

ABSTRACT

A Director's Approach to Jamie Pachino's *Waving Goodbye*

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This thesis provides an in-depth analysis of Jamie Pachino's play, *Waving Goodbye*, followed by a detailed description of Daniel Inouye's directorial approach to the work in Baylor University's production which ran from February 7 to February 12, 2006. Chapter one will provide background information on *Waving Goodbye*, and Pachino's life as a playwright. Chapter two will provide a concise analysis of the play specifically looking at its type and style and dramatic structure. Chapter three will cover the design and production choices made within the collaborative artistic process. Chapter four will follow the production process from the play's initial acceptance for the season through to its final performance. Chapter five will conclude with a critical self-evaluation and director reflection on the process.

A Director's Approach to Jamie Pachino's *Waving Goodbye*

by

Daniel Paul Inouye

A Thesis

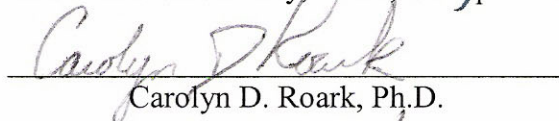
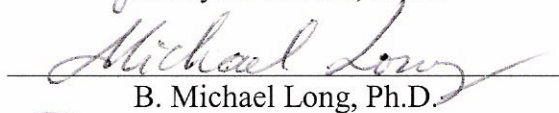
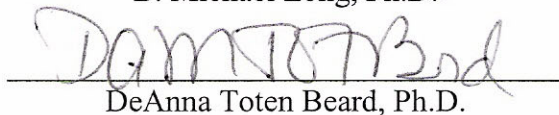
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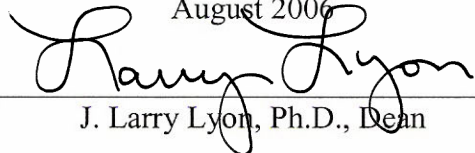
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CHAPTER ONE

Jamie Pachino and *Waving Goodbye*

Introduction

Sitting down for my first reading of this play, I was not expecting much as I had never heard of Jamie Pachino or *Waving Goodbye*. Yet, by the time I finished reading it, I knew that I wanted to direct it for my thesis. Its heightened poetic language, powerful theatrical conventions, multifaceted characters, and compelling story worked together to create a captivating play. Its focus on the journey of a seventeen year-old protagonist who is finding her voice, and becoming an artist all while dealing with her father's death and mother's abandonment, provides the Baylor University audience—mostly college students—with an opportunity to see someone else's journey of self-discovery. Ideally, this journey provides members of the audience with the impulse to reexamine their own journeys and recognize the need for reconciliation within their own lives.

Since *Waving Goodbye* is a new play that had its premier in Chicago in 2001, there is little scholarly work available on it or on the playwright, Jamie Pachino. Nevertheless, *Waving Goodbye* and the rest of Pachino's works are deserving of a critical analysis. My exploration of *Waving Goodbye* marks the beginning of a larger body of critical exploration of Pachino's work and its influence within the theater community and in society.

This thesis will explore my directorial process to *Waving Goodbye* and will be broken down into five chapters. This first chapter will provide background information on Jamie Pachino and her play *Waving Goodbye*, including a brief biography, an

overview of *Waving Goodbye* and Pachino's other works, and an examination of the critical reviews of her major productions. Chapter two will provide a concise analysis of *Waving Goodbye*, specifically looking at the style of the play, its given circumstances, the play's characters and dramatic structure. Chapter three will cover the production choices made within the collaborative artistic process, providing details about the overall design style and how the individual design elements worked within that concept. Chapter four will follow the production process from the play's initial acceptance for the season through the final performance of the play. Aspects of directing to be explored in this chapter include auditions, casting, staging, directorial strategies, rehearsal process, and performances. Chapter five will explore the strengths and weaknesses of the production and my abilities as a director. The thesis will conclude with a critical discussion of the overall effect of the production.

Jamie Pachino the Playwright

Jamie Pachino began her career as a dancer/actor, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Theatre from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Originally from Baltimore, Maryland, she moved to Chicago to pursue an education and ultimately, a career in theater. She was successful in both. Pachino has worked as an actor at numerous theaters including Goodman Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Organic Theatre Company, National Jewish Theatre, Apple Tree Theatre, Bailiwick Repertory Theatre, Drury Lane Theatre, Strawdog Theatre Company, and Pegasus Players in Chicago. (Pachino, personal web page) She also has acted regionally in California, Maryland, and Ohio, as well as in international productions at the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland. Pachino also pursued dancing and choreography with numerous credits throughout the

United States and internationally at the Omsk Music Theatre in the Siberian city of Omsk. Pachino has held faculty positions at various institutions of higher education including Northwestern University, Columbia College, National Louis University, and the Chicago Academy for the Arts. From a successful career as a dancer/actor in theater, Pachino transitioned into playwriting. Her journey as a professional playwright can be tracked by examining three of her plays and the impact they have had on her career. These plays, *Children of Cain*, *The Return to Morality*, and *Waving Goodbye*, are each tied to a milestone in her development as a playwright.

The first milestone is Pachino's initial venture into playwriting. During a telephone interview with Pachino on September 12, 2005, she explained how her first play was written to win a bet.

The bet was I had to open up the dictionary and point to any word and I had to write a play based on that word. And we did it because I had nothing to do all day but answer the phone. The word that we came up with was 'mandrake'. And 'mandrake' is a fantastic word to write a play about. So I did, and it wound up getting produced. (Pachino, interview)

The play that emerged was *Children of Cain*, a black comedy set in Texas about a family with the biblical curse of Cain on their heads. Pachino admits that it "is not very good" and that it "smacks of a first play" (interview). However, the play eventually ended up being produced at The Playwrights' Center in 1993 and received mixed reviews.

Pachino's eventual transition from actor to writer was guided in part by her affiliation with Strawdog Theatre in Chicago. She worked there as an ensemble member, acting and writing. She says of her time at Strawdog, "I had a place, I had a home, and they would produce my work, and so I started developing stuff for them" (interview). Pachino eventually decided that she was going to take a break from acting and focus

solely on her work as a playwright. “There became a point at which acting was not as satisfying, or I guess being an actress was not as satisfying—acting I still love. And being a writer was very satisfying” (interview).

During her time with Strawdog Pachino achieved the second milestone in her career with the play, *The Return to Morality*. This play was instrumental because it was her first professionally successful play. *The Return to Morality* was produced on both coasts and was eventually optioned for film by Lions Gate and Trigger Street Films. The play, which deals with the concepts of identity, politics, hypocrisy, and personal responsibility, is a fast-paced satire about a well-meaning liberal whose scathing, satirical book on the religious right is mistakenly embraced as a conservative manifesto. *The Return to Morality* went on to win eight national awards and was published by Playscripts, Inc. in 2004. It has been described by reviewers as “a funny and timely satire” (Zimmerman) as well as “intellectually engaging and riveting” (Wixon). *The Return to Morality* continues to be frequently produced throughout the United States. “It really did open the doors for me,” Pachino says. “People became interested in my development as a writer and opportunities started opening up for me” (interview). The success of this play marks the beginning of Pachino’s career as a professional playwright.

Waving Goodbye is the third milestone in Pachino’s career as a playwright. Prior to this work, she was writing plays for lower budget theaters with small casts and low technical demands. *Waving Goodbye* is the first play in which Pachino began to write with the anticipation that larger theaters would produce her work. The technical demands of *Waving Goodbye* require a falling roof, dripping water and creation of art onstage. The switch in Pachino’s focus came about due to the success of *The Return to Morality*

and a subsequent invitation to attend the Ashland New Play Festival in Oregon. While in Oregon, she met Lou Douthit, the literary manager of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. The conversation with Douthit led Pachino to an epiphany about her work as a playwright. Douthit approached Pachino at the festival and asked her when she was going to write a play for her theater. Pachino recalled: “I said, ‘What are you talking about?’ and she told me, ‘Until you start writing for bigger theaters, bigger theaters are never going to produce you’” (interview). The encounter with Douthit was an eye-opening moment for Pachino. She had been getting good reviews in Chicago, but none of the larger theaters, such as the Goodman and the Steppenwolf, seemed interested in producing Pachino’s work. Her writing was “for small-budget, black box Chicago storefront kind of theater, a very rock-and-roll theater” (Pachino, interview). Douthit went on to explain to Pachino that theaters were looking for big-budget productions with small casts. Because Pachino was in the middle of writing *Waving Goodbye* when she heard this news, she decided to write it as if she had no budget constraints. “And that’s why the roof caves in at the end of act one” she explains. “It obviously fits in all together with the metaphors, but I just thought, well, what the hell?” (Pachino, interview).

Waving Goodbye was eventually co-produced in conjunction with Naked Eye Theatre and Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago and ran from Dec 31, 2001, through March 31, 2002. Pachino notes that *Waving Goodbye*’s success, “opened doors for [her] to larger theaters and larger-scale plays” (Pachino, interview). Since its premiere, *Waving Goodbye* has continued to grow in popularity, with six productions in the past two years alone.

These three plays *Children of Cain*, *The Return to Morality*, and *Waving Goodbye* represent only a small part of Pachino's overall canon. She has several additional plays that have been professionally produced. Another play is *Aurora's Motive*, first produced in 1999 at the Teatro Vista Theatre Company in Chicago. It tells the true story of Aurora Rodriguez and her prodigy daughter, Hildegart, in the early twentieth century. The mother eventually kills her daughter when she turns eighteen, ending Hildegart's career as an accomplished young lawyer and advocate for women's rights. *Aurora's Motive* is similar to *Waving Goodbye* in its use of a strong female protagonist, heightened poetic language, and focus on the idea of identity. Although the play has a weak beginning that hinders the audience's connection to the story, it develops into a compelling story by its end. *Aurora's Motive* was named one of the top ten productions of 1999 by the *Chicago Tribune*. The script is currently optioned for film.

Theodora: An Unauthorized Biography, first produced in 1995 at the Bailiwick Repertory Theatre in Chicago, is an exposé on the Byzantine empress, Theodora, who has been called throughout history a despot, a heroine, and a revolutionary. The play explores the nature of history and whether or not one can ever really know someone completely. Like *Waving Goodbye* and *Aurora's Motive*, *Theodora: An Unauthorized Biography* also deals with notions of identity—how we know someone through time—and uses a strong female protagonist. Pachino's use of poetic language is evident within the play's dialogue as expressed through the four historians, known only by the year they wrote their accounts on Theodora:

1090: A second Eve.
 1590: A new Delilah,
 1090: dripping
 1890: dripping with the blood of the saints. (1.2)

Theodora: An Unauthorized Biography has been produced both nationally and internationally with a production at the Women Playwright Conference in Athens, Greece, in 2000.

RACE, first produced in 1994 at the Strawdog Theatre Company in Chicago, is an adaptation of Studs Turkel's book, *RACE: How Blacks and Whites Think and Feel About the American Obsession*. True to its title, *RACE* focuses on the oral histories of individuals concerned with issues of race in America today. As such, *RACE* does not follow a specific plot but rather examines responses to cultural policies and social conditions such as affirmative action, drugs, stereotypes, neighborhoods, and police. Pachino uses ethnic identity—Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics—to force the audience to see their own ambivalence towards bigotry and race, especially within these cultural elements. The script for *RACE* also was adapted in 1995 into a one-act for high school and junior high students, which has been produced in Chicago and New York City schools.

Pachino's most recent work, *Splitting Infinity*, focuses on a physicist, Leigh Sangold, who decides to search for evidence of God and by doing so, upsets the balance of her relationships with those around her. An extremely timely play, *Splitting Infinity* depicts the way American culture continually questions the relationship between faith and science. "I think most of us have a yearning to understand the world on a broad level, or a yearning for a connection of some sort," says Pachino. "But there's the need not only to connect, but to know that you're right" (qtd. in Bartley). It is this quest for knowledge that ultimately drives Leigh's actions and at the end of the play forces her to rethink the answers she had always given and the choices she made in the past. *Splitting*

Infinity has a well-developed storyline with nuanced characters that explores the consequence of choices and the cost of being an ambitious woman. *Splitting Infinity* was originally commissioned by Steppenwolf Theatre and won at the Women Playwrights Festival at A Contemporary Theatre (ACT) in Seattle, Washington, and the Dorothy Silver Playwriting Competition in 2004. It is premiering at The Geva Theatre during the 2005-2006 season.

Pachino has also written a number of monologues and other short plays. A few examples include *Kreskin Be Damned*, a one-man show about a love-struck accountant who saves a homeless man from an oncoming ‘L train’ (subway); and *Still Blonde...Runs Deep*, a one-woman comedic show about an actress who is debating the choice of her hair color—blonde or brunette—knowing that it will affect her life and career. Another example of Pachino’s work is the play *Famous for Fifteen Years*. A non-linear play, *Famous for Fifteen Years* moves back and forth through time to depict one artist’s journey of fame, from his memorial service to the meet-and-greet parties that helped launch his career. *Famous for Fifteen Years* deals with coming to terms with personal identity and what a person can become through a pursuit of fame. The play has been produced once at the Oberon Literary Ensemble of NYC in September 2002.

Pachino’s place as a playwright continues to solidify as she frequently adds to her evolving body of work, which includes eight full-length plays, all professionally produced. Her plays with the most production credits are *The Return to Morality*, *RACE*, and *Waving Goodbye*. Pachino is not only an accomplished playwright but also found great success as a screenwriter, having written or rewritten ten screenplays. Pachino’s ability to distinguish the varying styles of writing required of the stage versus

screenwriting and writing effectively for each style, is what makes her a successful dramatic writer. “Her work as a playwright and screenwriter complement each other,” Ed Sobel, Steppenwolf Theatre’s literary manager explains, “She’s an open collaborator, she has strong ideas, but she understands that primarily, her job is to communicate. She is concerned with what is clear to an audience” (qtd. in Bernardi-Reis 1). Pachino’s focus on communication comes across as a driving force in her writing whether for film or stage. “I’m interested in what you tell a story about,” she explains. “The relationship to the audience is really compelling—what works, what doesn’t work, like how you guide them into a story” (Pachino, interview).

As a professional playwright, Jamie Pachino is passionate about telling a story. When asked what compels her to write, she responded, “it’s sort of like extended improv on paper and you get to be everybody [...] you get the opportunity to investigate ideas, issues, people, and relationships” (interview). Yet within the context of this exploration, one needs to make sure that the story one is telling is, as Pachino explains, “about something [but] still entertains and connects to you emotionally” (interview). The emotional connection of the audience is what ultimately drives the success of many of Pachino’s plays. As Kerry Reid comments in her *Chicago Reader* review of *Waving Goodbye*:

Jamie Pachino’s new work is a beautifully written portrait of loss, rage, change, and the terror - and joy - of trusting another person in the wake of personal cataclysm [...] Pachino writes from the gut and heart in a way that’s utterly refreshing.” (Section 2)

This emotional connection can be found in many of her plays; Leigh’s soul searching in *Splitting Infinity*, a moment of heartbreak as Aurora kills her daughter in *Aurora’s Motive*, and the phone call between Lily and Jonathan as he lies dying in *Waving*

Goodbye. Each of the examples represent a heightened emotional moment that draw the audience into the story being told.

Pachino's passion to write a compelling story continues to open up new projects for her in both screenwriting and playwriting. She has just finished a film for *Lifetime*, is currently working on a feature film for *DreamWorks*, and is collaborating on writing a musical with her husband, Lindsay Jones, a professional sound designer and composer. Throughout her career as an actor, teacher and now a playwright, Pachino's goal "was always to be making a living at what I love. My ultimate goal is to be in this business for my whole life, not for the two or three years I'm hot" (qtd. in Bernardi-Reis 2). Pachino's plays seem to suggest that she should have no problem achieving this goal.

Influences

Pachino acknowledges that her work has been influenced by the writings of other playwrights, her interaction with theater artists, and the place where she writes. Two playwrights that stand out as influences on her work are Tom Stoppard and Tony Kushner. I asked Pachino to clarify her reasoning for choosing these two authors:

Because I think that they err to each side of me. Tom Stoppard can be occasionally really cold and analytical and really, really, really smart. And Tony Kushner can be really poetic and melodramatic and polemic. So somewhere in the middle is where I would love to think I could live. (interview)

In examining *Waving Goodbye*, one can see where each of these playwrights has influenced Pachino in telling the story. Tom Stoppard uses the convention of moving back and forth in time in his play, *Arcadia*, in order to comment on what is happening in these various periods of time. *Waving Goodbye* makes use of the same convention. Pachino draws out the audiences' understanding of Amanda in the present through an

examination of her actions in the past and vice versa. Tony Kushner uses quick changes in settings and scenes, and an emphasis on poetic language to tell the story of *Angels in America*. Many times, characters move in and out of scenes with each other and at times, these scenes overlap on stage. Both of these conventions are mirrored in *Waving Goodbye* with its overlapping scene changes and poetic language. The latter is seen in one of Lily's monologues in *Waving Goodbye*:

Sometimes when my father dies, wrapped in icicles. Sometimes he lays in a bed of ice and snow, and when he wakes, and it begins to thaw...he melts into our house, breaks open the windows, runs down our walls and lands on our heads. Just to make sure we're awake. (1.9)

Pachino balances this poetic dialogue with Stoppard's almost mathematical or analytical investigation into structure. Besides Stoppard and Kushner there are many other playwrights that interest Pachino, such as Arthur Miller and Eve Ensler, but she finds that her writing tends to emulate a balance between Stoppard and Kushner.

Pachino's other influences are from fellow theater artists who read and critique her work while it is still being shaped. Throughout her career as a playwright, Pachino has established relationships with a number of professional dramaturges whom she trusts with her work. Pachino's four primary consultants are Edward Sobel, the director of new play development at Steppenwolf Theatre; Gavin Witt, resident dramaturge at Center Stage; Liz Engelman, who works at The Playwright's Center as a dramaturge and coordinator of their New Plays on Campus project; and Pachino's husband, Lindsay Jones. Pachino says of her consultants, "Those are the people that I trust. Mostly, I send stuff to them because I know that they can read stuff that's not there and know that I can get it there" (Pachino, interview). Many times, it is through these friendships that Pachino is able to secure readings, showcases, and workshops for her plays. Pachino's

latest play, *Splitting Infinity*, was given a week of development at A Contemporary Theatre in San Francisco as a result of handing off an earlier version of the play.

Another individual that has had a tremendous impact on Pachino and her work as a playwright is her former acting teacher, Bud Buyer, at Northwestern University. She confesses that, “he is really responsible for developing my ear for dialogue” (Pachino, interview). He had his students eavesdrop on people’s conversations and then match it to a play that it sounded like. Pachino explains, “your ear was being trained to hear two guys yelling at each other in a cafeteria and go ‘early Mamet’ and two people who weren’t facing each other having conversation and go ‘Oh, that’s Sam Shepherd’ ” (interview). Using this exercise, Pachino was able to hear dialogue everywhere she went. She continues, “For me, dialogue is the easiest part of what I do. I could write pages and often do. Once I hear them [characters], I can have them talk about anything” (Pachino, interview). Dialogue continues to be a strong element of her writing, and she is often praised for it in reviews of her plays.

The notion of ‘place,’ the place where Pachino is writing influences her work a great deal. Since Pachino has lived and worked in both Chicago and Los Angeles, she acknowledges that each city influenced the process of her writing, as well as the type of writing that she does. While in Chicago, the work that she had been doing was mainly for Chicago theaters such as Strawdog. Working at Strawdog provided many opportunities for Pachino to work on her scripts with actors and find collaborators throughout the entire process of her writing. “I always loved being in rehearsal, and I do think there’s so much to mine and so many ways to do it and finding the best way to tell a

story you can't get to the end of' (Pachino, interview). In addition, Pachino felt secure in the strong theater community in Chicago.

Chicago I loved so much because I felt like I was part of something and everybody knew each other and I constantly had friends in work, I could go to theater any day of the week basically because I could always find somebody who would let me in. (Pachino, interview)

'Place' is an important factor when writing and working in the theater as a playwright.

Pachino at the beginning of her career was working and writing for smaller Chicago theaters, and her writing reflected that environment. Her plays were tailored in their technical demands for theaters she knew were going to produce her work. Although a connection to a theater group is beneficial because it provides a writer with a home and people to collaborate with on developing plays, it can prove challenging and detrimental as well. There is a tendency to limit the writing to the abilities of that particular theater, and in doing so, close the play off from other opportunities. The success of Pachino's *Return to Morality* and her conversation with Douthit helped her realize the restrictions she was placing on her writing, which allowed her to move beyond them.

Pachino subsequently moved to Los Angeles in 2002 to further her career as a professional writer by pursuing work within the film and television market. Moving away from the theater community of Chicago changed the way Pachino wrote because she was now writing primarily for the medium of film. She explains:

Film is incredibly lonely. It's just a writer in a room with a computer. And often time you'll get notes over the phone from a producer and they'll say 'Let's just do another draft,' there's no 'Let's sit around and read it,' There's no collaborating in a way. (Pachino, interview)

Even with this lack of collaborating, one has to acknowledge the draw that film and TV work offers writers—financial independence. Whether or not Pachino continues to write

for the stage is yet to be seen. Only time will tell, whether Pachino can develop her career as a writer without losing her connection to the “rock-and-roll theater” (Pachino, interview) she established at the beginning of her career.

