

THE VALUE OF CREATING CONNECTIONS:
PERFORMING THE ROLES OF
SISTER AND MADAM
IN THE PLAY
ROBERTO ZUCCO
BY BERNARD-MARIE KOLTÈS
TRANSLATED FROM FRENCH BY MARTIN CRIMP

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Words without thoughts never to heaven go.
William Shakespeare

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Abstract of Project in Lieu of Thesis Presented to
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Major: Acting

Roberto Zucco by Bernard-Marie Koltès was written in 1988 and translated into English by Martin Crimp. In my final performance at the University of Florida, I created the roles of Sister and Madam in *Roberto Zucco*, directed by Dr. Ralf Remshardt. This paper is a documentation of my creative process from casting through the final performance. In the first portion of my paper, I discuss my research about the play and the playwright. My research chapter is followed by a chapter outlining my rehearsal process and the many acting methods I worked with throughout that time. In the last part of my paper, I elaborate on how the obstacles and breakthroughs I encountered during this process manifested themselves during the performance run.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

After studying acting at the University of Florida for nearly three years, I have gleaned a new respect for the craft of acting. Over this time, I have come to appreciate the voice, the body, and the mind of the actor more than ever before. It was precisely this reverence that drove me to perform better than I ever had before in my final main stage role at UF. I set out to incorporate as much of my education as I could. I researched, experimented, and deepened my choices more than I ever had before. I set out to perform both of my roles in *Roberto Zucco* with a passion both unmatched by my peers and worthy of respect from my superiors. Instead, I became frustrated that none of my hard work was paying off. Disconnected from the play and the joy of acting, my parts as Madam and Sister quickly became the source of the majority of my director's notes. It was not until the final hours of the rehearsal process that I began to feel connected to the words I was saying on stage. Thanks to the vocal and Alexander Technique training I put into practice at this late stage, I found my voice as an actor again. This process reminded me that acting is not simply the sum of the tools an actor has at his disposal—acting is an art like any other and the artist's passion lies in telling the audience the story put down by the playwright. I rediscovered my passion for storytelling as I told the story of *Roberto Zucco* through my roles as Sister and Madam.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH

CRITICISM

Bernard-Marie Koltès may have been 40, but he was approaching the end of his life as he wrote *Roberto Zucco*. Inspired to write the play in 1988, he finished it just months before AIDS took his life April 15, 1989—one week after his 41st birthday. With the end of his life in sight, Koltès offered a spiritually challenging play to anyone willing to take it on. However, without the opportunity to hear his play before his death, Koltès may not have had the opportunity to fine-tune this demanding work.

Roberto Zucco is the only character in the play given a name. Koltès' choice to withhold names for characters proves a tricky obstacle for actors playing those parts. The namelessness of the remaining characters draws them as archetypes that, separately, help represent the many lenses Zucco is viewed through, and together, represent society as a whole. As my research has shown, because of little character development by Koltès, actors who are unable to grasp their purpose in the story have struggled to connect to Koltès' lines, resorting instead to over-blown caricatures that left critics unaffected and confused.

Though the supporting roles often bear heavy loads of poetic language, rich with thematic elements, actors in these roles often give underdeveloped deliveries. Productions of *Roberto Zucco* all over the world (having been produced in at least 18 countries) fall short when it comes to these nameless roles, calling both actors and directors into question. In reviews of a 1997 London production, critics found fault with the writing of the characters as it pertained to the actors' interpretations of those characters:

Without psychological profiles, these characters [are] accessible to lots of different interpretations, and extremely difficult to play. (Christopher)

The violent domestic scenes are undercut with caricature-like acting. There is no real edge, no disturbing nastiness... which is how this play must work. (Naughty 48)

Similarly, a 1999 production in Adelaide, Australia was criticized for its over-the-top, amateurish acting:

Many of the actors present their roles with what can often be described as staccato aggression, selecting a manic emotional pitch even where the text would bear a more modulated delivery. (Ward 11)

The flaw lies in some of the performances, which range from excellence to the worst sort of declamatory posturing. (Tracy)

The Brink Company shows its youth...many of the actors working so hard at enunciation that they lose the nuance of the lines. *Roberto Zucco* is an expressionistic play which contains the sort of complex and sometimes abstract dialogue which screams for the calm ease of the seasoned professional. Tim Maddock allowed [his] actors to indulge in emphatics. (Harris)

Reviews of a 2004 production of *Roberto Zucco* in Glasgow also criticize the actors' interpretations:

Loftier aspirations and brooding menace are undermined by an over-reliance on one-dimensional cartoon archetypes and slapstick buffoonery that seem to work against the text. (Cooper 15)

Frustratingly, no performer seems to share a common performance style. (Roberto 12)

THE PLAYWRIGHT AND THE PLAY

Attending Catholic school with his two brothers (in an Arab ghetto of Metz, France), Koltès' was raised by his mother while his father spent most of the 1950s in Algeria as a soldier. The playwright studied journalism at Strasbourg and had plans to become a professional organist. Film always interested Koltès and his tastes were for things accessible and popular. Perhaps for this same reason, he found most theatre "unbearable":

I have always rather detested theatre because theatre is the opposite of life; but I always come back to it and I love it because it is the one place where you say: this is not life. (Bradby xv)

Despite his conflicting feelings, Koltès made his living writing for the theatre and became regarded as one of the strongest dramatic voices of the 1980s. Claiming little interest in dramatic theory and avoiding politics, Koltès valued the craft of writing over ideology in his plays. Unsentimental about human behavior, deals and transactions interested Koltès more than relationships:

I have never liked love stories. They tell you so little. I don't believe in the love relationship... If you want to tell a story with

any subtlety you have to take a different route. For me the ‘deal’ is a sublime means. (Bradby xvi)

Although his plays focus on family violence, betrayals, mutilations, oppression, and murder, Koltès wished his plays to be performed for their comic effect. In an explanation of how to approach the lines, Koltès encouraged actors to read light and fast, “the way a child might recite lessons while suffering from an urgent need to pee” (Bradby xvi).

After translating *A Winter’s Tale* in 1987, Koltès credited Shakespeare with teaching him a greater freedom in the dramatic form. His plays from 1988 do show a change in writing style—*Roberto Zucco* is often noted for being his most dialogue-driven work:

If *Roberto Zucco* seems quite different from most of Koltès’ earlier plays, it is also because of a new note of intimacy in the interpersonal relationships it depicts. Without sacrificing his emphasis on the deal and on the commercial trade-offs that dominate so much of our lives, the author seems to have overcome some of the distaste he had previously felt for the depiction of a relationship of love or affection. This is particularly clear in the monologue of the sister, Scene 13, ‘Ophelia.’ (Bradby xli)

The play opens with a scene between two guards on lookout who wonder if they are seeing an apparition and contains a scene entitled ‘*Ophelia*,’ about a woman drowning in a state of hysteria—both references to Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. Oddly, however, Koltès *omitted* the line ‘To be or not to be...that is the question’ from a voice recording of the actual Roberto Succo (from whom he took lines that he put into *Roberto Zucco*):

‘To be or not to be...that is the question. I believe that...there are no words, there is nothing to say [...] So one year, a hundred years, it’s all the same...sooner or later we all have to die. All of us. And that...that’s what makes the birds sing, the birds. That what makes the bees sing. That’s what makes the birds laugh.’ (Froment 58)

Koltès also refers frequently to Africa in his plays, *Roberto Zucco* being no exception. Though he lived in Paris for much of his life, Koltès traveled often and for long periods of time,

and was particularly fond of New York and Africa, where he discovered his love for such black musicians as Billie Holiday, Otis Redding, and Bob Marley:

He never felt the need to identify with a particular community, valuing the freedom to travel above everything. He wrote that he lacked all feeling for 'home' but experienced something of the comfort and security normally associated with home when he listened to Bob Marley. One of his favourite Marley songs, 'Running Away', sums up the restlessness and desire for escape that were a central part of Koltès' spiritual make-up. In the last year of his life his freedom of movement was severely curtailed by his physical condition. He compensated for this by writing *Roberto Zucco*. (Bradby xxv)

Inspiration to write *Roberto Zucco* came to Koltès in early 1988 through a wanted poster for the Italian serial killer, Roberto Succo. Succo had murdered his own mother and father and recently escaped from prison. The poster showed four photos of Succo and to Koltès, each one looked like a completely different person. Though the play's main character is a killer at large, Koltès' play does not bother explaining the murders or center around a police investigation. He didn't write a psychological or detective thriller, but instead *Roberto Zucco* was constructed to show a different Zucco in every scene, depending on who was viewing him—the way Succo's photos appeared like four different people. Raping a young girl, killing his mother and father, a policeman and a child, Zucco is seen as a symbol for the destruction of innocence, origins, law, and the future. Koltès does not attempt to help the audience understand Zucco in any Freudian way, however, even poking fun at Freud with a passage about penises in the opening scene. Instead, Koltès' focus is on Zucco's desire to become nameless or invisible.

While writing, Koltès met with Pascale Froment, author of a book about the killer, to discuss Succo:

Koltès had completely absorbed his character. What was uncanny was that he had arrived at an extraordinary intuitive understanding of Succo, and had drawn psychological conclusions which were

pretty close to the truth. As for the darkness of Succo... Fundamentally it didn't really matter to him that he was a killer. He was fascinated to the point of identification. (57)

Koltès believed Succo was not that different from himself or anyone else. Coming from this uncommon point of view, Koltès was prepared for people to read his play as a celebration of a serial killer. David Bradby, in his introduction to a collection of Koltès' plays, noted the playwright's position on his portrayal of a serial killer,

Koltès goes to great pains to avoid judging Zucco's behavior. Believing anyone capable of killing, 'There are times when I, too, almost feel like killing... When I am told that I have sung the praises of a murderer, which is what they will say... I shall say that he is an exemplary killer, in the sense that I think he is like everyone.' (xxxviii)

The play's final scene was inspired by Succo's second escape from behind bars, which was broadcast on the news. Succo had climbed to the roof of the mental ward that had held him prisoner and Koltès was struck by the theatricality of the scene. News reporters questioned and photographed him stripped of his uniform. Succo threw roof tiles at them, hung from wires, and finally fell to the ground, only to be re-institutionalized before killing himself. Under interrogation, Succo gave fake names, identifying himself before committing suicide by saying 'I killer.'

Fascinated by the way the media portrayed Succo, Koltès saw the way an audience creates a relationship to what it sees. In scene 10, a woman is held at gunpoint by Zucco in a park as visitors look on. Similar to the news teams reporting Succo's rooftop antics, "Each bystander has a different explanation of what is going on... they simply tell us about their own mentalities [through] superficial explanations of criminal conduct" (Bradby xxxix). As the park visitors argue over what is happening in Zucco's mind, Koltès works with the idea that certain

situations cannot be explained through our own limited vocabularies, especially when trying to express someone else's inner experience; ideas central to Artaud's theory, known as Theatre of Cruelty:

[Artaud] was convinced that the chaotic contents of the unconscious could not be represented by the conventional literary theatre with its emphasis on the logical structure of human language. If it was to fulfill its task of confronting modern man with his spiritual crisis, the theatre had to present the inner reality of dreams, hallucinatory and visions of fear instead of occupying itself with the imitation of the world of outward appearances. (Ahrends)

In the final scene of the play, Koltès creates a dialogue between Zucco and a string of voices. Also inspired by the media's coverage of Succo, the voices barrage Zucco with questions and accusations as he climbs higher and higher towards the sun. Like much of the play, this scene has mythological undertones—here, the story of Icarus. Just before falling to his death, Zucco begins reciting descriptions of the sun taken from the Mithras Liturgy. The following story from Carl Jung (about his own encounters with these descriptions) appears in the Endnotes of *Roberto Zucco*, and might explain what Koltès was driving at:

We had a schizophrenic, and he was in the ward twenty or so years. He took me by the lapel of my coat, and led me to the window, and said: 'Doctor! Now! Now you will see. Now look at it. Look up at the sun and see how it moves. See, you must move your head, too, like this, and then you will see the phallus of the sun, and you know, that's the origin of the wind. And you see how the sun moves as you move your head, from one side to the other!' I thought oh, he's just crazy... Four years later [I] came across a paper written by the German historian, Dietrich, who had dealt with the so-called Mithras Liturgy, a part of the Great Parisian Magic Papyrus. It had said there: 'After the second prayer you will see how the disc of the sun unfolds, and you will see hanging down from it a tube, the origin of the wind, and when you move your face to the regions of the east it will move there, and if you move your face to the regions of the west it will follow you.' And instantly I knew—this is the vision of my patient! It was only

published four years later, after I had observed it with my patient.
(Freeman 61)

Jung observed and Koltès illustrated man's struggle to *suspend judgment* of anyone society has already labeled. Koltès wrote *Zucco* as an anti-hero yearning for invisibility, freedom, and namelessness. He identified with *Succo*, bridging a gap he saw others create—between good and evil. Koltès understood labels can limit us. *Zucco* becomes trapped in a labyrinth as those around him try to pin him down. Koltès and Artaud understood that words can limit us and, like Jung, knew there was more to the human experience hidden in what we cannot see or name. Koltès felt a connection between himself and a serial killer and Jung witnessed a connection between a schizophrenic and magic scrolls. Koltès wrote *Roberto Zucco* about a man running from the world that was always labeling him, a man who wanted to forget his own name and become invisible.

By the end of my research process, I felt connected to the play and the playwright in ways I had not felt on first reading *Roberto Zucco*. Martin Crimp, whose translation of *Roberto Zucco* to English is described as deft, iconic, and wonderful said of translating Koltès, “You need to find some personal contact with the writer's voice, I think, before you can re-create it because you need to share the energy of the original writer of the text” (Litson).

With a feel for the play's seed, I was able to let go of the names of my characters and trust that the language would lead me to insights that labels might keep me from. This research did not happen early on, however, but came about as a response to my rehearsal process—most of which I spent feeling like an ill-suited actor for both of my roles as Sister and Madam.

CHAPTER 3

THE REHEARSAL PROCESS

CASTING THROUGH FIRST REHEARSAL

From the very moment I heard the term “thesis role” during my first year at UF, I began to envision my final performance and the paper that would examine it. I imagined all the knowledge I would gain as a Master of Fine Arts Candidate concentrated, and reflected through, this grand opportunity. When the cast list for *Roberto Zucco* finally went up in my third year, I found myself cast, not only in one, but *two* “thesis roles.” It was certainly beyond what I was expecting, but it was also beyond what I could have hoped for: I looked forward to demonstrating versatility that would assure the faculty of my readiness for professional work and my master’s degree. After two years of studying, two summers of teaching, and nine plays in which I practiced my acting since coming to UF, I felt prepared to showcase my capability.

Were I not asked for a paper outlining my process, I would have approached my roles differently. The label “thesis role” cast a shadow of doubt over my everyday approach to performing, and I chalked up my methods as unsubstantial. In our Creative Process class, I had struggled to eloquently express my approach to performance in a paper. My own process seemed a mystery, even to me. With a 20-page paper down the line, I chose to focus on methods I could easily articulate and unfailingly reference in my paper. I was eager to apply all the acting tools I gleaned from graduate school and keep a record of the process. By keeping documentation, I imagined working more efficiently toward the director’s vision. I often felt dissatisfied with past performances, and I imagined this approach would help me to identify imperfections and address them expeditiously.

