. And it will never be truly all right after losing him, but I'm going to say that it will because it's really nice to hear it sometimes. So. "It'll be all right. It'll be all right."

MARIANNE. (Taking out her last letter to Vincent.) I never... I never...sent my last letter. He never read it. He'll never—

MARIANNE. Read it now. To me. I'll hear it for him. What did you want to say?

Marianne gets out the red-ribboned letter, reads from it—

MARIANNE. I love you.

Marianne folds a page and drops it.

I love you.

Marianne folds another page and drops it.

I love you.

A heavy KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK on the door.

MARIANNE. No, not yet, don't leave, not yet.

MARIANNE. Wish "yet" would listen.

MARIANNE. But if we're honest we all knew this was coming.

MARIANNE. What should I... Should I take a book? Or my play? I'll give him your letter. And don't be sad for us. When you laugh? We will too.

Marianne smiles to Marianne, gathers all her ribbons...

The door creaks open—
MARIANNE. It'll be all right.
MARIE. I think so. M turns back M exits UL

And Marie exits.
Marianne is alone for a moment.
She feels alone.
Then Olympe runs on.

OLYMP. Are they gone? Did they take her? Did they take anything

of mine? Did they take the—

MARIANNE. I cannot talk to you right now.

OLYMP. But she's gone though right? She's gone? She's—? Oh god,

where's my play? The new play? Did she take it? Nonono, not that

play. Not that play.

MARIANNE. How could you leave her, leave us all? M n x to next to armchair

OLYMP. I will be with you in one minute but I think that Marie-

Antoinette took my goddamn play. Which means they have it now,

which means...suddenly I wish I'd written a romantic comedy.

MARIANNE. No one cares about your stupid play.

Fiction doesn't matter if you're only using it to hide from reality—

our reality—this reality, the one where your friends need you and

are dying alone and you're trying to get your lines right.

OLYMP. My... No, I'm trying to save our lives.

MARIANNE. There's nothing to save if you don't stand for anything.

OLYMP. No, there's nothing to save if they kill us because they

find my script in Marie-Antoinette's pocket. Now. (A decision.)

Burn the pages. All my scripts, all the pamphlets. Anything left. We

burn them, drown them, eat them, just get rid of them.

MARIANNE. No.

OLYMP. Yes. We have to. And we leave tonight.

MARIANNE. No. No more of this running and dodging.

OLYMP. If I don't, if they find any trace of my writing about any

of us, they come for me, so start burning shit.

MARIANNE. And if you destroy them you destroy Charlotte and

Marie and me. You destroy me. Because no one writes me down.

But I thought you were. Sisterhood of heroes. Bullshit.
OLYMPE. Hey.

MARIANNE. NO. *(Talking about Vincent now.)* If you burn this story then everything we've fought for, everything that's happened, every single person that has thrown their life into this will be as blank and mute as the paper you can't seem to fill.

OLYMPE. You seem upset. I get that, but I'm just saying what we know is true: This fight isn't winnable any more. It's unstoppable this violence and—

MARIANNE. Isn't winnable?

OLYMPE. It's not.

MARIANNE. It is.

OLYMPE. It's not.

MARIANNE. *(Furious.)* My husband died for this and you tell me that "this isn't winnable"?

OLYMPE. Wait—what?

MARIANNE. *(Furious sarcasm.)* It's just a game and he lost? NO. No—

OLYMPE. *(She gets it.)* Marianne, wait—

MARIANNE. It can be won, and it will be won, because people like him died for something real, unlike you and your goddamn stories that you abandon just when it's your time to stand for something.

OLYMPE. I didn't—I'm sorry—

MARIANNE. They killed him like he was theirs to throw away as they pleased, but he was mine. *He was mine first.*

OLYMPE. Oh Marianne I'm—

MARIANNE. THIS IS NOT YOUR LINE.

OLYMPE. I'm sorry, I'm saying I'm sorry.

Marianne is fucking furious.

MARIANNE. You're always saying, saying, saying, and you never listen.

Because this is all about you. Because you cannot feel anything unless it's staged.

Well I'm gonna blow your mind here and tell you that this might not be your story in the end. Yes—Holy shit, the lady who has the
time to sit down and write her little skits might not be the hero of the
French Fucking Revolution.

