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He Stoops to Conquer His Doubts: An Actor's Journey

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

He Stoops to Conquer His Doubts: An Actor's Journey

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

in

Theatre and Dance (Acting)

by

Michael Hammond

Committee in charge:

Kyle Donnelly, Chair
Ursula Meyer
Charlie Oates
Manuel Rotenberg

2014

The thesis of Michael Hammond 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 my family, especially my mom, dad, sister, and of course, my dog Lucy: every one of you has lifted me up without fail. Whether it was a smile, a card, a 3,000 mile flight across the country, or a lick on the nose: you knew what I needed even before I did.

Thank you with all my heart.

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LIST OF SUPPLEMENTAL FILES

- File 1. Ernst Robel in *Spring Awakening*
- File 2. James in *The Santa Barbarians*
- File 3. King Philip of Spain in *Elizabeth I*
- File 4. Rico Verri in *Tonight We Improvise*
- File 5. Carles Casagemas in *Casagemas*
- File 6. Carles Casagemas in *Casagemas*
- File 7. Connie Rivers in *The Grapes of Wrath*
- File 8. Marlow in *She Stoops to Conquer*
- File 9. Marlow in *She Stoops to Conquer*
- File 10. Marlow in *She Stoops to Conquer*

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To all of the directors, playwrights, designers, stage managers, dancers and even the PhD-ers from 2012-2016, to the entire UCSD class of 2014, and in particular to all the actors that I have studied with here, from 2012, 2013, 2015, and 2016: we are UCSD and we are fearless. It has been an honor to share the stage with you all and I am so glad that we are about the step out into the world as friends and collaborators.

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We. Are. A Tossed Salad. I can't wait to see what we do out there.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

He Stoops to Conquer His Doubts: An Actor's Journey

by

Michael Hammond

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Acting)

University of California, San Diego, 2014

Professor Kyle Donnelly, Chair

What knowledge have I gained over the past two and a half years - lets call it three, it sounds nicer – that I did not know before? What about UC San Diego has changed my life? Everything is an easy answer. But I think I'm going to go with one word: confidence.

Confidence was, is, and will always be the defining word in my life. When I have it, I can go wherever I want; when it leaves me, I become trapped within the walls of my body. So what have I learned here that has taught me to hold on to that confidence? The strength, power and depth of my voice; the length of my spine; the 5 questions of my process; the singing range of my vocal chords; the clarity of my consonants; “O, for a muse of fire”; and the love of myself. I am enough. I am me.

In my personal statement in my application to UCSD, I wrote: “When I leave graduate school, I don’t expect to feel like I’m a complete actor; I want to have the confidence and technical skills to explore the creativity of theatre, continue to discover and learn from new experiences, and share the stories of my characters.” Rereading it now, I feel like I was yearning for some courage to jump right in into any situation. Do I have that? Sometimes. Do I have more of it than I did before? Most certainly. And that’s only after 3 years? Just imagine where I’ll be in 20.