

Directorial Concept Proposal

I think that "Polaroid Stories" presents a new artistic avenue for the Rude Mechanicals. This play is contemporary, lyrical, urban and confronts subject matter that Shakespearean and Classical texts do not, like drugs, homelessness and street crime. While these distinctly contemporary issues would be new material for the troupe, the play is deeply embedded in the stories and characters of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, familiar territory that will be the artistic anchor of my production. My goal for this production is to tell the stories of people who are often forgotten and ignored, elevating their pathos by aligning them with the lasting tales of ancient immortals, like Zeus and Dionysus, and mythological figures like Eurydice and Orpheus. Through this play I feel I will be able to portray the heartwrenching, but viscerally human lives of drug addicts, runaways and thugs while maintaining the integrity of Ovid's Greek source stories. These characters are not kids who happen to resemble gods, they are gods living in the contemporary underworld.

I believe that this play has a unique ability to turn contemporary jargon, slang and profanity into stunning verse that matches its Classical source in beauty. For this reason, I think it fits perfectly into the Rude Mechanicals season and overall mission. It is a contemporary play with the spirit and artistry of a classic. The play's use of vernacular veils an artfully faithful adaptation of Ovid, which might attract audience members to *Metamorphoses* who may not have otherwise been interested. Further, I think that the subject matter of this play lends itself well to opportunities to reach out to the D.C. community, raising awareness and, perhaps, donations for homeless and at risk youth.

The show's aesthetic is handmade and dreamlike. Each character will be dressed in contemporary ragged but colorful clothing and will have a costume aspect evocative of their myth. Philomel will put on a bathrobe with her defiant speech from Ovid written all over it. Persephone will wear a hoodie and a flower in her hair. Orpheus will carry a busted and broken guitar. SKINHEADgirl will have string wrapped around both of her forearms. D will wear androgynous clothing and make-up. G will dress opulently with lightning bolt accents. Narcissus will always carry a hand mirror. Eurydice will wear a handmade flower chain wreath. Echo will carry around a toy echo microphone. SKINHEADboy will always have a knife. The lighting and set will be dark and dreamy. The only major set piece will be a panel of chain link fence. Above the scene I want there to be colorful Christmas lights. The music will be heavy bass, dupstep and mash-up music. I want to create an atmosphere that reminds the audience of finding your way through a major city at night, maybe a little drunk.

Naomi Iizuka's *Polaroid Stories*

A directorial concept breakdown by. Jonelle Walker

...Create your own myth...

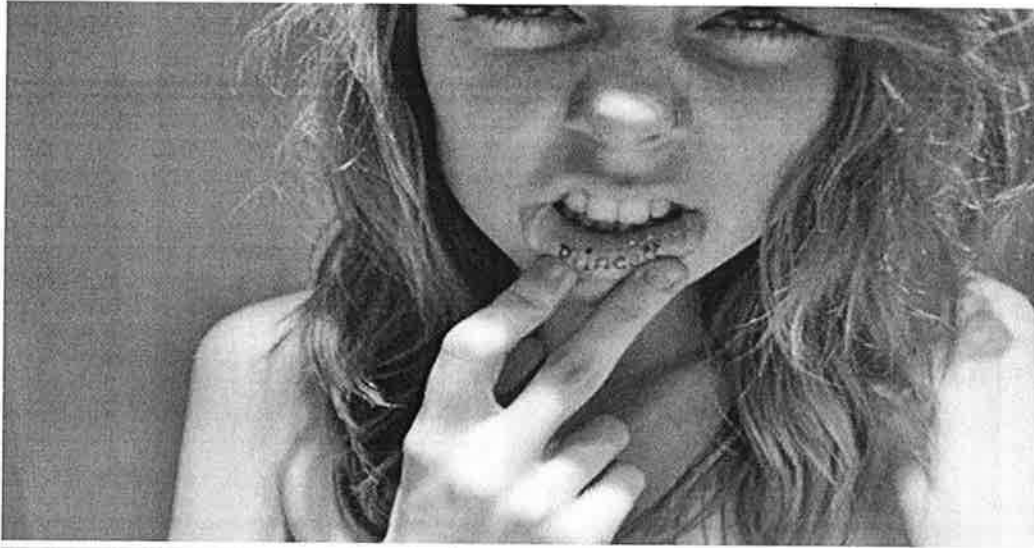
D (Dionysus)



ain't about dancing
around. ain't about
talking big. you got to
touch me to kill me. we
got to be that close

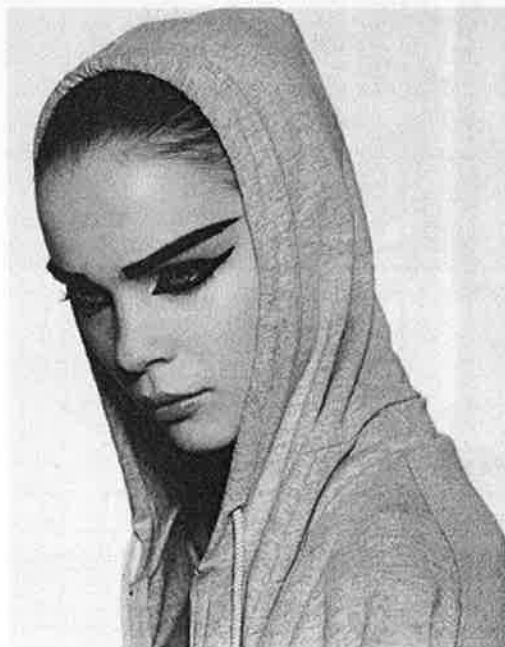
listen up, baby, this
faggot is a god.