OLYMPE. You came to me, you all came to me, and asked for my help—

MARIANNE. And you are failing us because you’re not writing what’s real. The real world, the world you say you want to change, is too much to bear and you run. You run. You are allowed the privilege of telling stories, of naming yourself but here you tremble, afraid of your own power. Maybe that’s why your writing doesn’t mean anything.

OLYMPE. Doesn’t mean anything?—I went to the National Assembly myself and—

MARIANNE. Told them what you thought they could handle. It didn’t work. Now you’re cowering in the shadows, abandoning your friends. Where is my pamphlet, my declaration, huh? You wrote half a play for Marie-Antoinette because she’s easy to stage. Where are my words, Olympe? Or am I one of those breathless puppets to which you so often resort.

OLYMPE. You can’t berate me and call me false and then beg me to help you.

MARIANNE. I’m not begging for anything from you. I don’t need you.

OLYMPE. Finally! I’ve been waiting for you to declare your damn self and stop waiting for me.

MARIANNE. And I’m waiting for you to realize that you can’t write the world if you’re not in it! You can’t change it if you can’t see it! And you can’t be a hero if you’re too scared to show up. Or is this all just another drama you’ll never finish?

This chills Olympe.

OLYMPE. At least I’m trying to create something. You’re just watching.

MARIANNE. Witnessing isn’t just watching.

OLYMPE. And fear isn’t weakness. Fear is how you know you’re paying attention.

MARIANNE. Maybe real revolution doesn’t have time for either fiction or fear.

OLYMPE. Because you don’t think art matters. You never did—you never did.
MARIANNE. Oh please—I have always stood by you.

Throwing every bit of anger at Marianne with this—

OLYMPE. You have always judged what I do, and doubted it, and mocked it and truly, in your honest heart, thought that words don't work. You would rather have twenty Charlottes in this fight than one sane artist because theatre seems to piss you off, but death doesn't bother you.

Marianne smacks the papers out of Olympe's hands violently, like she's slapping a face.

Both Marianne and Olympe are shocked that she did.


MARIANNE. If your story is so easy to burn you won't need my help.

Marianne leaves.
Olympe is alone... really alone now.
Freaking out.
Gathers her papers—will she burn them?
No. She can't. What does she do now?
Trying to conjure up a new character...

OLYMPE. Perhaps a... new friend enters?

Nothing.
Or an old one? Blue out 28
Across town trumpets announce...

Cross fade to tribunal

FOUR.

Marie, standing behind a rail, the ribbons fallen at her feet,
defending herself at the Revolutionary Tribunal.

Fade up on scaffold 4 29

MARIE. Marie enters. This is not her usual crowd.

Marianne enters, Olympe isn't here.
Charlotte, as Fraternitée, in a mask presides.

MARIANNE. The Trial of Marie-Antoinette. This is big. The world
is watching. Even so the prosecutor knows that this is not a trial but a roast as he says:

CHARLOTTE/FRAT. “Prisoner 280, STATE YOUR DEFENSE.”
MARIE. Well, I didn’t do…it?

CHARLOTTE/FRAT. “The Tribunal accuses the former and immoral Austrian queen of crimes against humanity, morality, and the Republic. These crimes include: Being queen—”
MARIE. Oh, I did do that.

CHARLOTTE/FRAT. “Calling the former king a coward—”
MARIE. Definitely did that.

CHARLOTTE/FRAT. “Conspiring with the enemies of France to promote war and destroy the populace—”
MARIE. I did not do that—

CHARLOTTE/FRAT. “Orchestrating orgies at the palace—”
MARIE. No one told me about that.

CHARLOTTE/FRAT. “She sent French treasury money to her true homeland of Austria, designed the massacre of Swiss Guards, and—”
MARIE. Well this is not hilarious.

CHARLOTTE/FRAT. “And we’re not done yet, folks. This woman is also accused of incestuous relations with her own son.”

MARIE. NOW YOU LISTEN HERE. YOU MAY PUSH ME BUT DO NOT PUSH MY CHILDREN, NEVER MY CHILDREN, YOU DO NOT SLANDER CHILDREN. That accusation is a disgusting lie that you dreamt up, not me, which says a lot more about the dreamer than it does the accused you sick, pardon my American, DICKS.

