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**Direction of Ghosts by Henrik Ibsen: Theatre UNI, Spring Semester  
2004**

Megan E. Schumacher

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DIRECTION OF  
*GHOSTS*  
BY HENRIK IBSEN  
THEATRE UNI, SPRING SEMESTER 2004

An Abstract of a Thesis  
Submitted  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

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University of Northern Iowa  
May 2006

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to record and explain choices made in the direction of *Ghosts* by Henrik Ibsen. This creative thesis describes the director's process and includes a production journal, research and analysis, production goals and schedules, and a visual video recording of the production in performance. The goal of this process documentation is to provide the choices made through collaboration and authenticate those choices up to performances.

*Ghosts* was performed in the Bertha Martin Theatre located within the Strayer-Wood building as part of Theatre UNI's 2003-2004 season. Henrik Ibsen, the playwright, penned a domestic tale about a widow in the late 1800's struggling to live her life on her own terms despite societal oppression. Her journey, combined with the other characters in the piece, provides the audience with a cautionary tale, forcing them to examine their own decisions and their implications.

My responsibility as director was to create a unique vision for the production, one that would engage a modern audience on a university campus. I would then relay this vision effectively to a design and production team who translated my ideas into onstage reality. I led rehearsals with the actors, guiding the show towards that vision. Finally, I was responsible for combining all the elements of this theatre production to create the final product seen onstage.

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has been approved as meeting the thesis requirements for the  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER 2. RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS .....	2
CHAPTER 3. PRODUCTION CONCEPT.....	5
CHAPTER 4. DESIGN PROCESS.....	12
CHAPTER 5. REHEARSAL PROCESS.....	22
CHAPTER 6. CONCEPT APPLICATION .....	30
CHAPTER 7. PROCESS EVALUATION .....	38
CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION.....	42
REFERENCES.....	44
APPENDIX A. PLAY SYNOPSIS.....	45
APPENDIX B. PRODUCTION JOURNAL .....	51
APPENDIX C. FRENCH SCENES BREAKDOWN.....	72
APPENDIX D. REHEARSAL SCHEDULES .....	73
APPENDIX E. MOMENTS OF CLARITY .....	81
APPENDIX F. GROUNDPLAN .....	83
APPENDIX G. PROGRAM NOTES.....	84
APPENDIX H. DESIGN PRESENTATION STATEMENT.....	86
APPENDIX I. ARTICLES/REVIEWS.....	87
APPENDIX J. PAINTING BY EDVARD MUNCH.....	94
APPENDIX K. PRODUCTION PHOTOS.....	95

APPENDIX L. KCACTF RESPONSE..... 111

APPENDIX M. PROGRAM..... 120

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

When I was asked to direct Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts*, Theatre UNI's production process had already begun. I had attended two design meetings already as assistant director. When the original director proposed I take over as director, I was apprehensive at first. Directing a mainstage show would be a huge undertaking for a student especially in a setting such as UNI where I would be working with student and faculty designers, technicians, and actors. This meant that I would be required to renegotiate my relationships with a number of people involved, in addition to doing all the work entailed to guide the show successfully. This examination of the creative work employed to direct *Ghosts* will include my personal journey with designers, actors, managers, technicians, and public relations. It will explore the collaboration that occurred in order to create what was eventually put onstage in performance in April 2004. I will be pointing out specifics of the process in several parts, beginning with the research component required to support the conceptual development of the production and leading into the design and rehearsal processes. Finally, I will evaluate the production as a whole, describing the success of the project.



## CHAPTER 2

### RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Henrik Ibsen, often referred to as the "father of modern drama," was born in Skien, Norway in 1828. As a result of his family's low financial status, he was forced to leave home at the age of fourteen to learn a trade. He became an apothecary's apprentice until he fathered an illegitimate child at the age of eighteen. He fled the town and began traveling and writing. With revolutions abounding throughout Europe, he became extremely political. In 1851, he was appointed to a position in a theatre in Bergen and shortly thereafter became artistic director at a different theatre in Oslo. In 1853, Ibsen saw the first performance of one of his plays. In the mid 1870's, Ibsen began work on a new type of play. His cycle of twelve realist prose plays was completed in 1899. *Ghosts* is the third play written in the cycle (Meyer).

*Ghosts* is a play that explores a number of religious and societal issues that were prevalent in the time it was written. It is the story of Helene Alving, the matriarch of the family, and her struggle to exorcise the metaphorical ghosts that haunt her. When her only child, Oswald, returns home from his life abroad to help commemorate her late husband in the form of a Memorial to be erected in his honor, she finds her visions for the future crushed as she is forced to face memories of the past. These memories compel her to revisit the past and tell the truth about her late husband and their life together.

*Ghosts* was written in 1881. Ibsen's previous realistic prose plays, *Pillars of Society* and *A Doll's House*, had been published and produced already. Both endured scathing reviews. *A Doll's House*, in particular, was attacked by critics as immoral and

unsuitable for the stage due to its heroine's departure from her home and family at the end of the last act. Nora, the heroine, abandons her husband and three children in the conclusion of the piece and in the late 1800's, that behavior was unacceptable according to the social constructs of the time. *Ghosts* is rumored to have been written in response to the public outcry resulting from this earlier play. Mrs. Alving, the heroine in *Ghosts*, is often described as the "Nora who never left"(Fjelde). When *Ghosts* was published in 1881, the same public outcry resulted. It was titled *Ghosts: a family drama in three acts*, and many readers were disillusioned with the play when they actually read it. Here again was a less than ideal husband, a family destroyed, and a direct address of venereal disease and euthanasia. The play caused a major scandal internationally and in most places, it was banned from public performance. Bookshops returned copies to the publishers, and it would be more than ten years before the first edition sold out. Despite the original critiques, *Ghosts* has transcended this early reaction to become one of the most widely known and produced plays of Ibsen's canon (Meyer).

The production history of *Ghosts* is long and very impressive. The show was first produced in Chicago on May 20, 1882, for an audience comprised of Scandinavian immigrants. Due to the scandal the published version created in Norway, it wasn't performed on Ibsen's home soil for two years, until October 17, 1883. The most recent productions of *Ghosts* have incorporated more than what the script simply entails. Ibsen's ability to write a realist play with deep psychological and cultural nuances has allowed the drama to be easily produced in many nations today. *Ghosts*, especially, has

been treated with new conceptual visions in recent productions (Meyer). As Rick Davis states:

These productions--all distinguished by design values and performances that leapt beyond the literal--and others that have followed, prove that Ibsen's dramaturgy is cast from the classical mold; that his plays, like those of Shakespeare or the Greeks, can be liberated from their local and temporal origins and survive the transplantation--even prosper thereby...*Ghosts* can acquire mythic overtones that enlarge our sense of the awesome struggle our species faces to wriggle forward to the next step in the evolution of our consciousness in the face of dead ideas and actions that work to hold us back. (ix)

In the same way that directors often attempt to revisit classic plays by Shakespeare and the Greeks, *Ghosts* has also been adapted to find the modern resonance that is possible with such a great work.

## CHAPTER 3

### PLAY CONCEPT

As assistant director attending the first few design meetings, I noted that this production would not be a straightforward approach to Ibsen's work. The original director stated this declaration very clearly in the first meeting. His readings of the play had led him to suggest a conceptual vision of the show. In an effort to help a modern audience identify with the characters, he thought it would be in our best interest to make the play a bit more complex for them. If their interest in the world of the play was piqued, they might work harder to understand and identify with Mrs. Alving and the others. Using this reasoning, he proposed that the whole show take place within Mrs. Alving's mind. With this idea circulating, we began discussing non-literal elements that could be derived from the text to support this concept such as the ever-present rain and the fire at the end of Act II. For the design team, these elemental forces could be used to indicate a world that was not entirely realistic, meaning that the text and the actions of the play would stay true to the script, but the motivations for those actions would result from elements the characters would feel around them without actually noticing them directly. Those elements could drive the actions forward by affecting the characters on a subconscious level. In the meetings before I became director, this was the direction in which the show was headed. The design team had begun to gather both evocative and factual research materials, and ideas were being explored fully, but no final decisions had been made.

I supported this production conception already, so when I took over as director, I had that notion in my head. I agreed with the conceptual approach to the play because in reading the play, I recognized a need to update the work in order to make it accessible to a modern audience. *Ghosts* is a classic piece with dated conventions and social norms that directly influence the nature of the conflict. I felt that these societal issues which were so relevant in the time in which the play was written—such as the social shame of divorce--would not translate for an audience today, meaning that the play would not hold as much resonance for them. I did not want the audience to feel removed from the characters and their struggles and I felt that a production that adhered completely to a simple recreation of the time period and setting would do just that. I was also interested in adding some complexity to the show to keep the audience engaged. Having come to these conclusions, I then had to ask myself what I wanted to say with this show. What did I want the audience to go away with after having seen this show? To what, in this story, would they be able to relate? With the audience in mind, which I realized would consist largely of college-aged students, I began to consider ways to reach them using this story. I immediately went back to my notes from the first few design meetings to see if any of those discussions had value for me. I was interested in exploring a number of ideas discussed in these earlier meetings, such as the idea of placing the action within Mrs. Alving's mind or perhaps presenting the play as a flashback, and challenging myself to see if the script would support either presentation. I went back to the text at this point and drew the basic concept from here.

*Ghosts* is Mrs. Alving's play. I came to this conclusion based on the information in the script as well as from my perception of the conflict. Through several readings of the play I found that, comparatively, Mrs. Alving is the central figure in the play. Her physical presence throughout the majority of the play was the first hint to this perception. With the exception of the first two scenes in Act I and a brief portion of the first scene in Act III, Mrs. Alving is onstage either listening directly to or participating actively in the discourse. The setting of the play is her home now that her husband has passed away, and the event that brings her son home, Pastor Manders to the house, and that has provided work for Jacob Engstrand, originated with her. Reading *Ghosts* from her perspective and dealing with her as neither protagonist nor antagonist, I realized that her journey through the play had enough complexity to create a concept to which modern audiences could relate. Her struggles with the "ghosts" that haunt her are broad. They transcend the 122 years this show has been in production and make it applicable to everyone because she defines these ghosts not as specific entities, but as "dead old ideas and beliefs" (Ibsen 97, trans. Davis/Johnston), and those are applicable to anyone at any time.

Typically in a complex plot, the playwright will include a character who makes the discovery and the reversal, meaning that he or she learns something new that propels him or her to make a life change. Usually the play is written to highlight that character's journey towards that reversal and one might say that it is "her play". *Ghosts* is Mrs. Alving's play. Mrs. Alving reveals all the secrets in the play with the exception of one. The fact that Oswald is sick and suffering from syphilis is revealed to her *only* after she

has told the truth about her past and present decisions. These revelations qualified as the reversals for her--the points at which she learns something new and changes her action. What leads her to these moments, however, must be an equally astonishing discovery for the audience. Viewers must see clearly the event or new knowledge that affects her and believe her reversal is warranted. In part, the knowledge that pushes her to tell the truth has happened before the show begins through the books she has read. New ideas have been planted in her mind, and as she endures Pastor Manders' preaching or listens to Oswald describe the "joy of life," her need to release the truth grows as those ideas are openly discussed. This prior knowledge derived from her book reading seemed too self-contained for me. It does not engage the audience in an active way. They may not have read the same books and they cannot read Mrs. Alving's mind. Also, the catalysts or "triggers" for her reversals were not strong enough when translated to the stage to force her to make that full journey. What I mean by this is that they are largely spoken triggers, but the audience, unless watching Mrs. Alving closely at each moment, might miss the information given that forces her to make an admission. I wanted her reactions very visible and big so the audience members could fully understand the importance of what was said, partially to keep their interest but also to help them realize the severity of the subject matter at the time in which it was written, so I wanted the triggers to be even more forceful than in conventional productions. I wanted a physical punctuation for every spoken line that affects Mrs. Alving to such an extent that she must reveal another past secret.

An audience in 1881 would have been shocked to hear such topics as adultery, sexually transmitted diseases, incest, and euthanasia openly discussed onstage, whereas a modern audience is conditioned to that type of discourse. The shocks this play relied upon to create the tensions when originally produced are lost unless one deals with them in a new way. I was drawn to a specific passage within the play:

MRS. ALVING: I'm terrified--and it's made me something of a coward--because my mind is haunted by the dead among us, and I'm afraid I can never be completely free from them.

PASTOR MANDERS: What did you call them?

MRS. ALVING: The dead among us--ghosts. When I heard Regina and Oswald in there, I saw ghosts. I almost believe we are all ghosts, all of us. It's not just what we inherit from our fathers and mothers that walks again in us--it's all sorts of dead old ideas and dead beliefs and things like that. They don't exactly *live* in us, but there they sit all the same and we can't get rid of them. All I have to do is pick up a newspaper, and I see ghosts lurking between the lines. I think there are ghosts everywhere you turn in this country--as many as there are grains of sand--and then there we all are, so abysmally afraid of the light (Ibsen 97, trans. Davis/Johnston).

This is why I added the "ghosts." The "ghosts" would be four actors with non-speaking parts in the play who would move within and occupy Mrs. Alving's space in some way.

This was an idea that was developing in those earlier meetings, but their function had not yet been determined. I was convinced that the physical presence of the ghosts that haunt Mrs. Alving would make this piece accessible and intriguing to a modern audience. The audience would be able actually to see and feel the ghosts that she describes in the play.

This physicalization would serve to help the audience understand the impact of the information Mrs. Alving receives throughout the play as well as heighten the action in the show which I believed would, in turn, heighten the interest of the audience. In this way,



the ghosts are palpable instead of simply ideas discussed. This decision to add ghosts was practical as well. It enabled more students to participate in a mainstage production in unique roles. It also released some of the pressure for the actor playing the role of Mrs. Alving to show the audience the inner workings of her mind. In this manner, I made the entire play the inner workings of Mrs. Alving's mind.

The "ghosts" would carry much of the show's weight by physically showing the audience the past moments that are revealed throughout the show and the physical haunting that occurs in the present leaving Mrs. Alving no choice but to relive it all again and again. They were largely responsible for defining Mrs. Alving's journey from beginning to end with their actions and visual focus. The concept grew from here. Going back to the script again, I realized the journey traveled by Mrs. Alving is quite ambiguous. Oswald's fate in the end is left to interpretation. Ibsen does not indicate whether Mrs. Alving actually administers the pills to release him from his syphilis or not. Her choice is certainly not defined. The play is also a tragic one. Mrs. Alving finally tells the whole truth and, instead of triumphing, she is left with that horrible choice. I evaluated each choice she makes throughout the course of this unfortunate day and decided that her discoveries and reversals force her to tell the truth, but that in the end, the ghosts may be unveiled, but the truth came out too late. She removes the lies one by one and as she does, her surroundings are also removed. She loses the memorial, Regina, and even her son. So, in an effort to release herself she has actually given too much. Mrs. Alving is trapped in the beginning by the ghosts that haunt her and, in her attempt to rid herself of these ghosts, she ends up with only the ghosts for company and is

more trapped than ever. I wanted to make her tragic day cyclical then as if this were repeating itself within her mind and that she fails to gain control of the outcome. She ends in the exact same place as she began.

## CHAPTER 4

### DESIGN PROCESS

The first decision made in regard to designs for the show was that I would be directing in the round. The reason for this was to give the actors and myself experience with this type of arrangement as well as to support the concept. If the action was to take place in Mrs. Alving's mind, I wanted the space to help facilitate that choice. I was also interested in using the space in its entirety to this effect, meaning from wall to wall. The entire Bertha Martin Theatre and everything in it, with the exception of a few places where masking would be utilized, would serve as the landscape of Mrs. Alving's mind. Directing in the round, I felt would best exemplify this idea because of what it offered in terms of focus and the sensory experience for both the actors and the audience. First, it would encourage the audience not to focus only on the realistic scenes in the center, but to look beyond the action at times to notice the full space. Second, having the action take place in the center of the space allowed the audience actually to become part of the scenery. While no actors would be placed in the seating units at any time, they would be moving along the periphery in front of them, giving a sense of the audience as a backdrop for the scenes. Also the idea of having no real anchor other than furniture was another reason for this setup. I wanted the sense of this conflict happening in a void somewhere instead of a real place, because I wanted the audience to know immediately that this play was not going to be realistic. I wanted them to feel the space as opposed to think about it. The furniture would not be sitting up next to a wall. It would be in space touching only the floor. This configuration of the space would also place emphasis on the center

playing area, giving me a place to focus energy from all sides. This was the best arrangement for creating tension because Mrs. Alving could feel pressure from every part of the room. This was especially important to me for the final scene in which Mrs. Alving would feel trapped, due to her inability to gain control over the events taking place in the center of the space.

The next pressing decision was that of period. I was adamant about a hint of period, but not full 1880's Norwegian decor. The reason for the period elements was to marry the text, which has a definite period style to it, with the concept that would modernize the show in a sense, again piquing the audience interest. I thought that disregarding the period completely would diminish the major revelations in the script and completely confuse an audience which would not believe such emphatic reactions in an unspecified time frame. Placing the play in any time other than the late 1800's to early 1900's would require updating the text or choosing a new translation. Having period style furniture and the period silhouette seemed to make sense of the words because the manner in which the main themes within the play are discussed is very specific to that time period. For example, Pastor Mander's description of Mrs. Alving as a runaway wife may be applicable to any culture and time in which it is disagreeable to leave one's husband, but his language and distaste indicate a severe social penalty indicative of this particular period in history. I only wanted a hint of the period style, however, because I did not want the period to become the focus for the audience. I did not want to adhere completely to the period, because I wanted some flexibility with movement and action, which, if done completely true to the period style, the physical etiquette would not afford

me. The style of the period was extremely reserved and constricted and I wanted the characters continually to break from that style. I wanted the design to coincide with my rehearsal plan, which was to root the show in realism, but then to expand to include expressionism, meaning elements that convey subjectivity emphasizing inner feelings through a distorted rendition of reality, as inspiration for the forays out of that realism.

The designers continued the research process with these decisions in mind and soon after, the inspiration for the majority of the choices made in the final designs came to be the work of the haunting artist, Edvard Munch. Munch's expressionism seemed to inform the design team as well as me throughout the design process. What seemed to influence the team the most was the quality of the lines or strokes in Munch's work as well as the color contrasts in most of his paintings. The line quality in expressionism is undefined, but it is bold. This related almost directly to our concept. What is occurring in Mrs. Alving's head is forceful, but somewhat unclear. There are secrets to be revealed, but the characters must search for them. They are somewhat hidden. The colors used in Munch's paintings are, for the most part, extremely bold and bright, but are often matched with muted dark tones. This color contrast was striking to me, and I wanted to use something similar when Mrs. Alving experienced a memory. For example, I wanted the moment at the end of Act I in which she hears Oswald's attempt to seduce Regina to be a clear memory for her. My vision of these moments of memory included color. I was hoping to introduce this color in a bright flash. These moments became known as the "moments of clarity" and color was introduced through both lights and costumes. (See appendix E.)

This expressionism was particularly important to me in the designs, because I needed a way to connect the realism of the scenes with the concept. The application of the concept was founded on the expressionistic marks housed in Munch's work. The vibrant colors among dark backgrounds heavily influenced the moments of clarity and how they would be translated onstage. The combination of an established mood in the painted scene with an element in contrast with that mood found within Munch's work also influenced my work. I found similarities in the script where the subtext of the scene is very different from the words of the scene itself. An example of this is the scene in which the pastor first arrives and speaks to Regina. The words themselves indicate a simple debate between the two characters about whether Regina should go back to live with her father or not, but the subtext in the scene leads one to believe that Regina is actually tempting the pastor into taking her in with him. She does not come right out and say it, but the subtext is heavily implied.

It was no surprise to learn that Ibsen's plays influenced many of Munch's most famous works of art (Meyer). With several library books filled with Munch's paintings, it wasn't long before I found one in particular that inspired me. I found a painting of a window with light coming through it. (See appendix J.) This simple painting must have found its way into my subconscious, because I soon was dreaming of windows and realized that I wanted them somewhere in the set design. The scenic designer, Leonard Curtis, was amenable to this idea and began working windows into a set design.

The reason for the windows was twofold: I wanted audience members to feel like voyeurs, looking in on these scenes and learning all the dirty little secrets that have taken

place in this home, but also I wanted them to feel the cramped space in the begin to expand as secrets were revealed. Because of this desire, I asked that the windows have the capability of flight. I wanted them to fly out of the space between the acts to give the sense of inside forces trying to get out and outside forces trying to get in. These windows would be used as a way to demonstrate the ghosts' force within the piece as well. I was envisioning some movement or focus from the ghosts to indicate they were the force actually moving the windows even though they may not have had contact with them directly.

As I began the rehearsal process without the actors playing the ghosts, I found that my instinct was to remove furniture throughout the course of the play to coincide with Mrs. Alving's elimination of lies. I had a vision of the final moment of the play and in it there remained one chair only. Until I had experimented with furniture a bit in and outside of rehearsal, I was not quite sure how plausible this furniture removal would become, but it soon became a reality. In conjunction with the windows flying out, the furniture would also be taken out of the central acting area to indicate that same disintegration of barriers between the outside and inside. This removal would take place at the end of each act and be performed by the "ghosts." The windows would be operated by a crew offstage giving the impression that the "ghosts" were responsible for their removal as well through carefully timed blocking.

