

PERFORMING THE ROLE OF MAGGIE
IN THE PLAY *HOBSON'S CHOICE* BY HAROLD BRIGHOUSE

By

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A PROJECT IN LIEU OF THESIS
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Abstract of Project in Lieu of Thesis
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Chair: Kevin Marshall
Major: Theatre

For this project, I crafted the role of Maggie in the University of Florida's production of *Hobson's Choice* by Harold Brighouse, under the direction of Dr. Charlie Mitchell. The play had a select run from January 3 through February 7, 2014 for the students of HUM 2305: "What Is the Good Life?" before opening to the public on February 8 and closing on February 16, 2014.

This paper begins with an analysis of the script and playwright before moving to an exploration of my research and process in creating the role. I examine the acting, vocal, and movement techniques I employed during the rehearsal process as well as the successes and challenges of putting those techniques to use in the rehearsals and productions. I conclude with a self-evaluation of my work on the project.

INTRODUCTION

When I first read *Hobson's Choice* during the season selection process, I found the character of Maggie slightly flat and one-dimensional. The play had its charms, but the character came across in the text as consistently strident and unmovable in her pursuits. I was, however, attracted to her strength of will and commitment to her purpose. My opinion of the play improved after viewing the 1951 film adaptation, which showed more fully the comedic potential of the script, as it seemed to be a script that played better than it read. I became intrigued by the challenge of finding the different levels inside the character of Maggie as well as embodying a character that drives the action throughout the play. I was also excited by the opportunity to play a character close to my own age, which I had not yet done in a mainstage production at the University of Florida. The chance to work under the direction of Dr. Charlie Mitchell was also very appealing. I had worked with Dr. Mitchell once before and fully trusted in the quality of his direction and his ability to push me to excellence in my acting. After coming to these realizations, I pushed hard to obtain this role for my thesis project and, luckily, was successful.

After securing the role, I looked more deeply into the script in the hopes of finding more layers to the character. I became attracted to the relationship between Maggie and Will, the character who becomes her husband in the play. There seemed to be great potential to show Maggie's softer underbelly through the development of that relationship. I also found additional parallels between Maggie and myself beyond age, two single women in pursuit of their life's goals with a dry wit and a distaste for the exhibition of weakness. Maggie seemed to be right in my wheel-house and a perfect fit for me, which was not the case with any of the characters I had already played in mainstage productions at the University of Florida. I was excited for the opportunity to play this character. Though I found her to be quite challenging, in the end I found

her infinitely rewarding to create.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

The Play

Hobson's Choice takes place in Salford, England in 1880. The first act of the play is set in Henry Hobson's boot shop as his daughters Vickey and Alice man the counter. As Alice impatiently waits for a suitor to arrive, her older sister, Maggie enters from upstairs. Alice inquires as to when their father will be leaving, as she is anxious for him to be out of the house, but Maggie informs her that Hobson, a heavy drinker, has barely gotten out of bed after a long night out. The sisters' discussion is broken up by the arrival of Albert Prosser, a young lawyer, who has come to call on Alice. The couple's hopes of a quiet visit are ruined by Maggie, who takes over the situation and cajolingly forces Albert to buy an expensive pair of boots before sending him on his way. As Alice begins berating Maggie for her harsh treatment of Albert, Hobson crosses through the shop on his way out. After his daughters remind him about dinner time and warn him not to stay at the Moonraker's Pub too long, Hobson launches into a long speech about receiving the proper respect and decorum from his daughters, ending in an admonition that he will choose husbands for Alice and Vickey. The two girls leave in an indignant huff. Maggie questions her father about finding a husband for her, but he only laughs at her in response. The scene is broken up by the arrival of Mrs. Hepworth, a wealthy customer, who demands to see the person who made her boots. The audience is then introduced to Willie Mossop, Hobson's uneducated, yet talented boot hand. Mrs. Hepworth leaves after giving Willie her calling card and praising his work, which earns some grumbling from Hobson after her departure. Hobson's friend, Jim Heeler, arrives and the two discuss Hobson's issues with his

daughters. After learning that dowries would be expected to marry off his daughter, Hobson decides against marriage and leaves for the Moonraker's with Jim. Maggie then launches her master plan, calling Will up from the shop and working to convince him to marry her. He is reluctant, yet Maggie is persistent, even after learning that Will is already engaged to Ada Figgins. Ada shows up at the shop with dinner for Will, and Maggie informs Ada that her engagement to Will is now off. Ada objects, but she and Will are powerless in the face of Maggie's resolve. Maggie attempts to get a kiss out of Will to seal the deal, but he balks when her sisters enter the shop. Vickey and Alice are aghast at the news that Maggie is planning to marry Will, and inform their father when he returns home. Maggie and Hobson face off, and she tells him her terms: either agree to the marriage and start paying Maggie a wage or she will leave the shop with Will to start a new business. Hobson refuses and calls Willie up, threatening to "beat the love out" of him with a belt. Will, emboldened by his anger at the threat of violence, tells Hobson that he will leave the shop with Maggie.

Time jumps forward one month in the second act, which opens on Hobson's shop in a state of somewhat disarray after Maggie's absence. Alice struggles with bookkeeping, and finds no help in either Vickey or Tubby, the shop foreman. Maggie enters with Will and Freddy Beenstock, a young grocer who is also a suitor to Vickey. Freddy breaks the news to the girls that Hobson has been found asleep in his cellar after drunkenly falling into it the previous night. Maggie sends Freddy to get Albert and then starts arranging plans with the surprised Vickey and Alice. She pushes the girls into giving Will a kiss as their brother-in-law-to-be, buys a brass ring from the shop to use for her wedding that afternoon, and sends Will to fetch some old furniture in the house. Vickey and Alice resist, but Maggie assures them that she has a plan to get them both married to the men of their choice. When Freddy returns with Albert, Maggie sends Freddy

to help with the furniture while discussing with Albert the lawsuit for trespassing she had drawn up against her father on Freddy's behalf. She sends Freddy to serve the legal paper to her father and persuades Albert to carry the furniture back to Maggie and Will's new home in Oldfield Road while she heads off to the church with Will and her sisters.

The third act opens in Will and Maggie's cellar home and workshop with the three couples toasting Will and Maggie's marriage after the wedding dinner. Will gives a speech, obviously prepared and taught to him by Maggie, though the other four are impressed with his newfound education and abilities. As the guests prepare to leave, Maggie asks Will to clear the dishes. She then forces all the men to clean up after Albert laughs at Willie. As the women go into the bedroom to get their hats, Will asks the men for advice on how to deal with Maggie on his wedding night, being very uncomfortable and nervous at the thought of being with her alone. Freddy and Albert are not much help, however, and the women soon return. The wedding party is surprised by the arrival of Hobson, who is awake and in distress after learning about the lawsuit against him. The sisters and their suitors hide as Will, encouraged by Maggie, puts on a strong front as the "man of the house" for Hobson. Maggie works to get her father to accept Will as part of the family and also to get him to agree to settle the case out of court. Albert, with some input from Maggie, negotiates a settlement of 500 pounds with Hobson, who then becomes infuriated when he realizes that he's been duped into giving money for his daughters to use as dowries to marry their suitors. He leaves in a storm, soon followed by Alice, Albert, Vickey, and Freddy. Left alone, Maggie and Will awkwardly maneuver around each other before finally heading to the bedroom for their wedding night.

