PERFORMING THE ROLE OF GRANMA IN JOHN STEINBECK'S *THE GRAPES OF WRATH* ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE BY FRANK GALATI

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Chair: Mikell Pinkney
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This paper describes the creative and technical processes of developing the character Granma, in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* adapted by Frank Galati. The performance took place at the Constans Theatre in the Nadine McGuire Theatre and Dance Pavilion at the University of Florida from January 28 – February 6, 2011. The paper's three sections are as follows. The first details the initial research. The second section relates the rehearsal process and the fleshing out of the role. The final section is a self-evaluation of my performance and acting process. This paper details my journey in melding internal and external acting approaches in creating a truthful, spirited yet frail portrayal of Granma Joad.

INTRODUCTION

In May of 2010, I was offered the role of Ma Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath* as my thesis project, to be completed during the spring semester of 2011 as a culminating project for my Master of Fine Arts degree. For the fall semester I was fortunate enough to land an acting internship at the local professional company, The Hippodrome Theatre. Neither the faculty nor I caught the fact that the performance schedule to which I contractually agreed at the Hippodrome would conflict with rehearsals for *The Grapes of Wrath,* which were to begin during the fall semester. As the director began to cast the other parts after auditions, we exchanged e-mails regarding the schedule conflicts. He wanted me to pull out of The Hippodrome show, but I was reluctant to break my contract and create bad blood with our local professional theatre company. The decision was then made that Ma Joad would be recast and I would do my thesis role in *The Madwoman of Chaillot* by Jean Giraudoux. The director of *The Grapes of Wrath* expressed regret at the situation and offered me the role of Granma so I could still be part of the production. I accepted the role because I wanted a chance to work with this director, and to work on the play, but I initially felt that the role of Granma was too small for a thesis role and hoped to land a meatier role in *The Madwoman of Chaillot.*

The fall semester progressed. I had discussions with the director of *Madwoman,* but a role for me was not finalized. This director subsequently pulled out of the project and I found myself auditioning for a new director. When the cast list was posted I had an interesting dilemma on my hands. I did not think either role was thesis-worthy. The role I was offered in *Madwoman,* Josephine, is a functional character that comes on at the end of the play to hold a mock trial. Her

one scene is a fun moment in the play, but we do not learn much about the character; she does not change or grow, and nothing much happens to her. She moves the plot forward and then is gone. I took a second look at Granma Joad. She speaks only 26 times, and many of those lines consist of only a word or two. But in her four scenes she loses her home, her husband, her health, her sanity and finally her life. She has a history, and it represents the Joad's past and their connection to their land and home. Granma Joad's losses stand for the loss of a way of life. As the Joads embark on their exodus to California, Granma's death is a grim reminder of the human cost in the gamble they are making for a better life. Considering I am a woman several decades away from Granma's 70 or so years, the role posed a huge physical and technical challenge for me as an actor. I decided the role was richer than I initially judged it to be and chose to do my performance in lieu of thesis as Granma Joad.

In this casting process I gained a glimpse into the type of juggling that professional actors must do to manage their careers. I had to let a great role (Ma Joad) go by to honor a contract and preserve a professional relationship that could be useful to me and to the School of Theatre and Dance in the future. An actor's life is fraught with such tough decisions, but my goal must be to handle them with integrity and grace.

RESEARCH

I. THE PLAY AND ITS CONTEXT

John Steinbeck wrote a novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, in 1939 to draw attention to the terrible conditions faced by refugees from one of the worst natural disasters in the history of the United States: the drought that turned the Southern Plains states into a virtual "dust bowl" between 1931 and 1939. The novel focuses on the Joad family who flee Sallisaw, Oklahoma, in search of a better life in California. It depicts their trials and troubles as they encounter

institutional greed and exploitation at the hands of large farm owners. Steinbeck was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for the novel in 1940 (Steinbeck xvi). He was later awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1962, largely because of the impact of the novel, "for his realistic and imaginative writings, combining as they do sympathetic humour [sic] and keen social perception" (Nobelprize.org).

At the time of the novel's publication, Steinbeck wrote that the writer's job is to simply set down "what the people of his own time are doing, thinking, wanting" (Steinbeck 540). He defined people's basic wants as comfort, security and relationships with each other:

> In the growth of our country the symbol of these things was new land. That was the security. The writer sets down the desire of his own time, the action of the people toward attaining that desire, the obstacles to attainment and the struggle to overcome the obstacles. (Steinbeck 540)

I found this description of the "people's basic wants" very revealing and theatrical. Even before the stage version of the novel was conceived, Steinbeck was thinking in terms that any student of Stanislavsky's Acting System would understand: the characters' desires (objectives), their actions towards their desires (tactics), their obstacles to attainment (obstacles) and their struggle to overcome the obstacles (adaptation).

The novel was first dramatized in 1987 by Peter Whitebrook for a three week run at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe produced by the American Theatre Festival / New York University Studio Theatre Productions (Whitebrook 8-9). But it took Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company to bring the novel to an American stage in 1988, in a version adapted by Steppenwolf member Frank Galati. The production, directed by Galati himself, ran in Chicago from September 1 – October 30, 1988. It then traveled to the La Jolla Playhouse in California in May

of 1989, followed by a trip overseas the following month to the Royal National Theatre of Great Britain's Lyttleton Theatre, London, England (Steppenwolf).

The production then moved to Broadway's Cort Theatre in March of 1990 for a 188 performance run (IBDB). It won two Tony Awards in 1990: Best Director/Play for Frank Galati and Best Play for the 1989-90 season. Gary Sinise, a founding member of Steppenwolf, received a Tony nomination for the role of Tom Joad. Cast members Terry Kinney (Casy) and Lois Smith (Ma) also received acting nominations (TonyAwards.com).

Adapting any novel for the stage is challenging. For *The Grapes of Wrath*, the daunting challenge was capturing the scope of a 450 page epic novel in a few hours of theatre. To complicate matters, Steinbeck's novel alternates chapters that chronicle the Joad's journey with chapters that describe the overall social, political and economic context, sometimes graphically, sometimes poetically and impressionistically. This creates a novel that seems episodic and jumpy at times, with a hodgepodge of narrative styles. In his review of the New York production, critic Frank Rich of *The New York Times* pointed out: "Mr. Galati, like Steinbeck, demands that the audience sink into a jerky, episodic journey rather than be propelled by the momentum of character or story" (Rich).

Rich also pointed to challenges in the script regarding character: "The characters are perishable W.P.A.-mural archetypes incapable of introspection, the dialogue is at times cloyingly folksy and the drama is scant" (Rich). And finally, regarding dialogue in the script: "…the evening's dialogue scenes are few and brief, the lines are reduced to a laconic minimum and many people are defined by their faces and tones of voice rather than by psychological revelations" (Rich).

These observations (which I read well after my first reading of the script) confirmed my initial impressions. The Joad's episodes in the play are rooted in the tradition of Realism: the subject is the struggle of the common man grounded in the unfolding of a particular family's story, the dialogue is rooted in the idiosyncratic speech of the characters, and the environment plays a crucial role in the unfolding of events. But to tell such a sweeping story and to honor the social commentary that is so prevalent in the novel, Galati added a healthy dose of theatricalism and episodes of Brechtian-like commentary on the action by creating scenes and monologues that incorporated Steinbeck's commentary into the dramatic action. An example of this would be the comments by the gas station owner and attendant in Act I, who watch the Joads drive off towards the desert in their Hudson Super-Six and compare the Okies to little better than gorillas; too stupid to even know how dangerous their gambit is. Another example is the narration in Act I that describes the "path of a people in flight:" Route 66. "Sixty-Six is the mother road – The mad flight" (Galati 28).

Going into my first rehearsals I knew that the challenge of the script would be in alternating between moments of theatricality when the characters were "W.P.A. -mural archetypes" and moments of realism when the scant, folksy dialogue would have to ring deep and true from fully-realized, human characters for the audience to become fully invested in the play. I knew that the space we were working in, the Constans Theatre, would be both a bane and a boon to us. Its size and its technical capabilities would make the spectacle of the play possible: the moving truck, the campfires, the river and the rain. But I also knew from experience that one must play large on that stage for intention to read all the way to the back row and I wondered how well the sparse dialogue would play. It seemed to me for the play to work, in absence of revealing dialogue, the characters' relationships would have to be fleshed out with subtext, facial

expression, things thought but left unspoken, small gestures, and moments of psychic and emotional connection that are precisely the things that are the hardest to convey on the cavernous Constans stage. But I also knew that Steinbeck had drawn characters with very clear needs, a driving will to meet those needs and plenty of obstacles to create dramatic tension.

II. FIRST STEPS

My first step in approaching the role was to read Galati's adaptation for initial impressions. I then became curious about what additional information the novel itself contained, and reading it was the next step. I believe when playing a character famous in literature, one must be as familiar with the source material as possible. I felt this would be especially helpful since Granma was such a small part. I hoped to find additional details about her in the novel to help me flesh out the character.

In reading the novel I made note of moments where Granma appeared and the things that were said about her to glean ideas for my characterization. Early in the novel, Tom describes a Christmas card that Granma sent him while he was in jail. It had a very schmaltzy greeting that got him teased in the cellblock, but he thinks she bought it because it had on it "a tree an' shiny stuff looks like snow" (Steinbeck 28). Since it was one of only two missives Tom received from his family while in jail, it struck me as an important piece of information. Granma obviously loved and missed her grandson and was trying to brighten his holiday, even if she had lost her glasses and could not read the silly greeting.

Granma's religiosity is described in several places. "When Granma got to talkin' in tongues, you couldn't tie her down. She could knock over a full-growed deacon with her fist" (Steinbeck 27). That line made it into the play. And later, during grace: "Granma bowed so low

that her nose was nearly in her plate of biscuit and gravy" (Steinbeck 82). This gave me an idea of both the exuberance and reverence in Granma's religious practice.

Granma's vocal quality is described by Steinbeck: "Granma raised a shrill voice" (82), "'Grace fust,' Granma clamored" (82), "From outside and across the yard came an ancient creaking bleat: 'Pu-raise Gawd fur vittory!'" (79). These descriptions provided the blueprint for what I set out to achieve vocally.

Tom also relates an interesting story, which I incorporated into the back-story I imagined for Granma. He describes how the Joads acquired their farm house. A family who lived a mile and a half east of the farm moved out, so Granpa, Pa and Noah stole it. They had to cut the house in half to drag it back to their farm, and by the time they returned for the second half, another family had stolen it.

