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Roberson, Claire

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Desdemona: An Ingenue for our Time?

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Theatre and Dance (Acting)

by

Claire Roberson

Committee in charge:

Marc Barricelli, Chair
Eva Barnes
Ursula Meyer

2018

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publication
on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2018

DEDICATION

I'd like to thank my family for joining me on this whimsical journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature Page.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Supplemental Files.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Abstract of the Thesis.....	viii

LIST OF SUPPLEMENTAL FILES

File 1. *Othello* Photo 1

File 2. *Othello* Photo 2

File 3. *Othello* Photo 3

File 4. *Othello* Photo 4

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Desdemona: An Ingenue for our Time?

by

Claire Roberson

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Acting)

University of California, San Diego, 2018

Professor Marc Barricelli, Chair

I've spent a lot of my time here worried about whether or not I was good enough. Was I worth enough to speak up in class. Was I brave enough to trust in my acting choices. Was I kind enough to not beat myself up for what I thought were mistakes, or faults, or problems in judgement. At this time, having reached my third year, I realize that I am enough. And I think my experience as Desdemona in Othello has been the result of the culmination of my three years here. Challenges abounded, mostly regarding the way the room was run. Instead of being cowed, of being afraid to speak up when my director could not remember my name, or treated the women in the room poorly, I was able to instead have confidence in who I am as an actor, and as a person, and speak up for myself - something I've learned from this training. I was able to use the physical training I've had here to participate in fight choreography that physically and emotionally drained me

every night. I was able to use my vocal training to understand how one's character speaks after their windpipe has likely been crushed. But I return once again to how I was able to participate in the *Othello* room; my time spent at UCSD has taught me to take up space without apology. I am worth being treated well, and I now know how to speak up for that. My Desdemona fought, and so too do I.