The fourth and final act opens in the parlor of Hobson's shop a year later. Jim and Tubby are worried about Hobson, who woke up gravely ill. Hobson enters, complaining that he is on the

verge of death and Tubby goes to fetch a doctor and, of course, Maggie. Doctor Macfarlane diagnoses Hobson with a severe case of alcoholism, and tells him that he must abstain from all alcohol and convince Maggie to come and live with him again to take care of him. The doctor apprises Maggie of the situation as she appears before taking his leave. Hobson bristles at her presence at first, but eventually relents and tells her that he wants her to stay. She reminds him that he has two other daughters as Alice and Vicky arrive in quick succession, though both girls seem unwilling to come. Maggie convinces her father to go put a collar on in preparation for Will's arrival and then start negotiating with her sisters. However, Alice, who is living the high life with Albert, and Vicky, who is now pregnant, are both unwilling to come. Maggie goes to welcome Will, who is a newly educated and confident man, as he arrives. He aggressively negotiates with her sisters as Maggie goes to fetch her father. Vicky and Alice leave at their father's insistence after expressing their unwillingness to take care of him, leaving Will and Maggie alone with Hobson. Will takes the lead in the negotiations, astonishing Hobson with his success and stature, proposing that Maggie and he return to take over the shop, with Hobson as a silent partner. Maggie challenges Will's proposal for renaming the shop "Mossop and Hobson", but Will refuses to back down and Maggie relents to his authority. When Hobson leaves the room, it becomes clear that much of Will's performance was a façade, but Maggie encourages his strong showing. The two share a sentimental moment, then leave with Hobson to draw up the paperwork for the partnership.

The Playwright

Harold Brighouse was an English playwright who was best known for his regional plays set in Lancashire. Born in 1882 in Eccles, Lancashire, Brighouse did not originally set out for a life in the theatre. He started work as a buyer in his father's cotton firm, and it was the firm's

location near a theatre that first exposed Brighouse to drama (Tyson 77). Brighouse became further involved with theater during his brief residence in London from 1902 to 1904, attending the theatre quite frequently; it was an “outrageously bad play” that prompted him to begin writing, feeling that he could do better (Tyson 77). He moved back to the Lancashire area after a failed business venture and became a full-time writer. His first full-length play was rejected by Johnston Forbes-Robertson, a theatre manager, who recommended Brighouse start with one-act plays and write about the life he knew (Smigel 67). Brighouse took Forbes-Robertson’s advice to heart, and became a prolific one-act play writer specializing in plays set in Lancashire. Ironically, Brighouse is best remembered now for his highly successful full-length play *Hobson’s Choice*, written in 1915, rather than for his one-act work.

Brighouse’s career was greatly aided by the flourishing of repertory theatre in England at the time of his writing and is considered to be a part of the Manchester School of regional theatre artists. His career was heavily supported by productions of his work at the Gaiety Theatre in Manchester, managed by Annie Horniman; along with writers Stanley Houghton and Allan Monkhouse, he became part of a group of local writers whose works for the Gaiety most often had a Lancashire setting (Hollingworth). These Manchester School writers “took as models the Lancashire people of their daily life” but “did not always flatter their models,” aiming instead at presenting the truth of the “human comedy of Lancashire” (Brighouse 11). Brighouse’s plays of this time focused on domestic or economic themes, using dialect, regional setting, and local topicality to appeal to the regional audiences of the repertory theatres (Smigel 74). The true feather in the cap of Brighouse’s career was *Hobson’s Choice*, which was first produced in New York in 1915 before showing in London in 1916; this play was vastly popular on both sides of the Atlantic, and both launched and stunted Brighouse’s career as it would be the only popular

play for which he would be remembered. The immense popularity of the play caused Brighouse to refer to himself as “a one-play playwright” (qtd. in Smigel 73). *Hobson’s Choice* has continued to be successful even beyond Brighouse’s career and lifetime, spurring four film adaptations, a musical adaptation, and even a ballet; it is the only one of Brighouse’s plays that continues to be produced by theatres with regularity today.

Style and Themes

Hobson’s Choice is a social comedy rooted in realism in which the humor grows out of the domestic conflict between characters. It has been described as “*King Lear* in a comic key,” with the father demanding submission, rather than love, from his three daughters, who rebel against his authority (Gregor 247). Critics have noted that in this play, as with much of Brighouse’s work, “there is in the acting much more laughter than one would expect in the reading” (Payne viii). The play works best when the comedy grows naturally out of the characters and situation, using the realism of the play to appeal to the universal experience of domestic conflict. The success of *Hobson’s Choice* comes from its “shaping of regional attitudes into a form that is neither a caricature nor condescendingly folksy” (Trussler 151). Brighouse uses the Lancashire setting as a lens through which to view the development of his characters; he relies on the actors to depict the truth of these characters without overemphasizing the idiosyncrasies of the Lancashire lifestyle.

The title of the play contains one of the central thematic elements of the text. “Hobson’s choice” is a phrase that means “a choice of taking what is available or nothing at all,” originating in the 17th century from a horse carrier named Thomas Hobson, who gave his customers the “choice” between taking the horse closest to the door or none at all (Knowles 333). Throughout the play, Maggie offers a “Hobson’s choice” to several characters: in the first act, she gives her

father, Henry Hobson, the choice of agreeing to her marriage to Will or facing the loss of both Will and her from the shop; to her sisters and their suitors, she offers the choice of going along with her plans or losing the opportunity to get married at all; in the last act, it is Will who offers Hobson a choice similar to the one given in the first act – agree to Will’s terms to become partners in the boot shop or lose Will and Maggie yet again. In the first act, by refusing the Hobson’s choice from Maggie, Henry Hobson suffers greatly. The cases in which the Hobson’s choice is taken have positive results; the two young couples are successful in getting married and Hobson wins Maggie back by agreeing to the partnership with Will. Here, Brighthouse seems to suggest that people are better served by taking what is offered rather than turning their backs on opportunities.

Another central theme of the play is family. Brighthouse illustrates both the creation of family through marriage and the duty of family members to each other. All three of Hobson’s daughters look to create a new family life by marrying their intended husbands; all three characters’ lives improve after their marriages. Maggie, though unconventional in her methods, upholds the most traditional view of the family unit with her continual push to get her father and sisters to recognize Will as the true head of her household; Maggie’s creation of a new family unit becomes complete when Will becomes strong enough to overrule her at the end of the play. Maggie also illustrates the duty that family members owe to one another. She breaks this duty by leaving her father’s shop in the beginning of the play, but she returns to this duty at the end of the play, as she is the only daughter willing to move back into the house with her father to take care of him. She also continually pulls her sisters back into their familial duties, demanding they take part in her wedding and respect Will as their new brother-in-law. Through her respect of the centrality of the family unit, Maggie represents the author’s focus on traditional family values.

Maggie's journey in the play is not complete until she has found the traditional Victorian valuation of family with the husband as the respected head of the household.

Context

Understanding the Victorian setting is central in giving context to the action of the play, as it both upholds and inverts traditional Victorian values. The social atmosphere of Victorian England was fundamentally driven by the class system. Society was divided into three main class groups: the rich upper class, who carried wealth, land, and influence; the growing middle class of businessmen and professionals; and the lower working classes (Supple 92). The Hobsons of *Hobson's Choice* are distinctly middle class, a fact that Henry Hobson is quite proud of in the play. During this time, the middle class was characterized by a valuation of the "domestic and creature comforts" afforded by their income paired with "habits of thrift and prudence" to maintain their income, along with the "acquisition of skills, influence, style and contacts which were the best means of providing unity and coherence to members of a powerful class" (93-94). Brighouse imbues all the middle class characters of the play with these qualities to some degree. The play also reflects the nature of interactions between classes in the Victorian age. The class system was "highly stratified" and driven by a sense of class rivalry, which kept fraternizing between the classes at a minimum while also encouraging a striving towards improving one's own place in the social class hierarchy (92). These attitudes are reflected in the play through the reaction to Maggie's choice of Will, a lower class character, as her husband, the importance of Mrs. Hepworth, an upper class character, as well as the overall approach to the depiction of class in the play.