Steinbeck describes the relationship between Granma and Granpa. The following passage contains the essence of Granma's character:

> Behind him hobbled Granma, who had survived only because she was as mean as her husband. She had held her own with a shrill ferocious religiosity that was as lecherous and as savage as anything Granpa could offer. Once, after a meeting, while she was still speaking in tongues, she fired both barrels of a shotgun at her husband, ripping one of his buttocks nearly off, and after that he admired her and did not try to torture her as children torture bugs. As she walked she hiked her Mother Hubbard up to her knees, and she bleated her shrill terrible war cry: 'Pur-raise Gawd fur vittory.'
>
> Granma and Granpa raced each other to get across the broad yard. They fought over everything, and loved and needed the fighting. (Steinbeck 80)

Having read the novel and gleaned what character information I could, I next wanted to deepen my understanding of the historical context of the play. I wanted to know what daily life was like on a farm prior to and during the 1930s, and more about living conditions during the Dust Bowl.

In the play, after Granma dies, Tom says that even if she had made it to California, she was too old to really see it: "Granma would a remembered an' seen the first home she lived in" (Galati 47). I researched what Granma's first house would have been like, to substantiate the details of Granma's back-story in my mind. I knew that early prairie settlers lacked wood for home building, and that many had built sod houses using thick-rooted prairie grass. I found this description of early prairie homes, which was enough to fire my imagination about what it must have been like to live in one:

> Construction of a sod house involved cutting patches of sod in rectangles, often 2'×1'×6" (600×300×150mm) long, and piling them into walls. Builders employed a variety of roofing methods. Sod houses accommodate normal doors and windows. The resulting structure was a well-insulated but damp dwelling that was very inexpensive. Sod houses required frequent maintenance and were vulnerable to rain damage. Stucco or wood panels often protected the outer walls. Canvas or plaster often lined the interior walls. (Sod House, *Wikipedia*)

I wondered what life was like for women on farms. I consulted a book on the history of farming entitled *Farm: A History and Celebration of the American Farmer* by Gary Paulsen. I had assumed it was difficult, but the book listed a daunting number of tasks women were expected to do on a daily basis: preparing food, making or repairing clothing, doing all the tasks that men were too busy with the crops to do, such as splitting rails for fences, maintenance of the

farm house, caring for stock, slaughtering animals, preserving meat, doctoring the family and caring for children. The following passage spoke to me about how this difficult life affected people's relationships: "The work of the early farm wife was so hard, so time-consuming, that Dr. James Tilton of the period wrote: 'Few things will bring a more certain and happy reward to a farmer than for him to remember his wife is a social being; that she is not a machine, and therefore needs rest…'" (Paulsen18). I imagined Granma was someone who was extremely good at managing all these tasks. Based on Steinbeck's description of her relationship with her husband, however, I surmised that there were many battle lines drawn about how things would be done on the farm and who was to do them. I also did not think that Granpa was someone who often remembered that his wife was a "social being" or that she needed rest. I imagined this as a possible root cause of some of the tension between them.

I viewed some moving first-hand descriptions of what it was like living in Oklahoma during the Dust Bowl in the PBS documentary *Surviving the Dust Bowl*. The film gave a year-by-year description of the crisis, and delved into the root causes such as the market speculation on wheat that drove prices up, the resulting over-production of the land, the failure to rotate crops, and finally drought. From an acting point of view, the most valuable parts of the film were the first hand accounts of surviving the Dust Bowl. The people interviewed were elderly, but their memories were so vivid. The fear, despair and pain these people experienced were still palpable. As I performed the role, certain memories from the film would surface. While eating on stage I would recall the descriptions of how the dust and grit were always in people's food, grinding between their teeth. While acting in the tableau at the top of the show, I would envision the black clouds of dust, called black blizzards, and how the Dust Bowl victims in the documentary described them pouring overhead like huge storm clouds. The film described how

people struggled to deal with the dust by wearing masks, putting wet sheets in front of doors, and stuffing rags around windows. Despite these measures, women still had to remove dust from inside their homes by the shovelful after a wind storm. Particularly moving to me were the accounts of those who lost loved ones to "dust pneumonia." The film stated that in one county alone, one-third of the deaths in a year resulted from this form of pneumonia, caused by breathing in the dust, which particularly affected the young and elderly. This was a piece in the puzzle for me concerning Granma's and Granpa's rather sudden deaths in the play. Their health was no doubt compromised by breathing in the dust for several years.

III. CLOSE READING

Having done my initial reading and research, I was now ready to dive into the particulars of the script. I first wanted to understand how Granma's scenes fit into the overall structure of the play. I determined that her first scene, when Tom has arrived home from jail and the family has supper, is still part of the exposition of the play, where relationships, situations and characters are established. The inciting incident, which triggers the forward movement or rising action following the exposition, is when the family leaves for California the next morning. The rest of Granma's scenes are part of the rising action. The death of Granpa is the next event after the family departs. Granma's death, just as the family reaches California is another. The play's climax occurs well after Granma is dead and buried, when Tom avenges Casy's death by killing his murderer. Departing somewhat from pure Modernism, which would typically have the climax at the very end of the play, *The Grapes of Wrath* has a comparatively long period of falling action and denouement. The falling action spans Tom's decision to leave his family and carry on with Casy's work up until the still birth of Rose of Sharon's baby. The denouement is the scene in the barn when Rose of Sharon nurses the starving man.

Knowing that my initial scene was part of the exposition gave me permission to take my time and give full measure to establishing my character through her happiness in seeing her grandson Tom again and her quarreling with her husband. Knowing that the rest of her scenes were steps in what should be the increasing tension of the rising action informed my choices to play her objectives strongly and cleanly, without adorning my performance with a lot of "character" moments or choices.

The next step in my close reading was examining the script for things my character says about herself and things others say about her. I have mentioned two already: Tom's anecdote of Granma speaking in tongues and knocking over a full-grown deacon with her fists, and his assessment that she would not have been able to truly see California, but would have instead been looking back into the past, remembering her first home. Tom also alludes to the fact that Granma knew Casy well in the past: "Granma says you was just lousy with the spirit" (Galati 10), which was another clue about Granma's religious priorities.

The things that are said of Granma after the departure for California mostly have to do with her health or mental state. Ma tells Rose of Sharon to go lay down with Granma as the family buries Granpa because "she needs somebody now. She's knowin' now" (Galati 29). This eventually confirmed for me that the realization that her husband is dead does not hit Granma all at once, and that she may not realize it completely even as she is ordering Casy to pray for him. Ma chooses not to wake her for the funeral, saying that she is tired, which told me that her husband's death has already taken a toll on Granma. At the first campsite, Ma returns onstage to the men and says, "Granma finally dozed off" (Galati 37), which indicated to me that she has been having trouble sleeping, probably due to illness, grief or both. Finally, after Granma's first delusional outburst at the river, Rose of Sharon says, "She's awful sick" (Galati 43). She and Ma

have been fanning Granma and applying wet cloths to her forehead, which told me Granma is feverish. This explains her hallucination a few lines later: "Will! You dirty! You ain't never gonna get clean" (Galati 43).

Granma does not say anything about herself, her past or her feelings in the play. The things she talks about most are God and prayer. She also talks to and about her husband. Comments such as: "Wants to drive the truck! Well he ain't goin' ta" (Galati 19) and "Shut up you sinful old goat!" (Galati 21) assess his character or attempt to set limits on his outrageous behavior.

IV. FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS

In my research and reading, Granma's religious beliefs surfaced as the most essential part of her character. The exuberant "meetings" described in *The Grapes of Wrath* with people jumping around and speaking in tongues sounded to me like modern Charismatic Christianity. I decided I needed to experience a worship service like this first hand to inform my portrayal. On December 19, 2010, I attended a two-hour Sunday service at The Pentecostal Church of Gainesville, with Pastor J.W. Arnold preaching. I benefited from the experience by seeing how physically and exuberantly the congregation responded to the service. People jumped up and down, twirled and spun around with their arms up (reminding me of the Whirling Dervishes, the Sufi sect that performs a ceremonial spinning dance), threw punches in the air and ran laps around the sanctuary. I noticed the way they used their hands in prayer: waving them, holding them up, fluttering them and pumping them in the air. I listened to the way the call and response occurred between the pastor and the congregation and noticed a sort of wave-like flow of energy back and forth. Pastor Arnold would start a section of his oratory in a low voice, repeatedly calling for "help" from the congregation and telling them to "watch this!" Then he would build

the intensity of his message, which varied in theme each time (his themes included the irrelevance of science, the guilt and sin of the congregation, the need for God's spirit in one's life, and various forms of "us against them," i.e. belittling scientists, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Lutherans). He would build the intensity of his rhetoric by increasing his volume, using repetition and repeatedly calling out for assistance from the congregation, who rose to their feet as the rhetoric heated up and called out responses such as "Glory!", "Come on!", "You're right!", and "Amen!" He would work them up to a frenzy that would peak with some members of the congregation running or spinning, and then he would pull back and regroup for another attempt. His goal seemed to be to get the whole congregation in a frenzy at once, which did not quite happen. Pastor Arnold expressed his disappointment at the end that no one had spoken in tongues that day.

The experience at the Pentecostal Church gave me a very clear image of what attending one of Casy's religious meetings would have been like and gave me the confidence to fully commit to Granma's vocal and physical responses to Casy's prayers, both over supper and over Granpa's body.

Early in the rehearsal process, the director drew my attention to my physicality, saying I was playing Granma as too spry, reminding me that she is close to death when the play opens. I realized I would need to discover what her physical ailments were, what effect her advanced age was having on her and what actually causes her death. The director said he would like to see Granma be a little "shakier," so that is where I refocused my research.

I discovered a movement disorder called Essential Tremor. It manifests in elderly people as a shakiness in the hands when the person is trying to do a voluntary movement, such as reaching for something, holding a cup, eating, drinking etc. It most often affects the hands, but

can also cause a "yes-yes" or "no-no" wobble in the head and even affect the voice. This seemed a good direction to go in because it was a condition that was married with actions I needed to do on stage, but it was not something that I would have to keep doing for long periods of time, which I thought might pull focus or be distracting on stage. (Staff, Mayo Clinic/MayoClinic.com)

I asked a friend of mine, who is a physician, what could cause fever, delirium and death in an elderly person. She suggested I look at encephalitis as a cause of death. I found that weakness, loss of consciousness, tremors, fever, confusion, hallucinations and personality changes were symptoms of the disease, all of which described Granma's condition in her final days. Encephalitis is a viral infection that can be transmitted by mosquitoes, ticks and other insects, which seemed plausible given the Joad's exposure to the elements during their journey. Also, encephalitis is not usually fatal but is more serious in the elderly or those with weakened immune systems. (Staff, Mayo Clinic/MayoClinic.com) I imagined that Granma's repeated exposure to the dust storms would have weakened her. I did not choose to imagine she died of dust pneumonia because of the vocal demands of performing the role in the Constans Theatre; I did not want to give myself the added acting challenge of reduced lung power that would be symptomatic of such a physical ailment.

V. CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Having now completed the research I needed to understand the context of the play, the historical backdrop, and my character's lifestyle, priorities and physical conditions, it was time to combine all of this information in a character analysis that I would use to personalize all these facts and serve as my blueprint for Granma. I chose Uta Hagen's Six Steps (Hagen 134) as the

format for the analysis and eventually used it to help me score my script with my character's objectives, tactics and obstacles. See Appendix A for a sample of my scoring method.

WHO AM I? I am Granma Joad. I am not given a first name in the script, so I chose Vilma as my name, very close to my own grandmother's name (Velva), who was a constant inspiration to me in playing the role. My present state of being is elderly, with the aches, pains and joint stiffness that accompany age. I have a persistent cough because of exposure to the powder-fine dust that is constantly in the air. This detail is important because I myself have a persistent cough and including this detail allowed me to fold what could have been a distraction into the reality of my character. I am disoriented because I have recently been evicted from my farm and forced to move to my son John's farm, where I am sleeping in the barn for lack of room in the house. I am nervous because the family is talking about moving to California to find work. I do not even know where California is. I perceive myself as one of God's soldiers on earth. I take pride in my boys and my grandchildren. I have worked hard my whole life and am proud of my competence in running a farm for so many years. I am wearing an old, favorite dress of mine. I love the blue color and the pretty lace. I ordered it special from the Sears catalog twelve years ago as a special treat to myself on my 60th birthday. Its low-waist is typical of the style when I purchased it in the mid-twenties.

WHAT ARE THE CIRCUMSTANCES? The year is somewhere in the mid to late 1930s, when the migration of Dust Bowl refugees was in full swing. The play begins in summer, and ends the following spring. In my first scene it is afternoon and I have just been awakened from a nap in the barn by my son Tom telling me that my grandson Tom is home from jail. It is hot and dry and dusty and the withering crops all around the ramshackle old house are a depressing reminder of our distress. In my second scene it is early morning of the next day, still at John's

house outside Sallisaw, Oklahoma. I have had a rough night because my husband Will has been tossing and turning and I know he does not really want to go to California, despite all his bragging. I am confused that the family has packed up everything over night and that we are leaving sooner than I expected. In my third scene (part of which was added by the director from material in the novel to expand Granma's character), we have traveled only a day and arrived on the other side of Oklahoma City. It is evening, and we stop on the side of the road because, unbeknownst to me, Granpa has died of a stroke. I see Granpa's inert body carried out of the truck and placed on the ground by the family and order Casy to pray for him. The family buries Granpa while I lie on a mattress beside the truck in a state of shock and grief. In my fourth scene, we have arrived at the beautiful, green Colorado River in Needles, California, in the early morning to rest for the day and get water before trying to cross the Mojave Desert that night. It is hot, and I am feverish and delirious. I lie in the back of the cluttered, dusty truck next to the river while Ma and Rose of Sharon try to keep me cool by fanning me and applying wet cloths. I die in the Mojave Desert that night as the family makes the crossing.

WHAT ARE MY RELATIONSHIPS? My most important relationship is with God, my savior Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. God gives me joy and transports me out of my troubles and the monotony of my everyday existence. I see everything that happens in life as an expression of His divine will, and I bend to His will as a devoted Christian. Next in line is my sinful husband, Will Joad. I was attracted to his wild ways in my youth, but now I see Will as God's daily test of my virtue and patience. Fighting with Will and trying to get him to repent his evil ways is what gives my life meaning. My sons Tom and John are also important to me. Now that Will and I are old, they are the only ones who can take care of us. My favorite grandson is Tom. I have always seen some of Will's spunk in Tom, and he reminds me of my husband when

he was young. Only Tom is not as out of control as Will was, even though he has already been in prison for murder. But it was self-defense, the other fellow started it, and Tom has paid his debt. I have hope that Tom will turn out to be a good man. I have always related better to men than women, probably because I raised two boys. But my daughter-in-law, called Ma, my oldest granddaughter Rose of Sharon and my young granddaughter Ruthie become increasingly important to me as I begin to fail because they care for me. I can finally let go of my life in the truck in the desert because Ma tells me the family cannot stop for me; that the family has to get across. I know then that my daughter-in-law has the strength to take care of the family and I can let go, relinquish my post, and move on.

WHAT DO I WANT? I want to reform my wicked husband because I am sure he's headed straight to hell on his present course. I want the family to stay together through all our troubles. I also want Casy to provide spiritual leadership to the family the way he used to do. On two occasions, I want very much for him to pray.

WHAT IS MY OBSTACLE? My husband's delight in crossing me is my obstacle to reforming him. The ruin of the farmland, the family's eviction and the choice to migrate west are the obstacles to the family staying together. Death is also an obstacle, as Granpa's death is the first step in the dissolution of the family. Casy's own spiritual crisis and doubts are the obstacles to him providing us spiritual leadership.

WHAT DO I DO TO GET WHAT I WANT? I nag my husband, correct him and attempt to limit his bad behavior. I attempt to accompany the family to California, although my health fails before we reach our destination. I order Casy to pray and ignore his objections.

VI. DIALECT WORK

Before rehearsals started, a final step in my research was to explore the Midwest Farm or "Okie" accent. I consulted a dialect tape and manual produced by David Alan Stern, Ph.D. I have found his tapes to be useful in the past because they address not only specific vowel or consonant sound changes, but changes in where the tone focus or resonance of the voice is placed in different dialects. My work with Lessac Voice Technique has made me more facile in focusing and placing vocal energy where I want it to be. In Lessac work, the idea is to focus the vibration as much as possible on the gum line above the front teeth to get bone-conducted sound vibrating throughout the facemask and skull. Stern's dialect tapes often place that vibration focus in different locations in the mouth; for instance, for the Midwest Farm accent, Stern advises changing the focus to the back of the soft palate (Stern 6). I was initially concerned with that placement, afraid it would cause me to "swallow" my sound or send my voice back instead of out. But in working on the accent I was able to get the slight nasal quality of the soft palate resonance without sacrificing the vocal support of bone-conducted sound. I found a way to have both, simply by employing a little muscular energy in the soft palate while keeping the bulk of my vibratory focus going forward and out for bone-conducted tone.

The vowel substitution that was most present in my lines was the change from the Lessac N^3 sound in "get" to the N^2 sound in "lit." The most important consonant change was to make sure to hit all "R's" following vowels very hard. This is different from the Southern accent I had done before, in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, where the "R's" were often dropped.

Before memorizing my lines I marked the consonant and vowel changes in my script so that I memorized my lines in the dialect. I did this because I wanted to avoid the feeling of

"putting on" an accent after I had already begun to rehearse the lines. Learning the lines and the dialect together helped me to find Granma's voice more organically.

For an example of how I scored my script with vocal markings to achieve the proper dialect, see Appendix A.

REHEARSAL PROCESS

I. EARLY STAGES (NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER)

I was unable to attend many of the early rehearsals due to performance commitments at the Hippodrome Theatre. I was not present at the first reading of the play. The director told me I could be "plugged into" the show in January, but I made sure to attend as many rehearsals as I could before that and to take careful blocking notes. The inconsistency in my rehearsal attendance made things awkward, as blocking and staging would change between times I could attend rehearsals. It also made it hard to feel as though I was a "part of the Joad family" at first, because I was not able to bond with the cast as quickly as I normally would. On the positive side, however, the situation kept me flexible, which turned out to be a good quality to have in working with the directing style of the production director.

My initial choices for Granma were to make her gestures large to capture her religious exuberance, as I had witnessed at the Pentecostal Church. I also made her very big vocally because I was aware that I would have to fill the Constans Theatre. I justified it by thinking of how people who are hard of hearing often speak very loudly.

These early rehearsals were mostly about blocking the show, trying out initial character choices and getting a feel for the overall arc of Granma's story.

II. EXPLORATION (EARLY JANUARY)

When the spring semester started, I could focus on rehearsals with undivided attention. In the rehearsals in early January I refined my objectives, honed my physical choices, discovered my psychological gesture and experimented with vocal placement.

I started with what I would describe as big choices for my character's objectives, or goals. For example, three of the objectives I chose for the first scene were: "to glorify Tom," when I first see him; "to save the family," by getting Casy to pray; and "to implore God's help" during Casy's grace. I was directed to pull back. The director said I was playing Granma a little too broadly and needed to have more specific thoughts. I was happy I had taken the time to write down the specific objectives I was playing, because it made it easy to pull back by refining the objectives. Instead of "glorifying Tom" when I first see him, I instead chose, "to thank God" and specifically had the thought that I was thanking God that Tom could go to California with us. Instead of "saving the family" with Casy's prayer, I chose, "to bless the family," which had the same quality but was a less charged choice for me. Instead of "imploring God's help" during the prayer, I chose "to seek comfort," which made Granma less distracting during the prayer, but was also a more personal, specific choice for me.

Early January was also the time I honed my physical choices for Granma. I started my physical transformation by trying to imagine what a lifetime of hard living on a farm would do to a person's body. I imagined I would be stooped at the waist from a lifetime of bending over my work. I imagined I would be stuck in a "startle pattern" (head down and back, shoulders up and shoulder blades pulled together in back) as a response to the farmer's constant fear and uncertainty of what the next season will bring. However, these physical choices were quite painful for the few rehearsals I used them.

I made an appointment with the School of Theatre and Dance Alexander Technique instructor and coach to work on Granma's physicality. Alexander Technique is a method of improving the use of the body to bring greater ease, support, balance and coordination to movement and posture. The Alexander Technique coach very quickly and efficiently helped me to achieve the same "look" of being stooped over, but with less wear and tear on my body. Working from the ground up, she gave me a series of release points to help me create the physicality: heels back and down, knees releasing forward, hip sockets back (so I was now bending forward from the hip sockets instead of trying to bend at the "imaginary" waist where there is no joint), tailbone dropping, back lengthening and widening, and shoulders rolling and releasing forward, which gave a hunched appearance, but actually left my neck remarkably free. The new physicality was effective for me on many levels: it looked realistic, it was much easier for me to come in and out of and to maintain on stage, and it instantly boosted my confidence. As I had begun to work on Granma's physicality, I was very worried about presenting merely a stereotype of old age. So I made physical choices that seemed realistic, but were hard on my body. And because they were hard on my body, they ended up feeling "put on," exactly what I did not want. The new "Alexander-friendly" physicality was something that I created by releasing a series of joints in my body. It was actually pleasurable to do, and somehow felt more internal rather than "put on." The ease of the physical transformation translated into an ease in the characterization, which became one of the main keys in unlocking Granma.