I had already decided to use the catwalks, the walkways above the stage, to allow the ghosts a place to stalk Mrs. Alving without invading her immediate space. This would give the ghosts a good distance from the action at the beginning of the show so

they could move closer during the course of the play when they wished to apply more pressure on Mrs. Alving. I also wanted the audience to feel the ghosts in the space at the top of the show and this placed them right above the audience in a space that was unlit so they could merely catch glimpses of them. I also needed a way for the ghosts to access the catwalks without leaving the space. This is when the notion of stairs leading from the floor to the catwalks began to enter the design discussions. This would enable me to make the "ghosts" more present for the duration of the show, as if they were really haunting Mrs. Alving, while at the same time providing valuable and varying levels on which they could move and be. Having different levels in the set design enabled me to add visual interest with the actor placement and contribute effectively to the overall aesthetic of the piece. The ghosts could literally be all around her at all times easily with the use of these connecting stairs. The bridge, a set piece that would overlook the action from above the entrance to the theatre, was an idea introduced very early as a possible perch for Mrs. Alving at the top of the show. I did want Mrs. Alving in the space even when she was not directly involved in the scene and the bridge provided a place from which she could watch and still remain the focal point for the "ghosts." As we rehearsed, I began to envision the bridge used in that capacity, but also began to see it as a place for her counterpart "ghost."

The rain was a wonderful element in the script that the design team wanted to use because it symbolized the action in the play for us. When the truth emerges, the rain ceases. For me, the rain represented Mrs. Alving's attempt to repress the truth. This is why the rain diminished throughout the course of the play, because the truth was revealed



and so the rain lifted and the sun finally emerged. I wanted real rain onstage in addition to a sound cue that would be continuous throughout the first two acts until the fire.

Having actual rain fall on the actors as they entered the space, would further exemplify the outside forces trying to break in, and in the case of the rain, it would achieve that objective. I was also interested in using a rain machine, quite literally a contraption that would continually produce falling water in a contained area, to aid in the audience member's experience with the space. I wanted each of them to feel the rain, and having it present within the space, I felt, would help them in that respect. The rain became inspiration for the costume designer, Jess White, as well. He designed the male "ghosts" jackets to look as if they had wetness from the rain on them. This directly related the ghosts to that element, as if they, too, were forces trying to get into the center acting space.

Another element was the fire. Because I did not want to use real fire because it would be extremely complicated to create and contain, and would not be practical for the short amount of time the fire occurs within the script. Therefore I decided this element should be demonstrated through lights and sound.

The final set design included four audience seating units, each placed against a wall of the theatre, near the center of their respective walls with the exception of one unit which was placed roughly two to three feet from the wall in order to give the actors a masked escape from one of the platforms. (See appendix F.) In one corner of the theatre between two seating units, a raked platform with a stair unit attached leading into the center acting area, served as the "dining room" area. This platform had a box attached to

it over which a tablecloth was placed and which served as the dining room table for the play. In the corner opposite the table, another raked platform mirrored the dining room platform and served as the entrance to the house. This platform we called the "rain platform," because the rain machine was placed overhead. At the edge of the platform where the steps into the center acting area began, a transom window was hung above to indicate the entrance location. On the other end of the platform, flats were placed to mask the scenic shop from where the actors entered, and create an opening through which they would enter onto the platform. In the two remaining corners, stair units and platforms were pieced together to provide access from the catwalks to the floor. In the corner by the doors through which the audience entered, the stairs going up to the catwalks included a bridge or widow's walk before ascending the rest of the way up.

Four windows were hung on four sides of the center acting space between it and the seating units. These windows were sitting on the ground during Act I, flown to varying heights before the first intermission, flown all the way to the catwalks before the second intermission, and brought back to their original positions during the end of the show. The floor was painted in the center acting area and on the stairs and the lower portion of the dining room platform. The painting included a warm sepia tone as well as a cool blue tone and the style used was expressionistic lines originating from the center of the space outward. Over these wavy lines, a black wash was applied to mute the effect and give the floor a layered look. (See appendix K.) The rest of the space was painted black with the exception of the window frames, which were treated in the same fashion as the floor.

The furniture included a late nineteenth century style sofa, armchair, two dining room table chairs, two backed chairs, a desk, a side table and a footstool. The two chairs in the dining room had maroon upholstery, and the sofa and chairs in the center acting area had green upholstery that was muted with black paint. The desk, side table, and all the wood on the furniture was painted to look like a dark mahogany wood. The footstool was upholstered with a dark maroon fabric. Act I included all furniture listed above. Act II included all furniture listed above with the exception of the footstool and the desk chair. Act III used only the armchair and a backed chair in the center acting area while the dining room chairs remained on the dining room platform. (See appendix F.)

The lights were focused mainly on the area within the windows in their first position. Special lighting areas included the rain platform, the dining room platform, the bridge and a platform splitting the other staircase from the floor to the catwalks as well as the very center of the space. (See appendix K.)

The costumes were all constructed with the late nineteenth century period silhouette which is a corseted look that defines the woman's torso clearly, with a padded bottom called a bustle and a full skirt, although the bustles on the women were tightened up to give them a sleeker look as well as to aid the actors with movement in the space, particularly the catwalks where they had little room to move and pass one another. The palette for the costumes was grays and blacks until color was introduced in the "moments of clarity." The reason for the gray palette was that if this is happening within Mrs. Alving's mind, it is almost like a black and white dream until flashes of color begin to seep into her world. The memories that she experiences force her to tell the truth about

the past. I then wanted to see those same colors from the moments of clarity begin to find their way onstage in the costumes as if her admissions are making her see things in their true light. The colors in the moments of clarity were worn by the "ghosts" as they recreated these memories. The colors were chosen through dream color research, gathered by Jess White, indicating what each color means if dreamt about. These colors were then applied to the characters. The ghost representing Johanna wore red petticoats and a corset. The color red signified passion and lust. The ghost representing Captain Alving wore a blue vest, signifying creativity and a close connection with art and culture. The ghost representing the young pastor Manders wore a purple coat signifying spiritual leadership and power, and the ghost representing the young Mrs. Alving wore a green cape, indicating a need for healing and reconciliation. These items were only worn or shown during the moments of clarity. At all other times, the "ghosts" remained in the same gray palette. In Act III when all the secrets are revealed, each of the speaking roles, with the exception of Mrs. Alving, have the color associated with "their ghost" somewhere in their costumes. Engstrand, who is not represented with a ghost, has a brown color attached to him signifying practicality and earthiness.

## CHAPTER 5

### REHEARSAL PROCESS

Rehearsals for *Ghosts* were planned to begin on Monday, February 23, 2004. For three weeks, rehearsals were scheduled for Monday through Friday evenings from 6:30 to 10:30 pm. The following week was spring break and no rehearsals were scheduled. Rehearsals resumed on Sunday, March 21st, and continued to run at the same time for two weeks including Sundays. In the middle of the week of April 4th, on Wednesday night, we had a crew view, in which the backstage running crew was allowed to watch a run of the show before they were required to attend technical rehearsals. The technical rehearsals, in which all the technical elements, such as lights, sound, and the flying windows were added, occurred on Thursday, April 8th and Friday, April 9th. Dress rehearsals, in which costume pieces were worn, began on Sunday, April 11th, and continued until Wednesday, April 14th. The performance run began the following evening and continued every day, excluding Monday, April 20th, until Sunday, April 25th. This schedule allowed five and a half weeks of rehearsal prior to crew view and then one week of technical and dress rehearsals before performances. I wanted to begin doing full run-throughs of the show with no stopping except between acts by Sunday, April 4th. This meant I had five weeks to get the show up and running. (See appendix D.)

I chose to break the rehearsal period up into five phases in order best to serve the actors and myself in this process. I began with table work. This was the phase during which we read through the script twice and began to analyze the action and motivations

for the characters. The script is quite dense even with the accessible translation chosen. During the first two rehearsals, especially when doing table work, I asked multitudes of questions, allowing the actors to make decisions and then guiding them to answers as well as having them research where needed. For example, I made sure they all found some information on period etiquette. Leah Raulerson, the actor playing the role of Mrs. Alving, was asked to research Scandinavian greetings between a man and a woman within the late 1800s. This way, she would have an idea of how to greet Pastor Manders in her first scene with him. I decided to spend only two days on table work, which in hindsight might not have been enough time. The reason for this choice is because the play is so long and dense that I really wanted to get it on its feet as fast as possible. I also anticipated the next rehearsals in which I would go through the scenes with only the persons involved very slowly and ask more specific questions to make sure each actor knew what he/she was saying and why. Having had no experience staging in the round, I also wanted to allot enough time to experiment with the blocking and change it and specify it if needed.

I chose to split the acts into French scenes, the action that occurs between character entrances and exits. (See appendix C.) The first act contained five French scenes, act two contained four French scenes, and the third act contained only three. Through this breakdown, I was able to call actors only as needed for the first few weeks in order to give them time to do their script work when they were not called. I wanted to make sure they did not get burned out right away dealing with all the information pertaining to their characters such as occupation, age, gender, world views, etc., they

were required to develop for their characters. The remainder of the first week's rehearsals, with a few exceptions, went as follows: The cast members called for the French scene would be seated facing each other and would read through the scene slowly to ensure they were listening carefully to what the other was saying. This would be a very slow process in which I would stop and start again in order to ask questions about what the information they were receiving meant to them and also allowing them to react authentically to what they were given. I was focused on having the cast actively listen to each other, because this play relies so heavily on the discourse as opposed to physical action. The words are the action, and so everyone needed to begin by listening closely. After this slow read through and after everyone understood the content and action of the scene, we got the scene up on its feet. This meant that they were given a rough space in which to explore movement possibilities in the scene. Before the first read through, I had already experimented with a rough ground plan for the furniture that I wished to have in the set, so this gave me a chance to see if what I had envisioned would actually work. During this phase of rehearsal, I watched the actors closely for instinctive movement and allowed them to find their own blocking, meaning where they move in the acting space during the course of the production. In these early rehearsals, I was interested in the actors pursuing their objectives in the scenes to see where that would lead them in terms of spatial relationships and action. This process also gave me the opportunity to see what I might change to make the visual picture stronger. I had already been through the script several times, marking beat changes, meaning the point in the script where the action changes, and locating climaxes where the action hits its highest point, but this gave me a

chance to see where the actors thought these were and it solidified a lot of my decisions as well as made me reevaluate some of my earlier thoughts.

By the third week, I had defined the ground plan and was finally ready to set down some definite blocking. At this point we had visited each scene and explored some blocking possibilities. At the end of the second week, I saw a run through of the show. This was partially for the actors, but mostly for me. It gave them a sense of the whole show, which was important because I had split it up into French scenes and rehearsed them out of order due to some scheduling conflicts, so this run of the show enabled the actors to see where their characters began and where they ended up. I was able to see where we were at that particular point in the process and assess whether we were, indeed, at a place where we could move on into the next phase. We began on Monday night revisiting the scenes one by one and solidifying blocking. This is where I took the explorations and modified what they had done in terms of movement to serve the shape of the show, the actors, and the audience.

The next week was spring break for the university. While the break was somewhat detrimental to the continuity, I chose to view it as a positive aspect of the production process as it enabled the actors a full week off from school to learn lines and rest if they so chose. Due to the eight-day hiatus, I found it best to require the actors to be off book by the day after they returned from the break. It also provided a nice break for me to formulate my needs in respect to the ghosts. I required the ghosts to begin attending rehearsals right after the break on that Monday. This gave me ample time to work with the five speaking cast members on the realism in the piece before adding the



ghosts who would support and become the conceptual portion of the show. In this way, I was prepared to layer the process. This was especially important for the actor playing the role of Mrs. Alving. She, in particular, needed to be rooted in the realistic scenes before I added other elements that she was required to deal with in order to implement successfully the expressionistic concept to the piece. I wanted to make sure that she was clear regarding the script and the action within the actual scenes so that when I added the ghosts, she could feel freer to explore her relationship to them without having to worry about what she was doing in the scene. I hoped that by then, she would have a good handle on all of the objectives and blocking.

The week after spring break began on Sunday instead of Monday. As the performance dates were getting closer, I required a six-day-a-week rehearsal period to allow more flexibility in rehearsals. This way, if we were running behind in the work, we would have ample time to catch up. On the first rehearsal back from Spring Break, we did a run through. This was important for the cast to reacquaint themselves with the material and to regroup as a cast before we added the four non-speaking roles the following night. It was also an opportunity for them to do the whole show for the first time completely memorized, as this was their homework for over the break. Adding the "ghosts" was the next step in the process. With the scenes solidly blocked and the cast fully exploring their roles without scripts in their hands anymore, they were in pretty good shape for me to focus completely on blocking the ghosts. Scheduling issues allowed me to work with the "ghosts" on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for the first two weeks after Spring Break. This turned out to be a great happenstance,

because I could split my focus in a way. I could deal almost entirely with the ghosts on the days they were at rehearsal, but on Tuesday and Thursday, could focus my attention completely on the scenes. This gave me a chance to clean up any blocking issues and work on specific actor problems. It was also important for cast members to feel I was giving each of them attention throughout the week, which gave them impetus to continue working hard. It gave them the impression that the show was not ready yet and that there was still work to be done before the performances and that work involved everyone. These two weeks were also the last solid weeks that I would be able to focus on the acting alone. Beyond this week, technical aspects would be added, and I would have to put my attention elsewhere.

By the first full week in April, we were doing full run-throughs without stopping. I did this because I wanted to make certain that the actors were comfortable enough with the show so that when technical elements were added, they would not be completely thrown and could easily deal with them. This became the next phase in the rehearsal process. The first technical rehearsal was a cue-to-cue run-through meaning that we skipped portions of the show in which no technical element changed. My focus in these rehearsals was almost completely on the technical elements. I began to watch the acting only for timing when it was affected by or affected one of these technical moments. After the first technical rehearsal, we ran the show, stopping only when the cue was timed incorrectly or needed some extreme adjustment.

One problem I had not foreseen was my actors' limited technical acting skills. Projection in that particular space was a trial for many of my actors. The Bertha Martin

Theatre gives the impression it is a small space, but in reality it is quite large when the catwalk and space above the stage are taken into consideration. The ability to hear became extremely important, and acting in the round did not aid this challenge. The actors not only had to contend with the large space, but they also had to be aware that, invariably, at every moment, their backs would be to some portion of the audience. While the audience did not need to see their faces for that particular moment, they still needed to hear their words, especially for this show, which relies so heavily on exposition and secrets revealed orally. This required strong projection as well as articulation, and we worked on it too late for optimum effectiveness in the actual performances. Other problems I encountered during this production were the inexperience of some of the actors and the differences in learning processes. The ability to focus onstage is a skill learned through much practice and the inexperience of some of the actors playing ghosts showed when trying to get them to focus for the duration of the show especially when relying on them to use that focus to move the action along. Using more experienced actors may have helped achieve faster results in this respect. Many of the actors, although trained at the same school, have very different learning curves. As a director, I needed to find creative ways to help them connect to the subject matter and the experiences that occur during the show. I also have to help them keep those experiences “fresh” every night meaning that the audience believes that everything is happening for the first time regardless of the fact that it has been rehearsed over and over again. I never knew how I was going to impact an actor so I tried many different techniques from physicalizing arguments to aiding them in emotionally recalling events similar to those in

the script, but my actors were different in their abilities and my inexperience with the different levels of ability was a challenge for myself and the cast.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCEPT APPLICATION

Adding the ghosts was exciting and difficult. My goals with the ghosts in the first rehearsal were to acquaint them with the space and the work and then to allow them to watch the show. I had cast the ghosts with a physical look in mind. I wanted one to represent Captain Alving and, because they are so closely linked, Oswald as well. Joe Kelly had the look I wanted. He was close enough in height to the actor playing Oswald, but looked older with a hint of mischief. I wanted a young female who could exert sexuality to represent Johanna and Regina. Brina Smith played this role. The other ghosts would represent Mrs. Alving herself and the pastor. Nick Halder served as the Pastor counterpart and was representative of the pastor now and the pastor when he was younger. Anna Simpson was the most complicated in her representative role. She represented Mrs. Alving when she was younger as well as at the present time, but she was also the most integral to the mental and emotional, as well as some physical movement of Mrs. Alving during the show. As Mrs. Alving's counterpart, I wanted her to push Mrs. Alving towards a revelation or for Mrs. Alving to turn to her when she experienced a discovery. I wanted it to seem as if when they were near each other or when they made visual contact with one another, that Mrs. Alving was seeing a reflection of herself. This would be another indication of the inner workings of her mind "pulling the strings" so to speak. With these constructs in mind, at the first rehearsal the ghosts attended, I asked them to watch from the point of view of the character(s) they were aligned with and to

see if they made any discoveries from that point of view. I asked them to watch for specific rhythms and mannerisms to play with at the next rehearsal they attended.

The next rehearsal with the ghosts, I began to block them in the space. This was difficult because the set was not built completely, and I was blocking with the understanding that almost all of it might change when I could finally see them on the actual stairs or platforms or catwalks. This was a slow process as I was trying to see when I wanted some movement from them. I did not have the ghost's movement completely formulated. I was hoping to rely on the ghost actors to explore the characters they were aligned with and listen to how the play and in particular, Mrs. Alving, affected them. I wanted to derive my final decisions as to their functions based on what they could give me. This did not work because some of the ghosts were inexperienced and they were timid about working on their own. They needed specific direction when I was hoping their explorations would inspire my work, so nothing happened.

I eventually had to modify the rehearsal schedule to meet with the ghosts and Mrs. Alving and work on some movement. I began with a grid and then worked into exploring some of Ann Bogart's viewpoints. Viewpoints is a movement-based technique that explores the actor's body in time and space. I wanted the ghosts to find a connection with each other as a whole and then, as a group, affect Mrs. Alving. I became more interested in the ghosts as a unit as I saw them explore through movement. I then began to use imagery to link them together. The image I used was a spider web wrapped around their waists and tied to Mrs. Alving, who was located in the middle of the ghosts in the space. They started moving with this image. I then expanded this image to include

spider webbing attached to wrists and ankles and also linked to each other as well as Mrs. Alving. They began to explore how they could control and affect each other and when they were being controlled.

This hour-long session was effective in allowing the actors to use their bodies non-literally as well as introducing them to kinesthetic responses and the tension they can create with their focus. My own evaluation of the ghost's functions began to take shape based on this exploration. Choices I had made became clearer and I became more specific with the moment-to-moment movements, although at this point I was still allowing the actors to explore and show me new discoveries every rehearsal with the exception of their basic blocking.

The ghosts would serve three functions. They would serve as: 1) Mrs. Alving's memories; 2) Representatives of the characters with whom they were aligned; 3) Forces moving Mrs. Alving to her next action. To apply these ideas, I needed to specify the moments in which each of these would occur.

The moments in which the ghosts would serve as memories were the easiest to point out. I had already defined these as "moments of clarity" and had been working with Mark Parrott, the lighting designer, to make them fully shocking moments for Mrs. Alving, which would lead her to the next revelation. In these "moments of clarity," the ghosts would be fully representative of the past with the exception of their visual focus. I wanted them to keep their focus on Mrs. Alving so that their intent to affect her specifically with their present action was obvious. Their recreation of the memory was staged specifically to upset Mrs. Alving and invade her safe world. These memories are

very difficult for Mrs. Alving to deal with, and keeping the focus on her made the intention behind them clear.

At other points in the play, the ghosts began to interact with the action in the play, expressing the intentions of the characters with whom they were aligned. Some examples of these moments are when Engstrand slaps Regina and they discuss Johanna, and when Regina attempts to seduce the pastor. At these points in the play, I used the ghosts to represent the subtext of the scenes and to illustrate the presence of the past within Mrs. Alving's present, all the while keeping the focus on her even when she was not in the scene. In this way, they served as reminders of the events in the past that are still haunting her and forcing her into action. In the scene in which Regina tries to seduce the pastor, the actor playing Regina was very subtle and adhered for the most part to period etiquette, meaning there was almost no physical contact between the two actors. The "ghosts" aligned with those two onstage characters, however, freely embraced during this scene, acting out the subtext of what was happening onstage, but maintaining their focus on Mrs. Alving in order to force her to see what was really happening in the scene. Throughout the play, I made sure to keep the ghosts that were linked to the characters onstage in the current scene closer to the action while the others would remain in the space, but usually stalk the catwalks. This kept the alignments subtle but clear and it also enabled the ghosts to remain active even when not serving in one of the two previously discussed functions.

The third function was the most difficult to achieve because it required much of the work employed during the movement session previously noted as well as a specific



connection between the ghosts and Mrs. Alving, the ghosts with the other ghosts, and the ghosts with the words, actions, and rhythms of the play each and every night. I had difficulty achieving the result I wanted with the ghosts. As a force in the play creating the tension needed to move the action forward, the ghosts had to present a neutral face and adopt a group pace which would change when the action changed. I soon realized that the success of the ghosts in this capacity was dependant on their connection with Mrs. Alving. I used her as their anchor and appointed one of the more experienced ghosts as a leader so that they could change pace based on what that ghost experienced in the scene.

In early rehearsals with the ghosts, I tried to use stillness and focus to establish their presence and movement to indicate their power to affect the action. This was not translating in the way I wished. When they were still, it was obvious that they were interested in what was happening, but they seemed to have no effect on the action whatsoever even when they moved. I experimented with some different types of movement and different paces and finally came to the conclusion that the ghosts were most effective when used as a continually moving force. This is when I had a breakthrough.

