Title
Immersed in the Ensemble Mindset: "This is Our Song About Us!"

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/37p232vb

Author
Dettmers, Amber

Publication Date
2019

Supplemental Material
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/37p232vb#supplemental

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation
Immersed in the Ensemble Mindset: “This is Our Song About Us!”

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

in

Theatre and Dance (Stage Management)

by

Amber R. Dettmers

Committee in charge:

Lisa Porter, Chair
Lora Powell
Kim Rubinstein

2020
©

Amber R. Dettmers, 2020

All rights reserved.
The Thesis of Amber R. Dettmers is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California San Diego

2020
DEDICATION

For Kim Rubinstein; I will treasure our partnership forever.

For the City of Chicago.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature Page</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Supplemental Files</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract of the Thesis</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF SUPPLEMENTAL FILES

File 1. BALM Calling Script, Dettmers_BALM_Calling Script.pdf
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My comrades and confidantes, Nicholas Lambros Smith and Jacob Halpern Weitzman, for the unbreakable bonds of Jambco.

The Usual Suspects, Laura Chamness White, Bethany Greer, and Kim Keasler Scarbrough. There is no one but my parents who knows me without the three of you.

My teachers and mentors, Lisa Porter, Lora Powell, Charles Means, Colleen Kollar Smith, and Patti Saraniero. Thank you for your investment in my success and continued growth.

Chicago, the home of ensemble-based theatre, where I learned how to be who I am and love what I do. You are the city that does theatre best in the most understated way. May I always make you proud.

Finally, Michael Rathbun, my person, my partner, my puzzle piece. You are my favorite theater artist, conversationalist, comedian, adventurer and human. Your endless love and support could never be repaid, though I will try. I am yours and you are mine from now until the end of days.
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Immersed in the Ensemble Mindset: “This is Our Song About Us!”

by

Amber R. Dettmers
Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Stage Management)
University of California San Diego, 2020
Professor Lisa Porter, Chair

_Balm in Gilead_ requires a unique level of orchestration and scoring by the ensemble, similar to the specificity of reading and playing a piece of music. The play exemplifies the need for ensemble stage managers, who lead productions with an ensemble mindset, establishing themselves as one with the ensemble, demonstrating the same level of focus, attention to detail, and storytelling as the actors and director. I guided our production with this ensemble approach, earning the trust of the players as I embraced each artistic choice fully, voiced technical curiosities, and shared in the collective language of the storytelling.

As I engaged the sensibility of an ensemble stage manager, I successfully integrated myself into the show’s artistic scope. I referenced the spirit and culture of ensemble we had
pledged to uphold, regularly discussed character and story, and addressed issues while appealing to a sense of community. I used plural pronouns from day one. The play was ours, and I included myself and the stage management team when talking about the creative process. I stood and joined the ensemble for the opening and closing ritual of each rehearsal. I gave multiple lines when prompting, showing that I understood the actors’ needs within the complex text. When calling the show, I was one with the action onstage, fully engaged. Surfacing a group purpose resulted in discipline, community, and communal responsibility in both process and product. This ensemble approach to stage management contributed to a production driven by the company’s interconnected accountability.