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A Documentation of a Year As an Artistic Director for UNL

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HONORS THESIS:
A DOCUMENTATION OF A YEAR AS AN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR FOR UNL

An Undergraduate Honors Thesis
Submitted in Partial fulfillment of
University Honors Program Requirements
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

by

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Johnny Carson School

Abstract

The goal of this project was to document a year of being an Artistic Director for UNL's student run theatre company Theatrix. Through this documentation, I will be able to reflect upon and learn from my experiences as a leader, director, and theatre maker.

This thesis will be broken up into eight different parts to outline the eight different stages I experienced as Artistic Director this year: season selection, the 24-hour Play Festival, *The Revolutionists*, *The Thanksgiving Play*, *Clown Bar*, season changes, *Based on a Totally True Story*, and *Lemons, Lemons, Lemons, Lemons, Lemons*. Through these eight stages, I will touch on all of the problems, successes, and failures I experienced as Artistic Director of Theatrix this year. Through the examination of this past year, I will document all of the different angles through which I worked with theatre this year.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this honors thesis to Professor Ann Marie Pollard. Thank you for helping me through the past four years of college. I would not have been able to do anything I have done without you. Thank you for your patience, your guidance, your wisdom, and your support.

Part 1: Season Selection

Being the Artistic Director of a theatre company comes with a myriad of jobs that shift and change as the year progresses. While these jobs can be different from theatre company to theatre company, the one thing that remains the same is that every Artistic Director starts each year by selecting a season of shows.

Since Theatrix is a student-run theatre company, we try to include the student body in as many of our decisions as possible. This began last March when we reached out to the students to ask what shows they would like to see in the next Theatrix season. After about a month, we had received very few show pitches, but we had heard over and over again from students that there was a desire for more inclusive theatre. Upon hearing this, I reached out to multiple former professors and got a wide variety of plays written by LGBTQ, Indigenous, and Latinx playwrights.

After reading a wide variety of plays, I pitched ten plays to the Theatrix Executive Board for consideration in our 2021-2022 season. We read all of the plays and decided that our season would consist of our fourth annual 24-Hour Play Festival, *The Revolutionists* by Lauren Gunderson, *Clown Bar* by Adam Szymkowicz, *Based on a Totally True Story* by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, and *Marisol* by José Rivera. We, as the Theatrix Executive Team, felt very good about this season, but there was one more play that kept coming back to us: *The Thanksgiving Play* by Larissa FastHorse. We knew it didn't make sense for that show to be a full length production in our season, but it was an incredibly important show that we felt needed to be heard. Because of this shared

feeling, we decided to include *The Thanksgiving Play* in our season as a staged reading to take place immediately before UNL's Thanksgiving Break.

After solidifying our season, it became my job as Artistic director to decide on a season theme. I took a weekend, re-read all five plays, and then began brainstorming. Fifty bad ideas later, I came up with an idea for a season theme, but it felt oddly familiar. I looked up at a poster in my room and saw that "Change your Perspective", the idea I thought I had come up with, was actually Theatrix's Season Theme two years ago. As a result of this heartbreaking realization, I returned to the drawing board. After another long list of bad ideas, a theme came to me that was even more perfect than "Change your Perspective." It was a theme that perfectly encapsulated all five shows of our season, the current climate we found ourselves in as COVID-era theatre makers, and who we were trying to be as people. I knew right then that I had come up with Theatrix's 2021-2022 season theme: "Rewrite the Narrative."

Part 2: The 24-hour Play Festival

For the past four years, Theatrix has kicked off each season with its 24-hour Play Festival. This festival takes place the first weekend of each school year and is a great way for freshmen to get to know the upperclassmen, as well as a chance for students who may not have made theatre all summer to get a chance to return to the stage. From Theatrix's perspective, the 24-hour Play Festival is a chance to get people excited about Theatrix's upcoming season, as well as a chance for the new Executive Team to practice their new roles. As the Artistic Director, I had four main jobs in the 24-Hour Play Festival: coming up with a festival theme, being the face of theatrix, guiding all of the groups through this 24-hour long process, and filling in if there are any gaps in any of the groups.