Inspiration for Waving Goodbye

The story of *Waving Goodbye* focuses on the life of Lily Blue, a seventeen-year-old abstract artist and photographer who is forced to live with her estranged mother after her father, Jonathan, dies. Lily was the last person to speak to her father before he died. He called her on his satellite phone after falling into a crevasse during a mountaineering expedition. Lily attempts to deal with her loss by making art, which provides her a way to express herself and understand her pain. Her mother, Amanda, who had abandoned Lily six years prior for her own pursuit of artistic expression, now finds herself having to fulfill the role of parent once again. Amanda and Lily are forced to live together in the New York loft that Lily had shared with her father. Both have to deal with their own grief and come to an understanding of their loss before they can hope to understand each other again. Adding to an already tense situation is a leaking house, unpaid bills, and years of resentment toward each other.

This story of *Waving Goodbye* came out Pachino’s initial idea to write a play about a seventeen-year-old girl and her mother. She says, “I really find that to be one of the most interesting times in a girl’s life because they’re just on the brink of everything” (Pachino, interview). Pachino combined this idea with a story she read in *Vanity Fair* about a climber who had fallen on Mount Everest and was unrecoverable. The man had fallen with his satellite phone and was able to call home, speak to his pregnant wife, and

name their child before he died. Pachino explained her reasoning for combining these two elements.

There [is] something in the loss and the drama of losing somebody, in such a notoriously large way, and coping with that as you are becoming an artist, finding your voice and becoming a woman. And all of those things sort of fused together in my mind. (Pachino, interview)

Pachino acknowledges that this play is her most personal because she had lost her own father five years earlier. “It’s not my story, but it is the expression of my grief at having lost my own father, who was a very large force in my life” (interview). Although Pachino says there is nothing autobiographical in the play, the loss of her father energized her as a writer and provided her a personal way to connect to the story. The play took about a year-and-a-half to write, after which Pachino had more than three hundred pages of material including scenes, thoughts, and stream of consciousness writing. At this point in the process, Pachino acknowledged that she didn’t know where the play was within all the material. However, while on a writer’s residency at Ragdale Foundation in Chicago she organized and cut the material into a cohesive play. Soon, she was contacted by Jeremy Cohen, one of the artistic directors at Naked Eye Theatre, who invited her to bring a play to work on at Naked Eye Theatre’s New Plays Lab at the end of 1999. *Waving Goodbye* was at the point where she needed to see it worked on by actors, so she opted to take it to the Naked Eye Theatre for work.

After the initial workshop at the New Plays Lab, *Waving Goodbye* was given a staged reading at the Chicago Cultural Center in February of 2000. The play went on to win the 2000 Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays \$10,000 Award. Along with this award, Naked Eye Theatre was given a grant of \$20,000 to produce the play. In December 2001, *Waving Goodbye* received its debut at the Steppenwolf Studio. It was

co-produced by Naked Eye Theatre and Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago, Illinois. It went on to receive numerous accolades, and won the Chicago's Joseph Jefferson Award for the best new work, the Arlene P. & William L. Lewis Playwriting Competition, the Coe College Playwright Competition, the Pinter Review Prize for Drama, and the Women at the Door Festival. In 2000 *Waving Goodbye* was listed as thirteenth in the top hundred *Writer's Digest* drama competition. These are only a few of the more than forty awards that Pachino has received for her work as a playwright.

Waving Goodbye has a limited production history with four other professional productions since its debut in Chicago. In October 2002, *Waving Goodbye* was produced at Red Hen Productions in Cleveland, Ohio. Productions by the Aurora Theatre in Georgia in January 2005, the Syzygy Theatre in Los Angeles in June 2005, and the Buckham Alley Theatre in Michigan in March 2006 followed. It has also been produced in educational settings with performances at Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio, in October 2005, and at Minnesota State University in Mankato, Minnesota, in March 2006.

Waving Goodbye within Pachino's Larger Body of Works

In order to better understand *Waving Goodbye*, it is important to examine the play and its themes within the context of the larger body of Pachino's work. There are two recurring themes that appear throughout Pachino's works: the idea of identity and the cost of being an ambitious woman. *Waving Goodbye* touches on a number of other minor themes that are specific to the play including abandonment, parenting, compulsion to make art, grieving, and depression.

The notion of how to define a life is one of the central questions in *Waving Goodbye*. Lily is forced to redefine herself within a new world that no longer includes her father. Lily has lost her previous identity, and the play follows her journey of discovering herself anew. Amanda also grapples with the notion of identity. Since getting married, she struggles between being an artist and being a mother and now must come to terms with her newest title, widow. Boggy, the love interest of Lily, is a third character who touches on this issue by providing us with an example of someone on the other side of Lily's journey. "He's probably had it worse than she has," Pachino explains, "but, he's figured it out" (interview). Having already dealt with the abandonment of his parents, Boggy offers Lily and the audience hope that one can make it through to the other side.

The idea of identity is a common theme among Pachino's works and appears in many of her other plays including *Theodora: An Unauthorized Biography*, *The Return to Morality*, and *Aurora's Motive*. *Theodora: An Unauthorized Biography* chronicles the life of Theadora, while uncovering how an author's presumptions alter how one defines a person from the past and tell that person's story. *The Return to Morality* is another play in which we find this idea. Arthur Kellogg's identity is co-opted by the religious right and he is blackmailed into hiding his true character. It examines the idea of personal identity versus political identity and how the two can be at odds. *Aurora's Motive*, attempts to uncover the presumptions of male/female identity and explores how identity can be changed based on the notions of power, ambition, perceived ownership over others, and cultural expectations of gender roles.

A second major theme in *Waving Goodbye* is the cost of professional success for women, embodied by the Amanda's struggles in the play. Throughout the play, we watch Amanda's internal conflict between being a mother and being an artist. Pachino describes this theme as "being a successful, ambitious, colorful, productive woman and...the sacrifices that have to be made [for it]" (interview). This theme also impacts our understanding of Lily as she struggles to answer the same question: what do I have to do and what is it going to cost me to become a success? The same question is posed in a number of her other works including *Splitting Infinity* and *Aurora's Motive*. In *Splitting Infinity*—Leigh Sangold, the central character, forty-nine—finally understands that she can't attain the ultimate knowledge she had been struggling for, proof of God's non-existence. And during the course of the play she must now examine what she gave up to pursue this dream. In *Aurora's Motive* the central character, Aurora, struggles throughout her life against the male-dominated society of early twentieth-century Spain. As an educated person, Aurora refused to conform to society's expectations for women and attempted to raise her daughter to reflect these views.

Pachino's concerns as a writer seem to focus on these two themes, which she communicates through a variety of styles within her work. None of Pachino's plays are stylistically alike. Pachino employs a wide range of styles that includes black comedy, tragedy, satire, and drama. However, most of Pachino's plays include a strong female protagonist, heightened poetic language, and a focus on the idea of identity and the cost of success for women. Pachino came from an acting background, and readily admits that she likes writing powerful women characters: "that's just what's really interesting to me"

(Pachino, interview). As such another prevailing feature of Pachino's writing is the presence of a strong female protagonist.

Critical Reviews

In order to provide a framework for the Baylor University production of *Waving Goodbye*, a critical assessment of past production is necessary to uncover the play's inherent problems and limitations as well as its strengths. Ideally, a review of productions allows one to differentiate between the problems that are inherent in the text and those that arose out of a specific production.

The most prominent recurring problem discussed in reviews of *Waving Goodbye* centers on the development of the first act. Criticism specifically points out the play's unclear intentions and its underdeveloped characters. Lucia Mauro, a writer for the chicagotheatre.com web page, reviewed the Naked Eye and Steppenwolf collaborative production and commented, "act one gets too caught up in a whiny petulance, an aching vagueness and a slightly clichéd approach to relationships to be truly fortifying." Mauro continues to address other issues that she had with the play, including the lack of adequate development of the characters of Jonathan and Perry; Boggy's riddles, which she quickly tired of; and the lack of a more layered understanding of Amanda's psychological issues.

While Mauro's criticism is harsh, the majority of the reviews are much more forgiving. In a review of the Aurora Theatre production, Curt Holman explains "Though *Waving Goodbye's* thematic intentions seem cloudy at first, like a Polaroid picture, its truths come increasingly into sharp focus." Other reviewers point out that some aspects of the show seemed overdone. Sandra Ross argues in her review, "the symbolism is

heavy-handed at times—the roof literally falls in,” and Hedy Weiss in a review for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, points out that there is “some overly self-conscious talk by the characters, and an ending that would have been more satisfying had it been left raw and unresolved” (38). While one might agree that the symbolism is heavy-handed, one could argue that it serves the play in that moment and as such, facilitates telling the story. *Waving Goodbye* has a strong ending that provides the audience only a glimpse of possibility as Lily and Amanda take their first steps towards reconciliation.

Pachino’s use of language and style of story-telling elicits both negative and positive responses from reviewers. Travis Holder in a review of the Syzygy Theatre’s production for backstage.com writes, “The playwright’s sometimes soapy tale of a teenager trying to get to know her estranged mother [...] is elevated beyond its limitations by Pachino’s poetic examinations.” Louis Mayeux, reviewing the Aurora Theatre production, praises the play and its poetic language: “Each moment crackles with originality, [...] it achieves rare theatrical elegance. Past and present co-mingle without a loss of clarity.” Curt Holman, also in a review of the Aurora production, has a more negative outlook: “*Waving Goodbye*’s dialogue uses the jargon of art, photography, and mountain climbing to inflate the play’s metaphors at the expense of sounding natural.” Yet, in spite of the negative reviews, Pachino’s use of language is far more often praised than attacked. Pachino’s mastery over language and her use of complex characters ultimately garners praise for her work. Pachino’s writing has been described as “a rich and innovative work” (Holman), and as “an astute and poetic approach to speech” (Mauro). Critic Mark Share praises Pachino’s use of language: “the language of this play is poetic, which wonderfully elevates the plot and themes.”

Of course, every play has problems inherent within its text. *Waving Goodbye* is no exception. In fact, Pachino is very honest with the pitfalls that she sees within her play.

Waving Goodbye has one humungous trap after another and I completely acknowledge that, that if not handled delicately comes off very soap-opera-ish. But I wanted to write a play that was heightened dramatically, emotionally, visually, structurally all of those [...] and if the balance of any of those things is off, the balance is thrown. (interview)

Most of ‘the traps’ can be tied to the play’s demand that a director and cast walk a very fine line between developing its heightened dramatic nature and preventing it from becoming melodramatic. The interaction between Lily and Amanda is one example. Even though Lily and Amanda are both dealing with grief, their interaction can’t dissolve into hysterics. The audience needs to see Lily and Amanda’s journey through their grief, not necessarily their explosive expression of that grief. The other relationships and characters in the play must also be carefully guarded. The audience has to fall in love with Jonathan and Amanda’s relationship. Pachino says, “if you don’t root for them and feel what they feel, then we don’t get what Amanda’s lost and we don’t understand what Lily’s pining after, that she feels like she never got to be a part of” (interview). Another challenge is finding equilibrium between the emotionally intense relationships among Lily, Amanda, and Jonathan, with the characters and interactions of Boggy and Perry. These latter two characters have to be genuinely funny because they provide the humorous elements in the show. The final pitfall that Pachino expresses concern over is the balance between scenes depicting the past and present and how the alternation of past and present affects the characters’ interaction. Pachino cautions against creating a past that is drastically different from the present in terms of the way the family deals with

each other. Their interaction must be the same within both the flashbacks and present day moments. By acknowledging these pitfalls at the beginning of the process, a director is better prepared to deal with them in the production process.

Conclusion

Waving Goodbye contains many of Pachino's prominent themes and makes use of a female protagonist. While *Waving Goodbye* is typical of Pachino's thematic focus, it is unique in that it was the first play she wrote without modifying her writing to the budget constraints of smaller theaters in anticipation that it would be produced in larger theaters. The play provides a brief glimpse into the fragmented lives of the Blue family as they struggle to reconnect the broken pieces of their lives and art. The next chapter examines how Pachino uses dramatic elements and a focus on psychological character development to capture the audience's attention, in order to take them through Lily's surprising journey of self-discovery. Ideally, Lily's journey provides the audience members with the impulse to reexamine their own lives and recognize the need for reconciliation and connection within their own communities.

CHAPTER TWO

An Analysis of *Waving Goodbye*

Introduction

In forming a directorial concept for a production, a director is required to have a complete and clear understanding of the play's genre and style and to be able to compare it to other dramatic categories. Understanding the framework upon which it is built affects how one directs the individual moments within the play. For example, if a director is working on a play known as a comedy, he/she approaches the text looking to draw out those comedic moments so as to bring out the playwrights' intention. Without knowing the genre, a director may never discover the play's themes. This type of analysis is difficult in *Waving Goodbye* because as a recent play (2004) it does not already have a body of established critical analysis, which is used to define the play's genre or assign it to a particular theatrical movement. On the other hand, a director also benefits from dealing with such a new script as it allows him/her to approach the play without any preconceived notions as to its category. Chapter two will provide a synopsis of the play, an outline of my directorial interpretation, and a concise analysis of *Waving Goodbye*. This will focus on the genre and style of the play, the given circumstances, characters, and the play's dramatic structure. This analysis will provide a framework for future research and interest in Jamie Pachino's play, *Waving Goodbye*.

Waving Goodbye Synopsis

Waving Goodbye begins with a confrontation between Amanda and Lily over Amanda's sculptures of her late husband. Lily wants to keep the artwork, which she has brought to the house, but Amanda would rather sell everything including their home to hide her pain. In scene 2, Boggy, an offbeat, unconventional boy who has a crush on Lily, visits her and tells horrible jokes to cheer her up. Lily tells him that her father passed away on Mount Everest. In scene 3, Perry, an art gallery owner and personal friend to the Blue family, offers Amanda a commission for new sculptures but Amanda, who feels she cannot work due to her grief, replies, "I don't know how to work when I'm only unhappy. [...] My hands are empty, Perry. They're cold and useless" (1.3). Perry convinces her to think about her decision for awhile and leaves Amanda alone. The scene ends with a flashback of the first time Amanda and Jonathan meet, on a mountaintop.

In scene 4, Boggy and Lily continue flirting and begin to find solace in each other's presence. Lily finally has the sense of being needed that she has desired. Amanda and Lily quarrel over the fact that Lily has not returned the sculptures like her mother asked, and in the ensuing argument, Amanda drops a sculpture of hands and it shatters. At the scene's end, Lily questions her father's ghost, "Why are you here? What do you want?" (1.4), but gets no answer. In a flashback of Amanda and Jonathan's playful early courtship, there are hints of the conflict that will eventually drive Amanda away from Jonathan. She is more interested in spending her time sculpting than responding to his romantic overtures. When he proposes marriage, she dismissively

replies, “Oh yes...Someday.” Frustrated, he responds, “Someday Amanda, we’ll do what I want” (1.5).

Scene 6 continues the argument between Amanda and Lily over the sculptures. Amanda is determined to sell the artwork despite Lily’s protests. Lily finally gives up and tells her mother, “I don’t want to make friends with you. I don’t want to know you better. I don’t want to sit here while you pretend to be interested in me. I don’t want you to feel bad, I just want you to go away” (1.6). Boggy and Lily’s relationship continues to develop as they become more comfortable with each other, and Lily tells Boggy how she learned of her father’s death. “He called the house on his satellite phone. From the mountain. From where he...landed. He wasn’t dead. Not at first...So we talked till the signal went out...” (1.7). Boggy tries to share his feelings about his own father but is brushed off by Lily, “I don’t wanna compare war wounds with you right now. I just don’t” (1.7). Later, in Perry’s art gallery, Lily tries to convince Perry to let her take her mother’s commission because she needs money to fix the home and pay back taxes. Perry refuses, but instead, she offers Lily a job as her assistant. The act closes in the loft as Amanda, bags packed, gets ready to leave Lily. The skylight suddenly opens, covering Amanda with water. Lily rushes into the room to help, discovers Amanda’s plan to leave, and is hurt and angry. Both women are left isolated and broken in the middle of their destroyed home and wrecked relationship.

The second act opens with a repaired apartment, and Lily is starting a collage of art. The first two scenes re-examine Lily’s relationships with Perry and Boggy as she grows closer to each friend and begins to develop as an artist. Lily is willing to listen as Boggy tells her about his father, a famous painter who no longer lives with him. After

Boggy leaves, there is a flashback to the day when Jonathan and Amanda are wed at City Hall. The couple discusses Amanda's unplanned pregnancy (Lily) and her hesitation about getting married, and Jonathan convinces her that they are doing the right thing and promises never to leave her. Scene 4 also contains a flashback to the day that Jonathan leaves Lily to go on the expedition that will cost him his life. Jonathan gives Lily a Polaroid camera: "Your mother said all her work started with a photograph" (2.4). Lily promises to use it, and Jonathan takes a picture of her to take on his expedition.

The play's action moves to the present, where Amanda turns down Perry's commission. When Perry tries to figure out why, Amanda says, "I'm grieving. You of all people know-the most important person in the world to me died and--." Perry interrupts, "Oh Amanda, come on. Everybody knows the most important person in the world to you is *you*...You hadn't seen him in six years! How can you say that? You didn't have anything. *You were gone*" (2.5). Amanda grabs a box full of pictures and exits as the lights cross fade to scene 6. Amanda reenters and attempts to reconnect with Lily by showing her the old pictures of her early relationship with Jonathan. She says, "I wanted to show you. More to tell you--." Lily doesn't understand why Amanda brought the pictures and before storming off, she asks, "Besides that you didn't want me? [...] Besides I was the reason you always left? And how if it weren't for me, you and Dad would be happy on a mountain somewhere? More like that?" (2.6).

Scene 7 opens with a flashback of when Amanda is pregnant with Lily and Jonathan is leaving without her to go on an expedition. Amanda, referring to the baby, tells Jonathan, "I can still get rid of it. [...] I don't want it" (2.7), trying desperately to keep things the way they were when she was happy. Jonathan feels differently

explaining, “It grows into something more. [...] The past is something to build on. Not to keep” (2.7). Amanda finally agrees to keep the baby but says, “I’ll care for this child until I don’t have to be its mother anymore and then I’ll go too” (2.7). The climax of the play is a flashback to the phone conversation that took place between Lily and Jonathan followed by the resolution of the tension between Amanda and Lily and the hope for healing.

Directorial Interpretation of Waving Goodbye

Waving Goodbye continues to garner praise wherever it is produced, but the play still provides the director, actors, and design team with fierce challenges to overcome in the telling of the story. It requires a director who can work well with actors to develop nuanced characters and create a balanced dramatic approach to the story, keeping it believable. My directorial concept for producing *Waving Goodbye* is broken into two parts, corresponding to the two acts of the play. In the first act, everything is breaking and falling apart: relationships, artwork, sculptures, and the roof. At the end, the skylight bursts open, pouring water onto Amanda. The play demands a huge broken mess sitting on the stage at the end of act one. The second act is about putting pieces back together. Every piece that was ruined in the first act is now being used to create a new, whole, three-dimensional collage art piece. In the same way, Lily and Amanda finally come to a realization of their need for each other through their grief. They are able to create a new relationship out of the broken debris of their lives. Lily is no longer frozen in her grief. The play ends with Lily’s creation of art again on stage and the promise of new work from Amanda.

Two central metaphors for *Waving Goodbye* include water—and its properties of freezing and thawing—and the image of hands. The first metaphor, which is the most central, is the idea that water in the play represents Lily’s internal grief and eventual catharsis. Lily starts out the play stuck in her grief, unable to move past her father’s death. Lily acknowledges this, describing how after the call with her dad, she was unable to move or put the phone down and was literally frozen in that moment till morning (1.7). She continues to dwell on her father, not willing to move beyond her grief. Jonathan, symbolized by the continual presence of the dripping water from the ceiling, stays present in the play; literally thawing and melting into their lives from above. Yet like the water dripping into the loft, Lily’s grief will not go away and begins to seep into her life. This metaphor continues with the breaking of the skylight and flooding of water onto the stage at the end of the first act. In this moment, the physical world of the play and the emotional life of Lily mirror each other. Lily and Amanda have a confrontation in which Lily is finally able to say to her all the things that she wanted to say the first time her mother left. It is an emotional release of her grief and all of her resentment and bitterness towards her mother. After this cathartic moment Lily begins the healing process. By the time we get to the end of the play, the roof has been fixed, there is no more water dripping down, and Lily is finally able to move past her grief over her father’s death that had frozen her in time. She finally makes a step to reconnect with her mother.

