EXTRA-CURRICULAR THEATRE AT NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL:
A MEANS TO EMBODY THE MISSION

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Theatre

by

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Dedication

To Barbara Jean Brough
who once took her grandson to the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
to see a production of *Oklahoma!* and then to so many other afternoons at the theatre.
Acknowledgements

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ABSTRACT

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Master of Arts in Theatre

This project archives the history of the theatre program at Notre Dame High School of Sherman Oaks, California with particular focus on extra-curricular productions. In doing so, it illuminates the role of the extra-curricular theatre program in a Catholic high school with a specific religious identity associated with the Brothers of the Holy Cross.

The school’s identity, mission, and the community it serves were researched before articulating the role of this singular extra-curricular program within this institution. A complete production archive has been created to cover over sixty years of theatre history, with particular emphasis on play selection. In addition to this record, representative programs and photographs have been included.

Various stakeholders, including school administrators, alumni, and enrolled students in the program were given an opportunity to evaluate its cultural worth and prescribe prudent recommendations for its vitality.
Preface

This project is the culmination of my Masters studies within the Department of Theatre at California State University, Northridge, a period in my life that has been filled with wonderful gains and unexpected losses. A graduate project is typically completed within a semester; however my journey towards graduation has encountered many personal challenges. During my first semester of graduate studies my wife, Heather, and I welcomed our first born and only daughter, Isabelle. Our son Elijah was born during my final semester of course work. During the initial period of research for a topic that may have blossomed into a thesis, my father died unexpectedly. Academic progress halted for a great length of time. A year and a half after my father’s passing our youngest, Thomas, was born.

All the while I have been employed by Notre Dame High School of Sherman Oaks, California. Hired as a religious studies teacher I served the school in that capacity for eight years. After developing a relationship with the theatre directors and sharing my educational background in the performing arts I was invited to join the program in an extra-curricular role. For the past seven years I have directed shows with a particular focus on performing for young audiences. The content of those shows was at the beginning focused on younger children with works such as Charlotte’s Web and James and the Giant Peach. Steadily the focus has shifted to a more adolescent point of view, exemplified by I Never Saw Another Butterfly. I am immensely grateful to Notre Dame for enabling me to daily pursue my passion for understanding humanity’s pursuit of truth through the theological and theatrical arts.
My proximity to the extra-curricular theatre program has allowed for the disclosure of more internal information than would otherwise be available to an outside auditor. However my role as a participant and observer in the program is not defined by hierarchical expectations and potential for administrative review; hence, my observations are beyond the scope of potential conflicts of interest. My role as director of the annual theatre for youth production is integral and integrated into the broader theatrical program at Notre Dame yet limited to an exclusively advisory role concerning the other aspects of the program.

The dual nature of my relationship to the community as religious educator and artistic mentor is part and parcel of the Catholic school tradition, and it is this tradition's mission and values that distinguish its programs from those available at non-parochial, yet oddly more restrictive, high schools.
Introduction

This project is necessary and vital to the community it serves, insofar as it enables Notre Dame High School of Sherman Oaks, California to more completely understand how this singular extra-curricular program enriches both the development of student participants and the greater community’s ability to live the institutional mission. It will be the first formal documentation and study of this specific program. Furthermore, this project offers the various stakeholders in the program an opportunity to evaluate its worth both culturally and professionally, and prescribe prudent recommendations for its continued vitality.

This project differentiates itself from published texts such as Jeff Bennett’s *Secondary Stages: Revitalizing High School Theatre* which articulates a pedagogical vision that builds a program based upon exposure and recruitment. Similarly *The Drama Teacher’s Survival Guide: A Complete Tool Kit for Theatre Arts* by Margaret F. Johnson operates under the pretext of successful program building, principally within the structure of the classroom. This project intends to evaluate an existing program and its relationship to the particular community in which it functions, this focus distinguishes it from Judith Colaresi’s thesis *A Case Study of a High School Theatre: Planning, Teaching, and Reflecting as well as Longevity* and *The Secondary Theatre Arts Teacher: A Case Study* Cynthia Brown’s doctoral dissertation. Both works focus on a program deemed successful and try to extrapolate prescriptive norms for developing programs, as opposed to this study that is centered on analysis of a specific program operating within a given mission.
Having previously established the basis of this self study of the extra-curricular theatre program at Notre Dame of Sherman Oaks High School, it is now necessary to describe the manner in which evidence was collected to support the arguments espoused in the observations section. To facilitate this study, it was necessary to develop a comprehensive understanding of the theatre program within the framework of the school’s heritage. The endeavor of creating a historical narrative of the program allowed for contextual study of play selections in relationship to the program’s growth and cultural significance. The inclusion of stakeholder interviews enabled a further articulation of the unique manner in which this singular extra-curricular program’s role has been established.

Describing the cultural context of Notre Dame High School, a Catholic college preparatory institution founded by the Brothers of the Holy Cross, required pulling from the author’s experience as an educator within the community. The history of the Holy Cross order and biography of the charismatic founder Fr. Basil Moreau are infused into the daily life of the campus. Aside from the obligatory posters and paraphernalia, the school takes the notion of mission seriously. Mondays begin with a “Mission Moment” in which the student body is addressed over the PA concerning the Holy Cross foundations of the school; this can include biographical sketches of major contributors to the order’s history and/or brief explanations of the various mission themes. Daily community members receive an email entitled “Moreau Reflection” which includes selected quotes from his writings. Annually the school celebrates Founders Week and furthers the historical/cultural understanding through group activities, student made videos, and assemblies. Additionally, faculty and staff are afforded the opportunity to attend the Holy
Cross Institute which is held on the campus of St. Edwards University in Austin, Texas. This four day conference is designed to bring together community members of the various Holy Cross high schools across the country to further their formation as educators and share their experiences of embodying the mission.

The creation of the historical archive was achieved through extensive study of the school’s annually published yearbook *Arches*, named after a prominent architectural element of the campus. The school opened in 1947 the first yearbook published was in 1952; in order to cover the initial period of history, bounded editions of *The Knight* were examined for theatrical information.

Representative theatrical productions and programs where chosen to reflect the current five show season of the school year. Great effort was made to correlate the representative photos to the selected programs. However, the Frosh/Soph and Acting III productions happen late in the academic year and are not featured in the yearbook. Photographs were supplied by the yearbook coordinator and thusly those two productions do not have photographs included in this project.

Interviews were conducted with a variety of community members to gain a further understanding of the role and function of the program. School administrators chosen for interview were selected based upon their proximity to the program and knowledge of the schools mission. Thus the president, Brett Lowart, who is charged with implementing and sustaining the Holy Cross mission, was included. Likewise, Rob Thomas, Vice Principle of Student Life, was included because of his direct relationship with the theatre program as administrator of all school activities. Representative students were selected with
intention to reflect a diversity of gender, grade level, and active participation. A wide net was cast to include as many alumni as possible. Attempts were made to include representatives from as broad a time frame as possible, the interviews included represent three decades of theatre participants. Lastly, extensive interviewing took place with Judy Welden, Visual and Performing Arts department chair and theatre program director. The intent of this methodology is to move from developing historical context to understanding contemporary implementation.
Chapter 1: Holy Cross Mission and Notre Dame High School

Notre Dame High School is a Catholic, college preparatory high school founded by the Holy Cross Brothers in 1947. It is the oldest Catholic high school in the San Fernando Valley. Initially the school was an all-male institution, but in 1983 the school opened its doors to young women. The community reflects the ethnic backgrounds present in the greater San Fernando Valley. Although the majority of Notre Dame’s students are Caucasian (57% during the 2010-2011 school year) it is much more diverse than the Sherman Oaks community it is located in. Hispanic/Latino students make up 21% of the student body, Filipinos represent 10%, Asian Pacific Islanders are 6%, African Americans equal 5%, and Native Americans stand at 1% according to the registrar’s office. According to US Census data available at americafactfinder.org the population of the 91423 zip code is 82.5% Caucasian. While its students appear diverse from an ethnic perspective, the school is a Catholic high school, and, as such, the highest percentage of the student population identifies itself as Catholic. According to data available on the 2010-2011 school year 71% of students identify as Catholic. The majority of Notre Dame students live in the San Fernando Valley and neighboring communities, extending north to Santa Clarita, south to Los Angeles proper, west to Westlake Village, and east to Claremont.

In keeping with the Holy Cross philosophy of “educating hearts and minds” the school endeavors to develop the student as a whole person. The student body is afforded an opportunity to find his or her niche and develop personally. Aside from providing a diverse, challenging, multilayered curriculum, Notre Dame offers extensive extra-curricular programs. Over twenty sports teams practice and play throughout the entire
calendar year. Demanding programs like Debate, Band, and Theatre offer students the ability to develop their intellectual and artistic talents. Dozens of clubs are chartered each year offering the opportunity to get involved in the serious and trivial. The Amnesty International club raises awareness of various social justice issues. The Filipino Food club promotes cultural awareness. The Dry Ink club promotes the aspirations of budding authors. The Hip Hop Dance club celebrates music and movement. The Notre Dame community fosters unity through the respect of each person’s distinctive gifts.

In order to understand Notre Dame’s culture and identity, a historical understanding of its founders’ historical roots is necessary. It was in the aftermath of the French Revolution that a young Basil Moreau, the founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross, was called to the priesthood. After the Reign of Terror, when Church schools and properties were seized and the public practice of the Catholic faith was forbidden, a period of restoration began in French Catholicism. It was this period that shaped the emerging direction of Moreau’s priestly vocation. He rapidly developed into a charismatic seminary professor. The reestablishment of schools that largely served the peasantry of the French countryside offered Fr. Moreau the chance to challenge educational orthodoxy. Latin and literature would not be the only subjects his students studied. He promoted the study of the arts, music and dance, as well as, science and finances. His innovative approach to curriculum development and student focused scholarship set him apart. In his 36th Circular Letter, restated in Gary MacEoin’s biography *Basil Moreau: Founder of Holy Cross*, Moreau affirms the order’s mission when he declares, “We shall always place education side by side with instruction; the
mind will not be cultivated at the expense of the heart. While we prepare useful citizens for society, we shall likewise do our utmost to prepare citizens for heaven” (237).

Moreau’s educational reforms were not initially centered on the French youth; rather, he started with adults. If priests were to be effective teachers they had to be able to cope with the ever changing world around them. As early as 1828 Fr. Moreau called for the creation of a group of priests whose formation would be expanded to include the study of physics, political science, and economics, stretching them beyond the norm of philosophy and theology. Education in Moreau’s mind must be extremely flexible and integrated; seminarians under his direction would soon take in the physical sciences as well.

Previously in his priesthood Father Moreau aided another priest, James Dujarie, in the establishment of a group of religious brothers focused on providing education to villagers in the Le Mans region. When Fr. Dujarie retired in 1835, Moreau became the community’s de facto overseer (244). Soon after Moreau’s priests and Dujarie’s brothers would formally merge. An order of women religious would be added to the community. The group’s first home, located in the Sainte-Croix region, became its namesake. Notre Dame de Sainte-Croix, Moreau’s first school, opened in 1837 cementing what became the Holy Cross educational charism of education. His vision for educating and sharing the Gospel was not limited to the French countryside. As a group founded on the core belief of helping the poor, uneducated, and excluded Holy Cross reached out in many directions. By 1841 Father Moreau had sent the first group of Holy Cross brothers and priests to the United States (244).
This small group of seven was sent in order to establish a school-orphanage in rural Indiana. A year later, under the confident leadership of Fr. Edwin Sorin, the University of Notre Dame was established. From Indiana, Holy Cross religious spread throughout the United States establishing schools in New Orleans, Austin, and Chicago. The Archdiocese of Los Angeles reached out to the brothers in 1941 and requested that they join the staff of St. Anthony’s Parish High School in Long Beach. Shortly thereafter, a demand rose for a Catholic high school in the San Fernando Valley. Notre Dame High School in Sherman Oaks opened its doors in 1947.

In two very different ways Notre Dame seems to be the enactment of the idea of educational mission. As the first Catholic high school in the San Fernando Valley the overall architectural design of the campus was conceived to reflect the heritage of the Spanish Mission that lends the Valley its name. It was also a mission which sent Holy Cross Brothers to the United States. Notre Dame, like all Holy Cross schools, shares in this mission of educating the heart as well as the mind. The school’s mission statement reiterates Fr. Moreau’s aspirations:

Notre Dame High School, a Catholic, college preparatory school in the Holy Cross tradition, educates the hearts and minds of students who are diverse in talent, ethnicity and society. As a faith community, Notre Dame strives to provide each student with a rich academic background, an appropriate sense of self, an opportunity for growth, a commitment to family, community, nation and world, and a respect for the spiritual dignity of all persons. (www.ndhs.org)

Working in concert with all Holy Cross schools of the South-West Province, Notre Dame has adopted four school year themes that are celebrated throughout the community. They are: Building Respect, Educating Hearts and Minds, Being Family, and Bringing Hope.
Each year a different theme is encouraged so that students will develop a full understanding of the Holy Cross mission.