The first few rehearsals were filled with presentations and exercises to acquaint us with the style in which we would present *Roberto Zucco*. The set would change shape, the lighting would be reminiscent of a film noir, and we would perform in a Brechtian style—alienating our audience through use of out-of-place music, addressing the transitions as part of the play, and incorporating *gestus* (a pose momentarily held by actors in a performance to highlight a social condition or character flaw.) In the first week, we explored Anne Bogart’s Viewpoints, did exercises from Peter Brook, and talked about Berthold Brecht’s views on theatre. I was more than ready for us to get on our feet when, the night before we did so, my partner of a year and I ended our relationship. As ready as I was to get started, I brought a fog with me into the rehearsal room. It took about a week before my head cleared, but it took the entire process for me to recover from starting off on the wrong foot.

FIRST WEEKS

I began my work immediately after receiving the cast list via email, with a message from the director telling me, “I especially like the idea of going from prude to bawd and back.” Never having played two parts in one show, I focused on differentiating my two characters. I started by listing the differences between Sister and Madam. Madam I pictured as loose, fluid, smooth, humorous, fearless, easy, open, grounded, curvy, street smart, abandoned, free, and smooth talking. Sister, on the other hand, I saw as a tight, wringing, chaste, frightened, uneasy, thin, closed-off, bottled-up, and off-balance home-body without the vocabulary for what she wants to say. Drawing from my first acting class at UF, I elaborated into descriptions of each character’s appearance, age, voice, and way of moving—all supported by each one’s life story and point of view.

In the first weeks of rehearsal, I worked on incorporating as many of these choices as possible—adjusting my way of walking or the sound of my voice until I felt it matched the characterization I constructed in my imagination. This led me to frustration when, here and there, night after night, the choices I made seemed to conflict with my lines. I would be in the middle of a monologue when all of a sudden I was thrown off my course by how unnatural I felt saying a certain line in the particular way of speaking I had pre-determined in my characterization.

By writing about my characters before saying the lines in rehearsal, I was making choices that did not consider what is learned from saying the words out loud. I was simply pushing my own ideas into the play, whether they supported the text or not. It was not long before I caught myself falling into the trap of an ego-driven actor who values her own ideas over the ideas already found in the play. I can recall the exact rehearsal when it occurred to me. After a week of my director telling me to make my characters more distinct, I was stuck on figuring out what animals were most related to Sister and to Madam, in order to distinguish them from each other further. As I moved around the room alternating between moving like a prairie dog and moving like an octopus, it hit me like a ton of bricks: “I’m no longer focused on the play but instead I’m focused on how to stand out in it. I’m turning into the kind of actor that I hate.” Focusing on so many external elements was not helping me tell Koltès’ story at all.

As I received the same notes night after night, my confidence began to fade. Little can be accomplished by an actor on stage without confidence—he spends his time confusing the audience by making choices he cannot fully commit to. I abandoned my characterizations of Sister and Madam after that day, stopped worrying about how to make my two parts look and sound different, and turned my attention back to the text with fresh eyes. In the next few weeks,

I focused my energy on *what* my characters were doing as opposed to what they looked like doing it.

ONE MONTH IN

With careful attention, I covered my script in objectives, tactics, beat shifts and obstacles. Unfortunately, around this same time, we stopped exploring scene work in rehearsal and began blocking the show. On my script, I had marked exactly what I was going to do and at what point I was going to do it, but the day I brought my marked up script to rehearsal, we focused instead on precisely where we were to move and at what point we would move there. I struggled to marry these conflicting processes.

Furthermore, the director incorporated movements he hoped would appear slightly strange to the audience, as one element of his Brechtian approach to the play. For example, while giving a heart-felt talk, I was directed to walk away from my scene partner and handle an awkward prop. In another case, while trying to keep my sister from running away and avoid being noticed by my father, I was directed to pick up a chair and use it to emulate a bull fighter and his red cape, rounding my sister up as my father looked around for beer in the same room. In yet another instance, while listening to a story, I was directed to stand facing away from the people talking to me. Although I was excited to perform in this style, I frustrated myself trying to bring honesty to my lines *and* remember the director's off-kilter blocking. I became overwhelmed with the feeling that I was falling far behind. Due to have our lines memorized soon, I felt an urgency to memorize my lines, my choices, and my blocking all at once. As I continued to get notes about making my characters more contrasting, I felt myself drowning in inadequacy. Memorization was all I could do to keep myself on track for a performance worthy

of its “thesis role” distinction. I went home, got off-book, and came in the following day with my lines memorized. Rather than memorize the lines by memorizing the thoughts that drove them, which takes much more time and careful thought, I concerned myself with getting rid of my script and memorizing my lines as fast as possible. I wanted to show my director and cast mates that I was trying to do a good job despite making little progress in the rehearsal room. Unfortunately, this rushed memorization method would only create another obstacle in my process: by memorizing the words, without memorizing what I was doing with the words, I ended up working twice as hard for the rest of the process, constantly working to override my memorization in order to provide a more thoughtful and deliberate delivery of the lines.

I gave up my detailed script markings when I gave up my script, so I moved on to an approach I learned in my contemporary acting class. Through this approach, I could analyze large sections of the script for action as opposed to marking objectives, tactics, beats and obstacles line-by-line. In this process, the actor deduces the literal action taking place in a given section, reduces that to its essential action, and connects that essential action to a personalized as-if. The actor then performs that essential action as an as-if scenario. As-ifs are something I’ve worked with many times. It helps me connect to the character’s point of view. Through as-ifs, I am able to draw on personal relationships, life experience, and my active imagination to give the character’s words truth and depth. As I reduced my scenes to essential actions and scoured my imagination for as-ifs that would connect me to those actions, I began to feel a sense of ownership of my roles. Unfortunately, I was not able to get very far with my truthful offerings, and for the first time in the process, I did not have myself to blame. I had come up against yet another wall in the labyrinth of *Roberto Zucco*, and this time it was my scene partner.

TWO MONTHS IN

My characters had scenes with a character called Girl for the vast majority of my stage time. The actor who played Girl delivered a performance that I believed was unsupported by the script, perhaps using the name Girl as justification for turning her role into a caricature of a young girl. In the story of the play, Girl is repeatedly referred to as types of birds by both Sister and Madam—flighted birds by her sister who does everything to keep her “caged,” and flightless birds by Madam after running away to Little Chicago, where she becomes a prostitute in Madam’s brothel. In contrast to these names, the character never spreads her wings. However, the actress playing Girl shouted the majority of her lines to Sister with great angst; defiantly insisting that she wanted to run off to Little Chicago, only to arrive there and adopt a baby voice in scenes with Madam. As a result, the bird references offered little more than irony as she spent the majority of her stage time in tears, crying before her first line in the play and continuing to cry after her last line. After finally finding Zucco, Girl tells him that, in the course of looking for him, “I’ve cried and cried so much I’ve turned into a tiny island in the middle of a sea of tears, and now the last waves are drowning me” (Koltès 49). However, Koltès says the following concerning acting out his words:

Never try and work out a character’s psychology from what he/she says, but on the contrary, make the character speak his/her lines as a function of what you deduce them to be from their actions. Love, passion, tenderness—or whatever—should be left to go their own sweet way. To give them too much attention always means diminishing them and making them look ridiculous. (“Koltès” 59)

Unable to spend any energy listening to me, my scene partner exhausted herself yelling, talking in a baby-voice, or crying through most of her lines. She kept the play at such a distance from reality that she did not even pull on a bag we fought over on stage. Instead, she would

position her body in a way to make it appear as if she were pulling on the bag, forcing me to either play along or heave her across the stage. A similar problem resulted in other scenes and I could either go along with her over-acted choices by listening and responding to her or I could go my own way in the scene and bring truth through my lines. I could barely contain my frustration over her glassy-eyed interpretation of Koltès' words, but unable to give a fellow actor notes, I could only hope the director would say something. As time went on and the director did not give her adjustments, I took it upon myself to bring her into the scene with me: I tried matching her levels, and we got the note to "give ourselves somewhere to go." I made the adjustment the next time, and she remained about the same. I tried undercutting her, but her preoccupation with crying and yelling kept her from responding to any new stimuli. I requested that we run lines back stage while holding hands, looking her in the eyes with love and forgiveness, but nothing seemed to penetrate the wall I was hitting with her. My concern with my scene partner took my energy and my patience every night at rehearsal. In the process of suppressing a scream of frustration those four hours every night, I was forgetting lines, blocking, and I failed to find any enjoyment in being on stage. I was nothing short of miserable, and my pages of notes from the director observed exactly that. I watched as my cast mates got one or two notes each night while I seemed to have a note session completely dedicated to me. I had no problem understanding why the director wanted to see something different from me, but putting these notes into action was an ongoing struggle.