I made the choice to have the ghosts pace in the catwalks before the show began as Mrs. Alving was sitting in the center of the space. I wanted to establish them in the space as well as a force keeping this cyclical tale moving. They are then, literally, haunting the space at all times. They would return to the cats at the end of the play to indicate that they had not been exorcised, but that the trap has been set again and the

journey will be repeated. As I experienced the ghosts pacing in the cats, I realized that I wanted a ghost pacing in the catwalks during the show, not only at the beginning, but whenever possible. This would indicate the continual movement of the piece and the ever-present nature of the ghosts within Mrs. Alving's mind. I also now used stillness as emphasis instead of movement as emphasis. Since the ghosts were continually moving now, when they came to a point of stillness as a group, the focus went immediately to the center of the space. I pointed out specific lines and moments where the ghosts should use this technique. I also pointed out specific moments in the show where they should speed up their pace. This pace change not only placed emphasis on the action occurring in the scene, but also included the ghosts within that action. I used this technique very sparsely throughout the first two acts, but more in act three to heighten the urgency leading to the climax.

Another way in which I utilized the ghosts was in the scene changes. I wanted to suggest that the space breaks apart and the ghosts pull closer into the space as well. Having the ghosts perform the shifts was necessary if I wanted the set to support the concept. I decided to use the ghosts because this also supported the idea of the ghosts forcing themselves into Mrs. Alving's world and pushing her to that final choice. Having them strip the furniture away between acts, as well as giving the impression that they were also manipulating the windows while the audience watched, gave that sense. It was as if they had set it up to happen. After setting the furniture in the acting area at the top of the show, I had the ghosts stay on the outside of the windows. When they "moved" during the first scene change, they also placed themselves outside looking in. After Act

II, however, the ghosts moved the windows from the inside, indicating that they were breaking into the space, that the space was, in a sense, disintegrating. Now the ghosts could haunt Mrs. Alving more freely. During Acts II and III when the ghosts would move on the floor of the space, they would, instead of skirting around the acting area in the center, weave in closer to the action. In Act III, leading up to the final moment of the piece, they were very much in the center acting area.

The connection between the ghosts and Mrs. Alving needed attention as well. This was a slow layering process for Leah Raulerson, the actor playing the role of Mrs. Alving. When the ghosts first arrived, I was mostly interested in their movement and blocking and how they, as a group, would translate onstage. As that developed, I became more concerned with Mrs. Alving's connection with the ghosts that haunt her world. I had her explore places in which she could make visual contact with the ghosts. It was important that she be the only one actually to see the ghosts. Not only are they present in her world, but she is aware of them and they must affect her. This process was broken down for Leah. First, a basic exploration of points at which she wanted to look at the ghosts was made. Making Leah aware of the ghost alignments, meaning the ghosts that are representative of each of the characters in the past, allowed her to make contact with those particular ghosts. Second, I began to watch in rehearsals for places in the action that her character makes discoveries and at these specific points, required Leah to make a connection with one or more of the ghosts. I also looked for places in which her character makes a major decision to reveal or do something new. These are also points in which Leah made a connection. Third, I decided what type of connection she would

make each time. I told Leah she must either push her ghosts or be pushed by them. In this way, not only would she be making contact with the ghosts, but they would in some way affect her to do something.

The concept application was the final addition to the rehearsal process and for me it became the most exciting. Watching the ideas come together and evolve was very engaging for me. All in all, it tied the story together with the design elements and most importantly, created the atmosphere necessary to the success of the show.

## CHAPTER 7

### PROCESS EVALUATION

I have thought long and hard about the aspects of the show I would continue to work if given more time. Overall, the show was successful. This is, of course, according to my definition of success, which means that positive growth occurred and I learned many lessons. The concept was successful due to the addition of the ghosts and the movement between the acts. I am not sure it was translated fully to every member of the audience, however, due to the configuration of the space. Sitting in one spot or another affected the performance and what is actually taken in by an audience member. I also was rather subtle in the application of the concept with the exception of the moments of clarity, which were bold choices. This subtle approach was chosen because I wanted to keep the focus on Mrs. Alving and her movement throughout the piece instead of on the ghosts. They were there to enhance her story and while the subtlety helped this, the ghosts sometimes became more focal than the action taking place in the center of the space.

I also wish I had brought the ghosts in sooner to rehearsals and had not waited so long to define their role within the piece. As inexperienced actors, they were not as ready or open to exploration as some more experienced actors might have been. It would have been beneficial to have more workshop time in which they could explore their connection to each other and to Mrs. Alving in the space without the rest of the cast there to distract them. Once established, that tension would be easier for them to access during rehearsals

and performances. I also feel as if the cast would have felt more cohesive as a result of additional time as a full cast.

I had difficulty, at times, with each of the actors. I was aware of some of the difficulties I would be dealing with before the process began because I was very involved in the casting process, but I was not prepared with active strategies for dealing with many of the acting problems I encountered. My inexperience was a source of much frustration during the course of this production. I learned very quickly, however, where to find help with the situation. Using the resources at UNI, I was able to work through some of their acting issues, such as their inexperience and finding techniques to help them connect with the material, but I definitely did not solve all of them. Understanding the goals I set for the cast, which was to grow onstage and push their limits, they really did exceed most of them and I am most proud of their work. In the future I will prepare myself, if possible, for the acting problems I might encounter with a mental storehouse of strategies for dealing with them.

I have also learned a lot about a casting balance. Realizing time constraints and the effort a director must invest in a mainstage production, learning to cast pedagogically without killing oneself is a great lesson. Casting strong actors to fit their strengths is a good strategy, but it is also important to stretch an actor here and there and to remember that directing in a college setting requires a certain amount of teaching as well.

In addition to the issues with the cast, I also have reevaluated some of the details in the designs in which I was disappointed when they were fully realized. The sound design, in particular, was an element of the show that if I had more time, parts might have

been reconsidered. The sound, which included prerecorded cues such as a ticking clock, a chime, the continuous rain sound, and the fire crackling, left something to be desired. It didn't seem to "fit" within the concept because it didn't enhance the audience experience. I claim responsibility. It was another detail for which I had no preconceived ideas and was forced to make decisions about without really thinking it through very well. It was a last minute addition. Another example of these details was the perceived color of the furniture after adjustments to the lighting had been made. This was something that could have been changed had I more time. The floor treatment, also, could have used more time spent on it to create the desired effect. These elements are those that were not dealt with to my satisfaction because of time constraints. This was another good lesson learned. The ability to manage time when working under a tight production schedule, and to apply just the right amount of pressure and encouragement to the team, is an important skill to hone. It is one that I am not entirely certain I have acquired sufficiently yet.

Along with all these lessons about the directing process itself, I have learned the most about myself, and my own work. I have redefined my strengths and weaknesses and have found active ways to utilize the former and improve upon the latter. I felt I was very successful in blocking the show so it would be visually stunning to an audience and I was also thinking creatively about the script and the designs and very open to hearing suggestions. The weaknesses I discovered lie in my inexperience with acting techniques and my inability at times to articulate my ideas. I have closely examined my relationships with the various players involved with this production and have found

several strategies for serving the work despite differences and obstacles. I have gained confidence and much needed experience. I have made discoveries about my personality that will help me in later productions to negotiate ideas and find the strongest choices for all parties involved. I am proud of my work.



## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I must say that I fulfilled my duties as director in this process. As evidenced in this discussion of my choices, I have gained a tremendous amount of valuable information from this experience. I know I have more knowledge about directing on a whole. I understand the need for preparation and the delicate balance between controlling the show and allowing the designers to have their way. The most difficult aspects, such as finding the right triggers to get the desired result from actors and making decisions in a compressed time period, are the ones that I know I will focus on the next time. If I were to direct this show again, I would do it differently, although not necessarily better. I now understand that a show is comprised of so much more than just the aspects described in these pages. Every production has subjectivity to it. I can only make the strongest choices possible for the time in which I am directing a show and those choices may not be the strongest for everyone. I know that the next time I read the play, I may see something new to focus on the next time I direct this show. It will be different because the perceptions will be different, although the story is the same.

I may be more adept at directing because of this experience, but I would always strive to serve the work in whatever fashion I deemed necessary at that time and place. I did that with this show. It may not have affected everyone in the audience, but I'm convinced that more than a few audience members understood the message that if we hold onto all those dead old ideas, they may trap us forever. I think some audience members may even have related it to their own lives. Those reactions inspire me to

continue to learn and to grow as a director. The extent of the knowledge I gained is becoming clearer to me everyday as I begin new projects and reevaluate old ones. This venture into directing has reinforced my interest in theatre and my passion for teaching and directing. I am excited for my next opportunity in this field.

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APPENDIX A  
PLAY SYNOPSIS

Act I

The first scene begins with Regina Engstrand, the maid, tidying up an entrance room in preparation for an event taking place the following day. When her estranged father, Jakob Engstrand, enters the room, we learn that the event is the dedication of a memorial building that has recently been built. Mrs. Alving, the lady of the house, has erected this orphan asylum in memory of her dead husband, the late Chamberlain Alving. Engstrand, who has been working as a carpenter at the site, is visiting in an effort to convince Regina to come work for him in his new business venture in town. Regina refuses, realizing his true endeavor is to build a whore house and have her sell herself. She berates him and scoots him out the door before the pastor can catch him there talking with her.

Pastor Manders, a longtime friend of the family, arrives on the heels of Engstrand. His purpose is to complete the paper work on the memorial for which he has been serving as the legal advisor. He speaks briefly to Regina before sending her to fetch Mrs. Alving. He comments on her development and urges her to go home to her father's house to take care of him and keep him from drinking and sinning. She refuses this council, implying that she should come into town to live with the pastor instead. He, incensed, sends her away to get the lady of the house.

Mrs. Alving enters to greet the pastor. He greets her warmly but insists that he should stay in town overnight instead of in Mrs. Alving's home. They begin to discuss

the business with the memorial when the pastor interrupts to question Mrs. Alving about the books she has sitting in the space. We learn that these are ungodly books in the pastor's eyes. Mrs. Alving defends her right to read such books, and they finally return to business. The pastor shows her all the documents and then asks her about insurance for the orphanage. He insists that insurance would give important townspeople the impression that neither of them believed in divine providence. After a brief discussion, Mrs. Alving acquiesces and the decision made is not to insure the buildings. The pastor feels it is the right time to persuade Mrs. Alving to release Regina into her father's custody and tells her so. Mrs. Alving vehemently denies this request and before the pastor can respond, her son Oswald enters smoking a pipe.

Oswald has been living in Paris working as an artist but has come home for the dedication of the asylum and to stay perhaps indefinitely. Mrs. Alving praises her son while Pastor Manders questions his lifestyle as an artist. Oswald recounts a time when his father made him smoke a pipe as a child. Mrs. Alving denies the incident, but Oswald is adamant about the matter until Pastor Manders changes the subject. The subject of Oswald's upbringing is revisited again and while the two men agree that raising a child within the ancestral home is the best method, they disagree on the terms of that life. This sparks an argument about the "artist's" way of life and Pastor Manders' criticism of unconventional families Oswald has encountered while in Paris. The pastor is outraged at the thought of illegitimate children, but Oswald fully supports the men living with their children and their mothers without paying the large expense to get married. Oswald becomes so upset that he needs to leave the room, claiming his need for some fresh air.

The pastor questions Mrs. Alving about her thoughts on her son's present belief system and is shocked to find that she agrees with Oswald wholeheartedly. This knowledge inspires the pastor to offer Mrs. Alving a lengthy sermon on her failure as a wife and a mother. In this scene, the audience learns that early in her marriage to the captain, Mrs. Alving left her husband and fled to the pastor, begging his help. Manders then likens this to her parenting skills, berating her for sending Oswald away to boarding school at such a young age, claiming she has "shirked the duties of a mother." Mrs. Alving retaliates by finally telling the pastor the truth about the late captain Alving. We learn that he was a drunk and a womanizer in spite of his spotless reputation. The pastor is shocked to discover that the illustrious captain had an affair in this very house with the maid and that a child was the result. Not only is Regina the captain's daughter, but all the improvements to the estate, all the works for which the captain has claimed credit, were in fact implemented by Mrs. Alving. All of this information is expounded and on the heels of this revelation, Mrs. Alving hears Oswald seducing Regina in a similar manner as the recounted events. She is horrified, but composes herself enough to keep the pastor quiet and heads into the dining room for dinner.

## Act II

Mrs. Alving and the pastor enter the living room after a brief chat with Oswald in which he states his intention to go for a walk and Mrs. Alving makes sure that Regina will be busy in another room. Once alone they begin to discuss the new development between Oswald and his half sister, Regina. At first Mrs. Alving is appalled at the thought of the union, but as she continues to discuss the matter, she realizes her own

cowardice and expresses her support of the marriage of the two if done as she says "openly and honestly." The pastor cannot condone such an idea and rebukes her for suggesting it. He gets the full story then about Regina's mother's, Johanna's, pregnancy and the money she received and her hasty marriage to Engstrand in an effort to cover up her shame. Mrs. Alving compares herself to Johanna as she also received money in marriage and the captain was no purer when they married.

Just as the pastor is again expressing his disdain for Johanna, Engstrand appears at the door without knocking and pleads to speak with the pastor. He requests that the pastor lead a prayer service down at the memorial now that the work is complete. The pastor refuses to do so until Engstrand tells him the truth about the whole Johanna affair. Engstrand is finally forced to tell the truth and repent for his sin of marriage to a wanton woman. In addition to asking for forgiveness, he convinces the pastor that his actions were warranted and in fact quite honorable. The pastor believes him and asks, in return, for his forgiveness. Engstrand takes this opportunity to beg the pastor for help in his new venture. He explains his plans to build a sailor's home in town and asks for the pastor's assistance. The pastor promises to look into the matter and, satisfied that Engstrand's conscience is free and clear, the pastor tells him to light the candles for the prayer service that he will soon be down to lead. Engstrand exits and after a brief chat with Mrs. Alving, Manders follows.

Mrs. Alving is startled to hear Oswald in the dining room. She requests that he join her and he acquiesces. After some skirting around the subject, Mrs. Alving learns that Oswald is sick with a disease he has inherited from his father and that he has been

blaming himself for the illness, since, according to the letters his mother has sent him throughout his childhood, his father was an upstanding man who could never have acquired a venereal disease. Mrs. Alving requests a lamp and champagne for her sick son and, after Regina exits, she also learns that Oswald is planning on marrying Regina. Oswald tells her of Regina's interest in going back to Paris with him, and he eventually invites Regina to sit and drink with them. Mrs. Alving finally decides to tell Oswald and Regina the truth about the captain and their relationship to each other when she is interrupted by the pastor's entrance. He is appalled to find Regina in the room drinking champagne with the lady of the house. Oswald sticks up for Regina and asks for her hand in marriage. Mrs. Alving again tries to tell the truth while the pastor tries to keep her quiet when shouting is heard at the memorial. Oswald realizes that it is on fire and they all rush out to attempt to save Captain Alving's Memorial.

### Act III

Mrs. Alving and Regina are in the living room discussing the fate of the memorial which has burned to the ground. Mrs. Alving leaves to find Oswald and bring him back to the house. Pastor Manders enters from another door looking for Mrs. Alving. Regina questions him about the origins of the fire.

Engstrand enters soon after and proceeds to lament the fire while laying the blame on the pastor, claiming it was he who snuffed out a candle with his fingers and threw it into a pile of shavings. The pastor tries to deny this accusation when Mrs. Alving reenters. She asks the pastor to take the papers regarding the memorial with him when he leaves. The pastor agrees, attempting all the while to come up with some solutions to the



present problem. Mrs. Alving ignores these attempts, saying she wants nothing to do with the matter anymore. The pastor explains to Mrs. Alving that he may be implicated in the fire when it is investigated. Engstrand steps in at this point to take the blame for the fire in return for help with his sailor's home. The pastor takes his offer and they leave together.

Osvald enters and again requests Regina's presence at his side. Regina is hesitant, having just learned that Osvald is sick. Mrs. Alving finally tells them both the truth about Captain Alving and Johanna. Regina asks for permission to leave. Osvald and Mrs. Alving try to get her to stay, but she leaves with the full intention of receiving help from Pastor Manders or working in the sailor's home. Once alone, Osvald tells his mother the true severity of his disease. He explains that he had one attack already and that the next time it happens, he will become an invalid. He then pleads with his mother to take his life when the next attack occurs. He shows her morphine pills he has saved. She tries to take them from him and when he won't concede, she tries to leave and fetch a doctor. Osvald bars her from the door and locks her in until she agrees to help him when the time comes. She agrees and begins to predict happier times for the both of them now that the truth is out, but Osvald collapses in the midst of her vision and she is left with the choice to kill her son or let him live as an invalid for the rest of his life.

APPENDIX B  
PRODUCTION JOURNAL

2/23/04 Monday

Our first read thru was tonight. I am very excited to get working on this show. I have a tentative plan for reading thru everything. I have decided to take the approach that Cynthia Goatley [professor/director/mentor] did for *Lobster Alice* and have the cast read parts they were not cast for so that they can really listen to what their own character says. It really seemed to help ground that cast, and I am hoping it will do the same for ours. It also relieves that tension of expectations, although that is less of a concern for me with this particular cast because they are pretty seasoned as actors go in this department. Chad Ryan [Pastor Manders] is the only actor that may not use the same vocabulary. I have also formulated my goals and expectations for the cast. I really want them to push themselves and take ownership of this show so that by performances, they can be proud of their work and I can just let it go.

2/24/04 Tuesday

Another read thru. I really need to talk with Leah Raulerson [Mrs. Alving] tonight to preempt her "locking up" as I know she has a tendency to do...sometimes shutting down. I also want to make sure that she has no other extra curricular commitments at this time. Tonight I am interested in having cast members read their own parts and to begin discovering their objectives.

Tonight's rehearsal went very well. We went through the reading very slowly and the cast is beginning to ask lots of questions and really working together to find answers. I think they've begun to see what an immense undertaking this show is going to be for them. They all seem very excited as am I. I am keeping design choices and specifics about the concept to myself for the moment. I want to layer the process slowly and not overwhelm the cast.

2/25/04 Wednesday

We had a Design and Production Meeting today. Leonard Curtis [scenic designer] was not here due to his mother's illness. He did call during the meeting to share his wish to meet with Mark Parrot [lighting designer] and me Friday at some time in the afternoon. He indicated that he did have an initial groundplan to share at that time. This gave Jess White [costume designer] a chance to show off his stuff. His initial costume designs are very impressive. I am curious to see how they will translate on the actual characters.

Rehearsal was very interesting tonight. Due to scheduling conflicts, we have been assigned to work in the music building this evening. The space is entirely different from the BMT but at least we had a chance to get up on our feet. I am glad that I chose to do only two nights of read thru's with the full cast because the way we worked tonight was,

in my opinion, much more beneficial. I began with the two actors in the scene slowly reading the scene and talking and listening. This is a working "first read" for them and each actor is familiar with this type of rehearsal because they do it in their acting classes here at UNI. This helped them to feel comfortable, I think, and to realize that the work is just that...work. It's no different than any other scene. It employs the same techniques and elements. The actors were very amenable to this model for working. It gave me a chance to make script changes as we went along as well as to make sure they were getting all the given circumstances for each scene and their characters.

2/26/04 Thursday

Rehearsal tonight was very similar to last night's. We did the same type of work with different scenes. I did not finish all that I had planned to last evening and so tonight, I worked very hard to keep track of the time and I am finally beginning to be able to sense which scenes are going to take longer and require more work. So far in my rehearsal schedules, I have allotted time arbitrarily to scenes, really having no idea what will be enough time to get what I plan accomplished. This is going to be an ongoing struggle for me. Managing time is something I am particularly anxious about right now as this production schedule looms before me.

2/27/04 Friday

This has been an exhausting day. I am wondering how theatre professors do everything. They teach major loads and direct a show. I keep trying to justify my fatigue by telling myself that I haven't had as long to think about this show as I would if I had known earlier I was directing, but I know that is just an excuse. I am nervous, and I think about the show all the time. Directing is forcing me to change my lifestyle and practice better time management skills. Unfortunately, this is a slower process of change than what is required of me right now. Anyway, today I had a meeting with Leonard and Mark in the BMT to examine Leonard's tentative groundplan. We talked for more than an hour, walking through the space and trying to visualize everything and its placement. We had to change a few of the design elements based on sightlines. The staircase over the BMT doors will need to be truncated for practicality, and for safety as well. I think it will also be easier to use and light with our change. It's all giving me lots of ideas for moments with the ghosts. I will have to do some serious work over spring break to get it all blocked out the way I would like. Mark is going to be gone, however, for a week and a half or so during that time and somewhat before that week. This presents a problem because he will need to know all the special areas before I even get a chance to block everything. He and Jess also need a list of the "moments of clarity" that I keep talking about incessantly: the moments where Mrs. Alving will actually be confronted with these ghosts and the moments that haunt her. This will be a weekend project turning into an all-week project I think.

We broke for a half hour and then Leonard and I finished our meeting for another hour or so. The set design has now been expedited due to Leonard's mother's condition.

He may need to get away very suddenly and has been great about making this design a priority so that, should that situation occur, I will still have a set. So far, so good. I am just very anxious now to get into the space for rehearsal. It is hard for me to visualize how my current plan for furniture will work out when the space we are using is different. After my meeting with Leonard I headed to the costume studio to meet with Jess and look at the fabric he purchased from Minneapolis the day before. We went through each specifically according to character and discussed his decisions. I am impressed with his choices although the red for the moment of clarity with Johanna and Alving seems a bit much. I am relying on my faith in Jess, however, to assuage my fears. He seems to know what is going on and is supporting the concept with no troubles. I am glad he is getting ahead of the game. I am also glad, in retrospect, that Jess did not go alone to buy the fabric. With the question of rain and fabric and just the technical applications that may need to be made to certain types of fabric (I am thinking specifically of the fabric he has chosen for the female ghosts and whether it can still hold that silhouette), having Amy Rohrberg [professor] and Linda Grimm [costume studio technical director] there was probably more necessary than I had first thought. I do want corsets and boots for the women by Monday in the BMT.