MARIANNE. And the women in the room were taken with her passion, for how many of them had been accused of being bad mothers by strangers.

MARIE. You think you’re making things better with this charade? But you’re not, you’re setting us all up for a—All I’m gonna say is watch out for ambitious little emperors whose names rhyme with Shapoleon.

MARIANNE. The prosecutor knew he risked losing the crowd so he got right to the point:
CHARLOTTE/FRAT. “The Tribunal has reached a decision.”

MARIE. YOU CAME IN HERE WITH A DECISION.

CHARLOTTE/FRAT. “Prisoner 280, Marie-Antoinette, otherwise known as the Former Queen of France and Navarre, otherwise known as the Bitch, Madame Deficit, the Widow Capet, and the Soon-To-Be-No-More.

You are condemned and sentenced to die by the guillotine. Now.”

MARIE. (Summoning up her deepest, most regal power for this laser-like take-down of her enemy.) Then you, sirs, bear not the marks of men, but the instincts of animals. And with your mouth of hate and hands of hair, you rip not your enemies in half but your country, your country is gored on your watch—so you, Followers of Animal Order, will remove the squint from your eyes so that you may fully see with whom you are dealing. Do you see? Do you see this woman, this mother, this citizen queen, do you See. Me. Now?

You do. And now we are linked. And now, like a simple song played on and on, you will never forget me.

Proceed.

A quick shift to a guillotine. Marie’s wig is suddenly gone, her hair is short and messy.

Olympe finally shows up... terrified to be there, to witness.

OLYMPE. They cut her hair.

Marianne hears this, sees that Olympe is there.

She aged a decade in a moment. To her, she was still France. And today, France was losing its head in a dirty gown. But she doesn’t betray herself. She doesn’t weep. She acts every bit the royalty.

MARIANNE. Then the wind drops

OLYMPE. The world hums to a hush.

MARIANNE. And the world begins to never forget.

Marie looks to Marianne and Olympe

who nod and smile supportively.

MARIE. (Quick and quiet.) Marie enters. Is she late? Or lost? What were they talking about? Was it her? It’s always her. Or is she being her again? It’s a confusing time. Hello. Marie. introduce

CHARLOTTE/FRAT. Does the condemned have any last words...
MARIE. Yes.
I... steps forward
She accidentally steps on Frat's foot.
(To him.) I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to—

A sound of the guillotine.
Marie reveals and drops one red ribbon.
Cheers and a blackout cut her off.

Immediately a bright white spot
on Marie suspended in whatever purgatory this is.
She sings, so softly, so simply...

Who are we, without our power?
What's a truth, none understand?
Fame's a force, building era from hour,
and the beat of the beat, and the beat of the heart,
and heart in our hand.

Marie breathes, mourns, breathes, then looks right out at us
before...

Bump to Blackout on Marie.

Fade up to Study
OLYMPE. WHY DON'T YOU WORK?!
Air and ink and make believe and nothing is working and nothing
is helping and nothing that I'm doing is real. An entire life of nothing
that's real.

Marianne enters...
MARIANNE. That's not completely true.

Olympe swings around to see her friend—a rush of feeling.

OLYMPE. Marianne, you're here, oh my god, I'm so sorry. You're right. What am I doing with all this? What's the point, what's real? I don't even know anymore.

MARIANNE. You showed up for Marie. That's the point, that's real.

OLYMPE. I know I let you down. I'm not brave like you, I'm just... loquacious. A fact that's probably going to get me killed.

MARIANNE. You're not at the end yet. You're stronger than you think, and your words do matter. They are braver than you are. Let them loose and they'll outlast you. That's what I think. And... I'm sorry too.

Does Olympe hug her here? Need her, grip her hand, something.

And you'll be happy to know that you were right.

OLYMPE. Oh. About what?

MARIANNE. I am better at this than you. I wrote my own pamphlet, which was so good it became a declaration.

Clears her throat. The declaration from memory:

"We, the free and proud women and men of Saint-Domingue, deny the unjust power of France and her agents of torture and greed. The sun of this island shines on an independent nation of liberty, not property."


MARIANNE. Oh ya know. Writing what I want.

OLYMPE. What we want... D X D O W N  to M  n

MARIANNE. You know what I really want? I want people to live their lives and make babies and eat too much and do experimental theatre.