The other central metaphor that is central to *Waving Goodbye* is the image of a hand. A hand represents the notion of connection and relationship. People experience other people through our hands. Hands provide a sense of touch, of knowing other people. Amanda makes her art with her hands. It’s what Jonathan “gives” to Amanda for

her to sculpt. It is Jonathan's sculpted hands, which are always present onstage. The repeated image of hands provides a strong metaphor for Lily's need for connection with another person in light of Jonathan's death. The breakdown in communication and connection between Lily and Amanda is reflected in the sculptured hands, which end up lying shattered throughout the loft.

A thorough understanding of these metaphors helped me realize which aspects of the play's action and design needed to be emphasized in order to accentuate the story of *Waving Goodbye*. By focusing on water and the imagery of hands throughout the production, I was able to reinforce the ideas communicated through these metaphors. In doing this, the production provided the audience with a way to enter into the story being told and a way to understand Lily's journey of self-discovery as she reconnects with her mother. By experiencing this journey with Lily, ideally, the audience is prompted to reexamine their own lives and recognize the need for reconciliation and connection within their own families.

General Synthesis of Waving Goodbye's Genre and Style

The journey of self-discovery that serves as *Waving Goodbye's* central action is reflected in Lily's two questions: how do you tell the story of a life and how do you begin again? Yet, in order to understand these questions it is necessary to uncover *Waving Goodbye's* genre and style so as to determine the playwright's framework. Thorough analysis of *Waving Goodbye* has led me to conclude that it is best described as a non-realistic contemporary drama that focuses on the realistic psychological journey of its protagonist. Due to the blurred boundaries of what is considered realistic versus non-

realistic drama in contemporary theater it is necessary to provide a framework upon which to base this assessment.

For the purpose of this analysis, I will use William Demastes' definition of realism as found in *Realism and the American Dramatic Tradition*. He argues that realism is typically defined by whether or not "the playwright is restrained by nature and is operat[ing] according to the rules of reality" (xi). Yet it is important to note that this definition is one of many critical examinations of dramatic realism and that the term "has a chameleon-like existence [...] blending into a context appropriate to whatever needs a particular practitioner or critic deems appropriate for his or her goals" (Demastes x). To further clarify the notion, it can be helpful to consider a definition of non-realistic drama, which Thomas Adler in his essay on the work of Tennessee Williams describes as drama/theater that "challenges its audience to revel in the conventions of make-believe [...] to recognize that illumination about life can come clothed in an illusion not necessarily true to life" (172). This is a key concept in my exploration of issues of realism in *Waving Goodbye*. Pachino uses non-realistic and heightened theatrical elements to illuminate the real psychological journey of Lily. The rest of this section will expound upon the non-realistic and heightened elements in *Waving Goodbye* and will provide samples from other contemporary plays that use similar conventions so as to solidify *Waving Goodbye's* definition as a non-realistic contemporary drama.

The play's central non-realistic element is its non-linear approach to time. Rather than being chronological, scenes switch between those that portray moments in the present lives of the characters and those that show moments that took place in the characters' past (flashbacks). The purpose of this variety is to more clearly explain Lily's

psychological journey. Time does progress in the two acts of *Waving Goodbye*, but since the focus is on Lily's psychological journey of self-discovery after her father's death, the story follows the development of her grieving process more than the linear unfolding of events. By using flashback scenes, the playwright helps the audience members to follow Lily's actions in the present because we are allowed to see the cause-and-effect relationship between what happened in her past and what is happening in her present.

An example of this idea in *Waving Goodbye* can be seen by comparing act 1, scene 7 with act 2, scene 9. In the first scene, Boggy discovers that Lily talked to her dad on the phone as he was dying. When Boggy attempts to comfort her, she shouts at him, "Look—you have two choices: Stand up or fall down. I choose standing up" (1.7). This behavior is not clear to the audience until towards the end of the play when they see the flashback of the phone call when Jonathan tells Lily, "Don't fall down now. Stand up. Remember to stand up and don't miss me" (2.9). After hearing Jonathan's last words to his daughter, "stand up," we better understand why Lily is so emphatic about choosing to stand in the face of her father's death. The reasoning behind her actions in the first act is made clear through the portrayal of the memory scene in the second act. Clearly, realism, with its focus on imitating nature and abiding by the rules of reality, is broken in this moment. It is sacrificed to put the focus on the psychological realism of Lily and her emotional journey.

Another play that uses a similar convention is *The Heidi Chronicles* (1988), by Wendy Wasserstein. Like *Waving Goodbye*, it tracks the development of its main character non-chronologically so as to show how the past influences the present action. This places the focus on discovering the character and as such, there is less of a demand

that the plot follow a strictly linear storyline. Another example of this can be found in Arthur Miller's play, *Death of a Salesman* (1949). This classic American drama uses elements to follow the psychological journey of its protagonist through past and present. C.W.E. Bigsby in *Modern American Drama, 1945-2000* argues that "Miller deliberately reached for a style that would accommodate his [...] conviction that while past and present are causally connected [...] they are also co-existent realities informing and deforming one another" (83). Because neither the past nor present are ever completely knowable without examining the other, a play that explores the psychological journey of a character must include both past and present so we can see "what use the present makes of the past" (Bigsby 87).

Another aspect of Pachino's non-realistic storytelling that accentuates the focus on character is her use of quick transitions. Many times in *Waving Goodbye*, a scene will begin even though the previous scene has not ended. An example of this is found in the switch in the second act between scenes 3 and 4. In the initial scene, a young Jonathan and Amanda are at the courthouse steps waiting for Perry in order to get married. Jonathan watches a pre-pregnancy Amanda and Perry begin to leave as Lily enters. Observing her dad as he watches the two women, Lily demands for him to "title it," and after a moments' pause, he answers "regret" (2.3). Here we are outside of time, watching a seventeen-year-old observe her father and mother as they wait to get married. Once the action resumes, it jumps forward in time to the last moment Lily and Jonathan have together in the loft before he leaves on the fatal trip. These fast transitions, which happen within seconds, help focus the audience's attention on the emotional journey of the character, not on where or when it takes place.

Although this approach is not typical of all contemporary drama, it has been used to great effect in a number of other modern plays including *36 Views* (2002) by Naomi Iizuka. An exploration of its use of fast transitions is helpful to provide a framework upon which to assess *Waving Goodbye*'s use of the same convention. *36 Views*, like *Waving Goodbye*, makes use of fast transition between its scenes so as to explore the themes of identity and authenticity. In this way, Iizuka is able to heighten the themes within her play. Many times a scene in *36 Views* is a variation on the previous one to give the audience another view at the same moment. In this way, Iizuka explores how notions of identity are colored by one perspective of authenticity. While *Waving Goodbye* does not play out variations on the same scene, it does achieve a similar idea by having the characters tell about a moment which we then later see portrayed on stage. This allows the audience to evaluate the past experience based on the previous conception they formed while listening to a character describe it.

Another aspect of *Waving Goodbye* that illuminates the psychological journey of Lily is the emphasis on theatricality—accenting the conventions of theater—through the use of heightened dramatic elements and poetic language. An example of the heightened dramatic elements can be found in the breaking of the sculptures on stage. Throughout the play, both Lily and Amanda view the sculptures as an embodiment of Jonathan. Amanda, trying to explain to Lily why she needs to sell them, says, “I don’t want his body, his hands, the texture of his life invading this...life I have without him” (1.4). Although Amanda would rather not deal with the sculptures, Lily keeps them in the house against the wishes of her mother. During the ensuing fight, a sculpture is dropped and shatters, which in a production often elicited an exclamation from the live audience.

The embodiment of Jonathan so cherished by both Lily and Amanda lay in pieces before them. Another highly theatrical moment within the play is the phone call between Lily and Jonathan. It is an emotionally heightened depiction of their final moments together and the playwright specifies the convention and manner that it should be played. Pachino demands that, “the scene is not to be played with phones. They do not make eye contact. The actor playing Jonathan is not ‘dying on a mountain’ as they talk” (2.9). She cautions the actors against playing the scene in a realistic manner because more understanding of Lily will be gained through a non-realistic experience of the moment. Throughout the play, Pachino is more concerned with Lily’s emotional life.

Angels in America (1993) by Tony Kushner also emphasizes its theatricality through the use of fast transitions and poetic language to tell its story as in *Waving Goodbye*. The transitions—where one scene overlaps another—creates a different theatrical experience for the audience. C.W.E. Bigsby explains how *Angels in America* through an aversion to realism, “creates its own language—a language constructed out of performance gestures, poetry, stage metaphor, verbal excess—as a means of locating a different way of seeing experience” (422). This statement can be applied to the work of Pachino on *Waving Goodbye* as easily as to *Angels in America*. By using non-realistic heightened dramatic elements Kushner and Pachino both create their own theatrical language, which they use to tell their stories and explore themes.

Another important heightened dramatic element within the play is the poetic language of Lily. Her speech to Boggy in the second act provides a stunning example of Pachino’s use of this convention.

Sometimes my father dies and I talk to him in the moments before he goes and I can't keep him from dying, and he can't stay alive. I watch him wave goodbye over and over, one arm red, one arm blue, looking at the sky and wishing it was different. (2.9)

This poetic language elevates Lily's story and the themes in the play by acting as both a conveyer of information as well as a reflection of the inner turmoil of the character and her journey of self-discovery.

August Wilson also uses poetic language in his work, *King Hedley II* (1999).

Like Pachino, he assigns it to a particular character, in this case, Stool Pigeon, the neighborhood truthsayer. Stool Pigeon declares, "King want to be like the eagle. He want to go to the top of the mountain. He wanna sit on top of the world. Only he ain't got no wings" (2.1). Stool Pigeon and Lily's use of the poetic voice sets them apart from the other characters in the play. Their use of this heightened language acts as an element of non-realism that reinforces the play's themes.

Another non-realistic element of *Waving Goodbye* is that the protagonist directly addresses the audience with her questions. Lily begins the first act by asking the audience, "How do you tell the story of a life? In one moment? When the world you want to see it, embrace it, will...walk by it? How do you explain someone important?" (1.1). Pachino accomplishes two specific things by starting the show this way. First, she establishes that this is Lily's story and that the play focuses on her journey. Second, she establishes, from the beginning, the questions that will motivate Lily's actions throughout the play. Pachino uses the same convention at the beginning of act 2. "How do you begin again? When everything you knew is gone?" Lily asks the audience, "When everything you trusted, all your infrastructure is broken and cracked and the pieces won't

go back into whole (2.1). Again Lily steps out of the world of the play, lets the audience know what questions will drive her actions, and then steps back in to tell the story.

This convention has been used to great effect in numerous other plays, both contemporary and older. Some examples include the asides in Shakespeare, and Tom's first statement in *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams: "Yes I have tricks in my pocket; I have things up my sleeves" (1.1). He goes on to set up the story of the play and explain that it is not meant to be accepted realistically by the audience. Williams was trying to situate, "realistically conceived and handled characters within a nonrealistic, poeticized stage space" (Demastes xvii). One can see a similar approach within the structure of *Waving Goodbye* as it balances the psychological verisimilitude of the main character with non-realism in the use of time and space.

Ruby Cohn in her preface to *Contemporary Dramatists* argues that "forays into nonrealistic modes provide richer possibilities of theatricalizing the profundities of contemporary experience" (viii). This applies directly to the work found in *Waving Goodbye*. In utilizing non-realistic elements to tell the story of *Waving Goodbye*, Pachino creates a text that effectively depicts the character of Lily Blue and her struggle to answer the questions: how do you tell the story of a life and how do you begin again?

Given Circumstances

Geographical Environment

Waving Goodbye is set in New York City in the present, specifically in the broken-down loft home of Amanda and Lily Blue and the art gallery belonging to Perry Marshall with a few exceptions. The action of the play shifts between the two locations.

Exceptions are the flashbacks, which take place in the loft, on a mountain, and at a courthouse. Although the exact date of the loft's construction is unknown, this production depicts the loft as a renovated warehouse from the forties, which was modernized and turned into lofts in the late 1980s. Due to a lack of money to maintain the apartment, the place is in a general state of disrepair and clutter. The apartment's roof is leaking and its interior walls are rotting. In contrast, the art gallery owned by Perry Marshall is a very clean, stark location with cream walls and wooden floors that focuses on sculptures and modern art. It has little furniture other than a small reception area with a sofa, coffee table, and small refrigerator. The gallery caters to the taste and trends of the New York art market, specifically promoting its exhibitions to wealthy art collectors in the Hamptons.

For the context of this production, the play was in the Chelsea area of New York City. This neighborhood is located on the southwest side of Manhattan directly north of Greenwich Village. Chelsea lies roughly from 39th to 15th Streets, between the Hudson River and Fifth Avenue. (<http://manhattan.about.com>). It was once a run down neighborhood in Manhattan that recently has become trendy and upscale due to the artist community moving in and revitalizing it. Within Chelsea's boundaries lie a number of important places for Manhattan, including Madison Square Garden, Chelsea Piers, and the Chelsea Market. Chelsea is best known for its offbeat quality, acceptance of all art forms and lifestyles and, with over 200 art galleries within its boundaries, has been a very popular place for artists to live and work.

Social Environment

The Blue family is socially fragmented, in that it is no longer functioning as a unit. This fragmentation was brought about by a number of factors, including the six-year absence of the mother (Amanda) from the family, and the death of the father (Jonathan). Jonathan's death forced Amanda to return to her previously abandoned position as mother for their daughter Lily. The resulting conflict of Lily and Amanda's attempts to reconnect with each other is the basis for the plot of the play.

It also is important to evaluate the social interactions of the members of the Blue family with other characters in the play to get a clearer understanding of their social framework. The characters of Perry Marshall and Boggy provide us with opportunities to see Lily and Amanda within different relational contexts, thus rounding out the audiences' understanding of their characters. Perry acts as confidant for both Amanda and Lily as each talk to her about their problems. Perry also plays a key role in the development of Amanda and Lily's relationship by providing an outside force that spurs Amanda towards reconciliation. When Amanda tells Perry that she doesn't think Lily needs her anymore Perry responds, "Is that what you think? Go home. Talk to her. She's unbelievable, the way she turned out" (2.5). Perry forces Amanda to reexamine her perceptions of what Lily needs, which ultimately propels Amanda to make another attempt at reconciliation with her daughter. Perry also plays a key role in Lily's life as her godmother. Perry helped Jonathan raise Lily during the six years Amanda was absent and was a kind of substitute mother for Lily during her early teenage years.

Boggy, a relatively new friend, provides Lily with emotional connection and friendship, two things for which she is searching. As the play progresses Lily and

Boggy's relationship develops into a budding romance. It is in this relationship with Boggy that Lily is finally able to express and share her grief as reflected in the moments after the phone call. Boggy, who has had his own parental loss issues, understands what Lily is going through. Their relationship offers Lily a way to reveal her feelings of grief and remorse because Boggy is not caught up in her family problems and has already survived a similar abandonment by his parents. The cathartic moment of the phone call helps her to start the process of healing, of coming to terms with her own grief. This ultimately enables her to make steps toward understanding and reconciling with her mother.

Economic Environment

The economic situation of the Blue family is a cause of tension and stress in the play. Since both Jonathan and Amanda were self-employed, they had no set income; but instead, received money only when they had jobs or commissions. Since they own the loft, one can assume that they were well off at one point in time but due to breakdown in the relationship between Amanda and Jonathan, they are now cash poor, living in an affluent environment. Based on the environmental facts established by the playwright as well as numerous references to money in the play, it can be logically assumed that the Blue family struggles financially. During the course of the play a number of clues indicate the depth of the economic difficulty facing the Blue family. When talking to Perry in act 1, scene 8, Lily makes references to overwhelming debt as well as back taxes that are still owed on the loft itself. These debts, along with the leaking and rotting roof, paint a bleak financial picture for the future of Amanda and Lily. The environment of the loft differs greatly from the affluent world of the art gallery owned by Perry Marshall. It

is the place where the wealthy attend parties, drink fancy wine, and spend lots of money on high-end art.

Character Analysis

Lily Blue

Due to Jonathan's death, Lily—*Waving Goodbye's* protagonist—is in a state of mental confusion, not able to move past what has happened to her. She is literally frozen by her grief. It is in this state of grief and resentment that Lily enters the play. The first interaction between Lily and Amanda in act 1, scene 1 signals to the audience that something is not quite right. Amanda tries to begin a conversation with her daughter but Lily ignores her. After Amanda leaves, Lily says, "Leave for six years and come back. Things will be rotting. He still lived here. And he was always my father" (1.1). Lily's anger explodes at the end of the first act, when she discovers that her mother is planning to leave, "I'm begging you, okay? Just take the rest of you and go. I'm FINE. I'll be FINE. As soon as you leave for good EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE" (1.9). Lily's anger and resentment is typical of all her interactions with her mother up until the very end of the play.

This last scene between Lily and Amanda when Lily finally accepts her mother's attempts at reconciliation is an important moment in the play. As such, it is necessary to examine this moment further to uncover the reasons behind the change in Lily's feelings and behavior. There are two primary reasons behind the change. First, her relationship with Boggy provides Lily with love, acceptance, and most importantly, a sense of emotional connection that she lost in her father's death. Second, as Lily relives memories

of past experiences with her father; she finally achieves a sense of closure about his death. This closure of the past, along with Lily's connection to a friend in the present, ultimately provides her with the ability to open up to her mother's attempts at reconciliation and reconnection. At the beginning Lily resents and distrusts her mother and holds on to the only thing she has left, the memories of her dead father. By the end of the play, Lily knows she is loved and accepted by Boggy and as such, is willing to respond to her mother's attempts at reconciliation. The play is her journey from bitterness and grief to being able to move on with her life.

Amanda Blue

Amanda is a sculptor who has been absent from the Blue family for the past six years practicing her craft. Amanda left to pursue her art and to "hunt the light" (1.3) as she describes it. Although she had been gone, Jonathan's death still had a strong impact on her. Amanda says, "I should have mourned him so long ago. He should have been gone for me already, but when I heard he fell, it was like I'd...seen him that morning. Like I was nineteen and everything was..." (2.5). It is within this mental state, confusion and grief, that she returns home to Lily. Having no idea how to deal with her own grief and depression over Jonathan's death, she struggles to relate to her daughter. This grief affects her work as an artist as she explains, "my hands are empty Perry, they are cold and useless" (1.3). Amanda, like her daughter, feels trapped and frozen by her grief and does not know how to move beyond what happened to her. While Lily attempts to cope with her grief by creating art and reliving her memories with her father, Amanda tries to run away and forget her problems. This is typical of how Amanda responds to challenges in her life. She would rather sell her home and all of the sculptures and even abandon

Lily again than deal with her grief. Amanda is finally shocked out of this pattern by Perry, who yells at her, “Whatever you thought. This is your life” (2.5). Amanda, forced to acknowledge what her life has become, realizes that she cannot run away anymore and must reconnect with her daughter. To accomplish this, Amanda offers Lily the one thing she knows Lily has always wanted —the opportunity to be the subject of Amanda’s sculptures. Amanda asks to take her daughter’s picture and says to her, “All my work...starts with a photograph” (2.9). This statement of reconciliation from Amanda carries a dual meaning. Amanda is promising to Lily that she is going to be the subject for her art and more so, the subject of her work as a mother. It is a promise that her work is now about developing a healthy relationship with her daughter. Amanda began this play in grief and depression, believing that her daughter does not want her in her life. The play ends with Amanda having connected emotionally with her daughter. Although she still struggles with her grief, Amanda makes the choice to be present in her circumstances. She will no longer run away.

Jonathan Blue

Jonathan is an accomplished mountain climber who leads groups on expeditions to make a living. Approximately four weeks prior to when the play’s story begins, he dies in a mountain accident after falling into a crevasse. Jonathan serves two distinct functions within the play, which can be explored by examining the way Pachino portrays him within the story. His first function is that of a ghostly presence who is always nearby when Lily is on stage in the present. Jonathan represents Lily’s inability to get past her father’s death. This idea is solidified at the end of the play when Lily, finally able to get past her grief for her dad, realizes that his ghostly presence has finally left her.

Jonathan's second function can be found by examining Pachino's use of him within the memory scenes. By allowing the audience to see and share in Amanda and Lily's experiences with Jonathan, Pachino provides a tangible understanding of their loss. It takes the play's themes of grief and loss and personalizes them, allowing for a more intimate connection and understanding of the issues. The memory scenes provide us with a picture of a man who cared about his family and was protective of those he loved. When Amanda has doubts over whether their marriage was the right thing to do, Jonathan replies "We won't regret it. We'll live to a ripe old age, look back and laugh" (2.3). By showing the audience what Lily and Amanda lost due to Jonathan's death, Pachino provides a personal connection to the otherwise general themes in the play. We see the face of a man who, as Pachino says, "fell too soon" (interview).