Rehearsal tonight was in the Russell auditorium because Sandy Walden's [music professor/director] room was locked when we arrived and I like to keep rehearsal on time. I feel pressured to stay on task. Even when I am beat like I was tonight, I will get things done according to the schedule because I have so much to work on that I am constantly afraid I will not get it done. Tonight's rehearsal was very tough for me. We did a review of Act One, which is pretty good. It is the bare bones, but they are up on their feet. I may see if Richard Glockner [professor/actor/mentor] can come to a rehearsal soon, but I need to see what shape the show is in first I think...get a sense of the whole. Then we started in on Act Two. Josh Visnapu's a.k.a. Vis [Jacob Engstrand] scenes need work but I won't work on them until we get into the BMT. He liked the auditorium because of its size, which actually informs me about the problems I will have with pulling him back vocally and physically. I need to focus everything on relationship I think. He can't push his way into getting what he wants. He needs to finesse the others...persuade them. Leah locked up on me in the next scene. She gets into her head so much. Vocally she was caught up, stopping herself and she just got frustrated trying to figure out what she is doing. I need to take a look at these issues as well. I need to be clearer. I need to find a common vocabulary for her as well as for Chad. Richard helped me with that today. I can't make them conform to my words. I need to take what they are giving me, their process, how they are doing it, and I need to use that to get them to do what I want them to do. I am the one who should be adapting. I will check back in with Leah on Monday. For now, I need sleep.

3/1/04 Monday

Today I had a meeting with Katie Johnson [prop designer] about props. I am trying to decide what if any color I want for the props. I had to make a decision as well

about the language of the books and newspaper. I have decided that since the actors are speaking English, this is a convention the audience will accept. Also, the set, while period, will have no distinguishable features placing the action in Norway. I will have to decide based on this whether I want the setting in the program. My first instinct says yes, that it is somehow important and that the audience will overlook the lack of dialect and the English language as necessity. It's all very picky yet important. I sometimes wonder how objective I am being.

After my meeting with Katie I met with Leah. After her frustration on Friday that prevented her from working, I was able to talk with her about that rehearsal and what happened specifically. She indicated to me how scared and overwhelmed she feels about the role. The word she used was actually "afraid", I think, which is a major term for Leah, who plays it pretty tough most of the time. I remember thinking over the weekend on what Richard had shared with me when I asked him about Chad. He said, "You can't teach them how to act." That's true. I thought over the weekend briefly about what I am doing with them outside of the rehearsal periods and how that translates as "acting stuff". The way these women move is important to me. It somewhat defines their characters and I have to come up with active solutions to get them to be where I want them to be for these performances. I wondered, however, how much I was playing a role that was not director at all. It became a strange hybrid of teacher, friend, director, and a kick in the pants. Leah needs courage. I told her to break down the script into manageable tasks and reassured her that I have confidence in her ability to do this role. The difficulty I've found is that I don't often know what Leah needs from me because Leah does not know what she needs to do for herself. I feel the need to pull back a bit and just be the director. I was, as a result of this chat, late for a meeting with Leonard.

Leonard has finalized and redrafted the design for the set. I should have requested a model as well as a groundplan to fully visualize the space. The design seems to be getting tighter and while I didn't think of it until after our meeting, I think it may be pushing too much into the acting space. I approved what he had already done, though, and am awaiting his plotting of the windows that will separate the audience from the action and the furniture. That is going to be the next important step as well as getting the seating units in the right spot. As I was making dinner and checking on Jess in the costume studio, I met with Mark briefly. He discussed positions for windows and strongly urged me to consider as tight of a space as possible for the acting areas. He also expressed concern over the windows placed in the ghost's staircases as detrimental for lighting. Those I am willing to part with if necessary.

Jess has pulled corsets and boots for both women. The corset changes Leah's posture dramatically although I know it is difficult for her to keep it tightened all through rehearsals. She stands so much straighter. It makes her look taller and she even projects better due to the correct alignment of her spine. I loosened it up for her after about two and a half hours of working with it. Gretchen Carter's [Regina Engstrand] was too loose and so it was hard to gauge its effect on her physicality. Rehearsal tonight was a bit more relaxed than usual. I scheduled a good chunk of time for the third scene in Act Two and an absurd amount of time for the last scene in Act Two, which only consists of a page and a half. My reasoning for this was my fatigue on Friday when making the schedule. I

thought I would have stopped earlier than I did so I was padding my time on Monday to make up for anything I didn't finish on Friday. This was great because I returned to the scene between Manders and Alving that was so rough on Friday and we cleaned it up and clarified quite a bit and still adjourned at 10:15 p.m. I am starting to worry that I have them moving too much, but in arena staging, they just can't stay still for too long or they will be somehow in the way for possibly whole sections for extended periods of time and I just can't have that.

I will have to see what it looks like tomorrow night. We will be reviewing Act Two. I know I will need to work on all the scenes with Vis. I just needed, for some reason of which I am not altogether sure, to give him some more space and time to explore than the others, so he feels ownership. Now though, I just need to tell him where to go. He just wanders so much. I also need to root it all in action. They are taking their time, which I appreciate, but what is important is the other character in the scene and in arena, they all seem to be walking away from each other at certain points. This is my fault. It's also that they haven't connected the blocking to the action of the lines or the action of the scene. I am wondering if there will be enough time. I also need to make more cuts due to length and repetition.

3/2/04 Tuesday

I had only one meeting today. It was with Jay Edelnant [thesis advisor/UNI Theater professor] to discuss active ways of recruiting for this last non-speaking female role in *Ghosts*. I am amazed that at UNI, I can't even give roles away. The department seems worn thin. I have spoken with Jascenna Haislet [marketing director] about announcing to her Theatrical Arts in Society class and I will speak to Linda as well. I will need to be clear about the requirements of time and type. I am concerned about the 11 p.m. staircase. It seems to encroach upon the space too much. It will be nice to see it all taped out which I believe Mary Fagan [stage manager] did today.

Rehearsal tonight was all right. I had them first run thru Act II to see what kind of shape it is in and to review. It was a rough run. Not a single one of them was focused or really working. I let them go anyway and used it as an example to make them see that the run thrus are opportunities for them to connect and be in the moment because I won't stop them. They have a chance to work during the reviews. They can, at these rehearsals, find the arc of the scenes and the characters. After our little chat we had a bit of a break while I spoke with Vis and Chad before they left for the evening. Vis has visited Richard about the etiquette of the period and I think he gave him very good insight into the "brassiness" of Engstrand. I am glad that Richard reiterates my insistence that Vis focus very specifically on relationship. Actors don't do nearly enough homework and layering. They either try to do everything at once, like Leah, and can't wrap their heads around it, or they don't do anything at all. They have the power to understand everything and to connect to everything but they either cannot see that they have it or they choose not to do it. Whatever it is, I am negotiating how to help them and still be the director.

I am starting to wonder when to ask people to come into rehearsals. I feel capable but I am starting to question my own sanity. I know it looks rough, but I need a second opinion. I also need to just read more and plot the moments out clearly. I keep thinking that spring break will serve as my means to do just that. I just would like to have spring break happen now rather than later so that I wouldn't constantly feel as if I had no time to accomplish those things. Final designs are due tomorrow and the design presentation is a week from tomorrow. I am going to address the 11 o'clock staircase at the meeting. I think it may extend too far for my needs. The space is pretty tight right now. I need to let Mark know that it is expanding towards the end scene. I also need to figure out how the furniture will shift and when it shifts or moves and where it all goes to when it does.

3/3/04 Wednesday

The design and production meeting today was illuminating to me. I have more work to do. Both Mark and Leonard expressed concern over the windows to be used along the periphery of the acting space flying out of the space. This is a concern because of lighting. I am not equipped to deal with lighting issues. Not to say that I am not aware of lighting...I'm just not completely sure of the restrictions involved. Apparently what I want the lights to do would, in fact, defy the laws of physics. This is not good. I need to decide now whether I want the windows on the floor where they can and will be moved by actors, flown from the cats as originally intended with the knowledge that they will impede the lighting of the space tremendously, or a combination of the two ideas. I need to decide what I am really doing with the windows. What are they an indication of and how do they show it? What will they do from the audience's perspective? How are they aiding the show's movement? What is their purpose and how do they accomplish that purpose? These are obviously questions that I have not completely worked out yet in my own mind. But things must be done quickly so I need to make those correlations very soon.

Also Leonard has spoken to me about the last moment of the show and the "pouf", which was the word used to describe the round padded seat with no back to it, which was an earlier thought. The necessity of this item is in question. Have we imposed this piece simply for the final moment and is it necessary? If we eliminate it and shift the pieces, how will it change the action of the work? I really need to settle on a working groundplan by tomorrow. This means that tonight I will have to look very closely at these questions. Maybe I will move some stuff around with Act I and see how it works out: if it is better or worse. I am only wishing that the seating units are in their correct placement. That would be helpful.

I met with Teri Ann Greenfield [dramaturg] today and received information from her and gave her more assignments. I also met with Cynthia this afternoon. This meeting actually informed me about how I am using Teri Ann. I just gave her an assignment to look up how to use a pipe and a cigar, but Cynthia is right...that is Gabe Smith's [Osvold Alving] job. He is the one who will have to use it. I seem to volunteer myself for projects such as these. I should not be doing the actor's job. Also speaking with Cynthia, I have realized that I do not want to compromise on the windows. I need to try to work it

out somehow. I feel extremely pressured to get things done very quickly--to make decisions I am not ready to make yet.

Tonight's rehearsal went very well. Act III, sc 3 is a tough one that just cannot really be worked out in one night. It needs more work from the actors and we will need to spend more time on the action. That is what I want to ask Richard about the most. How can I get them to play action? I am also going to ask his advice on the designer dilemma. The rest of the rehearsal went very well. Going back through and specifying the first two scenes of Act I in the space was really great for me. We were getting more specific moment to moment. That is what is effective for me and I think the actors needed it as well. I was afraid of not knowing what to do next, but I understand that moment to moment work can happen. It just needs to get broken down for them a little bit and I can do that.

3/4/04 Thursday

My weekly meeting with Richard turned into a meeting with Richard and Eric Lange [Head of the UNI Theatre Department]. I expressed my desires about the windows and my inability in knowing how to negotiate this choice with the designers. Richard suggested that I simply ask Eric because he has experience working with both Leonard and Mark. He also reiterated the fact that my loyalty needs to be to the show and not to any designer or actor or whatever. I must serve the work because no one else is going to do it. I have to be in charge and take charge. I need to trust myself and my instincts.

My second meeting of the day was with Molly Taylor [make-up designer]. This was a somewhat frustrating meeting for me because I had higher expectations for the work done prior to the meeting than what I actually received. Make-up design, while some may view it as a minor detail, is really important to me, especially in such an intimate space as the BMT. I also think this show affords some fun opportunities in regards to that medium. We will be meeting again next week and I am hoping that meeting will be more fruitful. I am pretty sure we have just had a bit of miscommunication and we've cleared that up today so I am excited to discuss things again soon.

I met with Gretchen shortly after meeting with Molly. I gave her a brief start on some of the movement issues I want to address with her. I tried some Alexander techniques I was familiar with and we basically just assessed where she is moving from right now and some imagery to help her to try moving from a different center to see if that changes anything. I really don't want to just show her what I need from her just yet. I am hoping to get there organically. I sincerely hope that can happen. I know I will have to do some research because I am not entirely equipped to deal with movement. I'll ask Richard for some tips the next time I meet with him. Cynthia may also be helpful.

My meeting with Mark and Leonard was much easier after having met with Eric and receiving some active strategies for getting what I want. I think I had anticipated a negative reaction to my requests for the windows, but I think I actually convinced them that it was really important to me to have the windows fly out of the space and as soon as



they understood that it was an element of the design that I really wanted, they immediately began to discuss ways in which it could be done and not create more problems. At this point I removed myself from the discussion to ready myself for rehearsal.

Rehearsal was difficult tonight. I seem to be able to specify a lot more easily with Gretchen and Vis than with the others. They are willing to take whatever suggestion I give them and run with it. Finishing a review of Act I and specifying was important for me to see before the run thru tomorrow night. I am beginning to see some anxiety in Leah again and this concerns me. I will reassess the situation after tomorrow night's run thru.

3/5/04 Friday

I was nervous for the run thru this evening. I asked Richard to come watch to give me some strategies for dealing with Leah and her acting problems. I knew that the designers would be there as well. So we had a full house with Leonard, Mark, Jess, Richard, and Brad all watching. I think this was great for several reasons. First of all, the seating units have been placed in relatively the correct placement, which changes the space completely. My groundplan (the furniture) seems very lopsided now, but I was excited to see finally what sightline issues I will be having. It was also great to have people watching from each side.

I am starting to rethink a lot of what I've done so far. Thank goodness it is the weekend and I am able to step back for a second and see what I have got and what needs to be done next. Richard seemed very positive about the work. He didn't stay for the entire run, which was fine because the last moment is still very much up in the air right now, but he took copious notes that I am positive will be helpful to me. We will meet again on Thursday.

3/8/04 Monday

I met with Katie today to talk about props but cancelled my meeting with Leah because I need more time to decide my next course of action with the movement sessions with her. I decided to give her spring break to work on the things we've already done and then to push her in one direction or another. Katie is losing steam. I thought she would do this job well but it looks like I will have to keep on her more than I have been doing. I want rehearsal props ASAP! I am also acting as a buffer between Leonard and her because of what has happened in the recent past with props. The faculty members are all a little paranoid that the work won't get done in a timely manner.

Tonight's rehearsal went very well which surprised me, based on my lack of motivation earlier this evening. I really was feeling like spring break should have begun already. I often feel unprepared. In fact, that is a pervading sensation that tends to rule my life. I should always be doing more, knowing more, but tonight they gave me something to work with and things began to get specific. This was a lovely change for me to see. At one point, Leah really extended herself. Jess has put her in a bustle and a

high collar and more stuff and I did a quick spine straightening example for her. I basically used some elements from shows in which I have acted that helped me with my posture and quickly showed her how to apply them so she would at least feel briefly what she needs to employ physically. This seemed helpful but was not totally maintained the entire night, which is completely understandable. We worked on the first two scenes in Act Two and all three actors showed me new discoveries and gave me something to work towards. We even worked the entire rehearsal period with only two breaks. I got so interested I didn't even notice the time. I love this. It's getting exciting. I still feel as if I need more tools to help the actors to discover the beats (which were more clearly defined tonight) and the tactics they have at their disposal to get what they want. Chad especially needs to remember to talk and listen in the scenes. Vis needs to specify and Leah just needs to go for it. I could see that she had done some serious work on these particular scenes though, and I let her know that I recognized and appreciated that fact. She's getting her head around the material and it is starting to translate to the stage. I just hope she gets it all fast enough to apply it.

I have effectively scheduled absolutely NO meetings for tomorrow so that I may tackle my to do list and begin thinking about the design presentation on Wednesday night as well as the design and production meeting that morning. I am mortified at the prospect of speaking in front of such a large group of people. I will have to write it out for sure. I was angry that I took a nap today, but I am glad now that I have some energy tonight to work on some details for this show while I am still in the mindset to do so.

03/09/04 Tuesday

Rehearsal tonight was frustrating for several of my actors, but I thought it went well regardless. It is hard to know what to do when an actor has a tantrum like at least three of my actors did tonight. I remained calm for the most part and tried gently to push them while supporting them as well. It's these moments that make me realize that I need to continue always to act as well as direct because I sometimes forget how hard acting can be when I am watching from the director's perspective. It's sometimes very difficult to control the instrument and allow oneself to be present. Not to judge the work until later is very tough. They were on autopilot tonight, but to their credit, they had moments in which they really explored.

03/10/04 Wednesday

The Design and Production meeting this morning went very quickly. I am super nervous about the Design Presentation. This was discussed as well as some of my visual needs in the space. I am having a hard time with the placement of the furniture because I need to see where the windows will go in the space first. This affects a lot of the action especially in act one. The actors are going to have to get used to moving within a defined area. It will also help with picturization for me as well as the actors.

The Design Presentation was a piece of cake. I don't know why I worry about such things. I was fine and I answered all the questions and I kept it short and sweet. It

was a good chance for me to hear the design team talk as well to make sure that we are all on the same page and we are. This eases my mind and the fact that it is over and done with does as well. We even got through all I had planned for rehearsal after the presentation went a half hour past when it was supposed to be finished. It's also great to see the actors get excited about the look of the show and their costumes and everything. I think they were really pumped after hearing everything, and I hope that I at least piqued some people's interest in seeing the show, even if they are required to do so for class.

03/11/04 Thursday

I met with Richard today as usual. I always think I have little to ask him, and then when he gets here I end up finding all sorts of queries for him, and he has been quite helpful during this process. I also met with Eric this morning to discuss the KCACTF response of the show. Basically, a college professor is sent by the American College Theater Festival to evaluate our work on the production and verbally respond to us. I will have to factor that into the performance schedule when I find out who is coming and when. I am concerned about a full cast response, but I am willing to keep an open mind until I find out who will be responding.

Rehearsal tonight was a working one. I think it was frustrating for the actors but I thought I saw some really nice listening and reacting happening, and it is a much tighter act now. I still need to work on the Leah/Chad scenes. They just don't have the strength or focus the other scenes are acquiring at a faster pace. They really need to be clear about those beats and what they want from moment to moment. I need to be more specific with them. I will be working on them tomorrow night. The blocking also looks kind of muddled. I have much to do before spring break. I have the feeling that everything will go into hyper drive as soon as we all get back.

03/12/04 Friday

Gabe was not at rehearsal tonight because he went on spring break to Vegas. I am surprised at how worried I am that he will return safely. I'm beginning to feel as if I have a second family and that I'm the mom. We did selected scenes. I was extremely pleased with Gretchen's work tonight. I gave her some homework and she did it. She really explored on Thursday night and I wanted her to work through those explorations and make some decisions for tonight and she came in with all sorts of energy and did her job. I just hope it lasts. And I still think that physically she is still a bit out of place. She just has too much of a swagger I think. I will have to find a solution. Vis did some nice work as well. Leah and Chad did their best, but they were fading rather fast and anxious to get out of here, which I can totally relate to, but I was determined to fix the blocking issues in Act I before leaving today so I kept them and did a speed through blocking session. I did let them go at 9 p.m., however, and I hope I don't regret it and that they remember everything we worked on tonight.

03/21/04 Sunday

We're back from Spring Break and it went entirely too fast. I did not get nearly enough done. I did meet with Leah to give her some meditation exercises that I should really be doing myself. I also picked up a directing book that looked interesting by William Ball called, A Sense of Direction. This had some nice tips laid out in an easily accessible manner. The tip I took most to heart today was the part discussing the first rehearsal in which the actors go off book. He notes that it is a frustrating rehearsal because they seem to forget everything taught to them. It's true...they do. I remained rather calm though as they stumbled through the lines and blocking. This is mostly due to the fact that the ghosts are joining us tomorrow and I need to be extremely clear about what I want them to do and where I want them to be while doing what they are doing. I had much to distract me from the slow pace and struggle.

Vis was very late and had apparently forgotten that we had rehearsal tonight at all. This was fine for me, but it affected his attitude towards the run. I dealt with his nasty comments by ignoring them and just letting him know that his tardiness was forgiven and to just move on because I began the run thru with a brief overview of things to come and my relationship with the rest of the cast felt very positive and solid. I explained my expectations for the coming weeks and expressed my excitement for the rest of the rehearsal process.

I am finishing the schedule and am scheduling at least one scene with Vis and one scene with Gretchen regardless of the necessity because I need to keep working with them. I am a little perplexed about how to get them all to explore more and really define this show especially now that the ghosts are joining us and my attention will be split for awhile now. This is a question for Cynthia and Richard. I feel ready for the production meeting tomorrow, and I even finished preliminary sound cues as well. I am envisioning lots of meetings for tomorrow and the rest of the week. I feel more capable than before break.

03/22/04 Monday

The Production Meeting today went very slowly, but a lot was accomplished. It seems very detail oriented right now, but with the list Jascenna gave me, I have some serious PR work to do, and the meeting this afternoon should tell me more about the building that will be happening today on the show. I really need to give more specific direction to the ghosts, and I am starting to think that we are falling behind. I hope this is not the case. It also seems as if everyone is going out of town soon. I met with Leonard and Brad Carlson [sound designer/scenic studio technical director] this afternoon just to sit in on their discussion of set building and supports for the large bridge and staircases. I had met with Brad earlier about sound. I wish a student was interested in doing it because, besides being a great sound opportunity, Brad has no time to commit to it until later. At least he has an idea of what I want right now though. I asked Brad honestly how the set building was going, and he was clearer about it than Leonard and Mark have been. They've been telling me that this set will be relatively simple to build, but Brad has

informed me that the skill level of those working in the shop is lower than expected and that the majority of the work will be done by him alone. This worries and frustrates me because I really need that the set built and soon.

Rehearsal tonight was extremely rough on me for some reason. I guess the addition of the ghosts affected me negatively. I want them there, and I need them for this production, but the dynamics have now changed so much it feels like I am losing control when they are all there. My SM was having a very rough night as well, so she actually snapped at me at one point, and I am still having trouble with Vis and his working relationship with me. The others seem to respect me. Maybe he doesn't think I know what I am doing, but I need them to at least listen to what I have to say. It's been totally frustrating to be a student in a faculty position. I don't want to become someone other than I am. I don't want to pretend I'm a faculty member, but I still want the cast and crew to trust me...that I have a vision for this show. The run thru was not bad at all. Gabe is really working and so is Vis. Leah, however, really needs to explore. Maybe I've set the framework up too early. I wonder if this is what is holding her back. The blocking needs to make sense to her, but I also need her to explore within those parameters. I will need to think of some working strategies for tomorrow night's rehearsal. I am meeting with Cynthia tomorrow right before rehearsal. Maybe she can help me with some ideas.