The play also demands an exploration of the role of women in Victorian society. During this time, English society was undergoing much social and institutional reform, with a growing

emphasis on modernization after the advances of the Industrial Revolution. At the same time, Victorian society remained rooted in an “articulate traditionalism and social nostalgia” that valued proper decorum and traditional social conventions (Burrow 123). The role of women reflected this conflict, as they began to push for greater freedom and responsibility even as they were expected to maintain a traditional domestic role. The traditional Victorian female ideal was “the angel of the house” who exhibited the virtues of patience, self-sacrifice, and quiet suffering while maintaining an expert touch on the maintenance of the home (Dyhouse 174). This ideal role kept women as dependent upon men, and necessitated marriage to legitimize a woman’s place in society. However, women were gaining greater freedoms in other areas. Feminism was on the rise in England during this time, and feminist groups, such the Women’s Trade Union League, formed throughout the second half of the twentieth century; larger numbers of employment opportunities were becoming available, mostly in the service sector through clerical or secretarial work, and a greater value was given to the education of girls (176). However, work remained the purview of working class or single women; the middle class woman was expected to fill the role of domestic angel, the silent partner to her husband. Victorian society butted up against the image of the “New Woman,” who was generally middle class, depicted as smoking, riding a bicycle, reading advanced literature, and otherwise eschewing conventional femininity (188); this image was simultaneously mocked by the traditionalists and rejected by feminists. While the feminist movement was beginning to gain some traction during the late Victorian period, the average middle class woman remained subject to traditional values of the gently suffering goddess of the household.

THE PROCESS

Characterization: Preparation

To begin my work on the character of Maggie, I knew that I would need to research the Victorian era in order to get an accurate picture of the manner and decorum of a Victorian woman. In reading the script and other research of the Victorian era, it was clear that Maggie was not a typical Victorian woman, but I felt it would be important to know what the conventions of the time were so that I could make informed choices about when I broke those conventions. The wealth of etiquette books from the time offered advice to the ideal woman, a picture of civility, grace, and politeness. *The Ladies' Book of Etiquette, and Manuel of Politeness* offered this advice to the Victorian lady:

Let your carriage be at once dignified and graceful. There are but few figures that will bear quick motion; with almost every one its effect is that of a jerk, a most awkward movement. Let the feet, in walking or dancing, be turned out slightly; when you are seated, rest them both on the floor or a footstool.

Carry your arms, in walking, easily; never crossing them stiffly or swinging them beside you. When seated, if you are not sewing or knitting, keep your hands perfectly quiet. This, whilst one of the most difficult accomplishments to attain, is the surest mark of a lady. Do not fidget, playing with your rings, brooch, or any little article that may be near you; let your hands rest in an easy, natural position, perfectly quiet.

Never gesticulate when conversing; it looks theatrical, and is ill-bred; so are all contortions of the features, shrugging of shoulders, raising of the eyebrows, or hands.

When you open a conversation, do so with a slight bow and smile, but be careful not to simper, and not to smile too often, if the conversation becomes serious.

Never point. It is excessively ill-bred.

Avoid exclamations; they are in excessively bad taste, and are apt to be vulgar words. A lady may express as much polite surprise or concern by a few simple, earnest words, or in her manner, as she can by exclaiming "Good gracious!" "Mercy!" or "Dear me!"

Remember that every part of your person and dress should be in perfect order before you leave the dressing-room, and avoid all such tricks as smoothing your hair with your hand,

arranging your curls, pulling the waist of your dress down, or settling your collar or sleeves.

Let the movements be easy and flexible, and accord with the style of the lady.

Let your demeanor be always marked by modesty and simplicity; as soon as you become forward or affected, you have lost your greatest charm of manner. (Hartley 150-153)

These points of advice painted a picture of the model deportment and decorum of the Victorian woman. However, the script often had Maggie breaking these guidelines in her brazen approach to pursuing her objectives in the play. Maggie is a character with, ultimately, traditional Victorian desires of marriage and monetary security, she is just unafraid of pursuing those desires in a highly untraditional manner. I looked to use the model etiquette of the time as the basis for my physical comportment, while also recognizing the potential for breaking the rules of etiquette as Maggie. The knowledge of the idealized decorum of the time allowed me to make informed choices about how and why I might break those rules in my performance.

In the preparatory stages of characterization, I also did an initial script and character analysis. I broke the script down into units, large sections of action focused around a single objective – the character’s goal. I further broke each unit into beats – smaller sections of action focused around a single tactic – the means by which the character goes about achieving that goal. At this point, I did not articulate these objectives and tactics on paper. I have the tendency to feel the need to stick to choices once I have written them down, wanting to ensure that I have reached the most ideal choice before committing it to paper. My goal in this process was to maintain a sense of flexibility in my choices and allow myself the room to play and experiment in rehearsals. I had an internal sense of the possibilities for objectives and tactics, but it was not until later in the process that I began articulating them on paper. This was a mistake on my part; it would have been more productive for me to come into rehearsal with clearly articulated

objectives and tactics and simply give myself permission to adjust and experiment with these choices. By keeping my options as ideas without a written articulation, I kept myself from finding the greatest amount of specificity in my early objective work. At the time, I was more focused on finding out who Maggie was to me.

As part of my early characterization work, I also studied the script for character clues. I wrote down everything that was said about Maggie, both by herself and by other characters, looking for a sense of who this person was. The script drew a picture of a woman who was very self-sufficient, head-strong, controlling, and talented in business. Maggie is also genuinely in love with Will, and wants others to respect Will as her husband and the head of their household. At heart, Maggie does hold traditional Victorian values and definitions of success, but unafraid of pursuing those things in untraditional ways. I also reviewed the script with an eye toward finding multiple layers of characterization and opportunities for vulnerability in Maggie's journey. After sensing the potential pitfall of flatness in the portraying of Maggie, I wanted to avoid simply ordering people around through the entire play. I marked all the moments that I thought held the opportunity for Maggie exposing vulnerability or weakness in the play. Moving into rehearsals, it seemed that I perhaps focused too much on this aspect, as Dr. Mitchell kept giving me notes to make Maggie more "business-like". It would take me most of the process to find the key to making Maggie a three-dimensional character: playing the obstacle.

Characterization: Practice

During the rehearsal and performance process, I employed my own hybrid of acting techniques that I have learned across the course of my training to work on creating the character of Maggie. I started with a foundation of Stanislavski and moved toward the approach outlined in *A Practical Handbook to the Actor*, coupled with elements of the Chekhov Technique. I found

that this multi-pronged approach allowed me to utilize the components of each technique that worked most effectively for me. It is useful for me to center on a select number of foci; this prevents me from casting my mental net too widely and failing to give full attention to each element of my technique. For Maggie, I utilized the Stanislavski objective, the *Practical Handbook's* essential action, the Chekhov Technique's Psychological Gesture and Archetypal Gestures, and finally returning to a sense of the Stanislavski obstacle.

My approach to action changed throughout the course of the process. In the first half of the rehearsal process, I employed the Stanislavski objective. He defines good objectives as tasks that are necessary, directed towards the other actors, creative and aesthetic, fascinating and exciting, “genuine, living, dynamic, human Tasks which drive the role forward” (145). I used a method of objective articulation that I learned in my undergraduate work, which states the objective as “I want (*character*) to (*achievable, measurable goal*).” For example, in Act One, Scene Five, my initial articulation of my objective was “I want my father to agree to my terms for marrying Willie.” This is a straightforward, logical approach to objectives that I have used for many years, yet here it felt somewhat incomplete, not exciting my imagination or evoking strong personal response in me. I decided to switch my approach to action, and began working with the technique of “essential action” as outlined in the *Practical Handbook*. This essential action can be defined as “what exists in the scene when you eliminate all ideas about what you think the author is saying the character feels at any given moment in favor of what he is trying to accomplish” (Bruder 21). Essential action is discovered by asking a series of questions: “1. What is the character literally doing? 2. What is the essential action of the actor in this scene? 3. What is that action like to me? *It's as if . . .*” (Bruder 19). The essential action shares many of the same qualities of a good objective; according to the *Handbook* an action should be specific, fun to do,

and focused on the other person (Bruder 13). It serves a similar function, though it is articulated differently. I found that using the technique of essential action helped spur me toward a clearer, more energetically activated goal, though I did not always utilize the third “as if” question in my implementation. For example, in the scene I referenced earlier – Act 1, Scene 5 – Maggie is literally fighting to get her father to agree to her marriage to Will. I used the essential action “to get a loved one to give me my due.” My “as if” was “getting Eric (an ex-boyfriend) to admit that I was right in an argument,” but I never ended up using this personalization on stage. I often found that I did not require the use of the “as if” to motivate or personalize my essential action. Focusing on playing the action itself and affecting the other character within the circumstances of the play was often enough on its own; the “as if” choices seemed like extraneous information that I could not actively access without sacrificing another area of focus that was more essential to me. I found greater utility in focusing on marrying the main thrust of my essential actions with the psychophysical approach of the Chekhov Technique.