My first job was creating a theme for the festival. I wanted the theme for the festival to fit in with the theme from the season, but I didn't want it to be the exact same thing. I thought about it for a while and I couldn't think of anything. That's when I returned to the idea of what we are trying to do with this festival. One part of what we are doing is looking forward to the rest of our season, but another aspect of what we are doing is allowing people who, because of COVID, haven't made theatre in over a year to finally make theatre again. I reflected on the purpose of the festival and then I decided that the theme needed some aspect of forward progress. I met with the Theatrix Board and we decided together that "Next" would be a nice open-ended, yet purposeful, theme for our 24-hour Play Festival.

My second job in the 24-hour Play Festival was simply being the face of Theatrix. I was in charge of giving the presentation to the participants at the start of the festival. I welcomed everyone to the festival, shared a powerpoint about the rules I had made the night prior, introduced the theme, and then divided everyone into groups. Then, 24 hours later, when we finally showed our plays to an audience, I was in charge of giving the welcome speech at the start of the show.

My third job in the festival was to guide the groups through this 24-hour process. One positive of the 24-hour Play Festival is that it is a great opportunity for students to try things they have never done before, such as directing, writing, acting, or stage managing. Because of this opportunity, however, this can lead to confusion and problems arising. My job as the Artistic Director was to continually check in to make sure the groups were on the right path. Since I had been an actor, writer, and director before, I was able to offer guidance to any students who were experiencing difficulties in this process.

My final job in the festival was to fill any gaps that arose. After sign-ups for the festival closed, it became apparent that we were one playwright short. As the Artistic Director, I agreed to step up and write a play for the festival. This allowed us to create one additional group, allowing each actor who signed up for the festival more stage time. Since the writing had to be done within the first 10 hours of the 24-hour play festival anyways, it felt like it made the most sense for me to just write a play and then continue with the rest of my Artistic Director duties the following day.

The 24-hour Play Festival was a lot of work, but it resulted in four amazing plays with over 30 theatre makers involved and a full house for the actors to perform in front

of. This festival was a great way to start our season and set us up for an incredibly successful year.

Part 3: *The Revolutionists*

The first show of Theatrix's regular season was *The Revolutionists* by Lauren Gunderson. This was an all-female show about standing up for what is right, even in the face of adversity. We felt this was a great way to start the season because it is funny, heart wrenching, and as relevant now as ever. As the Artistic Director, it was my job to attend weekly production meetings, sit in on rehearsals, and offer guidance to the director.

Every Friday from the start of the semester until the show opened, Theatrix had production meetings consisting of the show's director, stage manager, all of the designers, the Theatrix Executive Team, and Theatrix's two faculty advisors. As Artistic Director, it is my job to attend all of these meetings to ensure that everything happening with this production is following my artistic vision for the season. More than that, though, I am also there as a friendly face in the room who is on the side of the director.

Another key role I played as Artistic Director during the run of *The Revolutionists* was attending rehearsals. I came to all or part of a rehearsal every week of the production to offer support for the director. I would show up and ask if there was anything she would like me to watch for and then I would observe rehearsal and speak to the director during breaks. This is especially helpful since Theatrix does all of our shows on a thrust stage (meaning there is an audience on three sides of the stage). Because of this format, it can sometimes be helpful to simply have another set of eyes in the room to see if things are reading from all audience perspectives.

Once tech week (the last week before a show opens where lighting and sound are implemented) came, I attended more rehearsals, watched full runs of the play, and spoke with the director about final notes at the end of the night. In addition to this, I was there, yet again, as a friendly face of encouragement for the director. Tech week can be a stressful time and so another key role I played was being a smiling face in the room who was confident in the production.

Part 4: *The Thanksgiving Play*

We originally planned *The Thanksgiving Play* by Larissa FastHorse to be a single day staged reading to take place immediately before students left for Thanksgiving Break. This one day staged reading slowly morphed into the biggest challenge we, as the Theatrix Board, faced all season.

At the start of the year when we announced we were looking for directors for our fall half of the season, we had one student who immediately reached out excited about directing *The Thanksgiving Play*. He had done his research and seemed like a really promising director. After director applications closed, he was offered the role of director and accepted. Then, at 11:30 pm the night before auditions, he called me and informed me that he would not be directing the show and that Theatrix should not be doing the show at all.

The next morning at auditions, we pulled *The Thanksgiving Play* from the list of shows to audition for, just until we had a chance to speak together as a Theatrix Board. We had a meeting and came to the conclusion that this is a challenging play, but a play that needs to be heard. UNL had never put on a play by an Indigenous Playwright and this play was written so Indigenous voices can be heard even where Indigenous people are not. We also realized that word was spreading fast through the school and people quickly feared that if they were involved in this play, they would be outcast by their friends. Things quickly began to spiral out of control so we reached out to the Johnny Carson School Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Club to organize a joint meeting where students could come and raise their concerns with the Theatrix Board.

