

Hailey Panek

Senior Project in Theatre

Dr. Kyle A. Thomas

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### Senior Project Justification

When faced with the question of what to do for my senior project, an effort that encapsulates everything that I've learned at Missouri State University, I felt that there was one obvious answer. Considering my ultimate goal is to be a director, the obvious choice is to direct a show. I don't think that this is an unreasonable goal. This project would build on my experience directing two other shows during my time here at the university, and I think that it will provide a great way to show future employers my artistic brand. This goal is made slightly harder by the current state of the world amid COVID-19 regulations and restrictions, but I think that I will still be able to create a worthwhile and valuable production.

The play that I will be directing is called *The Most Massive Woman Wins* written by Madeleine George. I chose this play because it deals with a subject very close to my heart: body image issues and fat shaming. Also, as this play will serve as my senior project for my BS in Dance as well, there is ample opportunity in this script to incorporate dance sequences and elements that will culminate in a hybrid play/dance experience. This is something that I have been planning for this project from the beginning and I think that this script lends itself very well and I already have a concept as a part of my vision. The cast includes four women, but I am going to up that to six women so that I can have two of them act solely as dancers. The whole play runs around 30-40 minutes in total, but I'm also accepting that the added dance elements may add onto that time as well.

As for how I plan to execute this project, I have already begun getting ready to direct this show. I have bought a copy of the play and read it through twice already, and I have secured dates for rehearsals and filming the project. I plan to reach out to a few people to see if they would be interested in being a part of the production, and if that doesn't work, I will be posting on the T&D Forum Facebook page to recruit students who I may not know as well. My rehearsals will be two hours long and I'm starting off with two rehearsals a week, beginning the week of February 20<sup>th</sup> and ending the week that we will film: the week of April 11<sup>th</sup>. There is room in the schedule to add more rehearsals if needed and I have already accounted for Spring Break and Spring Holiday. I am also going to ask a few friends that I have in the tech department to help me with a few technical elements, like running the light board. COVID-19 restrictions will be in place for all rehearsals including masking and taking temperatures. Having taken the Directing II class last semester I feel like I have a solid blueprint of everything that needs to be done to get a good quality finished project underway. I also plan on using Kyle A. Thomas and Ruth Barnes as advisors to bounce ideas off and to go to if I struggle with anything throughout this process.

There are many things that I hope to gain from this. To start, this will be my first time directing a show completely on my own, so I think that I will be able to grow a lot in my leadership skills. Directing a show requires significant decision-making and I think that this project will just make me more familiar with that process. Also, I think that this show will be perfect to put on a website after I graduate to show off what I can do. I also think that this project will strengthen my choreography skills. I wasn't able to take the Fall Dance Concert class while I was here at MSU, so this will be the perfect opportunity to work on those skills and discover who I am as a choreographer.

At the end of this project, I hope to achieve a well-rounded solid production of a powerful script. I hope to challenge the way that people think about others. Lastly, I hope to create a piece of art that reflects who I am and everything that I've worked for in college. My time in this department has felt like a rollercoaster, and I think that it is only appropriate to go out swinging.