

Candidate's Statement
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School of Music, Theatre and Dance
Department of Theatre
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When I started my tenure-track position at Oakland I brought along a substantial amount of professional and instructional experience. I had worked in professional theater for twenty-five years, in over fifty productions. I had performed in Chicago, Kansas City and Detroit, as well as smaller markets throughout the Midwest as a member of the Actors' Equity Association (the professional theatrical union) for seventeen years. I had garnered numerous positive reviews, nominations and awards for my work. I had the privilege to share the stage with well-known names, including Paul Rudd and Keegan-Michael Key. In the world premiere of *Killing Time*, I had the honor of originating the role of Amy under the direction of Tony Award winner Martin Platt. I originated another role in the world premiere of *Filthy Talk for Troubled Times*, this time under the direction of internationally-renowned playwright, filmmaker and director Neil LaBute. My work had been noticed and praised in national and international publications, including *The Kansas City Star*, *The Detroit Free Press*, backstage.com and actorsequity.org.

In addition to my work as a performer, I had ten years of experience as a theatrical coach, working in such areas as movement, dialect, voice and choreography. Included in those experiences was coaching movement for the Michigan Shakespeare Festival and coaching dialect for Meadow Brook Theater. I had coached local rap artists in acting for the film *Envy*, coached high school students in stage voice for a production of *Julius Caesar* for the Royal Shakespeare Company, and choreographed Emmy-winning actor Danny Jacobs in *Romeo and Juliet* for the Jewish Ensemble Theater. I was a seasoned and still passionate veteran of the working theatrical world.

When I arrived at Oakland University, I also had a significant resume in the academic world, having been an adjunct professor in a number of programs for 12 years and an Assistant Professor at Central Michigan University for two years. Prior to joining the faculty at Oakland, I had been offered a tenure-track position at a Research 1 Graduate Program in Athens, Georgia.

Although I am now primarily a teacher of acting, I continue to keep one foot in professional theater. This keeps me invigorated, grounded and inspired. Performing helps breathe a living, informed and enthusiastic breath into my work with students. Armed with fresh experience of the realities of working actors, I am better able to show them how to use every tool at their disposal to turn their dreams into practical, professional realities.

As a working professional in so many areas of theatrical production and performance, I was always inspired by the collaborations and connections demanded and fostered that truly moved me. Theater is first and foremost a collaborative meeting of artistic and technical sensibilities and skills, and this idea of collaboration is, to my mind, the most profound and meaningful concept that I can share with my students. Inspiration on the stage blossoms best when it unfolds in a cooperative atmosphere of mutual give and take, and in a communal exploration of a shared but ultimately unknown goal. Teaching, is always - at its best - a performative and collaborative

venture. Teaching is also a kind of exploratory performance, and a good teacher strives to bring the students into the experience as co-collaborators in the process. Teaching theater is particularly unique in that performance and collaboration are also lessons imparted. It is a perfect marriage of form and content. It has been, and continues to be, one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

In each and every one of my courses, I see my students as colleagues, or potential colleagues. Teaching is not something I do “to” them, but something I do “with” them. It has been 12 years of mutual collaboration and inspiration and, even as their instructor, I have learned so much from them in the process. Comments and reviews from students over the years have confirmed that my students, too, have left these courses with a deeper, richer and more confident sense of their professional, artistic, and human potential. While I hope my CV speaks for itself, the voices of the students have given me a profound sense of accomplishment and I am humbled by such remarks as those made by Tony Sharpe (Musical Theatre, 2019) in a speech for the Oakland Gala in November 2018:

Lynnae Lehfeldt taught me to kindle my inner fire. Professor Lehfeldt teaches both Acting: The Instrument, and Stage Voice; two of the most fundamental classes an actor will take throughout their time here at OU. Professor Lehfeldt showed me what organic strength looks like. Strength that truly stems from the self, that lies in vulnerability. Not in the amount of walls you put up, which is what I learned watching my mom. Through learning how to be a better actor I was learning how to be a better human, and I have Lynnae to thank for being not only my teacher, but also a grade A example.

TEACHING

In my 12 years as a teacher at Oakland, I have had the opportunity to develop curricula for eleven courses. The experience of conceiving and implementing my own courses has stretched and strengthened me as an instructor.

Courses I have taught include Acting: the Instrument; Stage Voice I; Stage Voice II; Acting: Shakespeare; Company Class; Theatre Ensemble; Meadow Brook Estate; History of Musical Theatre; Acting: Styles; Stage Movement; and Introduction to Theatre. I have also taught seven independent studies. While at Oakland, I have taught a one-course overload every year, with the exception of 2016-17, when I took a semester’s sabbatical leave.