One central element of the Chekhov Technique that I used in my approach to character was the Psychological Gesture. This is a full-bodied gesture that expresses the thoughts, feelings, and will of the character in a single movement (Chekhov 60). I employed a version of the Psychological Gesture that I learned in the Chekhov Intensive that took place on campus over the winter break. This involved a set of three gestures: a gesture of loss, the central Psychological Gesture expressing the seed of the character’s need, and a gesture of victory. For Maggie, the gesture of loss was a crouched position with the hands held together in front as if shackled. The seed of the need came from Maggie’s quest to make her life a complete success on her terms, success for Maggie defined as marriage to a successful man that could effectively command the respect of others and lead the household as well as a stable, successful business. My seed of the

need gesture was a combination of the Chekhov's Archetypal Gestures of Push and Gather, as I pushed obstacles out of my way and gathered what I needed to succeed. My victory gesture was a spreading of the arms in a wide stance, as if joyfully looking at a ring on my finger. I performed this Psychological Gesture series three times before each entrance on stage. After exploration, I found that moving from the victory gesture through the seed of the need and ending in the defeat gesture was most effective in both plugging into the character as well as driving me toward action by fighting against the image of the defeat.

I also utilized the Chekhov Technique's Archetypal Gestures as a kind of replacement for the typical Stanislavski approach to tactics. Archetypal Gestures are universal physical actions that express a character's psychophysical intent; the ten identified by Chekhov are: Push, Pull, Smash, Lift, Gather, Throw, Tear, Drag, Reach, and Penetrate. I married each beat with an Archetypal Gesture as a means of physicalizing the action of my essential actions; this replaced the standard use of "-ing verbs" as tactics for each beat in the Stanislavski approach. I find that the Archetypal Gestures lead me toward more specific, full-bodied work in my pursuit of my essential actions. The main Archetypal Gestures I used for Maggie were Push, pushing other people in the direction I wanted them to go; Gather, collecting what I needed to achieve success and bringing order to the situations and people around me; and Penetrate, using my sheer force of will in a laser-like fashion to influence others to bend to my desires. However, in my private scenes with Will, I utilized more frequent moments of Reach, as I tried to express and receive love, and Lift, as I worked to build him up. My father also brought out more frequent uses of Tear, as I tore up his objections to my plans, and Smash, when I needed to forcefully show him who was boss. The use of the Archetypal Gestures helped me physically articulate my intentions and means to achieving my essential actions.

The final, crucial piece of the puzzle for me in creating the basis of Maggie's characterization was the playing the obstacle, what gets in the way of achieving the essential action. For much of the rehearsal process, I was not fully taking into account Maggie's obstacles, being more primarily focused on the discovery of essential action and Archetypal Gesture as well as my physical and vocal life. It took me a while to truly identify and internalize the obstacles, since Maggie gets, eventually, everything that she wants in the play; the character was one of the few I have ever played that achieves total victory by the end of the play. As such, I was not allowing the other characters to truly challenge my ability to achieve my essential action, leading to some flatness in my acting. I recognized that there was some ingredient missing in my work, so I sought out advice from Dr. Mitchell, who gave me a piece of guidance that became invaluable in taking my performance to the next level: a character is always asking himself, "How am I doing?" and the answer is always "Not good." This golden nugget of direction unlocked the door to finding the obstacles in Maggie's world and actively fighting against them in my pursuit of essential action, instead of assuredly steamrolling through the other characters. I found that this addition of obstacle added an exciting layer of scrappiness to my work that brought me even further into the full-bodied psychophysical approach of the elements of the Chekhov Technique. Even though Maggie does continue to achieve success in her actions in the play, I discovered the journey of fighting for each victory by playing the obstacle that I had to overcome to win those victories. I am truly indebted to Dr. Mitchell's invaluable assistance in helping to bring me to this realization of obstacle, which elevated the overall level of my entire performance.

Vocal Life

My first step in working on the vocal life of Maggie came in working on the Lancashire, or British North Country, dialect, which was central to the creation of this character. I knew that nailing the dialect would be a vital part of creating the world of the play in a believable way for the audience. To learn this dialect, I used David Alan Stern's *Acting with an Accent: British North Country*, which came with written and audio material, both of which were infinitely helpful. I had used David Alan Stern's books and tapes to learn previous dialects, so I was already familiar with his system and felt confident in my ability to achieve success in this case. This was decidedly a more difficult accent for me to learn, in that I had no real foundation of knowledge of the dialect or what it was supposed to sound like. I began working with Stern's material two weeks before rehearsal began. In the beginning, it was very much rote repetition of the sounds without a strong internal sense of the dialect; however, once I found some pop culture examples of the dialect, I had a much easier time. About a week into my work, I realized that Ygritte, a character on *Game of Thrones*, and Mel B, former member of the Spice Girls, both spoke with this dialect. At that point, my learning began to progress much more quickly, as if a switch flipped in my head that allowed me a greater sense of the life of the dialect, which seemed to improve my ability to make accurate substitutions as well as internalize the dialect work.

The most important aspect was capturing the appropriate placement of the vocal resonance. In this case, the British North Country dialect is laced at the front of the mouth, just behind the gum ridge. Using my pop culture example of Ygritte, I often used the phrase "Jon Snow" to help me place or regain the placement of the dialect when I felt myself going off course in rehearsal. This became quite popular among the cast members, and many of them also adopted this habit. Other significant aspects of the dialect were: eliminating diphthongs by

elongating only the first vowel sound in each diphthong, substituting the schwa in words like “love” to the central vowel in words like “book”, substituting the short “a” sound in words like “cat” with the “ah” sound in words like “after”, substituting the short “o” sound in words like “rock” with the schwa sound, and dropping all the consonant Rs (Stern 8-11). I marked all the substitutions in each and every one of my lines in my script using IPA, the International Phonetic Alphabet, a series of symbols that represent vowel sounds. This helped me identify all instances of vowel and consonant substitutions in my lines and helped me transition from the coached drills on Stern’s audio materials to applying the dialect to the script.

In working on the dialect in the beginning of the rehearsal process, I found it useful to simply commit fully to the dialect and try to avoid second guessing or equivocating in my vocal choices. I did, however, find myself flattening my vocal range in my attempts to stay accurate in the placement and substitutions. After getting a note about this from Dr. Charlie Mitchell, I focused on widening my vocal range and avoid getting similarly caught up in the technical accuracy. I found it somewhat difficult to let go of this focus in the beginning, as the production did not have a dialect coach who was consistently present at rehearsal. This was somewhat disconcerting for me, as I could not both focus on the consistency of my dialect at the same time as my acting choices. I simply had to trust that Dr. Mitchell would inform me if my dialect was going off course. I later received feedback from Yanci Bukovec, our resident vocal expert, that my vocal use was still lacking the musicality necessary for the dialect, so I further focused on widening my range of vocal choices. I watched several movies with the North Country dialect, such as *United* and the British miniseries *North and South*. I found this helpful in bringing a stronger sense of the Lancashire life to the sound and freeing up my vocal choices. However, I developed a tendency to mechanically broaden my range without tying those choices to my

character's actions and I felt some of the vocal flatness coming back to my work as we got further into the rehearsal process and technical elements were added. I sought out advice from Dr. Mitchell, who told me that I should focus on fully and clearly pursuing my objectives and tactics, ensuring that I was focused on the other person and not the sounds of the words. I found this direction invaluable in moving forward and bringing greater life and authenticity to my vocal work.

