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My Godot Is Opportunity

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

My Godot Is Opportunity

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

in

Theatre and Dance (Acting)

by

Volen Iliev

Committee in charge:

Marc Barricelli, Chair  
Eva Barnes  
Ursula Meyer

2018

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The Thesis of Volen Iliev is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2018

## DEDICATION

To my incredible wife, Linda. You are the strongest, bravest, and most amazing person I know. I can't begin to tell you how much your love and support helped me through my three years here.

Here's to the best future imaginable.

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File 2. *Waiting For Godot* Photo

File 3. *Waiting For Godot* Photo

File 4. *Waiting For Godot* Photo

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

My Godot Is Opportunity

by

Volen Iliev

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Acting)

University of California, San Diego, 2018

Professor Marc Barricelli, Chair

“I sometimes wonder if we wouldn’t have been better off alone, each one for himself. We weren’t made for the same road.”

These musings I had the immense privilege of voicing as Estragon in Beckett’s *Waiting For Godot* may be the quintessential metaphor for the duality of my ceaseless internal conflict as an artist. On the one hand there’s my unflinching, unassailable, and unwavering love for performing. On the other hand there’s the constant doubt and insecurity about myself, my talent and my place in the theatre.

Yet, just like Gogo, I’ve come to realize that one cannot exist without the other if I’m to continue trying to carve my name into the monolith of professional artistry. I don’t push myself

to be the best I can be if I didn't have some measure of doubt to fight against. And I don't love performing if I'm not pushing myself to be the best I can be.

While working on *Godot* led to this epiphany about how to find harmony in my own dissonance, it also highlighted how critical this program's training has been in creating my foundation as an artist. Without this foundation I might have crumbled under the pressure of taking on such an iconic character. Without this foundation my eternal self-doubt may have simply eroded the better parts of me away over time.

Instead I can now embrace my fears, armed with the recognition of their necessity while simultaneously *knowing* that I can work at a high level and that I'm capable of taking up space in the pantheon of great acting. Accepting *that* has always been half the battle for me. The other half will always be how to come back to the same spot every day while waiting for my Godot to show up.