The Immersion experience is one way that Notre Dame students are encouraged to build respect. Immersion is a service learning retreat opportunity for Juniors that lasts four days and three nights. Each day the students, working cooperatively with teachers, focus their attention on a different marginalized group from the Los Angeles area. This time with the poor, elderly, and physically challenged establishes a desire for social justice and a deeper appreciation of others. Respect is built by enabling community members to “walk the talk” and put their words into action for the good of others.

A Holy Cross educator is dedicated to the concept of holistic experience. At Notre Dame, there are many examples of teachers who embrace this value in their lesson planning. One of those is Dave Savage, a history teacher who goes beyond expectations to make sure that his students are learning a lesson not just in dates and names, but also in what it means to recognize something greater and external to one's self. He seeks out local community members who give witness to history in his classroom, inviting, for instance, Tom McKimmey to speak annually about his time as a soldier in the European theatre during WWII, especially his service on D-Day. Students receive an oral history of the fall of the Soviet Union from Daiva Venckus. Possibly more expressive of his desire to educate the heart in addition to the mind is his resolve to cooking for his students. Dave explains his classroom culinary inclusion when he says, “I think a good cookbook can add finesse to one's understanding of history.” After studying a unit on Napoleon students sample one of his favorite dishes, duck a l'orange. In discussing how a dish is prepared Mr. Savage is “reveal[ing] a host of historic factoids - slow simmered stews are
all pre-16th century, when the home had an open hearth and the pot could be placed on coals over a trivet.” Dave Savage’s commitment to student centered learning is an embodiment of Moreau’s ideals in action.

Building a cohesive, family-oriented community is not just an abstraction at Notre Dame. Its diverse population has many needs that are constantly growing and changing. The Holy Cross Mothers Guild is an example of one way that those emergent needs are addressed. The Guild is composed of current and alumni parents who meet monthly and work specifically towards the advancement of the Holy Cross Mothers Guild Scholarship Fund. The fund is available to current students who would not otherwise be able to finish their education at Notre Dame without assistance. These mothers are the community’s “first responders” in times of loss and pain, forming ad hoc groups to support families during prolonged illnesses or loss of employment.

Notre Dame students often take the mission into their own hands. When a group of students became aware of the fact that kidney dialysis treatments prevented students in the Valley from attending their high school prom they jumped into action. Groups were formed to gather dress donations, decorate the gymnasium, and organize music. What became known as the Renal Prom has become a lasting tradition that brings hope to Notre Dame and its surrounding community. Now over one hundred renal patients attend annually.
Chapter 2: Observations on the Extra-curricular Theatre Program

Upon careful consideration of the evidence made manifest in this self-study of the extra-curricular theatre program at Notre Dame High School, it can emphatically be claimed that the school’s Catholic, specifically Holy Cross identity provides a sense of mission and direction at the core of its student’s educational experience. The school’s theatre program is an integral part of Notre Dame’s instructional philosophy, and remains a place where the heart and mind are educated through participation and exposure to values-driven artistic experience. The program exists in four clearly discernible historical periods that will briefly be described and then subsequently evaluated against the institutional mission. Furthermore, observations will be made regarding the program in its present form and how it aims to embody the ideals of a French country priest who initiated progressive educational reforms almost two hundred years ago.

The first phase in extracurricular theatre at Notre Dame was shepherded by the energetic and ambitious Brother Dunstan Bowles, C.S.C. The plays that were produced and directed on campus between 1951-1956 were exclusively his sole creation. Typical of his work was An American Living Room, a domestic play about a family dealing with the repercussions of their father’s choice to go on strike against his company. Although most famous and infamous of his work at Notre Dame was the production of Go Mac Go, a musical based upon Shakespeare’s tragedy, Macbeth. According to school folklore the production involved a cast of two hundred and fifty students and rehearsals were raucous affairs often marred by administrative disagreement.

Following the departure of Bro. Dunstan, the extracurricular play program operated in fits and starts under no clear, lasting leadership. This second period of theatre
history at Notre Dame took place between the Fall of 1956 and the Spring of 1982. Plays were produced under the leadership of parent volunteers and the occasional English teacher. During this block of time the typical production was an annual musical along the likes of *The Music Man* and *Li’l Abner*. Every so often a classic play was presented such as *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Our Town*, and *You Can’t Take it with You*.

During the 1982 – 1983 school year, the theatre program came under the direction of Gigi Perreau, and it was during this time that a more typical theatrical schedule materialized. Annually for the next five years she produced a fall play and spring musical. Her play selections were rather representative of tradition high school fare: *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, and *The Pajama Game*.

The final time of observation begins in 1987 and continues to the present. Under the leadership of Judy Welden, the Notre Dame theatre program has grown in multiple directions. Arguably the clearest indication of growth in the program is the inclusion of six productions annually, which warrants the effort of three faculty directors. The most notable growth area is the improvement of overall expectations for the student actors and the theatrical productions produced. Also of note is the consistent effort to select plays that meaningfully engage students in a thematic dialogue relevant to their times.

As indicated above, Br. Dunstan’s tenure as extra-curricular theatre director at Notre Dame is characterized by his choice to produce only his own plays. The little information that exists on these early productions is contained in *The Manic Mystic*, a biography of Brother Dunstan by fellow Holy Cross brother Gerald Muller. According to Muller, “*An American Living Room* is probably his finest [script] which he claimed was
based on his own life-story” (11). The play centered on domestic tensions that develop when the family’s father goes on strike. It featured a miraculous rescue scene in which a wheelchair bound son saves his fainting mother from a fall. “Dunstan wrote a dining scene in almost every play. Eating on stage added a note of realism to the production and of course delighted the cast” (11). An American Living Room and Strangers in Our Midst another play dealing with domestic issues could quite possibly live up to the Holy Cross ideals of educating the heart and the mind. His plays seemed to routinely focus on family. Dunstan’s need for there to be “a happy ending … with joyous celebrations” (11), can be construed be bringing hope. The consideration of labor issues and economic justice seem to suggest an awareness of importance of social justice issues. Sadly not much can be made of Br. Dunstan’s theatrical work with Notre Dame students given that play texts are not available and anecdotal stories passed on by subsequent brothers are all that remain. With singular focus on his own plays and the development of an outsized personality at a small school still in its infancy it is fair to ask who Br. Dunstan’s theatre program served.

After Br. Dunstan’s departure from the Notre Dame faculty in the middle of the 1955-1956 school year, the extra-curricular theatre program endured a twenty-six year period that was seemingly rudderless. Most typical of this time in the program was the production of a large, relatively traditional musical such as Guys and Dolls, which was produced twice during this period. This cheery romp through the seedier side of New York focuses on the relationships of a few sinners and saints with the overall implication being that love conquers all. Sky Masterson could take advantage of missionary Sarah while in Havana; he did spike her milkshake after all. Yet he does not. Sarah is willing to travel alone with a stranger to another land to possibly acquire some funding for her cash
strapped ministry. It seems like the line that separates those with virtues and those with vices is not very clear. One could argue that *Guys and Dolls* does touch upon the various themes presented in Holy Cross education. The sheer optimism of the finale is certainly hopeful and there are definitely family models present amongst the missionaries and gamblers alike. But these assertions are feeble at best. Perhaps this time in the extracurricular theatre programs history is not the most definitive example of an enlivened mission. However that does not mean that this period is void of the need for further analysis.

Two seminal American plays produced in the late 1970s represent great opportunities for thematic scrutiny. Thorton Wilder’s *Our Town*, which challenges the audience to reflect on what they cherish in life, is an evocative meditation on the ephemeral nature of humanity. Conversely, *You Can’t Take it with You* is significantly more lighthearted yet to some extent equal in thematic value. Kaufman and Hart’s comedic exploits with the Vanderhof family are at times outrageously absurd, yet at its core this play asks its audience to ponder what it is exactly that it values in life. In the end both plays are exercises that encourage the questioning of one's values. Correlations can confidently be established between these two shows and general Christian moral themes.

The scriptural theme of community and maintaining healthy relationships stressed in St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians – “None of us lives for oneself, and no dies for oneself” – is reflected in the failure of Wilder’s characters ability to see the value of living what the Stage Manager calls “daily life” in the first act (*New American Bible*, 1 Cor. 1.7). The core teachings of Jesus contained in the Gospels are meant to lead his disciples to a form of true freedom. Living our lives based upon the expectations of
others is a definite obstacle to living freely. At the end of the day, Grandpa Vanderhof’s lesson is that there are many pathways to happiness; we must make certain to follow our own. That is an articulation of Christian freedom par excellence. Additionally each play takes considerable time to reflect on what it means to be family a major theme of Holy Cross education. Electing to present such pivotal plays undeniably offers the Notre Dame community an opportunity to be educated in heart as well as mind.

Perhaps *Inherit the Wind* is the greatest example of a play production staged in this second period of Notre Dame’s theatre program that typifies the Holy Cross mission at work. The play is a fictionalized account of the Scopes "Monkey" Trial, which resulted in the conviction of a high school educator for the teaching Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. Although the play spends great time deliberating the concerns of one small town’s thoughts on creationism and juxtaposes them against the scientific community’s embrace of evolution, there is a much more profound struggle brewing. This play is rooted in social justice and provides a passionate defense for intellectual freedom in the face of fundamentalist rigidity. Coupled with the well-founded assertion that individuals can make progress for all of society when they courageously pursue truth regardless of other’s opinions this play is an affirmation of the very life of Father Basil Moreau. By cultivating hearts and minds, Moreau believed, Holy Cross schools could change an individual’s life and in this manner change society.

The third era of Notre Dame theatre history was inaugurated by former child actress Gigi Perreau. She appeared in several films in the 1940s including *Mr. Skeffington*, in which she played the daughter of Bette Davis and Claude Rains. However she is more than likely most renowned for a guest appearance as Greg Brady’s teacher
whom he had a crush on in *The Brady Bunch*. Gigi’s greatest service to the school’s extra-curricular program was the normalization of the production schedule. Under her stewardship, a single production was staged each semester, a fall play and spring musical. According to anecdotal stories from Gigi’s contemporaries who are still on the Notre Dame faculty, she epitomized an “all are welcome” approach to play productions. According to dance choreographer Lynda Goossen, Spring musicals in particular featured enormous ensembles that were bloated well beyond the requirements of the dramatic text. Inclusiveness would seem to be a value that concurs with the Holy Cross educational philosophy. If one of the recognized goals is to “be family” ensuring that everyone has a place gives the impression that the mission is being actualized. However, it begs a question: does inclusiveness hamper efforts to stage quality productions that nurture the talents of developing actors? There is an inherent tension between artistic formation and hobby accommodation. Perhaps a better expression of “being family” is by “building respect” for the craft through a more discerning casting process.

Perreau’s play selections were not explicitly mission-driven. Characteristic of her choices is *My Sister Eileen* by Joseph Fields and Jerome Chodorov. The play is based on a series of short stories by Ruth McKenney the plot centers on two Midwestern sisters who move to the Big Apple. Each pursues their ideal career while encountering eccentric New Yorkers. On the surface it would not seem to stress a specific social justice message, nor evoke serious thought on any of the Holy Cross themes. The two sisters have vastly different goals, older, sensible Ruth aspires to be a writer and the passionate, impractical Eileen dreams of stage fame. They come to better understandings of each other, which does lead to acceptance; while acceptance is a family value, its trite conveyance damages
its associated worth. The production with the most opportunity to spur the education of hearts and minds is Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *South Pacific*. Racial discrimination is not the usual fare for show tunes but the message of this musical is intended to be enlightening, love can lead to progressive change.

A watershed moment for extra-curricular theatre at Notre Dame High School happened in the fall of 1987. Under the stewardship of Judy Welden, the theatre program has enjoyed twenty-six years of artistic development and program growth that continues today. An immediate tonal shift was noticeable, according to alumni Tony Karraa, a student at the time who had shunned participating in the prior theatre program. “When I started my Junior year … I attended her fall drama, her first show at the school, *The Diviners* by Jim Leonard Jr., I was overwhelmed … I knew then, that I would audition for anything [she] produced,” he recalled. During Judy’s first year, the yearbook took special notice of the “surprise” spring production, the addition of a third production to the school year was the first of many examples of program growth. A clear philosophy drove her work as she began to shape the program – the development of the student actor was paramount. Her intention was (and is) to graduate students prepared to move on to noted college theatre programs. Expectations were raised, Notre Dame’s theatre students were to think and behave like artists, not like high school kids playing at theatre. The dividends of this shift in thinking and approach were immediate and long lasting.

Play selection over the course of Judy Welden’s tenure has consistently focused on exploring the diversity of the art form, relating to the times of the production, and embodying the mission of the school. A cursory glance at productions mounted since 1987 yields a list of titles that are at once evocative of Christian ideals and the underlying
Holy Cross identity of the school. Peter Shaffer’s *Equus* challenges the very notion of humanity, and questions what is left when all passion and instinct are eliminated. Producing Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* in the same year as *West Side Story* firmly explored the belief that hate can only lead to destruction. The value of tradition is weighed against what love is worth in *The Fiddler of the Roof*. The drug addicts that populate Don Petersen’s *Does a Tiger Wear a Necktie?* flounder and relapse alone, or discover hope and perseverance through love. The price of convictions is at the center of Dürrenmatt’s tragicomic *The Visit*. Actions, consequences, and responsibility are the core of *Into the Woods* which challenges the audience to be “careful the things you do.” The ability of these plays to promote self-understanding, building healthy relationships, accountability (personal and social), as well as the power of love, are all ideals that are complementary to educating the mind and heart simultaneously.