OLYMPE. Now there's a France I can believe in.

MARIANNE. And let's be kind, shall we. In honor of Vincent, and Charlotte, and crazy ass Marie-Antoinette, let us laugh too loudly and too often, and call out the hypocrites of our age until they are the butt of the joke. That's what we give our children. A good laugh.

OLYMPE. My son. All grown up with a son of his own. What will he think of me?
MARIANNE. He'll think his mom doesn't take any shit from anyone, says what she believes, and is willing to die for it.
OLYMPE. But—yes—but I don't particularly want to die for this. I would rather live for it.
MARIANNE. Uh. Yeah. I think the real win is changing the world and living to enjoy it.
OLYMPE. Right? This stuff is scary as hell.
MARIANNE. This is the "Reign of Terror" not the "Reign of Agree to Disagree."
OLYMPE. OK, I was trying to be brave because you were, but goddammit I want to outlive these fuckers.
MARIANNE. Me too!
OLYMPE. Let's just skip to the part when we're all over this bullshit and we can tell our grandchildren how we beat these idiots.
MARIANNE. Beat them black and goddamn blue.
OLYMPE. With our drama!
MARIANNE. And our sashes!
OLYMPE. And our fists goddammit I want to punch those assholes in their eye sockets!
(To those assholes.) You want a revolution? COME AT ME.
MARIANNE. COME AT ME TOO.
OLYMPE. OK, come at her first and then me.

They share a much-needed smile.

MARIANNE. OK. One of us has to survive this. Whoever does will have a lot of work to do. And three really chatty ghosts making sure they do it.
OLYMPE. I think it'll be you.
MARIANNE. I think it'll be you.

Marianne hands Olympe a pen.

Either way. We're the heroes. If you're writing the story.
OLYMPE. I should probably hurry up then.

Olympe smiles. Grabs the pen to write...
KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK at her door.
Marianne holds her hand and she:
The Trial of...
Me. Blue out (bump) 
BANG BANG BANG of a gavel.
As a swift surge into...
“The Trial of Olympe de Gouges”

SIX.

A podium swings in front of Olympe. Charlotte and Marie, as Fraternités in masks, enter. Olympe is surrounded, arguing for her life on all sides.

Fade up on tribunal 
CHARLOTTE/FRAT. BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE COMMITTEE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY, YOU ARE HEREBY TRIED WITH TREASON FOR CONSISTENT AND AGGRESSIVE THEATRICAL ACTIONS.

OLYMPE. OK. So. The thing about that is...
Will she deny it or not? Not. She takes a stand.
Yes. Yes. If being a traitor is loving my country enough to shame it for being less than its best self, then I am one, yes I am, and god knows I don’t do anything less than aggressive theatre.

One of the Frats reveals Olympe’s play—a threat to her.

CHARLOTTE/FRAT. Your play is a treasonous tract,
CHARLOTTE/FRAT and MARIE/FRAT. a shameful drama, poorly penned—