Eurydice



i drink from the river of forgetfulness.
i forget the names i forget the faces i forget the
stories
i forget all kinds of shit.

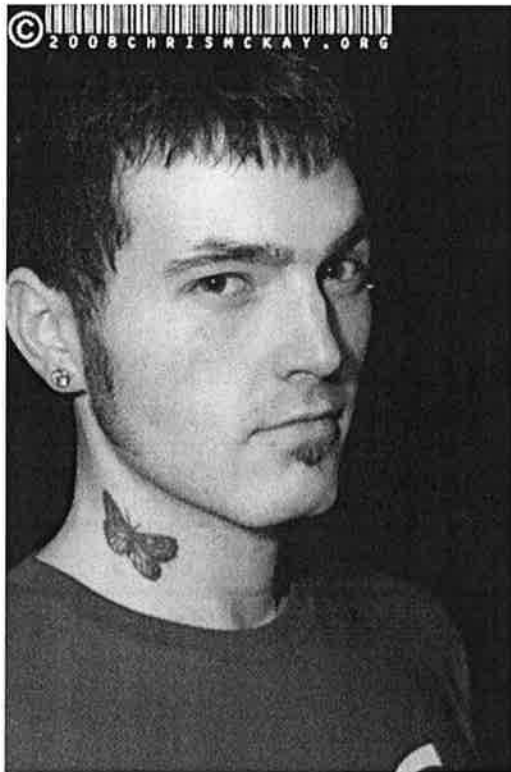
Persphone/Semele



heard that, heard
that, heard that all
before.

i know you, little
girl. i know you like
i know myself.

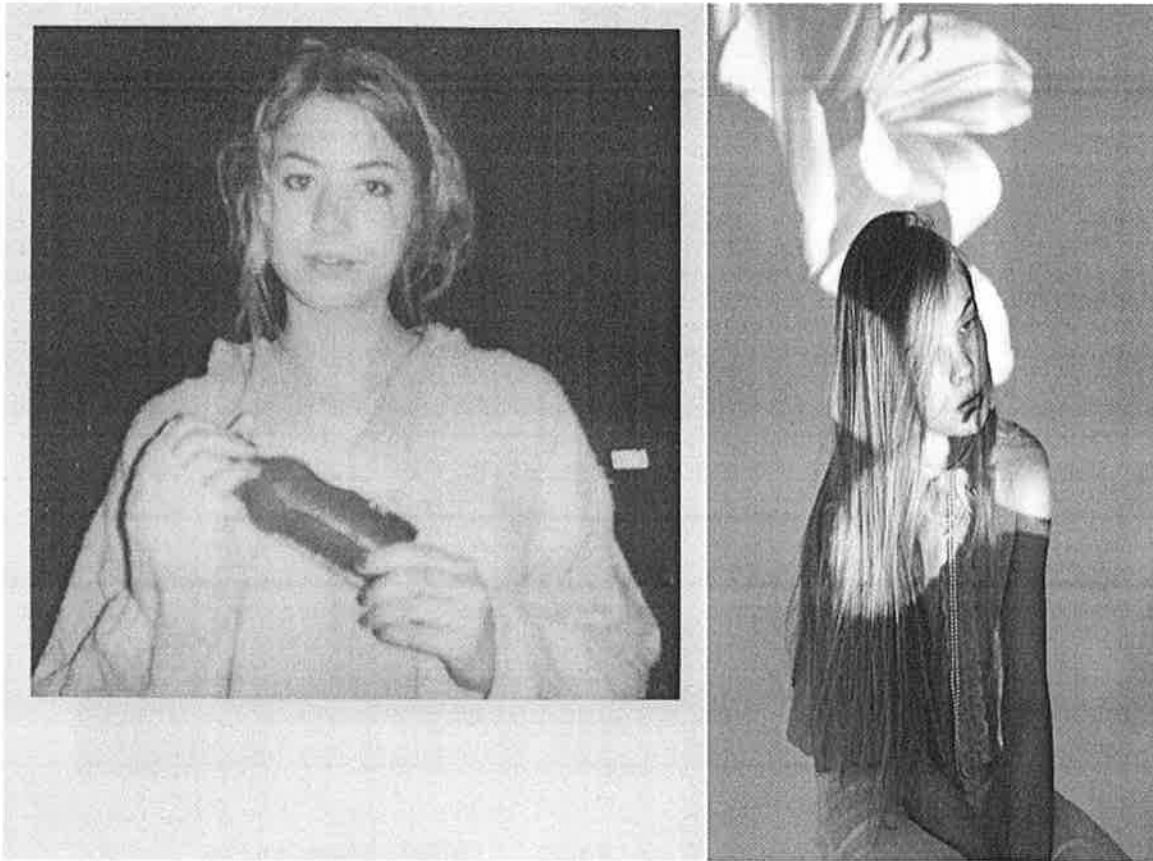
Orpheus/Tereus



i'm writing you a love song. i'm writing it in
blood like an oath

cross my heart. hope to die, stick a needle in my
eye - i'm going to win back your heart, swear i
will.