Boggy

H. Bogsworth Barry (Boggy) is an offbeat, humorous, eighteen-year-old male who is the son of a famous and wealthy painter. He has recently become acquainted with Lily. Throughout the play, Boggy's budding friendship with Lily slowly turns into one of mutual respect and romantic love. Boggy is characterized by his love of humor, devotion to his friends, and confidence in who he is, even if that does not always fit the norm. He tends to say what is on his mind and loves to give gifts to those he cares about. Throughout the course of the play he is constantly sharing jokes and riddles with Lily. During the play he admits that his father left him to go work on the other side of the world and that he currently lives by himself. Having nothing at home to keep him there, he quickly becomes devoted to Lily and rarely leaves her side. Both Boggy and Lily receive from each other a sense of emotional connection and friendship that they lacked

prior to their meeting. Boggy also plays a key function in the play because through his comedy and jokes, he provides the necessary balance for the more serious issues of death, grief, and abandonment. Boggy also acts as an example to Lily and the audience of someone who has managed to survive his own parental issues.

Perry Marshall

Perry is the eccentric owner of a high-end art gallery in New York. She was the one who found Lily after Jonathan's death, and as Lily's godmother, has acted as a surrogate mother to her during Amanda's absence. Perry also serves as Amanda's representative within the art community and her personal friend who has been selling and getting commissions for Amanda's art work for more than eighteen years. Perry's function in the play is that of a truth teller to both Amanda and Lily. She is not afraid to "tell it as she sees it." Upon meeting Amanda after her return, Perry says, "You look like hell" (1.3). In response to Lily asking for the truth Perry responds, "I'm sorry, what number did you dial" (2.8). You can also see this idea reflected in Perry and Amanda's confrontation in act 2, scene 5. Perry forces Amanda to realize that she can't hide behind her grief and guilt and must take action to achieve reconciliation with her daughter. Perry's acerbic personality is evident throughout the play, but it is balanced with a genuine care and love for those who are important to her.

Dramatic Structure

By examining the dramatic structure of the play, a director can understand how that structure affects the story being told as well as the audience's response. There are two important structural elements in *Waving Goodbye* that have an effect on how one

directs the play. First is its use of flashback scenes to convey information about the past so as to provide a complete understanding of the characters' action in the present. Most of the previous action of the play that affects the story—the first meeting of Amanda and Jonathan, the last moment of Lily and Jonathan, the climatic phone call—are all expressed through flashbacks. The second structural element that is important to note is that the play's physical world mirrors the internal world of the characters. An example can be found in the expression of Lily's anger and the destruction of the roof at the same moment. By understanding these structures, a director is able to accentuate the metaphors present in the play so as to further emphasize the dramatic structure of the play.

It also is necessary as a director to explore *Waving Goodbye's* inciting incident, previous action, climax, and resolution in order to articulate a clear understanding of its main dramatic question. *Waving Goodbye* focuses on Lily's grief and her need for reconciliation, reconnection, and acceptance by her mother and ultimately, of herself. In light of this, we can determine the main dramatic question: will Lily be able to overcome Jonathan's death and Amanda's previous abandonment to find reconciliation, connection, and acceptance in her life? With this question in hand, the director makes sure that the action of the play, its design, and the actor's choices all work towards bringing an audience closer to an answer.

In *Waving Goodbye*, the inciting incident is the death of Jonathan. His death sets up the conflict between Lily and Amanda by forcing them back together. Without his death there would have never been a need for Amanda to come back to fulfill the role of a mother again. This idea is expressed numerous times throughout the play and as it

progresses, the audience learns more details about the circumstances surrounding his death and life before it. This information, known as the previous action of the play, is told through both exposition of the characters in the present as well as through the playwright's use of flashback scenes.

In *Waving Goodbye* there are a number of key pieces of previous action that the audience discovers and that they must know in order to follow the story being told. The first and most important is the fact that Jonathan is dead. This piece of information is problematic since the audience sees the character on stage at the beginning of the play, so it is vital that Lily disclose the fact that he is dead in such a way that the audience takes note. In our production, she did this by pausing briefly before she shared it and using a slightly more powerful voice. Other important information that is shared is that six years earlier, Amanda left her husband and daughter and has now recently returned to care for Lily due to Jonathan's death. Without this information the audience would struggle to understand the story of *Waving Goodbye* and the situations of the characters it is portraying.

There are two peak moments in the play; the first is found at the end of the first act, which, while not the climax of the play, acts as the high point of the first act. This high point, as expressed in *Waving Goodbye* through the fall of the roof and Lily's emotional explosion, poses the question: what will Lily and Amanda do to recover from this experience? The second peak in *Waving Goodbye* is the climax at the end of the second act when Lily relives the last phone call with her dad. This memory had been standing in the way of Lily's emotional growth. Previous to this moment, Lily has been unresponsive to her mother's attempts at reconciliation and has been haunted by her

father's presence. However, the remembrance of the call acts as a catharsis for Lily. After the memory is acted out, she discovers that Jonathan is no longer present in the apartment; his ghost has finally left her.

Waving Goodbye, like many contemporary plays, provides little in the way of resolution within the script. After Lily discovers that the ghost of Jonathan is gone, Amanda enters and offers to take Lily's picture. At this moment, Lily is at a crossroads; she can either walk away from her mother again or respond to this attempt at reconciliation. Lily, who is now finally free of her father's ghost and the grief that had frozen her, is finally able to make a conscious decision to respond to this attempt at reconciliation. She hands Amanda the camera and asks, "you want to take my picture?" (2.9). Amanda responds by telling Lily that from now on Lily will be the focus of her work. Although their relationship is far from mended, they are both finally able to take steps toward reconnection with each other after having come to an understanding of their own grief.

Conclusion

Waving Goodbye sets out to share the story of Lily Blue as she struggles to become an artist, find her voice, and cope with her father's death. By the end of the play, Lily is able to overcome her grief and previous abandonment by Amanda to find reconciliation and connection with her mother. This journey of self-discovery is heightened through Pachino's use of poetic language and an emphasis on non-realism to create a text that captures the audience's attention and explores the necessity to "wave goodbye"—let go, in order to move forward as a new person. The following chapters

will explore how this text was handled in Baylor's production and how the notions of identity and self-discovery influenced the work of the collaborative team.

CHAPTER THREE

Synthesis of Production Style: A Collaborative Journey

Introduction

This chapter will explore the collaborative process for the production of Jamie Pachino's *Waving Goodbye* by describing the work undertaken in developing scenery, costumes, lighting, sound, properties, and makeup design for the production. Each design element will be analyzed in detail, focusing on how that element changed throughout the collaborative process and the final impact the designs had on the production.

Theater is one of the few art forms in which creation is fully a collaborative act. It is the director's job to facilitate the combination of the artistic work of the design team, actors, and crew into a unified and cohesive theatrical production. The director works with the other theater artists to create an interpretation of the play by focusing on the elements of dialogue, character, setting, and all other aspects of its fictive world. The interpretation, as championed by the director, provides a framework or map for the designers to follow during their artistic exploration of the text.

The collaborative process for *Waving Goodbye* was especially challenging and educational. The design team was comprised entirely of undergraduate students; the lack of experience among the designers, however was not a concern. Each young designer came to the process with energy, excitement, and commitment, which made up for the lack of experience. The collaborative process began at the first design meeting with the director's discussion of the central metaphors, themes, and issues of *Waving Goodbye*

and concluded with a concise synthesis of the central concept for the production. The director's concept can best be described in relation to the two acts of the play. The first act embodies brokenness, both in the relationships that are portrayed and in the physical space where everything falls apart or is destroyed. This is followed by the second act, where the broken pieces are used to create something new and whole out of what had been destroyed.

Choice of Venue

Waving Goodbye requires the portrayal of multiple time periods and two major settings with a few minor settings all on the same stage. Because it is a character-driven play, intimacy between the actors and the audience is especially important. The Mabee Theatre, a three-quarter thrust stage that seats 250, best served the needs of the play for two reasons. First, it lends itself well to the creation of multiple levels, which was an excellent way to portray the different flashback sequences and settings clearly. The two settings that need to be simultaneously represented on the stage are an artist's loft with its cluttered collection of art materials as well as the feel of a polished, stark, clean art gallery. Because the playwright offered little time in the text for transition to take place, the characters needed to be able to move between the two settings freely and smoothly in real time. As such it was necessary to avoid long or complicated scenic changes. Because the Mabee Theatre is a thrust stage with a moat, (see color plate #1) the designers are able to create different levels and various playing on which to focus the audience's attention throughout the play. The use of the moat in the courthouse steps scene in the second act is a perfect example of how the Mabee lent itself well to the creation of the specific physical setting. The Mabee Theatre as a thrust stage, also allows

the audience to be closer to the action, and therefore creates a greater sense of intimacy. *Waving Goodbye* depends upon moments in which the characters share their personal longings, problems, questions, and doubts with the audience. The play is less about the plot and more about the psychological or emotional journey of the characters, therefore, the audience's ability to connect with the character's emotions is crucial to its success. The emotions are not always expressed in words but on the faces of the actors as they interact. Having the audience physically closer to the stage helps them enter the world of the play on an emotional level.

Scenery

The scenic designer establishes the physical world of the play, laying a foundation for the work of the other designers. The scenic designer's work was extremely important in *Waving Goodbye* because the play called for various settings such as an art gallery, loft apartment, mountain, and courthouse steps. Thus, the collaboration between the undergraduate student scenic designer and director was of utmost importance. By working together, the director and designer were able to come up with a design that met the demands of the script, worked within the confines of the venue, and provided multiple playing areas for the action of the play. The first meeting focused on uncovering the needs and problems inherent in the script, specifically looking at ways to handle the quick transitions between the two different settings in the play—the art gallery and the loft apartment. The features peculiar to the Mabey Theatre also were discussed, including the high ceiling, steep rake of the audience—which places a strong emphasis on the floor—and the harsh sightlines for the sides of the audience. With these problems in mind, the scenic designer brought to the second meeting some rough sketches of what the

space could look like as well as visual research into New York City lofts. At this stage in the design, the use of moving walls that could swing out into the space to help define the two settings was discussed. However, these walls would have created too much movement between scene changes and taken much too long to maneuver. A much simpler approach was needed. During the next meeting, the designer revealed a plan that would use a unit set, one that could represent both settings in the play. This design provided a strong playing area down center, yet still managed to capture the essence of both the art gallery and loft apartment. Exposed piping, shelves, wood floor, and ladders with an elevated upstage right playing area balanced a bank of hanging windows stage left. The idea was quite functional and striking.

This preliminary design was then shown to the designer's faculty mentor who pointed out that the balance of the space was uneven and that it needed more weight on the stage left side. Consequently, a twelve-foot wall was added to the middle of the space, which, in conjunction with the platform, created a hallway leading back to the upstage right area. This hallway was raised three feet to provide another acting area and to help define the space where Lily works. In order to solve the weight problem on the left side, the designer added a bench made of brick which connected the bank of windows to the floor so they no longer appeared to be floating in space. The eight-foot platform on the upstage right side was kept, but it was no longer the dominant image on the set. The focus of the design was now on the middle of the set, which provided a strong central wall upon which to locate Lily's artwork. The wall underwent a variety of renderings before its completion. After much thought and deliberation, the designer decided to

cover the wall in a mixture of brick, wood, and drywall, that added texture and varying visual planes to provide a strong focal point for the set.

The design called for two sets of shelves within the space. The smallest set, which was about eight feet tall, was situated upstage right and provided a means of climbing up onto the upstage right platform. The second set of shelves was ten feet tall and stood upstage left in front of one of the windows. The shelves were created to be sturdy enough for actors to climb up and down on them and as such, they served as a perch for the presence of Jonathan during the production. Both of these shelves were full of clutter that one might find in an artist's loft, everything from paint cans and bolts of fabrics to mops and boxes of clay. This clutter helped convey the idea that this space was used frequently by artists. Immediately left of the large shelf sat a small table with a mini refrigerator for use in the art gallery. The placement of this refrigerator was problematic as it sat in front of handicapped seating. Unfortunately this was overlooked by the designer and director until it was too late to change its placement. The entire floor was covered with old barn wood to create a distinctly worn and distressed look. Two skylights hung about twenty-five feet above the stage and were connected by exposed piping that helped define the boundaries of the world. This piping provided a strong visual reference point for the play's use of water and rain. In order to create a setting for both the art gallery and the loft apartment within the design, the designer added a small, backless sofa and coffee table to the downstage center area to form a focal point (see color plate #1). After the design was agreed upon, the director and designer determined that the most efficient way to transition between the two major play locations was to use distinct lighting for each.

Lighting

The task of the lighting designer was to differentiate the physical worlds in the play and illuminate the flashback scenes. The memory scenes required a subtle change in lighting to signal the switch from present to past without distracting the audience. In order to distinguish the art gallery from the loft apartment, the lighting designer proposed the use of practical lights, which would be turned on during the loft scenes and off during the art gallery scenes, thus defining the two spaces. However, budget restraints made practical lighting in the space unfeasible, so the designer had to think of an alternative. Instead, she proposed the creation of two distinct lighting styles for each space. For the loft apartment, she used softer amber colored lights that left parts of the stage in shadows. For the art gallery, she created a crisp, clean ambiance with brighter white light that provided a sharply defined space down center stage, leaving the architecture of the set behind it in darkness. We decided not to use blackouts for scene transitions because we were concerned the audience would emotionally disengage due to the break in the action. This decision turned out to be very good for the production.

Another task of the lighting designer was to provide color for the stage. Lily's and Amanda's flashbacks are differentiated through the use of colored lighting. Lily's flashbacks with her dad were tinted with subdued dark green that seemed to float on the edges of the space and her memory. Amanda's memory scenes were lightly colored with a heavier emphasis on blue lighting, which worked well for her time with Jonathan on the mountain and the courthouse steps. The designer also wanted to use Dichroic glass gobos—a filter that fractures the light—to further distinguish the flashbacks from the present day scenes. Overall, this design strategy worked well.

One moment of lighting that was especially pleasing was the flashback of the phone call at the end of the play. Jonathan is located on the upstage right platform and Lily in the center of the space. In this call, Jonathan references the fact that one of his hands is red, the other blue. The lighting designer was able to heighten the moment by lighting one of the actor's arms red and the other blue as the light faded on his face (see color plate #2).

Sound

Music and sound played a crucial function in developing the world of *Waving Goodbye* because dripping rain and a building storm were key elements in the play. The sound design helped create this reality and accentuate the tense and dramatic moments within the show. The collaborative process between the sound designer and director was slightly different than with the rest of the design team. The designer came into the process late because she was still working on another production for the first month of pre-production planning. Since the designer missed the first design meeting, the director and designer met to outline the directorial concept and vision so that the sound designer would be on the same page with the rest of the designers.

The sound designer suggested that the flashback scenes be underscored with subtle tones to help accentuate the fact that they are memories. I felt that this would make the flashbacks stand out too much. The designer argued that the underscoring would help the audience know that we had gone back in time within the story. After sharing with the designer my reservations, in the spirit of collaboration, we agreed to not completely rule it out until the designer was able to provide samples of what she was envisioning so as to persuade me. After further discussion the designer and director

decided that underscoring the memory scenes did not fit with the rest of the play's aesthetic as it would be too distracting for the audience.

The director and designer also discussed the music that should be used before and after the play and during the intermission. I felt that mellow instrumental music would fit well with the play because of the heightened emotional journey of Lily. The designer proposed that we use jazz, and in the end, the designer and director settled on the use of primarily saxophone and piano jazz. The last song the audience hears prior to the start of the play is very important because it sets the tone for the play. For *Waving Goodbye*, the designer was able to find a slow, soulful blues song titled "The Artist" by Becky Archibald from her album titled *Light at the End of the Blues*.

We agreed on the importance of the sound of water within the play. There are frequent references throughout the play to water dripping into the apartment as well as rain and thunderstorms in the background that must sound as authentic as possible. The designer's task was to try to trick the audience into thinking it was actually raining outside the theater. The designer and director were especially concerned about the thunder during the storms. Making the thunder sound realistic was very difficult because as it came through the theater sound system, it became distorted and lost its believability. The designer continued looking for more thunder effects and kept tweaking those she currently had. The final storm sequence utilized multiple speaker clusters that suggested the movement of the storm across the stage as it progressed from a slight drizzle to a raging storm.

Properties

Waving Goodbye is a highly technical play and requires the creation and destruction of visual art on stage. Both Amanda's hand sculptures and Lily's collage feature prominently in the play properties. The designer needed to make pieces of original sculpture and collages that were simple enough for the actors to recreate during the show. The following discussion will examine the challenges that the designer faced in the creation of the multiple hand sculptures and Lily's collage of art, which played key roles in the play.

Waving Goodbye calls for seven to ten oversized hand and forearm sculptures painted in various colors. These sculptures included a closed fist, a pair of gripping hands, a hand holding onto a rock, praying hands, hand with a rope, hand holding a wrist, and the main sculpture of two outstretched hands. Although creating seven original sculptures is a daunting task in itself, the play calls for the destruction of many of these sculptures within the course of the show. Because the designer had no prior experience in sculpting, it proved a challenge to figure out how one might create them as well as manufacture multiple copies of them in order for us to have some to break during every performance. During the six-day run of the play, we ended up using and breaking close to seventy-five sculptures. To accomplish this, the designer shaped the original form in clay and then created a negative mold from each, which enabled her to create plaster casts of the original sculpture. From there, the designer created the required ten copies that were needed for the duration of the show's run. For dramatic effect, it was important that when dropped, they shattered into multiple pieces. Since the designer was using plaster to create the sculptures, it proved difficult to get them to break apart as needed. In order

to solve this problem the designer used a band saw to make cuts into them to lesson their structural integrity, thus ensuring they would break when dropped. Although I was not completely pleased with all the sculptures because some of them were smaller then envisioned, the main sculpture was an exceptional piece of art. It was a pair of hands and forearms covered with dripping blue paint reaching up, trying to grasp hold of something. Because the sculpture was big and brightly colored, it was an eye-catching central piece that when dropped, elicited gasps from the audience.

The second piece of artwork that was central to *Waving Goodbye* was Lily's collage of photos and various other items. The end result was an assortment of frames, photos, and mat boards about six feet wide and twelve feet tall. The collage had multiple planes with different media intertwining among it including wire, broken pieces of plaster, exposed film, and random objects scattered throughout to give it weight and texture (see color plate #3). The director's goal was to have Lily physically do all of the creation of this art piece while onstage with little to no change in the art during the intermission. Unfortunately, due to stress of the other projects, the designer was not able to meet this objective. The creation of the actual piece of art was not finished until a few days before *Waving Goodbye* opened, which did not allow enough time for the actress to learn how to recreate the art onstage. To solve this problem, the actress playing Lily created the first plane of the collage out of frames while onstage, allowing the audience to see her ownership over what she was creating. The rest of the collage was brought in during intermission. Throughout the play, Lily came back to the collage and added small Polaroid pictures to it as well as moved or changed the smaller pieces within it. This allowed for us to still show Lily as author of the collage but in a way that did not demand

its total recreation on the stage every night, which was not possible due to the timing of its creation. In hindsight, the designer should have planned a simpler more easily re-creatable collage or allowed the actor to create her own version on stage each night.

Costumes

Since *Waving Goodbye* is set in the present, the director and costume designer anticipated the costume design to be fairly straightforward. However, we found ourselves struggling on many occasions with how best to serve the play through costumes. The costume designer's initial idea was to have a distinct costume for each instance there was a change of time in the play. She argued that since *Waving Goodbye* was a fairly straightforward, physically realistic play, the actors needed to have new clothes if there had been a start of a new day. Based on this assumption, she researched various outfits we might use for the show. However, during the early meetings we discovered a number of significant challenges within the text that hindered the development of the costumes.

The first problem was the play's fast transitions between scenes and frequent flashbacks, which prevented the actors from changing their costumes to represent the passage of time. While most of the secondary characters had enough time offstage to change costumes, the protagonist did not. Setting a precedent that people change during a passage of time would ultimately not work if only half the cast could actually do so. In order to solve this, the designer settled on using one outfit per act for each character and adding items such as jackets or bags, which could be used to vary the look of the characters.

The second challenge was finding the best costume for the character of Amanda. Since the actress playing Amanda was much younger than the middle-aged character, the designer needed to find a way to make her look older and convey the fact that she was an artist. The designer came up with a variety of different designs for Amanda but they all seemed too young-looking. Part of the problem was that a lot of the clothes that would be worn by a person like Amanda, a very free-spirited artist, made our actress look much too young. This was primarily due to the actress' physique; she was slender and tall with striking features and very long brown hair. To help play down her younger features, the actress cut her hair and wore black pants with an oversized sweater. Although this helped her appear older, she still looked much too young overall.

In hindsight, our mistake was focusing too much on making Amanda look like an artist. Since we were using a young actress to portray a middle-aged woman, the priority should have been on conveying her age, not the fact that she was an artist. The audience would have been more likely to accept the fact that she is an artist without costume cues, but they would have been less likely to believe her age without costume help. We should have put Amanda in clothing that made her look older even if it did not necessarily look like what an artist would wear. While some of this fault lies in the designer's final choice of the costume, equal blame must lie with the director for not realizing the error in focus.