Two productions can be looked upon as exemplars of what it means to produce quality theatre within the context of a Catholic high school community dedicated to core values that not only seek the betterment of people, but the freedom of the creative process as a means to effect such change. Joshua Sobol’s *Ghetto* (about the Jews struggle to survive in the Vilna Ghetto in Nazi occupied Lithuania) focuses on the establishment of the Jewish theatre in overwhelmingly adverse conditions. Jacob Gens is viewed by his fellow Jews as an enemy, a German collaborator. His apparent collusion with the occupiers is actually saving lives by granting work papers to ghetto citizens establishing their worth, delaying their eminent death in light of the final solution. The substance of sacrifice, survival, responsibility reminds the audience of their responsibility to each other, building respect. By knowing the horrors of the Holocaust through extensive
research of the specific group in this Ghetto the ensemble became family. Working with and learning from three survivors of Nazi atrocities educated the young actors hearts and minds. Making the production all the more pertinent in the Fall of 2003 was the increasing violence and destabilization of the Darfur region of Sudan, a conflict that President George W. Bush labeled genocide. Following Moreau’s belief in thinking globally while acting locally, the Notre Dame theatre program challenged its community to remember that those who forget the past are destined to repeat it. Throughout late 2010 and early 2011, the scourge of gay bullying and subsequent suicides was growing, warranting Dan Savage’s “It Gets Better” project. The theatre program, in the words of director Judy Welden, encouraged the community to witness the damage and the healing that can happen in within humanity with The Laramie Project. Just weeks after Matthew Shepard was taken, brutally beaten and left for dead on the fringes of Laramie, Wyoming, the Tectonic Theatre Project under the direction of Moisés Kaufman arrived intent on understanding what happened. The script that evolved from their experience is based on extensive interviews, court room transcripts, and media reports. This particular play staged in alternating-view fashion in the intimate black box space radiated hope as it explored themes of prejudice and tolerance. Acclaimed playwright Del Shores happened to witness Notre Dame’s production of Laramie and sent the department a letter of commendation. He shared that on the same evening he wrote Judy Shepard, Matthew’s mother, an email declaring “times they are a changin’”: a Catholic High School had staged an unedited, insightful, and responsible production of a play dealing squarely with the inhumanity of intolerance directed at homosexuals. Embracing the Holy Cross mission has led to the establishment of a theatre program that dares both the active
participants and the broader community to engage in serious reflection on their role in promoting social justice.

There are many other ways beyond looking into play selection that present a means to evaluate the extent to which the extra-curricular theatre program personifies institutional mission. The embrace of adaptability mirrors Fr. Moreau’s own experience of growth and development as an educator and administrator. Consistent output of quality productions coupled with the growing reputation of the theatre curriculum implemented by Judy Welden resulted in growing interest in the program. After ten years at the helm she could no longer single handedly manage both the classroom and extra-curricular responsibilities. In 1997 Bill Lawrence joined the Notre Dame faculty and took responsibility for the introductory theatre courses, Freshmen Acting (a semester long class) and Acting 1 (a full year course). Additionally, as a move to accommodate the growing interests in the extra-curricular program another production opportunity was added to the calendar. This led to eleven consecutive years of ND Improv, itself a highly adaptable event that showcased the creative talents of students at all grade levels. As an extension of the Catholic value of service, Notre Dame sent the ND Improv to local grade schools where they performed for and conducted workshops with younger students. In 2005 the program grew again adding a secondary offering to the fall semester. Under the direction of Kris Brough, a Theatre for Youth production was initiated with the intention of being more inclusive of students who desired to be a part of the program while not sacrificing the quality of shows by swelling ensembles. This new addition also offered training in a new style and took over the grade school touring responsibilities. Once more meeting the needs of the student body ND Improv was retired in 2009 and the Frosh/Soph
Play was introduced in the spring of 2010. Currently co-curricular possibilities are being developed, last fall students in the junior level religious studies course Christian Moral Principles attended performances of *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, a one-act piece that explored the lives of children in the Terezin concentration camp. Immediately following the performance the ensemble and gathered students dialogued about the ways in which dehumanization is perpetuated in society and where they saw it manifest in today’s world. Committing to meet the students where they are and developing programs that offer inclusiveness without forfeiting expectations parallels Moreau’s own belief in adaptability and progressive change.

Recognizing that each production has specific needs that are inherent to its script, decades of consistent leadership has established an archetypal production method, meaning that Notre Dame’s program does not approach its productions in an *a priori*, result-orientated manner. The goal across the theatre department, classroom and extra-curricular alike, is rather the development of the student actor with an emphasis on college preparedness. Particular focus on process has established a pattern of delivering productions of quality. Examining the typical production process further demonstrates the extra-curricular theatre program’s ability to personify the themes present in the Holy Cross mission. After a week long period of auditions followed by callbacks, the cast list is normally posted late Friday evening and the first cast meeting is the following Monday after school. A two to three week phase begins that is designed to facilitate ensemble familiarity. Actors are challenged to find a bond of trust through exercise work and group discussions. Exercises at this point tend to stress the growth of awareness that the body is an instrument. Ultimately the director is attempting to get the young actor in
touch with their instincts. By exploring movement and to some extent voice together, the actors begin to feel safer, having had the opportunity to better know themselves and each other. The next period is a combination of table readings followed by discussion or personal reflection and continued exercises that transition to blocking. This hybrid time lasts one to two weeks. The blocking phase is the longest and focuses heavily on character development and textual analysis. The cast retreat, which will be explored later, happens towards the middle of this segment of rehearsal. As the blocking of the play continues, great importance is placed on storytelling. What is the story we are telling? How are we telling it? How do you contribute to the story? Following the blocking phase, at roughly nine weeks, tech and dress rehearsals begin. The process culminates on opening day with the cast and crew prayer service and first public performance. The focus on ensemble, united with great effort to produce trustful bonds, is an extension of the family theme. Maintaining high expectations and insisting that all are treated with esteem builds respect. Fostering an attitude of service to the text, production, ensemble, and audience brings hope. In the end hearts and minds are educated by learning the craft and about themselves and each other.

Over the years many audition methods have been explored. For the most part the program has settled on a process in which students present something prepared for their initial audition and if they are called back are asked to respond in a more impromptu manner. It has been observed by the extra-curricular directors that having something prepared seems to enable students to feel more confident. This approach seems to work best in terms of relaxing students and seeing them at their best.
Typically at the initial audition for a standard non-musical play students are asked to prepare a monologue of their choice. The audition information sheet (see appendix F) informs those interested to the style and tone of the play so they can make a wise choice for their audition. In an effort to be inclusive and make the process somewhat less intimidating a clause has been included that allows students to read their piece if they are not memorized. For musicals, students are asked to prepare thirty two bars of a song of their choice for the initial auditions. However, for musicals students are also required to attend a dance audition where they are taught a short routine and asked to perform the routine at the end.

During callbacks for standard non-musical plays students engage in a variety of exercises. Often a callback will begin with a warm-up and relaxation to put the students at ease. Following that sometimes theatre exercises and games are employed to assess how well students can respond to others in the moment and how they respond to an ensemble approach. Eventually cold readings take place as the process narrows down who might be right for specific roles. The first time in the callback students are asked to cold read and are given some time with their partner or group to prepare. Although most high school students have had very little experience with cold reading, Notre Dame has found that if students are given some time during the first round they tend to relax and embrace the opportunity.

For musicals the callback process is a bit more formal. The process typically begins with calling back specific actors for the solo roles. They are taught a portion of that character’s most difficult song and see who is capable of singing the role. Normally
that is followed with ensemble singing and cold reading. If there is a specific dance requirement for the particular show students might dance at the callback as well.

The audition information sheet gives students pertinent information in terms of the particular show, appropriate audition behavior and casting policies. Throughout the auditioning process every attempt is made to make it a teaching opportunity. It is acknowledged during auditions that auditioning is daunting and it requires courage. Students are commended for taking that step and encouraged to continue auditioning despite the outcome.

Students of all grade levels work on technical crews throughout the theatre season. Students work as electricians, carpenters, prop makers, painters, stage managers, and show runners. Occasionally students also serve as designers. Consequently the theatre program has had several students over the years go on to colleges and universities in technical and design majors.

In preparation for production Notre Dame employs a professional design team in the areas of lighting, set and sound. Due to budgetary concerns directors are responsible for costume planning. Student technicians work side by side with the lighting designer during light hanging and focusing and technical rehearsals. Student carpenters and painters work with the set designer building, painting and decorating the set. Students who run sound are brought in during technical rehearsals to learn how to run the sound board. Student technicians on running crews run the light and sound boards, run props, operate follow spots, and assist with make-up, hair and costume changes. When specialty make-up is required such as in the recent production of Frankenstein, or in a show such
as *The Wizard of Oz*, a professional make-up designer is hired to design the make-up and then teach application to student make-up artists who then run the show.

Student stage managers are chosen early, sometimes before a show is cast and engage in managerial duties through every step of production. Before technical rehearsals the stage manager is responsible for properties, for setting up and striking furniture for rehearsal and for managing actors. Stage managers are on book and are often called upon to call sound and light cues prior to technical rehearsals. Stage management students learn the responsibilities of the position and run shows calling cues and managing crews. Of course all of this is done with faculty supervision and training as the stage manager learns the job.

From time to time extra-curricular productions had have students who are interested in and qualified to design shows. Case in point, students recently served as set designers for *Oliver* and *Death*. On occasion students design lighting and costumes as well. The professional make-up designer currently retained for productions began as a student make-up designer in the 2002 production of *Midsummer Night’s Dream*. In fact all of the program’s professional designers are either alumni or parents of current students, thus keeping it in the family. The other positive outcome is alumni understand the Notre Dame Theatre traditions and enjoy passing them on to current students.

Post-production reviews are something the program struggles with. Being a part of a production can be such a defining experience for high school students there is a hesitation to do anything after shows close to detract from their sense of accomplishment. However, it is clear much could be learned from some kind of response. Students who are
in performance classes have the opportunity to reflect on their experience, and experience has allowed the directors to discover that as time passes students are able to comment on their own past performances fairly insightfully.

Following each production students in performance classes write a reflective response either from their viewpoint as an audience member or as a participant. All students in performance classes are required to see productions. The questions asked in their written reflections reflect the focus of their class at that time. For instance if a class is focused on physicality a question will be asked regarding physicality they witnessed in the production. These written responses are also used to solidify ideas in script analysis.

As students progress to Acting II and Acting III they read and respond to a chapter in their acting book weekly. The books used are Stanislavski’s *An Actor Prepares* and *Building a Character*, and Uta Hagen’s *Respect for Acting*. It has been noted that often when discussing a topic students will point out something they could have done better in a prior performance.

Having mentioned the above performance classes, perhaps it is necessary to give a brief overview of the curriculum in place that supports the development of student actors. Students at Notre Dame have the opportunity to study acting and theatre in three yearlong courses at the introductory (Acting I), intermediate (Acting II), and advanced (Acting III) level. Additionally, Musical Theatre offers students a yearlong workshop where they work on acting, singing, and dancing on alternating days. Play Production and Playwriting is a yearlong course that focuses on all areas of production, except acting. More often than not students taking these classes make up the core of the participants in
the extra-curricular productions. This multi-leveled approach to educating students in the art of theatre is reflective of Fr. Moreau’s insistence on teaching more than what is expected.

The greatest expression of the school’s Catholic identity is noticeable in the inclusion of retreats and prayer services in the production process. This tradition goes back over a dozen years and although constant it is rather flexible. The retreat coordinator, Dave Savage, meets with the director frequently in the earliest phase of rehearsal to flesh out a theme and attempt to discern the particular needs of the given ensemble. Careful consideration is given to the selection of activities and scope of the experience. A cast retreat customarily begins around noon and continues to about eight in the evening. The retreat takes place in the theatre and every effort is made to ensure that students are comfortable, understanding full well that each ensemble is composed of individuals with varying and unique approaches to faith and spirituality. Students may engage in journaling on a response to a shared piece of music or theme-appropriate reading. As a group cast members are given the chance to share their response to each activity. Role playing scenarios designed to promote healing or forgiveness may be added if the coordinator and director feel it is fitting. Opportunities for silent mediation are offered before the large meal, commonly a pot-luck spearheaded by a parent volunteer. After the meal students are given ample to share affirmations with one another, depending on the nature of the production this may happen through direct conversation or through written statements on prepared materials. The most explicitly “religious” activity is the opening night prayer service. Cast and by this time crew members as well will be excused from their last period of the day and head over the St. Joseph Chapel in the Holy
Cross Center. Dave Savage will then spend time getting the students acquainted with the location, explaining the meaning of the altar, stained glass windows, and other religious artifacts. Once at ease students will be lead in a mediation that incorporates themes of the play that are juxtaposed with the life of a Saint or a representative scripture passage. Ensembles are then afforded the chance to pray which according to Savage, “is putting into someone’s hands what we are concerned about.” They are prompted to pray for the production, understanding their place in the production, how they serve the story, how they help others tell the story, and what they are giving to the audience. The service ends with the traditional “pinning” ceremony where once again students are able to affirm each other while distributing a saint medal to another student. The saint medal is chosen based upon the prior thematic mediation. For example, the Miraculous Medal, featuring the Virgin Mother, was used during the prayer service for James and the Giant Peach, a play that included magical and marvelous things. Tradition holds that cast members pin the medal to the inside of their costume as an expression of their unity and commitment to serve the story and audience.