Philomel



PHILOMEL opens her mouth. No sound comes out. Blood instead of sound. She touches the blood with her fingers. And then touches the chainlink fence, cement, the walls. And everywhere her fingers touch, she stains the world red. In the darkness, the red turns into blood-red flowers.

SKINHEADgirl (Ariadne)



cause i'm like this
princess in this
fairy tale, this
fuckin rad-ass fairy
tale and I don't get
scared ever, cause
the princess always
lands on her feet,
she always ends up
ok in the end

Narcissus



what's wrong with
wantin shit? no, i'm
serious. what's so
wrong with wantin
shit? tss. forget
this. forget you.



Echo



i'd be like somebody who
knew you when, i'd be
like somebody you used to
know

SKINHEADboy (Theseus)



i ain't scared, i ain't scared
i ain't scared, i ain't scared
i ain't scared, i ain't scared —

but, see, what it is, i got a plan, right
i got it all worked out
i ain't about to let shit get me down, i ain't about to
let nothing get me down, cause i know what i'm doing,
and i got it all figured out

G (Zeus)

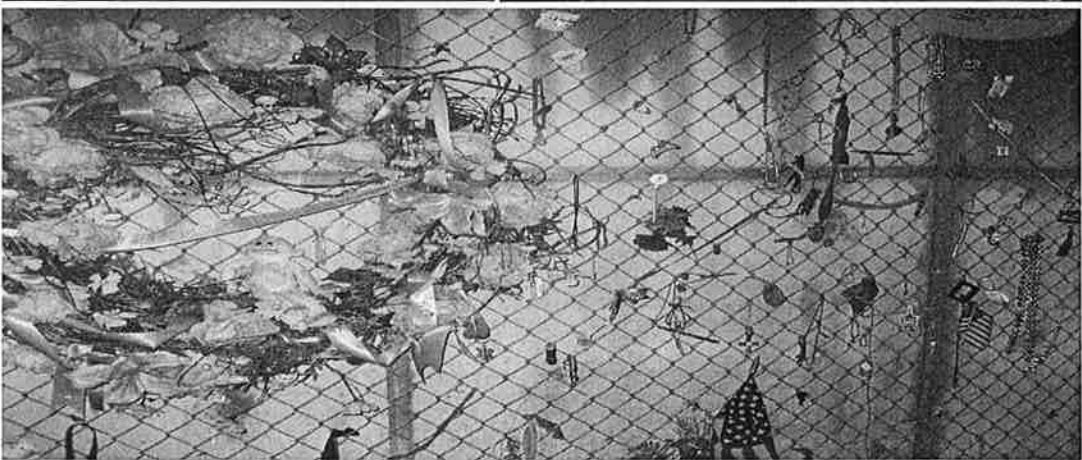
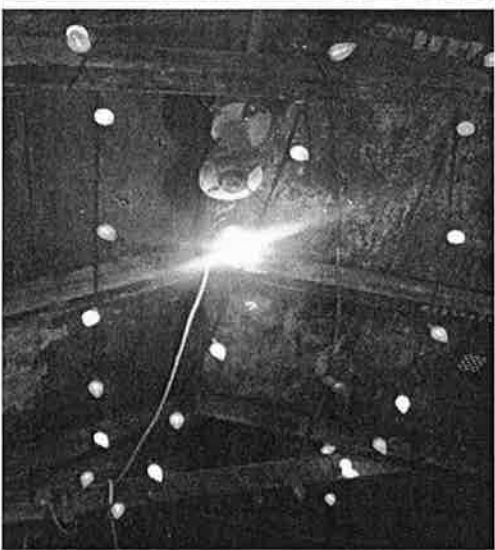
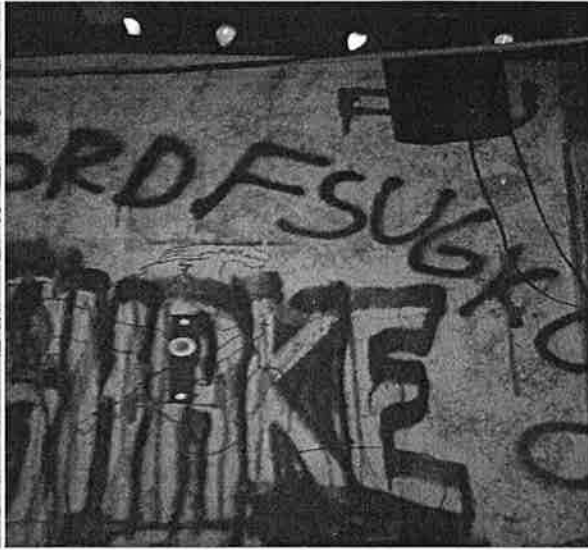


what can i say to make my girl smile?
what kind of love song can i sing to
her? what kind of magic words can i
say to her to make her open up for me
like some kind of beautiful flower -

baby, all i got for you is love,
ain't nothing deep, ain't nothing
special. love is what is is. simple
as a shoe.