The third problem encountered was a moment when Lily playfully takes off her shirt in a scene with Boggy, leaving her only in a brassiere. Because of this, we had to find a brassiere that worked well within this moment of the play, and allowed the actress to be comfortable maintaining her modesty. Early on in the process there was much discussion as to what kind of brassiere we should be using as it needed to reflect the

playful nature of Lily and Boggy's interaction so as to prevent the scene from being construed as seductive in nature. The designer initially picked out full coverage brassiere from a popular lingerie chain store. However, about a week prior to the play's opening, a few faculty members sat in and one was unsure as to the appropriateness of the brassiere. The faculty member felt it was too sexy for Lily, and argued that the reason Lily is comfortable in taking off her shirt is because she is not in something revealing. In order to solve this, the designer provided a sports brassiere for an alternative look. The sports brassiere met all of the criteria established—it provided the character with a youthful look, put the actress more at ease, and matched the scene's playful emphasis.

The final challenge in the costume design for *Waving Goodbye* was the choice of colors. When the entire design team presented their ideas we discovered that both the set and costumes were mainly in black and brown shades. This was problematic because there was not enough distinction between the actors' clothes and the set behind them. The people on stage would blend into the background making it harder for the audience to differentiate them from the set. As such, we lightened the shades of brown used on the set and altered a few of the costumes from browns to gray and green. The effect was a much more balanced use of color within the production.

Makeup & Hair

The makeup and hair design for *Waving Goodbye* was handled by the costume designer and the head of the makeup crew. This was due to a mix-up as these two people both claimed responsibility for the design. Since the technical director had not made it clear who was in charge, there was some initial tension because both had been preparing designs. Wanting to prevent this from becoming a problem I came up with a way for

both to stay on the project. The costume designer was in charge of hair and styling, while the makeup crew head would be responsible for makeup design. In the end, both worked together well to create the needed look for the actors in the production. Since *Waving Goodbye* is set in the present and does not call for any fantastical moments or magical characters, the makeup only suggested the age of the characters. This basic approach to the makeup allowed us to stay away from makeup that would appear false, especially due to the audience's close proximity.

Lily's style is plain, because she cares more about art than how she looks. The actress cut her hair short and wore just enough makeup to prevent her face from being washed out on stage. For the second act, the designer added more distinction around her eyes and mouth, because she was becoming more concerned with her appearance due to her relationship with Boggy and because she had started working in a professional environment.

Amanda starts the play with no makeup and her hair tied back in a ponytail. Since she is grieving for most of the play, she never looks like she is put together. Finally during the second act, Amanda makes strides towards emotional healing, and this is reflected in her appearance—she actually takes care of her hair and puts on a little bit of makeup.

Both of the men in the play, Boggy and Jonathan, wore subtle makeup to make sure that they were not washed out on stage. Jonathan's character, while older, did not need makeup to highlight his age, because he was able to achieve this through his comparatively larger size, his facial hair, and his interaction with the character of Lily, his daughter, made his age more obvious.

Perry, the remaining female character in the play, is flamboyant, which was reflected in her makeup and hair. Perry is also very fashionable and works with wealthy patrons. Her hair and makeup suggested high style and money.

The work of the makeup crew was successful in capturing both the mood and age of the characters. Although makeup was not a dominant design within the creation of *Waving Goodbye's* world, it helped in the overall creation of a believable production.

Conclusion

Although the design team was comprised entirely of students, the work and dedication from them in their creation of the world of *Waving Goodbye* was admirable, and for the most part, successful. A few problems cropped up within the collaboration but like any successful team, they worked well together to effectively find solutions. The scenery provided a place for the world of the play and set the tone and feel of the production. The lighting enabled the action of the play to move fluidly from one moment to the next and acted as a powerful way to play up the theatricality of important moments in the play. Sound created a musical backdrop, both in setting the tone of the production and in capturing the importance of water in the play's world. The properties provided the production with beautiful art that conveyed the believability of these characters as artists. Costumes and makeup reflected the essence of the individual characters, providing a way for the audience to see and understand them. Each of these designs worked well with the other in creating a complete and unified world that contributed to the success of this production of *Waving Goodbye*.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Production Process

Introduction

From the beginning of the process to the closing night of *Waving Goodbye*, my directorial goal was to generate and sustain an atmosphere that encouraged the actors and provided them with a safe environment where they were free to risk and develop their craft as actors. This chapter will cover the directorial strategy and will describe in detail the production process of *Waving Goodbye*, examining the audition and casting process, as well as strategies for staging, dress, and technical rehearsals. Finally, the chapter will give an overview of problems encountered throughout the process.

Directorial Strategies

The director's job is to make the actors' experiences with the play and its themes real to the audience, giving the actors an opportunity for self-discovery and exploration. This is accomplished by reiterating to the actors that a director needs their input because the director does not always have the right answer. This encourages the actors to see themselves as part of the collaborative process and reiterates the value placed upon their own instincts within the acting process. I do this because young or inexperienced actors have a tendency to want to rely on the director's choices too much within the rehearsal process.

Another way to combat this tendency is by telling the actors they do not need to ask permission for their choices or feel that they have to explain them early in the

process. If they want to move onstage or approach a scene in a different manner then they must go ahead and try it. Every rehearsal is started with my mantra, “Try, do not ask!” A director needs the actors’ opinions, thoughts, and impulses about how their characters interact with others and move through the world of the play. When the actors are able to understand the value of their choices, they are free to voice them and try new things onstage. They are able to risk, working toward new ways of seeing a character or exploring a situation. Of course sometimes their experiments are not appropriate for the characters, so I step in and either ask that they try a different approach or provide them with an alternative method.

Auditions

Auditions are of the utmost importance for a production because they provide the director with the actors with which to build the production. Going into auditions, the undergraduate actors’ attitude toward the play was positive. They continually expressed their willingness to help and interest in various parts. This was partly due to the fact that a junior-level directing course in the department had recently devoted several meetings to reading and analyzing the play. This was encouraging to me as the director because whoever was finally cast in the play would be willing to commit to the hard work that would be required of them. Since the play was going to be the first production of the spring semester, auditions were held prior to the students leaving for winter break. This schedule enabled me to cast the play prior to the break and allowed the actors to memorize their lines while they were on holiday. *Waving Goodbye’s* heavy technical and acting demands made this early start very advantageous.

The auditions were initially scheduled to take place in the Mabee Theater allowing the actors to be seen and heard within the physical space being used for the production and challenge the actors to be heard in a larger setting. However, due to the limitations in availability of space, the auditions were moved to Theatre Eleven, a black box space that is considerably smaller than the Mabee. Although this was not ideal, it still provided ample opportunity and room to evaluate the actors effectively.

I broke the audition process into two parts, the initial audition and subsequent callbacks. For the first part of the audition, each student prepared a short, ninety-second, modern monologue that reflected the type of character they were interested in playing. My main goal with this first step was twofold: first, to give me a sense of who might fit in each role; and second, to help me see which students were committed to their work. After seeing approximately ninety undergraduates, the list was narrowed down to about five actors per part.

The next step of the process was the callbacks, which took place a day after the initial auditions. My goal during the callbacks was to find a cast that would have a passion for their work, possess an ability to risk and try new approaches in solving problems, respond well to direction, and work well together as an ensemble. To begin this process, I took the actors through a series of warm-ups to loosen them up and get them comfortable in the space. Following this, they performed cold readings from the script so that they could work with the material in the play. The readings were kept fairly short, about a page in length, so the actors could become familiar with them and work on trying new approaches. My specific goal in doing this was to try to see and establish different relationship pairings within the casting pool. In hindsight, I would have liked to

have spent more time with individual actors during the callback. The callbacks should have been limited to three to four actors per part.

Casting

Since *Waving Goodbye* is about family relationships, it was necessary to make sure that my actors were credible as a family. The first task was to find someone who was believable as the main character, Lily. Since she is a seventeen-year-old girl, her body needed to pass for that of a teenager. It was very important that my lead actress had the ability to connect to her emotions and share them with the audience onstage. The actress who plays Lily had to be able to handle the extreme emotional demands of *Waving Goodbye* and be believable in expressing those emotions on stage. The actress cast was physically smaller than those called back for the parts of Amanda and Jonathan and was plausible as a teenager; yet as an undergraduate senior, she was mature enough in her acting ability to portray a grieving girl trying to rediscover herself after her father's death.

Once the actress for the character of Lily was chosen, the next challenge was deciding who to cast for the characters of Jonathan and Amanda. These two parts were more problematic because the actors needed to be able to work well together as a married couple and be believable as Lily's parents. Jonathan is a mountain climber, an imposing man with a strong physical presence that is balanced with a fun and loving nature, which expresses itself in his actions toward his daughter and wife. Ultimately, the character of Jonathan was easy to cast, because there was an actor within the department that fit the necessary physicality of the character as well as the fun nature that is demanded. He was also believable as Lily's father because they both had similar features and hair coloring.

Once the actors for Lily and Jonathan were chosen, the possibilities for Amanda were narrowed. The physical and emotional demands for the part of Amanda are as great as those required of Lily. The actress needed to be able to physically portray an older woman, work well with the other actors playing Lily and Jonathan, and be comfortable expressing a wide range of emotions onstage. Amanda turned out to be the hardest character to cast, because there were multiple actresses within the department who would have fit the character. In the end, I chose the actress who had the strongest acting abilities but looked less like Lily's mother. Since this actress' believability as an older woman was a problem encountered later in the production, I could have cast it differently. Yet, the work I received from the actress who was cast was strong. She was able to emotionally connect to her character and share that with the audience.

The last two characters, Perry and Boggy, were easy to cast. Boggy is an eighteen-year-old boy who does not care what other people think of him and is always himself, no pretense. There is something about him that is slightly weird, and he is a loner. The actor cast in this part seemed to be able to embody this idea with his physicality, comic sensibility, and interactions with others onstage. Perry, a flamboyant art gallery owner, also was easy to cast. The actress cast for this part came to the audition process with passion and energy and continually made interesting acting choices and was committed to her physical exploration of the character.

Actor Preparation

As a director I expect a professional manner from the actors who are cast and I work to explain, model, and teach professionalism—strong work ethic, collaboration, adaptability—to undergraduates. This is balanced by creating an environment that

promotes exploration, which is essential for young actors' development as artists. For *Waving Goodbye*, the necessary and desired atmosphere of professionalism and free experimentation was developed through a variety of tactics.

The first task was to make sure that everyone had a clear understanding of the expectations. During the first read-through of the play in late November, I outlined my immediate expectations for them as actors. First, they must treat this production as a priority and come back from Christmas break with their lines memorized. Though not usual for Baylor Theatre productions, this expectation was justified by the shortened rehearsal time frame. Second, they must arrive on time to every rehearsal to which they were called and be prepared physically and mentally to work. Third, they must keep a journal of their experiences throughout the production. The journal would provide a place for them to keep their character work and analysis as well as record any thoughts, reflections, or insights they gleaned during the process. The journal also provided the actors with a tool to help them better their craft by responding to questions or prompts throughout the rehearsals. One of the actors' first tasks was to complete a character analysis exploring four aspects of their characters: mental, relational, social, physical. The goal behind this particular assignment was to give them the tools necessary to understand their characters prior to the first rehearsal. Although most of the actors responded enthusiastically to the journal tasks, others did not utilize it beyond the first entry. I would have liked to see more use of the journals overall, but I made a specific choice to not demand a set length or type of response. I could have forced my actors to utilize the journals by setting apart time in rehearsals for the actors to write. However, I decided against mandating the use of this tool because not every actor responds or uses

this particular method in the exploration of their work as actors. It was more important that the actors were doing their own character exploration, not that they utilized a particular method I established.

Rehearsals

Waving Goodbye had almost exactly four weeks of rehearsals, which began on January 6, 2006, with opening night on February 7, 2006. Due to the extreme technical demands of *Waving Goodbye* including dripping water, a falling skylight, and creation of art onstage, the focus of last week of the rehearsal process was on implementing the technical aspects. This left us with three weeks to get the play prepared for production, which is why the actors were required to come to the start of rehearsals with their dialogue memorized. The three weeks were broken into three parts, each with a specific goal. The first week was used to block the production. This work will be explored in more detail in a following section. During the second week we developed the individual scenes, focusing on pacing and character work. During the third week, we focused on relationships and began to put the production together with a goal of having a complete run-through of the script every night.

Each rehearsal was structured the same to provide the actors with clear expectations of how they should be working. We began with a ten-minute warm-up, followed by a short exercise or game designed to establish a sense of ensemble among the cast. The warm-up and exercise time ended with a long tongue twister titled, “Give me the Gift of a Grip Top Sock.” We then used the rehearsal to work on specific scenes according to the rehearsal schedule.

Warm-up Routine

The most important time in a rehearsal is the opening warm-up because it provides the actors with the opportunity to relax and get ready both physically and emotionally. Throughout the first couple of weeks of the rehearsal process, the actors were led in a set pattern of warm-ups that included physical work, connection to breath, relaxation exercises, and vocal or diction work. After a few weeks, I began to allow the actors freedom over their warm-ups. By the end of the rehearsal process, the actors were allowed to do the warm-up work on their own and all had tailored their own specific routine.

Group Exercises

The group exercises was geared in some way toward developing the actors' ability to work effectively with each other. We often used games that focused on improvisation, which forced the actors to listen intently and be ready to respond immediately to their acting partner. An example of this type of improvisation exercise is when two actors were given a starting word and had to make up a scene based upon that word. As the exercise progressed, I called out new words and they were forced to alter their scene to fit that new signifier. The actors were particularly proficient in these exercises since each had prior experience with improvisation.

Another task they did repeatedly throughout the process was a rhythm exercise. In this exercise, each actor developed the personal rhythm that embodied his or her character. They shared this rhythm with the group, then every actor repeated his or her rhythm until eventually all the rhythms melded into one that was then associated with the group. Each actor still had his or her own character rhythm, but many times, it had

altered slightly and now fit within the context of the group rhythm. This exercise develops concentration and the ability to listen intently to other actors. In using it for *Waving Goodbye*, we were able to further develop a sense of connection among the actors that was instrumental in our creation of the relationships within the production.

The final category of exercises focuses on risk-taking. These exercises are almost always games—defender, story time, machine—where the actor has to do something silly in front of the other actors. One we used almost daily was called “Ay So Quo.” This is a game where the actors pretended to be Sumo wrestlers and had to match an appropriate word with physical action when called upon, all the while maintaining connection to a group rhythm. As the game progressed, the speed picked up until someone messed up. Another example of this is an exercise called “the monster.” For this game, the actors were asked to create a monster, but this monster must only have a certain number of feet and hands touching the floor at any one time. The goal of this exercise was twofold, to encourage the actors to risk, and to enable the team to be comfortable in working together to solve a simple problem. The better they got, the harder the challenges and the fewer seconds they had to accomplish the task.

Actor Work

Once the warm-up and group exercises were complete, the remainder of the rehearsal process was spent coaching the actors in the exploration and portrayal of their characters, working on creating believable relationships among the cast, and creating an effective staging of the play. My work focused on uncovering meaning as found in the themes of the play and aiding the cast in communicating those themes. This work is essential for any production because it allows the audience to relate to the play and

ultimately, respond to it. I will examine individual scenes in which the actors struggled and outline the specific coaching work for each actor involved in the production.

There were two scenes that the cast struggled with in the first act. The first scene was act 1, scene 5, where we are shown the relationship between Amanda and Jonathan right after they have fallen in love. They have just spent three passionate days in Amanda's loft together having sex and eating takeout food. In the scene, Amanda is trying to get Jonathan to pose again so she can sculpt his hands and Jonathan is trying to get his hands on Amanda and get her back to the bedroom. This scene is a key moment in the play because it allows the audience to fall in love with their relationship. "If you don't root for them and feel what they feel" explains Jamie Pachino, "then we don't get what Amanda's lost and we don't understand what Lily's pining after" (interview). In understanding Amanda's loss, the audience is prevented from judging her only in light of what she is doing to her daughter. The problem was that the relationship between the two actors playing Jonathan and Amanda was not reflecting this idea of real physical and emotional love. To solve this dilemma, each actor was given a specific task that they must achieve within the parameters of the scene. For the purpose of the exercise, their goals were kept a secret from the other so as to create a situation where they are forced to compete for what they wanted. Jonathan's goal was to persuade Amanda to come back to the bedroom with him, all the while maintaining some sort of physical connection with her. Amanda's goal was to seduce Jonathan into staying and doing what she wants, which was getting him to pose for her artwork. The result was exceptional and thrilling to watch as these two actors worked to find ways to achieve their objectives. It proved to

be one of the most effective scenes in the play and provided a clear and entertaining view of their relationship and the love they had for each other.

The second scene that posed a directorial challenge was act 1, scene 9. In this scene, Lily discovers Amanda just as Amanda is getting ready to walk out and abandon Lily again. It is an emotionally charged scene and has a high degree of technical difficulty because just prior to Lily's entrance, the skylight breaks open and water floods onto the stage. Moreover, this is the last scene before intermission, so the need for a strong moment was even greater. The scene calls for Lily to run around, piling up junk and pieces of broken sculptures around her mother while screaming at her. The problem was that the actress playing Lily was asthmatic and could not move quickly and scream at the same time without getting out of breath. Even worse, by focusing too much on the physical activity she was performing, the actress was losing her connection to the emotional content in the scene. To solve this, I asked the actress to take her time and imagine that she was using her words to hurt her mother. This enabled the actress to slow her physical pace down yet still keep up the emotional intensity she needed to make the scene and confrontation believable for the audience.

The second act also had a few scenes that were problematic and needed extra attention from the director. The first of these was the end of scene 6. In this moment, Jonathan is trying to leave a pregnant Amanda to go climb a mountain. Amanda is working desperately to convince him to stay, but he finally refuses. He says, "I have to go. It's who I am" (2.6). At this refusal, Amanda begins tearing up the photos they have of their time together. Jonathan stops her and tries to convince her that he loves her and that he will be returning. This is a key moment because Amanda realizes that Jonathan

will always leave her behind. Knowing that the future she was envisioning with Jonathan had changed, she responds, “I’ll care for this child until I don’t have to be its mother anymore, and then I’ll go too” (2.6). The problem was that the actors were not connecting emotionally to the scene. They were not listening enough to their partner or caring enough about the outcome. To solve this, I asked that they consider the photos as treasure, something precious to them, which caused both actors to become much more involved, especially when Amanda began tearing them up. The scene was ended by having Jonathan hand back the box of photos to Amanda, who had just been destroying them. It created a tense moment where Amanda was forced to choose whether or not she was going to accept the trust of the photos, their memories. This scene ended up being one of the strongest moments in the play and helped solidify the audience’s connection to what was emotionally happening to Amanda as her husband left.

The scene in the second act that was especially challenging was the phone call between Lily and Jonathan in scene 9. During this scene, a flashback depicts the call Lily received from her father as he lay dying. The first problem was figuring out where to play it on the stage. We first tried placing both actors down center each on one side of the stage and found that the focus was being split too evenly between them. Since it is Lily’s memory, her experience needed to be central to the audience so we moved Jonathan up onto the upstage right platform about eight feet off the ground and Lily into the center of the stage. This enabled us to create a central pool of light around Lily and leave Jonathan barely lit in the shadows. Even though Jonathan and Lily were now further from the audience, the scene was more intimate because it allowed the audience to see Lily’s pain as she relived the memory.

My primary work as a director in *Waving Goodbye* was as a coach helping actors to connect emotionally to their characters. Since the play deals with grief and abandonment, obviously, a lot of the key moments in the play are emotionally charged. An example is the previously discussed phone call at the end of the second act. In order to help the actress playing Lily connect to this scene I took her through a series of acting exercises that were designed to ignite an emotional response. For one exercise, Lily sat in a dark stage and imagined that she was completely alone. Then we started the scene and as she went through it, she began adding imaginary walls around her that blocked her in and cut her off from anyone else. Each time the actress went through the scene, she had less and less space and was more trapped until she was unable even to move. From this completely trapped place, the actress ran the scene once more and the outcome was fantastic. She finally made connection to what was happening and was able to move past some of the emotional blocks she had in performing the role. By succeeding in doing it once, she was able to re-approach this moment every night in performances. Overall, I was very happy with the actress' work in this moment. This was similar in its style to the type of exercises I used with all the actors to enable them to connect to their characters and understand the emotional demands of the play.

After developing a rehearsal environment in which the actors feel comfortable working, the director then begins layering subsequent theatrical aspects of the production onto this base. For *Waving Goodbye* these included helping expand the actors' portrayal of their characters by demanding effective technique and believable staging. I also asked for clarity of their emotions and connection to their characters' impulses and a complete understanding of the characters' actions and objectives within each moment. Once these

expectations were met, we began adding the technical aspects of the designers and technicians, which completed our unique telling of the story.

