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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Flying: Freedom and Expression on Stage

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

in

Theatre and Dance (Acting)

by

Tom Patterson

Committee in charge:

Kyle Donnelly, Chair
Ursula Meyer
Charles Oates
Manuel Rotenberg

2014

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

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2014

DEDICATION

To Mimi and Kevin Patterson. Of all the parents, they are the best parents.

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LIST OF SUPPLEMENTAL FILES

- File 1. Creative Ensemble in *Out of the Silence: Afghan Women Writer's Project*.
- File 2. Moritz in *Spring Awakening*.
- File 3. Hugh in *The Santa Barbarians* with cast.
- File 4. Shill in *Elizabeth I*.
- File 5. Marcus in *Titus Andronicus* with Kim Blanck as Lavinia.
- File 6. Trevor in *Little Children Dream of God*.
- File 7. Old Man in *Fool for Love*
- File 8. Lyle in *Cornerstone*.
- File 9. Uncle John in *The Grapes of Wrath*.
- File 10. Hastings in *She Stoops to Conquer*.

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Flying: Freedom and Expression on Stage

by

Tom Patterson

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Acting)

University of California, San Diego, 2014

Professor Kyle Donnelly, Chair

I am an actor. I wrapped a lot of my identity around that sentence. After moving to New York, churning through four years of training at an undergraduate level, and spending some time as a working professional, I began to feel stagnant. The sense of play had been lost. Pounding pavement just for the sake of audition was beginning to take its toll. While I had worked around the country, I felt that theatre had become an obligation. Success was mandatory. Then I got sick.

I developed an autoimmune disorder known as alopecia areata. While it can happen to healthy individuals, my doctor decided that the amount of stress in my life combined with the fact I was not eating had caused my body to shut down. A change

was necessary. Acting had ceased being pleasurable. I wanted to find my way back to that feeling of weightlessness on stage. Adjusting my attitude, I decided to train again, but this time with a positive energy.

Throughout my time at UCSD I concentrated on being easy on myself. I know I am harsh with myself. Explaining the transformation three years of training is impossible in limited space, but in my final show, *She Stoops to Conquer*, I re-found lightness. The training, from voice to movement, has been unexpected and immensely fulfilling. While I am continually working on myself emotionally and physically, this program has done more than make me a better actor. It has made me a happier, fuller human being.