Lighting & Set



Soundscape

1. Agony by. Kredo
2. The Riddler by. Kredo
3. okay cupid by. Kitty Pryde
4. Sedative by. Kredo
5. Bloom by. Pogo
6. Thinkin' Bout You by. Frank Ocean
7. Wishery by. Pogo
8. Lightless Dawn by. Kevin MacLeod
9. Hypnothis by. Kevin MacLeod
10. Tranquility by. Kevin MacLeod

Semele and Zeus – The Birth of Dionysus

Key: Jupiter/Jove=Zeus, Bacchus=Dionysus, Juno=Hera

From Ovid:

“So Juno moulded Cadmus’ daughter’s [Semele] mind.
The girl, unwitting, asked of Jove a boon
Unnamed. ‘Choose what you will’, the god replied,
‘There’s nothing I’ll refuse, and should you doubt,
The Power of rushing Styx shall be my witness,
The deity whom all gods hold in awe.’
She, too successful, happy in her ruin,
Doomed by her lover’s generosity,
Answered ‘Give me yourself in the same grace
As when your Juno holds you to her breast
In love’s embrace.’ He would have locked her lips;
Too late: her words had hastened on their way.

...

Then her mortal frame
Could not endure the tumult of the heavens;
That gift of love consumed her. From her womb
Her baby, still not fully formed, was snatched,
And sewn (could one believe the tale) inside
His father’s thigh, and so completed there”

Summary: Zeus’s angry wife, Hera, upon finding out that Semele is pregnant with Zeus’s child, disguises herself as an old woman to trick Semele into asking Zeus to make love to her with his full power as a god. Semele requests a gift and Zeus swears to not refuse her on his station as chief amongst the gods, so once Semele requests he make love to her at full power he has to oblige her. Semele is destroyed by the full glory of Zeus’s power, but Dionysus, still in his mother’s womb, is saved by Zeus and is born from Zeus’s thigh.

In Polaroid ...: Semele is consumed by her addiction to “rock,” which is the gift she asks G for, that he cannot refuse to give her. This addiction is what caused D to be born with some defects (“Crack Baby”) and to be taken away from his mother.

Narcissus and Echo

From Ovid:

"Narcissus now had reached his sixteenth year
And seemed both man and boy; and many a youth
And many a girl desired him, but hard pride
Ruled in that delicate frame, and never a youth
And never a girl could touch his haughty heart."

"Echo was still a body, not a voice,
But talkative as now, and with the same
Power of speaking, only to repeat,
As best she could, the last of many words ...
Now when she saw Narcissus wandering
In the green byways, Echo's heart was fired;
And stealthily she followed, and the more
She followed him, the nearer flamed her love...
She longed to come to him with winning words,
To urge soft pleas, but nature now opposed;
She might not speak first but – what she might –
Waited for words her voice could say again."

(It is really best to read all of the myth of Narcissus in the Ovid – it's beautiful and short and completely relevant.)

Summary: Echo distracted Hera while some nymphs fled from lying with Zeus on a mountainside. For this, Hera stole her ability to speak with her own voice, only allowing her to echo a small piece of what she could hear. Echo came upon Narcissus in the woods and immediately fell in love with him, trying to declare her love with the echoes of his words. Echo revealed herself to Narcissus and he rejected her. Echo retreats into the woods and wastes away from sadness until all that is left is her echoing voice. Narcissus eventually notices his own reflection in a stream and drowns himself in grief that he can't embrace the one thing he has ever loved – his own reflection.

In Polaroid ...: This is pretty straightforward. Echo loves Narcissus, but he cannot love her, not simply because he is haughty, but also because he is gay. When Narcissus tells her to disappear, that is the rejection that causes her to waste away to just a voice.

Pentheus, Acoetes and Dionysus (The Lydian Sailor/SKINHEADboy .v D, explained)

From Ovid:

"Bacchus himself, grape-bunches garlanding
His brow, brandished a spear that vine-leaves twined,
And at his feet fierce spotted panthers lay,
Tigers and lynxes too, in phantom forms.
The men leapt overboard, all driven mad
Or panic-stricken,

...

[Said Acoetes] 'Landing there, I joined his cult
And now am Bacchus' faithful follower.'

...

With no hands left to stretch
Out to his mother, 'Look, mother!' he cried,
And showed the severed stumps. And at that sight
Agave howled and tossed her head and hair,
Her streaming hair, and tore his head right off ...
so those wicked hands
Tore Pentheus limb from limb."