In concert with the British North Country dialect, I also used elements of the Lessac vocal technique and Alexander Technique in my vocal work in order to find the necessary richness of tone and strength of sound in order to fill the large space of the Constans Theatre. The Lessac technique stresses the value of adopting a forward facial posture, a focusing of the vocal resonance and facial muscles toward the front of the mouth, in creating tonal NRG. As defined by Lessac, tonal NRG is “a vibrative energy state relating to phonation, vocal production, tonal resonance, stentorian quality, and vocal expressiveness” (Lessac 276). Finding and utilizing this tonal NRG was central to creating the energetic vocal life of Maggie as well as projecting my voice to the last row of the theatre. Luckily for me, the first major place of resonance for the tonal NRG is the hard palate just behind the gum ridge, which was the same placement for the resonance of the dialect. I worked on exploiting this overlap by using the necessary placement of the dialect to reinforce the natural tonal resonance of the hard palate.

The Lessac work was also useful my approach of the consonants. I used Lessac's technique of “playing the consonants” by conceiving of each consonant as a “musical instrument with unique, expressive, and beautiful qualities” in order to strengthen the images of the words (Lessac 68). For example, in Act Two Scene Two, in my line to Hobson, “It's been tested,” I would sustain the “s” consonant in “tested” in order to draw focus to the word and use it to dig

under his skin. In Act Two, Scene Eight in my line to Will, “I’m not preventing you,” I sustained the “n” consonant in “preventing” as a way to highlight the image of the meaning of the word and as a kind of vocal version of the archetypal gesture Drag. I found these kinds of opportunities through my vocal exploration throughout the rehearsal process; as I became more adept at focusing on using my vocal choices as direct expressions of my objectives, these opportunities became clearer to me.

Throughout my vocal work, I also utilized the Alexander Technique in order to maintain ease in my vocal use and keep my voice healthy. I have a tendency to hold extra tension in my throat and over-effort my voice by pushing the sound from the back of the throat, creating vocal fatigue and lessening the resonant quality of my voice. In this process, I wanted to focus on using the Alexander Technique to alleviate some of these problems by practicing inhibition, the “ability to stop, to delay our response until we are adequately prepared to make it” (Gelb 59). When I felt extra tension around my vocal cords or pushing from the back of the throat, I worked to employ inhibition to cease and release the tension and come back to the forward facial posture that encouraged the resonance focused on the gum ridge behind the teeth. I also focused to maintaining a connection with my breath, the foundation of all vocal production. I found that by giving awareness to taking full and complete breaths, I was able give more support to my voice and maintain the appropriate resonance placement. I also learned to trust my resonators to do their job in conducting the sound without extra effort on my part. The Alexander Technique approach of “nondoing” was crucial in this discovery. Nondoing can be defined as “preventing unwanted responses, which leads to the discovery of appropriate effort” (Gelb 99). I need to inhibit the extra tension as well as pushing from the back of the throat in order to discover the appropriate effort needed to work from the forward placement. As I improved in my ability to

use a higher quality of breath support and maintain awareness of my resonance placement, I was able to find a much greater sense of ease in my vocal life.

Physical Life

When I first began my work on this life, I failed to make the physical life of Maggie my first priority. I relied mostly on my sense of the standard decorum and carriage of the Victorian woman to inform my physical choices, working from a base of an erect posture and minimal gesturing as fit the conventions of the time. My physical life was greatly informed by the addition of a rehearsal corset and petticoat around the fourth week of rehearsal; these pieces greatly aided my sense of how the period garments restricted my range of movement. However, it was not until I added elements of the Chekhov Technique to the physical life of my character work that Maggie truly began to take shape. The use of an Imaginary Body and the physical manifestations of the Thinking, Feeling, and Willing forces brought greater specificity and an individual sense of being to my work. Additionally, I made significant use of the Alexander Technique in maintaining ease in my physical life.

The first step in creating Maggie's physical life was the discovery of her Imaginary Body. As defined by Chekhov, the Imaginary Body is an imagined body that is different from the actor's own that the actor embodies in his work (Chekhov 100). My first incarnation of Maggie's Imaginary Body was as an eagle, which, for me, conveyed her regality and domain over her territory. However, I was not fully satisfied with that image in working with the lower half of my body; the legs of the bird did not accurately reflect my sense of Maggie's relationship to the earth. I wanted my Imaginary Body to be more fully grounded and rooted in the earth. I realized that the key elements of the eagle for me were the eagle's wings and the attitudes of the head as it turned its head, smoothly and penetratingly surveying the surroundings. I married those two

elements with the Imaginary Body of a Victorian woman, as I found the addition of a sense of reality and time in which she lived helpful in fully internalizing my Imaginary Body for Maggie. I created an image of a strong, slim-hipped female body with wings growing out of her back. This body had an erect posture, as if held up by a string passing through the spine and pulling up the back of the head as it passed through the top of the skull. In the first act, this Imaginary Body also wore an armored breastplate, which served the dual purpose of drawing the shoulders back and protecting the heart; this breastplate also returned in the fourth act during the conflict with her father and sisters, serving as an extra layer of strength and invincibility.

At times this Imaginary Body would express itself in my own physical body – movement in my arms, for instance, where there was movement in my imagined wings; at other times the movement was wholly in the energy body of my Imaginary Body. Within this body, the position of my wings served as an imagined physical expression of my power. My wings could wrap around my body, making me impenetrable to outside resistance and shoring up my strength, as in Act One, Scene Five as I waited for Willie to come up out of the trap before asking him to marry me. They could also spread and flap as I gathered power or worked to influence others to bend to my will, as in Act Two, Scene Three when I admonished Albert and Freddy for being too greedy in the negotiations with my father. They could also spread widely and I would soar in moments of total victory, as in Act Two, Scene Eight when Willie dictated to my father the terms of the partnership without any assistance from me. The outward expression of these attitudes, when it happened, was always smaller in my physical body than in my energy body, a grasping of the hands in front of my body when wrapping my wings, or a release of the hands when spreading them.

The other key element in finding the specificity in the physical life of Maggie was my

exploration of the elements of Thought, Feeling, and Will as physical expressions of character. Chekhov believed that characters were always predominantly Thinking, Feeling, or Willing, and, further, that each predominant character approach could be married with a quality (160-161). He also associated each with an area of the body: Thinking with the head, Feeling with the chest and heart, and Willing with the legs and feet (52-53). In my character work, I found that Maggie operated primarily with an unrelenting Will force, which I then used to inform my physical choices, using both elements expressed by Chekhov in his book and techniques I learned from Lisa Dalton and Wil Kilroy. This approach views the Will force as expressed not only in the legs and feet, but also in corresponding areas all over the body – the thumbs, the heels of the hands, and the chin. I also explored areas of the play in which Maggie switches to a primary core of Thinking or Feeling, such as Act 2, Scene 4, in which she is alone with Willie in their house on their wedding night, when Feeling becomes the central element. Just as the Will force can be expressed in both the macrocosms (i.e. legs) and microcosms of the body (i.e. heel of the hand), so can the Thinking and Feeling forces, such as the tips of the fingers representing Thinking and the palms of the hands representing Feeling.

Throughout the course of the play, I explored the use of these different forces through their corresponding physical locations in the body, which helped me marry the psychology of Maggie with her physical expression. I found this very helpful in working with the limited vocabulary of outward expression most often afforded to the Victorian woman. As Maggie is a primarily Willing character, I used a core attitude of clasping the hands in front of the groin with the fingers interlocked and the thumbs facing forward, reflecting the Will's emanation from the bottom parts of the body. I also worked with leading with the heels of my hands in gesturing. However, when Maggie was in Feeling mode, I switched to holding my hands palm to palm

slightly higher on my body, just below my sternum, in order to reflect Feeling's emanation from the central parts of the body. Additionally, I used movements leading with the tips of my fingers and the top of my head when expressing new ideas or formulating plans in order to reflect the Thinking force as emanating from the uppermost parts of the body. The physical expression of these forces served as a baseline for my movement and helped me in adding greater specificity to my work.

