

Abstract

The value of dramatic performance has fallen out of favor with contemporary American culture. Despite the increasing richness of diversity and pliability of modern theatre, the frequency of times the everyday consumer is exposed to live performance continues to become an ever-widening margin. In part, the cause can be traced to the increasing production value of commercial theatre which has grown to match the manic sensory experience of pop and rock concerts, making ticket prices virtually unaffordable. Today, the production cost of the average Broadway musical can range from \$5-\$15 million, (Downs, Right, Ramsey, 225) The more theatre artists attempt to imitate the experience audiences receive at the cinema, however, the further distanced we become from the primary significance and efficacy of theatrical performance – live, tangible human connection.

The emergence of storefront theatre in major cities such as Chicago and New York have begun to disperse the mythos that theatre is for the elite, but much work is left to be done in part of artists to bridge this gap and provide quality theatre in innovative ways which don't require exuberant ticket prices to cover the overheads of production and commercial revenue. In a world where media is available instantaneously and often at a nominal fee, theatre must learn to adapt and become as facile as the modern setting in which we consume entertainment in order to survive as a prevalent artform. The crucial fulcrum from which this paradigmatic shift begins is at the pedagogical level. Young adults training in professional theatre often lack the impetus to practice art outside the prescribed requirements of their specific degree. Providing a space and opportunity to create as an independent artist destigmatizes the idea that theatre is only that which exists on the Great White Way and other equitable venues.

Luckily, a recent trend in theatrical entrepreneurship has pressed college programs to provide opportunities for students to produce their own creative opportunities. (Essig, 117) Collegiate programs such as the Cave Theatre Studio Series at Ball State University provides an opportunity to empower future generations of artists to practice art and create the opportunities they wish to be involved with. It is within this context that myself and my collaborator, Annaliese Loxton utilized the opportunity of student-run and managed theatre to produce, direct, and music direct the Adam Gwon musical Ordinary Days. This endeavor into direction and production as an independent artist results in a culmination of the skills and information accumulated within the Bachelor of Fine Arts Musical Theatre training program. I will articulate the process and application of my formal training as it pertains to bringing to fruition a solely independent project in a market which calls for independent expression and creation more than ever before.