The morning of the meeting I was terrified. It had become evident that there was a little bit of a mob mentality forming against Theatrix and, while we simply wanted to talk about issues with the play, many students were coming to the conversation with the intention to shut the play down completely. We arrived at the meeting and it quickly became clear that what I feared was true. After an hour of discussion, two factions of students emerged: people in favor of shutting the show down completely and people who believed the show wasn't being given enough of a voice by being a one day play reading. I took what I heard at that meeting, spoke with multiple of my faculty mentors, and met back up with the Theatrix Board.

We, as a board, believed that this story is too important to just be shut down completely, but we also agreed that we need to take further steps to give this show a greater voice. That was when one of our faculty advisors Jamie spoke up and said that he had recently seen a play in Lincoln where Kevin Abourezk, the vice chair of the Lincoln Indian Center, gave a verbal land acknowledgment at the start of the show. With that, we reached out to Abourezk who was more than happy to meet up with us to talk.

Over fall break, Theatrix's two faculty advisors, Theatrix's Managing Director, and I met up with Abourezk for coffee and to speak about the difficulties we had been facing with putting on this show. Abourezk was very supportive of us and agreed that this show needs to be heard. He spoke with us about how important it is that young Indigenous children have the opportunity to see art that talks about them without being offensive towards them and he told us he was fully behind us. After speaking with him, it became clear that, while this show is able to speak for itself, there are some uncomfortable issues that arise in the story that should be talked about. We had already been planning

to have Dr. Margaret Huettl give a talkback after the performance, but we asked Abourezk if he would also be willing to help facilitate a talkback as well. He then offered that we could do an additional performance of this show at the Lincoln Indian Center, where he would bring a panel of Indigenous individuals to speak about this play.

After our conversation with Abourezk, we knew we had to move forward with this play. It was too important to let fall by the wayside because we were met with a little controversy. We announced that we were planning to add two additional performances with talkbacks and that one would be held at the Lincoln Indian Center and we were immediately met with negativity. We set up another meeting to hear from the students and we invited faculty to join the meeting as well.

When this meeting came people were upset and we talked for almost two hours. After two hours of discussion, it became clear that the major problem the students were having was not with Theatrix, but rather with the way students of color were being treated by the Nebraska Repertory Theatre at our school. At the end of the meeting, there were still a few students who were against *The Thanksgiving Play* being produced, but there was at least more of an understanding about why Theatrix needed to put it on.

After the Theatrix Board worked out all the logistics for when and where we were going to perform the show, we still needed a cast. We reached out to a few different students who had raised interest before, but schedules did not line up. We eventually reached out to a recent acting graduate from UNL who was more than happy to take part in this production. The rest of the roles were then filled by Theatrix's Managing Director, Production Manager, and Technical Director.

After a week of rehearsals, it was finally time to open the production. Our first show took place at the auditorium in the UNL Student Union and had a rather sparse attendance, but still featured a very meaningful and important conversation to follow the show. Our second show took place at the Lincoln Indian Center and had an audience of over 50 people. This was then followed by a lengthy talkback featuring a wide variety of experts. Our final show took place in the Lab Theatre at the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film. This audience was not quite as large as the show the day prior, but for a Monday night show, it was surprisingly well attended. While we had very few students show up to any of the shows, we had a great turnout from the community. We heard only positive things back and we have even been asked by the Lincoln Indian Center if we would be interested in making this a yearly occurrence. There were a lot of difficulties with bringing this play to fruition, but I think that this ended up being one of the most important things Theatrix did all year.

Following the close of this show, we have gone into the works of commissioning a permanent land acknowledgment in the Johnny Carson School. Our school was built on Native Land and it is so incredibly important that we acknowledge where we are.

Part 5: *Clown Bar*

The second full production Theatrix put on this year was *Clown Bar* by Adam Szymkowicz. This show is a ten character comedy about an ex-clown-turned-cop dealing with the clown mafia to figure out who killed his brother. During this show, I was still the Artistic Director of Theatrix, but my duties shifted drastically, since I was also cast as an actor in this show. Since I was acting in this show, most of my Artistic Director duties were passed down to the Assistant Artistic Director of Theatrix. Because I was an actor in this show, I truly only had three main duties as Artistic Director: attend weekly production meetings, ensure that everything is going according to plan in the rehearsal room, and offer guidance to my Assistant Artistic Director.