I discovered Granma's psychological gesture very organically in rehearsal. We were rehearsing the scene where Granma is trying to get Casy to pray over Granpa's body. I reached down toward the body of my dead husband. My desire was to get down to him, to find out if he was alive. My obstacle was physical; as an old woman I could not bend easily and my balance

was not steady. I was afraid of falling. The gesture of reaching down towards the earth while precariously trying to lower myself to the ground spoke to me of loss (the loss of my youthful abilities, the loss of the fertility of the earth in the Dust Bowl) and of struggle (the struggle to wrest a living from the earth, and to hold on to land, family and way of life that were now slipping out of my reach). That loss was centered in the "gut chakra" (energy center), and the stooping and reaching out and down to Granpa's body naturally sent my hips gut chakra back as I tried to reach out and beyond the "loss." It was a gesture that I used in one moment on stage, but it remained underneath Granma's physicality, movement and psychology throughout the play. As Michael Chekhov said: "The Psychological Gesture will appear before your mind's eye and, after being practiced, will always remain with you as a kind of inspiration while you are acting" (Chekhov 65).

In these early rehearsals, the director said he was missing the sense of my age in my vocal quality. So I set out to find a voice that could be heard in the Constans Theatre, but still sound frail enough to be perceived as elderly. I did not want to do a stereotypical, shaky elderly voice, but I did want to arrive at something like the voice described in the novel as "shrill" or a "clamor" or a "creaking bleat." Yet I feared placing my voice too high, which would make it too light and unable to hit the back wall of the Constans. I remembered being told in my Linklater voice studies in the past that the reason people's voices sound old is that the vocal apparatus (larynx and vocal folds) lose flexibility over time, so a tinny, thin or breathy voice is produced. I experimented with thinking of a "tighter" or a "tinny" sound. By doing this, I seemed to find a voice that was higher and sounded older, but still carried in the theatre.

III. SOLIDIFICATION (LATE JANUARY)

My habit as an actor is often to "solidify" my choices too soon, which can limit character development or dampen my own creativity. I had a great ally in my director, who helped me to *not* do this in *The Grapes of Wrath*. His directing style is very fluid and resistant to nailing down even basic blocking too soon.

In late January we re-blocked my final scene at least four times. At first I was doing all my lines from inside the back of the truck. Then we re-blocked it so that I got out of the truck and did the first set of lines up stage, went back into the truck, then came back out and delivered the last lines down stage by the river. Then I alternated saying one set of lines from the truck and the other from somewhere on stage. Finally we settled on my saying the first lines outside the truck, and the final lines from inside. Symbolically this worked: as Granma weakens, her presence is reduced to a disembodied voice.

The director was equally sensitive to nailing down line readings too soon. One day he would urge me to use one word as an operative. The next day he would ask for a different operative. I asked him why, fearing that I was somehow failing to communicate my character's intentions. He told me that he always asks for a change if he hears the same line reading twice in a row. Both in the blocking and in the delivery of lines, the director forced me to keep experimenting and finding new shades and depths for Granma.

Around this time, a late discovery came out of an exercise we did in Alexander Technique class called the Breathing Costume, developed by Jessica Wolf:

> Everything evokes feeling in us and since we can't know when and what will be the exciting moment, we must keep searching. The breath may point the way and help make choices that lead the actor to the psychology of the character. A

> breathing pattern can easily change the whole body and personality of a character. (Wolf 19)

The exercise involves taking on the breathing pattern of a partner and then using that pattern as a springboard for creating character. I applied the principle to my final scene as Granma. As we began running the play, I realized that I had a long time to lie on stage in the back of the truck before I finally climbed out and delivered my penultimate lines, which involve Granma calling out for her dead husband. Remembering the Breathing Costume exercise, I used that time to slip into the breathing pattern I remember so clearly from attending to my own grandmother as she was nearing death. Her breath slowed and was more labored. It had an erratic rhythm, with varying amounts of time between breaths, which was unsettling to hear. I adopted that pattern as best I could as I lay in the truck. Doing so made me feel slightly disoriented and off balance when I finally stood up. It also made me feel a bit detached from the world, as if I were floating away between breaths and being pulled back to earth each time I finally inhaled. The effect was subtle: in other words, I was not too dizzy to do what I needed to do for the scene, but I felt it created a psycho-physical response in me that was useful in telling the last moments of Granma's story. This breathing pattern also became a trigger for me: it brought back the memories and emotions of my grandmother's death, which, closely followed by my father's death, was the beginning of the disintegration of my own nuclear family. I was able to use Hagen's principle of *transference* to apply those feelings to my character's circumstances.

SELF EVALUATION: PERFORMANCE & PROCESS

I. TECH WEEK AND OPENING NIGHT

As we began our dress rehearsals, I got a note from the director that I was not playing my objective hard enough in the scene with Casy over Granpa's body. My objective was to get Casy

to pray, and my tactic was ordering him to do it. To relate how I was finally able to address the director's note, I must go into some detail about that particular moment in the play.

As the family unloaded Granpa's body, Casy walked me to the opposite side of the truck and attempted to distract me. Once Granpa was placed on the ground, however, I saw his body and attempted to go to him, as Casy blocked my way. Once Casy admitted Granpa was sick, I went past Casy and got to Granpa's body. As an actor, I knew that I had to kneel over the body to pray. As the character, I had no idea how to get down to the ground, because the director had not blocked anyone to help me and did not seem to like that suggestion when I made it. I knew my character would have trouble getting to the ground due to stiffness and fear of falling. My first choice was that I would realize my husband was dead and sort of collapse to the ground. My desire for Casy to pray was then rooted in wanting to give my husband's soul the proper send off. The challenge was being able to summon the emotional hit of grief every time that would justify the collapse. But the realization that Granpa was dead was coloring my exchange with Casy with grief. As I got the note to play the objective harder, I first tried to feel more grief, to fuel the need for the proper "send off." But that did not work. I got the same note the next night and I realized I was trying to play an emotion, instead of an intention or action. So I spoke to the director and we decided that I would try *not* realizing my husband was dead. This was actually supported by Ma's subsequent line: "She needs somebody now. She's knowin' now" (Galati 29). That meant I would have to struggle to the ground instead of collapsing and my objective would be to get Casy to heal my husband with prayer. This worked like a charm. The struggle to get to the ground was an action that naturally fueled frustration and desperation. The much stronger objective was not softened or muddied with grief: I *needed* Casy to pray to *save* my husband. Suddenly, the objective was crystal clear and the moment was much more powerful. The grief

came after the prayer, as I was being taken away from Granpa's body and thus did not get in the way of playing the objective. This turned out to be a very important discovery that bore fruit for the rest of the run.

On opening night, I had one of those profound experiences that I am sure will defy my attempt to describe it. It was in the closing moments of the play, long after Granma is dead and gone. The whole cast was in the wings, in place for the curtain call. The play was in its final moments and Rose of Sharon was about to nurse the starving man. I looked around and saw that the entire cast was completely engrossed in what was happening on stage. It astounded me because I have never been backstage at a University of Florida show where there was not someone horsing around, gossiping or texting on their cell phone. But in this case, all the emotional and spiritual energy of the cast was focused on stage. The audience was absolutely silent. There were hundreds of people, actors and audience, all bearing silent, reverent witness to one of the most disturbing yet selfless acts of human charity ever put on stage. It was a holy moment and it made me proud to be a part of telling the story of *The Grapes of Wrath*.

II. LESSONS FROM THE RUN AND CLOSING NIGHT

During dress rehearsals I established my preparatory routine, and held to it during the run. I arrived early so there was no rush or stress in putting on my age makeup and graying my hair, which took about an hour of work. I found the makeup process to be very contemplative. It is not pleasant for me to draw in wrinkles that I know are on their way to my face in the near future. So, I turned the discomfort of doing it into a sort of ritual, each wrinkle representing an event or loss in Granma's life. I made putting on the makeup part of assuming the character.

I would then do a vocal warm up and run through all of my lines. I made a habit of getting to the stage right wing about 10 minutes before places and lying in the cab of the truck in

constructive rest (simply lying on my back, knees raised and feet on the ground to allow my spine to lengthen and my breath to drop deeply in). As I lay there I would think about the back-story I had created for Granma and add onto it. I liked to think about the story related in the novel of how we got our farmhouse (by stealing it from a neighbor!). I thought about how I had met Will at an outdoor dance and bonfire in Missouri and systematically foiled his attempts to court the other girls in town. I thought about how we had staked the claim to our land during the Oklahoma land run of 1889, when settlers lined up to rush onto the newly confiscated Indian land and stake their claims. I thought about how we had snuck out of camp the night before to get a head start and had gotten away with it. I liked to think of Granma's youth and imagine how she fell in love with her husband. By giving her a past and honoring her youth, I hoped to bring an entire person to the stage, not just a caricature of an obnoxious old woman.

Early in the run I read a passage in Uta Hagen's *A Challenge for the Actor* that talked about preparing properly the moment before an entrance (Hagen 143-149). I decided that I was not attending to this enough on my first entrance, so I gave myself the task in the wings of imagining I was being awakened from a nap, receiving the news about Tom's return, and hastily pulling on clothes. I loosened my shawl so I could finish tying it as I entered and all of these things gave me something to think about as the character rather than thinking about "making an entrance" as an actor.

I found myself remarkably emotional on closing night. I wrote in my journal about how my life was imitating art. The Joads leave home hoping to find a better life. I will be leaving my UF home soon and my future as an actor is just as uncertain as the Joad's future in California – the odds are against us all. But I took inspiration from the Joad family's spirit and determination to go on despite the odds. And I took satisfaction in telling their story in times that do not feel

dissimilar to the Great Depression. Just as the Joads face exploitation at the hands of the wealthy land owners, we all currently face exploitation as the middle class shrinks, healthcare and a decent education are denied to huge swaths of the population and the rich just keep getting richer even as the current economy threatens the majority of the population. I was proud to tell this important story at this particular time.

III. EVALUATION OF MY PROCESS

On February 3, 2011, Dick Maxwell reviewed the play for *The Gainesville Sun*. My performance was one of six mentioned as "notable": "Grandma [sic] Joad is played by Candice [sic] Clift as a long-suffering elderly woman who tries mightily to keep Grandpa [sic] under control and get the family to pray" (Maxwell 20).

The next day Sybil St. Claire, a lecturer at the University of Central Florida, came to adjudicate our play on behalf of the American College Theatre Festival. During feedback she said that each of the cast members made idiosyncratic, interesting choices physically and that each of us appeared fully "sunk into" our characters. She said the characters were all earthy, gritty, richly drawn and very grounded.

By way of self-evaluation, I would say my research prepared me well for performing my role and gave me a firm grounding in the history and circumstances of the play and my character. I was proud that I made big choices physically and vocally early on in the rehearsal process, so that the director could tell me that I could afford to pull back. It is much easier to pull back than to ramp up a performance. My daily preparations served me well and I believe I made a successful transformation into a character very different from myself. In fact, one of my students saw the play and swore he did not recognize me or realize I was in the play until he read the review in the paper.