Staging

I approach the staging or blocking of a play very organically. Prior to the first staging rehearsal, I examine the script to create a rough blocking plan of each moment in the play specifically focusing on where characters need to make their entrances and exits. During the actual blocking rehearsals I work with the actors including them in the creation of the blocking as much as possible. If there is a problem I will refer back to my rough blocking plan but otherwise try to allow the actors freedom in their exploration of the staging. By creating the blocking organically the actors are provided with a base from which to jump into their character exploration. More often than not, some blocking changes as the actors get a clearer sense of what their character is doing or wanting in any particular moment. I encourage this because it makes for a stronger production at the end of the process.

During the blocking rehearsals for *Waving Goodbye*, my job as the director was to make sure we were utilizing the space efficiently, creating interesting composition, and striking stage pictures that were effective in telling the story and conveying the play's themes. Successful blocking can increase the audience's awareness of the characters impulses, thoughts, actions, as well as any relationships. The one aspect actors were cautioned against was repetition. Repeating patterns tend to cause an audience to lose interest in what is happening onstage.

Since the play was performed in the Mabey Theatre, the thrust stage played a key role in developing the blocking of the play. The actors had to be aware of every seat in

the house, even those on the extreme left and right, due to the thrust of the stage. I encouraged my actors to stay turned out to the audience whenever possible, though this proved impractical in a couple of moments due to specific scene demands. At the beginning of the third week, a couple of professors came to watch the play and gave me their opinions on the staging. My mentor pointed out that the production was too flat in its use of the space. Since we had placed so much emphasis on making sure the actors were addressing the entire house, they were no longer using the extreme down center space on the stage. He encouraged me to pull the intimate moments in the script down center to allow for more audience connection and variation in the blocking. The next day, we went through and re-blocked a few moments, which helped solve this problem.

The Mabee Theatre provides four entrances into its space, upstage left, upstage right, and two entrances through the vomitoria downstage right and downstage left. The blocking for *Waving Goodbye* utilized all four of these entrances. The upstage right entrance led back to the rest of the loft apartment including Amanda's bedroom and kitchen. The upstage left entrance allowed the character of Jonathan, the ghostly presence in Lily's life, to suddenly appear on the stage. The vomitorium downstage left was the backdoor to the loft apartment and also served as the front door for the art gallery. The vomitorium downstage right led to the hallway and Lily's room in the loft apartment and also served as Perry's office and the backroom of the art gallery. By being consistent with where characters were to enter and exit, we were able to further reinforce the sense of place associated with each.

Since *Waving Goodbye* is written with a number of fast transitions between scenes, we were forced to come up with clear and interesting ways to mark the end and

beginning of each new moment. While lighting and sound played a key role in these transitions, it was left to the actors to make it distinct enough for the audience to follow. A perfect example of this is in the transition between act 2, scene 6 and act 2, scene 7. In act 2, scene 6, Amanda is trying to convince Lily to stay and talk to her. Lily crosses to the upstage right entrance and while exiting, swipes hands with her dad, Jonathan, who is entering the same way. At that moment, Amanda is pulled back into a flashback of the day when her husband left her to go climb a mountain when she was pregnant with their child. The whole transition takes probably half a second. In that moment, the actress who is playing Amanda must switch from being a mom arguing with her teenage daughter to a pregnant, desperate wife trying to get her husband to stay at home. It is these types of moments that forced the actors in *Waving Goodbye* to be very specific about their transitions. Whenever an actor is forced to switch between two very different scenes like this, it is important for them to have a clear understanding of what their character wants and how they try to get it within each moment. This understanding prevents the actor from appearing vague or uncertain within the moment of transition because they know exactly what their action is in the new scene.

Another important aspect of the blocking that was influential in the success of telling the story of *Waving Goodbye* was the presence of Jonathan onstage. Throughout the play, Jonathan's presence haunts Lily in the loft. Any time she is in her space, her father is there with her as well. This initially proved problematic, because Jonathan must be present in the space but not steal focus from Lily. We solved this problem by perching him on top of the shelving units we had in the space. Each shelf was built so that he could surreptitiously climb up and sit on top. Since the play makes continued references

to the fact that his body is still stuck up on Everest, we decided to keep him up on the shelves looking down on Lily, because it reinforced both the fact that he was still up on the mountain and the idea that he was still a presence in her life. Although we had some initial problems figuring out where and how to get him onstage—the stage left shelf was not close to an entrance—in the end we solved it by deciding that since he was a ghost, he did not have to abide by the conventions established in the design. Specifically, he was able to enter into the space through an area that all the other actors treated as a solid wall. While I was initially concerned about this, the use of lighting, fast transitions, and other stage action helped cover his entrances and exits and as such, he seemed to appear and disappear when needed.

Not every production runs smoothly and *Waving Goodbye* is no exception. There were a number of problems that cropped up during the blocking. One of the main problems was the dropping of the sculpture and the subsequent fight between Amanda and Lily. Since we only had two extra copies of the actual sculpture to practice with, my actress did not get enough opportunities to practice the moment, so it seemed forced in its implementation. In the script, it says “Amanda makes a sharp gesture and the hand sculpture she was moving drops from her hand” (1.4). However, during the show, it never achieved the feel of something that was actually accidental. Unfortunately, this deflated the emotional intensity of the moment and hindered the audience’s connection to what was happening. I was never pleased with this moment and was disappointed with its final outcome.

Overall, the blocking for *Waving Goodbye* was satisfactory. The actors proved especially capable in their ability to create motivation for their movements onstage and

continued to allow for creativity and exploration throughout the development of the play. They responded well to my direction and brought to the process their own thoughts and ideas, which enabled us to develop an aesthetically pleasing look and feel for the production.

Technical Rehearsals

At the completion of the first three weeks of rehearsal we moved into the last week of preparation, which focused on technical and dress rehearsals. The technical rehearsals are designed to combine the actors' work with the work of the designers, specifically looking at the implementation of the costumes, lighting, and sound. For *Waving Goodbye*, the actors handled the addition of costumes easily because the clothing was typical of what they already wore. If the clothes had been unusual or somehow restrictive, the actors would have needed more time to get used to them.

The other design elements we added during the technical rehearsals did not go as smoothly as costumes. Some of the most demanding additions included the use of water and the breaking skylight and developing the timing and coordination between lights and sound for the storm effects.

By far, the most difficult challenge was developing a skylight that could break open during the play, pouring down water onto the actor. The technical director and I were very adamant that the skylight had to be safe, because our first concern was for the wellbeing of the actress. We needed to be able to guarantee that it would not fall and injure someone. The technical director attached six support lines to the hanging skylight to provide backups in case one should fail. During the first technical rehearsal, we tried it without anyone underneath and one side of the window snapped in half. Although

nothing fell, we were forced to pull it down and add metal supports to the entire window to make sure that none of the other wooden parts broke during the run of the production. Once we had made it secure, we then began adding the water to the window to achieve the desired effect of water plunging down onto the stage. After a number of repeated tries, we finally got the timing right.

The second area that caused considerable problems during the technical rehearsals was the coordination of the storm sequence at the end of the first act. This moment calls for a building storm that peaks in a loud crack of thunder just as the skylight breaks open. My lighting and sound designer worked hard to create the natural delay between the lighting and thunder. They also worked to make sure that the entire storm sequence in the play, from its beginning to its climax, was believable. Throughout the entire technical rehearsal, all of the designers and technicians worked hard to increase the artistic aesthetic of the final production. Their willingness to change and adapt and their ability to brainstorm ways to solve unforeseen problems was essential to the success of the production and the quality of the final product.

Dress Rehearsals

The purpose of the dress rehearsals was to provide those associated with the production—the actors, designers, and technicians—the opportunity to polish their work by performing for a smaller audience. These rehearsals are very important because they allow the cast and crew to build confidence in their work and provide the actors with an opportunity to see how an audience might respond to the production. This was especially important for *Waving Goodbye* due to the fact that there were only a few people who came in and watched our rehearsal process. We wanted to have at least three dress

rehearsals; however, due to the short time frame this was not feasible, so we went with two.

One aspect of this production that was unusual was that we actually added an element during dress rehearsals. Usually everything is in place prior to technical rehearsals but due to budget constraints, we had to wait until dress rehearsals to add in the breaking of the main sculpture onstage. It was not feasible for us to break this sculpture earlier due to the extreme amount of time and energy needed for its creation. As stated earlier, this did cause a problem, because it did not give the actress enough time to practice with the sculpture to make the moment believable.

After each dress rehearsal the actors were given notes, which were generally positive in nature and designed to increase their level of comfort within the production. At this point in the process, the production was finally coming together into a cohesive unit. We balanced the design elements with a strong story told by actors who had a nuanced understanding of their characters. At the end of the final week of technical and dress rehearsals, the cast and crew were ready to share this story with an audience.

Conclusion

The production process of *Waving Goodbye* was a powerful example of a team of theater artists collaborating together to create a unified and aesthetically pleasing play that told a powerful story, and which elicited strong positive audience response. One comment received from an elderly gentleman who watched the play serves as a good example of the kind of response this production elicited. He said, “I have been coming to Baylor’s productions since the fifties, and I have never seen a better play here.”

Although not everyone was that enthusiastic about the success of the production, I was

very pleased with the outcome. The efforts of all involved resulted in a play that was engaging, aesthetically beautiful, and moved the audience to tears. The last chapter will focus on my self-evaluation of my work as a director and will include a critical look at the strengths and weaknesses of my production of *Waving Goodbye*.

CHAPTER FIVE

Production Evaluation

Introduction

A play is best directed when the director is aware of the uniqueness of the audience and also its universal humanity. If the director understands the audience's cultural influences, he can help them understand the themes and connect to the play better by communicating in the audience's cultural language. At the same time, an observant director can draw out the human themes and challenges of characters and make the play's themes more accessible to the audience. A director must also find a balance between the focus on the play's theme with an emphasis on strong actors, a well-developed design, and effective blocking in the *mise-en-scène*. Achieving this balance was the goal of my directorial work on *Waving Goodbye*. I was especially pleased with the audience's positive response. The rest of this chapter will focus on my evaluation of *Waving Goodbye* taking into account the responses and feedback received from my professors, peers, and student actors.

Evaluation of Final Production

A theatrical experience, due to its ephemeral and subjective nature, does not lend itself well to evaluation. Colin Chambers in the introduction to *Contemporary Dramatists* outlines theater's elusive nature and the problem inherent in its critique. "Theatre...always surprises, slips our grasp, and refuses to me measurable" (xi). Yet in spite of these characteristics, principles of analysis can be applied to all works of art. An

analysis and critique of *Waving Goodbye* is valuable because it provides an opportunity for self-evaluation. There are three areas that I choose to focus on when examining my work as a director. The work of the actors is the first area: did the actors tell the story and effectively embody their characters? The second area is an examination of the design and technical work of the production, exploring the question: did the design serve the play's needs, effectively communicate the themes of the play, and provide a good representation of the physical world of the play? The third area is a look at the production as a whole, asking: was the collaborative process for *Waving Goodbye* effective and fair for all parties involved? The main concern in this assessment is evaluating whether or not the work on the play was truly a collaborative act. The evaluation will end with a frank assessment of my personal abilities as a director, specifically focusing on how the process revealed the strengths and weaknesses of my work as a theatre artist.

Acting

In order to connect with the play, the audience must connect with the characters. The most effective performances are created by actors who are able to explore their characters and find ways to relate to them. The director aids the cast in this endeavor by creating a safe place where the actors are free to risk and fail and the fear of judgment is removed. When I, as a director, am able to be vulnerable and imperfect with my actors, they are in turn released from the need to be perfect. They are then able to risk trying new approaches, which enables them to come to a deeper understanding of their characters. Using this as a basis for evaluation, the work received from my actors was outstanding. They each brought their own individual strengths and weaknesses to the

production. Although their performances would not be classified as professional due to the educational nature of the performances, the attitude and energy they brought to the process far exceeded that of most of the “professional actors” with whom I have worked in the past.

The actors who played the two lead characters, Lily and Amanda, both made exceptional strides in their development as performers during the course of the production. From the very beginning of the process, they continually worked towards finding a connection to what drives their characters’ emotions and developing a believable relationship as mother and daughter, which proved difficult for them due to the intense emotional demands of the script and the fact that both actors were very close in age. The actress playing Amanda was more successful in expressing and connecting to her emotions. This connection enabled her to give a convincing portrayal of a woman who is drowning in her own grief and guilt. The scenes which called for expressions of grief, anger, or guilt were poignant and well-developed. However, she was less believable in her portrayal of a middle-aged mother. The actress was never able to achieve the necessary physicality that properly reflected the age of her character. Unfortunately, this hindered her performance because she was less convincing as Lily’s mother and at times seemed to read more like her sister.

The actor playing Lily had a much easier time in connecting to her character’s age and properly reflecting the mother-daughter relationship. She was able to embody an angst-filled teenage girl who cared more about being left alone than having to deal with her mother, all the while allowing the audience to see and connect to Lily’s hurts, dreams, and desires. Although the actress accomplished this with aplomb, she was less successful

in her connection to the character's internal emotional life. Throughout the rehearsal process the actress was unable to achieve a sense of believability in the portrayal of her emotions onstage, especially grief. We worked extensively on this challenge, trying a number of exercises designed to help her in this exploration. Although the final product was much better than any work she had done prior to *Waving Goodbye*, her portrayal of Lily was still not as fully developed during the scenes that called for a heightened emotional response.

The final member of the Blue family, Jonathan, had a unique challenge in *Waving Goodbye*. He spends most of the play haunting Lily, continually present in the space with her but not actually involved in what was happening in each scene. The challenge posed to the actor at the beginning was that he needed to seem to appear and disappear on the stage. The audience needed to physically see him but at the same time not lose their focus on what was happening to Lily. He did an amazing job with this by focusing on Lily and by being very spare in his movements while onstage. He seemed to blend into the background of the set. His work was accentuated by the creation of pools of shadows and light. For the scenes in which he interacted with the others on stage, he was able to develop a clear and consistent portrayal of his character while achieving an authentic relationship with Lily and Amanda that allowed the audience to see him as an individual with his own problems, frustrations, and dreams. An area in which he was weaker was his connection to heightened emotions. During act 2, scene 7, when he's getting ready to leave a pregnant Amanda, he was not connecting emotionally to what was happening to this character. Eventually, through some coaching work, he was able to realize what was at stake for his character within the scene and became more involved emotionally.

The last two characters in the show, Perry Marshall and H. Bogsworth Barry (Boggy), brought to the production characters that were funny, offbeat, and completely at ease in being who they were, even if this was slightly off the normal. They provided the necessary comic element that the play needs in order to find the correct balance between serious moments and laughter.

Perry, the flamboyant art gallery owner and surrogate mother to Lily, continually made interesting choices in the development of her character. The internal energy, passion, sharp wit, confidence, love, and surprising vulnerability she gave to the character created a distinct yet well rounded individual whom the audience enjoyed watching. She was at ease in portraying Perry both as the gallery owner—superficial New York socialite with a dry wit—and a loving and protective mother figure for Lily.

Boggy—Lily’s love interest and friend—embodied the offbeat character through his physicality, comic timing, and genuine care and concern for Lily. His ability to take an audience from tears to laughter in one scene was impressive and says a lot about his abilities as an actor. Using only a few sparse lines, the physical embodiment of his character and his comic sensibility provided the nuance and offbeat color that ultimately allowed the play to succeed in connecting to audience members.

Developing the actors is usually one of my strengths as a director, and my work on *Waving Goodbye* re-enforced that this as an area of relative skill. My ability to bring the actors together as an ensemble, which effectively told the story of *Waving Goodbye*, all the while helping them to create characters who were multi-dimensional yet specific, kept the audience engaged in the story of *Waving Goodbye* and ultimately allowed them to connect to the characters’ emotional journeys.

Design

The design elements of a production, when properly combined together, contribute to the sensuous world of the play, thus enabling the audience to connect with the story. The director must not fail to appreciate the considerable impact of the designers' work on the quality of the production and on communicating meaning. All of the general designs for *Waving Goodbye* and their execution were successful, with only a few problems in the process.

The scenic designer effectively created a setting that balanced the demand for an art gallery and a loft apartment. The open space and detailed environment she developed provided a strong central location, which allowed for the creation of striking stage pictures and a well-balanced use of the space by the actors. *Waving Goodbye* is filled with technically challenging moments, such as a falling skylight and multiple points of dripping water onstage. The designer was able to incorporate these challenges into the designs, thus creating a space that was aesthetically beautiful while at the same time solving the technical problems inherent in the play. The properties designer's construction of Lily's collage of photos and the multiple sculptures lent credibility to the actors' portrayal as artists. As mentioned earlier, due to the late assembly of the collage, we were not able to implement its construction into the actual production. Although this was not ideal, it still allowed the collage to serve its purpose within the play. The only other area in which the properties designer's work was not excellent was the creation of the sculptures. Although individually they were magnificent in their attention to detail, most of them were too small. Because the audience could not see them clearly, their impact was lessened. In hindsight, I would have asked that the properties designer make

all of the sculptures larger. This would have heightened the audience's response to them when they were broken, providing a stronger connection to what Amanda is going through in the loss of her husband.

The lighting in *Waving Goodbye* was exceptional in capturing the play's various moods and properly shaping the visual world of the play. The use of blues and greens to reflect the memory scenes added the necessary touch of color that subtly indicated to the audience that we were no longer in the present, but it was done in such a way as to be almost unseen by the audience. The designer was able to capture in light the feel of each scene and used textured patterns to highlight what the characters were feeling. One scene that was exceptional in its execution was the scene depicting the phone call between Lily and Jonathan. By using low blues, reds, and textured shadows, a ghostly mood was created which was well-balanced and provided the audience with an opportunity to travel with Lily as she remembers her father's last words. The lighting designer's hard work, attention to detail, and well-thought-out vision for the production provided *Waving Goodbye* with an appropriate atmosphere for each scene and a defined space for the action of the play to unfold (see color plate #4). Her lighting design was exceptional and was instrumental in creating an effective environment to tell the story of *Waving Goodbye*.

Like the lighting designer, the sound designer was able, through hard work and trial and error, to develop music and sound cues that meshed well with the set and lighting in the creation of the world of the play. The pre-show and intermission music, which echoed the mood of the play, helped set the tone and feel of the production for the audience members. This, along with the designer's careful consideration for each sound

cue, heightened the theatricality of the production. An example of this was in her creation of the storm sequence at the end of the first act. From its beginning, with low rumblings indicating a coming storm through to the thunder clap during the climax of the scene, she was able to add a level of reality that complimented the action taking place.

Another important design element in theatre is costumes, because they play a key role in the audience's perception of characters. As such, the costume designer must be proactive about everything the character wears including the type of fabric used, the style, texture, and choices in footwear. They all provide visual clues to the internal workings of a character, and must be taken into consideration when designing costumes for a show. The challenge for a designer is to communicate through costumes the feel of the character in such a way that it does not overpower the actor or seem blatantly obvious in its execution. For the majority of the costumes, the designer accomplished this goal.

However, there were two problems with her designs. First, the costumes for the character of Amanda did not appropriately reflect her age. Second, the character of Perry did not seem to fit in the world of the play. Perry is described in *Waving Goodbye* as, "a gallery owner, funny, acerbic" (6). The costumes, especially the second act outfit, seemed more suited to someone who was flashy and trendy, but gave the character an almost comical look due to an enormous front bow on the shirt. While this outfit seemed all right in the preliminary stage of development, it did not work once we got it on the body of the actor.

In this instance, the relative inexperience of the undergraduate designer showed in her lack of understanding of how the clothes she was designing were going to change based upon the different body types of the actors. After seeing it on the actress, I knew

that it was not what I wanted and as such should have been upfront with the designer and asked that she scrap it and start again. Instead, I told her why it was bothering me and asked that she fix or alter it somehow. Unfortunately, I lost focus on the costume and did not get a chance to see it again until the dress parade. I still felt it was inappropriate for the actress playing Perry but had to balance my feelings against it with the cost of time and frustration caused by requiring changes so close to the play's opening. I knew it was a problem but failed to follow through early enough to change it, so I was stuck with a costume that was not appropriate for Perry. Even though these particular costume choices were not ideal, the costumes she developed for the other characters were appropriate for the look and feel of the play.

Production as a Collaborative Act

Each aspect of the performance—the acting and the scenic, lighting, sound, and costume design—contribute to the sensuous world of the play and ultimately affect the audience's ability to connect with it. The director's job is to facilitate the collaboration of the work of all of the theatre artists, resulting in an effective production. To do this, the director must succeed in two primary areas. First, he/she must provide the actors with a safe rehearsal environment so they have the freedom to explore their characters. Second, he/she must establish an open dialogue between themselves and the designers. The rest of this section will explore these concepts as they relate to my work as a director for *Waving Goodbye*.