Summary: Pentheus tries, and fails, to persuade people not to worship Dionysus. Pentheus is not persuaded by the tale of Acoetes, who tells how Dionysus came aboard his ship and made all of his shipmates insane, forcing them to jump ship and drown themselves. Pentheus tries to spy on the rites of Dionysus and his followers, but, in their madness, he is discovered and torn limb from limb by his mother and aunt.

In Polaroid ...: SKINHEADboy tries to undermine D, with SKINHEADgirl, by undermining his authority and stealing his stash. Upon being discovered, SKINHEADboy is "torn to pieces" by D and then tells the story of his mother (which has clear parallels to Pentheus's death). "The Lydian Sailor" is a reference to SKINHEADboy's suicide after SKINHEADgirl disappears/dies (arguable). It could be said that SKINHEADboy was driven mad, in a sense, by the overwhelming power/allure of the streets/drugs (Dionysus) and he was inspired, like the Lydian sailors to jump ship.

Persephone and Hades (Persephone/G/Eurydice connection)

Note: Prosperpine=Persephone, Ceres (Demeter) is her mother

From Ovid:

“But if your heart’s so set
To part them [Persephone and Hades], Prosperpine shall reach the sky
Again on one condition, that in Hell
Her lips have touched no food; such is the rule
Foreestablished by the three fate-goddesses.’
So Jove replied; but Ceres was resolved
To win her daughter back. Not so the Fates
Permitted, for the girl had broken her fast
And wandering, childlike, through the orchard trees
From a low branch had picked a pomegranate”

Summary: Hades falls in love with Persephone. He rapes her as she picks violets from a grove and kidnaps her, taking her to the underworld. After searching the earth for her daughter, Demeter punishes the earth by making the soil barren. Demeter speaks to Zeus, Persephone’s father, and he tells her what has happened. Zeus assures her that she can have Persephone back as long as Persephone hasn’t eaten anything from the underworld. Sadly, Persephone is tricked by Hades into eating seeds from a pomegranate, sending her back to the underworld where she rules alongside Hades as Queen of the Underworld/Dead.

In Polaroid ...: Persephone is queen of the streets (underworld). When Eurydice tells Persephone her story, she has heard this story before because it is her own. She, too, was seduced by G (Hades/Zeus) and brought into the underworld. When Eurydice eats the orange G gives her, she is damning herself to the underworld and to become a, Persephone-like, queen of the streets. Killing Orpheus is her symbolic final, irreversible descent into the underworld.

Tereus and Philomel (Philomel's Story/ Orpheus as Tereus)

From Ovid:

"As Tereus watched, already in his thoughts
He fondled [Philomel], and when he saw her kisses
And how she hugged Pandion, everything
Thrust like a goad, his passion's food and fire

...

And then the king drags off Pandion's daughter
Up to a cabin in the woods, remote
And hidden away among dark ancient trees,
And there pale, trembling, fearing everything,
Weeping and asking where her sister was,
He locked her, and revealed his own black heart
And ravished her, a virgin, all alone

...

Philomela, seeing the sword,
Offered her throat and hoped she would have died.
But as she fought, outraged, for words and called
Her father's name continually, he seized
Her tongue with tongs and, with his brutal sword,
Cut it away."

(Stephanie, this whole passage ["Tereus, Procne, and Philomela"] is brutally sad and beautifully written – would be helpful I think!)

Summary: Tereus is married to Philomel's sister Procne. Procne sends Tereus to fetch Philomel for a visit to their home, Thrace. Upon first seeing her, Tereus is overcome with lust for Philomel. Once he has gotten her back to Thrace, he rapes her and cuts off her tongue, so she can never tell anyone. Philomel weaves illustrations of the crimes onto a robe so that she can tell her story to her sister. Philomel and Procne's terrible revenge, feeding Tereus's son to him, is punished by turning Philomel into a song bird.

In Polaroid ...: Philomel has been attacked by a shadowy figure not present in the play (Tereus) who looked exactly like Orpheus. She spends the play trying to find ways to tell her story, singing, speaking (blood song), her robe. Philomel also sees in Orpheus the powerful lust/love he has for Eurydice, which she remembers from the eyes of Tereus. Orpheus is always teetering on the razor thin edge of extremes: extreme love (Eurydice/Orpheus) and extreme lust (Philomel/Tereus). This is a man who does NOT like to be alone.

Orpheus and Eurydice

From Ovid:

"So to music of his strings [Orpheus] sang, ...
The Furies' cheeks, it's said, were wet with tears;
And Hades' queen and he whose sceptre rules
The Underworld could not deny his prayer,
And called Eurydice.

...

And now they neared the edge of the bright world,
And, fearing lest she faint, longing to look,
He turned his eyes – and straight she slipped away.
He stretched his arms to hold her – to be held –
And clasped, poor soul, naught but the yielding air.
And she, dying again, made no complaint
(For what complaint had she save she was loved?)
And breathed a faint farewell, and turned again
Back to the land of spirits whence she came."