FINAL WEEKS

As I approached the final weeks I had failed to apply the tools from my education effectively. I had also failed to take my director's notes (too busy with mentally criticizing my

scene partner), and I was sure I would fail to grasp Koltès' play enough to take ownership of my lines. I thought, "What happened to the actress in me? Has graduate school removed all the joy from the thing I loved the most? Have I grown too tired to care about pleasing a director? Do I even care about storytelling?" I was disenchanted with acting and discouraged about my future.

Describing the aesthetic for the set, lighting, and costumes on the first day of rehearsal, Molly Ilten eerily forecast my experience rehearsing *Roberto Zucco*, "It will have a maze-like feel... *Zucco* is *just* out of reach... Walking into the dark will be intentional." In execution, keeping constant documentation was over-complicated and uninspiring. I got caught up in the academic side of the thesis project, stunting myself to levels of frustration I had never felt during plays I performed in before *Roberto Zucco*. I was rehearsing my roles without finding the fun, mystery or risk. In the process of worrying about so many outside factors, I forgot that everything I need as an actor comes from simply saying the words. The simplicity of using the text as a guide (and nothing else) is not only how I had approached all of my performances up to this point, but it also went against the over-complicated approaches to acting often taught in school. Everything I was doing for my roles as Sister and Madam, I was doing to prove myself worthy of approval by a committee of my teachers.

I can recall leaving rehearsal with another laundry-list of notes, walking to the nearest picnic bench, and crying until I couldn't any more. It wasn't until the final week of the nearly three month rehearsal process that I let myself cry. I cried because I knew I had to give up the need to deliver a pitch-perfect "thesis role" performance. I had to let go of everything I thought I "should" do if I wanted to do anything worthwhile. Only then did I start to act from my heart rather than my mind, and only then did Koltès' words reveal their colossal power to me.

In the final days before opening, I deepened my research of Koltès and *Roberto Zucco*. In my research I learned that Koltès was interested in deeper levels of human thought than those that can be easily expressed, and I learned that doing too much was the trap of this play (see Chapter 2.) With these understandings, I felt strong in choosing to venture out of rehearsal to saying the words plainly. I hoped they might guide me to a truer interpretation than the one I had created through my sampling of acting approaches. I turned to the use of the Alexander Technique and my vocal training, and met with mentors outside of rehearsal.

The use of these tools focuses the actor on allowing the lines to come out whatever way they want to, and asks the actor to do little else. The freedom of these techniques liberates the actor from the obligation to “act” the lines out. As a result, rather than the actor controlling the words, the words control the actor. I had two experiences in particular where the simple recitation of my lines connected me to Koltès’ ideas. In the first case, I brought in a monologue to my Alexander Technique teacher and explained to her the issues I was having with it. Part of the problem, I told her, was that just before this monologue I had a quick costume change, and was surrounded by costumers spraying me with water and pulling at my clothes. I was supposed to already be in a state of hysteria by the time I entered, and my director wanted me to perform an invocation by the end. I told her that the costume situation was a huge distraction and I never felt able to start the monologue with enough strength. If I wasn’t crying by the time I sat on the bench, I explained, I wouldn’t cry for the rest of the piece. If I didn’t cry, I couldn’t get to the intensity necessary for an invocation. After expressing these thoughts to my Alexander Technique teacher, she reminded me that my beliefs were limiting me. She asked me to let go of everything I thought about the monologue and my ability to do what my director wanted and only then should I begin speaking the words. After a few moments, taking her direction, I began

my monologue. Through the course of speaking the words, what Koltès had written passed through me like an epiphany. I began sobbing and saying the words with an unfamiliar passion and strength of conviction. The monologue revealed itself to me in such a divine way that I couldn't speak for a few moments afterward. I held on to my mentor's words after that day, and I reminded myself every night (as I was being dressed and sprayed with water by costumers) to let go of any beliefs that might limit me and go on stage open to divine intervention. Of course, this was easier said than done.

I also met with my voice teacher to help bring my attention back to the words. My breakthrough in this case was also about letting go of habits that had been limiting my performance. I had been playing my opening monologue in a hoarse whisper because the text stated that I didn't want to wake my parents, who were in the next room. My voice teacher reminded me that the play is an *illusion*, and as such, I could be as loud as I needed to be without losing the audience—they would buy into the reality regardless. If I lost the whisper, the audience would simply imagine that the parents I didn't want to wake were in a room upstairs, or farther away. Trapping my voice in a whisper was inadvertently trapping the voice of the playwright. As I released my full voice, the full meaning behind the words came with it. Much like my exploration using the Alexander Technique, my exploration with my voice came out of relaxing into the words. Finding my voice in this first monologue changed my approach to the rest of the scene and the play.

In another section of the play where I was struggling, my voice teacher encouraged me to focus my vocal energy on the verbs in my lines. In this exploration, the verbs painted a very clear picture of how the character's mind is working by taking my mind to the same place. The verbs evoked a feeling in me that fueled the monologue seamlessly. I found that, in an

expressionistic play like *Roberto Zucco*, simply attending to the words themselves gave me what three years of marking objectives and tactics could not. I did not need to create a long back story, I did not need to decide exactly how my characters moved or sounded in every moment—I needed to relish the words and the way they drove my acting instrument.

One of the most difficult tasks for an actor is to go on stage, do what is necessary, and nothing more. In rehearsal, I had been doing much more than I needed and I had missed out on many subtleties of both Sister and Madam as a result. After finding these levels through voice and Alexander Technique work, I made it my goal to bring my breakthroughs into my scene work. I had to fight habits I had engrained over months of rehearsals and we were already in technical run-throughs by this point. With my hopes high, I set forth releasing my voice and attending to the words as often as possible. I fell into old habits often, but I noticed a change in my voice as both characters.

Before meeting with my voice teacher one-on-one, I was putting on voices to differentiate my characters. During my character research, I chose a voice I heard in the film *Working Girls* for Madam, and I meshed my mother's voice with a voice from the TV show *United States of Tara* for Sister. Now that I was simply saying the words, I noticed my voice adopting qualities of the voices I chose early on—this time organically. All of my work to choose ways of talking, ways of walking, objectives, obstacles, tactics, back stories, and so on felt like foolishness as I saw the words make my choices for me. Trusting the language was my problem from the beginning: I was afraid I would not be able to write 20 pages about trusting the words to do the actor's work, so I chose another way. I paid the price in frustration, tears, and the formulation of bad habits. Despite many obstacles, I can say there were a few nights during the run of the show that I got to feel my last-minute adjustments pay off.