As a director, I always focus on creating an environment for my actors that allows for freedom in the exploration of their characters. This is accomplished by establishing a clear picture of my expectations for them. In *Waving Goodbye*, as in all plays that I

direct, I laid out my directorial style, specifically addressing the belief that a play will be best served when actors have freedom to try new choices within the development of their character. A play needs the ideas and thoughts of its actors to make it excel. Second, I explained my directing mantra, which is “Try, do not ask.” By emphasizing the value of the actors’ work, they then feel free to pursue that work within the development of their characters. To maintain this type of environment I never tell an actor that their choice is wrong, instead, I ask that they make a different choice. The successful outcome of *Waving Goodbye* and the audience’s ability to connect to what the characters were feeling provides evidence that the actors were provided with an environment that allowed for their successful creation of believable and nuanced characters.

As with any collaborative effort it is important that the director places value and trust on the instincts of the design team, because it is their work that ultimately provides the basis for a strong production. My skills are as a director and as such, I acknowledge my need to bring designers into the process of developing a complete and realized production. Of course, any time one brings multiple personalities together to develop a production, there are going to be differences of opinion regarding what is best for the production. Ideally, the director’s work in establishing a strong concept and being very specific as to what he/she is envisioning helps deflect some of these problems.

However, in conveying my concept ideas, I never flatly disagree with a designer’s assumptions or impulses. It is necessary, in a truly collaborative process, that the designers have opportunities to express their ideas fully, even those I might disagree with. On numerous occasions my initial reluctance to accept a design choice has changed upon hearing and evaluating the designer’s input regarding how the specific choice would

best serve the play. An example of this can be found in the collaboration between the costume designer and myself as we worked on coming up with an appropriate look for Lily's first act costume. In one of our first meetings, she discussed the fact that she wanted Lily in a white shirt. This idea seemed wrong to me, because it would wash the character out onstage and was too plain for her. Lily needed to be more colorful and younger looking, and the white shirt would cause her to seem too stiff or formal. Yet the costume designer was adamant about this idea, so I asked her to provide me with sketches of what Lily would look like. She came to the next meeting with painted sketches of what she envisioned. To my delight, she furthered her idea and had Lily in a white shirt covered in splashes of paint. This satisfied both of our visions of the character and also provided the audience with a strong visual reference to the fact that Lily was an artist. By not squelching her ideas, the lines of communication were left open, enabling us to work together and come up with a design that was better than we both had envisioned. This is an example of the kind of collaboration a director must strive for in interactions with designers because it makes a stronger production.

At the same time, a director must know when and how to disagree with the designers so as to make sure that the play and its themes are being properly portrayed by the designs. This is an area in which I as a director need to continue to develop, because I had both good and bad experiences with this in *Waving Goodbye*. An example of effective communication can be found in the collaboration with the sound designer. Her initial idea to underscore the memory scenes would have caused them to stand out too much from the rest of the play and hinder the audience from connecting to the story being told. By explaining my reasons for not underscoring the scene, she was able to

understand the decision and see how it best served the play. It is important to note the distinction between saying “No,” and creating a dialogue to explore the rationale behind the decision. An example of ineffective communication between the designer and director centers on Perry’s second act costume explained earlier. I should have been more proactive about making sure that the play was being served by the costume. Instead, I failed the play as well as the designer by not being specific enough as to what I did not like about the initial design or following up on the problem.

Director Self-Evaluation

Each production offers an opportunity to examine my personal abilities as a theatre artist in light of the work that was accomplished. This section will focus on my work as a director for *Waving Goodbye*, specifically highlighting how the show revealed my strengths and weaknesses within my work. I chose *Waving Goodbye* as my thesis production because it challenged me in areas I consider weaknesses while still playing to my strengths as an actor’s director. My directorial work is focused on creating believable relationships among my actors while still allowing them freedom in their exploration and portrayal of their characters. The actors’ connection to their characters and the effective portrayal of them allows me to claim that my directorial work on *Waving Goodbye* was successful. My focus, on creating a safe, collaborative environment for the actors and my subsequent use of exercises which helped enable them to come to a nuanced understanding of their characters’ actions and objectives, set the stage for their accomplishment. The ability to instill confidence in the actors as well as achieve a high level of proficiency from them is the strongest asset I bring to a production.

My work on *Waving Goodbye* also pointed out areas in which I am weak. The play, with its heavy technical demands and quick changes between scenes, requires a director who is able to balance the needs of the actors against the creation of the set. A lack of balance in my work on *Waving Goodbye* caused a number of design aspects to falter. The late creation of Lily's art college, the size of the sculptures, and the poor costume choices could have been prevented had I spent more time overseeing the technical and design aspects of the production. While the two art pieces were good, they could have been excellent, if I had spent more time on making sure that they were going to be ready when they were needed. In the future, I will need to continue to reevaluate the amount of effort I spend on the actors and on the design to achieve the balance that I strive for while working on a production. I have to learn to give more time to making sure that the design and technical aspects of the show mirror the work and skill achieved by the actors.

The second weak point was the transitions between scenes. Due to the fast transitions in the play and the use of the Mabey Theatre, there were a couple of transitions that I felt were not as effective as they should be. The two that were the most problematic were between act 1, scenes 4 and 5 and act 1, scenes 7, 8 and 9. The reason that 4 to 5 was especially troubling was due to open paint cans, wet paintings onstage, and the fact that Lily has paint on her hands and clothes. The transition calls for Amanda to appear upstage beginning the next scene with Jonathan while Lily exits the space. We had to find a way to get Lily and the painting material off the stage quickly while not interrupting the action between Amanda and Jonathan. We tried having a stagehand come on to take off the painting material, but it was too distracting. In the end, we set the

transition so that Lily puts away the paint cans before she exits and takes the paintings with her. I was not happy with the transition but could not come up with another way to solve the problem. The second transition that was problematic was between act 1, scenes 7, 8 and 9. The script calls for Amanda to come in at the end of scene 7 and begin packing her things, preparing to leave while at the same time, a second scene between Lily and Perry plays down center in front of her. However, this was impossible because the theatre could only allow for one specific playing area onstage. In other words, it was impossible for us to portray both the gallery and loft at the same time. So, we had Amanda's character come in during the transition and get a suitcase and then leave. While this solved the problem within the text, it slowed the production down too much and detracted from our previously established pattern of quick transitions. I have to continue to focus on the transitions within productions working to make them part of the action of the story.

Conclusion

Waving Goodbye was an effective and entertaining production that while successful offered room for improvement in the implementation of the designs and the actors' creation of balanced nuanced characters. While the audience responded positively to the work that the actors, designers, and director accomplished, as a director I acknowledge the production's weaknesses so as to learn from my mistakes and become better at creating theatrical productions. Overall the production was a success and my work as a director in facilitating collaboration between all involved was a fundamental aspect in the audience's positive response.

By drawing out and communicating *Waving Goodbye's* themes of grief, abandonment, need for family, the necessity of finding one's own identity, and artists' compulsion to make art, the creative team—director, cast, and crew—were able to excel in creating a theatrical event. The work provided a brief glimpse into the lives of the fragmented Blue family as they struggled to reconnect the broken pieces of their lives and art and once more see and value each other as family. Ideally, this play provided the audience with the impulse to reexamine their own lives and recognize the need for reconciliation and connection within their own families.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Interview with Jamie Pachino by Daniel Inouye on Sept 12, 2005

DANIEL INOUE: You wrote your first play on a bet? Can you talk to me a little bit about that?

JAMIE PACHINO: I started out as an actress and that was what I was going to do although I'd kind of always done writing on the side and a couple of people said 'Oh you're going to be a writer.' I had a job as a receptionist at a law firm. That was my day job for awhile. And one of the guys who was the head of the mailroom had seen me writing and said 'You should write a play,' and I said 'Nah, I don't want to write a play.' And he bet me that I couldn't. And the bet was I had to open up the dictionary and point to any word and I had to write a play based on that. And we did it because I had nothing to do all day but answer the phone. The word that we came up with was mandrake. And mandrake is a fantastic word to write a play about. So I did and it wound up getting produced.

DANIEL: What was it?

JAMIE: It's called *Children of Cain*. It's a very black comedy and it's not that good but it got produced and it actually got decent reviews and ironically, the guy who helped dramaturge it for me and then directed it is now the director of the new play development at Steppenwolf and it partially responsible for *Waving Goodbye* having its world premier in co-production with Steppenwolf. So after seven years of relationship of us keeping in touch as writer and literary person, you just never know.

DANIEL: You went to Northwestern?

JAMIE: Yes.

DANIEL: And are you from Chicago?

JAMIE: No I'm from Baltimore. And then I went to Northwestern and I stayed in Chicago for 14 years. I love Chicago I love, love, loved it,

DANIEL: I am from Chicago as well. I actually ended up working at National Louis University for a time.

JAMIE: Oh, I taught there. Did I teach one or two course there? It was right before I left town. I was great. I really enjoyed that.

DANIEL: When did you know that you really wanted to be a playwright?

JAMIE: It's hard to say that there was a moment. It was a gradual evolution for me, I was still acting while I was writing and my stuff was starting to get produced in Chicago and then it started getting produced in other places. I was a company member at a place called Strawdog. I was constant ensemble there both as a writer and an actress so I had a place, I had a home, and they would produce my work and so I started developing stuff for them. There became a point at which acting was not as satisfying or I guess being an actress was not as satisfying—acting I still love. And being a writer was very satisfying. It was never a conscious decision to stop acting and to focus completely on writing. There was a certain point, probably 8 years ago when I said, 'I'm just going to take a break from acting because it's not really feeding me in the same way and I'm going to concentrate on my writing,' and it really took off after that. I had a particular play that really started to hit. It got a bunch of awards. It got produced all over the country. It was an option for a film, and that's a whole other story. It really did open the doors for me and it became much more satisfying and people became interested in my development as a writer and opportunities started opening up for me. It just sort of felt like I had really found my place. So there wasn't a moment when I was like, 'I'm a playwright' but if you ask anybody I grew up with or my 7th grade English teachers or whatever they all thought I was going to be a writer, which was ironic, as did my acting teacher in college which was sort of annoying.

DANIEL: What compels you to keep writing?

JAMIE: I love writing. To me, in a lot of ways, it's sort of like extended improve on paper and you get to be everybody. You know what I mean. You get the opportunity to investigate ideas and issues and people and relationships in a very creative and also mathematical way because once you're dealing with structure issues and not just character and dialogue issues. I'm interested in how you tell a story. I'm interested in what you tell a story about. The relationship to the audience really compelling-- what works, what doesn't work, like how you guide them into a story. It's everything about the process. I love collaborating. And especially since I've been out in LA I've been doing more and more film work. Film is incredibly lonely. It's just a writer in a room with a computer. And often time you'll get notes over the phone from a producer and they'll say 'Let's just do another draft,' there's no 'Let's sit around and read it,' There's no collaborating in a way, well, it's own form of collaboration, but it's lonely. And I always loved being in rehearsal and I do think there's so much to mine and so many ways to do it and finding the best way to tell a story you can't get to the end of. Your interest in is just...and make a living at it? What could be better than that?

DANIEL: Are there themes or issues that keep recurring in your plays?

JAMIE: There are. I mean, nothing that I'm consciously pursuing but stuff that I look back on and 'Oh, look at that.' The issue of identity interests me. How you define somebody's life, how you define your own life. That's in a play of mine called *Theodora* about this true, notorious empress from Byzantium and everybody told her story but her. And so I'm really fascinated by that. How could you presume to tell somebody else's story? Which is basically what I do for a living. But also in *Waving Goodbye*, Lily after

her father is gone, is somebody new. There's sort of three things I've found that come up in my work, and that's one of them. I'm fascinated by the idea of chance and timing. My best example is I drove to the store recently to return something and I was really fascinated by the radio interview on NPR. So I sat in the car and listened to it and then I said 'Oh I don't think I brought the receipt' So, I looked in my purse and I didn't have a receipt and I was going to go home and get it, and I backed right into a car. Now, it's like any other...if I hadn't listened to the story, if I hadn't forgotten the receipt...if I hadn't picked that parking space. It's like, that, to me...What if that had been a horrible car accident? Maybe that's just life with possibility. Oh and then the other one that kinda comes up is, and my friend says this is me working it out, is how to be an ambitious woman and not suffer. It's in *Splitting Infinity*, which is my latest play. That's going up this season. It's in *Waving Goodbye*, certainly Amanda's dealing with it. And it comes up, the idea of being a successful, ambitious colorful, productive woman and yet the cost of that, if that's possible or the sacrifices that have to be made. And that's not something I do consciously, it's sort of crops up. A friend of mine said that *Waving Goodbye* was-- I have a 3-year-old now-- my way of working out whether I could have a child. And I got pregnant during the run of it so you take it for what it's worth.

DANIEL: It seems like you do write really strong female characters.

JAMIE: Well, I write for actresses. It's like I go 'I'm going to write a really powerful woman'. It's just well, that's what's really interesting to me. But also having grown up as an actress and the dearth of really great role for women out there, especially for women once they're 30. It's just, like, Perry in *Waving Goodbye* I wrote for a friend of mine. And she did it at Steppenwolf first and she was brilliant. She's brilliant, brilliant, brilliant. I love writing for voices that I know very well. Amanda here in LA, because I saw a production go up here, is an old friend of mine and she was amazing and had been an early thought of mine for Amanda. And you know I write for actresses I don't necessarily write, I don't say I'm going to write about a woman who acts.

DANIEL: How would you describe your style as a writer?

JAMIE: I wouldn't. It's all over the map. Like I said before, it's all about, to me it's about 'What's the best way to tell this story?' I had a political satire, which is called *A Return to Morality* in which is a guy in the lead. It's just incredible, fast paced, relatively short scenes, you know bap,bap,bap, one right after another. Which the delivery out to the audience in some instances he's one character and then the 5 other actors in the play, play like 30 other people. So that's one way to tell...you know it's sharp and it's funny and its satire. And then I have another play called *Aurora's Motive* which is about this woman in Spain during the early part of the 20th century who raises this prodigy daughter and then kills her and that is an old-fashioned tragedy. *Waving Goodbye* is stylistically different from any of them. *Children of Cain* is a black comedy. They're all different and to me it's about what serves the story I'm telling, best, not this is the way that I write. I like to think that the writing that I do is only the writing that's necessary. I over write like crazy and then I pare back. To me, it's about writing to most muscular piece possible and the most economical and just doing what needs to be there. Looking at

Waving Goodbye you wouldn't think that but in its own way, it's a very spare play. It's pretty florid but in its own way, it's just what's necessary to tell that story.

DANIEL: Who or what are some of your influences, writers or philosophies?

JAMIE: I love Tom Stoppard and I love Tony Kushner and I think somewhere in the middle of there is what I try to do. Because I think that they are to each side of me. A Stoppard can be occasionally really cold and analytical and really, really, really smart. And Tony Kushner can be really poetic and melodramatic and polemic. So somewhere in the middle is where I would love to think I could live. But then there are lots of other...beyond those two, I kind of worship them, there are specific plays that interest me but not necessarily bodies of work. I love Arthur Miller, but not all of his plays. And I love Eve Ensler, but not all of her plays. There are certain things that I appreciate but I don't really like. Like Chekhov and Beckett. Something I can appreciate—"Boy, those guys really knew what they were doing but I don't need to see any more of that." Just so you know that's totally heresy. I'm attracted to work that's about something and still entertains and connects to you emotionally, so anything that makes me warm and runny all over.

DANIEL: What does your writing process look like?

JAMIE: It depends on what I'm working on. *Return to Morality* took me three weeks to write. *Aurora's Motive* took me four years to write. So it goes back to it just depends on the play. I've written a screenplay in six weeks. I've done that a couple of times, actually 10 weeks. *Waving Goodbye* took probably about a year and a half. It sort of feels like there's two ways I go about it. One is either I have this energy toward this idea and I don't know what the play is and so I just write a whole lot of stuff, scenes and thoughts and stream-of-consciousness things. That's the way *Waving Goodbye* worked. I just had this idea about a young artist and a contentious mother and a father who was gone. And that's all I knew and I kept writing. I had like 300 pages of material and I just didn't know where the play was. And I got the opportunity to go on a writer's residency at Ragdale in Chicago, Lake Forest. And I took all 300 pages and I started organizing them and I found the play. I was really lucky with that too because Naked Eye Theater Company and Jeremy Cohen who was one of the artistic directors, he's now at Hartford Stage, he came to me at some point and said "Do you have a play you want to work on?" and I was like, "Yes! Yes I do as a matter of fact." And they helped me develop it and really hone it and nail it down. So that's sort of one side and the other side is like *Return to Morality* that kinda came out fully formed. It's easier with comedy, I don't know why that is but you get to the end of one scene and you're like "Ok what's the next thing that could happen to this guy?" and then you sort of write that scene and either it's the right scene or it's not. So you either throw it away or you don't and then you write the next one. With comedy you sort of have to write straight forward. *Aurora's Motive*, because it was, you know, motherhood, and its feminism and its history and its politics and its socialism and I get really wrapped up in the ideas. So I got really far away from the idea that it was a mother/daughter play for a long time. I was like "This is about history," and I got really lost. And Teatro Vista in Chicago helped me find my way back, they helped

me develop it. So I had really great opportunities with companies that have helped me develop stuff.

DANIEL: When you write dialogue...how do you do that?

JAMIE: I had this fantastic acting teacher in college who is really responsible, I think, for developing my ear for dialogue. He did this thing with us when we were in college, which was he said go out and eavesdrop on people and write it down. That was the first part. Then when you're listening to it figure out a moment, a play that you know that it's like. So we're suddenly going, "That's a Chekhov moment. Or you would see like "That's a Tarantino moment. So suddenly your ear was being trained to hear two guys yelling at each other in a cafeteria and go "early Mamet" and two people who weren't facing each other having conversation and go "Oh, that's Sam Shepherd." So suddenly you were hearing dialogue everywhere and you were matching it to plays. I think it was one of the best exercises in the world, because suddenly you would look at two people sitting in a car and the girl's crying and the guys' trying to help her out and you can't hear their conversation but you know exactly what they're doing. Then you start to collect it in a way. For me dialogue is the easiest part of what I do. That's not true for other playwrights. Structure's the hardest thing for me. Dialogue, I could write pages and often do and once I hear them I can have them talk about anything.

DANIEL: Who was that acting teacher?

JAMIE: His name was Bud Buyer and he's a genius. He's the just the best teacher of anything I've ever had. He is on sabbatical now. He was head of the dept there for awhile. He's an incredible teacher because he would...you know, we did a lot of text analysis but it was so much about the character. It wasn't about...it wasn't analysis for analysis sake. It was about...and then how do you play that and what is the scene doing here? And why is it the right scene and why is this moment mean so much at this point in the play? Well, it's because all of these things led up to it and there's the dialogue in the first scene that you didn't realize it resonated. And suddenly you were looking at plays like an archaeologist. You're going "Oh I understand the people from this era now." That's how I felt. I loved that class.

DANIEL: Do you have a set schedule when you write?

JAMIE: I do because I have a child. So you have to. I was less organized before I had a child but if you're going to write for a living, which is what I do, then it's impossible not to. And he just started preschool this week so now I get all day Monday, Wednesday and Friday to write which is dreamy. But I had somebody who came in from 8:30 to 1 everyday so that and his nap was when I wrote or grocery shopped or did the laundry or cleaned the house. I've been doing some film work and some TV so that's when I do the bulk of that.

DANIEL: Do you have people look over your work?

JAMIE: I do. I wish that there were...I'm the kind of person who wished that there was such a thing as a book editor for playwriting. And there kind of is, but there's no permanent person that way, like your agent or your manager could be that but they're not as versed in it as the people who dramaturge for a living. And over the years I've built some fantastic relationships with some dramaturges that I trust with my life. There's probably about six of them and so my last play, *Splitting Infinity*, I had gone as far as I could go on the computer with it. Like I would just look at it and say "I can't do this anymore without bodies in front of me," very much because I grew up as an actress because I did a lot of new plays I've very in tune with being in rehearsal with people and being like "Oh I've said that 15 times, I could cut these 14." And so I had reached a point where it was working but it wasn't good. So I sent it to these half a dozen people who work in really great theatre around the country and said "I just want your thoughts A and B, if you have any developmental opportunities I could really use them." I lucked out because ACT in San Francisco called and they were like "Do you wanna come up here for 4 days? We'll give you actors and a director and a room and a public reading at the end of it, "which is what I'd sort of been crying out for and the play took a gigantic leaps forward. From that, it was included in a couple of play festivals. As a result of handing it off to Jeremy at Hartford Stage and Marge Betley at Geva Theatre which is where it's going to go up next season, they then saw it in it's next incarnation and were like "Hey, come do this so we can showcase it for you and see if other people want to grab it." And Geva Theatre said "We want to see if we want to do it so come and have a first date with us on it" So I got an opportunity to do that. But I do. There are a handful of people and also like, there's a writer of mine that I adore and I send him stuff and I'll be like "Hey, can you take a look at this?" to just get a sense where I am.

DANIEL: Who are some of those people?