I made two important discoveries in playing Granma that I hope to apply to all future roles. The first was in discovering Granma's physicality using the principles of Alexander Technique.

I had made my initial choices by thinking about what years of hard living, worry and back-breaking work would do to a body. That caused me to adopt a stooped-over, startle pattern. It was truly painful, but I thought since it was "truthful" and "real" it would read well for the audience and allow me to feel confident.

But after adapting my physicality with Alexander Technique and finding ways to release and extend through the posture, I immediately felt more confident in my choices. My greater physical comfort translated into greater mental/emotional comfort and confidence; an example of psycho-physical connection. And it was an important lesson for me about the benefits of applying good technique over mere slavish attempts to "be realistic."

My other key lesson in playing Granma came out of the adjustments to my objective in the scene over Granpa's body. One of my habits, identified early on in this program, is that I often try to play an emotion rather than an action. I have always understood the difference intellectually, but this example was so clear and the results of playing my objective rather than playing grief were so tangible, that I think it may have been a watershed victory for me. I could feel the difference of being focused inward on my emotions versus being focused outward on my objective and scene partner. That is the most important part of changing an old habit: being able to clearly feel the difference between the old and the new so that it is possible to identify and correct the old habit when it creeps back in. It was an important lesson for me that I hope will bear fruit for the rest of my career.

CONCLUSION

I recently wrote in my Comprehensive Exams that I believe the 21st century will see a continued melding of internal and external approaches in acting. I think my process in performing the role of Granma Joad is an example of this.

Much of my initial research (reading the novel and researching the events, history, lifestyle and beliefs depicted in the play) helped me fuel the internal aspects of the character. I used the research to help me identify Granma's psychological objectives, understand her point of view and develop her back-story. It was easy to tap into her feelings of loss using Hagen's theory of *transferences* and substituting events from my own life: the death of my grandmother and father and the subsequent disintegration of my nuclear family.

But the moment I stepped into rehearsal and attempted to "embody" Granma, the need for external technique was immediately clear. I might have known exactly what Granma wanted and felt in any given scene, but no one would have believed I was a 70-year-old woman unless I was able to make physical, "outside-in" adjustments to my body and voice. Fortunately, Alexander Technique, dialect work and vocal technique provided me the tools to make those adjustments. In turn those adjustments (or more accurately, the struggle to overcome the obstacles that my physical adjustments presented) eventually led me to a Psychological Gesture for Granma. I see Psychological Gesture, in and of itself, as a melding of internal and external acting technique. The gesture is created externally (as mine was in rehearsal), but it is then internalized, imagined and felt inside. It becomes a part of the psychology of the character, and thus becomes an internal aide. The external technique thus begins to support the internal acting process, and that is also what my physical and vocal characterization did for me. I began to trust

in my portrayal of Granma internally once I found comfort and control in her external characterization.

John Harrop and Sabin R. Epstein, authors of the book *Acting With Style*, support my own experience and belief:

> There is no fundamental contradiction between the demands of mask and playing, and the need for inner process. Gestalt psychology teaches the close relationship between physical response and emotional response, and many practitioners of theatre now feel that the articulation of the physical part of the role stimulates the inner support. (Harrop & Epstein 5)

The graduate acting program at the University of Florida does not teach one particular methodology of acting, but instead an overview of many; with the hope that the student will select the methodologies that work for her and develop an individual approach that serves the needs of the role. That is what I did in my portrayal of Granma and what I will do in all future roles.

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APPENDIX A

SCORE OF TEXT: ACT I

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SCORE OF TEXT: ACT I

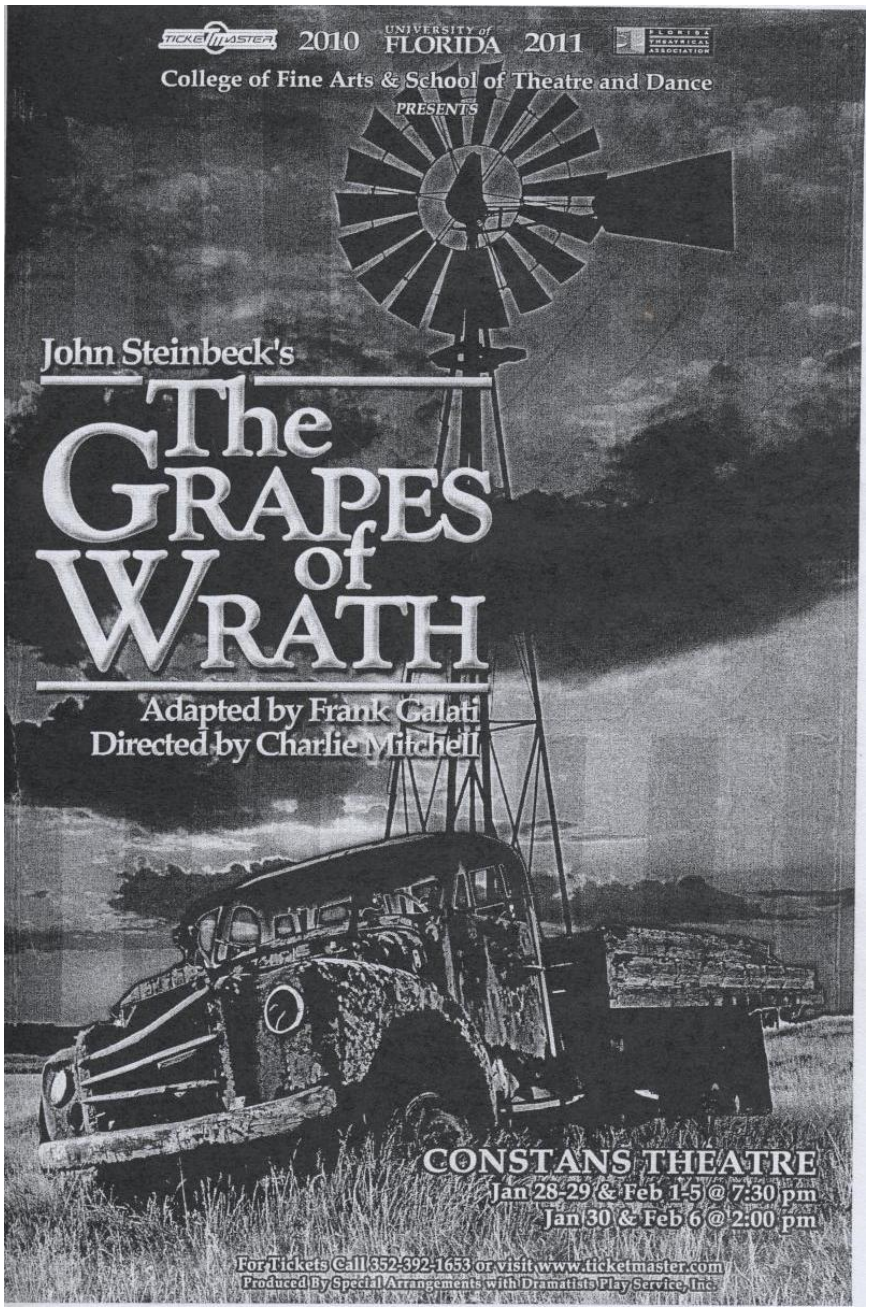
Page #	Person Addressed	Line & Vocal Markings	Objective	Tactic	Obstacle
18	God	Oh Lord! Pu-raise Gawd fur vittory!	To thank God	Praising	Struggling to get dressed and beat Granpa to Tom
18	God	Hallelujah!	Same	Same	Same
19	God	Pu-raise Gawd fur vittory!	Same	Same	Same
19	Granpa	Pu-raise *Gawd* fur vittory!	To correct Granpa	Clarifying	He won't listen to me
19	Tom / Granpa	A wicketer cussin'er man never lived. He's goin' to hell on a poker praise Gawd! Wants to drive the truck! Well he ain't goin' ta.	To chastise Granpa	Accusing	He is shameless
19	Tom	An action (not a line): embracing Tom	To welcome Tom	Embracing	We are not usually an affectionate family

20	Tom	Preacher? You got a preacher? Go git him we'll have a grace. Too late for him – he's et. Go get the preacher.	To bless the family	Ordering Tom / Shaming Granpa	Jim Casy doesn't want to pray
21	Pa and the family	Grace fust. Grace fust.	Same	Commanding	Same
21	Granpa	Shut up, you sinful ol' goat.	Same	Shutting Granpa up	Same
21	Jim	Say her.	Same	Ordering	Same
21	God	Pu-raise Gawd!	To find comfort	Glorifying God	Jim's prayer is unusual
21	God	Hallelujah!	Same	Same	Same
21	God	Oh, yes. Pu-raise Gawd! Hallelujah!	Same	Same	Same
22	God	A-men	Same	Same	Same

Explanatory Note: I did not do the standard Lessac vocal markings, but focused instead on the important vowel and consonant changes for the "Okie" dialect. My streamlined approach was as follows: 1) I marked Lessac tonal vowels with a dot. 2) I marked the vowel changes with Lessac indentifying numbers. Many of the single vowel sounds became almost two-stage vowels with the addition of a slight "N4," as heard in the word "tuck." 3) I circled my operative (emphasized) words. 4) I marked the sustainable "R" consonants, which are hit much harder in the "Okie" accent than in Standard American dialect.

APPENDIX B

PRODUCTION PROGRAM



John Steinbeck's

The GRAPES of WRATH

Adapted by Frank Galati

Directed by Charlie Mitchell

Featuring

Live Performances by

Tony Shed & Olga Godula

Scenic Design
Molly Ilten

Costume Design
Rebecca Wallace

Sound Design
Gerard Hale III

Lighting Design
Timothy Reed

Stage Manager
Martina Harte

There will be one 10 minute intermission

The use of photography or video is strictly prohibited.
Cell phones and text messaging are not permitted.

* Project in lieu of thesis in partial fulfillment of the Master of Fine Arts degree in theatre.