CHAPTER 4

THE PRODUCTION

OBSTACLES

Playing two parts in this production proved more difficult than I had anticipated. I had five costume changes, two of which were quick changes, and one of those was less than 30 seconds. Without a full dress rehearsal until the night before opening, these changes were in large part a mystery to me and the costume crew. By a few nights in, the changes ran smoothly, but they still interrupted my focus as the costumers would try to engage me in conversation or would talk with another in front of me. In some cases, I had to go on stage with tears in my eyes immediately after these conversations. To combat these distractions, I would listen to music and get away from them as soon as I was changed. Some nights, however, I had no choice but to listen. Those nights, as I walked on stage I did a mental “letting go” of whatever I just heard (similar to the way I let go of limiting beliefs while doing my Alexander Technique work) and reinvested myself in the story we were telling on stage.

Another difficulty I encountered during the run of the show was my scene partner. No matter how I said my lines or what I did with myself as I said them, my scene partner heard them the same way every night. She delivered her lines with the same readings every night, and would cry at times that seemed to make no sense in the context of the scene and the play. She played her part the same way every night, emphasizing the same syllables and shedding tears at the same moments. I could not help but feel irritated. A good actor takes into account what he is being given by his scene partner. For fear of being hypocritical, I made sure to take into account what I was being given by her. Often, taking her choices into account contradicted my own

lines, but if I ignored it, it would look like we were in two different plays (something every actor wants to avoid.) Listening to my scene partner often re-directed my lines, and my breakthroughs from outside of rehearsal went out the window. For example, in my opening monologue as Sister, I barrage Girl with questions that she never answers. For three pages, she does not speak. The actress playing Girl, however, chose to start speaking several times throughout the piece, forcing me to cut her off. If my objective is to get her to speak, it makes no sense for me to cut her off if she is starting to tell me something. On the nights when I would not talk over her (in an attempt to hear her out—in line with my objective) my director would tell me to speed up my lines. He didn't want me to stop when she started to speak because she didn't actually have lines to say. When a representative for the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival came to see the show, he noticed that my scene partner was uncomfortable doing very little on stage. He pointed out to her that, in the scene I described above, "Not speaking is still a choice."

I struggled with bringing an open mind to the stage each night because of my scene partner, but on a few occasions I did feel a connection to her. These connections were in the rare moments that I was able to stop judging her acting, and realize that I was standing in my own way. When I let my thoughts wander to what my scene partner is doing rather than what I am doing, I am not giving enough attention to my own actions. These moments of connection were a highlight in the show's run, and luckily they were not the only ones.

HIGHLIGHTS

As I gave over to the imagery and verbs used by Koltès in my lines as Sister and Madam, my points of view as these characters strengthened. On closing night, I didn't feel finished with discovering the layers, but I had certainly connected to Sister and Madam personally. One night

while I was giving Madam's monologue about making fake breasts out of cardboard, I suddenly felt a connection to her desire to be desirable to the opposite sex. I suddenly felt as if I was telling my own story, and Madam's vulnerability came rushing through me. By the end of the monologue, she had covered it all back up again but I caught a glimpse of it and it made Madam a much deeper character than I had created up to that point.

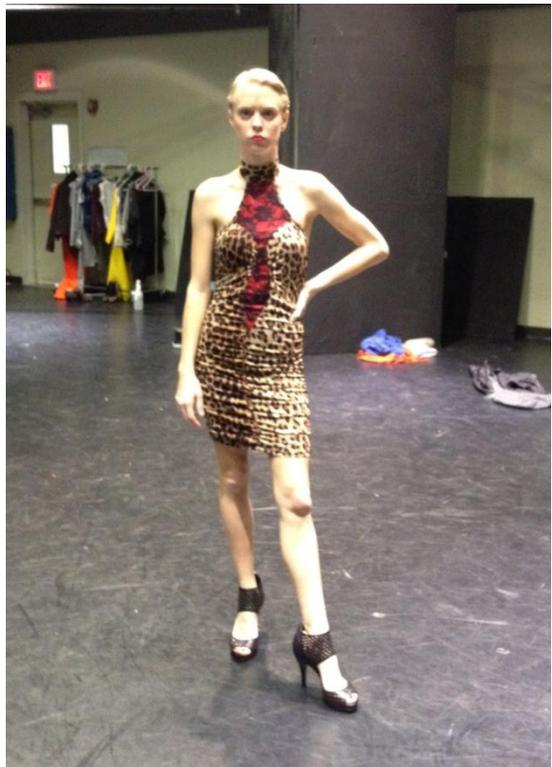
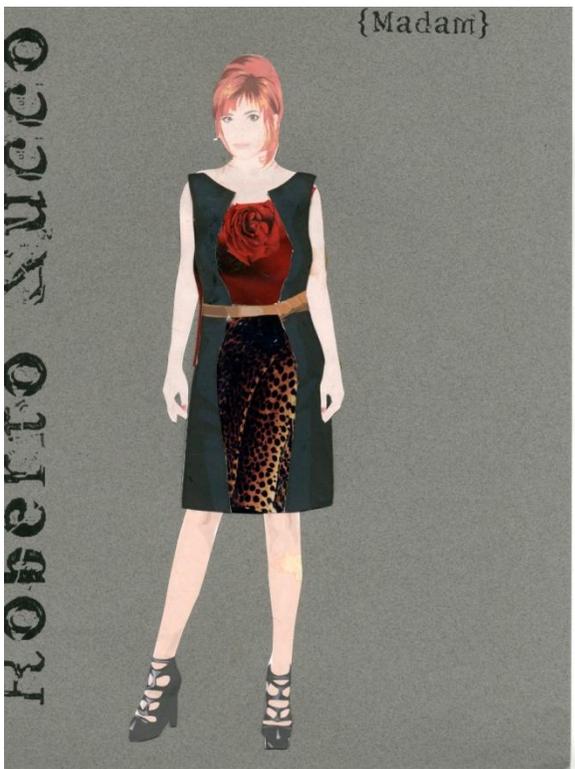
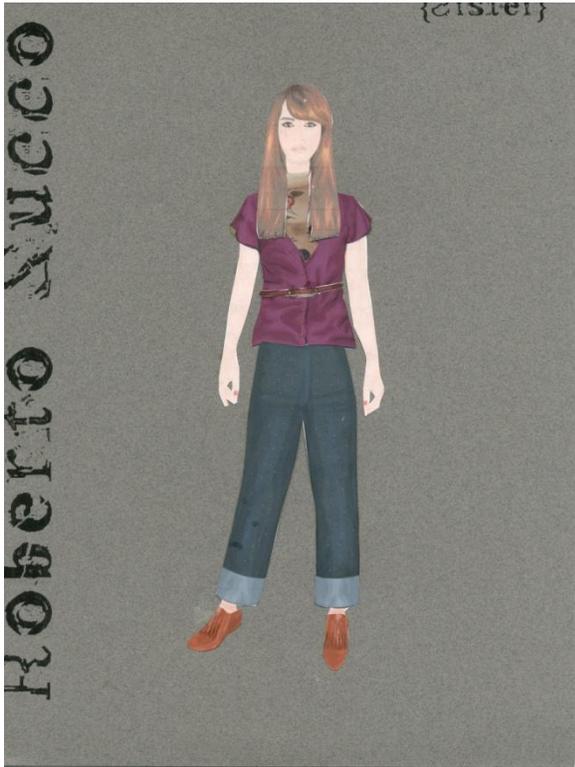
Another instance in which I felt as if my own words were coming out of me instead of from a character was in Scene 13, when Sister talks about how men are disgusting. One night out of nowhere, as I was saying the words, I remembered that a cheerleader from my squad in high school was murdered and buried while still breathing by her boyfriend. I hadn't recalled that for years and years, but suddenly my own life's experiences were leading me to my character's points of view. These moments were few and far between, but they always happened when I was able to stop trying to do something to the words and, instead, simply said the words with the intention of letting go.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Looking back on the process, I see how unrestrictive it was from the start. Our director offered up ideas that came to him in his dreams, pointed us towards films whose characters could shed light on our own, and encouraged us to expand our thinking, “Put yourself into the mentality of a French actor,” was a particularly memorable phrase. It occurred to me toward the end that my director probably knew from the start that the play does not work when approached at a cerebral level, hence his approach. So, while I was busy offering up answers, I missed out on the fact that neither my teachers, Koltès, nor my director was ever asking for them. The only person who was concerned with getting it “right” was me. I led myself in circles as I tried to turn my acting into an academic process. Acting is not an academic process to me—it is a spiritual one. Through giving oneself to the words of the playwright, an actor gives up his ego. He takes full ownership over the playwright’s point of view, and sacrifices his own. Acting in *Roberto Zucco* as Madam and Sister reminded me that every choice I make as an actor must come from the words. If the choices I make don’t have their basis in the text, I have severed my connection to the script somewhere, and its subtleties may not reveal themselves to me. If I value the way I want to say the words over how the words want to be said, I value my voice over the writer’s. Although the actor has an important job, it is not to write the play: it is to understand the words that have already been written to the point that they come out of him as though they were his own. This process reminded me of my job as an actor. I am grateful that I had the opportunity and tools to rediscover the calling behind this craft.