OLYMPE. First draft, Jesus.
CHARLOTTE/FRAT. maliciously and purposefully composed to attack the sovereignty of the people.
OLYMPE. I would never attack the sovereignty—
MARIE/FRAT. Your play depicts the former queen, does it not?
OLYMPE. Well yes but not in a fine light.
CHARLOTTE/FRAT. You portray that woman as a sympathetic figure for all to see.
OLYMPE. Nonono, the whole point is that the queen learns a lesson. A lesson about the true north of the Republic.
MARIE/FRAT. And she learns this lesson in your play?
OLYMPE. Yes.
MARIE/FRAT. So she's capable of learning?
OLYMPE. Yes.
CHARLOTTE/FRAT. Which makes her a sympathetic figure.
OLYMPE. *It just makes her human. I'm* the sympathetic figure in the play. And *I'm* the one that convinces her that democracy is better than royalty. That character is Olympe de Gouges SO AS NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH ANYONE ELSE BUT ME. This play proves I'm a patriot. And anyway, I haven't even gotten to the end of it.
MARIE/FRAT. What happens at the end?
OLYMPE. *(Making this up—*deliberate Les Mis references.*) Uh... we'll probably... hear the people sing? And the sound of distant drums?
MARIE/FRAT. It's a musical?
OLYMPE. For the whole family. You'll laugh, you'll cry, there's a barricade.
CHARLOTTE/FRAT. By unanimous decision, this Tribunal states that Olympe de Gouges, the female playwright—
OLYMPE. Just playwright. *Annoyed*
CHARLOTTE/FRAT. —is guilty and shall be punished by death—
OLYMPE. You can't kill me for this, I work in the theatre; it's a nonprofit.
CHARLOTTE/FRAT and MARIE/FRAT. We kill a lot of people, Miss De Gouges.
OLYMPE. No. You can't kill me. I'm pregnant. *(Pause.)*
CHARLOTTE/FRAT and MARIE/FRAT. The Tribunal does not think you're pregnant.
OLYMPE. But I am. Definitely pregnant.
CHARLOTTE/FRAT and MARIE/FRAT. We're pretty sure that you're not.
OLYMPE. Gimme a few weeks.?
CHARLOTTE/FRAT. The condemned shall be killed tomorrow morning and justice will hereby be served.
OLYMPE. THIS IS NOT JUSTICE. You say you fight for freedom and equality but that means art and ideas which is my life's work. A work in progress you might note. I mean you can't kill the writers, that's Democracy 101.
OLYMPE. I AM NOT THE PROBLEM, YOU ARE THE PROBLEM.
CHARLOTTE/FRAT and MARIE/FRAT. The Tribunal does not think we're the problem.
OLYMPE. Goddamnit—come on—no—NO—YOU GUYS? YOU GUYS ARE FUCKING UP THE REVOLUTION.

Swift transition as the world around her empties, vanishes, leaving—

**Cross-fade to Down Center**

*Olympe.*

*Alone.*

OLYMPE. Not like this. No. No, it's not ending like this. I'm not ending like this.

*Trying to tear out the stage curtains, the floorboards, her costume. How does she stop this play?*

**THIS IS NOT. THE END.**

*She stops, realizes.*

You don't write what you know, you write what you want. OK.
*(Trying to narrate her way out of this.)* Olympe de Gouges, 38, very well liked and respected in her field and all the politicians and revolutionaries and theatre critics think she's great, and she will live a long time, and eat as many macarons as she can carry, and she will
make it out of this, and she is just walking home from rehearsal, and
enjoying Paris in the fall and—

Charlotte appears. Lights up on C.

CHARLOTTE. You know that's not as good a story.
OLYMPE. I don't care if it is.
CHARLOTTE. Yeah you do. I know you do.
OLYMPE. No, THIS IS MY LIFE, NOT A PLAY. A PLAY YOU CAN
WALK OUT OF.

Marie appears, only ever repeats her last words.

MARIE. I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to—
OLYMPE. Marie—help—ribbons.
MARIE. I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to—
OLYMPE. What is she saying?
CHARLOTTE. Her last words. I think that's all she remembers—
MARIE. I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to—
CHARLOTTE. Do you have your last words worked out yet?
OLYMPE. NO NO I DON'T.
CHARLOTTE. You should think about it, writer.
OLYMPE. I am not this kind of writer!

Marianne enters.

MARIANNE. What kind of writer are you?
OLYMPE. The really scared kind.
CHARLOTTE. Scared that you didn't matter?
MARIANNE. (Re: Marie.) Or that she's going to be more famous
than all of us.
MARIE. I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to—
OLYMPE. No No NO. I'm scared of...of ending.
MARIANNE. Then don't. Turn the end into a beginning.
CHARLOTTE. (A bad idea.) A play that doesn't end? Oh god.

OLYMPE. (A great idea.) A play that doesn't end? Oh god!
MARIANNE. You're writing what you want, right? So defy them
with your story. They can't touch the play in your mind.
OLYMPE. The play in my mind?
MARIANNE. Yeah. Play that one.
OLYMPE. But. I need real help here, not fiction.
MARIANNE. It might be fiction, but it’s not fake.
The beating hearts in front of you are real.
The gathering of people is real.
The time we spend together, this time, is real.
The story is real when it starts.

*The lights rise slowly on the real audience.*
OLYMPE. Has it? Started? But it can’t write itself.
MARIANNE. Oh girl. It already is.