# Denotes work in partial fulfillment of BFA Senior Project

CAST of CHARACTERS

Grandma Joad	Candace Clift*
Grandpa Joad	Kevin Marshall
Ma Joad	Alaina Manchester
Pa Joad	Andrew Bailes
Uncle John	Joshua Hamilton
Noah Joad	Robert 'Robin' Martinez
Tom Joad	Adam Kroeger
Al Joad	Justin Ritchey #
Rose of Sharon	Angie Petty #
Connie	Nick Erkelens
Ruthie Joad	Megan Hess
Winfield Joad	Ellis Cunningham
Jim Casy	Jason Weiss*
Muley Graves / Floyd Knowles	Andrew Herrera
Proprietor / Deputy Sheriff / Ensemble	Colin Hudson
Man Going Back / Hooverville Officer / Ensemble	Cristian Gonzalez
Elizabeth Sandry	Amelia Harris
Narrator / Ensemble	Lauren McPherson
Mrs. Wainwright / Narrator / Ensemble	Katie Pankow
Aggie Wainwright / Ensemble	Katie Lee
Al's Girl / Ensemble	Emilyann Offutt
Willy / Gas Station Attendant / Man on Strike / Ensemble	Paul Sabayrac
Gas Station Owner / Government Camp Director / Ensemble	Chase Milner
First Agricultural Officer / Ranch Bookkeeper / Narrator / Ensemble	Ryan Weiss
Mayor of Hooverville / Man on Strike/ Ensemble	Matt Mercurio
Second Agricultural Officer / Narrator/ Ranch Guard/ Ensemble	Kenny Frechette
Contractor / Ranch Guard / Man in Barn /Ensemble	Joseph Urick
Boy in Barn	Winston Cunningham
Narrator / Ensemble	Andrea Erkelens
Ensemble	Cree Armstead
Ensemble	Natalie Rollan
Ensemble	Meghan Wolfe
Ensemble	Jack Polefko
Ensemble	Paulina Oswald

TIME

The Great Depression of the 1930s

PLACE

From the "Dust Bowl" prairies of Oklahoma to the Promised Land of California

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Stop me if this sounds familiar: a banking crisis fueled by speculation and greed leads to an economic collapse and the government seems helpless in the face of massive unemployment. Jobs are outsourced to the cheapest labor possible and a "race to the bottom" ensues for workers. At the same time, subsidies are given to the wealthy and big business but when public money is earmarked to help the public, violent accusations of socialism are heard. California, formerly a model of progressive thought and abundance, becomes known for intolerance and social problems. This was the Great Depression of the 1930s, one of the darkest times in our young country's history.

While the country was still reeling from the possibility that America might fail, more disaster loomed in the Plains states such as Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, and Missouri. Extended drought and high winds killed crops and erosion turned a foot of topsoil to dust. Soon, static electricity created a magnet, gathering dust into enormous storms that ripped across the land, burying farms, killing cattle, and destroying wells. Once harvest and hope had disappeared, between 1935 and 1940, over one million Americans left their homes in this "dust bowl" and traveled to California lured by promises of work. Proud Oklahoma farmers became "Okies," occupying the lowest rung of the social order and treated with distain.

John Steinbeck, who had grown up in California and worked in its fields, wandered the country during this time and with a journalist's eye, recorded what he saw on the roads and camps in the now-classic prose of *The Grapes of Wrath*. Although the title of the novel was inspired by the biblical lyrics of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," the image was explored in the book with a passage describing the business practices of California growers. Anxious to protect their profits and maintain prices, many growers hired armed guards to patrol large corporate farms where crops were destroyed or left to rot as starving people watched from ditches alongside the road. Most cruel, however, was the practice of spraying kerosene on oranges to repel the desperate. Steinbeck wrote:

> There is a crime here that goes beyond denunciation. There is a sorrow here that weeping cannot symbolize. There is a failure here that topples all our success....in the eyes of the people there is a failure; and in the eyes of the hungry there is a growing wrath. In the souls of the people the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, growing heavy for the vintage.

Yet the book and this theatrical adaptation do not stand as a story about politics; this is the story of a family lost in politics, blown by winds and circumstances, struggling to hold on to family and humanity. It is a struggle that I hope will inspire and, as I believe Steinbeck hoped, move us to look after our fellow man through collective action.

- Charlie Mitchell

MEET THE CAST

Cree Armstead (Ensemble) is graduating this spring with a Theatre major and a Dance minor. She is thrilled to be a part of the *The Grapes of Wrath* cast and would like to thank God for opening the doors, Dr. Mitchell for giving her the opportunity and her family for driving 9 hours to watch her. Thanks to everyone who is coming, enjoy the show!

Andrew Bailes (Pa Joad) is a second year MFA Acting candidate. Previous UF credits include: *Streamers* (Billy), *In the Blood* (Doctor), and *Noises Off!* (Garry). Later this semester, Andrew is directing Neil LaBute's *BASH* for Florida Players as well as staging his original play *Shotgun Party* for the New Works Festival.

Candace Clift (Grandma Joad) is a third-year MFA candidate. UF credits: *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Blanche – UF & International Production in Germany and the Czech Republic), *Oedipus Rex* (Chorus), *Pride and Prejudice* (Mrs. Bennet) and *George Washington's Boy* (Martha Washington).

Ellis Cunningham (Winfield Joad) is pumped to appear in his first play at UF. He is in 8th grade at PK Yonge and has appeared in many shows at school and in the community. Ellis is a member of the school's Varsity Dive Team and recently ranked 26th in the state. Thank you to the cast and Dr. Mitchell for being so welcoming to the noob. REAL!

Winston Cunningham (Boy in Barn / Ensemble) is downright giddy to appear in his first play at UF. He first fell in love with theatre with PK Yonge's *Les Misérables* (Gavroche). Since then he has appeared in many shows at school and in the community. Winston is a member of the school's Varsity Swim Team and loves political satire. Thanks to Dr. Mitchell and Ms. Martina (again) for giving him this opportunity.

Andrea Erkelens (Narrator / Ensemble) is a second year Theatre BA student and is ecstatic to be making her UF debut! She's lucky to start off with such a talented cast and crew, including her brother, who started it all. Thanks to her family and friends for all the support and love.

Nick Erkelens (Connie Rivers) is a BFA Acting candidate. He was last seen as Eduardo in *The Cuban Swimmer* at Santa Fe. This is his first production at UF and couldn't be more excited to work with such an amazing cast and crew. He would like to thank his family and friends for their love and support.

Kenneth Frechette (2nd Agricultural Officer / Narrator/ Ranch Guard/ Ensemble) is happy to be performing in his second UF mainstage production, the first being *City of Angels* this past fall. He is honored to work with such a diverse and talented cast, and thanks Charlie Mitchell for this opportunity. Much love to my family.

Cristian Gonzalez (Man Going Back / Hooverville Officer / Ensemble) is a 3rd year BFA Acting candidate. He would like to thank the cast and crew for an awesome experience, Dr. Mitchell for bringing him aboard this epic project, and Caitlin, for supporting him in all his endeavors

Joshua Hamilton (Uncle John Joad) is extremely grateful and excited to be making his debut here at UF in *The Grapes of Wrath*. A first year MFA acting candidate, Joshua earned his BA in Theatre at the wonderful Quirk Theatre of Eastern Michigan University. Thanks to my family

Amelia Harris (Elizabeth Sandry) is a second year MFA candidate. Recent credits include *A Christmas Carol* (Mrs. Dilber), *Noises Off!* (Dotty Otley/Mrs. Clackett), *In The Blood* (Amiga Gringa), and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (Player). She would like to thank Dr. Mitchell for allowing her to discover and for making her listen.

Andrew Herrera (Muley Graves / Floyd Knowles) is a first year MFA Acting candidate. Andrew recently graduated from Clemson University where he received a BA. Some of his favorite past roles include: *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Jack Worthing), *Blood Wedding* (Leonardo), *The Foreigner* (Ellard), and *Self Destruction Opera* (Jerald/ Detective Moon).

Megan Hess (Ruthie Joad) is the tallest fifth grader at Gainesville Country Day School. She absolutely loves playing on the volleyball team, running, and hanging out with family and friends. She would like to thank God for blessing her with all her talents, her family and friends for all their support, and Charlie Mitchell for all of his help and patience. Philippians 4:13

Colin Hudson (Proprietor / Deputy Sheriff / Ensemble) is happy to be making his second appearance in a UF SOTD production, having previously been featured in *Dark Play* (Ensemble). He would like to thank Charlie for the chance, his friends for the fun, and his Mom for everything in between.

Adam Kroeger (Tom Joad) is a first year MFA candidate, hailing all the way from Idaho. I'm absolutely thrilled and humbled to have the opportunity to perform such an incredible role in this piece with this amazing cast and director.

Katie Lee (Aggie Wainwright / Ensemble) is a senior BFA and is thrilled to work with this great cast and crew! Most recently Katie was seen in *The Women* (Miriam) and has also been working on several independent film projects. She would like to thank Charlie for this opportunity, her beautiful friends and her boyfriend for everything they do to keep me sane.

Alaina Manchester (Ma Joad) is a second year MFA candidate. She is so proud to tell such an important story. She is thankful for her family for grounding her and Justin for always urging her to soar.

Kevin Marshall (Grandpa Joad) is Director of the Center for Arts and Public Policy at the University of Florida. For 12 years he was Director of the University of Florida's School of Theatre and Dance. Mr. Marshall is enjoying his return to the stage as an actor and to the classroom as a teacher.

Robert "Robin" Martinez (Noah Joad) is a third year theatre major focusing on stage direction. He last directed *ART* for Florida Players fall season. He would like to thank Charlie for the opportunity to play such a wonderful character, his cast mates, mother, sisters, and friends. *Vi Veri Vniversum Vivus Vici.*

Lauren McPherson (Narrator / Ensemble) is making her UF SOTD stage debut.

Matt Mercurio (Mayor of Hooverville / Man on Strike/ Ensemble) thanks Dr. Mitchell for the opportunity, his family for their many sacrifices & support, Christina for filling his life with love and laughter, and God for an infinite amount of things. Matt hopes you continue supporting theatre & all types of art everywhere.

Chase Milner (Gas Station Owner / Government Camp Director / Ensemble) is a BFA student, in his Junior Year. He has been involved in previous productions at the University such as *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Damn Yankees*, and *Oedipus the King*. He has enjoyed working with the cast and crew for the production of *The Grapes of Wrath* and is thankful for all their help.

Emilyann Offutt (Al's Girl / Ensemble) is a recent addition to the BFA Acting program and is excited to appear in her first UF production. In the community, her most recent involvement in the arts includes work with Star Centre Children's Theatre, Gainesville Creative Kids, and the High Springs Community Theatre.

Paulina Oswald (Ensemble) has appeared in many dramas and musicals in the Gainesville area, most recently in *The Crucible* at P.K. Yonge. She also appeared in the short film *The Last Shot*, and in a Public Service Announcement. Paulina is in the Performing Arts program at P.K. Yonge, and plays the saxophone.

Katie Pankow (Mrs. Wainwright / Narrator / Ensemble) is a first year MFA candidate. She received a BA in English from Florida Gulf Coast University, and is honored and thrilled to now be studying her true passion—acting. Thanks and love to all who pushed me, supported me, and helped me to get here.