APPENDIX A – COSTUME RENDERINGS



APPENDIX B – PRODUCTION PROGRAM

ROBERTO ZUCCO

WRITTEN BY BERNARD-MARIE KOLTÈS
TRANSLATED BY MARTIN CRIMP
DIRECTED BY RALF REMSHARDT

Lighting Design

Bryan Lussier*

Scenic Design

Molly Ilten*

Projection Design

Brittany Powell

Prop/Puppet Design

Caitlin Callahan

Stage Manager

Lexi Dufries^

Costume Design

Becki Stafford

Sound Design

Ryan Bible

Digital Content Design

Tim Difato

Fight Choreography

Tiza Garland

Asst. Stage Manager

David Duclos

Special Thanks

Pat Pagano (Digital Projection Design Mentor), Digital Worlds Institute, Kathy Sarra, Caron Cadle

THERE WILL BE NO INTERMISSION

Produced by Special Arrangement with Methuen Drama

THIS SHOW CONTAINS HAZE, SMOKE, STROBE LIGHTS, GUNSHOTS, MATURE CONTENT & LANGUAGE

CAST

Roberto Zucco	Carlos Josue Alejandro*
Zucco's Mother/The Lady	Alaina Manchester*
The Sister/The Madam	Amelia Harris*
The Old Gentleman	Gregg Jones#
The Girl	Annelih G. Holganza
The Brother	Linden Taylor#
The Father	Robert Cope
The Mother	Emily Green
Officer/Policeman	Danovan Mullings
Officer/Policeman	Cristian Gonzalez
Prostitute/Ensemble	Haidee Cano
Prostitute/Ensemble	Rhiannon Tasker^
Prostitute/Ensemble	Natalie Chin^
Bruiser/Pimp/Ensemble	Joshua Hamilton
The Melancholy Detective/Ensemble	Joel Oramos
Police Chief/Ensemble	Michael Martinez-Hamilton
Detective/Ensemble	Colin Hudson
The Child/Ensemble	Laine Evans Nelson
Woman at Bar/Ensemble	Andrea Erkelens

UNDERSTUDIES

Natalie Chin (Zucco's Mother, The Lady), Andrea Erkelens (The Girl), Emily Green (The Sister), Joshua Hamilton (The Brother), Linden Taylor (Roberto Zucco)

* Denotes work in partial fulfillment of MFA Thesis Project

^ Denotes BFA Senior Project

Appears Courtesy of Actor's Equity Association

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND THE PLAY

Bernard-Marie Koltès was born in the French city of Metz in 1948. He studied at the school of the National Theatre of Strasbourg, where he began writing plays. His dramatic monologue *The Night Just Before the Forests* premiered at the Avignon Festival in 1977. His other plays, many of them directed by Patrice Chéreau, include *Black Battles With Dogs* (1982) and *In the Solitude of Cotton Fields* (1987)

Roberto Zucco (1988), Koltès' last play, written when he was dying, premiered posthumously in a production directed by Peter Stein at Berlin's Schaubühne theatre. It is based on the career of an actual Italian serial killer, Roberto Succo, but Koltès fictionalized and heightened the play. The title character transcends the boundaries of mere criminality and becomes an anti-hero of near-mythical stature. Zucco is a serial murderer, yes, but he is also a young and lonely soul who seduces his victims philosophically and erotically, driven by forces that seem as much in control of him as he is of them. It is as if he is chosen by some cosmic instinct to act on his impulses and as if his victims choose him rather than he chooses them. Even while he leaves violence and suffering in his wake, he remains impossible to pin down; he is like a blank cipher or a Rorschach blot (Koltès got the idea for the play when he saw a wanted poster with several photos of Succo, all of which seemed to show a different man).

While he thinks nothing of killing his parents or a child, Zucco can be thoughtful, tender, charming, melancholy. He lives in a world simultaneously fascinated and repulsed by him, and yet hardly any better. A young man sells his sister into prostitution, a young girl betrays her lover, there is violence and rapacity all around him, and in a way Zucco simply becomes the most extreme reflection of the culture which he inhabits. It is a cruel play, written close to the playwright's death from AIDS, but also sweet at times — proof that Koltès felt tenderness and forgiveness towards the generally foul lot of characters he had drawn. After all, they are only behaving as they're expected to behave, caught in the absurd hurricane of an anti-hero's preemptive fate.

THE "DEAL"

A deal is a commercial transaction concerning values that are banned or subject to strict controls, and which is conducted in neutral spaces, indeterminate and not intended for this purpose, between suppliers and consumers, by means of tacit agreement, conventional signs, or conversations with double meanings — whose aim is to circumvent the risks of betrayal or swindle implicit in this kind of operation — at any time of day or night, with no reference to the regulation opening hours for officially registered trading establishments, but usually at times when the latter are closed.

I don't believe in the love relationship. If you want to tell a story with any subtlety you have to take a different route. For me the deal is a sublime means. It really encompasses everything else.

- Bernard-Marie Koltès

ON PRISONS

You ask where prisons come from. My answer is "from practically everywhere." Something was "invented," to be sure, but it was an entire technique of surveillance: the control and identification of individuals, the regulation of their movements, activity, and effectiveness.

This took place in the 16th and 17th centuries in the army, colleges, schools, hospitals and work places. It boiled down to a technology that made possible exact, day-by-day power over bodies. Prison is the ultimate embodiment of that age of discipline.

The social role of internment is to be discovered in terms of a person who begins to emerge in the 19th century: the delinquent. This establishment of the criminal world is absolutely correlated with the existence of prisons. Within the masses, a small core of people became, so to speak, the privileged and exclusive licensees of criminal activity.

In the classic age, (...) the criminal world was not so closed in on itself, something that developed essentially out of the existence of prisons, out of the "marinade" of prison society that forms a micro-society in which men find real solidarity that will provide them, on their release, with mutual support.

Prison is a recruitment center for the army of crime. That is what it achieves. For 200 years everybody has been saying, "Prisons are failing: all they do is produce new criminals." I would say on the other hand, "They are a success, since that is what has been asked of them."

- Michel Foucault, in an interview with Roger Pal-Draïl (1975)

MITHRAS

After the second prayer you will see how the disc of the sun unfolds, and you will see hanging down from it the phallus, the origin of the wind, and when you move your face to the regions of the East, it will move there, and if you move your face to the regions of the West, it will follow you.

