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An Actor and His Suitcase

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Williams, Maurice

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Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

An Actor and His Suitcase

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

in

Theatre and Dance (Acting)

by

Maurice Williams

Committee in charge:

Professor Kyle Donnelly, Chair  
Professor Charlie Oates  
Professor Ursula Meyer  
Professor Manuel Rotenberg

2013



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

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2013

## **DEDICATION**

For Joyce and Gladstone. J.MP.R – 1.Zr.iV – Myn.R - .X. And to my grandmother who always told me: “Just go do it.”

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This blank page is hardly enough space to acknowledge all the people who have helped me through this journey. With that in mind I am going to take this space to thank a few select people. Some of them will read this, some will never know it exists; all of them are directly responsible for this achievement.

- Nancy Boykin – for being my first teacher and telling me that the only way to be “the greatest actor in the world,” is to be the greatest actor I can be; and then giving me the confidence to believe that I could achieve both of those impossibilities.
- Donna Snow – for telling me that graduate study would make me a better actor; but, more importantly, that it would make me a better person. She then spent tireless hours working with me to be the man that walked into the audition room at Ripley Grier studios on that December morning.
- Kyle Donnelly – for being the teacher I always wanted and needed. Whatever you saw on that previously mentioned December morning allowed you to take a chance on an over eager kid from Queens and I thank God, and every other higher energy out there, that you did. Not only is this achievement yours to share with me, but any semblance of my future career. I owe you more than I can put into words.



ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

An Actor and His Suitcase

by

Maurice Williams

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Acting)

University of California, San Diego, 2013

Professor Kyle Donnelly, Chair

The idea of the actor as journeyman is as old as the profession itself. The travel troupes of yesteryear laid the groundwork for the theatres of Shakespeare and the regional theatre circuit here in America. So if there is one thing an actor must have: it's a good suitcase. Or two. One for the rags and trinkets he, or she, holds dear; and another for all the skills he, or she, brings to every project.

When I left the east coast for San Diego I brought with me those two suitcases. Luckily for me, the latter of the two doesn't have to be checked or carried-on. That second suitcase was filled with all the things a young aspiring actor should have:

unearned confidence, unwarranted self-doubt, and unrelenting will to be best he can be. Thrown in also were some “soft-skills” I had learned at the undergraduate level. I was packed and ready for a new journey.

Upon arriving here at San Diego I had to be willing to set down that suitcase, turn it over and empty it out on the sidewalk. For it was to be filled with new ideas and skills that wouldn't be a weight on my shoulders; but more so a Mary Poppins bag of magic. I had to work extremely hard for every addition to that suitcase. But now that I stand here with a full suitcase I'm thankful for the time and energy that it took to fit each article in it.