Angie Petty (Rose of Sharon Rivers Joad) graduated this past December with a BFA acting degree, and is so excited to be on UF's main stage for the Spring semester! She previously appeared in UF's summer production of *Noises Off* (Brook/Vicki). She would like to thank Dr. Charlie Mitchell and the whole cast and crew for the opportunity, support, making the process so much fun, and helping to really put the emotion into it! She'd also like to thank her family, friends, and loved ones for always believing in her. "143!"

Jack Polefko (Ensemble) began acting 2 years ago when he performed in *Ragtime* (Edgar). Since then he has played several roles including *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Jem) at GCP. He is excited about being in *Hairspray* at P.K. Yonge this March. He thanks Dr. Mitchell for this great opportunity!

Justin Ritchey (Al Joad) is a 4th-year BFA acting major and fisheries minor; simply put, if he's not acting, he's fishing. Previous productions include: *Reasons to be Pretty* and *Oedipus the King*. Justin sends love to his family, his wonderful woman Chelsie, and the entire SoTD faculty. Oh, two words: THUG LIFE. -Sperber/Sabayrac

Natalie Rollan (Ensemble) is a sophomore psychology major. *The Grapes of Wrath* is her first production with the School of Theatre and Dance and she is incredibly grateful to be part of such a wonderful production. She would like to thank Dr. Mitchell, the cast, and the crew for making this experience so fun and meaningful.

Paul Sabayrac (Willy / Gas Station Attendant / Man on Strike / Ensemble) is thrilled to be a part of his first SoTD production. He would like to thank Dr. Mitchell for the opportunity, the cast and crew for the invaluable lessons learned, and his family for their undying support.

Joseph Urick (Contractor / Ranch Guard / Man in Barn /Ensemble) is a first year MFA candidate. Joseph holds a BA in Acting/Directing from Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi (Summa Cum Laude). Joseph is a two time Irene Ryan Regional Finalist, winner of the Texas Educational Theatre Association's Founder Award, and the runner up for the David Shelton Playwriting Award from KC/ACTF.

Jason Weiss (Jim Casy): **UF:** *Oedipus Rex, The Clean House, How I Learned To Drive, Pride & Prejudice, Cloud Nine.* **Hippodrome:** *Dracula, Boeing Boeing, Defiance.* **Florida Players:** *Fool For Love* (Director) **Off-Broadway:** Francis Ford Coppola's *The Conversation* (29th Street Rep), *... And Counting* (2nd Stage), *The Big Funk* (Greenwich Street Theatre), *The Homecoming* (Cherry Lane), *The Burial at Thebes* (La MaMa Etc). **Regional:** *Othello* (Virginia Shakespeare Festival), *King Lear, Romeo & Juliet, As You Like It, The Winter's Tale* (Princeton Rep), *Biloxi Blues* (Flat Rock Playhouse). **FILM:** *The Book of Me, Shipwreck: USS Squalus, Nina.* **TV:** 3 Years on ABC's *One Life to Live, All My Children, Crib Crashers.* Jason is a 3rd year MFA student and a proud member of AEA, SAG, AFTRA.

Ryan Weiss (First Agricultural Officer / Ranch Bookkeeper / Narrator / Ensemble) is a second year Criminology major, performing in his second UF SOTD show. Favorite credits include: *Tommy* (Captain Walker), *Songs for a New World* (Man 2), *Death of a Salesman* (Willy Loman), *Pippin* (King Charles). Ryan would like to thank Dr. Mitchell and the entire cast and crew for a great show!

Meghan Elizabeth Wolfe (Ensemble) is a 7th grader in the Performing Arts Program at P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School at the University of Florida. Meghan is a member of the National Junior Honor Society and the PK Yonge Swim team. She enjoys singing, acting, dancing, drawing, writing, and playing the oboe and piano.

MEET THE PRODUCTION CREW

Dr. Charlie Mitchell (Director) has directed and acted in a variety of theatres in New York City, Chicago, and Baltimore. After completing his BFA training at Ithaca College, he studied playwriting with Nobel prize-winning author Derek Walcott at Boston University and later earned a PhD from the University of Colorado at Boulder. For three years, Dr. Mitchell was an artistic associate and company member of the award-winning Chesapeake Shakespeare Company. He has directed over twenty productions including last year's UF production of *In the Blood*. Credits include *Epic Proportions*, *A Flea in Her Ear*, *How I Learned To Drive*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Cabaret*, *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*, *City of Angels*, *Under Milk Wood*, *Oleanna*, and *Woyzeck*. Dr. Mitchell would like to thank his tremendous design team and technical staff for their imagination and dedication. As for the cast, never has he seen so much talent assembled in one place.

Molly Ilten (Scenic Designer) holds a BS in Mechanical Engineering and is working towards her MFA in Scenic Design. Past UF productions include *City of Angels*, *In the Blood*, and *Agbedidi*. She has also worked at Flatrock Playhouse and Wagon Wheel Theatre as their scenic charge artist.

Tim Reed (Lighting Designer) received his BA from Weber State University for Musical Theatre Performance and Design and is currently a first year MFA student in the Lighting Design area here at University of Florida. He has designed lights over the past eight years in Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, Nevada, and California. Timothy has won the national KCACTF awards for Lighting Design and Stage Management, and looks forward to a BRIGHT future.

Rebecca Wallace (Costume Designer) is honored to be trusted with such an immense show for her senior project. A BFA Costume Designer, previous design credits include *Hair*, *The Bay at Nice*, the 2010 New Works Festival (all Florida Players), *Iphigenia and Other Daughters*, and three pieces in the 2010 Fall BFA Dance Showcase. Assistant credits: *Damn Yankees* (UFSoTD) and *The Rocky Horror Show* (UFSoTD). Thanks to her professors for the opportunity, Martina for being the best SM ever, and her family and boyfriend David for the perennial love, support, and sanity they provide.

Gerard Hale (Sound Designer) is a graduating BFA lighting design student. This is Gerard's second sound design and his last mainstage production. He is very grateful for all the opportunities he has been given and for all the lifelong friendships he has made. His previous sound design was *Damn Yankees*.

Martina Harte (Stage Manager) is a fourth year BA Theatre Major who has been involved in some stuff and remains that way. She would like to thank Charlie, Gaby, Sarah, Becca, the Senioritas, and the cast, parents, and crew of Wrathful Grapes for making this experience a memorable one.

Gabriela Barrios (Assistant Stage Manager / Props Mistress) is a sophomore studying theater, and has already been involved in a number of shows through the school and Florida Players, mostly in stage management. She appreciates the help and guidance that Charlie, Martina and the rest of the cast and crew gave her while she struggled to get everything done.

Tom Shed (Musician—Banjo, Singer) performs "history, humor and the human condition" throughout the U.S. Tom explores our awareness by looking at our lives, history and the natural world around us. Visit Tom, at www.tomshed.com, watch his music videos at YouTube +Tom Shed or on Facebook

Olga Godula (Musician—Violin) holds Master's Degrees in Musicology and Ethnomusicology and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology. As a violinist she has collaborated with orchestras, chamber groups, composers, and jazz musicians in Europe and the United States. She teaches violin at the Academy of Music and Art in Gainesville.

SPECIAL THANKS

Jason Weiss, Andy Howard, Ric Rose, Jovon Eberhart, Friends of Theatre and Dance, Sarah White

PRODUCTION TEAM

Fight Director	Jason Weiss
Assistant Stage Manager	Gabriela Barrios
Costume Advisor	Stacey Galloway
Costume Studio Manager	Lisa Davis
Asst. Costume Studio Manager	Kate Glennon
Costume Studio Assistants	Susan Bucciero, Lee Martin, Erica Bascom, & Jaime Samson
Sound & Lighting Advisor	Jeremy Sinicki
Sound Engineer	Gerard Hale III
Master Electrician	Todd Bedell
Light Shop Assistants	Ryan Bible, B. Lussier, Mike McShane, & Tim Reed
Technical Director	Zak Herring
Master Carpenter	Tony Berry
Scenic Studio Assistants	Jovon Eberhart, Molly Ilten, Anne Tully & Tim Watson
Properties	Gabriela Barrios
Dance Captains	Katie Lee & Cree Armstead
Director of Operations	Sarah White
Stage Crew	Katrina Asmar Taylor Rector David Collins Sarah Boynton Samantha Montero Ben Hawkins Rachel Harrison Caitlin Hunter
Light Board Operator	Chelsea Sorenson
Deck Electrician	Kayla Mason
Sound Operator	Angelica-Naia Gabor
Wardrobe Head	Emily Cabrera
Wardrobe Crew	Stephen Keenan, Elizabeth Posey, Marissa Toogood, Antonisha Williams, Logan Wolfe, Tayliz Rodriguez, Patrick Tran, Sacha Sorrell, Sarah Jackson, Sandra Garcia
Poster & Program Cover Design	Joseph Urick
House Management	Students of THE 4950

University of Florida

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Kevin Austin	Undergraduate Advisor
Tim Altmeyer	Performance
Dr. Rusti Brandman	Professor Emeritus
Yanci Bukovec	Performance
Mihai Ciupe	Scenic Design
Mohamed DaCosta	African Dance
Lisa Davis	Costume Technology
Kelly Drummond Cawthon	Dance
Meredith Farnum	Dance
Joan Frosch	Dance
Stacey Galloway	Costume Design
Tiza Garland	Movement/Stage Combat
Zak Herring	Technical Director
Pamela Kaye	Rendering
Kristen O'Neal	Dance
Stan Kaye	Lighting Design/Design Coordinator
Tony Mata	Musical Theatre
Kevin Marshall	Center for Arts and Public Policy
Dr. Charlie Mitchell	Performance
Dr. Mikell Pinkney	Theory/Performance Coordinator
Neta Pulvermacher	Dance
Dr. Ralf Remshardt	History/Dramaturgy
Isa Garcia-Rose	Dance
Ric Rose	Dance Coordinator
Kathy Sarra	Performance
Dr. David Shelton	Professor Emeritus
Jill Sonke	Dance
Dr. Albert F.C. Wehlburg	Professor Emeritus
Dr. Judith Williams	Performance
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Deirdre D. & H. Russell Fogler
Stephanie Infante
Dr. Steven Pliskow & Blanca Luaces

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Lucinda S. Lavelli & Kenneth D. Webster

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Paul F. Favini & John W. Reger
Ellen R. & Jim Gershow
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Mary A. McIntyre
Mrs. Sereta K. & David A. Russell
Peggy O. Waters
Evan J. & Arlene S. Yegelwel

Chorus
Priscilla P. & Billy R. Appleton
Karen T. Butts
Linda M. & Roger L. Blackburn
Riley M. & Peggy W. Blitch
Robert L. & Mrs. Dell Bowman
Starlina Bradbury & Mitchell Jim
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This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