Throughout my physical work, the use of Alexander Technique played a central role in maintaining an ease of movement and access to the use of my whole body. The core of my AT practice here was staying connected to Primary Control, which is the relationship between the head, neck, and spine from which all movement originates. It was vital for me to maintain a strong sense of Primary Control and ease through the neck in order to allow for freedom of movement through my whole body. A key element was the sending of the central Alexander Technique directions: "Allow the neck to be free to let the head go forward and up so that the back may lengthen and widen" (Gelb 69). I would send myself these directions whenever I sensed tension or blocking in my neck in order to encourage release. This became especially important when I was employing the eagle-like head movements of my Imaginary Body, which often lead to a spinal twist as my head moved to face a different direction than my chest. I found that releasing up and out into Primary Control played a significant part in maintain the full flow of energy and power through that movement.

Additionally, I used the Alexander Technique's practice of inhibition to address other unproductive physical habits. This played an important role in stopping the unnecessary holding of tension in my thighs and knees, which was bringing me overly forward and off-center. I also used inhibition to interfere with a pattern of tension in my lower back, which I noticed with the

addition of the corset and petticoat to my daily wear, as well as a pattern of rounding forward in the shoulders, which is a personal habit of mine. In addressing all of these habits, it was important for me to maintain a consistent awareness of my physical life by “checking in” with myself, performing a conscious internal check of my physical use, inhibiting any holding, and then sending myself the main Alexander directions. By maintaining a consistent awareness, I was able to find a desirable ease of movement and fully embody the physical life through my Imaginary Body.

PRODUCTION AND PERFORMANCE

Final Rehearsals

The addition of the technical elements as we moved into dress rehearsals was very stressful for me. Ideally, an actor will feel a sense of last piece of the puzzle coming into place as she puts on her costume and starts using the actual performance props. I, however, initially had the opposite reaction. During our first dress rehearsal, I felt quite out of sorts, as if I were somehow in conflict with everything that I was touching and that was touching me. I felt that it was important that Maggie be in complete control of her domain, but I was having a lot of difficulty handling the props in the deft manner that I wanted to. We did not receive the majority of our actual props until the tech rehearsals started, and they were often quite different from what we had been using as rehearsal props. Where I wanted to be smoothly moving through my use of the objects and space around me, I found myself struggling to maintain ease. I also didn't feel completely at home in my costume, as if it were something that was simply laying on top of me, rather than a part of my sense of self. The quick changes also seemed much more difficult than I expected, which I allowed to cause me further consternation. These struggles were also manifestations of the stress and doubt I was feeling about my own work in the week leading up

to this first dress rehearsal. I had been putting immense amounts of pressure on myself to be excellent and carry the show and impress people with my work; I become too caught up in making the “right” choices and what I “should” be doing rather than exploring the possible choices and what I “could” be doing. I left our first dress rehearsal feeling very defeated and doubtful about the quality of my work.

After this rehearsal, I knew that I needed to find a way through this self-doubt back to a feeling of freedom and ease. I had a meeting with Dr. Mitchell, who did a lot to quell my fears by talking me through taking the stress off of myself and bringing my attention back to the fundamentals – playing the obstacle and taking my time living in each moment. I also worked to utilize my practice of the Alexander Technique to come back home to myself and find a greater feeling of ease. By releasing some of the mental tension, I was able to come to the second dress rehearsal from a place of strength instead of fear. I was also buoyed by some alterations in my costumes; my corset and skirts were taken in, which greatly improved my feeling of the fit of the costume. For the first time, I felt like Maggie in those clothes, which was a joy and a relief because I hadn’t had that feeling even through the fittings, and I was beginning to wonder if I would have that feeling of completeness in the wardrobe. It wasn’t that the costumes weren’t well made before; they were beautiful, right from the start. I just needed to be ready to fill those shoes, and on that day, I was. There were still the typical bumps in the road in the last few rehearsals – finessing the timing of certain moments or finagling with some props I hadn’t yet made friends with – but the road toward our opening felt much smoother starting with the second dress rehearsal. It was not a very technically demanding show, so my primary focus could be on my work and marrying that with the final technical elements.

Performances

Hobson's Choice had a unique performance run. We opened for a select group of University of Florida freshman enrolled in the "What is the Good Life?" seminar for the first nine performances before opening to the public for our final eight performances. I anticipated a distinct difference between the two audiences due to the variance of the groups' demographics and, for the most part, I was correct. Opening for what I liked to call our "preview audience" of freshmen was a bit nerve-wracking. I wasn't quite sure how they were going to react or if they would buy into the humor of the show. Although it took time for each student audience to warm up to the show and exhibit a high level of vocal response, ultimately they seemed to quite enjoy it. Their responses to Will and Maggie's relationship in particular were very rewarding. Before this show, I had never experienced an audience breaking into cheers when I kissed someone onstage, but every night without fail, the wedding night scene drew whoops and hollers from the audience, which I found very satisfying. However, during previews I started to become a bit too focused on the audience response, resulting in my chasing the comedy rather than letting the comedy happen naturally. I started feeling like I needed to compete for attention with Sean Cancellieri, the actor playing Will, who was hilarious in the role and regularly drew many laughs from the crowd. In Alexander Technique terms, I began endgaining, focusing on the end result rather than the process of getting there. I was over-efforting in my pursuit of humor. However, I was successful in recognizing where I was straying off-course and, again, used a combination of refocusing my own thoughts as well as discussion with Dr. Mitchell to help get my performance back on track. Here I focused on playing the truth and coming to the play with a fresh set of eyes, truly using the obstacle to launch my pursuit of the essential action, and always assuming that the character is not doing well in that pursuit. I also came more in touch with Maggie's scrappiness and started engaging my lower body more as I utilized my Will force more strongly. I felt as if I

had truly come home to Maggie by our sixth performance for the students.

Our public audiences were, for the most part, quite a bit more vocally responsive than our student audiences. This was particularly evident in our opening night audience. The humor of this play is primarily intellectual or situational and naturally appeals to a slightly older audience, so our public audiences, which consisted of a wider range of ages, had an easier time relating to the play. There were still some quiet nights, however, when I wasn't sure if the audiences were fully on board with us. Yet after refocusing my energy, I was able to simply remain present on stage and worry less about what the audience was thinking. I made it my nightly goal to maintain my focus on the present moment onstage without working any harder to engage the audience, and I believe I was successful in that goal during our public run. We weren't without difficulties, however, as Sean suffered some illness and injury during this period. At one point, he got pinkeye, which was problematic because we kiss several times throughout the show; there was a strong fear that I, as well as other members of the cast and crew, could catch it. We discussed possible alterations of the blocking with Dr. Mitchell, but I decided that I was fine with taking the risk of touching and kissing Sean despite the pinkeye, because I felt that the show would lose something without the physical expression of Maggie and Will's relationship. That turned out to be a productive choice as I never caught pinkeye, thanks to a considerable amount of hand washing and strategically placed hand sanitizer. Sean also injured his knee in our second-to-last performance during a particularly energetic wedding night scene; he had to muscle through the pain for the last two performances. All in all, our performance run was very successful and I had the most fun I have ever had onstage performing Maggie. I would have been happy to continue the run indefinitely, but as a whole, the show was ready to close by the time closing night came, as our set, costumes, and even some of the actors were starting to show significant wear.