Considering the evidence gathered, it can clearly be said that the extracurricular theatre program at Notre Dame High School demonstratively embodies the institutional mission expressed by the phrase “educating hearts and minds.” The school’s ability to develop students who can balance the demands of academics with the commitment to various programs outside of the classroom gives witness to the claim Principal Stevie Connelly makes in her interview “at our school extra-curricular is not an ‘extra.’”

The natural disposition of plays as an artistic expression can, in the words of alumni Jerome Gonzalez, “always educate the heart.” Notre Dame’s consistent
commitment to producing intelligent and demanding plays that focus on human responsibility and relationships affirms the latter half of the mission to educate the mind. These two points were consistently emphasized in interview responses. Current students Nicoletta Hynes and Isabella Zelinger both assert that program directors select shows of thematic importance that are relatable to the everyday world. The school president Brett Lowart highlighted *Inherit the Wind* for its social justice message, and in view of that he states, “The Holy Cross mission calls us to be respectful citizens who are sensitive to service and social justice.” Furthermore he claims, “Theatre [. . .] is particularly effective in developing keen sensitivities that raise awareness of ills and injustices in society.”

Taking into account play selection and social justice, a cursory glance at recent productions demonstrates that indeed plays are reflective of the times in which they were produced. In the Fall of 2009, when national headlines repeatedly spoke of efforts by groups like the Texas State Board of Education’s attempt mandate the teaching of Creationism, the theatre department staged *Inherit the Wind*. Reflective of ongoing social struggles that do not often see headline status, *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, a play about concentration camp survivors, was produced. Ironically, during production, the Notre Dame campus itself was defaced with large swastikas, adding immediately poignancy to what might have otherwise been a dislocated incident. The endeavor of the extracurricular theatre program to inform the conscience of the community is not only an expression of the Catholic identity it speaks to what principal Connelly labels “the open heart and open mind that we are trying to establish within them.”

The Catholic, Holy Cross identity of the school might seem to the outsider to be a hindrance towards artistic expression and creative freedom. On the contrary, it is an
affirmative, nurturing culture that enables an environment where students and the community at large are presented with multiple plays annually in a variety of theatrical styles. The inclusion of retreats facilitating young actor/student growth in self awareness, while concurrently preparing a role that challenges them to articulate that understanding, is one of many examples that demonstrate this unity between school mission and the theatre program.

This study explicates how artistic principles play out in a Catholic educational context and invites further investigation both intra and inter institutional. Within Notre Dame High School other extra-curricular programs can be researched and comparatively evaluated to determine their ability to embody the Holy Cross mission, with emphasis on how the participants and community are enriched. Of potentially greater academic benefit would be comparative analysis of extra-curricular programs functioning in other schools. Does Notre Dame’s Holy Cross culture distinguish it from the broader Catholic educational community? Is a similar affirmative, artistically fostering atmosphere present in public schools or other non-parochial private schools? Additionally, this study can be used in support for any advocating in support of the value and place of the arts in the development of young persons.
### Appendix A: Production Archive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Play or Event Title</th>
<th>Playwright/Creative Artists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950 – 1951</td>
<td><em>An American Living Room</em></td>
<td>by Br. Dunstan Bowles, C.S.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>...<em>And Upon Our Children</em></td>
<td>by Br. Dunstan Bowles, C.S.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>With Out The Light</em></td>
<td>by Br. Dunstan Bowles, C.S.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Go, Mac, Go</em></td>
<td>by Br. Dunstan Bowles, C.S.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956 – 1957</td>
<td>unspecified “Christmas Play”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957 – 1958</td>
<td><em>Saint Joan</em></td>
<td>by Bernard Shaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962 – 1963</td>
<td><em>Stalag 17</em></td>
<td>by Donald Beuam and Edmund Trzcinski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966 – 1967</td>
<td>Drama Club Formed - “Opening Knights”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968 – 1969</td>
<td><em>Billy Budd</em></td>
<td>by Louis O. Coxe and Robert Chapman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969 – 1970</td>
<td><em>Arsenic and Old Lace</em></td>
<td>by Joseph Kesselring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(from <em>A Midsummer Night’s Dream</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Music Man</em></td>
<td>Music, lyrics and book by Meredith Willson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1972 – 1973  
*Guys and Dolls*  
by Abe Burrows, Jo Swerling, and Damon Runyon  
Music by Frank Loesser

1973 – 1974  
*High Button Shoes*  
by George Abbott and Phil Silvers  
Music by Jule Styne

1974 – 1975  
*The Pajama Game*  
by George Abbott and Richard Bissell  
Music by Jule Styne

1975 – 1976  
*Our Town*  
by Thornton Wilder

*Li’l Abner*  
Music by Gene de Paul  
Lyrics by Johnny Mercer  
Book by Norman Panama and Melvin Frank

1976 – 1977  
*A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*  
Music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim  
Book by Burt Shevelove and Larry Gelbart

1977 – 1978  
*Paint Your Wagon*  
Music by Frederick Loewe  
Lyrics and book by Alan J. Lerner

1978 – 1979  
*You Can’t Take it with You*  
by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart

1979 – 1980  
*Guys and Dolls*  
by Abe Burrows, Jo Swerling, and Damon Runyon  
Music by Frank Loesser

“A Tribute to the American Musical”
featuring selections from Hello Dolly,
West Side Story, Oklahoma, and Carousel

1981 - 1982

Inherit the Wind by Jerome Lawernce
and Robert E. Lee

Godspell Conceived by John-Michael Tebelak
Music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz

Anything Goes Music and lyrics by Cole Porter
Book by Guy Bolton
and P.G. Wodehouse

1982 - 1983

Fall Play The Man Who Came to Dinner by George S. Kaufman
and Moss Hart

Spring Musical The Fantasticks Music by Harvey Schmidt
Lyrics by Tom Jones

1983 – 1984

Fall Play My Sister Eileen by Joseph Fields
and Jerome Chodorov

Spring Musical The Music Man Music, Lyrics, and Book by
Meredith Willson

1984 – 1985

Fall Play Ten Little Indians by Agatha Christie

Spring Musical South Pacific Music by Richard Rodgers
Lyrics by Lee Adams
Book by Michael Stewart
1985 – 1986

Fall Play  
*Aresnic and Old Lace*  
by Joseph Kesserling

Spring Musical  
*Bye Bye Birdie*  
Music by Charles Strouse  
Lyrics by Lee Adams  
Book by Michael Stewart

1986 – 1987

Fall Play  
*Mrs. McThing*  
by Mary Chase

Spring Musical  
*The Pajama Game*  
Book by George Abbott and Richard Bissell  
Music and lyrics by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross

1987 – 1988

Fall Play  
*The Diviners*  
by Jim Leonard Jr.

Spring Musical  
*Jesus Christ Superstar*  
Music by Andrew Llyod Webber  
Lyrics by Tim Rice

Spring Play  
*Noises Off*  
by Michael Frayen

1988 – 1989

Fall Play  
*Equus*  
by Peter Shaffer

Spring Musical  
*The Robber Bridegroom*  
Music by Robert Waldman  
Lyrics and book by Alfred Uhry

Spring Play  
*“Musical Mystery Murder”*

1989 – 1990

Fall Play  
*Romeo and Juliet*  
by William Shakespeare

Spring Musical  
*West Side Story*  
Music by Leonard Bernstien  
Lyrics by Stephen Sondhiem  
Book by Arthur Laurents

Spring Play  
*One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*  
by Dale Wasserman
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fall Play</th>
<th>Spring Musical</th>
<th>Spring Play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991–1992</td>
<td>Scapino! By Frank Dunlop and Jim Dale</td>
<td>Camelot Music by Frederick Loewe Lyrics and book by Alan Jay Lerner</td>
<td>The Incident at San Bajo by Brad Korbesmeyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Fall Play</td>
<td>Spring Musical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994 – 1995</td>
<td><em>The Tempest</em> by William Shakespeare</td>
<td><em>Guys and Dolls</em> by Abe Burows, Jo Swerling, and Damon Runyon; Music by Frank Loesser</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995 – 1996</td>
<td><em>The Diary of Anne Frank</em> by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett</td>
<td><em>Damn Yankees</em> music and lyrics by Richard Adler and Albert Hackett; Book by George Abbott and Douglass Wallop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997 – 1998</td>
<td><em>The Miracle Worker</em> by William Gibson</td>
<td><em>Bye Bye Birdie</em> Music by Charles Strouse; Lyrics by Lee Adams; Book by Michael Stewart</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>In a Grove: Four Japanese Ghost Stories</em> by Eric Coble; <em>Revenge of the Space Pandas</em> by David Mamet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>An Evening of One-Acts</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Senior Showcase:

| 1995 – 1996 | *An Evening of One-Acts* |
| 1996 – 1997 | *The Visit* by Friedrich Dürrenmatt |

Traveling Theatre:

| 1997 – 1998 | *An Evening of One-Acts* | *In a Grove: Four Japanese Ghost Stories* by Eric Coble; *Revenge of the Space Pandas* by David Mamet |
1998 – 1999

Fall Play  
*The Crucible*  
by Arthur Miller

Spring Musical  
*Once Upon a Mattress*  
Music by Mary Rodgers  
Lyrics by Marshall Barer  
Book by Jay Thompson,  
Dean Fuller, and Marshall Barer

Performance Group  
ND Improv

1999 - 2000

Fall Play  
*Stage Door*  
by George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber

Spring Musical  
Into the Woods  
Music and lyrics and Stephen Book by James Lapine

Performance Group  
ND Improv

Acting 3 Showcase  
*Afternoon at the Seaside*  
by Agatha Christie  
*Sorry*  
by Timothy Mason  
*Ascension Day*  
by Timothy Mason

2000 – 2001

Fall Play  
*The Matchmaker*  
by Thorton Wilder

Spring Musical  
*The Robber Bridegroom*  
Music by Robert Waldman  
Lyrics and book by Alfred Uhry

Performance Group  
ND Improv

Acting 3 Showcase  
An Evening of One-Acts
2001 – 2002

Fall Play  
*The Wood Demon*  
by Anton Chekhov

Spring Musical  
*The Pajama Game*  
Book by George Abbott and Richard Bissell  
Music and lyrics by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross

Performance Group  
ND Improv

Acting 3 Showcase  
*Feiffer’s People*  
by Jules Feiffer

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2002 – 2003

Summer Workshop  
*Tongues*  
by Sam Shepard

Fall Play  
*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*  
by William Shakespeare

Spring Musical  
*Babes in Arms*  
Music by Richard Rodgers  
Lyrics by Lorenz Hart  
Book by George Oppenhimer

Performance Group  
ND Improv

Acting 3 Showcase  
*Trifles*  
by Susan Glaspell
*Dining Out*  
by Marcia Dixcy
*The Cherry Sisters*  
by Michael Green
*If Men Played Cards as Women Do*  
by George S. Kaufman
*Bury the Dead*  
by Irwin Shaw
2003 – 2004

Summer Workshop  *Pullman Car Hiawatha* by Thornton Wilder

Fall Play  *Ghetto* by Joshua Sobol and David Lan

Spring Musical  *Godspell* Conceived by John-Michael Tebelak
Music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz

Performance Group  ND Improv

Acting 3 Showcase  *Second Best Bed* by Tim Kelly
*The Field* by Robert Spera
*The Actor’s Nightmare* by Christopher Durang
*The Hitch-Hiker* by Lucille Flethcer
*Funeral Parlor* by Christopher Durang
*Sorry, Wrong Number* by Lucille Flethcer
*The Dancers* by Horton Foote

2004 – 2005

Summer Workshop  *The Odyssey: A Play* by Mary Zimmerman

Fall Play  *Green Grow the Lilacs* by Lynn Riggs

Spring Musical  *Fiddler on the Roof* Music by Jerry Bock
Lyrics by Sheldon Harnick
Book by Joseph Stein

Performance Group  ND Improv

Acting 3 Showcase  *Bone-Chiller!* by Monk Ferris

2005 – 2006

Fall Play  *Pride and Prejudice* by Helen Jerome

Theatre for Youth  *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* by Barbara Robinson

Spring Musical  *Kiss Me, Kate* Music and lyrics by Cole Porter
Book by Sam and Bella Spewack

Performance Group  ND Improv

Acting 3 Showcase  *The Thirteenth Chair* by Bayard Veiller
2006 – 2007

Summer Workshop  *Quilters*  by Molly Newman and Barbara Damashek

Fall Play  *The Young and the Fair*  by N. Richard Nash

Theatre for Youth  *Charlotte’s Web*  by Joseph Robinette

Spring Musical  *The Wizard of Oz*  by L. Frank Baum
             Music by Harold Arlen
             and E. Y. Harburg
             Book by John Kane