- Mithras Liturgy, part of the Great Parisian Magic Papyrus

MUSIC BY

The Bad Plus
Denis Gougeon
Bob Marley
Jan Garbarek
Györgyi Ligeti
Melody Gardot

THE CAST

Carlos Josue Alejandro (Roberto Zucco) is in his final year of the MFA program at the University of Florida's School of Theatre and Dance. Carlos is very proud to be part of this incredibly talented cast and thankful to work with such a caring and diligent crew. It is remarkable to see how much this group of young professionals accomplished under Dr. Ralf's guidance. Carlos would like to extend a special thank you to his own family and his UF family. Thank you Mom, Dad, Maia, Rachel, Dr. Ralf, Lexi, David, Zeke, Dr. P, Yanci, Kathy, Triza, Tim, Dr. Young, Dr. J and my beautiful classmates. If it weren't for you all, I wouldn't be who I have become today.

Haidee Cano (Prostitute/Ensemble) is happy to make her SoTD department debut as a lady of the night! Thank you Dr. Ralf for uncapping my "inner slut" and to Lexi and David and the crew for all their hard work. Love to my kind, talented costmates Henry, you are my rock. A tiny one. But a rock.

Robert Cope (The Father) is a 1st year MFA Acting candidate and is excited to be returning to the UF stage for his second time. He appeared in the UF production of *You Can't Take It With You* earlier this season. Prior productions include *Macbeth*, *Lonestar*, *An Ideal Husband* and *Working*. Robert will be appearing in *She Stoops to Conquer* in April of 2012.

Natalie Chin (Prostitute/Ensemble/U/S Zucco's Mother, U/S Lady) is a senior BFA candidate captivated by the twisted story of *Zucco*. Other credits include *Colored Girls*, *Circle Mirror Transformation*, and *The Madwoman of Chailot*. Over the past four years, Natalie has been surrounded by the most talented and loving coworkers/friends, a supporting faculty who believes in her potential and encourages her to never stop learning, a family who loves and supports her, and a fiancée who challenges her to be a better person. I want to thank each of you for helping me realize that being Natalie... is enough.

Andrea Erkelens (Woman at Bar/Ensemble/U/S Girl) is a junior BFA candidate and is delighted to be working with such a diverse and talented cast. She would like to thank Dr. Ralf for the opportunity to be part of this wonderful production, and her family and friends for all their much-needed support.

Cristian Gonzalez (Officer/Policeman) is a senior BFA Acting major. He would like to thank his girlfriend and his family for all their support, and the cast and crew for being amazing.

Emily Green (The Mother/U/S The Sister) is a 1st year MFA Acting candidate from Kansas City, MO. This is her UF mainstage debut.

Annelih G. Holganza (The Girl) is a 2nd year MFA Acting candidate. Prior UF credits include *dark play* or *stories for boys*, *Romeo & Juliet*, and *Oedipus the King*. Thank you to Dr. Ralf for the opportunity. Love to her parents, Hanneli, the 2nd years & Joshua.

Joshua Hamilton (Bruiser/Pimp/Ensemble/U/S Brother) is a 2nd year MFA Acting candidate. Thanks to Dr. Ralf for the opportunity. Shout out to my families, both here and in the Philippines. Love to Anneh, "Go On Down And Tell em."

Joel Oramas (The Melancholy Detective/Ensemble) is a 1st year MFA Acting candidate from Western Connecticut State University. He was last seen in UF's production of *You Can't Take It With You*. NYC credits include *I Love A Piano* (TGB Theatre) and *The Will of Love* (Turtle Shell Theatre). Other credits include *Seussical: The Musical*, *The Three Sisters*, and *A Flea in Her Ear*. He has performed at HBO studio, INTAR, and KCACIF.

Linden Tailor (The Brother) is a 1st year MFA Acting candidate. UF: *An Inspector Calls*. REGIONAL: Round House Theatre: *Eurydice*. The Kennedy Center: *The Other Room*. PA Shakespeare Festival: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Imagination Stage: *Lyle the Crocodile* (Helen Hayes IYA nomination), *Junie B. in Jingle Bells*, *Batman Smells!* Adventure Theatre. *If You Give a Cat a Cupcake*, *Stuart Little*. TRAINING: Virginia Commonwealth University, BFA Theatre Performance. Love to God, family and Nicholeto.

Rhiannon Tasker (Prostitute/Ensemble) is a senior BFA candidate. She is excited to be performing in her Senior Project role. She has previously been seen in *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Madwoman of Chailot*, and *Pippin*. Thanks to my friends and family for all their love and support.

THE CREW

Ryan Bible (Sound Design) is a 2nd year MFA Lighting Design candidate.

Caitlin Callahan (Prop/Puppet Design) is a senior Scene Design BFA. This is her third mainstage properties design with UF and she is looking forward to her first mainstage scenic design with *Cross the Line: Dance 2012*. She would like to thank Dr. Ralf and the rest of the team for this experience.

Tim Difato (Digital Content Design) is currently pursuing a MA in Digital Arts from UF. He has a BA in Business Administration and an MS in Business Entrepreneurship. He is passionate about using digital media to bring awareness to the injustice in the world and reveal the love of Jesus Christ.

David Duclous (Assistant Stage Manager) is a senior Statistics Major. He is excited to work on one more show before graduation and would like to thank Dr. Ralf, Lexi, and Sarah for the opportunity. Previous credits: *The Pillowman* (SM), *The Women* (ASM), *A Look Back in Anger* (ASM).

Lexi DuFries (Stage Manager) is thrilled to be using *Roberto Zucco* for her Senior Project. She will graduate this May with a BA in Theatre. She serves as Production Manager for Florida Players, the student run theatre company at UF. Following graduation she will continue her studies at UF to pursue a MS in Management. She thanks Dr. Ralf, Sarah, Nichole, David, Robin, Daniel, her family, her friends and Aaron for all the opportunities, help, love, encouragement and support they've given as she pursues her passion. Previous credits: *Gem of the Ocean* (ASM) and *Melancholy Play* (ASM).

Katie Hipschman (Assistant Lighting Designer) is a freshman pursuing a BFA in Lighting Design. She'd like to thank B. for giving her this opportunity and her family for their constant support. She looks forward to being involved in future SoTD productions.

Michael Martinez Hamilton (Police Chief/Ensemble) was recently seen as Birling in *An Inspector Calls*. Other roles include *Last in Yankers* (Eddie), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Oberon), *Romeo and Juliet* (Friar Laurence), *Twelfth Night* (Malvolio), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Don Pedro), *The Tempest* (King Alonso), *Equus* (Dalton), and every role in the West Coast premiere of *Ear the Runt*.

Amelia Harris (The Sister/The Madam) is a 3rd year MFA Acting candidate at the University of Florida. Florida performance credits include *The Grapes of Wrath* (Elizabeth Sandry), *The Vagina Monologues*, *A Christmas Carol* (Mrs. Dilber), *The Madwoman of Chailot* (Constance), *Noises Off* (Doty Otley), *In The Blood* (Amigo Gringo), *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (Player), and *Signs of Life*. She would like to thank the faculty of the School of Theatre and Dance: "The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows." Thank you for holding the mirror.

Colin Hudson (Detective/Ensemble) is a senior History major. Past credits include *This is Our Youth*, *You Can't Take It With You*, *An Evening of Improv*, *The Madwoman of Chailot*. This is Colin's final performance on a UF stage. Colin would like to thank Dr. Ralf for the opportunity and everyone for their love and support through his four years of higher learning.

Gregg Jones (The Old Gentleman) is honored to be making his second appearance in a UF production in the past few years. He is a tenured professor of Theatre at Santa Fe College and is a member in good standing of Actors Equity Association (74) and the Screen Actors Guild (83). He would like to thank Dr. Ralf, one of his favorite professors, for this opportunity to explore his inner "old man".