Summary: Shortly after Orpheus and Eurydice are married, Eurydice is bitten by a snake and she dies. Orpheus goes to the underworld to beg Persephone and Hades to return his wife, playing a beautiful song to convince them. He is allowed to take her on the condition that he does not look back at her until they leave the underworld. Just before they reach the surface, Orpheus is worried for Eurydice and looks back at her sending her back to the underworld, for good.

In Polaroid...: Orpheus and Eurydice meet and fall in love quickly ... at least, Orpheus does. When Eurydice is seduced into the underworld by G, Orpheus works his way through the underworld trying to win her back, eventually pleading with his words of love to Persephone. He is finally confronted by Eurydice, who is already a shade, already too far into the underworld to come back. When Orpheus looks back at her, she kills him and she descends completely into the underworld, for good.

Ariadne and Theseus in the Labyrinth (SKINHEADgirl and SKINHEADboy)

In Ovid:

"The door,
so difficult, which none of those before
Could find again, by Ariadne's aid
Was found, the thread that traced the way rewound.
Then Theseus, seizing Minos' daughter, spread
His sails for Naxos, where, upon the shore,
That cruel prince abandoned her and she,
Abandoned, in her grief and anger found
Comfort in Bacchus' arms. He took her crown
Flew through the soft light air and, as it flew,
Its gems were turned to gleaming fires, and still
Shaped as a crown their place in heaven they take"

Summary: Ariadne volunteers to help Theseus solve the labyrinth and kill the Minotaur. They kill the Minotaur and solve the labyrinth using Ariadne's string. Theseus abandons Ariadne on the shore of Naxos, where she grieves his loss. Dionysus determines that she will be his wife and he sets Ariadne's wedding diadem in the stars as a constellation.

In Polaroid ...: SKINHEADgirl and SKINHEADboy are constantly searching for each other in the labyrinth of the streets at night. They work their way out together and are determined to elope and leave this place. When SKINHEADgirl wakes up to find SKINHEADboy missing, she shakes him off and takes her place amongst the stars (note: the diadem connection to the "fucking princess" monologue).

Polaroid Stories

REHEARSAL REPORT

DATES: 10/15 - 18

LOCATION: Katzen 151

Management: Jonelle, Kate, Ramya

SCHEDULE:

Monday: FS-1- Everyone - 5:40-8 pm

Tuesday: FS- 3,9,11- Called: Matt, Henry, Stephanie,Ariana,Niya- 5:40-8 pm

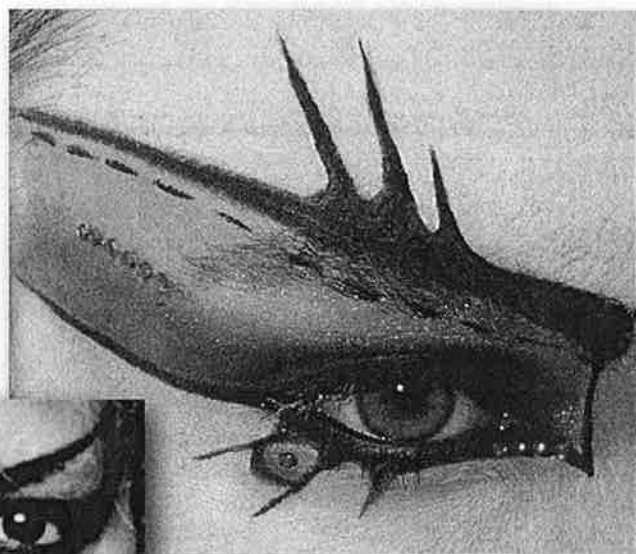
Wednesday: FS 2,5,10- Called: Matt, Caitlyn, Niya- 5:30-8 pm

Thursday: FS 4,12 – Called: Andrea, Brandon, Sarah- 5:40-8 pm

GENERAL NOTES:

- Rehearsed nearly half of the first act
- Relationship building with Brandon/Sarah, Caitlyn/Matt, Henry/Ariana
- Tried Italian run-throughs with an ensemble scene and two partner scenes with Caitlyn/Matt and Sarah/Brandon to successful character breakthroughs. Will continue this strategy, when the opportunity presents itself.
- Production meeting on 10/15 with costume designer Medha and Kate went well; will pick up on acquiring costume pieces when she returns to DC
- A small stuffed teddy bear has been added to the props for Stephanie (Philomel), in addition to potentially adding a guitar or ukelele for Matt (Orpheus).
- Both Sarah and Brandon will begin bringing rehearsal shoes next week.