Performance Group  ND Improv

Acting 3 Showcase  *The Questioning of Nikky Bernard*  by Arthur Kopit
            *DMV Tyrant*  by Jules Feiffer
            *Graceland*  by Christopher Durang
            *An Afternoon by the Seaside*  by Ellen Byron
            *The Miss Firecracker Contest*  by Agatha Christie
            (select scene)

2007 – 2008

Fall Play  *Bury the Dead*  by Irwin Shaw

Theatre for Youth  *James and the Giant Peach*  Dramatized by David Wood

Spring Musical  *Anything Goes*  Music and lyrics by Cole Porter
             Original book by Guy Bolton, P.G. Wodehouse, Howard Lindsay, and Russel Crouse
             New book by Timothy Crouse and John Weidman

Performance Group  ND Improv

Acting 3 Showcase  *Death*  by Woody Allen
### 2008 – 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author/Adaptation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer Workshop</td>
<td><em>The Enchanted</em></td>
<td>by Maurice Valency an adaptation from Jean Giraudoux’s <em>Intermezzo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall Play</td>
<td><em>Much Ado About Nothing</em></td>
<td>by William Shakespeare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre for Youth</td>
<td><em>The Tomato Plant Girl</em></td>
<td>by Wesley Middleton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Musical</td>
<td><em>Oliver!</em></td>
<td>by Lionel Bart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Group</td>
<td>ND Improv</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting 3 Showcase</td>
<td><em>The Murder at the Vicarage</em></td>
<td>by Agatha Christie</td>
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### 2009 – 2010

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<th>Event Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>Summer Workshop</td>
<td><em>War in Heaven</em></td>
<td>by Sam Shepard and Joseph Chaikin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall Play</td>
<td><em>Inherit the Wind</em></td>
<td>by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee</td>
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<td>Theatre for Youth</td>
<td><em>The Little Princess</em></td>
<td>by Frances Hodgson Burnett</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Musical</td>
<td><em>Good News</em></td>
<td>by Laurence Schwab and B.G. DeSylva</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lyrics by B.G. DeSyva and Lew Brown</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Music by Ray Henderson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frosh/Soph Play</td>
<td><em>The Actor &amp; Blind Date</em></td>
<td>by Horton Foote</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acting 3 Showcase</td>
<td><em>Vacancy in Paradise</em></td>
<td>by John Kirkpatrick</td>
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### 2010 – 2011

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<td><em>Subway Circus</em></td>
<td>by William Saroyan</td>
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<td><strong>Fall Play</strong></td>
<td><em>You Can’t Take it with You</em></td>
<td>by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman</td>
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<td><strong>Theatre for Youth</strong></td>
<td><em>A Christmas Carol: In Many Scenes and Several Songs</em></td>
<td>by Neil Bartlett</td>
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<td><strong>Spring Musical</strong></td>
<td><em>Curtains</em></td>
<td>Music by John Kander</td>
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<td>Lyrics by Fred Ebb</td>
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<td>Book by Rupert Holmes</td>
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<td><strong>Frosh/Soph Play</strong></td>
<td><em>Ascension Day</em></td>
<td>by Timothy Mason</td>
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<td><strong>Acting 3 Showcase</strong></td>
<td><em>The Laramie Project</em></td>
<td>by Moises Kaufman, et al.</td>
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### 2011 – 2012

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<td><strong>Summer Workshop</strong></td>
<td><em>The Arabian Nights: A Play</em></td>
<td>by Mary Zimmerman</td>
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<td><strong>Fall Play</strong></td>
<td><em>Frankenstein</em></td>
<td>by Victor Gialanella</td>
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<td><strong>Theatre for Youth</strong></td>
<td><em>I Never Saw Another Butterfly</em></td>
<td>by Celeste Raspanti</td>
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<td><em>Once Upon a Mattress</em></td>
<td>Music by Mary Rodgers</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lyrics by Marshall Barer</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Book by Jay Thompson,</td>
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<td>Dean Fuller, and Marshall Barer</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Frosh/Soph Play</strong></td>
<td><em>A Young Lady of Property</em></td>
<td>by Horton Foote</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Acting 3 Showcase</strong></td>
<td><em>Bone-Chiller!</em></td>
<td>by Monk Ferris</td>
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Appendix B: Representative Production Programs

You Can’t Take It With You - Fall 2010 - Fall Play

**Page 2 and 3:**

**Production Team**

**Director:**

**Production Manager:**

**Lighting Designer:**

**Stage Manager:**

**Property Master:**

A very special and heartfelt thanks to the following people for their kind and generous support:

- Dave Savage
- Beverly Brooks
- David Whittle
- Sara Wilde

**Cast:**

**Penelope Pymon:**

**Rosie:**

**Ned:**

**Mrs. Dina:**

**Toby:**

**Kate Wellington:**

**Mr. Scatter:**

**Mrs. Scatter:**

**Papa:**

**Mama:**

**Olga:**

**Nina:**

**Greg:**

**John:**

**Nina:**

PANTAGES THEATRE

FALL 2010

The audience is the heart of Martin Vanderhof, New York

*There will be a 10 minute introduction
*NO PHOTOGRAPHING of any kind is allowed
*Please turn off all cell phones and pagers

**CAST:**

**Penelope Pymon:**

**Rosie:**

**Ned:**

**Mrs. Dina:**

**Toby:**

**Kate Wellington:**

**Mr. Scatter:**

**Mrs. Scatter:**

**Papa:**

**Mama:**

**Olga:**

**Nina:**

**Greg:**

**John:**

**Nina:**

PANTAGES THEATRE
James and the Giant Peach - Fall 2007 - Theatre for Youth

Production Staff

Director: Kim Bough
Technical Director: Joseph Waldon
Scenic Design: Ewan Kaunz
Lighting Design: Mike McDonald
Stage Manager: Lynda Hassett
Stage Manager: Lynne Rees

Light Board: Cassie Llewellyn
Spot Light: James Ganes

Very special and heartfelt thanks to the following people for their generous help and support:

Heather Brough, Bill Laverence, Stacey Savage, and Judy Waldon

The following people contributed greatly to the success of the elementary school team:

Michelle Carter, Morris Connolly, Bill Laverence, Rob Thomas, Judy Walden, and Maria Yanni

Director's Note

"And above all, watch with glowing eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don't believe in magic will never find it." - Roald Dahl

Cast

James ..... Christian Mendosa
Olive/Green-Grasshopper ..... Anna Whaley
Ladybug ..... Roelie Calusdoff
Earthworm ..... Austin Vaziri
Miss Spider ..... Simone Lee
Gangster ..... John McCullough
Mr. Trutter / #1 ..... Emmet O'Regan
Mrs. Trutter / #2 ..... Francesca Philippi
Old Man ..... Shannon Timmons
Aunt Spence ..... Cherry Carter
Aunt Spiker ..... Courtney Angel
Captain of the Queen Mary ..... Lauren Giason
TV Reporter ..... Shane Sjostad

This performance is given without an intermission.
For the safety of the actors and the benefit of the audience no photography of any kind is allowed.
Please turn off all cell phones and keep them silence.

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Once Upon a Mattress - Spring 2012 - Spring Musical

Once Upon a Mattress

Music by Mary Rodgers
Lyrics by Marshall Barer
Book by Jay Thompson, Diane Paulsen and Marshall Barer

Director: Judy Welden
Choreographer: Lynda Gissane
Production Manager: Julie Gregory
Music Director: Tony Larmas
Light Design/Technical Director: Henry Reale
Sound Design: Dominique Mitchell-Dugas
Light Board: Timm Johnsrud
Lighting: Sydney Otto-Gran
Sound Board: Galby Gal
Stage Manager: Abigail Pizzelle
Stage Manager: Kevin Quigley

Band
Conductor/Vocals: Julie Gregory
Piano: Cathy St. Germain
Drums: Chris Johnson
2nd Trombone: John Wahl
Trumpet: Shane Schreiber
Baritone: Timm Johnsrud
A very special and heartfelt thank you to the following people for their help and support:

John Combs
Brian McGlinchey
Gary Tyler
Barrett Scott

The Pizzles
Mark Morgan
Renee Quinn
Tami Taylor
Ken Welden
Richard Salt
Paul Nuccio
Dore Bence
Bobby Thomas

Screen and Set Design: Timm Johnsrud
Costume Design: Susan Bell
Makeup: Cindy McCleary
Wigs: Alter Ego
Props: Prop Masters

The Cast
Morgan: Gigi Gissane
Princess: Jodie Journeay
3rd Witch: Domethica Magness
Spellbook: Gigi Gissane
Queen: Andrea Lydon
Prison Guard: Adrienne Luss
King: Bob Pizzi
Prince: Austin MacLeod
Sir Henry: Faron Fassinger
Lady in Waiting: Nick Bannerman
Wedding: Jamie Ellis
Ruth Sipple


Once Upon a Mattress - Spring 2012 - Spring Musical

Once Upon a Mattress - Spring 2012 - Spring Musical

“Once Upon a Mattress”
Time: Many moons ago
Place: A palace

There will be no photography of any kind is allowed. It is distracting to the actors and the audience.

Please turn off cell phones. Texting or making calls during a live performance is disruptive to all.

The Cast

Morgan: Gigi Gissane
Princess: Jodie Journeay
3rd Witch: Domethica Magness
Spellbook: Gigi Gissane
Queen: Andrea Lydon
Prison Guard: Adrienne Luss
King: Bob Pizzi
Prince: Austin MacLeod
Sir Henry: Faron Fassinger
Lady in Waiting: Nick Bannerman
Wedding: Jamie Ellis
Ruth Sipple


Once Upon a Mattress - Spring 2012 - Spring Musical

Once Upon a Mattress - Spring 2012 - Spring Musical

Director’s note:
“Who could refuse that had a heart to love and in that heart average to make live scenes?”
William Shakespeare

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(back cover)

About the Playwright

Timothy Mason wrote the book and lyrics for the national
Broadway tryout, Dr. UInt’s "Hello, Dolly!" also Chris Carter/"The American"
Hetav, It's a Small World, an adaptation by Unimat, is
being published by Delacorte Press (2007). He's Mason was a
company playwright with Caste Rep in New York City, which
produced his plays Leapin', Cab; One Golden Century (with
Timothy Huma and Mary Louise Parker), and The Poor Poets
(with Julie Harris), his plays have been also been produced by
Actors Theatre of Louisville, South Coast Rep, Seattle Rep,
Vienna's Komische, the Jungle Theatre, the Old Globe, the
Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis, and the Guthrie
Lab, among others.

Ascension Day - Spring 2011 - Frosh/Soph Play

The Cast

Randy ................. Ronnie Pedro
Charity ............... Liscia McDoald
Faith .................. Hadley Granger
Jerry .................. Dantoon Merren
Danny ................. Armand De La Torre
Weaver ................ Danielle Mascaro
Jean ................... Sienna Hare
Joey ................... Nikhil Montoya
Mary Lou .............. Aine Bed
Ensemble/Cover ......... Ashley Friedman (Choreo), Mary Lou
Katherine McIntosh (Pianist)
All First (boys)

There will be no intermission.

+ This is not the standard family's movie, but important for them, the
+ occasionally put the stress of a real life on an inner circle, and
+ if we take a look, the most beautiful of the house in its slightly subtle.
+ —Henry David Thoreau

Digital Note:
The jumping off point, from adolescence to young adulthood is
revelatory. It is also the most frightening and scary experience
in the maturation process. The young person try for someone to
understand. In this sense, we are all on an inner circle.
Please to all electronic devices.
No photography is allowed during the performance.
The Laramie Project - Spring 2011 - Acting III

PRODUCTION STAFF

The Laramie Project

* No photography of any kind allowed.
  Photo-free official cast photos & taper design.

The Company

Ben Andrews  

e-Andrews

Catherine Andrews  

Catherine Andrews

Baylor Dugan  

Baylor Dugan

Gina Garbino  

Gina Garbino

Roman Garguangio  

Roman Garguangio

Eliza Benj目睹  

Eliza Benj目睹

Amber Nolan  

Amber Nolan

Simone Liss  

Simone Liss

BRI O'NEILL  

BRI O'NEILL

Benie San  

Benie San

Anna Vaziri

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Appendix C: Representative Production Photograph

You Can’t Take it with You

Fall Play – 2010

Photos courtesy of Sabrina Landinguin
James and the Giant Peach
Theatre for Youth – 2007
Photos courtesy of Sabrina Landinguin
Once Upon a Mattress

Spring Musical – 2012

Photos courtesy of Sabrina Landinguin
The Young and the Fair
Fall Play – 2007
Photos courtesy of Sabrina Landinguin
Appendix D: Selected List of Graduate College Admissions

According to the school’s registrar, Lynda Goossen, Notre Dame Theatre students have been admitted to study Theatre at the following Universities and Colleges. Many have received scholarships in performance, design, stage management, and playwriting.