My role in production meetings for *Clown Bar* was similar to my role in production meetings for *The Revolutionists* in terms of me being there to support the director, but it was slightly altered since I was also an actor in the show. Because of my double involvement I answered questions that were asked to me, but I tried to stay a little more out of the way, so as to not let the production be influenced from my acting perspective.

Since I, as an actor, was called to every rehearsal of *Clown Bar* it was easy for me to report back in case anything wasn't going according to the Theatrix rules. Especially since we were working with a brand new stage manager on this production, it was important that we made sure things were being done correctly. After about a week of rehearsals, it became clear that the director wanted to keep working through breaks and the stage manager was scared to tell him otherwise. Since I was in the room, I was

able to report back to the Theatrix Board and we were able to talk with the director and stage manager about Theatrix's break policy.

While I was the Artistic Director of Theatrix, I was an actor in *Clown Bar*, so I reached out to my Assistant Artistic Director about filling in for me during this show. I guided her through the process and role of an Artistic Director in a rehearsal room and gave her ideas on what to look for. I also stressed the importance of communicating with the director. It is so vital for a director to have that extra set of eyes in the rehearsal room once a week and I tried to ensure that my Assistant Artistic Director knew exactly how best to serve the director's vision for this show and my vision for the season.

Part 6: Season Change

At the end of the fall, the Nebraska Repertory Theatre held auditions and cast their spring season. Upon looking at the cast lists, it became clear that we would not have the actors we needed to be able to put on either show we had planned for the spring. The Nebraska Repertory Theatre had slightly altered their dates and this meant that neither of our shows would be able to happen as we had planned.

Our first show of the spring season was set to be *Based on a Totally True Story* by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa. Since the Rep moved up their rehearsal start week for their second spring show, we realized we would have to reschedule our show to not conflict. This meant that, rather than the Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday run we had planned, we instead had to perform Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday a week and a half earlier. This meant less audience available and a week less of rehearsal time. Since it was our only option, we agreed to it and moved forward.

Our second show of the spring season was set to be *Marisol* by José Rivera. Because of the Rep's casting, it became clear that no matter where we moved the show, we wouldn't have the actors necessary to put it on. After much discussion, the Theatrix Board agreed that the best course of action would be to simply find a new show for the final show of the season. We put out a submission portal for students to submit shows they would like to see, but after receiving zero replies, I re-pitched a show I had originally pitched at the start of the year. It was a show we had all liked, but passed on because it was a two person cast. At the time, we wanted to give more acting opportunities to students, but now that we had such a small pool of available

actors to cast from, the show (which fit perfectly into the season theme) just made sense. So, we announced that *Lemons, Lemons, Lemons, Lemons, Lemons* by Sam Steiner would be the final show of our 2021-2022 season. Our season theme is “Rewrite the Narrative” so it only made sense that we were willing to rewrite our own.

Part 7: *Based on a Totally True Story*

Based on a Totally True Story by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa was a play that I read and immediately fell in love with. Once we agreed it was going to be part of our season I was so excited and that excitement was doubled the day I found out I would get to be the director. As the Artistic Director of Theatrix and the director of this production, I had my hands full with this production.

Even though I am the Artistic Director of Theatrix, I still had to submit a directors pitch for consideration. My directors pitch was as follows:

Based on a Totally True Story by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa is a hilariously tragic exploration of what it means to get what you want, but not what you need. This is a play about the personal sacrifices that accompany chasing a dream. From broken dreams, to broken promises, to broken relationships, *Based on a Totally True Story* dives deep into the human experience in a way that is humorously approachable, whilst also devastatingly relatable. This is not a play that an audience should watch from afar, but rather a play that requires full investment from the audience. Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa starts and ends this play with direct addresses to the audience and in between, he lays forth a vast array of human experiences to which every single living person can relate.

Based on a Totally True Story is a funny play that tackles incredibly sensitive issues. I believe that a play such as this requires a director who is able to use the humor of this play to humanize the characters, whilst refusing to back away from

the difficult topics present in this play. As someone with acting, directing, intimacy, improv, and leadership experience, I believe that I am well-equipped to handle this play in a safe, fun, accepting, and successful way. This play needs a director who is excited and ready to approach this play head on for what it is and I believe I am that director. Ever since I first read this play, I have been drawn to the characters and flaws in all of them. This play examines humanity for what it is and that is why I want to direct *Based on a Totally True Story* by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa.