03/23/04 Tuesday

I have had a very rough day today. I woke up from an awful dream with physical manifestations of stress. I was also feeling extremely overwhelmed with the amount of work I have to do to be ready for this show. I am feeling as if I have nothing more to contribute to rehearsals. Meeting with Cynthia helped this afternoon. She made me realize that I have been playing at director for a bit too long and that I need to get back to a place in which I can serve as an acting coach. That's what Leah really needs. She also made me realize that I am expending too much energy worrying about things that I have absolutely no control over at all. So what if the set doesn't get built? I can still do this show. I need to serve the work and worry less about my own performance as the head of this operation. If I can get Leah out of her head even for a little bit, this show will be a success. If I can get Chad to listen onstage and pull him out of himself for brief moments, I will have done my job. These are the kinds of things that I should be focusing on instead of deadlines and the perfect prompt script.

Reading that book has given me some nice tips as well. I have learned some phrasing that is really detrimental as well as some additions to my process, like making physical contact with the actors each night. I almost broke down at rehearsal tonight, but I think it might have been a good thing because it opened me up and I think it opened Leah up as well. She did some nice exploration work tonight. She simplified just a little bit and worked through it when she wanted to give up. I really appreciated her work. I just hope she doesn't go home and immediately judge it. That would be unfortunate. She needs to let it go and just keep what works for her. Chad had some nice moments as well, and Vis and I made a deeper connection tonight as well. He hugged me for a time after I told them how I was having trouble, and he started to respond to my direction. I

was extremely pleased. I guess showing them that I am human is a good thing. I have to have a lot ready for tomorrow as well. Before the ghosts arrive, I need to have blocking and a warm-up ready. I hope it goes well. At some point I need to take the cast out for pizza or something. Maybe I will do this after the costume parade.

03/24/04 Wednesday

This was a good night. We had a warm-up outside which consisted of playing a game. It was so nice out today that I thought this was the best use of the time, and it also helped them to have fun and feel like a real group. On Friday I will lead an actual warm-up--something simple from *Lobster Alice* that may or may not incorporate sit-ups and push ups. I am not sure I can do pushups based on my back, neck, and the numbness in my left arm that I am experiencing at the moment. After this we began to block the ghosts for Act I. This took a lot longer than originally intended, and so as a result, we did not get through the Act until 8:45 p.m., and at that point Chad needed to leave so we went on to block the ghosts through Act III instead of going with the schedule. Mark came to watch tonight. The schedule for Friday will now need to be modified but, overall I feel as if this was the best use of that time, and I was not really upset at the slow process. I think taking it that slow will save time in the end. This way, on Friday I will be able to stop when I need to do so to fix certain parts or add moments with the ghosts and make sure they are clear on everything before we do a full run with no stopping on Sunday. That will be a nice time to see where everything is currently.

03/25/04 Thursday

I met with Richard today and he gave me some tips on what to do with Leah. The meeting helped me realize that she is really my focus right now. I need to get her someplace that she is not at currently. Talking with him, I can see that the others are doing well in my estimation, and while Leah is maintaining, she is not allowing herself to grow and that concerns me. I think I need to have a heart to heart with her this weekend if things do not change tonight. I have also realized that I have been neglecting Gretchen. I just trust so much that she will learn quickly that I have put off her physical needs until after I deal with Leah. I am running out of that time though, and I need her to begin to get some sense memory going with the physical movement so I will have to start working with her soon. I need to begin trusting myself more.

3/26/04 Friday

Tonight's rehearsal was great for solidifying blocking with the ghosts, but I still do not have all the set pieces, so it is still difficult to envision the work. It is also hard for the ghosts to time out their entrances and exits around the space when they cannot really do what I am asking of them. Hopefully the work call this weekend will be really fruitful and by Sunday night we will have some stairs to use. This is my hope. I think I need to rethink the warm-ups as a group. I like having a different person lead each night, but I

am finding that the actors are not all entirely respectful of each other during the warm-ups, and it makes me feel a little like a grade school teacher. Instead of scolding them, I think I will just have us do the sit-ups and push-ups together. That is always a good team-building portion, and if we do them together every night, it will still give us cohesiveness, but they can also maintain their own, individual warm-ups as well, and we won't be wasting time either.

3/28/04 Sunday

I went to the work call on Saturday morning this weekend just to see where everything is going right now as well as to lend a hand. I feel much more involved when I can at least work on a portion of the set and costumes. It was so good to have Cynthia come to this rehearsal. She helped me in a big way to understand some of the qualities that I am missing as a director within the rehearsal process. She looked at the overall picture, not just the acting or one aspect. She found it compelling to watch, and that excites me a lot. At least I am not the only one interested in the work that is happening.

3/29/04 Monday

We had our usual Design and Production Meeting today. Someone needs a serious kick in the pants to get these props done, and I am amazed Leonard hasn't done so already. Rehearsal tonight went longer than planned, or, rather, the work I was doing took longer than expected. This is partially because I worked with the ghosts on some non-literal movement to get them connected to Leah on a kinesthetic level, which I think was very successful but unfortunately didn't translate onto the stage. I thought we would manage for sure to get through the act and then be able to review it all, but that is not going to be a possibility, and I need to come to terms with that fact. Act I is looking rather good, however, and I am certain that taking the time to do the movement work with the ghosts and Leah was a good idea. I think it helped them a lot and that it will eventually translate onstage if they can reconnect in the same way every night.

3/30/04 Tuesday

I was completely blocked today and just could not work tonight. We went to Applebee's instead of rehearsing. In my defense, I did do some of what I had planned and, in retrospect, I think what we did instead was valuable. I am fortunate to have a very supportive cast.

3/31/04 Wednesday

I met with Richard today instead of Thursday because I have an interview on Thursday with Melody from the Courier, and I really needed to assuage some of my fears

regarding this process. Act II tonight and again I think I am deluding myself with my expectations of what we can accomplish with this show. The realistic scenes must be totally solid before the layering begins, and I cannot teach them how to act, but I must also coach them in a sense. I want a total sensory experience rooted in action. Is this a concept that is impossible to implement successfully? I think I need to be constantly reevaluating what would make this show a success. What are my expectations? I am beginning to feel much like Mrs. Alving in the sense that I feel a lot of pressure to do well. Graduate students do not often get these types of opportunities, and I have a lot of people putting their trust in me. I am guiding a large project here, and I am really hoping I do not screw it up.

Taking last night off from rehearsal was great for rehearsal tonight. The actors seemed very close and refreshed. I think they are beginning to support each other in the work and that is nice to see. I am glad they are committing themselves fully at points in the play. I now need to find a way to get them to sustain that commitment to their characters needs throughout the entire play.

4/01/04 Thursday

Tonight was very trying. I think it was practical in a lot of ways. We did some of the pipe moments, have cut the cigar moment, and worked on some blocking issues, but overall, Leah had a very rough night, and, in the end, we were both in tears. I don't know how to help her, and I am plagued by the thought that if Richard were directing she would be pushed further. I am just not as qualified as an acting coach as I would like to be. I did, however, admit my lack of experience with her particular acting problems and encouraged her to go to Richard or Cynthia or both.

4/02/04 Friday

Act III really went somewhere tonight. This act I knew we would be able to get back and run because it runs at half the time of the other two acts. Running it again, I am realizing that I still need Leah to work so hard in each scene and the build and tension is missing. The ghosts are doing a nice job right now of focusing their energy, and while some of their movements are pedestrian, I love what they add to the world of the play and the experience of watching. The rehearsals still feel very loose, however, and that is something that needs to get tightened because I think it will help everyone. They need the experience of getting from one place to another.

After this weekend, the set should be built, which means a couple of things. First, I will be married to watching from one side. The space will be very limited and the specificity I am hoping for will start to emerge with little prompting. They will realize with the space limitations and the visual cues how much more isolated they will all feel. I hope this increases the tension tremendously. I can't wait for Sunday night to see where everyone is at and what portions still need some work. I still feel a need to pull back and reevaluate my role and what is required of me. I guess I just need to solidify what I am looking at every night. I need to be aware of where my focus should be each night at



rehearsal. That will aid the process and help them understand what I want. I need to be more clear about what shape I want the show to take. Arts in April scene tomorrow will take some of my time as will director's notes, and I must go see *Fuddy Meers* as well. A little break is all I am going to get, but this journaling really helps as well.

4/04/04 Sunday

Tonight's run was difficult. I have a lot to do before the end of tomorrow, and this was not the start to tech week I was looking for at all. Jess told me that he got the impression that the actors were taking advantage of me. He is right. It has been exceedingly difficult to negotiate relationships throughout this process. These are my peers, but I am in a power position and my loyalty must be to the integrity of the show, not to the actors as my friends. I need to remember this fact. I had a brief chat with all of them letting them know that I was aware of the dynamic and that it needed to change in order for us to work together successfully. It is time for them to buckle down and start working professionally, especially now that we will be adding tech and costumes soon.

4/05/04 Monday

The design and Production Meeting this morning was fast and to the point. Everyone seems to be working furiously to finish all the work. I am beginning to get a handle on my anxiety and am remaining patient while keeping myself entirely available to the team at all times. I had a meeting with Brad about sound this afternoon. It is coming along well. Sound is definitely an element I wish I had spent more time working on, but with directing myself and with Brad as technical director as well, we make a decent team, but not the optimal team for designing sound. It will have to do, however, and hopefully we have produced the right effects to blend with the rest of the show's feel. I also met with Leonard concerning props. We made final decisions regarding a number of items, and I am finally confident that it will all get finished in time for opening night. We also had paper tech this afternoon. This was a very short paper tech, surprisingly, for the length of the show. We assigned the cues that we could and then headed out. It seems to me that we should have more cues than what Mark has assigned thus far, but as he has been out of town, I am assuming that he will need to see more of the show to determine this. Tonight will be good for me to see where we might be missing some important nuances.

Jay came to see the first act tonight. He gave me some good tips for adding some specificity to what I want to do with the ghosts. I am going to give them a try tomorrow night if I can schedule a little bit of time with them. They have fewer rehearsal garments to deal with so that "getting ready" time may give me an opportunity to gather them and plant some fresh direction into their heads and just see what I get.

Tonight's run thru was better. I am most concerned about hearing everyone. That is a technical aspect that I have not really focused on until now, but I need to begin addressing these details. It's time to begin fine tuning the show a little bit. It could use some tightening up. Leah let me know that she is sick with a long standing cold that has

descended into her lungs. This concerns me as she carries the show in a lot of ways. I really need her to break out and do some good work, and this is just another block for her. I have finally finished the director's notes. I wonder how relevant they will actually be when the show opens. So much changes from this point of view every night it seems. I feel as if the director's notes I have turned in are really a comment on my personal struggles with the show at present. Perhaps this is better anyway... for the audience to get an "in process" point of view as opposed to a final product comment.

4/06/04 Tuesday

Leah allowed herself to have an experience tonight. It was very refreshing. She was working hard in Act II to do something to the other character, but in Act III, she seemed to get out of her head and just begin to listen, breathe, and respond. When she began to do this, I remember sitting up in my chair and becoming instantly engaged in the scene. Others in the room did the same. Amy and Ben Layne [actor/friend] came to see the show. Ben was also impressed with her exploration tonight, and he is aware of Leah's work so that was nice feedback to have heard. Everyone in the cast reiterated my sentiments about Leah's performance tonight to her during notes. I thought about keeping my compliments to myself so that she would not build up an expectation for herself to get to that same place tomorrow night because that is "death" for an actor. Trying to recreate an experience is never good, but I thought if she could make herself aware of what allowed that experience to occur, she may be able to tap into it more easily each night. The difficulty with this is that she is almost totally unaware of what did allow tonight's breakthrough. I explained that she simply left herself alone. I wanted to really give her permission to do that again and again and again. Hopefully she will. Late phone interview with Jessica Smit of Northern Iowan. It is always tough to discuss the show process with the media because I never know how much prior knowledge reporters may have of the theatre or what angle they may wish to take. I also find I respond differently at different times in my process so I tend to emphasize certain points that might end up to be less important later.

4/07/04 Wednesday

My meeting with Richard today was very short and sweet. He gave me good advice for helping Leah process her work each night, and we talked very candidly about what my expectations are for her and all the other actors. I think it is hard for me to get Leah to talk about her experience because I would probably have the same problems that she is having with acting. I see a lot of similarities in our acting strengths and weaknesses, so it is tough to help her with the same issues I have to work on myself.

Rehearsal tonight was a lot of fun. It was crew view so we finally had an audience. This was great for the actors. I think they were ready for an audience response, and it was awesome to have all sides filled with groups of people. The special relationships changed immensely, and this was fun for me at least. Everyone understood

that this was the last night for me to focus completely on acting and that they should embrace the opportunity to work and everyone did. Leah did not enter the same territory that she had the night before, but she did not give up and was still trying to open herself to have an experience. I think it was frustrating to her, but it was really great to see her try to work through it instead of immediately give up. Overall, it was a solid run with some timing issues and not nearly enough volume. I kind of feel bad for the crew having to watch the show tonight when they could hardly hear Leah. Without the technical elements as well, it must be somewhat confusing to watch. The other distraction was the ghosts in the catwalks because they have not yet been carpeted and they were very loud walking above the seating units.

4/08/04 Thursday

Tonight was a tech rehearsal. I am completely out of my element. I decided to do a cue-to-cue tonight and see if we could get out a little early to give everyone a break. This was a good decision because most of the technical elements are not even finished yet. This is becoming very frustrating for me. I want to know what the rain will actually be like in its working state. I would like to see the set fully painted so that I can actually get a sense of the piece. I know I need to be patient, but I am getting worried that it will not all be done in time. It was also good to do the cue-to-cue because I did not have the first clue as to what I was doing or how to go about doing it. I was really finding my own stride tonight with a fresh stage manager and the seasoned designers and everyone. I had read a bit and recalled my past experiences with technical rehearsals before, but I was still negotiating how I wanted to function in these rehearsals. I also think that the majority of the technical difficulties will be timing issues with the "moments of clarity" and the scene changes, so I wanted to spend the time working on this instead of running the show and waiting during the long periods in which no cue occurs. It was also nice to have a night off from watching the acting, just to focus on the aesthetics of the designs. It's beginning to look, sound, and feel very thrilling. I am excited to add the other elements and to see how the actors respond tomorrow night.

4/09/04 Friday

I had an interview with UNI news people today and it went well. They wanted to speak to me and to a cast member. I asked Gabe to speak because he is so likable, and he really has a sense of the concept, and I also knew it would not throw him before doing a run. He is the last actor to enter in Act I, so he would have ample time to prepare himself. I was totally disappointed with the actors this evening. I told them that, understanding that we might be stopping and starting and that they would most likely lose some concentration, I still wanted them to work hard and explore. They completely disregarded me, and I think they were all disheartened with their own work too. It was a missed opportunity for them, but hopefully this will inspire them to do well tomorrow night.

The technical elements are going better than expected. I am having some real timing issues with the "moments of clarity." There is something about them that is not quite right. They don't "pop" like I want them to and so I will be thinking about them all night until I have a revelation about how to solve the problem. I feel very overwhelmed right now with all the sensory input I must deal with very specifically. I want to give my attention to everything, but it is tough for me to do so both with the configuration of the space and the sheer amount of visual and auditory information happening on virtually all sides of me at any given moment in the play. I really need to be totally focused for these final rehearsals or else I will most likely have a meltdown. I just hope it all comes together in time.

4/10/04 Saturday

Today I invited the cast and the stage managers to my house for pizza before we went up to the theatre for the costume parade. I thought this would be a nice gesture since they had to be here over Easter weekend. It also gave me a chance to reconnect with them since we started technical rehearsals. I have very mixed feelings about the usefulness of the costume parade. Understandably, due to lack of personnel lately in the costume studio, most of the costumes are not finished yet so it was difficult actually to see what they will look like in performance. It's also somewhat late for a parade anyway as the costumes are mostly made, and so I think we would only be able to make minor changes. I am having doubts about the robe already partially constructed for Osvald. I am afraid that it shortens Gabe even more, and all this time we have been trying to make him look taller. I am reticent to cut it, however, since I haven't even seen it with sleeves. I think I will wait to see the final product first. The costume parade did give me a chance to see what the lights will do to the colors in the fabrics, and currently it is not pretty. For some reason, the gels seem very warm on the grays in the costume palette. I will have to discuss this with Mark tomorrow.

4/11/04 Sunday

This was originally supposed to be a dress rehearsal, but we decided to have Leah only in partial costume, meaning that she wore her half constructed costume in order to allow her some time working with all the layers and the weight of the dress. Mark was not at the rehearsal tonight, but my brief chat with his assistant, Chris Blad [assistant lighting designer], helped to calm my lighting fears. I will speak with Mark directly tomorrow. Mary is doing a nice job calling the show. I had to move a few cues here and there and needed to add a few lighting cues as well. I think, at times, I am underestimated. I have a clear vision of the show and the shape I want it to take, so I am becoming forceful about what I want, but there's no more time to beat around the bush. It's got to get done. Mark and I brainstormed tonight about the "moments of clarity" and what they needed. I described my vision for them, and he helped me by offering some viable strategies for getting the desired effect. I will have to find the time to make the

changes I need to make. The actors are holding up nicely to a weekend full of work. Tonight they made some new connections and that is very refreshing to see.

4/12/04 Monday

Production Meeting this morning was super quick. Just the details, but everyone is all caught up, it seems, with everything. We spoke also today about the things that will happen during the run of the show. The cast will get fed on Saturday between the two performances. The photo call is on Sunday of the first weekend after the matinee. I will need to provide a list of the photos in the order in which they happen. I also reminded the team about the respondent who is coming on Friday night of the second weekend and will be commenting after the show. I will be taking her out to dinner. I have asked Jay to accompany me because this type of schmoozing makes me nervous for some reason. It will be great to get feedback though. I think Jess and I are most excited to hear what someone outside of this department has to say about our work. I also spoke with Mark about my lighting concerns. He agreed to meet with me in the afternoon and was totally great about pulling some of the warmth out of the gels to see how it affects the costumes tonight. I was glad he was so open about changing an important element in his design.

Tonight I got to see the actors in their costumes. This was great. The lighting changes made were great as well. They improved the whole look of the show and the costume colors looked fantastic. I am pleased with the rich textures of the fabrics. The costumes somewhat changed the actors' movement too. It was nice to see them work with them and enjoy what they were wearing. The ghosts, especially, look fascinating. The way they blend in with their surroundings without totally disappearing is a neat effect. I had a few notes for Jess, but he caught most of them himself, and most of what I noticed was not major. Many of the costumes are still unfinished, however, so I hope it doesn't change anything too drastically.

The rain machine is still being tinkered with at the moment. It rains too much and gets water all over the audience. They will be cutting it down again. There was some mention of cutting it altogether. I expressed my desire for it and my complete confidence in Brad to make it work. It just adds so much. It needs to be lit just right though too. This all still needs to be worked out in addition to the windows, which are also a tough element to work with right now. I need it all to function correctly, and it all needs to be timed out perfectly. Tomorrow, Mary will call the show from the booth. I hope she's ready!

4/13/04 Tuesday

The time is slipping by very quickly. One more rehearsal after tonight and then we open. I am stretched rather thin right now, trying to make sure that all the details get finished. Brad left this morning for Washington, so Eric has moved to take over. I feel as if I am in good hands. I keep stopping in the shops to check on everything, trying to be cheerful as everyone frantically tries to get it all done. I don't want to seem as if I am

looking over their shoulders. I just want to be available to help or to make quick decisions if need be. I am afraid that I will have to readjust some of the timing issues again tonight.

I met with Leah, Anna Simpson [ghost], and Joe Kelly [ghost] early tonight to go over some timing problems. I also let it be known that I wanted to change some of the "moments of clarity". I had a breakthrough about one of them and knew it would require a little extra time to show them. Everyone is now working under show conditions and holding up rather well despite some serious cases of extreme fatigue. I keep checking everyone to make sure they are surviving and that all is going decently well for them. Strange, but I almost feel guilty for not devoting more time to watching the acting. It's all about the picky stuff right now. The actors are ready, and since not everything is finished technically, I am still looking and assessing new elements every night, so I don't have enough pairs of eyes and ears to watch the actors' journeys as closely as I once did. By tomorrow night, I should get the chance to sit back and take it all in without focusing on any one element in particular. That will be absolutely wonderful. I am not giving up. I am pushing through to the bitter end!

4/14/04 Wednesday

Final Dress tonight was quite the experience for me. I was so hoping that everything would go just right, especially for Mary calling the show. I think with a few exceptions, this rehearsal went very well. We finally seem to have a handle on the rain machine, and everyone was working very hard tonight. The show had some very nice moments. The floor looks much better tonight. I am much more pleased with the look. In fact, the texture is really wonderful. Unfortunately, it lacks some of the focus I had originally anticipated, but it is finished in time for the show's opening, so I am not complaining. Things are really shaping up, and that pleases me. The acting was better. Everything was better. I gave final notes and am glad to be able finally to watch the show tomorrow night as an audience member. I am not nervous yet, but I know I will be when I show up to take my seat. I can't believe how fast the time went. It seems like we were just having our first read thru and now we're here, the night before opening. What a whirlwind experience. I am proud of this show and excited to see how the audiences react. I think it was a true collaborative effort, more than almost anything else of which I have been a part. I hope it goes well tomorrow night. I am confident in everyone and believe it will be a good show, and I will let go of any expectations I may have for it. I have been lucky to take the helm of this extraordinary opportunity. It still overwhelms me to think on it. I almost don't believe it was me that led this whole undertaking.