Boston University
California Institute of the Arts
California State University, Northridge
Carnegie-Mellon University
The Julliard School
Marymount Manhattan
New York University
North Carolina School of the Arts
Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts of Allan Hancock College
Purchase College, SUNY
Syracuse University
University of California, Los Angeles
University of Evansville
University of Southern California
University of the Arts
Webster University
Appendix E: Sample Audition Information Sheet

Once Upon a Mattress

Audition Information

***I know this is long, but read the whole thing!!!!***

General Audition Information

- All Notre Dame Students are welcome to audition
- Sign up for one time slot for singing and one time slot for dance. Be on time, and stay the whole time.
- If you change your mind and decide not to audition, or change your time slot, please cross off your name so someone else can take your slot.
- Please print clearly so we can read your name.
- Please wear loose, comfortable clothes and tennis shoes.
- Auditions will be held December 12th (dance) and December 13th (singing). Callbacks will be held Wednesday December 14th. If you are called back you must attend the callback in order to be cast, if you miss the callback for any reason we cannot cast you.
- There will be no rehearsals over Christmas break. Rehearsals will begin the first day back to school, January 3rd.

Singing Audition Requirements

If you can, prepare 32 bars (a verse and a chorus) of a song from a Broadway musical. Your song should be memorized and should absolutely stay within the time limit. However, if you don’t have a chance to memorize your song you may bring the lyrics with you. Bring your own accompaniment on CD or IPOD. You can obtain karaoke tracks on Amazon.com or I-tunes for 99 cents or you can record someone playing the piano for you. See Ms. Welden if you need ideas about what song to sing. If this is new to you and you don’t know where to begin, do not let that stop you from auditioning, we want to see you! Feel free to sing any song you are comfortable with, just know that pop vocal affectations will get in the way, and so avoid them. You can sing a childhood favorite, a hymn or a Christmas Carol, anything you enjoy. However, if you have been in musicals you should make the effort to put together a well prepared audition.

Dance Audition Requirements

You do not need to prepare anything for the dance auditions. Just make sure to dress in clothes you can move in and wear tennis or dance shoes. Also, relax and try to have fun, just do your best and enjoy the learning and performing process.
**Some information about this show**

This is a fun, lively, high energy musical comedy. Although all productions require a lot of hard work it should be great fun to work on. There are a few non-signing roles in the show. However, everyone must dance and sing to audition, just remember your dance and singing audition IS your acting audition. So let us see some expression, personality and sense of fun! If you can, it’s always a good idea to take a little time to learn about the show by looking it up online and getting a sense of the story and the characters. You can also listen to some of the songs on YouTube. Don’t be overwhelmed, it just takes a little time.

**Casting Policies**

Our policy is we cast whoever we believe is the best person for each role. We do not take into consideration seniority or any other qualifications. So, be informed that just because you’ve been in a show before does not mean you’ll be right for this play. Everyone has to earn a spot in the cast, and you earn it through your audition. When you walk in the door to audition we try to look at you freshly and simply as an actor auditioning for a play.

**Some General Audition Tips**

At an audition you want to show your best self, both as an actor and as a person. Always be open, supportive and accepting of others. Avoid appearing to be part of a “clique”. Try to relax, be in the moment and enjoy yourself. Perhaps most importantly, listen. Listen to instructions, listen to your instincts, and listen to each other. Always remember an actor’s job is one of service. The actor serves the script, the director and the audience, so your hope should be that you could be of service in any way in the show.

**Commitment, Conflicts, Concerns**

Being any part of a play at Notre Dame is a huge commitment. We rehearse tirelessly and constantly. Rehearsals will directly conflict with many Notre Dame activities. If you have a question regarding conflicts see Ms. Welden. Before you audition make sure you and your family are prepared for the obligation of you attending rehearsals almost every day.

**And finally**

Thank you for your interest in auditioning, theatre is a group experience and we could not produce plays without actors! If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to ask Ms. Welden. Make sure you are well prepared for your audition; we wish you great success and break a leg!                      - JW
Appendix F: Contract for Actors

**Contract for Actors**

First and foremost you are now responsible to this company. Being a member of this exceptional company is a privilege and should be honored as such. The following list represents behavior which could result in this privilege being revoked:

a. **Missing Rehearsals**
   If you must miss rehearsal due to illness or emergency, please text Ms. Welden @ (818)4274278. No appointments or other activities should be used as an excuse to miss rehearsal. Please make the rehearsal schedule available to all family members who schedule your time. **NOTE:** Please list on the back of this sheet any conflicts you have between now and November 20th. Most importantly, if a conflict should occur, the sooner you notify Ms. Welden, the better.

b. **Consistent Tardiness**
   Actors should make every effort to arrive at rehearsal 5-10 minutes before the start of rehearsal. You should be in the Theatre ready to work at the start time of rehearsals. If something does occur that is going to make you late, please call a stage manager right away.

c. **Inappropriate Behavior**
   This would include going against ND codes of conduct, leaving campus without permission, and generally not following instructions. Remember you represent this program now, please treat everyone on campus with respect and do not use rehearsals as an excuse for not completing school work. Avoid whining and complaining about rehearsals, remember this is an honor and a privilege and should always be treated as such.

d. **Irresponsible Behavior**
   This would include not meeting memorization deadlines, coming to rehearsal without materials, not being dressed properly for rehearsals, and generally not living up to the actor’s responsibilities.

Please look this over with your parents and have it signed by the next rehearsal.

Name____________________________________

Student Signature__________________________________

Parent Signature___________________________________
Appendix G: Stakeholder Interviews

An interview with Theatre Director and Fine Arts Department Chairperson Judy Welden.

**Before exploring the nature of the play program can you share your educational and professional credentials?**

I received my Bachelor of Arts in Theatre from CSUN in 1980. Then I studied at the University of Utah and received my MFA in Directing in 1983. Prior to joining the faculty at Notre Dame I worked as an instructor/director with the Teenage Drama Workshop at CSUN. Over the years I’ve directed in several equity-waiver theatres in Los Angeles, as well as the Edinburgh Theatre Festival.

**In so far as Notre Dame’s extracurricular theatre program is concerned what opportunities exist for students?**

Our department produces five plays each school year. The fall play is in performance in November/December. Recent productions include *Frankenstein*, *You Can’t Take it With You*, and *Inherit the Wind*. While the fall play is in performance the Theatre for Youth production tours local elementary schools. Immediately following the tour the production has a weekend run on campus, this year’s piece was *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*. In the spring we offer a musical such as the recent *Once Upon a Mattress*, *Curtains*, and *Good News*. The Frosh/Soph production, typically a one-act, goes into performance immediately after the musical closes. This year we are presenting Horton Foote’s *A Young Lady of Property*. Finally, in May students in the Acting III class perform their senior play. We also offer a summer workshop production. In every production students act, stage manage and assume crew responsibilities. Occasionally, students with appropriate training and background have served in various designing capacities.
What is the philosophy with which the program approaches the creation of theatre?

Theatre seems to be intrinsic to every part of the world. Where does this need for sharing with each other in live performance come from? What human needs are filled through the partaking in creative expression? What is gained through storytelling, dance and song? In becoming performers, what do actors offer the world, and how do actors train themselves to bring the essence of humanity to their work.

These questions are the basis of our work in the theatre. We choose to constantly dwell in the questions because we believe from the questions come inspiration, community, and meaningful creation. If theatre holds up a mirror to humanity we must look at the humanity within ourselves; we must be willing recognize ourselves in others and to share the truest reality of human experience. Theatre must not only be a mirror – theatre has the power to forge or influence community. This possibility leads us as theatre artists to consistently work toward being worthy of our positions. Therefore we must learn to be diligent, inquisitive, disciplined and devoted to our work and one another.

Is the program’s approach directly influenced by Notre Dame’s Holy Cross identity?

In keeping with our mission statement to educate the heart as well as the mind, all of our theatre programs attempt to rigorously train and develop actors’ sensitivity to place themselves in the service of their communities. To this end our play selections force students to confront issues of diversity, marginalization, stereotyping and historical oppression. Some recent productions include *The Laramie Project*, *Inherit the Wind*, *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, and *Bury the Dead*. 
Additionally, each ensemble of all of our productions experiences a retreat and opening night prayer service. Working with the invaluable Dave Savage, a fellow faculty member, we craft unique retreat experiences tailored to each production. (A brief interview regarding theatre retreats follows this interview.)

**In your mind what sets this program apart?**

Well every school has a unique personality, focus, and offering. Notre Dame is a Catholic educational community founded on the teachings of Basil Moreau, who believed education was for the soul as much as it was for the mind. In the study of theatre this foundation is liberating. We are reminded daily to be mindful of the spirit, the dignity of every individual, and our responsibility to our fellow human beings. In what better setting can one teach *All My Sons*, *Othello*, and *Angels in America*?

Our approach to performance is based on Stanislavski; however we emphasize his questions rather than the answers. We are less interested in modeling a specific system and more interested in inspiring students with Stanislavski’s ever changing quest for truth in acting.

And we continue to be thrilled by our Black Box Theatre. Performing in such an intimate space allows students to be subtle, nuanced and quietly intense. Our space itself complements Notre Dame’s educational mission, educating student actors to truly connect to each other, the audience, and the larger world.

**Are there any unique challenges that Notre Dame faces?**

Bluntly, our school is in close proximity to Hollywood where artistic vision can take a backseat to celebrity. In light of this, another focus for the Notre Dame theatre
program is emphasizing the discipline of acting. It is the actor’s responsibility to bring integrity, ethics, and a collaborative spirit to any medium and every situation.

**Could you name a few productions that you believe are representative of the program?**

*The Visit* and *The Enchanted* come to mind. These plays feature the ensemble, which is something vital to us when choosing material. The stories examine how the actions of an individual impact a community. They blend the classic with the contemporary in their lyricism, their study of relationships and their impact. The characters in these play are forced to make essential decisions about who they are, what they value and what their role is in their society. And plays are set in an earlier period therefore giving our students ample research opportunities.

A contemporary work that not only represents our department but also the Holy Cross tradition would have to be *The Laramie Project*. I discovered that events in recent history can have a deeper effect on high school students than events from the more distant past because they had such a hard time processing the idea that this violent crime occurred so recently. Also, the fact that they were playing multiple characters and had to see the event from many different viewpoints was very powerful for the cast members. Part of playing multiple characters involved becoming the oppressed and the oppressor, the victims of prejudice and those who preach prejudice. They were required to look humanity squarely in the eye and recognize its potential for damage and healing.

**What needs to be done in order to maintain the program’s strength?**

Several practical things that go into working and shepherding a program within a lively high school. Ensuring that our budget continues to enable to hire specialists and
help with voice and physicality. Developing a more cooperative relationship with plant management in terms of access to keys, storage space, and other operational necessities. Although I love to work in the black box I struggle with the lack of wing space and the general location of the theatre, we’re right in the center of a noisy, busy campus.
A brief interview with Dave Savage, theatrical retreat coordinator, regarding ensemble retreats at Notre Dame

**From your point of view what is the purpose of the theatre retreats?**

I believe the retreats help the participants to see their roles in them as more than an extracurricular activity but as an extension of everything they learn at the school and the spiritual life they nurture. I realize that all of the participants have a different level of faith practice - some pray, some meditate, some have no particular belief or religion but consider themselves part of the human spirit. I believe that Holy Cross ministry is about meeting people where they are - exactly as Fr. Moreau did.

**What kinds of activities would be typical of theatre retreat?**

Typical activities seek to create a comfortable area and atmosphere for the kids. I wouldn't do an anointing but then I also wouldn't do a Wiccan healing circle. I try to work with the director to find a theme to the production - the story's main characters and their situations, or the plot of the story. Sometimes for the musical we focus on a particular song or number that captures the production's message. Self-searching activities such as journaling, sharing, labyrinths, role playing for healing or forgiveness, and affirmations are the main ones, with some additional activities depending on the production.
School Administrators

Name: Brett Lowart

Position: School President

Can you put into your own words what it means to be a school in the “Holy Cross tradition”?

Simply, this means that in the absence of Holy Cross religious, the lay teaching professionals and staff are responsible for carrying forward the founding Holy Cross mission. In recognition of the imminence of lay leadership in Holy Cross schools, four fundamental Holy Cross themes have been established at high schools throughout the country: 1) Educating Hearts and Minds; 2) Being Family; 3) Bringing Hope; and 4) Building Respect. These themes, which are rotated annually, help faculty and staff to stay true to the Holy Cross mission and traditions, as well as providing parents and alumni with living proof of the uniqueness of Holy Cross that distinguishes our schools.

What is the role and function of an extra-curricular theatre program?

The extra-curricular theatre program serves an important role to afford students of artistic, performing arts abilities the opportunity to develop skills and have experiences that serve to facilitate the growth of the whole person. In addition to student individualistic growth, the extra-curricular program must seek to supplement academic theater courses, putting together theory and practice to form lifelong learning in this area.

To what extent can an extra-curricular theatre program enhance the school community’s ability to live the mission?

Forming students that have an adult appreciation for the arts is integral to society in general. The Holy Cross mission calls us to be respectful citizens who are sensitive to
service and social justice. Theatre, perhaps as well as any program, is particularly effective in developing keen sensitivities that raise awareness of ills and injustices in society. Thus, if the extra-curricular theatre program is conducted effectively, the school’s mission is achieved by virtue of alumni living and acting in Christian ways.