Shortly after pitching my director's concept, I was informed that I had been chosen to direct *Based on a Totally True Story*. I was then given a four day turn around to get ready for auditions and my first production meeting as a director. To prepare for auditions, I read the play every night and came up with short scenes for actors to read at callbacks. For the first production meeting, it was my job to come with a presentation for my designers about what I want to do with this play. I created a powerpoint presentation where I reworded my director's concept, talked about each character in the play, introduced the themes I wanted to focus on, brought up potential challenges we may encounter, and introduced the world of the play. In theatre, "the world of the play" is the world in which the characters find themselves in the play at hand. For designers, knowing the director's perception of the world of the play is vital in making sure that whatever work they do lines up with the director's vision. Here was how I described the world of *Based on a Totally True Story* by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa:

In this world, time moves at the pace of Ethan's mind and memory. This leads to difficult moments being skipped through quickly while other moments are given their full due. That said, all events in this play take place in the present. Space changes quickly in this world and all spaces are familiar to Ethan. He has been to all of these places before, but he is now viewing them through a different lens: his memory. Ethan sets the scene and tells the story, but allows other members of the world to insert their own point of view. While Ethan wasn't able to understand others' points of view at the time, he is trying to understand them now. Ethan is aware of the audience. Michael is usually aware of the audience. Mary Ellen, Ethan's Dad, and Tyler are sometimes aware of the audience. Hot LA Guy, Kim's Guy, and Apple Boy are unaware of the audience.

After finishing my director presentation and presenting it to my panel of designers, it was time to attend auditions. As an actor, I can not count the number of times I have been in an audition room, but being in the room as a director was a whole new beast. We held two days of auditions and, even after having a few people try some new things in the audition room, it became apparent that we still needed to hold callbacks to ensure that I was able to get the best actors for each role. I held callbacks and, an hour and a half later, I had my cast.

The following Monday, I began rehearsals. The first day of rehearsal I introduced all of my actors and designers, gave my director's presentation to my actors, and we read through the script together with everyone speaking their parts. Then, for the next three weeks, we rehearsed from 6:30 to 10:30 pm every night.

For the first week of rehearsals, we focussed on text work. I only called two to three actors per rehearsal and we were able to dive into their characters each night. For this week we broke down the play into individual scenes, read through the scenes, and talked about them. This gave us the chance to get a firm understanding on what each line means, but also on the play as a whole. It also gave the chance for me to ask questions to my actors and see how they saw their characters, as well. This was also the week where we implemented intimacy training. In the play, two of the actors are in a relationship on stage and they even end up kissing at one point. Because of this intimacy, I wanted to ensure that my actors felt comfortable. I took one day of rehearsal and walked them through theatrical intimacy training (which I will talk more in depth about in the next section of this thesis).

At the end of the first week of rehearsals, we had our second production meeting where the designers pitched their ideas to me and I gave them notes to incorporate for the following week. I also spoke with the designers about any changes I had made to my initial ideas since the show had now rehearsed for a week. Lastly, we talked about any questions that had been brought up in the rehearsal reports from the prior week of rehearsals. These meetings continued in a very similar format at the end of each week up until the show opened.

The second week of rehearsal was blocking week. This was another week where I only called a few actors each night, partially just so I wouldn't be wasting any actor's precious time. We spent this week up on our feet and finding where each moment in the play would take place. In some scenes, I had very strict blocking for exactly where each actor needed to be and when. This was so that I could create nice stage pictures for the

audience to help advance the story. In other scenes, I simply told the actors where they would enter and exit from and left the rest up to them to feel out in the moment. As an actor, I know that I prefer a happy balance between those two blocking styles, so I tried to give that to my actors as well. In addition to blocking, we also did some scene work and some acting exercises this week, to help get my actors especially ready for the following week.

During the third week of rehearsals, we worked scenes individually and did full runs of the play. This was the only week where every actor was called every night, but that was because we were finally getting to the point where we were running the whole play. During this week, I started focussing a little less on individual scenes and a little more on the play as a whole. We started incorporating transitions between scenes and started running bigger and bigger chunks of the play at a time. This was also the week where the actors were expected to be memorized, so the actors were able to fully be in the moment of each scene without having to look down at their scripts.