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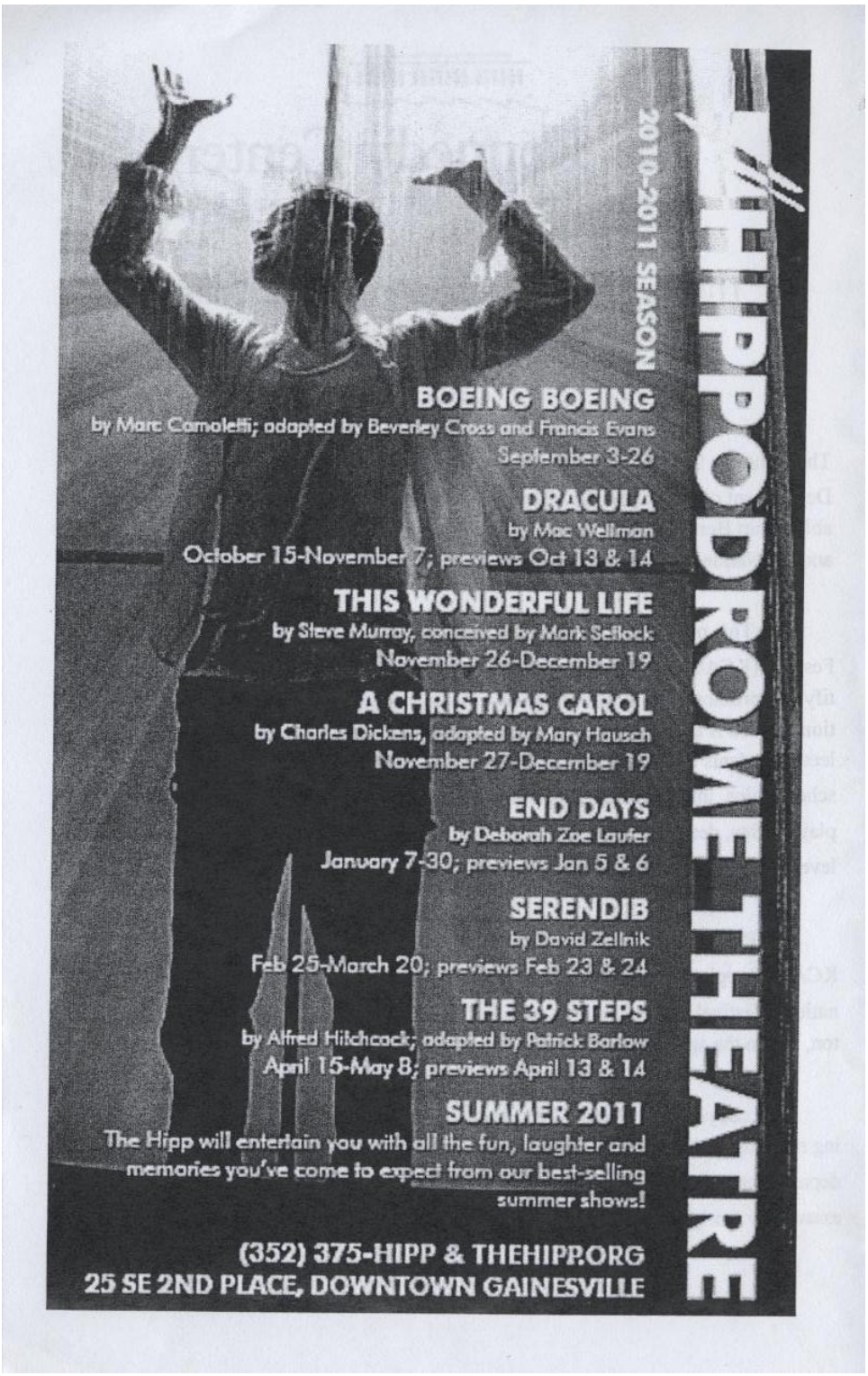
Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.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by Marc Camoletti; adapted by Beverley Cross and Francis Evans
September 3-26
DRACULA
by Mac Wellman
October 15-November 7; previews Oct 13 & 14
THIS WONDERFUL LIFE
by Steve Murray, conceived by Mark Setlock
November 26-December 19
A CHRISTMAS CAROL
by Charles Dickens, adapted by Mary Hausch
November 27-December 19
END DAYS
by Deborah Zoe Laufer
January 7-30; previews Jan 5 & 6
SERENDIB
by David Zellnik
Feb 25-March 20; previews Feb 23 & 24
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APPENDIX C

PRODUCTION PHOTOS

APPENDIX D

PRODUCTION REVIEW

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE OF THE GAINESVILLE SUN
SCENE
FEBRUARY 3, 2011
THEATER·ARTS·MOVIES·MUSIC·TV

THEATER REVIEW

MATT WALSH/CORRESPONDENT

"The Grapes of Wrath" features Angie Petty as Rose, left, and Alaina Manchester as Ma Joad at the University of Florida's Constans Theatre through Sunday.

'Grapes of Wrath' a moving, theatrical experience

By Dick Maxwell
Sun theater critic

The University of Florida production of "The Grapes of Wrath," an adaptation of John Steinbeck's novel that opened Friday at the Constans Theatre, is a big play with a cast of 38, many of whom speak in the dialect of the American Southwest.

The actors' voices are not amplified, which at times muffles their speeches but is consistent with the soft-spoken people they portray. Director Charles Mitchell's concept emphasizes the humanity that exists between the members of the Joad family toward themselves and others as they face the travails of their journey from Oklahoma to California.

The characters in "The Grapes of Wrath" are subjected to terrible hardships, and while the story speaks to the strength of these people to endure, this production does not create enough of a sense of the effect these hardships must have on their spirits.

Beginning in 1936, Steinbeck wrote a series of articles about migrant workers in California for the San Francisco News, and he traveled the state with Tom Collins, a man who was in charge of building camps for the workers as part of the New Deal. The material Steinbeck obtained from his research was used in both the news articles and the subsequent novel, which was published in 1939.

While Steinbeck's novel recounted the conditions of desperate agricultural workers who had descended in droves on the state, it did not tell the complete story. Conditions were far worse than

GRAPES *on Page 20*

'The Grapes of Wrath'

What: UF School of Theatre and Dance production of classic John Steinbeck story
When: 7:30 p.m. today through Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday
Where: Constans Theatre at the UF Nadine McGuire Pavilion, UF campus
Tickets: $17, $13 for UF students and staff
Info: 392-1653 or www.union.ufl.edu/ubo/

GRAPES: Cast members narrate novel passages

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those described in the book.

As Steinbeck's protagonists, the Joads were a family of "Okies" who typified the groups of people lured west from the dust bowl by promises of plentiful work harvesting fruit and vegetables for good wages. In the book, as in the play, which was adapted by Frank Galanti, things go from bad to worse when the Joads get to the Golden State as they learn that finding work is difficult, the landowners don't pay a living wage and deputies hired to keep order beat them and burn their camps.

A skilled production team enhances the theatrical experience: Costumes designed by Rebecca Wallace are appropriate in their simplicity. They are the type of clothes and in the condition one would expect for hard-working people of the soil. Lighting designed by Timothy Reed and sound designed by Gerard Hale III add sunsets, lightning and thunderstorms, gunshots and the desolation of the wind to the play.

The set is not minimal but avoids clutter. A barrier made of wooden slats that suggests the weatherworn buildings left behind transects the stage. A truck has been created to hold the family as they travel, and it provides a unique setting as they ride in the front seat with the lights shining toward the audience, creating a sense of close comfort for the occupants despite the loneliness of the country through which they are traveling.

The utility of the Constans stage comes into play through the use of trap doors that are lifted in various spots to emit lighting simulating campfires. An interesting effect is created by utilizing the orchestra pit to contain a body of water used by the cast for washing and in a dramatic storm sequence that also features rainfall.

The director has chosen to have live music provided onstage by Tom Shed (banjo) and Olga Godula (violin), and there is also a lively square dance sequence.

Mitchell has enhanced the story by having several members of the cast narrate short passages from the novel that were not included in the script. These additions provide color without disturbing the course of action in the play.

Particular mention should be made of performances by members of the Joad family: Tom, played by Adam Kroeger, is excellent as a male stalwart of the family; Ma, played by Alaina Manchester, is their pillar of strength; Grandpa is played by Kevin Marshall, whose performance is over the top but provides comic relief to what is basically a very serious play; Rose-of-Sharon is played by Angie Petty, whose portrayal of the tragic pregnant young woman is moving; Grandma Joad is played by Candice Clift as a long-suffering elderly woman who tries mightily to keep Grandpa under control and to get the family to pray.

A notable performance is also obtained from Jason Weiss as Jim Casy, who is relied upon to provide spiritual comfort to the family despite his status as a lapsed preacher.

The University of Florida's production of "The Grapes of Wrath" retains the spirit of the novel and succeeds in being an entertaining, if not overly moving, theatrical experience.

APPENDIX E

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

In addition to an MFA in Acting from the University of Florida, Candace Clift received her BA in English Literature from the University of California, Santa Barbara. She graduated Summa Cum Laude and was honored with membership in Phi Beta Kappa during her junior year. She has trained in classical acting in Shakespeare & Company's internationally-recognized Professional Actor Training Program.

Candace is an actor, director and education artist who has worked on both U.S. coasts. Her most recent professional work has been at The Hippodrome Theatre in Gainesville, Florida, where she played Gloria in *Boeing, Boeing,* Mina in *Dracula* and The Ghost of Christmas Past and Mrs. Cratchit in two separate productions of *A Christmas Carol*.

She has been a company member of Advice To The Players, a theatre company in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, since 2004. There she has played such roles as Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*, the Princess of France in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, Olivia in *Twelfth Night*, Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew* and Dromio of Syracuse in *The Comedy of Errors*. In 2007 she won the New Hampshire Theatre Award for best actress for her portrayal of Rosalind in *As You Like It*. She also developed and taught a children's performance-based Shakespeare camp for ages 7 – 11 and an advanced Shakespeare workshop for high school students.

Candace spent five years at Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Massachusetts, where she acted, directed and taught as a member of the Education Program. She directed five full-scale high school Shakespeare productions as part of the annual Fall Festival of Shakespeare and

conducted in-school residencies with elementary and middle school students. She also administered the Company's Teacher Professional Development programs – managing two month-long, NEH-funded teacher institutes.

Internationally, Candace co-directed a production of *Romeo and Juliet* in Vietnamese at the Ho Chi Minh City School of Theatre and Film in 2006. The production received national press attention in Vietnam as an experimental East / West collaboration.

Candace's University of Florida acting credits include Martha Washington in *George Washington's Boy*, Mrs. Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (both at UF and on tour in Europe), Chorus in *Oedipus*, Granma Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath* and Josephine in *The Madwoman of Chaillot.*