"Polaroid Stories"
Hair & Makeup



Jonelle Walker
IS: Honors Capstone Project
Prof. Rivera
December 7, 2012

Polaroid Stories: Reflection Paper

On my first read through *Polaroid Stories* – Naomi Iizuka’s adaptation of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* – I was immediately inspired and challenged. The piece is densely lyrical, told almost exclusively with the dramatically challenging “story monologue.” The actions that Iizuka suggests in her stage directions are symbolic translations of Ovid’s fantastical imagery, completely up to the director to interpret for the gritty, streets of *Polaroid Stories*. In order to artistically orient myself in this world, I consulted four inspirational texts, both literary and musical: *Polaroid Stories*, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Mary Zimmerman’s *Metamorphoses* and the music of mash-up artist Pogo and experimental composer Milton Babbitt. I approached *Polaroid Stories* and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* comparatively, letting Iizuka’s source text illuminate the work that the play is doing. Zimmerman’s *Metamorphoses* was a contrasting vision; a wholly different approach to the source text that nonetheless helped me isolate a directorial matrix for *Polaroid Stories*. Finally, my musical inspirations were two standouts in the hundreds of songs I culled, Pogo and composer Milton Babbitt, who, though distinctly different musicians, both illustrated the texture of the aural atmosphere of *Polaroid Stories*.

When I began working with *Polaroid Stories* as a production, my first step was to analyze how and why Iizuka adapted Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. I began cross-referencing Iizuka’s adaptation with her source text to glean what particular strands of Ovid’s stories she had used and what she had edited out. From this cross-reference, I determined that Iizuka extracted and adapted seven major myths from Ovid: the myths of Semele and Zeus, Ariadne and Theseus,

Tereus and Philomel, Pentheus and Dionysus, Orpheus and Eurydice, Echo and Narcissus and Hades and Persephone. These seven couples, fourteen individuals, are compressed into ten by Iizuka, allowing her to focus on romantic or loving relationships while complicating their emotion. For example, by compressing the characters of Tereus and Orpheus into one figure, called Orpheus in Iizuka's adaptation, that figure's relationship to both Eurydice and Philomel is complicated: darkening the relationship between Eurydice and Orpheus as well as giving more depth to the relationship between Orpheus (Tereus) and Philomel. Ultimately, this compression clarifies and improves upon Ovid's characterization of Orpheus and Tereus. This effect is true of other compressions in the adaptation including that of Pentheus and Theseus, Eurydice and Persephone and Semele and Persephone. The compression of these characters and the selection of key images from the myths in certain stage directions highlight Iizuka's themes of personal myth, love and storytelling, essential ideas to my production.

The detailed adaptations of Ovid that Iizuka performs are the following:

Semele is consumed by her addiction to "rock," which is the gift she asks G (Zeus) for that he cannot refuse to give her because he has sworn, on his power as king of the gods, that he would provide anything she requested. This addiction (in Ovid, the full force of Zeus's power as a god through lovemaking) is what "burns" Semele and forces her to abandon D (Dionysus) because he is born with birth defects; addicted to crack-cocaine before he has left the womb.

Echo loves Narcissus, but he cannot love her, not simply because he is haughty, but also because he is gay. Echo breaks from her cursed loss of voice to confess to Narcissus how she feels. When Narcissus tells her to disappear, that is the rejection that causes her to waste away to just a voice.

SKINHEADboy, like Pentheus, tries to undermine D (Dionysus), with SKINHEADgirl, by undermining his authority and stealing his stash. Upon being discovered, SKINHEADboy is “torn to pieces” by D and then tells the story of his mother (which has clear parallels to Pentheus’s death at the hands of his mother and aunt). “The Lydian Sailor” is a reference to SKINHEADboy’s suicide after SKINHEADgirl disappears. It could be said that SKINHEADboy was driven mad, in a sense, by the overwhelming power and allure of the streets and drugs, a stand in for the power of Dionysus, and he was inspired, like the Lydian sailors, to jump ship.

Persephone is a queen of the streets; a contemporary underworld. When Eurydice tells Persephone her story, she has heard this story before because it is her own. She, too, was seduced by G (Hades/Zeus) and brought into the underworld; when Eurydice eats the orange G gives her she is damning herself to the underworld and to become a, Persephone-like, queen of the streets. Killing Orpheus at the play’s climax is her symbolic final, irreversible descent into the underworld.

Philomel has been attacked by a shadowy figure not present in the play who looked exactly like Orpheus – arguably the same man that Eurydice was abused by back where she comes from; a Tereus figure. Philomel sees in Orpheus the powerful lust and love he has for Eurydice, which she remembers from the eyes of the Tereus figure.

Orpheus and Eurydice meet and fall in love quickly ... at least, Orpheus does. When Eurydice is seduced into the underworld by G, Orpheus works his way through the underworld trying to win her back, eventually pleading with his words of love to Persephone. He is finally confronted by Eurydice, who is already a shade, already too far into the underworld to come back.

SKINHEADgirl and SKINHEADboy are constantly searching for each other in the labyrinth of the streets at night. They work their way out together and are determined to elope and leave the city. When SKINHEADgirl wakes up to find SKINHEADboy missing, she shakes him off and ascends, becoming a star, like Ariadne's diadem in the myth which is further referenced by the "princess" language in SKINHEADgirl's monologue.