APPENDIX C  
FRENCH SCENES BREAKDOWN

*Ghosts* by Henrik Ibsen. Translated by Rick Davis and Brian Johnston

ACT I

Scene 1	Regina & Engstrand	pp. 69-73
Scene 2	Regina & Manders	pp. 73-75
Scene 3	Manders & Alving	pp. 76-81
Scene 4	Manders & Alving & Oswald	pp. 81-85
Scene 5	Manders & Alving	pp. 86-92

ACT II

Scene 1	Manders & Alving	pp. 93-98
Scene 2	Manders & Alving & Engstrand	pp. 99-103
Scene 3	Alving & Oswald & Regina	pp. 104-111
Scene 4	All but Engstrand	pp. 112-113

ACT III

Scene 1	All	pp. 114-117
Scene 2	Alving & Oswald & Regina	pp. 117-120
Scene 3	Alving & Oswald	pp. 121-125

APPENDIX D  
REHEARSAL SCHEDULES

***Ghosts* Rehearsal Schedule (tentative)**

**Monday, February 23, 2004**

6:30-10:30 p.m. All called : Read thru/Table work

**Tuesday, February 24, 2004**

6:30-10:30 p.m. All called: Read thru/Table work

**Wednesday, February 25, 2004**

6:30-8:00 p.m. Leah & Chad: pp. 76-81 (Act I sc. 3)

Gretchen arrive at 7:30 p.m.

8:00-9:00 p.m. Gretchen & Chad: pp. 73-75 (Act I sc. 2)

Vis arrive at 8:30 p.m.

9:00-10:30 p.m. Gretchen & Vis: pp. 69-73 (Act I sc. 1)

**Thursday, February 26, 2004**

Gretchen & Vis work on your own @ 6:30 p.m. (Act I sc. 1)

6:30-8:30 p.m. Gabe & Leah & Chad: pp. 81-85 (Act I sc. 4)

8:30-10:30 p.m. Leah & Chad: pp. 86-92 (Act I sc. 5)

**Friday, February 27, 2004**

6:30-8:00 p.m. All called: Review Act I

8:00-9:00 p.m. Vis & Leah & Chad: pp. 99-103 (Act II sc. 2)

9:00-10:30 p.m. Leah & Chad: pp. 93-98 (Act II sc. 1)

\*Please be warmed up both vocally and physically for all rehearsals and be ready to work at the time indicated.



## ***Ghosts* Rehearsal Schedule (tentative)**

### **Monday, March 1, 2004**

6:30-8:30 p.m. Leah & Gabe & Gretchen: pp104-111 (Act II sc. 3)

Chad arrive at 8:00 p.m.

8:30-10:30 p.m. All except Vis: pp. 112-113 (Act II sc. 4) and review

### **Tuesday, March 2, 2004**

6:30-8:00 p.m. All called: Review Act II

8:00-9:00 p.m. All called: pp. 114-117 (Act III sc. 1)

9:00-10:30 p.m. Leah & Gabe & Gretchen: pp. 117-120 (Act III sc. 2)

### **Wednesday, March 3, 2004**

6:30-8:00 p.m. Leah & Gabe: pp. 121-125 (Act III sc. 1)

Gretchen & Chad arrive at 7:30 p.m.

8:00-9:00 p.m. Gretchen & Chad:(Act I sc. 2)

Vis arrive at 8:30 p.m.

9:00-10:30 p.m. Gretchen & Vis: pp. 69-73 (Act I sc. 1)

### **Thursday, March 4, 2004**

Gretchen & Vis work on your own @ 6:30 p.m. (Act I sc. 1)

6:30-8:00 p.m. Gabe & Leah & Chad: pp. 81-85 (Act I sc. 4)

8:00-10:30 p.m. Leah & Chad: pp. 86-92 (Act I sc. 5)

### **Friday, March 5, 2004**

6:30-8:00 p.m. All called: Review Act I

8:00-9:30 p.m. All called: Review Act II

9:30-10:30 p.m. All called: Review Act III

\*Please be warmed up both vocally and physically for all rehearsals and be ready to work at the time indicated.

## ***Ghosts Rehearsal Schedule (tentative)***

### **Monday, March 8, 2004**

6:30-8:30 p.m. Leah & Chad: pp. 93-98 (Act II sc.1)

Vis arrive at 8:00 p.m.

8:30-10:30 p.m. Leah & Chad & Vis: pp. 99-103 (Act II sc.2)

### **Tuesday, March 9, 2004**

6:30-9:00 p.m. Leah & Gabe & Gretchen: pp. 104-112 (Act II sc. 3)

Chad arrive at 8:30 p.m.

9:00-10:30 p.m. All called except Vis: pp. 112-113 (Act II sc. 4)

### **Wednesday, March 10, 2004**

6:30-8:00 p.m. All called: pp. 114-117 (Act III sc. 1)

8:00-9:00 p.m. Leah & Gabe & Gretchen: pp. 117-120 (Act III sc. 2)

9:00-10:30 p.m. Leah & Gabe: pp. 120-125 (Act III sc. 3)

### **Thursday, March 11, 2004**

6:30-10:30 p.m. All called: Act I

### **Friday, March 12, 2004**

6:30-10:30 p.m. Scenes TBA

\*Please be warmed up both vocally and physically for all rehearsals and be ready to work at the time indicated.

## ***Ghosts Rehearsal Schedule (tentative)***

### **Monday, March 22, 2004**

6:30-9:30 p.m. All Called (including Ghosts): Run thru

9:30-10:00 p.m. Leah & Gabe: Act III sc. 3

10:00-10:30 p.m. Nick, Brina, Joe, Anna, and Leah: Opening Sequence

### **Tuesday, March 23, 2004**

6:30-8:30 p.m. All Called: Work Act I sc. 3 & 5: Others Work Lines

8:30-10:30 p.m. All Called: Work Act II sc. 2: Others Work Lines

### **Wednesday, March 24, 2004**

6:30-6:45 p.m. All Called: Warm-up

6:45-7:45 p.m. All Called: Block Act I with Ghosts

7:45-9:00 p.m. All Called: Run Act I

9:00-10:30 p.m. All Called: Block Act III with Ghosts

### **Thursday, March 25, 2004**

6:30-7:30 p.m. All Called: Work Act III sc. 2: Others Work Lines

7:30-8:30 p.m. All Called: Work Act II sc. 3: Others Work Lines

8:30-10:30 p.m. All Called: Work Act III sc. 3: Others Work Lines

### **Friday, March 26, 2004**

6:30-6:45 p.m. All Called: Warm-up

6:45-8:00 p.m. All Called: Run Act III with Ghosts

8:00-9:00 p.m. All Called: Block Act II with Ghosts

9:00-10:30 p.m. All Called: Run Act II with Ghosts

### **Sunday, March 28, 2004**

6:30-6:45 p.m. All Called: Warm-up

6:45-10:30 p.m. Run thru (no stopping)

Scenes TBA after if time permits

### **Monday, March 29, 2004**

6:30-6:45 p.m. All Called: Warm-up

6:45-10:30 p.m. All Called: Work/Run Act I

### **Tuesday, March 30, 2004**

Scenes TBA (no Ghosts)

### **Wednesday, March 31, 2004**

6:30-6:45 p.m. All Called: Warm-up

6:45-10:30 p.m. All Called: Work/Run Act II

**Thursday, April 1, 2004**

Scenes TBA (no Ghosts)

**Friday, April 2, 2004**

6:30-6:45 p.m. All Called: Warm-up

6:45-10:30 p.m. All Called: Work/Run Act III

**Sunday, April 4, 2005**

6:30-6:45 p.m. All Called: Warm-up

6:45-10:30 p.m. All Called: Run/Work Full Show

\*Please be warmed up both vocally and physically for all rehearsals and be ready to work at the time indicated.

# February

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
	Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	
<b>29</b>						

2004

# March

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
	<b>1</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>2</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>3</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>4</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>5</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>9</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>10</b> Design Pres. 6:30 Rehearsal 7:30-10:30	<b>11</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>12</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> SPRING BREAK	<b>16</b> SPRING BREAK	<b>17</b> SPRING BREAK	<b>18</b> SPRING BREAK	<b>19</b> SPRING BREAK	<b>20</b> SPRING BREAK
<b>21</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>22</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>23</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>24</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>25</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>26</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>29</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>30</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>31</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30			

2004

# April

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
				<b>1</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>2</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b> Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>5</b> Mini-tech 5:00 Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>6</b> Mini-tech 5:00 Rehearsal 6:30-10:30	<b>7</b> Crew View 6:30	<b>8</b> Tech rehearsal 7:00	<b>9</b> Tech rehearsal 7:00	<b>10</b> Tech Adjust 1:00
<b>11</b> Dress rehearsal 7:00	<b>12</b> Dress rehearsal 7:00	<b>13</b> Dress rehearsal 7:00	<b>14</b> Dress rehearsal 7:30	<b>15</b> Performance 7:30	<b>16</b> Performance 7:30	<b>17</b> Performance 2:00 & 7:30
<b>18</b> Performance 2:00 + Photocall	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Brush-up rehearsal 7:00	<b>21</b> Performance 7:30	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Performance 7:30	<b>24</b> Performance 7:30
<b>25</b> Performance 2:00 + STRIKE	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	

2004

APPENDIX E  
MOMENTS OF CLARITY

Description

This is the list distributed to the designers noting the "moments of clarity" I chose within the script.

"Moments of Clarity"

These are the high saturation moments we spoke of Thursday:

ACT I

1. The "pipe" moment. This will happen on the stairs coming from the dining room. Page 81
2. The "Captain/Johanna sex in the dining room" moment. This will happen in the dining room. Page 92

ACT II

1. Alving rejected by Manders. This will happen in the rain. Page 98

These are the mid saturation moments that I am considering. I will know more when I add the ghosts on the Monday after Spring Break:

ACT I

1. When Oswald describes his mother's reaction when she found him smoking that pipe as a child. Mrs. A's ghost will be on the bridge for this moment. Page 83
2. Mrs. Alving describes her battle with her husband to keep him at home (drinking with him). This will take place on the platform. Page 90

ACT II

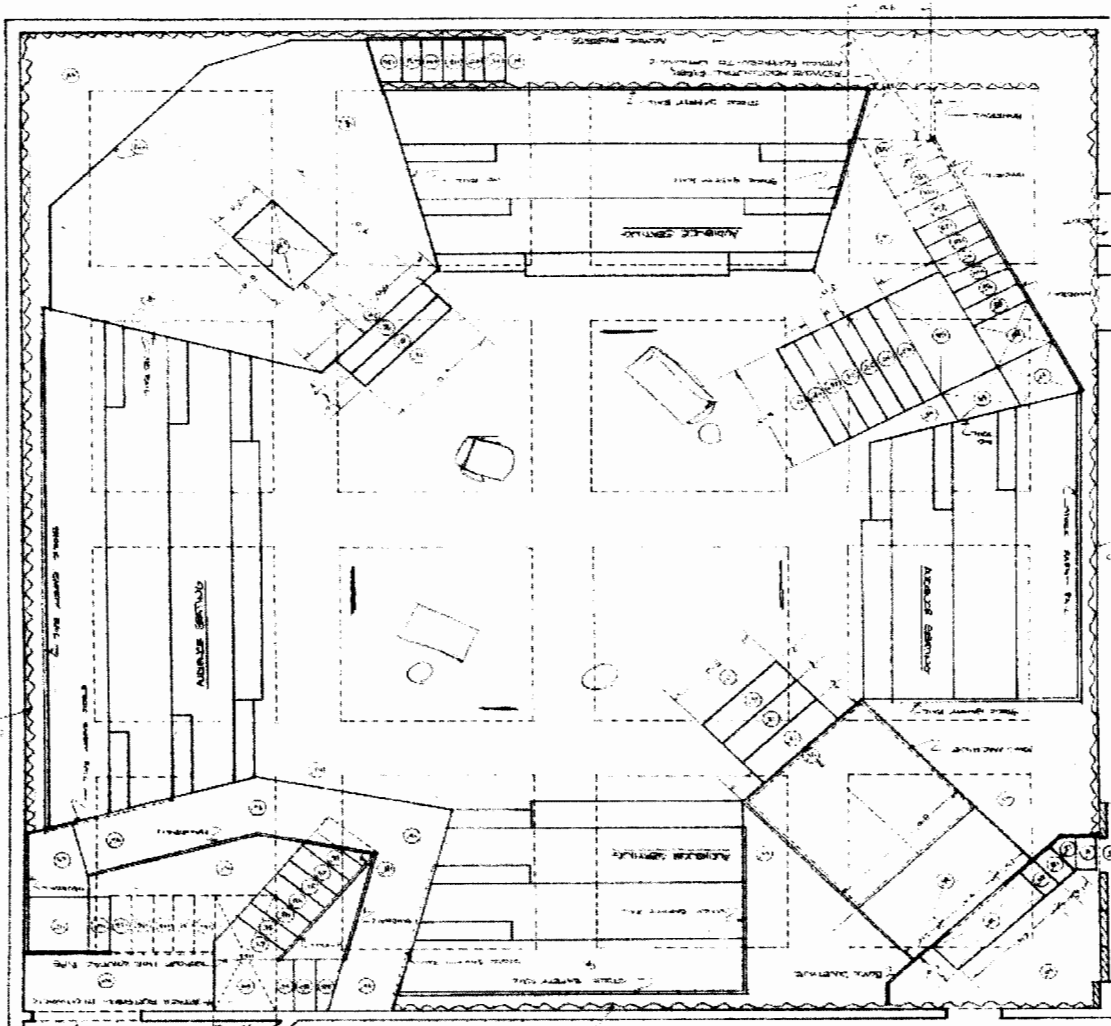
1. Mrs. Alving's "ghosts" speech. I definitely want one ghost on the bridge and one on the platform. The other two I will either place in the cats (they won't necessarily need to be lit) or down on the floor of the acting area. Page 97



## ACT III

1. Mrs. Alving talks about Mr. Alving and what he was like in the past. I would like a ghost on the bridge and one on the platform. Page 118

# APPENDIX F GROUNDPLAN



## APPENDIX G PROGRAM NOTES

### Informational Notes

"It is reasonable to suppose that {Ghosts} will cause alarm in some circles; but so it must be. If it did not do so, it would not have been necessary to write it."

--Henrik Ibsen

Henrik Ibsen, known world wide as the "father of modern drama", wrote *Ghosts* in 1881 as a response to the overwhelmingly negative reaction he received after the first few productions of his earlier play, *A Doll House*. What began as a harsh reaction to the criticism evolved into a play in its own right dealing with similar familial subject matter but expanded to include societal restrictions as well. Needless to say, in the time period in which it was first published and produced, the show was not a huge success. It took ten years for the first edition to sell out because bookstores were sending it back to publishers, deeming it indecent. It caused a major scandal internationally and many countries banned public performances. It was eventually produced for the first time in Chicago for an audience of Norwegian immigrants in 1882. One hundred and twenty two years later, it is still being produced. While the themes may not shock audiences as they once did, Ibsen's view of humanity still rings true today.

### Director's Notes

Who defines us and more importantly, how do we define ourselves? Is it how we fit into society's view? Is it the roles we play within our family or amongst our friends and lovers? Is it what we say or what we believe? So often we find ourselves living up to expectations even if we must lie to do so. We cling to these expectations and let them guide us in our actions instead of letting the truth of our humanity shine through and free us all. This play is a cautionary tale. Mrs. Alving's struggle against the ghosts that she defines as "all sorts of old, dead beliefs and ideas" will hopefully enable others to speak their own truths.

As we began this process, I think it was with some trepidation. A tremendous opportunity for everyone involved from actors to designers to the production crew, this was not something to be taken lightly. This is a well known play by a famous playwright. It required modernizing and hard work and complete dedication. While the process has encompassed all these things, these very serious expectations have fallen by the wayside because at the heart of this play is a woman--a woman who has made mistakes in her past and has a desire to release herself from the guilt and pain this has caused. As we began to research and rehearse and create and build, an amazing momentum swept the process along until we had something in our hands to share. Something important. You will find, as the story unfolds, a layered sensory experience. Everything is linked and interwoven to give Mrs. Alving's struggle depth. The design

elements, the addition of four non-speaking roles, and the movement all push her towards her final moment and a devastating choice.

## APPENDIX H DESIGN PRESENTATION

### Description

The Design Presentation took place on Wednesday, March 10, 2004 at 6:30 p.m. in the Bertha Martin Theatre. The presentation is a regular event preceding each mainstage production performance run and is open to the public. In the presentation, the director and designers are given the chance to share with those attending their visions for the show and their choices in terms of implementation of those visions. Each production team member is allotted roughly fifteen minutes to present his or her work and after all have presented, questions from the audience are allowed. As director, I spoke first. The following is what I planned to share orally with the group. I did use this prepared statement, but I also elaborated on some of these points as I began to share.

### Prepared Statement

I have been given the opportunity to direct this play, "Ghosts", which is and has always been a favorite of mine as are almost every play written by Henrik Ibsen. Ibsen is often referred to as the father of modern drama. The plays he wrote were well made plays with and this one in particular has five very meaty roles for the actors here at Theatre UNI as well as some wonderful design opportunities as well.

Henrik Ibsen published this play in 1881. When it was first produced it created quite a stir due to its sensational content for that time period. Some of these themes are venereal diseases, incest, and euthanasia. This material doesn't quite elicit the same shock that it once did so it is often treated in some way to make it accessible to a modern audience.

This is what I personally enjoy about Ibsen's work. He deals with universal truths that can still be translated today. The approach I am taking with this production will combine the period elements and the realism of the scenes with the expressionistic and sensorial elements that Ibsen has written in as well. I have chosen to focus this production primarily on the journey of Mrs. Alving. She is, as she says, "doing battle with ghosts inside and out." In this production that battle will not only be fought by the five main characters written in the script but it will also be evident within the space as well. You will hopefully see and feel inside forces trying to escape and outside forces trying to break in to this world in which she is immersed. For this sense I have also cast four non-speaking roles. They live in the world of Mrs. Alving's making. At times they will serve as witnesses, at others they will create shocking memories invading her world, and at other times they will push the action forward. Mrs. Alving is haunted by ghosts. She is trapped by them from the very beginning of the piece. This is her struggle to escape and it may work and it may not. That you'll have to come and see.

APPENDIX I  
ARTICLES/REVIEWS

# STAGE Ink

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2004/05 Season  
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Membership  
Newsletter  
Vol. 21, No. 4  
March, 2004

## Ghosts at the Strayer-Wood

Sex, lies, corruption, and religion. This controversial combination sets the stage as one woman struggles to live life on her own terms after years of playing the proper, dutiful wife and mother in Henrik Ibsen's classic psychological drama, *Ghosts*.

Theatre UNI will present *Ghosts* April 15<sup>th</sup> through 25<sup>th</sup> in the Bertha Martin Theatre as the final production of the 2003/04 season.

Written in 1881, the play explores the issues of religious and societal oppression, family secrets, and euthanasia. When her only child, Oswald, returns home on the eve of the dedication of the new Alving Memorial Home built in honor of her late husband, Mrs. Helene Alving finds her plans for the future threatened by the memories of her past.

Henrik Johan Ibsen, born in 1828 in Skien, Norway, wrote his first play, *Cathine*, in 1849. The following year, a one-act play entitled *The Warrior's Barrow* became Ibsen's first play to be produced, premiering at the Christiania Theatre in Oslo.

Over the next fourteen years, Ibsen traveled extensively to study, worked as a stage director and artistic director, and married and started a family. He also wrote

eight plays, many drawing on folk songs, folklore and history for inspiration. In 1864, Ibsen moved to Italy after several difficult years working for the Christiania Norwegian Theatre. He would not return to Norway until the summer of 1891.

In 1865, he wrote a epic-lyric poem entitled *The Epic Brand*, which led to the drama *Brand* the following year. *Brand* was Ibsen's first major success as a writer. In 1867, Ibsen wrote *Peer Gynt*.

In 1877, Ibsen wrote *Pillars of Society*, a drama focusing on societal issues of the day that would become the first of the writer's realist cycle of twelve plays which include *A Doll's House*, *Ghost*, and *An Enemy of the People*. Although controversial and frowned in his native Norway for their subject matter, all were major successes for Ibsen, gaining the playwright international acclaim.

His next four plays of the realist cycle focused more on psychological conflicts and used a more symbolic style of writing, including *The Wild Duck* (1884), *Rosmersholm* (1886), *The Lady from the Sea* (1888) and *Hedda Gabler* (1890).

Ibsen returned to Norway in July, 1891, settling in Christiania, where he lived until his death in 1906.

*continued on page 3*



## Ibsen's *Ghosts* comes to haunt UNI's Theatre

By JESS DEE SMITH

*NI Features Writer*

April Fools brings April ghouls to UNI's campus this month.

Written in 1881, by Henrik Ibsen, "the father of modern drama," *Ghosts* will be performed in the Bertha Martin Theatre.

According to Jaceanna Haislet-Carlson, marketing director for Theatre UNI, this play tells the story of a psychological drama of one woman's struggle to live her own life after being a dutiful wife and mother.