Personal Evaluation

I am very proud of the work I did in *Hobson's Choice*. Several people remarked to me that it was the best work that they had seen me do at the University of Florida, and I agree. While my work throughout the process was not perfect, I found a level of ease, moment-to-moment focus, and full-bodied life that I had never before reached. I was also reminded holding myself to a standard of “perfection” was not useful, as perfection is not possible. Throughout the process, I was able to utilize the training I received during my graduate studies to elevate the quality of my work. The extended run was an invaluable learning experience for me as I continued to grow in my performance even after the show had opened.

There were some areas of my work that could have used further improvement. I will need to continue to work on finding ease in my vocal use and broadening my vocal range in my future stage work. My dialect could also have been more consistent and carried a stronger sense of the musical life of the dialect. My work also would have benefitted from more specifically and clearly articulated objectives and essential actions earlier on in the process. Additionally, the added pressure and stress I put on myself during the final stages of the rehearsal process was unproductive. However, in this matter, I am proud of my ability to recognize when I was taking missteps and refocus my work in a more productive fashion. I am learning how to take a proactive role in examining my approach to the work and utilize the director as a resource to identify the means to improving my performance. In the end, I was able to thoroughly enjoy myself onstage and give an energetic and effective performance.

CONCLUSION

The process of creating the role of Maggie in *Hobson's Choice* was difficult, but ultimately very rewarding. The use of essential action, the Chekhov Technique, and the

Alexander Technique were crucial in my development of this character. This kind of hybrid approach was very productive for me, and one that I will continue to use in my future acting work. I greatly enjoyed working with my director and cast mates; the chemistry we created and the affection we all had for each other were present in the rehearsal room and onstage in every performance. I am proud of the growth of my own work as well as that of my cast mates' throughout the process and believe that the production as a whole was quite successful. I feel grateful for the lessons I have learned in creating and performing this role and am confident in my ability to transfer those skills into my acting career beyond the University of Florida.

APPENDIX A

PRODUCTION PROGRAM

UF
UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA

School of THEATRE + DANCE

**HOBSON'S
CHOICE**

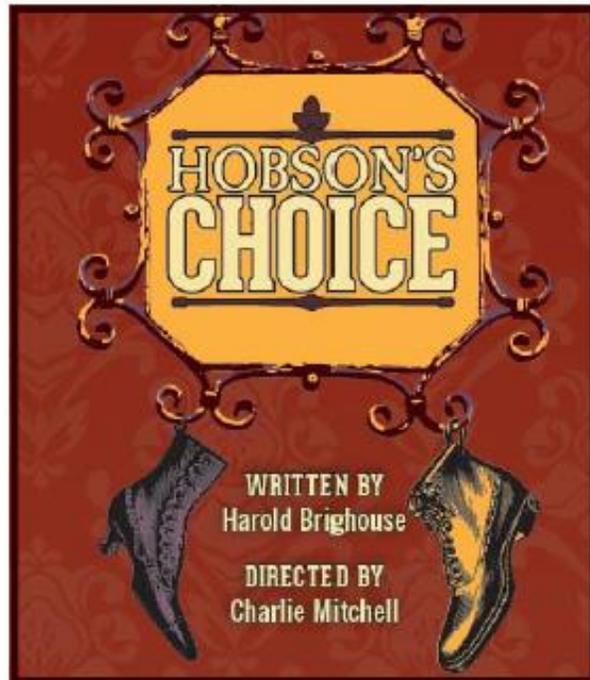
WRITTEN BY
Harold Brighouse

DIRECTED BY
Charlie Mitchell

FEBRUARY 8 - FEBRUARY 16, 2014

Constans Theatre

CBS 4 9 abc GTN MeTV



Lighting Design

Patricia Mayme

Scenic Design

Elizabeth Frith

Stage Manager

Andrea Camargo

Costume Design

Alyssa Couturier-Herndon

Sound Design

Mike McShane

Properties Design

Jason Myron Wright

There will be one 10 minute intermission.

Please turn off all cellular devices.

Food and drink are not permitted in the theatre.

Produced through special arrangement with Samuel French Inc.

Cast

Henry Horatio Hobson	Michael Martinez-Hamilton
Maggie Hobson	Emily Green*
Alice Hobson	Melissa Nave
Vickey Hobson	Ariel Reich
Will Mossop	Sean Cancellieri
Tubby Wadlow	Gabe Galloway
Albert Prosser	Andrew Quimby
Freddy Beenstock	Sam Richardson
Ada Figgins	Carrie Bigley
Dr. MacFarlane	Nazeeh Tarsha
Jim Heeler	Alex Johnson
Mrs. Hepworth	Amanda Schlacter

Time & Setting

1880, the town of Salford in Lancashire county, England.

Act 1

Hobson's Boot Shop

Act 2

A cellar in Oldfield Road & the parlor of Hobson's Boot Shop

Snobbery is a global phenomenon... What is a snob? Anybody who takes a small part of you and uses that to come to a complete vision of who you are.

- Alain de Botton

meritocracy, n. --A system which rewards the talented and high-achieving instead of those with wealth or high social rank.

* Indicates Project in Lieu of Thesis

Biographies

Dr. Charlie Mitchell (Director) earned his PhD from the University of Colorado at Boulder, MA from Boston University, and BFA from Ithaca College. Before becoming an assistant professor of theatre at the University of Florida, he worked as a director and actor for a variety of theatres in New York, Chicago, and Baltimore, including three years as an artistic associate and company member in the award-winning Chesapeake Shakespeare Company. At UF, he has directed *In the Blood*, *You Can't Take It With You*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *A Piece of My Heart*, and *Urinetown*. Most recently, he co-directed *Avenue Q* at the Hippodrome Theatre.

Janiel Myers (Assistant Director) is a Jamaica native, though soulfully Italian and just so happens to be studying theatre at UF. Theatre, languages, and travelling are her favorite things. She enjoys working with Charlie and is grateful for the opportunity to work with and learn from him again! Woot woot!

Andrea Camargo (Stage Manager) Couldn't be happier to be stage managing my first production. Thank you Charlie for your help, Sarah for trusting me this job, my friends for their support (especially Alyssa for helping so much during this process), the cast for their hard work and to my family in Colombia, much love (particularly Sergio) -the sky is the limit.

Alyssa Blitch (Assistant Stage Manager) is very excited to participate in a second main stage show at UF. Alyssa would like to thank Andrea for letting her come on board as a newbie to stage managing and to the cast for being so lovely. Alyssa also thanks her family and Troy for their constant support and love.

Colette Rackleff (Assistant Stage Manager): "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Alyssa Couturier-Herndon (Costume Designer) is honored to be presenting her first show at UF. She would like to thank her fellow grad students for their dedication and hard work, and Robin and Stacey for their support. Above all, she would like to thank God and her husband for always believing in her.

Patricia Mayme (Lighting Designer) is a 2nd- year Lighting Design MFA candidate. She received her BA in Theatre - Design and Technology from UNLV. UF credits include *Never the Sinner*, assistant lighting design on *Ajax in Iraq*, associate lighting design for *Servant of Two Masters*, and lighting design mentor for *Brighton Beach Memoirs*.

Mike McShane (Sound Designer) is a Masters of Fine Arts candidate at the University of Florida. He recently designed and operated lights for *Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol*. He will design sound for *Angels in America: Perestroika* at UF this Spring. His design website is www.sonofsham.com.

Elizabeth Frith (Scenic Designer) is glad to have had the opportunity to work on *Hobson's Choice* for her Senior Thesis. She would like to thank everyone involved in the production: Patricia, Alyssa, Jason, Andrea, Charlie, Jason, Jaimie and Nichole as well as Tony and Zak for all their hard work and flexibility in the shop. Special thanks to her advisor and mentor Mihai Ciupe for giving her this opportunity and guiding her through her time here at University of Florida and Carly Peloquin for being an awesome confidant. Finally, she would like to thank her wonderful fiancée for being with her every step of the way, through every up, down, sideways, and forwards!