At the end of the third week we began tech week, which in reality was only a few days long rather than a full week. During these few days, we went through the play bit by bit and incorporated lighting, sound, props, costumes, and set. As the director, it was my job to pay attention to all of the technical aspects and give notes to each designer on things I do or don't like or want. Simultaneously, I needed to watch and give my actors notes on the acting they were doing, as well as if things we established before needed to change to accommodate the technical aspects of the show.

Tech week then ended on Sunday February 27 with an invited dress rehearsal for the faculty to see the show. This is a great opportunity because it gives the actors and

the run crew a chance to do the show once with an audience, before having to do it in front of a full crowd. It is also nice because it gives the chance for the professors to, whether warranted or not, give their feedback before the production opens.

The next day was opening night and I had to switch back into my Artistic Director hat and give the curtain speech. In theatre, it is customary for someone to come onstage at the start of a show and give a brief speech welcoming the audience to the show, sharing a brief bit about the production, inviting them to come back to our next show, and asking them to turn off their cellphones. Since I am not just the director, but also the Artistic Director, I was the one in charge of giving that speech before each performance. Aside from that speech every night, though, my job as director was done and the show was now in the hands of the actors.

Part 7: *Lemons, Lemons, Lemons, Lemons, Lemons*

The current show that Theatrix is working on right now is *Lemons, Lemons, Lemons, Lemons, Lemons* by Sam Steiner. This play is a beautiful drama about the power of words and the negative effects of censorship. While this play does not open for another three weeks, I have already had a decent involvement with its process. Aside from the role I play as an Artistic Director, I have been helping to direct the intimacy in this show.

Lemons, Lemons, Lemons, Lemons, Lemons is a play that is written for two actors to be very physically comfortable together on stage. Since it is about a couple, it makes sense there would be physical intimacy, but it is important that intimacy is handled correctly. Since I directed the intimacy in *Based on a Totally True Story* and had attended a workshop on how to handle intimacy onstage, the director of *Lemons, Lemons, Lemons, Lemons, Lemons* reached out and asked if I would help. We arranged a day for me to come in and I implemented stage one and stage two of the intimacy training.

In stage one of the intimacy training, the actors do an exercise called “gates and fences.” In this exercise, one actor touches every part of their own body that they would be comfortable with the other actor touching. Then, the other actor verbally notes any “fences” or places where the other actor did not touch. Following this, the first actor guides the second actor’s hands over everywhere they are okay being touched. Then, the actors switch roles and repeat the process. This exercise is implemented at the first

intimacy rehearsal and then is repeated at the start of every rehearsal until the show closes.

“Gates and Fences” is important for four key reasons: 1) It encourages actors to only do what they are comfortable with and allows what they are comfortable with to change day to day. 2) It creates a trust between the actors and never leaves them any gray area to wonder if something is okay to do on stage, which then leads to even more authentic acting. 3) It prevents any touching on stage from being the first time an actor has been touched in each spot by their partner every day. 4) It makes the intimacy feel less like actual physical intimacy and more like blocking in a play.

After guiding the actors through stage one of intimacy training, we moved on to stage two. In this stage, we started incorporating the actual physical intimacy of the show into the scenes, using placeholders instead of kisses. Every moment of intimacy was broken down into 3 parts: duration, intensity, and relationship. Duration refers to how long the moment of intimacy lasts, whether it is a touch or a kiss. Intensity refers to how strong of a touch or kiss takes place. Relationship refers to who initiates, who breaks off, and what the level of involvement is from both parties in the moment of intimacy. Breaking every intimate moment into these three categories makes the process feel less like intimacy and more like blocking, while also leaving little up to the actor to try and “figure it out in the moment.” In a culture like theatre and film, that has such a bad history with sexual assault, intimacy training is so incredibly important in helping actors feel comfortable and confident on stage. *Lemons, Lemons, Lemons, Lemons, Lemons* still has a few more weeks to go and my roles will still continue to change, but for now the show is moving in a great direction.

Conclusion

Being the Artistic Director for Theatrix has been an incredibly rewarding experience and I have learned so much as a theatre-maker and a person. I am so grateful for every experience I have had with Theatrix this year and I know these experiences will help me so much in my future. This year I have been an Artistic Director whilst also writing, directing, acting, and intimacy directing and through this whole process I have grown so much as an artist. Thanks to this experience, I, a person who has always been more attracted to film than theatre, now can truly see myself directing plays in the future. This year has made me remember why I love theatre, why I got into theatre, and why I need to keep doing it.