Opening April 15 at 7:30, it is already sold out, but there are plenty more performances available to see: April 15-17; April 20-24 at 7:30, as well as, April 17, 18 and 25 at 2 p.m.

Attendance for the show looks promising with the first two nights already sold out.

One reason for the large attendance is some Humanities II students are required to see the show for class. While lectures may leave them falling asleep, *Chouteau* should be an eye-opening experience.

Humanities II professor Dr. Roy Sandstrom said, "I personally like *Chouteau* because it is accessible; it deals with a theme that I hope strikes a resonant chord in many of our students: a bright, well-educated woman who thinks for herself and does not allow others to dictate her values."

He goes on to say that the department has a series of possible choices from a very large booklist for Humanities II. The fact that students could read a play and then see a live performance made it particularly attractive to them.

The Humanities I and II faculty would like to develop closer ties with the theater department and with the Gallagher-Benedorn to make it possible for stu-

See Dubuque, page 10



Friday, April 9, 2004

## Dubuque native gives directing *Ghosts* a shot

*Continued from page 7*

dents to experience theatrical and musical productions directly related to classroom assignments.

Already directing *Death and Dancing*, *Ghosts* director Megan Schumacher, a graduate student in theater from Dubuque is directing her first arena play.

Having the audience sit on all four sides allows for freedom, but poses difficulties in directing and acting.

"Directing in an arena has given a new experience for me and an interesting opportunity for the students as well," Schumacher said. "It's a good experience for both of us."

Using all of the space available, including the cat walks as acting areas, Schumacher has tried to take "Ghosts" and modern-

ize it. Aside from the five main characters for the play, she has added four non-speaking roles. This gives more opportunities to the students and adds to the sensory experience. The scenic and costume is designed to pull more sensory for the audience. The director adds,

"Directing in an arena has given a new experience for me and an interesting opportunity for the students as well."

-Megan Schumacher

"I tried to depict the "idea of ghosts"; the idea that we all try and live up to the sense of truth which has the ability to set us free. Lies can trap us."

The five leading actors are Getchen Carter, senior theatre major from Sioux City, playing Regina Enstrand; Josh Vsnapuu, senior theatre major from Springville, playing Jacob Engstrand; Chad Ryan, sophomore theatre major from Chicago, playing Rev. Manders; Leah Raulerson, senior theatre major from Decorah, playing the main character Mrs. Alving and Gabriel Smith, senior English Education major from Monticello playing the role of Oswald Alving. Jeff White, a senior theater major from Des Moines is the costume designer for the production.

Schumacher had nothing but great remarks about her cast and crew. All of the actors/actresses are very talented, and the costume designer has been "really phenomenal."

Tickets for this event are going fast- so get yours today!

# UNI graduate student dumps soul into 'Ghosts' production

By **MELBOY PARKER**  
Courier Arts / Special Sections Editor

Ghosts are more than disembodied souls.

In Henrik Ibsen's psychological drama, "Ghosts," these haunting apparitions also take the form of old dead ideas and beliefs. "... We can never be rid of them. There must be ghosts all over the world. They must be as countless as the grains of the sands, it seems to me. And we are so miserably afraid of the light," says widow Mrs. Alving.

"Ghosts" opens Thursday and runs through April 25 at the Bertha Martin Theatre at the Strayer-Wood Theatre on the University of Northern Iowa campus, performed by Theatre UNI. Director is Megan Schumacher, a graduate student in the UNI Department of Theatre, who is basing her master's thesis on this directorial experience.

"It's interesting to look at a show from a different point of view, to see it from a director's perspective as well as being involved in all phases of the production, taking part in design and production meetings. I've found it challenging and fun," says Schumacher. "Being a student, it's a little difficult because these are my peers I'm directing. It does change the dynamic, but we all know it's about the work, and everyone is very professional and dedicated."

Schumacher is particularly pleased to direct Ibsen, because the Norwegian playwright is one of her favorites. Considered the founder of modern prose drama, Ibsen stripped away romance to reveal the realities of life. Written in 1881, "Ghosts" explores Mrs.

Alving's journey through a maze of family secrets and her deception to protect her son. Ibsen deals with such topics as hereditary venereal disease and social mores, as well as religious oppression and euthanasia.

"I think her journey is related to other characters in the story and in the end, all of the characters see the light of truth and all of the ghosts disintegrate. Ibsen's plays are so well-written, and it's just amazing to me that they're still performed and seem relevant," explains the graduate student.

Working from a script translation, Schumacher also modernizes the play by adding four non-speaking roles to original five-person cast. These characters serve as witnesses to assist the audience in dealing sensorially, and subjectively with the subject matter — "and it's an opportunity to put more students to work on the show," she says.

As director, her goal has been to create an environment where cast and crew could be successful. The production features scenic design by Leonard Curtis, assistant professor of theater; lighting design by Mark A. Parrott, staff designer; and costume designs by Jess C. White, a senior theater major. The production drew its inspiration for the design from the work of Norwegian artist Edvard Munch.

"Ibsen is realism, but I wanted to introduce a subjective level that was more expressionistic, to create a very layered piece, and all of the elements work together to get a real sense of the play."

The production is being presented in arena style, with audience on all sides to enhance intimacy and atmosphere.

## 'Ghosts' shows

"Ghosts" will be performed in the Bertha Martin Theatre at the Strayer-Wood Theatre on the UNI campus in Cedar Falls. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. Thursday-Saturday and 20-24 and 2 p.m. April Saturday and next Sunday and April 25.

Tickets are \$10 for the public; \$8 for senior citizens; and \$5 for youth, available by calling 273-6381 or online at [www.theatreuni.com](http://www.theatreuni.com).



# Theatre UNI puts Ibsen's 'Ghosts' in a new light

By **BARBARA LOUNSBERRY**  
For the Courier

## CE DAR FALLS

Phantoms literally stalk the stage in a stunningly new conception of Ibsen's "Ghosts," which opened Thursday at Theatre UNI. For a play to acknowledge venereal disease (syphilis) in 1881 was, of course, deeply shocking. Today we see that the great Norwegian playwright used this deadly disease as a visible symbol of illusions (of all kinds) that plague (and can even destroy) us.

"Ghosts" opens with Mrs. Alving in triumph. Her husband — the dissolute and womanizing Captain Alving — is now 10 years dead, and through enterprise she believes she has rid herself and her family of his inheritance (material and spiritual). That this is not to be, the play heartbreakingly discloses. In fact, talented director Megan Schumacher and her dramaturg, Teri Ann Greenfield, have imagined for us in this production the next step in Ibsen's play. This decision creates a "Ghosts" never before seen.

## REVIEW

The play opens with Mrs. Alving immobile, frozen in her chair. The long windows that surround her seem like prison doors. They stand, in fact for, conventional ideals — duty, respectability — that have imprisoned her. Technical aspects of this show are brilliant. Scenic designer Leonard Curtis has turned the ceiling walkways into stalking grounds for the ghosts of the past we now see pacing throughout the play. The ghosts walk down stairways at each corner and gaze eerily in at windows, creating the uneasy horror of Henry James' "The Turn of the Screw" or of a Gorey drawing.

In a brilliant stroke, Schumacher employs these ghosts to place the furniture for each act. We see here that Mrs. Alving's world is constructed for her, literally in the dark. Costume designer Jess C. White arrays all characters in ghostly shades of gray and black. Surrounding the frozen Mrs. Alving are four lively and talented actors. Josh Visnapuu a senior theater major, sparks the drama from the beginning and on every entrance as the slimy, opportunistic Jakob Engstrand.

Engstrand's diseased morality is signaled by his game leg which he thrusts incessantly at us. Chad Ryan, a sophomore, makes an auspicious Theatre UNI debut as the handsome but hypocritical Pastor Manders. Ryan's Pastor stifles his feelings, but the sexual tension with Regina Engstrand, the maid, smolders.

Lovely Gretchen Weseman Carter, a senior, gives us a nuanced ill-used daughter in Regina — one hopeful, determined and debased. Gabriel Smith, a senior, helped me see through his heartbreaking portrayal of Mrs. Alving's son, Oswald, the freedom and joy and light Ibsen wished for us all.

Each creative choice opens doors and closes others. Director Schumacher has given us a "Ghosts" that makes us feel palpably how the past haunts us and can imprison us — that dead old ideas exist within us, so difficult to exorcise. By foregrounding Mrs. Alving's paralysis, however, Schumacher risks a bit the dramatic movement of Ibsen's play. The playwright's mother moves a great distance from the beginning of the play

to the end. Schumacher's mother is a frozen center. Her paralysis is powerful, but it hurts the drama.

See this artful and thought-provoking "Ghosts" Tuesday through Sunday at UNI

APPENDIX J  
PAINTING BY EDVARD MUNCH



APPENDIX K  
PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS



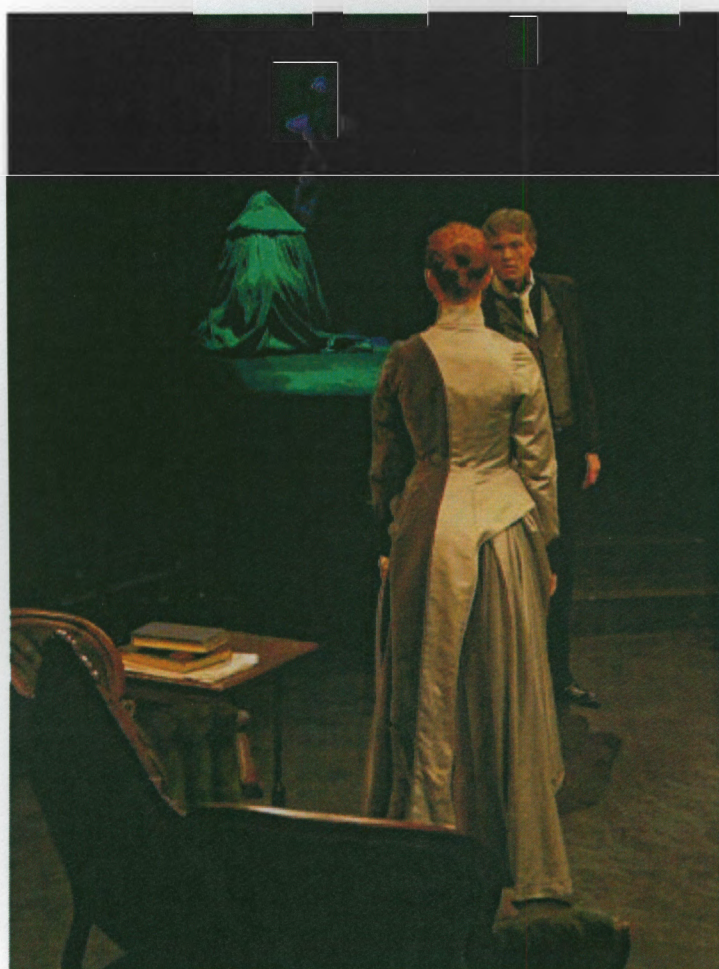




Neem het Laser













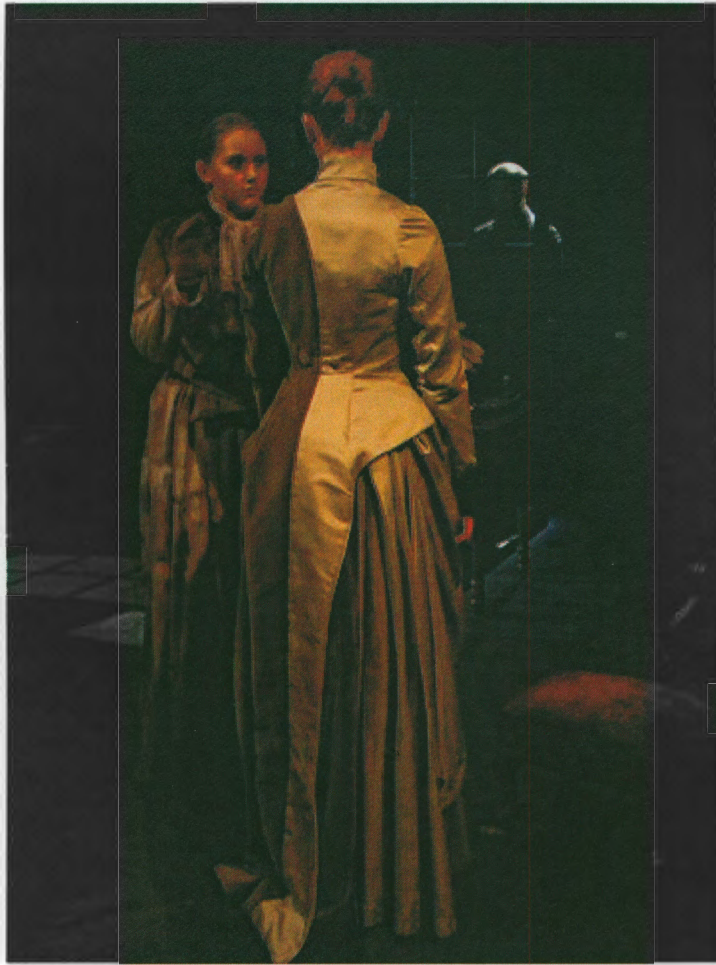
















APPENDIX I  
 COLLEGE THEATER FESTIVAL  
 AWARDS  
 AWARDED TO: DR. CORIANNE JOHNSON  
 PROFESSOR OF THEATRE  
 AMBROSE UNIVERSITY



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...a, sometimes I mean, in the script ... do we do what he says, I mean, we ...  
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 ... one point was something to me in and see and ...  
 ... is inspiring. So are the ghosts gone at the end? ...  
 ... sense of, necessarily, freedom at the end ...  
 ... to the end of the show and getting into ...  
 ... always look at some of the set elements, ...

APPENDIX L  
 AMERICAN COLLEGE THEATER FESTIVAL RESPONSE  
 RESPONDANT: DR. CORIANNE JOHNSON  
 PROFESSOR OF THEATRE  
 AMBROSE UNIVERSITY

RESPONDANT:

Let me welcome you to the American College Theatre Festival and I am a representative much like all of your faculty who go to different schools to respond to shows and have the wonderful opportunity of meeting new people and seeing the work of our colleagues and we give one person's response to the work, which is one person's alone and is in no way expected to be anything other than a response. In other words, your stage manager will keep you honest and keep your play as your director directed it.

Having said that, I look at all aspects of the performance from really the moment I walk into the theatre until the last moment I'm going to share with you first, which was in the ladies restroom when a woman who was sitting a few feet down from me and we only knew each other from having to say "Excuse me, pardon me, excuse me" said in the bathroom as we were washing hands, "Who'd you think the young ghost was?" And I said, "I got an idea. I don't know for sure." And she said, "Who'd you think? Who'd you think?" and she wouldn't let me go. "I think that it may have been Pastor Manders in a younger, when she was in love with him. I don't know!" And she gave me her idea and she wouldn't let me go and I think that's a great credit to your play continued long beyond and I mean she was vehement about...and I thought that, that's really wonderful when you have people that are engaged and thinking and believe me, that will not be the last moment that she thinks about your show...because Ibsen writes, he writes such fabulous women's roles, doesn't he? What an incredible ride we get with Mrs. Alving and you know she, as your dramaturg tells us, as you may have already known, she is the reaction to Nora, and then we put Hedda in there, and then we just have these women who are ahead of their time and yet stuck in the tradition of the period. They have the intellectual wherewithal and the, maybe the moral instinct, but not the resolution to go through it. And so the empathy that we have with those characters, you know, how can, I think you can love this character maybe a little bit more than you can love Hedda, but even within those same ideas, you've got to have some sense of understanding of why she did what she did and how she has been haunted by it ever since and maybe you know, I look at some of the very sophisticated choices that a very young director made and the end of this is terribly nebulous, I mean, in the script...do we do what he says, I mean, we're not supposed to see whether she actually does this mercy killing or not. It's a choice. I suppose you could go either way, but that idea of bringing the set pieces back in, bringing the windows back in which at one point was something to see in and see out and later end up being something in which to imprison. So are the ghosts gone at the end? I don't know. But certainly there is no sense of, necessarily, freedom at the end. The choices are still haunting her.

So that's me talking about at the end of the show and getting into beforehand, but anyway coming into the play, I always look at some of the set elements and certainly saw

this idea of the suspended windows, and piques your interest. Is this going to be selective realism? Is this going to be realism? Is this going to be naturalism? And to find an "in the round setting" where, of course, scenery has to be limited. You have sightline issues and all, what...full realism would be tricky. Where's the door? Where's the wall? What do you knock on? You know, you say it was bold enough to knock, come in, and how are we going to establish our parameters so that we can embrace the conventions from the get go and then go with you from there. And I thought that the set choices, at the very beginning, without all of the furniture in there, without the clear suggestion of the room, just leaving the parameters which is what you leave us with, already told me "bring your imagination to it. Fill in the dots for yourself. We are not going to feed this to you spoon by spoonful, chew it for you and swallow it. You must do this and you can digest it then afterwards as I am still doing. I'm certain that after I think about this for a few more hours and as I'm driving back to the Quad Cities tomorrow I'll continue to think about it and I will, that there will be new ideas, thoughts, questions. It was a probing play and it was a probing production.

Obviously, there is behavior at the beginning. We have Mrs. Alving sitting very, very calmly and very quietly and I would want to twitch and crack my knuckles and rearrange. And there was a sense of repose or at least that contemplation that, with these ideas very subtly twirling around, just enough to catch my eye here and there, but I had a sense that they, we, were in her world in the beginning and you brought us back to that world at the end, but if I am not mistaken, and correct me if I am wrong, Megan, I don't believe, the ghosts, were no longer up top, were they, or am I incorrect in that?

MEGAN:

Yeah they were.

RESPONDANT:

I just was so much with her that I did not see that so...These are just some thoughts about the story that you told me today that have to do really with the core of the piece and not...and I promise that we will talk about individually and we'll talk about all the other production elements, but I just want to talk about the core of the play first which is certainly talking about you as well but maybe more than anything responding to the visceral and emotional experience I got. Questions on, what is this talking to me about revisionist history. Do we sometimes rewrite our history and then start to believe it ourselves or at least have our legacy. I thought it was interesting that this play, today, really struck me as I heard in the news either today or yesterday, forgive me if I'm one or two days off, about some woman who took a photograph of the caskets of the dead American soldiers leaving Iraq and lost her job along with her husband because she was recording history and that was not the history that our political system wanted us to see. And our legacy can be shaped by those outside of us, can it not, and if it's doing a service or if it's doing a disservice. And I kept coming back to that today, to say that this play is, your dramaturg reminds us that this play is 122 years old. Good grief! And it still got chills up my back that it is still human issues that we are dealing with today. And maybe they're not as shocking. Maybe that idea of...Well, is incest any less shocking today?

You know, with that idea of Oswald and Regina, maybe we hear about it more, but I don't think it is necessarily any less shocking. Certainly, adultery we hear about. Certainly the idea of STD's, but they are those dirty little secrets too that sometimes our history tries to rewrite. There were questions that you and your group posed to me. That idea of what is cowardice and what is doing one's duty? Is doing one's duty sometimes a mark of cowardice? Because who imposes our duty upon us? And is it pastor Manders who is the icon of this community is yet the most gullible and the most easily duped of this community and she calls him a child and then he gets scared and runs away just like a child would. Truth versus ideals. Do we, when we learn the truth, is it by very nature that our ideals fall like felled timber. And then it was lies versus joyful illusion which I hung onto the most. It's not a lie. It's a joyful illusion. Those people really didn't die and I didn't see those caskets; we just hear the numbers and don't see the evidence. This behavior of the captain: what happened versus how he is portrayed and is the truth always the way to go. You would like to think yes. And we would like to think yes and I still think I do I think. But Ibsen and your production does sometimes make you question what is the right choice. We know what the truthful choice is. We know what the joyful illusion is, but what is up with the right choice. Sometimes, who knows? I think, you know, I know I've told little white lies sometimes because it's easier for that person to not know and sparing them.

I am going to start talking specifically now. There were a lot of wonderfully sophisticated ideas and I thought they all worked very well. There may have been a few too many for me and so therefore a couple of times I felt like one might have been fighting another a little bit. The idea, certainly, of the wonderfully resonant idea of these ghosts are always there, they're always with me. And this ghost might represent this person this one time, but I didn't always think that necessarily this ghost was always that person. I thought they might, at some time, that they might represent something else somewhere. So I can describe that literal element that the woman in the bathroom was talking about. It was there sometimes but I didn't pin it on there all the time. And I did see that they became more and more of a distraction for Mrs. Alving as the show went on. Sometimes I was so caught up with her connection between the ghosts that I did lose what was going on on the floor. And I didn't know where, you know, we talk about director's help us know what's important and what to look at and there were occasions that I could not make a decision. And which is the most important, that connection that she's having with the specter from her past or what she should use to go on here.

Some of the sound issues that I brought up at the beginning. The rain issue. It has to be present. It is another character in the play. And as a Minnesota born Scandinavian, these Norwegians, I know them, and that idea of bad weather that is with you and is sort of the burden that you must bear through your life and probably that we suffer for and that element being absolutely realistic, I thought oh now we've got selective realism, but it became another, the weather became another character and I liked that very much. A couple of sound effects, there's a voice over in the first act I believe, and then a few sound effects that were amplified or echoed, for example, the windows coming down at the end, but I also think there is a door slamming so forgive me if I've forgotten a few. I thought those were effective, but were maybe one layer because you



don't have many times to use them and that first one which was the voice over came in maybe 40 minutes, maybe 35, pretty deep into the first act and it was a convention that we hadn't had reason to establish earlier and so I wasn't with you from the get go and therefore it took me out of the moment and a couple other times I thought, oh yeah, she's established that before she's used it but it was maybe so infrequently and your other very, very sophisticated choices were so enough that you could, you should direct three or four more other productions of this and maybe really hone one route each time and you've got a plethora of things going on up there. It's just, on occasion, when there all on the same platter at the same time, it's all good food, I just don't know which one to eat. So those are some of the directorial thoughts.