Emily Green (Maggie Hobson) is a 3rd-year MFA Acting candidate. Previous UF credits include *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (Kate), *Two Rooms* (Ellen), and *A Piece of My Heart* (Sissy). She also directed *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind* and appeared as Sydney in *The Altruists* with Florida Players. Much love and thanks to Charlie for his leadership and advice, the crew for all their hard work, and the cast for the laughs and love. Special thanks to my family, BAM!: The Experiment, Tiza, and Dr. Ralf for all their support and guidance over the last three years. Extra special thanks to Jon Snow.

Michael Martinez Hamilton (Henry Horatio Hobson) Previous roles include: *All My Sons* (Joe Keller), *An Inspector Calls* (Birling), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Oberon), *Romeo and Juliet* (Friar Laurence), *Twelfth Night* (Malvolio), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Don Pedro), *The Tempest* (King Alonso), *The Taming of The Shrew* (Baptista), *The Waiting Room* (Dr. McCaskill), and every role in the West Coast premiere of *Eat the Runt*.

Sean Cancellieri (William Mossop) is a 2nd-year MFA Acting candidate. His recent credits include *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *The Altruists* and *A Servant to Two Masters*. He would like to thank his fellow cast, crew and the 1st Family for the continued guidance and support. This performance is dedicated to the memory of a dear friend and brother Kal Dunsmoor.

Ariel Reich (Vickey Hobson) is a Freshman BFA Acting student, most recently seen in *Guys and Dolls*. She is overjoyed to be a part of this incredible show and cast, correction: family. She expresses endless, warm gratitude to her family, friends, and Charlie. For you, Dr. KOB<3.

Melissa Jane Nave (Alice Hobson) a 3rd-year BFA Acting Major is thrilled to be a part of her third UF production. Previous credits include Germaine in *Never the Sinner*, and Cherie in *A Servant to Two Masters*. Special thanks to her family and friends, Charlie, and the creative team!

Sam Richardson (Freddy Beenstock) This is my first performance at the Constans Theatre. I'd like to thank my fellow actors and family for their support. This is my first semester as a BFA actor at UF and I'm extremely grateful for this opportunity from the College of Fine Arts.

Andrew Quimby (Albert Prosser): is a first-year BA theatre student and could not be more excited to be part of his first production at UF, *Hobson's Choice*. He would like to thank his parents, Joe and Cathy, for sending him here and Charlie Mitchell for this opportunity. Enjoy the show!

Gabe Galloway (Tubby Wadlow) is very excited to be taking the Constans stage for the second time. As always many and multiple thanks to Charlie, my cast mates, family, and friends. And thank you to God for blessing me with this opportunity.

Amanda Schlachter (Mrs. Hepworth) is a 2nd-year MFA Acting candidate. UF credits include Tecmessa/Gertrude Bell in *Ajax in Iraq*, The Mother in *Blood Wedding*, Blanche/Kate US in *Brighton Beach Memoirs* and Maryamma in *Miss Witherspoon*. Amanda also loves teaching here at UF and is forever grateful for this opportunity. www.amandaschlachter.com

Nazeeh Tarsha (Dr. MacFarlane) I would like to send my appreciation and thanks to all of the designers and stage managers that helped put the production together and Dr. Mitchell for the opportunity of being in the show. Also, I couldn't have done this without the support of my friends and family. Thanks Elizabeth!

Alex Johnson (Jim Heeler) is a Senior BA Theatre and Psychology major performing in his fourth University of Florida production (*Madwomen of Chaillot*, *Urinetown*, and *Blood Wedding*). He was also seen in Florida Player's productions of *12/21/12*, *Maple and Vine*, *The Mercy Seat* and UF's Hip-Hop Theatre troupe *Signs of Life*.

Carri Bigley (Ada Figgins) is a third-year BA acting student who is so thrilled to be making her stage debut here at UF. She would like to thank her parents for always supporting her dreams, God for giving her this passion, Charlie for this opportunity and her amazing cast and crew.

Special Thanks

Jon Snow, The Hippodrome Theatre, Jenny Lee



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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.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KCACTF regional festival and may also be considered for national awards recognizing outstanding achievement in production, design, direction and performance.

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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Assistant Stage Managers	Alyssa Blitch & Colette Rackleff
Sound Board Operators	Megan Whitiker, Rhianna Bergquist
Light Board Operators	Christine Dorsey, Dalton Hamilton
Deck Electricians	Lauren Hoefler, Rachel Stern
Run Crew	Mallory Carll, Cydney Walker, Daniel Dicola, Daniel Womack, Marcellis Cutler, Rachel Sheahn, John Schluter, Daniel Fuentes
Costume Studio Manager	Kate Glennon
Costumer	Michelle Benoit
Costume Studio Assistants	Alyssa Couturier, Lisa Eash, Tracy Floyd, Janae Lafleur, Kayla Lopez
Wardrobe Heads	Amber Chandler & Adriana Robles
Dressers	Kaitlyn Chomin, Alexandra Christie, Imani Cole, Kelsey Cote, Samantha Kennedy, Emily Lewis, Janiel Myers, Sara Nelson, Allison Newcombe, Alex Pinchin, Sara Price, Amanda Stambrosky
Master Electrician	Todd Bedell
Light Shop Assistants	Patricia Coleman, Dan Hopper, Julia LaVault, Topher Stumreiter
Technical Director	Zak Herring
Master Carpenter	Tony Berry
Scenic Studio Assistants	Nichole Bianco, Jaime Scott Frank, Jason Myron Wright
Director of Operations	Sarah White
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Dr. Judith Williams	Performance
Dr. David Young	Professor Emeritus/Directing

STAFF

Todd Bedell	Master Electrician
Tony Berry	Master Carpenter
Kate Glennon	Costume Studio Assistant Manager
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A comedy by Harold Brighouse
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A drama by John Logan
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music by Frank Loesser,
book by Jo Swerling & Abe Burrows
Directed by Tony Mata
Constans Theatre
Oct. 18 – Oct. 27

TRIBES

A new play by Nina Raine
Directed by David Young
Nadine McGuire Black Box Theatre
March 14 – March 23

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19th Annual African Dance Showcase
Directed by Mohamed DaCosta
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**ANGELS IN AMERICA, PART TWO:
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A gay fantasia on national themes
by Tony Kushner
Directed by Tim Altmeyer
Constans Theatre
March 28 – April 6

APPENDIX B

PRODUCTION PHOTOS



Act 1, Scene 1:

“And now you’ll have the boots to go with the laces, Mr. Prosser.”

Act 1, Scene 1:

“Maggie, we know you’re a pushing saleswoman, but –”



Act 1, Scene 2:

“But, I’ll tell you, if some women could see themselves as men see them, they’d have a shock.”





Act 1, Scene 3:

“Certainly, Mrs. Hepworth.”

Act 1, Scene 6:

“It’s the future that I’m looking to.
What’s your idea for that?”



Act 1, Scene 9:

“I thought we’d just drop in.”





Act 2, Scene 2:

“I’ve kept away from lawyers all my life, I’ve hated lawyers, and they’ve got their chance to make me bleed for it.”

Act 2, Scene 3:

“Will and me’s going to be busy and you’ll maybe find enough to do yourselves with getting wed.”



Act 2, Scene 4:

The Wedding Night



Act 2, Scene 8:

“You leave my wedding ring alone!”



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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Emily Green earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Acting from Millikin University in 2006. After graduating, she served one term of service in AmeriCorps as a member of City Year Columbia in South Carolina. She also worked for two years as an Applied Behavior Analysis Implementer at a private school for children with autism in Kansas City, MO before pursuing her graduate degree.

During her studies at the University of Florida, Emily has put her training into use in a variety of ways. Her credits at UF include productions of *Hobson's Choice*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *Two Rooms*, *A Piece of My Heart*, *Ajax in Iraq*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Roberto Zucco*. She was also involved with the student theatre group, Florida Players, appearing in productions of *The Altruists* and *The Children's Hour* as well as directing a production of *30 Neo-Futurist Plays from Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind*. At the time of this writing, Emily is in rehearsal for the Hippodrome Theatre's production of *The Tempest*.