After thoroughly examining how Iizuka adapted her source material, I was interested to see how other significant adaptations of Ovid approached the text. I immediately turned to Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses* – a seminal work of dramatic adaptation. Aside from the superficial fact that Zimmerman's work focuses on completely different myths from Iizuka's, there are significant structural and linguistic differences between the two works. Zimmerman's approach to the source text is less transformative in subject and language, keeping the mythological figures in their original time, place and social status. Where Iizuka displaces the figures from Ovid into the streets of a major city, Zimmerman places them in a mythological realm with a large pool of water at its center. The two playwrights take distinct approaches to adapting Ovid's beautiful verse: Zimmerman translates Ovid's poetry into contemporary speech, a sort of blank verse, where Iizuka develops her own contemporary version of the verse, incorporating profanity, slang and onomatopoeia to complete the rhythm. Reading Zimmerman's adaptation gave me a greater appreciation of the work that Iizuka does in the play, highlighting the dramatic strengths and weaknesses of each adaptation.

Though comparing the adaptations was important to me to discern what the work Iizuka's adaptation was, through reading Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses* I discovered my directorial matrix. In the tale of Eros and Psyche, A gives a monologue on the importance of honesty regarding the self-myth: "It has been said that the myth is a public dream, dreams are private

myths.”¹ This statement stopped me dead in my tracks - a lightning bolt “a-ha” moment. This statement summarized concisely and elegantly what I believe is the central statement of *Polaroid Stories*. To unpack that a bit, the personal myth is a way in which we control our lives, it is the essence of storytelling and of theatre. Mythology is the way in which we control the basic chaotic state of nature and the universe. The kids at the center of *Polaroid Stories*, inspired by real homeless youth in San Francisco, have no control over their destinies, because they have been disenfranchised by American poverty culture, and can only exert control through storytelling and through lying. Inside the lie, the myth, the dream is the power. This was idea was so powerful that it brought my directorial matrix, “create your own myth,” to the surface. This statement was essential to my production, as any good matrix should be; it influenced my direction and all of the lighting, sound and costume design.

Given the lyrical, rhythm based language of *Polaroid Stories*, it was very important to me that the show have a clear aural atmosphere. In collaborating with my sound designer, Niusha Nawab, I culled through hundreds of different songs ranging in genre from hip-hop to opera. Ultimately, I focused on the contrasting styles of two musicians whose work captured the unsettling, but relaxed air I wanted: Pogo and Milton Babbitt. Pogo works as a mash-up artist, cutting sections from many songs and collaging them together. I was particularly interested in his remixes of Disney songs, especially “Alice,” “Bloom” and “Wishery.” These songs are squarely in the mash-up genre, but also take influence from other genres I wanted to hear in the sound design like trip hop, chill wave and ambient music. Beyond the soothing, but rhythmic sound of the music, the idea of sound collage was appealing to the nature of *Polaroid Stories* itself. The language of the play, coming from the voices of ten performers, is weaved together to create one

¹ The dichotomy of the myth/public dream and dream/private myth is an idea that Zimmerman adapted from mythologist Joseph Campbell’s book “The Power of Myth.”

play, one story, one “song.” That these songs were Disney was also appealing to the aesthetic of the production. Disney songs are so evocative of the childhood of all American children that a remix of those classic songs lends itself well to the stories of the play, themselves dramatic remixes of the stories of American teenagers. Further, Disney is a sort of American mythology, passed down from parent to child, so its presence seems appropriate in a contemporary American adaptation of Greek mythology.

The work of Milton Babbitt, on the other hand, is a complete departure the relaxed, ambient sound of most of the sound design. Babbitt is an experimental composer who is especially known for his early work with the synthesizer. His work tends to be disjointed and complicated in the vein of improvisational jazz. I was especially interested in his piece “Philomel” as an inspiration for the unsettling feelings in the sound design centered on Philomel and Dionysus. The song uses the recorded sound of a soprano singer and a synthesizer. The singer is singing from the perspective of Philomel to Tereus, her rapist, which is unsettling on its own, but the way that Babbitt manipulates the pitch of the singers voice makes it especially disturbing. The sound of the singers voice when it is being distorted makes it sound like her body is being stretched or shoved. The suggestion of violence in the song as well as its mingling of classical music and unsettling synthesized sound made it a helpful example for my sound designer of what clash between unsettling and classic music I was looking for.

The various texts that inspired my production of *Polaroid Stories* were eclectic, but all relevant to my aims: the play itself, its source text, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Mary Zimmerman’s adaptation *Metamorphoses* and the music of Pogo and Milton Babbitt. Iizuka, Ovid and Zimmerman approached one set of stories from three distinct perspectives and styles, which helped me find my own voice in the shuffle. Similarly, Pogo and Milton Babbitt worked with

weaving and collaging sounds that were not designed to mesh together. In those different approaches to that clash, I found the aural atmosphere of my *Polaroid Stories*. Over months of research and learning for this production, I have narrowed down my most acute inspiration to these texts because they seem, on a first superficial glance, to be disparate from each other. In investigating each, I have learned that they are, in fact, often almost identical in artistic aim, only differing in approach. In essence, these inspirational texts have instructed me on the virtue of seeking the second and third opinion, not because the first, your instinct, seems incorrect, but because there is much to be gleaned from how perspective alters a piece.