It's tricky to direct in the round and there was never a time when I thought boy I wish that character would turn around because I haven't seen their faces for a long time and while they're acting beautifully with their backs, you know, I would like to see...that there was movement but it wasn't movement for the sake of movement. The space was used well and I didn't, aside from having directed in the round only a couple of times, I felt in the beginning that I was looking at some technical things. The shape, I mean, she had you offset, had you moving enough and organic moving that I just didn't pay attention after a while because I didn't need to and that was, Kudos, because that's tricky stuff and now you've all had a chance to act in the round so now you can all go to the Arena in Washington and get work. That's great!

This is a question I need to ask because I am so curious. The ticking clock at the beginning and end of each act. The passing of time as Oswald, as his clock is running out? Help me with that. I am really curious. I loved it, although I'm lost and I'm just too dense so help me, tell me about this ticking of the clock.

MEGAN:

In a design meeting we came up with ideas for how to do the cyclical, I mean, because it is cyclical, and how to place that continuity and so, we came on the ticking of the clock somehow and I just thought, "Yeah that'll do it. That says continuity to me." And so when I pulled up a couple of sound cues because I worked with the designer, I really liked it and I liked what it did and that's where the ghosts move. They move with the ticking of the clock and they move there and then where the realism begins is when we hear the chimes that tell us what the time it is and then we redo it and it goes again.

RESPONDANT:

I can certainly, I was still keeping the ticking in the realistic world and not outside of it, but it makes sense totally. It was an interesting and very effective choice, I thought, to make us watch the scene changes. Of course, what director typically would do that during intermission when nobody's watching, but therefore it had a statement didn't it? We are stripping away and stripping away and stripping away. We got down to the bare minimum like we got down maybe to the truth at the end. That's the metaphor that I went with. And the ghosts were that which are haunting and were forcing the stripping away of all of that which was superfluous or tertiary or whatever and at the end we didn't have a place for everyone to sit. It wasn't very comfortable. It wasn't very convenient and

neither was the truth so those were interesting. I put down very modern translation and then I forgot to look at who the translator was.

MEGAN:

Brian Johnston and Rick Davis.

RESPONDANT:

Ok. I'd like to talk about the staging and the use of the set and the lights. Is the lighting designer here?

MEGAN:

No.

RESPONDANT:

I thought that there was a very nice choice between the scenes and then the times that we went toward the symbolism, if you will. The voyeuristic looking through the windows at first and then those when we step into the world a bit. And so he uses the lights, I think, to set up our symbolic moments at the beginning and then pulls into the realism and with the windows going up and further away, there's nothing between us and their world. I felt that we were no longer, that person that says, "oh that's them and not us" and then that very theatrical moment at the end when she is in the crosshairs of the light was very strong. Now we hadn't had a quite a theatrical lighting choice up to that point and so it drew attention to itself and I'm still wrangling with that. I thought it was very stunning and beautiful. It said to me that we are out of the world of realism and we're into Mrs. Alving's head and I'm with her journey and out of her actual world and into this world. Also I think only in one place did I notice the stage manager change the color of your costumes and with a monochromatic, you know, or not really monochromatic, but with black and white and shades of gray, oooh, boy, it can go to green can't it? Your lighting designer can be your best friend or your worst enemy and so I thought for the most part, really kept your colors pretty true. Also the idea of just the minimalistic lighting so it was just enough to see a face here and there, but the detail up in this catwalkish whatever. The heavens that were somehow hell. You know, I read your work about Munch and your inspiration and I felt that the *Scream* was somehow here.

Also, moving on to costumes, the color palette was very interesting. The idea that these characters, especially the ghosts, were really devoid of blood, and bloodless I felt, but even into the real world, there wasn't much color in the characters either. A couple splashes of color, especially when we see a flashback of Regina's mother and a bright red there? A question I would have, it's Jess right? Tell me about the red sleeves on Regina at the end.

JESS WHITE:

Well, another design meeting. It kind of translates this whole stripping away of this world of Mrs. Alving's making, physically as well as mentally.....

RESPONDANT:

Tell me this. Because it's such a strong choice in that scene because it's such a more vivid red, what's happened to her between Act II and Act III.

JESS WHITE:

Well, we wanted that revelation to happen when she gets told by Mrs. Alving about her, about what's happened...

RESPONDANT:

And she takes the shawl off and I didn't see it until then. I love a justified choice because you are right, it was completely obscured until that moment. Great. Great. Are you your own cutter, draper?

JESS WHITE:

Well in conjunction...

RESPONDANT:

That bodice, that cut on that bodice for Mrs. Alving, that is tricky and it laid like a dream. Different fabric content. Heads up to you my man. It was interesting because you really did use a Victorian line but even in Osvald's, you've got metallic strands. There was a clear nod to the period but yet you weren't so strict to it fitting besides the play wasn't naturalistically, specifically rooted, every single element, certainly the furniture was of period, the costumes, the lines certainly told me that we were in a different period but it did not root me so much that the language of the translation seemed out of place and so yeah, yeah kudos to you. Are you a senior?

JESS WHITE:

Yes.

RESPONDANT:

What are you going to do after this?

JESS WHITE:

Moving to New York...

RESPONDANT:

Well, good luck. Really nice work. Good, let's see what else. If I could, I want to make sure that I talk about the acting styles if I can now because the play was so, it can be played on so many levels. Well, this play can go melodrama. And you know what let me connect, the sound effects that were a bit extreme, to me, those moments went to melodrama and the play was not there and I appreciated that and maybe that's why the sound effects did not work for me as well. But it really can, of course, at this time, the well made play and the melodrama were the soup du jour and Ibsen's saying nuh uh, we're going to work with a psychological trip of this woman character and so I thought

that it's a struggle and I thought you did very, very well in trying to find, to get everyone into the same world and at the same level of dramatization and when is too much too much and when is too little not compelling? That is a difficult, and especially I think, with Mrs. Alving because she is composed, isn't she? She's holding forth. She's holding back and she dampens the spirit of her husband and later she thinks "maybe I was the reason, maybe I was in part, the reason" and she does not have the *joi de vive* that her son finds when he goes to Paris and comes back and has this energy. And that's very difficult and are you onstage the whole time?

LEAH RAULERSON:

Except for intermissions.

RESPONDANT:

Except for intermissions. Holy cow! What a tour de force role and to play that restraint yet with the underlying sizzle of truth and her choices and the revelation of what those choices may have done to those around her. It's terribly difficult I think and to keep your subtext the journey that we are connecting with and riveted to because the text is very staid and so that was I think a really wonderful journey in psychoanalysis. There's a ladylikeness to your character which I thought was quite lovely, especially in comparison to Regina that was saucy. Saucy without being inappropriate. There were moments of silence that you had with her where there was a whole lot being said, but no words were spoken. And really the difference in class, I thought, was quite clear. The class, certainly, of Regina and her father, who, your leg isn't really like that, is it? Well, very convincing. Because of the coarseness of him and I felt like I wanted to go and give him a bath and the costume helped that enormously. The earth tone color palette there that really made him seem dirty and conniving and don't you go anywhere with your daughter alone. And the intellect that was there and, do you need much intellect to do pastor Manders? I might take that back. How about the opportunist element in him that really set him aside. I thought that the class and the hierarchy was there through physicality and through vocal choices and that was very, very helpful. Nice mirroring of the scenes with the periphery ghosts.

Excuse me for a moment while I find my place here. Public opinion. Traditional thinking. Ok. Um, Oswald's first entrance, I thought was really, costumes helped you here too. He's the returning prince. You know, he talks about being the prodigal son returning home, but you enter with this pipe, your long dressing robe, smoking jacket, whatever you want to call it, and it's a little Lord and you are doted upon. There was an interesting tempo rhythm that you chose, or in conjunction chose, that he is this person that is neigh onto death but still has this almost tantrum like look on, but that the energy of life and choices and possible love and possibilities, he's just like a little kid who goes out and plays real hard and then sleeps for a long time. And from that, I thought, it showed the difference in experience. And you want this mom to loosen up a little bit and while she is this forward thinker, she's got these thoughts going on, she still doesn't laugh much, she doesn't smile much. And for that, I thought, well shouldn't he be very sick and I'm so glad that I didn't direct this because I would have had him sick from the beginning

and I now know not to do that because it doesn't give any sense of, you know, he's lost from the very beginning or play the end of the play at the very beginning. Maybe the one thing that shocked me a little bit, I wasn't expecting it was to see him collapse, but because I was sitting over here and I didn't. All of sudden he was collapsed and I missed it. I missed him having this energy to being completely devoid of it and I may have seen it from the other side. Pastor Manders. Very nice sense of late middle age. I think that's a hard place to play. To be playing someone who is particularly aged, it's very difficult, but it has specifics that we go to. How old were you playing him?

CHAD RYAN:

Late forties.

RESPONDANT:

I thought middle age, is what I thought and I think for someone who is probably in their early twenties?

CHAD RYAN:

Just turned twenty.

RESPONDANT:

Just turned twenty. That is a hard place, agewise, to play and I thought you did it really very, very well and I thought there was a sense of him slowing down a bit physically, but was not a geriatric. And there was also a sense of pompacity that he brought to the floor which was by the very nature of his title he gave himself the go ahead to pass judgement, and to pass judgement without experience. But I thought you found that age bracket quite convincingly and again, I think it's a very hard one because how do forty eight year olds act? There's not really a norm to it and I think that's a hard age bracket.

As the show progressed, I wrote quite a bit in the first act, hardly any in the second, hardly any in the third because I was too busy watching. Forgive me if I get less specific. A couple things I wrote down about sound. The attention to detail was very nice. The fabulous lamp...I loved it! It was a huge splash of color onstage. It was kind of like in Schindler's List when he had that bright red dress. Tell me about the red lamp.

MEGAN

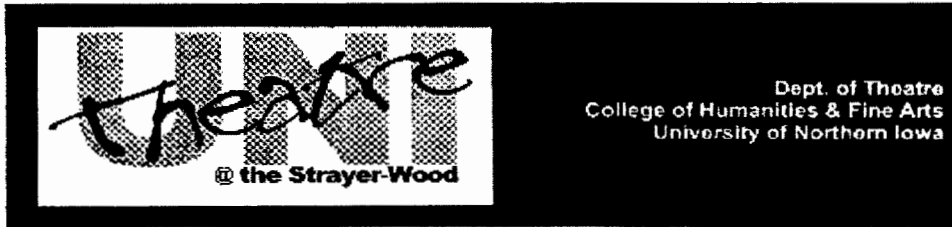
Well actually it came clear that the light...actually, the scenic designer made the lamp himself and he was very specific about it and we talked about it and he thought about red because whenever a lamp comes in there's a revelation and things are going to be revealed so we really wanted it to stand out. And there's a lighting cue there that happens that gives us a little more light as well so we decided on red because that's the point where she's about to tell them about Regina and her involvement and also the fire is about to happen and the color for the fire matches the color of the lamp.

## RESPONDANT:

It certainly does give a red flag that something significant is coming. I was starting to piece together the only colors that happen are in her memory and then I realized that wasn't right because there were some colors that were beginning to come onstage and maybe that was her memory coming into her present world, invading so much that she must deal with them in the present and not leave them in the past.

Anyway, I do want to talk to the ghosts as a group if I can. I thought they were a really wonderful consistency of a distance. You certainly did not have the same range of facial responses that your living characters did. It feels like you gave them very strict parameters and so that it gave the impression that they were reflections as opposed to living, breathing characters that brought new things. They didn't. They reflected the past. I felt like they were a much more restrained element and because of their restraint, their limited range of facial expression and their stalking that any little tiny thing they did, and when they came closer to the stage, and of course at the end when you are confronted, I thought if it touches her what is going to happen? And so they were the swarming, faceless entities that carried all of those dirty little sins and memories that you don't want to look at in the face and because they were so limited in their movement, any little tiny thing that they did struck me. Right at the beginning of the play when two of the ghosts embrace each other when there is some sort of sexual tension going on onstage, we see it as what music would do in a melodrama to highlight a moment, but it was done in a different way. I'm certain you have things you would like me to talk about that I have not, so if there's any questions that I can respond to...if not, I thank you so much. Ibsen is such a wonderful writer. I did one of his shows a couple of years ago and it is one of those shows that you think you want to go back and do it all over again because there's always so much more to find and I have only seen one other production of this and have read it a bunch of times, but you've shown me so many things that I was not able to discern and so thank you so much for having me! Enjoy your last weekend!

APPENDIX M  
PROGRAM



# *Ghosts*

by **Henrik Ibsen**

translated by **Rick Davis & Brian Johnston**

Director **Megan Schumacher**

Dramaturg **Teri Ann Greenfield**

Scenic Designer      Lighting Designer      Costume Designer  
**Leonard Curtis**      **Mark A. Parrott**      **Jess C. White\***

Sound Designer      Hair & Makeup Designer  
**Brad M. Carlson\***      \* **Molly Taylor**

Stage Manager  
**Mary Fagen**

April 15-18 & 20-25, 2004      Bertha Martin Theatre

Thanks to UNI's excellent and generous staff members, support staff, and audience members for making this production possible. The UNI and the Department of Theatre express their appreciation to the National Theatre Awards.

**University of  
Northern Iowa**



## Production Team

Production Manager.....	Leonard Curtis
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Amelia Bales
Assistant Lighting Designer.....	Chris Blad
Scenic Studio Technical Director.....	Brad M. Carlson
Scenic Artist.....	Eugenia Furneaux*
Scenery Construction Crew.....	Callic Beers, Chris Blad Carissa Bochmann, Katrina Broeka, Nathan Coon, Rob Drewelow, Derek Easton, Jolene Enke, Eugenia Furneaux, Carson Gross, Nick Halder, Jack Janning, Derek Johnson, Mark Jurgenson, David A. Myrick*, Amy Nagle, Rachelle Neuberger, Kimmy Park, Ben Powell, Gloria Rios, Anna Simpson, Anthony Soike
Properties Master.....	Katie Johnson
Scenery/Props Run Crew.....	Brad Borison, Leroy Feilds Diana V. Garcés, Molly Kline, Jay Robinson, Layton Weishner
Costume Studio Technical Director.....	Linda Grimm
Assistant to the Costume Technical Director.....	Leo Murzenko <sup>1</sup>
Cobbler.....	Jeffrey C. Bottom
Fabric Embellishment.....	Tiffany N. Rudd
Cutter/Draper.....	Linda Grimm, Katherine Nicklos Amy S. Ruhrberg, Jennifer Sherman, Jess C. White
Costume Construction Crew.....	Nikki Coppage, Pamela DeJong Eugenia Furneaux, Andrea Gangen, Nick Halder, Maura Ruth Hashman, Kate Holzmueller, Lacy Jennings, Anna Kretz, Leo Murzenko, Leah Raulerson, Tiffany Rudd, Jennifer Sherman, Kristen Solner, Molly Taylor, Kathleen Toal, Melissa Wallace, Jess C. White
Wardrobe Crew Head.....	Ryan Wickham
Makeup Crew Head.....	Arika Doering
Wardrobe/Makeup Crew.....	Jonathan Doerrfeld, Shallon Farmer Ben Kass, Breanna Lewis, Jussica Lewis, Alexis Mashek, Brian McCarty, Josh Mullady
Master Electrician.....	Carson Gross
Assistant Master Electrician.....	David A. Myrick
Electric Crew.....	Jeff Cumberland, Amy Nagle, JP Olsen, Kevin Sullivan
Light Board Operator.....	Whitney Randall
Sound Board Operator.....	Jay Robinson
House Manager.....	Teri Ann Greenfield
Box Office Manager.....	Joshua McGrane
Box Office Assistant Manager.....	Stacie Kienast
Box Office Staff.....	Dana Baranowski, Jason Goedken, Katie Johnson, Ben Kass, Kevin Sullivan
Poster Design.....	Jess C. White
Director of Marketing.....	Jasceena Hasket-Carlson
Assistant to the Marketing Director.....	Joshua Johnson, Laura J. Spindler
Acting Head, Dept of Theatre/Theatre UNI Artistic Director.....	Eric Lange
Dean, College of Humanities & Fine Arts.....	James Lubker

\* TAP member    <sup>1</sup> S.T.A.G.E. Inc scholarship recipient



## Cast Biographies

**Gretchen Weseman Carter** (Regina), from Sioux City, was most recently seen as *Rosecrantz* in *Rosecrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. She is a senior theatre major with an emphasis in performance and education. Her previous Theatre UNI credits include *Roosters*, *The Laramie Project*, *The Last Night of Ballyhoon*, and *Measure for Measure*.

**Mary Fagen** (stage manager), a junior theatre major, has worked in various positions in several Theatre UNI productions, including serving as the assistant stage manager for *Rosecrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Mary is from Perry, Iowa.

**Nick Halder** (Ghost), a junior theatre major from Cherokee, has performed in UNISTA's *The Best of Broadway* and served as stage manager for *The Tender Land* earlier this semester. He currently works in the Theatre UNI scenic and costume studios.

**Joe Kelly** (Ghost) is making his Theatre UNI debut onstage in *Ghosts*. He is a sophomore theatre major from Eldridge.

**Leah Rauertson** (Mrs. Alving) has recently appeared in the Theatre UNI production of *The Threepenny Opera* and UNISTA productions of *David's Redhaired Death* and *The Best of Broadway*. She is a senior theatre major from Decorah.

**Chad Ryan** (Pastor Manders) is a sophomore theatre major from Chicago. He appeared in the UNISTA production of *Slaughter City* last year. This is his first appearance in a Theatre UNI production.

**Anna Simpson** (Ghost) is a freshman theatre major from Maquoketa. This is her first appearance in a Theatre UNI production.

**Brina Smith** (Ghost) is also a freshman theatre major making her Theatre UNI debut onstage. Brina is from Sioux City.

**Gabriel Smith** (Oswald Alving) is a senior English Education major and theatre minor. He has appeared in Theatre UNI productions of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Measure for Measure*, as well as the Off-Hudson Reading of *Our Lady of 121st Street*. Gabriel is from Monticello, Iowa.

**Josh Visnapuu** (Jakob Engstrand) has previously appeared in Theatre UNI productions of *The Singular Life of Albert Nobbs*, *The Rose of Treason*, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, and *Angels in America*. He is a senior theatre major from Springville.

## From the Director

Who defines us and more importantly, how do we define ourselves? Is it how we fit into society's view? Is it the roles we play within our family or amongst our friends and lovers? Is it what we say or what we believe? So often we find ourselves living up to expectations even if we must lie to do so. We cling to these expectations and let them guide us in our actions instead of letting the truth of our humanity shine through and free us all. This play is a cautionary tale. Mrs. Alving's struggle against the ghosts that she defines as "all sorts of old, dead beliefs and ideas" will hopefully enable others to speak their own truths.

As we began this process, I think it was with some trepidation. A tremendous opportunity for everyone involved from actors to designers to the production crew, this was not something to be taken lightly. This is a well known play by a famous playwright. It required modernizing, hard work and complete dedication. While the process has encompassed all these things, these very serious expectations have fallen by the wayside because at the heart of this play is a woman—a woman who has made mistakes in her past and has a desire to release herself from the guilt and pain this has caused. As we began to research and rehearse and create and build, an amazing momentum swept the process along until we had something in our hands to share. Something important. You will find, as the story unfolds, a layered sensory experience. Everything is linked and interwoven to give Mrs. Alving's struggle depth. The design elements, the addition of four non-speaking roles, and the movement, all push her towards her final moment and a devastating choice.

In my own experience with this play, I have redefined myself several times over. I have questioned and answered truthfully and have found the ability to free myself from past mistakes and endeavors to fully embrace those in front of me. I may still feel the "ghosts" haunting me from time to time, but I am no longer afraid of the light and I will not let myself be trapped by expectations. A friend of mine once told me that we create the world in which we live. I believe this is true. What this entire experience has shown me, through the hard work of everyone involved, is that while we may create it, others will always affect our world. And sometimes, as in the case of this show, this is a very positive thing.

- Megan Schumacher

*The mission of the Department of Theatre is to provide university students with an experiential, liberal-arts education in theatre through coursework and productions which are diverse, creative, and participatory.*

*The Department prepares majors to contribute to the discipline and provides leadership in theatre education.*

*We create theatre and in this process, educate.*

*It is reasonable to suppose that «Ghosts» will cause alarm in some circles, but so it must be. If it did not do so, it would not have been necessary to write it.*

--Henrik Ibsen

Henrik Ibsen, known world wide as the "father of modern drama", wrote *Ghosts* in 1881 as a response to the overwhelmingly negative reaction he received after the first few productions of his earlier play, *A Doll House*. What began as a harsh reaction to the criticism evolved into a play in its own right dealing with similar familial subject matter but expanded to include societal restrictions as well. Needless to say, in the time period in which it was first published and produced, the show was not a huge success. It took ten years for the first edition to sell out because bookstores were sending it back to publishers, deeming it indecent. It caused a major scandal internationally and many countries banned public performances. It was eventually produced for the first time in Chicago for an audience of Norwegian immigrants in 1882. One hundred and twenty two years later, it is still being produced. While the themes may not shock audiences as they once did, Ibsen's view of humanity still rings true today.



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