Alaina Manchester (Zucco's Mother/The Lady) is a 3rd year MFA Acting candidate at the University of Florida. She is an equity membership candidate and has performed as Mrs. Pezzywig (*A Christmas Carol*) at The Hippodrome Theatre. Alaina has also toured three international theatre shows: *A Streetcar Named Desire* through Germany, Czech Republic, and Austria in the summer of 2010, and *Romeo and Juliet*, *Oedipus the King* through Greece in the summer of 2011. She has performed in multiple mainstage productions at UF: *The Grapes of Wrath* (Ma Joad), *The Women* (Countess Du Longe) as well as student-run productions. She is an artistic consultant for the non-profit theatre group, DramaShop, based in Erie, PA, and completed her internship at The Erie Playhouse working under the education director. She is excited to start her next adventure in NY (Chicago/Pittsburgh/Rochester/LA).

Donovan Mullings (Officer/Policeman) This is Donovan's first play with the School of Theatre of Dance. He is extremely excited and will give this role and this show 110%. He would like to thank his friends for all the support. "My confidence is a stain they can't wipe off." — Lil Wayne.

Laine Evans Nelson (The Child/Ensemble) is a 1st Year MFA Acting candidate. He graduated Summa Cum Laude from Arizona State University with a BA in Theatre. He has a background in Collaborative/Devised Theatre and Theatre for Young Audiences and training in Fitzmaurice Voicework, Viewpoints, Puppetry, and Laban Movement. This is his first mainstage production.

Molly Itten (Scenic Designer) is a 3rd year MFA Scene Design candidate. Previous designs at the UF: *Agbedidi*, *In the Blood*, *City of Angels*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, and *Bash*. Her work outside UF includes scenic designer and charge artist for Arundel Barn Playhouse. As well as charge artist for the Wagon Wheel Theatre and the Flat Rock Playhouse.

B. Lussier (Lighting Designer) is a 3rd year MFA Lighting Design candidate. University of Florida production credits include: *2,280 Pints!*, *City of Angels*, *Marry Me A Little*, and *In the Blood*. He was also a contributing writer to *Notes to Self*. He served as Lighting Director at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art for three years. After *Roberto Zucco*, he will be interning with The Sextant Group, contributing to the architectural lighting design for the new Center for Disease Control building in Atlanta. He would like to thank his friends and family for their continued support.

Brittany Powell (Projections Design) recently graduated from UF with a MA in Digital Arts and Sciences. Past productions include *The Last Unicorn*, *dark play* or *stories for boys* (recipient of Barbizon Award for Projection Design), *Signs of Life*, and *Othello*. Brittany's involvement in *Roberto Zucco* utilizes the technology she developed for projection mapping onto non-traditional surfaces.

Becki Leigh Stafford (Costume Designer) is a 1st year MFA Costume Design and Technology candidate from Pensacola, Florida. She has previously designed costumes for *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* at New Stage Theatre and *Juliet and her Romeo* at Belhaven University.

Dr. Ralf Remshardt (Director) is Associate Professor of Theatre. He holds an MA from the Freie Universität Berlin and a PhD from the University of California at Santa Barbara. He has lectured and presented nationally and internationally, published many articles, chapters, and reviews, and authored a book, *Staging the Savage God: The Grotesque in Performance*. Dr. Remshardt was 2006-2008 University of Florida Research Foundation Professor and was named the College of Fine Arts International Educator of the Year for 2010. Plays at UF include *The Bacchae*, *Waiting for Godot* (KC/ACTF Meritorious Achievement Award for directing), *The Real Thing*, and *Electronic City*. In the summer of 2009, he was invited to stage *Einstein's Dreams* in Beijing, China.

COMING SOON TO CONSTANS THEATRE



APPENDIX C – PRODUCTION PHOTOS

III Sous la table / Under the table



Sister gives Girl a piece of her mind for staying out past curfew.



"Tell me no one has used force."



"And you can't put back the pieces."

IV La mélancolie l'inspecteur / The melancholy detective



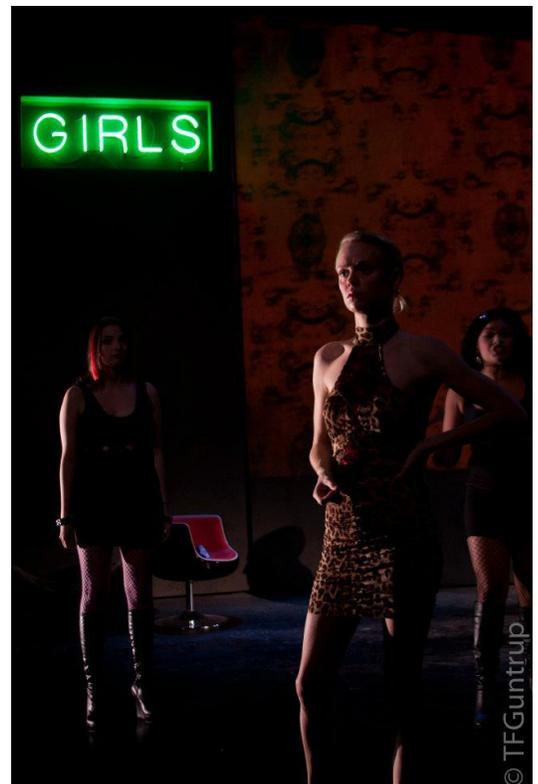
Gun control.



"Too much tinkering with pimps and dead bodies, inspector."



Madam finds out about the detective's murder...



...and wonders how it will affect business.

VII Deux sœurs / Two sisters



"You're a baby robin perched on a branch. And I'm your big sister."



Mother pretends to parent.



Dad threatens to beat anyone who doesn't tell him where his beer is.

XI Le deal / It's a deal



Madam oversees the transformation of Girl into a source of income.



Pimp and Brother close the deal.

XIII Ophélie / Ophelia



"What have they done with my dove? What filth have they dragged her through?"



"Men are filthy. They don't wash."



"Let the rain fall and let it keep on falling, let it fall on that heap of filth and softly wash my little turtledove."

APPENDIX D – CRITICISM

Dear Amelia –

Here are a few of my thoughts on your performance in Roberto Zucco. I think you came into the program with strong sensibilities about who you are and what the best way is to showcase yourself. I remember back when you did the Stoppard play, what a welcome surprise you were. I feel you have learned a lot here. The *Zucco* women were user specific, scary, not too ticky, but funny, and I saw a through line. Playing two parts is always difficult and I thought your use of the costume accessories helped make a strong difference between the two women – not to mention your very different physical aspects and body work. I was proud of you.

Regards,
David Young

Amelia,

It was a delight to see your recent performances in *Roberto Zucco* as Sister & as Madam. Your vocal, physical, and character training through your MFA training had a thorough work-out in the juxtaposition of these two roles. The physicality of the Sister was closed and cloying in relationship to your little sister. The voice of the Sister had more of an airy, urgent tone whereas the Madam was often lower, more unemotional, and controlling. The Madam's relationship to the Girl was predatory and business-like.

You are to be congratulated in creating two vastly different characters with seeming ease and precision.

Best,
Dr. Judith Williams

Amelia,

I love when people can see, understand, and utilize what classical training can do for them. The Sister character, in particular, used punctuation to sustain those long passages. It was awesome. It literally got to a point, at least for me, where I couldn't breathe until you did. You had me in the grips, the charge of how she was moving along. When you do things like that, the intention is so powerful and so clear. The emotions were riding along with all of that. I just thought, this is a brilliant example of the craft and technique. Not everybody can do that. This awesomeness that you were able to bring to the Sister was then balanced, almost heightened by the totally different kind of approach you were able to give to the Madam (who held her own in a different way than the Sister.) I thought it was just stunning.

Congratulations,
Dr. Mikell Pinkney



Madam reads *Madam*.

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