From your memory/exposure to Notre Dame Theatre is there a particular production that is representative of our school’s identity? If so, why?

I enjoyed *Inherit the Wind* because of my personal interest in legal social justice; however, all of the productions I have seen have been excellent. I believe that hard work, preparation, teamwork, sacrifice and passion are learned attributes that students acquire in the theatre program. While these attributes are not necessarily Christian in nature, there is an important faith element in working on a production that incorporates the concept of working together for something that is greater than any one individual. This type of faithful learning experience certainly serves to fulfill our overall school identity that seeks the development of a personal, spiritual awareness for each student.

Lastly, do you have any practical recommendations for maintaining the program’s vitality?

I do not have any recommendations for the program that aren’t already in effect. I would only be encouraging that the program to continue to be supportive of all students seeking to gain any level of appreciation and experience (in the classroom and on the stage). The only difficulty I am able to observe is how to accommodate all interested students without compromising the quality of the program. This balance is one of which I am sure you lever daily. I am equally appreciative of the variety of dramatic, comedic
and musical learning and performance experiences students can expect to receive during a four-year cycle. Keep up the good work!
Can you put into your own words what it means to be a school in the “Holy Cross tradition”?

A Holy Cross school is dedicated to educating the heart as well as the mind. At our school extra-curricular is not an “extra” they are mandatory to fulfilling the mission, fulfilling our commitment to Fr. Moreau’s ideals. That’s why we offer so many opportunities for students to find a their place within the community. Students feel part of a larger whole at Notre Dame — a feeling that spreads through our diverse activities. There is a place for every student to become involved: nineteen sports teams, such programs as the Academic Decathlon, community service, the Equestrian Team and other extracurricular activities, and more than twenty student clubs.

What is the role and function of an extra-curricular theatre program?

This program enables students who perhaps would not be able to be involved in the various theatre classes, because of demands of their academic schedules, the opportunity to participate in this lively art. It is one of the many means to give students, these students; I call them the “theatre kids” a place to belong. And of course to enrich their high school experience.

To what extent can an extra-curricular theatre program enhance the school community’s ability to live the mission?

For us it’s a no brainer… to educate the heart. Theatre allows students to express themselves, it gives them a place. It challenges us to finding meaning and share it with each other.
From your memory/exposure to Notre Dame Theatre is there a particular production that is representative of our school’s identity? If so, why?

For obvious reasons I loved *Godspell*. And most recently *Once Upon a Mattress* my face just hurt afterwards, I couldn’t stop smiling. But *The Laramie Project* speaks to our openness, and shows to our students and community the open heart and open mind that we are trying to establish within them.

Lastly, do you have any practical recommendations for maintaining the program’s vitality?

It is important to attract a broad spectrum of kids. I fear that we might appear closed off if a small clique of kids become symbolic of the program. Appealing to and encouraging as many kids as possible to find their place in the program will ensure it is sustainable.
Name: Rob Thomas

Position: Vice Principal of Student Life

Can you put into your own words what it means to be a school in the “Holy Cross tradition”?

It is about a sense of family. That overall view of the world that there are many parts and we should include as many as possible in the students education. In addition to that it deals with meeting the needs of the kids where they are, allowing their diversified interests to be met. Think about the robotics program, who would have thought about that five years ago? We enable passionate and determined people to flourish in our many parts.

What is the role and function of an extra-curricular theatre program?

Theatre offers students the ability to enter into that world, to experience something that might lead to a potential career. I’m thinking of Kevin Cauley who designs lights for major touring rock concerts or Patrick Duffy who is the technical director at a community theatre in Moorpark. There is a lot of opportunity for these kids in the community in which they live and will more than likely continue to live in. The location, proximity, to studio and theatre professionals offers a great prospects for our kids.

To what extent can an extra-curricular theatre program enhance the school community’s ability to live the mission?

Our program does this well we give exposure to a variety of theatre: children’s plays, musicals, the Fall drama or comedy. It offers the community an opportunity to
learn the various parts of “theatre.” Plus there is an education to be had in each piece performed, in the meaning of each show. And it is definitely cross-curricular.

From your memory/exposure to Notre Dame Theatre is there a particular production that is representative of our school’s identity? If so, why?

I can think of three. *Pride and Prejudice* goes a long way to teaching people not to judge and be appreciative of who they are, it’s about respect. *You Can’t Take it With You* we value you the belief in family, that our school is a type of family. Family can be crazy, but in that there is love, it may take a while to sort it out and come to terms. But there is love. Lastly, *Curtains* it’s fun and school, education, ought to be fun.

Lastly, do you have any practical recommendations for maintaining the program’s vitality?

Where we are now, I think we’re in a good place. We do our best to be inclusive of the young students, with the Frosh/Soph play, so they don’t have to wait to be exposed to something they may like. Is there a way, and I know it would be difficult, but is there a way to encourage more student designers? Wouldn’t it be a rewarding challenge to have students develop and write their own one-acts?
Representative Alumni

Name: Austin Vaziri – Alumni

Graduation Year: 2011

What role did the Notre Dame theatre program play in your overall high school experience? In particular the extra-curricular productions?

Notre Dame's Theatre Department was instrumental in shaping my High School experience. I was extremely involved in productions beginning my freshman year, and identified myself within my group of friends as an actor. The shows that I was a part of allowed me to network and meet new friends and it also allowed me to be involved in the community in a way which I was able to enjoy and feel a great deal of self-fulfillment.

Is there a particular production that you were involved in that you believe is representative of your work within the program?

Due to the nature of performance, there was no individual production that I believe can fully represent the work I put into the entire program. This is not only based off of the roles I played within each production, but it also pertains to the amount of growth I had as an individual and as an actor. Each production and each performance within that production was unique and instrumental in shaping me to be who I currently am and subsequent productions that I was a part of.

To the best of your recollection, do you believe that plays produced during your time at Notre Dame reflected the school's Holy Cross mission "to educate hearts and minds"? If yes, how so?

I not only believe that the productions reflected the Holy Cross mission, but I also attempted my best to embody this statement within each production that I was a part of. My understanding of the nature of the Notre Dame Theatre department is that it is aimed at not only producing a performance with student actors, but attempting to train and form
the students that are apart of each performance to become both a more aware and educated individual and actor. Each production allows the student to connect what they have learned and experienced in their lives and attempt to use these to inform performance. In that, each student, whether or not they are aware of it, is living out this mission statement because the amount of effort they put in each production will educate both their heart and mind.

Did the plays you participated in and/or saw at Notre Dame, while a high school student, enable you to better understand the current culture/society?

For me in particular, the shows produced at Notre Dame did not directly allow me to be more aware of current events. That is, I was not looking to understand more about the world around me, I was passively becoming more aware and knowledgeable about the world around me with each show I performed in. For example, in an attempt to understand a certain character in a show, I would watch the news or interviews that were available at the time. My primary focus was to create a character and draw a basis for my character from one of these mediums. However, in doing so, I was also being informed about the world around me and could allow those events to influence my character work and my performances.

To what extent did you continue to study or work in theatre following your time at Notre Dame?

Well, currently I am studying Theater at UCLA with a specialization in Musical Theatre. The Theatre department at Notre Dame was instrumental in not only providing me with a solid foundation of knowledge regarding theatre and performing, but it also shaped what I intend to do as far as a career is concerned. At UCLA I intend on
performing in department stage productions and following my education, I hope to move into the field of voice overs for television and movies.
Name: Tony Karraa – Alumni

Graduation Year: 1989

What role did the Notre Dame theatre program play in your overall high school experience? In particular the extra-curricular productions?

I was completely uninvolved in the theatre at Notre Dame during my freshman and sophomore years. I had seen one theatre production during my freshman year. It was the musical *South Pacific*. I was very disappointed by the lack of quality in the production, and decided at that time that I was not interested in pursuing theatre at Notre Dame. The marching band was my only extracurricular activity on campus. While I loved music and enjoyed playing with the band, I hated the parades and marching. I had friends in the band but was never able to bond with any individual or small group in a way that made me feel connected or part of something bigger.

When I started my junior year, I learned quickly that there was a new theatre director at the school, Ms. Judy Welden. I attended her fall drama, her first show at the school, *The Diviners* by Jim Leonard Jr. I was overwhelmed by the excellence of the piece. It was far better than any theatrical work I had seen prior. I knew then, that I would audition for anything produced by Judy Welden at Notre Dame. I was lucky enough to be involved in every theatrical production at the school from then on until my graduation.

Being involved in the theatre changed my life during my time in high school and altered the trajectory of my life from that point forward. I connected deeply with a community in which I felt at home and kindred. I was able to express myself in ways that felt genuine and I was respected for my efforts. I was given the privilege of learning from an expert at her craft. Judy taught the actors in her program the highest level of theatre
history and technique. We were respected as professional actors and we were expected to rise to that level at all times. It was an experience of growth and maturing for which I will always be grateful.

Is there a particular production that you were involved in that you believe is representative of your work within the program?

The first production I auditioned for was the musical *Jesus Christ Superstar*. This was a play that I had loved for years and I was lucky enough to be trusted with the role of Judas Iscariot. The process was grueling and wonderful. An absolute journey from which I emerged a different person. When I think back to the process of rehearsing this show, the thing that leaps from my memory with the greatest strength is the feeling of trust that was developed within the ensemble. The show came to life due to the culture of and commitment that was fostered within the ensemble by our director. We absolutely trusted each other. When we were on stage, we supported each other’s’ artistic endeavors in a way that I have not experienced in any group (theatrical or otherwise) since.

To the best of your recollection, do you believe that plays produced during your time at Notre Dame reflected the school's Holy Cross mission "to educate hearts and minds"? If yes, how so?

I believe that the goal of Ms. Welden was then, and still is until this day, to teach the craft and history of the theatre to the young minds with which she shares her time in a way that sparks their curiosity into the insight of the soul and the ability of each individual to touch the souls of many. She not only teaches the craft and produces theatrical productions without equal in her field, but she also personally mentors each young adult who goes through her program, with their individual strengths and weaknesses in mind, and leads many of them to college programs that will suit their skills
and continue their academic path. There are few teachers that I have witnessed that are willing to put that kind of time and effort into the future of each student in her program with no interest in personal gain in return.

**Did the plays you participated in and/or saw at Notre Dame, while a high school student, enable you to better understand the current culture/society?**

I believe the process was the education. The productions were wonderful vehicles for learning and sharing. The process to the resultant production, the difficult and demanding rehearsal schedule, was the real journey. Each show was a new experience with a new cast and a new story, but the story of the script was only the apparent journey. The internal journeys of learning how to work with others to create a piece of art that would touch others was always new and enlightening.

Each production's rehearsal process created a microcosm of the outside world and culture that we had to walk through daily. The difference was, within the context of the ensemble, we were allowed to experiment and create without judgment. This allowed the actor to learn about themselves in safe and powerful ways.

**To what extent did you continue to study or work in theatre following your time at Notre Dame?**

After graduation, I went on to study music at the California Institute of the Arts from which I received a BFA degree in Music Composition. Without the guidance of Ms. Welden, I would not have been able to find the school or even meet the deadline of the application and audition process. She was absolutely instrumental in that process. I have had the good fortune to be able to work in sound design for professional theatres and I
continue to work with Judy Welden at Notre Dame High School to this day, where I
teach Musical Theatre.
Name: Jerome Gonzales – Alumni

Graduation Year: 1995

What role did the Notre Dame theatre program play in your overall high school experience? In particular the extra-curricular productions?

Theatre classes (I was in Drama I & II junior and senior year, respectively) were a big help to my other classes. In particular, my grades in English improved significantly as my understanding of literature grew. The productions I was involved actually had a noticeable effect of on my social skills. I became more comfortable interacting with groups after performing in front of audiences.

Is there a particular production that you were involved in that you believe is representative of your work within the program?

Guys and Dolls. My part was chorus, with a few highlighted moments, but I was involved in various stages, from helping paint sets to tailoring costumes for the leads and dressing actors while offstage. It was a community effort and I felt a part of that community.

To the best of your recollection, do you believe that plays produced during your time at Notre Dame reflected the school’s Holy Cross mission “to educate hearts and minds”? If yes, how so?

Arts always educates the heart in my opinion. The careful selection of material that didn't pander to the age of students was definitely something that expanded the minds of those who attended as well as those who participated in productions.
Did the plays you participated in and/or saw at Notre Dame, while a high school student, enable you to better understand the current culture/society?

Definitely. My interaction with the other members of the productions and the awareness of my presence definitely have affected my view of my place and responsibility in society as time has gone on.

To what extent did you continue to study or work in theatre following your time at Notre Dame?

My direct work with theatre ended with high school. But I still enjoy consulting on productions my friends are involved with on occasion.
Name: Erin Lechner – Alumni

Graduation Year: 1993

What role did the Notre Dame theatre program play in your overall high school experience? In particular the extra-curricular productions?