*Olympe starts to see the audience around her.*
Your story isn’t yours now.
MARIE. I’m so sorry. I didn’t mean to—
OLYMPE. But…whose is it?
CHARLOTTE. *(Pointing to the audience.*) I think…theirs.

*Olympe sees the audience. Is amazed. Have they been there the whole time?*
OLYMPE. But…who are…who…?
MARIANNE. I don’t know. But they showed up and seem to be listening.
OLYMPE. Are they armed?
CHARLOTTE. I think they’re just…interested.
MARIANNE. Which is what you wanted, isn’t it? An audience.
CHARLOTTE. A message.
MARIANNE. A story of our own.

*Marie giggles softly.*
OLYMPE. Yes. *(Absolutely overwhelmed by this.*) What a thing.

*What does she say to a live audience? Tearfully but proud.*
To us...

Thank you. For your time. For listening. Thank you.
It’s an honor to…stand before you and—

*As she stands before us...*
The world around her changes...
To the scaffold. We become the mob. **Fade up to Scaffold**

Exactly as we heard in the prologue...
Anticipation. Wood creaking.
And the sound of a scared breath—Olympe's breath—
Except it's everywhere, it's our breath, it's history's breath.
Breath—Breath—

To stand before you and—

*Charlotte and Marie start singing “Our Song.”*

This whole time...I've been standing...before you and—

*A sharp white light on, or the engorging shadow of...*

*Guillotine turns to see a guillotine.*

That's not a way to start a comedy.

**MARIANNE.** I don't know about you, but when good stories end
I always want to go right back to beginning.

*Olympe hears this, understands, grips Marianne's hand.*

*She concentrates, conjuring up the ending to her story exactly as she would have it go.*

**OLYMPE.** The death of Olympe de Gouges.

*Marianne narrates for her...*

**MARIANNE.** A bright fall day, four P.M., light lingering on the trees and slanting low on the Place de la Révolution. Olympe de Gouges walks up the wooden steps onto the sturdy stage. Yes, she thinks, a stage.

**OLYMPE.** A stage...

**MARIANNE.** She thinks of Marie-Antoinette, who was on this very spot only weeks ago.

**OLYMPE.** Marie.

**MARIANNE.** She thinks of Charlotte Corday—

**OLYMPE.** Charlotte...

**MARIANNE.** and the wildness of her hands and heart, also here not long ago.

**OLYMPE.** All of us.
CHARLOTTE. She also thinks of a woman she passed in the streets
a few weeks ago who held her head high and wore a red sash that
said “Revolution For All.” To Olympe she looked like the symbol of
freedom.

OLYMPE. La Marianne.

MARIANNE. (Sung.)

Who are we, without a story?

Lost at sea, in search of land...

CHARLOTTE. That woman hummed a soft song that slipped into
Olympe’s ear that day.

MARIANNE. (Sung.)

We survive the roughness of glory

CHARLOTTE. A song sticks.

MARIANNE. (Sung.)

By passing the beat of the beat of the heart

From hand to hand.

Marie and/or Charlotte continues humming the song.

OLYMPE. A simple song played on and on.

CHARLOTTE. And on and on.

MARIANNE. Now Olympe never actually met these women, but
on the scaffold in that moment—

OLYMPE. Her moment.

MARIANNE. She writes what she wants: her own story.

OLYMPE. Her own story.

MARIANNE. And her story is one of... sisters.

CHARLOTTE. Sisters know what you mean when you don’t have
the words.

MARIANNE. So she tells herself a story as she looks out on the
masses of people.

OLYMPE. Yes. She finds herself with an... audience. And a mono-
logue. This she can handle.

So she quiets that fiction in her mind.

Charlotte and Marie stop humming “Our Song”...

And she summons up her truest self.
And the time is now.
And the stage is set.
MARIANNE. “Does the condemned have any last words.”
OLYMPE. And she knows that a story is more alive than a fact. A story is what lives.
Olympe de Gouges stands before them
And she is good.
And she is not alone.
And with her last moments, she calls out like a queen, like a righteous girl, like a mother of nations, she calls out:
“Children of France. Avenge my death.”
MARIANNE. Which wasn’t exactly what she meant. She really meant:
OLYMPE. “Please do my plays after I’m gone.”
MARIANNE. Or:
OLYMPE. “Don’t settle for the story that they’re giving you.”
MARIANNE. or maybe she just meant:
OLYMPE. “May God Have No Pity, You Motherfuckers.”
CHARLOTTE. That’s my girl.
MARIANNE. But the crowd understood her.
OLYMPE. And a downpour of applause rained on Olympe like the curtain call she’d always wanted.
MARIANNE. Which surprised the executioner so much that he held the blade longer than he’d ever done before. And that pause cracked him right down the center. And in that crack grew a rustle, that turned into a rumble, that turned into a...

