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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Balancing Authenticity and Perception in a Devised Process

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Theatre and Dance (Stage Management)

by

Morgan Zupanski

Committee in charge:

Lisa Porter, Chair
Anthony Davis
Charles Means
Deborah Stein

2016

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The thesis of Morgan Zupanski is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2016

DEDICATION

For my Family, Mentors, and Friends.
I am continually and eternally grateful for all of the amazing support, love, and guidance.
Thank you.

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File 2. *Movers + Shakers* Calling Pages 24, 25, 26

File 3. *Movers + Shakers* Calling Page 101

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Balancing Authenticity and Perception in a Devised Process

by

Morgan Zupanski

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Stage Management)

University of California, San Diego, 2016

Professor Lisa Porter, Chair

Knowing how to balance the perception of collaborators with the choice to be an authentic leader is what makes an effective stage manager. Growing up in hotels, as mirrored in the set of Movers + Shakers, I was taught that the perception of the customer was always right. In my work, navigating perception means more than making sure someone is happy. It is taking inventory of how everyone feels in response to my actions as a leader, and balancing how I take responsibility for my actions with defending my

choices. When collaborators and I disagree, I work to help the group move forward as a whole in spite of the conflict.

The director of Movers + Shakers taught me that collaboration means sharing ideas and seeing where discussion takes us, whether that is agreeing or opposing and discovering an innovative third path, born out of a disagreement. Similar to the character of Dorrie, I practiced asserting my opinions and trusting my gut while having challenging conversations. Engaging my authentic self while stage managing this process also meant being open to feedback, and staying present with the evolving needs of a devised process. My work on Movers + Shakers was a continual negotiation between remaining true to my instincts and incorporating the insights of my collaborators. Like Dorrie, I was invested while staying curious about the actions and intentions of my colleagues. Ultimately, my successful negotiation of this process is what empowered me to be an authentic and effective leader.