I went to see several of the productions produced by the theatre program at Notre Dame when I was a student. I remember thoroughly enjoying seeing the plays. I enjoyed them so much, that even though I was not involved in the drama department previously, I decided to audition for a musical my senior year. I had been involved in other programs for the majority of my time at Notre Dame (i.e., sports and visual arts); however, the one theater production in which I was involved was one of the best experiences I had during high school. It made me grow in so many different positive ways as a person.

Is there a particular production that you were involved in that you believe is representative of your work within the program?

I was involved in only one production when I went to Notre Dame which was *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. Being involved in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* was truly one of the most rewarding and enjoyable experiences I had at Notre Dame.

To the best of your recollection, do you believe that plays produced during your time at Notre Dame reflected the school’s Holy Cross mission “to educate hearts and minds”? If yes, how so?

The plays produced during my time at Notre Dame did reflect the school’s Holy Cross mission “to educate hearts and minds.” The students participating in the play learned music, dance, to speak/perform in front of others, and to work with others. It also taught them how to think fast and improvise when a situation didn’t happen exactly
as planned. The students seeing the plays learned different types of music, dance, literature and the messages or lessons each play taught.

**Did the plays you participated in and/or saw at Notre Dame, while a high school student, enable you to better understand the current culture/society?**

Each play had some message or lesson that could be applied to the current culture/society. For example, *West Side Story* could be compared with any two clashing different cultures or groups and the consequences of ignorant, violent actions.

**To what extent did you continue to study or work in theatre following your time at Notre Dame?**

I have not been involved in any theater productions following my time at Notre Dame, but my love of theater has continued to grow. I have seen numerous theater productions, both big and small, throughout the years. I have also exposed my children to theater, taking them to see plays at least two times a year.
**Enrolled Students**

**Name:** Isabella Zelinger – Current Student

**Graduation Year:** 2013

**What role has the ND theatre program played in your overall high school experience? In particular the extra-curricular productions?**

The shows at Notre Dame are probably the most memorable, life changing, and special moments I have experienced in my high school career. The theater is a home to me. When I had a long day of pointless exams, teenage drama, or just putting up with life, the theatre was and still remains my escape from "reality". I looked forward to going to rehearsal every day, in fact, I think just knowing I had rehearsal was what got me through my day. The theatre is my family. The friends I have created are the people I will remember and tell stories about once I graduate, Ms. Welden has become my mentor and a woman who has not only helped me grow as an actor, but as an individual, and the characters I have played have all helped me develop confidence on stage and growth in my abilities as an actor. Notre Dame theatre is how I fit in at school, without it I really don't think my experience at this school would have meant nearly as much to me as it does with theatre in my life.

**Is there a particular production that you have participated in that you believe is representative of your work within the program? Please explain.**

Believe it or not, being the lead in *Curtains* wasn't what I feel represented my abilities, but Frau Muller in *Frankenstein* did. This was my first big "character" role, in the sense that I completely stepped outside of my comfort zone and took on a huge challenge. I turned off my typical innocent, sweet, all-American-girl persona I naturally fall into, and portrayed a loud, flamboyant, and aggressive middle-aged woman. This
represents my work in the program because it exemplified my ability to grow, my
diversity in character choices, and how my small role could make a huge impact on the
entire production as a whole. This was a huge landmark in my acting career at Notre
Dame, because I was able to push aside my insecurities and act to my fullest potential.
My script analysis and vulnerability on stage definitely incorporated to Frau's identity,
but my ability to try something completely different really expressed how this program
has helped me grow as a performer.

Do you believe that plays produced during your time at Notre Dame reflected the
school's Holy Cross mission "to educate hearts and minds"? If yes, how so?

Yes, yes, and yes. This year actually was what I think really made me see just
how much the plays have impacted me. This past production of Once Upon A Mattress
really expressed my growth in my heart. I was put as ensemble. To some it’s not a big
deal, and I ultimately should have been grateful I was even placed in the show. But I am a
perfectionist, and when I set my mind towards something, I would typically get my
way...wow that sounds super selfish...but let me explain. I had voice lessons for my
audition piece, I listened to the entire sound-track before going into the audition, and I
really had confidence. I thought that was enough to land me a lead. I had it all wrong.
This production humbled me. It showed me that no, I'm not going to get everything I
want in life, I'm not going to win every competition, get every grade I desire, let alone
any part I want. And with this first experience of rejection, I was humbled as an
individual. I had to watch my two best friends get the two parts I would have loved to
play, and I had to be supportive despite my anger and pain. If it were not for the Notre
Dame shows, so much of the girl I am today would not be. Whether it is my beautiful
friendships or learning how to handle rejection, I have grown as an individual. As for
educating my mind, Yes! I am learning from Ms. Welden, someone whose opinion I value, whose past experience is immense, and whose direction is phenomenal. I didn't know what script analysis was, I didn't know how beneficial relaxation was to prepare as an actor, I didn't know I had half the imagination and creativity I do, and it is all because of my experience in these plays.

**Did the plays you've participated in and/or have seen at Notre Dame enable you to better understand the current culture/society?**

I think every show, those I've been in or seen, has helped me better understand the current culture and society. Every show has a message, and every message can be related to the everyday world we live in. I think I get this more when I am in the show, because the script work and character development involves research and substituting emotions from the "real" world and putting them into the character/show. *Frankenstein* helped me understand how members of society are ostracized, and how when those people aren't welcomed into healthy, loving relationships, they go insane. Or *Good News*, how in the 1920's people weren't afraid to show their school spirit, and in current society, teenagers keep a wall up because they are scared of being judged. Even in *Once Upon a Mattress*, how all people want in life is love, and in current society, love is absent from so many people's lives. The messages in the shows allow me to think about the society I live in, and compare what is actually going on in the world to what should be going on.

**To what extent do you plan to continue to study or work in theatre following your time at Notre Dame?**

This is a question I ask myself just about every day. Living in LA, I see all the struggling actors, all the people who really don't have any financial stability because all they want is fame and to perform. And sometimes, I don't think I could handle living that
sort of life-style. But, theatre and performing is what makes me the happiest, so a part of me does want to continue down this path because of the joy and passion I have when I'm performing. I know I will continue to take theatre in college, just because I love it and cannot imagine spending four years in college with no singing, dancing, and acting. Will I do this as a profession? That I still don't know, and probably will not know until I get to college and can experience it for myself. I have had such an incredible experience at Notre Dame, why stop here? So yes, I will continue to take performing classes and find ways to be in musicals and plays, but I am still figuring out if that's what I'm going to be doing in 30 years in my career.
Name: Nick Bassman – Current Student

Graduation Year: 2013

What role has the ND theatre program played in your overall high school experience? In particular the extra-curricular productions?

The six extracurricular shows I’ve participated in thus far have been the most defining experiences I’ve had at Notre Dame. Representing a human life on the stage has shaped me into a bolder, more inventive, more empathetic, and more passionate person. It’s also a fantastic social bonding experience, responsible for many of the high school friendships I’ve made.

Is there a particular production that you have participated in that you believe is representative of your work within the program? Please explain.

Frankenstein. I poured my heart into the role of the Creature and it was probably the hardest and most rewarding work I’ve done in my life. That show taught me more about discipline and passion and the nature of human beings more than any class I’ve taken.

Do you believe that plays produced during your time at Notre Dame reflected the school's Holy Cross mission "to educate hearts and minds"? If yes, how so?

Absolutely. At the core of a good play’s story is a positive moral message and fundamental truth about human nature, even an outrageous fairy tale like Once Upon a Mattress or a violent tragedy like Frankenstein. My own heart and mind have been vastly enriched within the four walls of the black box theatre.
Did the plays you've participated in and/or have seen at Notre Dame enable you to better understand the current culture/society?

Yes, yes, yes. Being on stage or watching good live acting reminds me of how much society takes things for granted, and – not to be overly trite – forgets to stop and smell the roses.

To what extent do you plan to continue to study or work in theatre following your time at Notre Dame?

I plan to take Acting III, Play Writing, and Film Acting next year, and audition for the available shows. I’ve just started to look at theatre schools I may be interested in auditioning for college.
What role has the ND theatre program played in your overall high school experience? In particular the extra-curricular productions?

Theatre has played a huge role in my experience. After getting involved my junior year, I met new people, discovered new ideas, and most importantly discovered and analyzed myself and who I really was as a person. Being involved in extracurricular shows made me more organized and motivated in my work and gave me something to look forward to and to express myself freely.

Is there a particular production that you have participated in that you believe is representative of your work within the program? Please explain.

I think that *Frankenstein* is the show that I feel most proud of because the character at first was the opposite of who I was, but after analyzing and using parts of myself for the character, it became my own and I was able to believe the character and make it realistic.

Do you believe that plays produced during your time at Notre Dame reflected the school's Holy Cross mission "to educate hearts and minds"? If yes, how so?

I do believe that it follows the mission because sitting in a classroom reading from a book is not nearly enough to fully educate yourself. Theatre presents on opportunity to learn about new ideas and meet new people that could affect you in a way a lesson from a textbook could not.
Did the plays you've participated in and/or have seen at Notre Dame enable you to better understand the current culture/society?

I think that the plays that have been performed reflect what society is or is capable of and can cause us to think about other aspects of life.

To what extent do you plan to continue to study or work in theatre following your time at Notre Dame?

I plan to major in Theatre at college and potentially work towards a masters degree, while trying to work professionally.
Name: Caitlin McCarthy

Graduation Year: 2012

What role has the ND theatre program played in your overall high school experience? In particular the extra-curricular productions?

The Notre Dame theatre program has come to define much of my high school experience. I have probably spent more waking hours in the Black Box than I have at home in the last four years, but there is not a place I’d rather be. It is a safe haven where I can escape the drama of high school and be treated as a competent professional. It has also aided me in finding myself, does sound awfully cliché? Truly, though, it has been in the theatre that I have discovered and become more confident as my truer self.

Is there a particular production that you have participated in that you believe is representative of your work within the program? Please explain.

I played Alice in You Can’t Take it With You last year, and I think it represents my work because I was very proud of that show. There was incredible synergy within the cast and crew, but most importantly I learned so much and had a lot of fun. It was fun because we got to go to the black box everyday and play. I also learned about dedication, passion, and focus from my older cast mates.

Do you believe that plays produced during your time at Notre Dame reflected the school's Holy Cross mission "to educate hearts and minds"? If yes, how so?

I do believe this because the institution of theatre itself, when shows are done with purpose and passion, does just that. Theatre at its best educates the hearts and minds of both the audience and the performers. Not only have I learned about history and theatre and art, I have become a more empathetic person because of my experience with the characters I have played.
Did the plays you've participated in and/or have seen at Notre Dame enable you to better understand the current culture/society?

I have been able to better understand our society and culture because of the history I’ve been exposed to in the ND theatre program. I’ve been in, seen, and worked backstage on shows ranging from the medieval times to present day, which has given my view of society and humanity a historical backbone. I’ve also got a lot more faith in human beings because of the characters, stories, and fellow actors I have encountered, theatre forces you, especially here, to encounter the humanity of yourself and others and to rejoice in it.

To what extent do you plan to continue to study or work in theatre following your time at Notre Dame?

I am going on to the University of Evansville to study theatre performance, as well as, the technical side of theatre. I would like to work in the theatre for the rest of my life, be it acting or otherwise, and I would like to start a theatre company.
Name: Nicoletta Hynes

Graduation Year: 2012

What role has the ND theatre program played in your overall high school experience? In particular the extra-curricular productions?

I honestly believe that if I had not done theatre here, I would have left this school. I have only ever liked the parts of my high school experience that involve shows, whether it be a rehearsal, a tech day, or an acting class. The theatre here is very welcoming, and in my opinion a much less stressful an environment that anywhere else. I feel as if I can be free at Notre Dame only in the theatre. The extracurricular productions have taught me more about responsibility, teamwork, freedom of expression, and creativity than all of my classes put together. I feel most productive not in a classroom, but in a rehearsal.

Is there a particular production that you have participated in that you believe is representative of your work within the program? Please explain.

The production I am currently working on Bone-Chiller is what will ultimately represent what I have learned throughout these four years. I have, at this point, experienced it all. I’ve had a few leads, been in many ensembles, and worked tech crew many times. I finally get to take all that knowledge and experience and use it for my final character in the Acting III show. I don’t think anything earlier then this show can represent me as well, because I was and still am continuing to learn all I can about the theatre and acting.

Do you believe that plays produced during your time at Notre Dame reflected the school's Holy Cross mission "to educate hearts and minds"? If yes, how so?

I absolutely believe this. I think the directors have always picked shows that have an important underlying message. Frankenstein, warned about the dangerous power of
love, fear, and hatred. *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* was about anti-Semitism, and the necessity of tolerance. And even if these messages did not come through to the audience, the students in the productions learned the value of teamwork, made new friends, and were given new values just by participating in a show.

**Did the plays you've participated in and/or have seen at Notre Dame enable you to better understand the current culture/society?**

Yes and no. I think many of our shows reflect society and point out its flaws, but the actors usually understood the flaws that were being illuminated. The point was more to make a change to something that was always understood but never altered.

**To what extent do you plan to continue to study or work in theatre following your time at Notre Dame?**

I want to study theatre my entire life, even if I have absolutely no success at it. I want it to always be a part of who I am as an artist.
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