Marie giggles.

CHARLOTTE. The executioner laughed. Not at her, at himself. He caught a glimpse of his own hypocrisy. Which was horribly, terribly funny.
OLYMPE. And the vindication of Olympe de Gouges started, as it should, with a joke.
CHARLOTTE. And a song was sung that Olympe could only hear—
OLYMPE. That Olympe could hear only—

Marianne sings to Olympe...
MARIANNE. (Sung.)
Who are we, without a story?
OLYMPE. As the blade fell.
Olympe takes a slow, proud, grand bow
thanking her audience for listening.
At the nadir of the bow—

The sound of the guillotine.

But Olympe stands tall again to tell us...
OLYMPE. And a story... begins.

End of Play

Bow lights 46
Post show music

Blue out 47
House up 48
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<th>Time</th>
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**Plan**
- Tech; Scheduled fittings scattered
- Costumes and make up; Cue-to-cue; transitions; props
- Run through; no costumes or make up
- Dress rehearsal
- Holiday
- Final dress rehearsal
- Performance
- Performance

**Notes**
- Morning class in Barnelle
- Class in Barnelle until 3:30
- Class in Barnelle until 3:30
- Class in Barnelle until 3:30
- Class in Barnelle until 3:30
The Revolutionists
by Lauren Gunderson
Directed by Amanda Hallman

April 2 - 3, 2022
8:00 pm
LMU’s Barnelle Theatre

The Revolutionists is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.
Land Acknowledgment

As part of Loyola Marymount University's recognition of our history, location, and relationship to the indigenous communities in Los Angeles, we acknowledge the Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (the Los Angeles basin and southern Channel Islands) and the presence of LMU on this traditional, ancestral, and unceded land. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live, study, create, and be in this place.

We urge you to:

Research the unceded territory you stand on by using the following link: [https://native-land.ca/](https://native-land.ca/)

Research and learn what LMU has to say about land acknowledgements: [https://resources.lmu.edu/dei/indigenous/](https://resources.lmu.edu/dei/indigenous/)

Research the importance of land acknowledgements followed by actionable steps: [https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/](https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/)

Support and donate to the work of Native Voices at the Autry, the country’s only Equity theatre company devoted exclusively to developing and producing new works for the stage by Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and First Nations playwrights. [https://theautry.org/events/signature-programs/native-voices/about-native-voices](https://theautry.org/events/signature-programs/native-voices/about-native-voices)
The Revolutionists
by Lauren Gunderson
Directed by Amanda Hallman

Cast
(by order of appearance)

Olympe de Gouges
Quinn Ruby DeVries
Marianne Angelle
Lia Washington
Charlotte Corday
Loviisa Pasternak
Marie Antoinette
Talia Bernstein

Setting
Paris, the Reign of Terror, 1793

Run Time: Approximately 2 hours
There will be one 15 minute intermission.

The Revolutionists is presented by special arrangement with
Commissioned and first produced by Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park.
Production
Director – Amanda Hallman
Costumes Designed and Built by Aja
Lighting Designer – Nelea Fong
Production Consultant – Kristofer Kataoka
Stage Manager – Than Povi Martinez
Sound Board Operator – Chloe He
Technical Director – Jason Sheppard
Prop Master – John Burton
Movement Consultant – Christine Breihan

Special Thanks
Aja, Kris Kataoka, Kathleen and Bill Hallman,
Mark Loventhal, Christine Breihan, Nelea Fong,
Than Povi Martinez, Jason Sheppard, John Burton, Rob Hillig,
Tania Walls, Mark Seldis, Kate Shirley, Kevin Wetmore,
Katharine Noon, Stacey Cabaj, Diane Benedict,
Emily Stapleton, Lauren Johansen Sheppard,
Andrea and Matthew Garwood, Chloe He, and Isabel Seera.
**Bios**

Talia Bernstein (Marie Antoinette) is a freshman Theater Arts Major at LMU and is stoked to be a part of this production of *The Revolutionists!* She has performed in several musicals in the past, and is super excited to play the French Queen in her first straight play. She would like to thank each of the wonderful ladies in this cast and crew, as well as her loving friends and family, for their never ending support!