JAMIE: Ed Sobel at Steppenwolf, Gavin Witt who's now at Center Stage, he used to be at North Light Theatre, Liz Engelman who's at Playwright's Center in Minneapolis—she used to be at the McCarter and I met her at the A Contemporary Theatre in Seattle. They brought me in for the very first draft of *Splitting Infinity* which was called *Visible Invisible*. My husband who is an incredible dramaturge—not very nice about it, but he's a really great dramaturge. He writes music for theater and for film for a living and he's started out as an actor so we come from a similar place. I'm missing somebody. Gavin and Ed and Liz, I would say are the primary three. Those are the people that I trust. Mostly I send stuff to them because I know that they can read stuff that's not there and know that I can get it there. Because there are other playwright people that will be like "It's not done," I'm like, "Right, you know I know."

DANIEL: You are a strong female playwright, how does that influence how you write plays?

JAMIE: It can't. I mean, if somehow I get in the middle of my plays, I'm in big trouble. I just gotta do what I do. I just gotta write the plays that people or I am interested in having me write. And then let the rest of it fall where it falls. But to cultivate my

position other than in any way to get my work done and out there because I need to move it along, that's counterproductive, I think. I'm not really concerned with my image.

DANIEL: When you see your plays produced are they the same as what you had in mind?

JAMIE: Sometimes.

DANIEL: Any example of good or bad experiences with that?

JAMIE: Well *Return to Morality* which is this free-flying political satire, is done a lot and sometimes it seems on it's surface like a really easy play to pull off because it's funny and its contemporary and it's six actors and it goes really fast. But it's sort of deceptively trickier than it looks like. So it's been very hit or miss in productions. And sometimes I go and I'm like "Yes, you got it!" and sometimes I go and I'm like "Um, Ok. Good try." The one notoriously bad thing that's actually been written about in some book that somebody wrote about was I adapted Stud Sterkels book, *RACE*. And Strawdog was where it premiered. And there was this company who should probably remain nameless and we did it, white writer A, white director, both are Jewish and then it was done again, in LA another white director and Jewish, I was like "I would really like to see this play in an urban place like Burbage Theatre in Los Angeles which is great but with a black director or a nonwhite director. This company chose to do it. It was a black director and I was really excited and he would call and I had sort of re-written a little bit of it for the LA production and I said "Hey look if there's stuff that comes up in rehearsal that you'd like to talk to me about, let me know. I'd be happy to sort of continue to massage it a little bit one way or another." And he never called. And they flew me in maybe three weeks into the running to see it. And the director picks me up from the airport and he says this to me: "I think you're going to be surprised." And I thought to myself, "I think that's the last thing a playwright wants to hear." And I go to the play and they have added to the paly and changed the ending without my permission. Not only had they changed the ending but they had cut it. Basically, the ending is this...it doesn't end on a hopeful note, let's put it that way. It doesn't end on a devastating note, it's just...it's a place like "We've come very far but there's a lot of work still to be done." And they cut the last page of it pretty much and replaced it with what I can only describe as a cheer. Which was all of the actors on stage going "Black, white, love togetherness, peace, one, group," and literally with the hand movements and everything and then they were like "individual, group," and the audience literally leapt to their feet and the director was like "Did you see that? We get that every night." I'm like "You're not supposed to get a standing ovation. Because then everybody walks out going, 'We did it we fixed race,'" and I'm like "What is the matter with you?" So that was kind of notorious. Also the things that drives me almost more bananas than that, almost put me over the edge, was, all of the black characters, all of the white characters...oops. I was like, "The white directors didn't make that mistake, why did you?" It threw the balance of the play off, completely. That's a sort of notorious one. But then I have gone and seen lovely productions of my work and been really thrilled about it.

DANIEL: Do you read reviews?

JAMIE: I do. I always read reviewers as an actor too. I'm interested in what reviewers see in the work, good or bad. It's definitely hurtful when you read a review that's like "What the hell was the playwright thinking?" "That's me!" but at the same time I'm interested to know what exception they took with it what they think went wrong. And to see a set of reviews come out that say similar things, that's maybe something I want to take another look at. For the production here in LA of *Waving Goodbye* I've gotten these lovely, lovely reviews both in Chicago and Atlanta for productions of it. For the production in LA, which I thought was pretty good but missed on a couple of things, on a couple sort of central things, I got knocked a good couple of times for being overly melodramatic. And I can say without, like, finger pointing, it's the production's fault because they played it, they played into it as opposed to against it. And it is a play that has one humungous trap after another and I completely acknowledge that, that if not handled delicately comes off very soap-opera-ish. But I wanted to write a play that was heightened dramatically, emotionally, visually, structurally all of those. I wanted to write a play that was big and if the balance of any of those things is off, the balance is thrown. And I get that. So that is my fault but at the same time getting knocked in the reviews in the handful of reviews I knocked in out here, was not just my fault.

DANIEL: How'd you come up with the idea for *Waving Goodbye*?

JAMIE: I was working on a play about a mother and a daughter. I really wanted to write a play about a 17-year-old girl. I really find that to be one of the most interesting time in a girl's life because they're just on the brink of everything, everything, everything, and really coming into their own. And had sort of a volatile relationship with the mother. This was 96-97—there was a bunch of climbers that died on Everest in 96 and I read, I think it was a Vanity Fair article about a man who, this true story, which is this man had fallen and he was unrescueable. And he had fallen with a satellite phone on him. He was from New Zealand I think. And he called home and he spoke to his wife who was pregnant and they named the child and he died. I still can't tell that story without getting choked up. I was so incredibly moved and saddened and sort of energized by it as a writer and... I lost my father in 91 and my dad was not a mountain climber and my mom was a preschool teacher, who was actually a terrific mother. And there was nothing autobiographic about it, but there was something in the loss and the drama of losing somebody that, in such a notoriously large way, and coping with that as you are becoming and artist and finding your voice and becoming a woman and all of those things sort of fused together in my mind. The last piece of it came together. I was...*Return to Morality* won a bunch of awards and I got to go around the country with it in small festivals. I got to go to the Ashland New Play festival up in Oregon and I met Lou Douthit who is the literary manager of Oregon Shakes and big, big, huge, huge festivals and besides doing Shakespeare they do new plays as well. But they do really fantastic, wonderful, huge plays. And at that point because I was at Strawdog I was writing for small-budget, black box Chicago storefront kind of theater, a very rock-and-roll theater. She had been following my plays and really liked them and she said to me, "When are you going to write a play for me?" and I said, "What are you talking about?"

And she said, “When are you going to write a play that goes in this space?” and she said “Until you start writing for bigger theaters, bigger theaters are never going to produce you.” And it was a really big eye-opening moment for me because I was sort of sitting in Chicago going, “Why won’t Steppenwolf pay attention to me? Why isn’t the Goodman interested?” Because basically I was doing well and I was getting good review and I was like, “What’s the matter with them?” She made an excellent point and there I was working on a play about a sculptor and a mountain climber and death, well not death, grief, and loss and growth and change and stuff and I just thought if I was ever going to do it now would be the time. She said “Write it as if you had no budget problems at all.” So, I did. And she said, “Theaters right now are looking for small-cast shows with big production values.” And that’s why the roof caves in at the end of Act 1. It obviously fits in all together with the metaphors but I just thought, “Well, what the hell?” And then somebody produced it and then honest to God, it did exactly what she said it would do which is it opened the door for me to larger theaters and larger-scale plays.

DANIEL: What are some of the metaphors or large issues you wanted to convey in *Waving Goodbye*?

JAMIE: Well, there’s a lot of stuff in it about being stuck and being frozen. The mother obviously can’t work, the father’s image is frozen, the father’s frozen obviously. His body’s still up there. The...taking a picture is about freezing a moment in time. The idea that you can’t hold a moment. You can only live it, you can’t freeze time. It really says, “Why does everything change when you don’t want it to? What happens if I don’t want to be different?” And to me that’s sort of the essential nature of moving forward in your life, which is, even when things are perfect you don’t get to keep that either. It’s this evolution of being fluid as an artist as a parent, growing into your life, in your relationships so there’s all this thawing that’s going on in the play that to me, Jonathan is encased in ice up in Everest and then the water then plunging through and flooding the stage, metaphorically, or actually physically, is about thawing between mother and daughter, between...all the relationships in the play are thawed. And also, with the artwork, everything in the first act breaks and everything in the second act gets fixed. What ideally, what happens with the artwork is that everything that breaks at the end of act 1, all the pieces of the hand sculptures and the things that she throws at the end of act 1 and everything that falling down the loft and the window and water and the pictures that get ruined when the water comes in—everything—it should look like a big mess at the end of act 1. Which is not helpful for your stage crew, but that’s the way it looks in my head. Is every piece of that she then takes and creates and builds on her art with it. And so that by the end she’s not just a photographer, she’s kind of a sculptor, like Amanda is. And her work is three-dimensional and it is a piece that is whole of all the things that have broken. So she’s taken what’s gone wrong and made something out of it so she can move forward. Those are the big things to me.

DANIEL: That’s great. I love that about the play.

JAMIE: Thanks.

DANIEL: What is it about *Waving Goodbye*, why was it important for you to write it?

JAMIE: It's definitely my most personal play. It really is the first time that, it's not my story but it is the expression of my grief at having lost my own father, who was a very large force in my life. And to be that heart-on-the-sleeve with the characters and to articulate about a woman who wants to be successful and a good mother and louses them both up and ultimately, finds a way to step forward. But all of those things to me...and it was also important to write this very large play because I these very large ideas. *Splitting Infinity* is the same way, it's just this huge play. It's a huge play of ideas, it's not as physical as *Waving Goodbye* is. Those are the reasons I think it was important for me to write it. Definitely opened me in a whole new way as a writer.

DANIEL: If you were forced to pick one image for the show, what would that be?

JAMIE: Oh God...I think it's Lily with the camera. I don't know. I'm not a visual person, that's why film's such a good thing for me to work on because you have to be. My challenge is always, say it less and show more. I don't know.

DANIEL: Ok, fair enough. Any specific moment in the play or characters that are really special to you?

JAMIE: Yes, there's a couple. There's something about...it was this way in Chicago and this way here...there's something about...there's two of them. In act 2, Boggy comes back and gives her the painting. When she's holding the painting at the end of the scene and she goes "Emerald and purple. Things that have weight and stay, things that glow" and she realizes it's sort of her in the painting and she can see something new out of what's bad. And from that moment until Lily and Jonathan swipe hands when he goes up the mountain the last time, through the wedding scene, it's so buoyant. I don't know how else to describe it because for a long time in the play there's hope and there's not so much angst and sturm and drung and people hating each other and fighting with each other and having sex with each other and climbing up mountains. There's just things working out and hope. For some reason all of that, that sequence, especially in the Steppenwolf production-- and my husband wrote this gorgeous, gorgeous music that went with it, he sort of scored through, not scored through but scored around it—and it's that. But the thing that really occurred to me in this last production was Lily's monologue after the phone call when she says...the piece where she goes "and I watch and wave goodbye, one hand blue and one hand red" and the part where she goes -and I know he knows I'm ok and I'm almost 18 and I'll be ok and he knows I'll always miss him and I'm not unique and other girls have lost parents in worse ways, in more notorious ways- oh it's "And sometimes I dream he visits me and I know he knows I'm ok." That is the only place where I walk into the play because that piece doesn't actually belong there. It's too self-aware for Lily at that moment. If it was a year from then I would let her say that. She shouldn't say that but it helps the audience to close it off and it's the moment—I mean, there's a bunch of writing that's really personal to me in the play but that part in particular is really my doff of the hat. There's a lot of other stuff in the play. The one that I particularly like the writing of is when Lily and Boggy have their fight in the fist

act and she says “Stand up or fall down” and he says, “Some people choose to lean.” That to me is Boggy. He’s probably had it worse than she has and he’s figured that out.

DANIEL: What are the traps and pitfalls? What are some of the challenges that you see in the play for directors? So as I am going through with this process I can know ahead of time what they are there so as to try to avoid them?

JAMIE: The biggest one is make sure Amanda and Lily are not histrionic and that they are so loaded down-- I mean, not loaded down, that’s a horrible way to say it--they’re so grounded by their grief that it’s never a screaming match but that the emotion runs so deep, it trails down so far so that the size of the emotion is there but that is never becomes histrionic. It has become useful I have found to track the Lily and Amanda scenes in a row in a rehearsal and just be aware of what doors open which time. And that the other thing is, sort of central to Lily is that she’s no precocious. She should never come off as this precocious kid. She is got her own...she should never be the victim here, although a bunch of shit has happened to her. She’s yearning, she’s a yearning person, she wants to know, she wants to understand, she wants to grow. She has all of these yearnings. I don’t know if that makes sense to you.

DANIEL: No it does, yes, definitely.

JAMIE: And I’ll tell you the one other thing that has to happen for the play to work just in general is, you have got to fall in love with Amanda and Jonathan in love because if you don’t, then nobody cares about him. And if we don’t love their relationships and see him, even with all his flaws, because he’s got a serious, sexist side, and not to make him a saint. He’s not like the helpful saintly ghost. He was a whole person and he had his own shit too, but if you don’t like when their on the mountain, when they’re having Chinese food together and having sex together, when they’re about to get married. If just don’t root for them and feel what they feel then we don’t get what Amanda’s lost and we don’t understand what Lily’s pining after that she feels like she never got to the part of him of. I would say that the fundamental part of it is you have to buy all the relationships in the Blue family and Boggy and Perry have to genuinely funny because otherwise you’re in big trouble. Boggy is utterly and completely always himself. There is no spin. There is no nothing. He’s not doing anything for any reason but that that’s who he is. Perry is quite flamboyant and quite fabulous but also when she comes out with the big love, she comes out with it. And then puts the lid back on and then it’s like “Just get the hell out of here, I don’t want to deal with you anymore.”

DANIEL: What have the critical responses been like for *Waving Goodbye*?

JAMIE: I could send you a batch of reviews if you want. I only save the good ones of course because that’s what I send out with the play. In general, the good are good for the same reason and the bad are bad for the same reason. The good reviews find a lot of merit in the language, the heightened sensibility of it, the passions of it, the characters in it. That it’s a unique expression of something. The bad take exception that it’s too flowery and too poetic. Oh, this is the other trap. I didn’t find it out until we did it in

LA. Which is, the poetry of the play all the hands language and the Lily and Jonathan's stuff when he's dead, all of that stuff, it cannot be a separate thing. It can't be like here's the naturalism play where the mother and daughter don't like each other and here's the play where we do art and people are dead. It has got to be the same play.

DANIEL: It has got to be the same world.

JAMIE: And if you look at themes when Jonathan's alive especially the Chinese food scene when she'd coming down the ladder and floating, flying, falling, all that stuff and the way that he talks to Lily in the present, the way he talks to Amanda in the present, the way that Perry...they talk like that in life. That's who this family in life. That's how this family speaks to each other. So to separate those two out as if like "Here's a play where we get all fruity and we underscore it and we change the lighting and then here's the play where it's not," it's problematic. We had to deal with it a lot in the LA production because I was like 'If you do this they're going to come after me with a stick,' because it just sounds incredible pretentious. And you have no idea why the fruity stuff is there so I would encourage you to make sure that this is simply the way they talk to each other when they're dead and this is the way they talk to each other when they're alive. So that the bad reviews thought that it was too heart-on-the-sleeve or it was too over-the-top, too melodramatic. They all, even the bad ones were like "There's a lot here to be said but I'm not crazy about the way she said it." The Red Hen one I didn't see and I don't remember the reviews very much. I do remember that there was a lot about the mother and daughter screaming at each other at very high decibels so I think they may have gotten it wrong.

DANIEL: How is it different now that you live in LA as opposed to Chicago, what influence has place on your writing?

JAMIE: It's more of a practical issue than an artistic issue because living in LA is expensive and also I came out here to do more film work, which doesn't mean I'm giving up playwriting but there's a business aspect to it that has become a large part of my life as a result. Which I don't mind. I don't mind pitching, I don't mind meetings, I don't mind all of that stuff. I like the work that I've done for features and for TV. But there's less community out here. Chicago I loved so much because I felt like I was part of something and everybody knew each other and I constantly had friends in work, I could go to theater any day of the week basically because I could always find somebody who would let me in. And the theater was fantastic and here in LA the theater is not fantastic. There is no real community of theater people because mostly, people come out here to do film. And they do theater but it's by in large, not every good, or highly mediocre. And what passes as really good theater out here, wouldn't in Chicago. And it's disappointing on a regular basis when I go and the process of theater is disappointing I have friends who do theater out here and my experience of having *Waving Goodbye* up here, the production was a lovely production and I'm pretty proud of it but the actual act of getting it on its feet was much harder in LA because people aren't committed to theater for theater's sake. They're in it for a lot of other reasons too and so I would say that that's the big difference for me. I lucked out because I have family here, I have friends here, I have a lot of

friends from Chicago who had moved here. I have an agent. I have a manager. I moved with a community. But I wouldn't recommend doing it without one.

DANIEL: What are you currently working on?

JAMIE: I've got this play that's going up at Geva next season. That's *Splitting Infinity*. And then I'm writing a feature for DreamWorks and I just finished one for Lifetime. Ironically I'm pitching *Waving Goodbye* to Lifetime on Wednesday. I'm writing a musical with my husband that is a work for hire thing that is this fabulous thing that I can't really talk about beyond that. I'm strictly not allowed to.

DANIEL: As part of the thesis requirement I have to research all your other shows as well.

JAMIE: Oh my God, poor you.

DANIEL: Yeah, you have to write the thesis as well as direct the thesis show.

JAMIE: God.

DANIEL: I wanted to see if I could track down copies of some of your other shows.

JAMIE: Sure.

DANIEL: I already have *Waving Goodbye*, and I have *The Return to Morality*, but I don't have any of your other works. I haven't been able to find them.

JAMIE: Well, they're not published anywhere else. Can I e-mail them to you?

DANIEL: You can e-mail them to me. Of course, I would keep them for myself. I would not give them out to anybody.

JAMIE: Yeah, I would say, do that. I would also say...you want all of them, really?

DANIEL: Yes.

JAMIE: Ok, I will give you the heads-up a head of time that *Children of Cain* is not very good and there's another one called *Famous for Fifteen Years* that has lots of interesting things in it, also not very good. Beyond that, I will stand up for the rest of the plays. You'll see threads of early work. *Cain* is just fun and it's a really, really black comedy, But it smacks of first play.

DANIEL: Ok, could you also send the reviews of *Waving Goodbye*? I managed to track down a few of them but I haven't gotten them all.

JAMIE: Sure, I will definitely do that. I mean, seriously you're only going to get the good ones. Because I look at the bad ones but I don't hold onto them for any reason. E-mail me again and just say "Here's my e-mail address." Because I've not sure whether I kept your original e-mail. Is there a format you want them in?

DANIEL: Pdf is fine. I appreciate your time.

JAMIE: No, problem. I've never been the subject of a thesis so do I get to read it when it's over.

DANIEL: Sure.

JAMIE: Are you kidding? I would love to, that would be exciting.

DANIEL: Basically what it is, is you track the biography of the playwright and try to figure out what their career looked like and their other works and then we kinda go through how the production went highlighting the good and bad things. Usually that's all bound together and it's about 200 pages and...

JAMIE: Wow. That's a lot of work. That's exciting. You don't want any screenplays do you?

DANIEL: I would love examples of them. Then I can talk about you not only as a writer of theater but you as a writer of screenplays.

JAMIE: Ok, let me figure out what I can o can't send you because some of them are wrapped up and I don't want people to see them yet. Ok, cool. It was good talking to you.

DANIEL: Likewise. And I will also...this is just kind of throwing it out here at the moment but I'm trying to see if I can track down money to fly you out to see it of you'd be interested.

JAMIE: I would love that. When is it?

DANIEL: It's February 7-12.

JAMIE: I think that's fine.

DANIEL: Like I said, it has to go through university coffers so...

JAMIE: My trick here is to make sure I've got child care covered and my husband travels a lot. Baylor's in Texas? I've never been to Texas. Also feel free to e-mail me again if you have questions about the play and you're thinking, "I don't know what she was thinking,"

DANIEL: Ok, thanks. I appreciate you talking to me.

JAMIE: No problem. I'll talk to you later then.

DANIEL: Ok, bye, Jamie.

End

APPENDIX B



© 2006, Baylor Photography – Robert Rogers

Color Plate #1: Mabee Theatre with moat



© 2006, Baylor Photography – Robert Rogers

Color Plate #2: The phone call



© 2006, Baylor Photography – Robert Rogers

Color Plate # 3: Lily's Collage



© 2006, Baylor Photography – Robert Rogers

Color Plate # 4: Night Lighting

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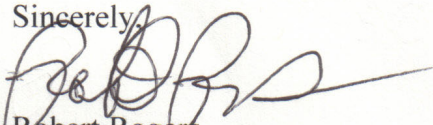
U N I V E R S I T Y

June 18, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

I, Robert Rogers, director of photography at Baylor, give Daniel P. Inouye, theatre graduate student, permission to print the photos I took of his thesis production of "Waving Goodbye" (Feb 2006) in his written thesis titled "A Director's Approach to Jamie Pachino's 'Waving Goodbye.'" "

Sincerely,



Robert Rogers

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