Quinn Ruby DeVries (Olympe de Gouges) is a freshman Theatre Arts major. At LMU, she previously played Catherine Donohue in *These Shining Lives.* She is so pumped to be performing on stage once again, and couldn’t imagine a better return to live theatre than two shows about some pretty epic women. Other favorite roles include Abigail Williams in *The Crucible,* #11 in *The Wolves,* and Viola in *Twelfth Night.* She is so excited to be revolutionizing with her three amazing castmates, along with Aja and Amanda. Thank you. For your time. For Listening.

Nelea Fong (Lighting Designer) is a second-year undergraduate film production and film studies student with a theatre arts minor interested in production design, set design, and lighting design. She has worked on LMU Theatre shows as a stage manager, lighting technician, and lighting designer. She hopes to continue working as a designer for theatre and film productions in her remaining time at LMU.
Bios

**Amanda Hallman** (Director) is completing her third and final year of the MFA Performance Pedagogy program at LMU, with this production as her final thesis. She holds an AA in Theatre Arts from Fullerton College and a BA in Theatre from UC San Diego. Amanda looks forward to a career teaching and directing college theatre, inspiring and mentoring a new and diverse generation of students, and entering into all work with a trauma-informed and consent-based approach. She would like to thank the cast for their hard work, humor, and trust. She could not be more grateful to her amazingly supportive family, partner, and friends, and the professors who helped her grow at LMU.

**Chloe He** (Sound Board Operator) is a junior in the theater program. She worked on the crew for *Everybody* last year and enjoyed the experience. Her favorite play is *Waiting for Godot*. She is also interested in reading plays about feminism and racial diversity.
Bios

Than Povi Martinez (Stage Manager) is an Indigenous woman from Pueblo de San Ildefonso in Northern New Mexico. A current dance major at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, she has a background of training in a wide array of styles. With interdisciplinary training in Ballet, Hip-Hop, Jazz, modern, and contemporary. She has also trained in West-African, Flamenco, and is steeped in the cultural practice of her traditional dances of the Tewa People. Her greatest strength is her fearlessness in trying and experiencing the artistic demands of exploration and that of the choreographer. She views herself as a vessel for an Artist’s vision, her own included. She has trained for over 15 years and has had experience in Film and Theatre production, both on crew and in the cast. With plans to become a professional dancer, she embodies and grows with the lessons and artistic values of every artist she has worked with.

Lovisa Pasternak (Charlotte Corday) is a theatre major, statistics minor and is thrilled to be one of the Revolutionists. She's especially thrilled to stab a political pundit (let's just say it's not the first time she's had the impulse) in a beautiful, historically-accurate gown, and to step into the villain's shoes as Fraternité. Her favourite roles prior to this include Celia in As You Like It and Queen Anne of Austria in The Three Musketeers. She is beyond grateful to be working with such a friendly cast, impressive costume designer, and a director who is so respectful of our creativity, feelings, and boundaries.
Bios

Lia Washington (Marianne Angelle) is from Columbia, South Carolina and is currently a sophomore theatre arts major at LMU. She is thrilled to be in her very first LMU production and enjoys every moment spent with her director and cast mates. Lia is excited about being on stage, where she feels most at home, making our theatre here her home away from home.
Our Song

Who are we, without the riot?
What is a song, without a band?
What plays on, during the quiet?
Is the beat of the beat, and the beat of the heart,
and the heart in our hand?
Who are we, without our powers?
What is truth, that none understand?
Fame is a force, building era from hours,
And the beat of the beat, and the beat of the heart,
and the heart in our hand.
Who are we, without a story?
Washed away, like the seat to sand,
Yet we survive the roughness of glory,
By passing the beat of the beat of the heart from hand to hand.
By passing the beat of the beat of the heart from hand to hand.
We’re passing the beat of the beat of the heart from hand to --.

- Lauren Gunderson