In my Stage Voice I and Stage Voice II courses, I employ the work of preeminent voice practitioner Kristin Linklater. Linklater training is invaluable to any working stage actor. I became a Designated Linklater Teacher (DLT) in 2019, after 12 years of study, at the Kristin Linklater Voice Center in Orkney, Scotland. I consider this the most significant achievement of my teaching career, and I am the only DLT in the State of Michigan.

Linklater Voice work is absolutely transformational, as it aims to free the natural voice by connecting it to the breath and body, thoughts and feelings, and instincts and impulses of the

practitioner. It literally spurs the desire to communicate, which is the cornerstone of acting. Through this practice, actors learn to connect their bodies to their breath and sound in new ways. The culmination of the technique comes in learning to truly “embody” a character: to breathe the breath of the character, feel the emotions of the character, and speak organically with the very voice of the character the students are bringing to life. Every semester I receive emails from students describing the changes they feel within themselves, and confirming my conviction that it is a truly transformational experience. In 2020, sophomore Musical Theatre student John Cotey emailed me: “...the reason I’m emailing you is because your class has genuinely changed my life. I have never felt more comfortable in my own voice in my life. Today in my vocal coaching I hit notes that I never thought I’d hit in my life...”

The challenges of the 2020-21 academic year were particularly felt while attempting to deliver my performative courses on-line. Nevertheless, feedback from my students remained positive. Sophomore Musical Theatre student Alec Diem wrote: “I would say, out of all my classes this was the most ‘transformative’ class...I didn’t realize I was literally singing a C5 in my mix (a mix I didn’t know I had!) I literally had to excuse myself from the screen to start singing a song I’ve struggled with because it had some crazy high notes in it. I started singing it with newfound placement, and I did it! It was easy, sustainable, and resonate! I was literally almost brought to tears, because I just could not find this mix for the longest time!” And sophomore Musical Theatre student Matilda Seagraves wrote: “...all this knowledge of resonators under my belt, I was a new person. This sounds dramatic and it honestly was. I started to switch between resonators without realizing in my voice lessons and coaching and would suddenly feel so magnificent on a song...she said it was the best I ever sounded.”

As a Designated Teacher of Linklater Voice, I am sought out every year to teach workshops at other institutions. Since my promotion at OU, I have taught workshops for Emerson University, New York University Silver School of Social Work, Case Western Reserve University, Southeast Missouri State University, and a six-day graduate course for teachers of theatre education at the University of Northern Colorado. I also presented four workshops at the Region III/Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in 2018 and three in 2017. Locally, I took 30 physicians through an “Immediate Intimacy” workshop at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak in 2018.

My other area of specialization and focus is stage movement. In THA 1010 Acting: The Instrument, I introduce freshmen actors to the work of Trish Arnold, Jean Sabatine, Michael Chekhov, Rudolph Laban, Anne Bogart, and Tashi Suzuki. The foundation of this course is built upon developing body awareness. In 2017, I took a 200-hour Immersion Yoga Teacher Training taught by Richard Schactel in Seattle, WA. Schactel is one of the most experienced yoga trainers in the US and has been teaching since 1986. I utilize this training in the classroom, as it is an invaluable aid in helping students achieve a mind/body connection more quickly before we move on to the work of other practices and practitioners. When faculty meets with the graduating seniors in their final review, a common refrain among students is that Acting: The Instrument was the most beneficial course they took in their study and training at OU.

Every year, I also spend time as a student myself in order to bring new and evolving methodologies to my students. Since my promotion I have taken: “The Clown and the Accordion

of Distraction” (New London, CT), a 2-day workshop in the Michael Chekhov Clown Technique in 2021; “The Movement Work of Trish Arnold” (Santa Fe, NM) a 6-hour Master Class with Merry Conway, in 2021; “Acting in a Foreign Accent,” (Lawrence, KS) a 5-day Master Class with Paul Meier covering African, Spanish, Russian, French, and Italian accents, in 2020; “Sound and Movement,” at the Center for Linklater Voice (Orkney, Scotland) a 3-day Master Class with Judith Shahn, in 2020; and “Phonetics Intensive” at the Knight—Thompson Speechwork Intensive (New York, NY) in 2016. I also regularly attend the Voice and Speech Teachers Association (VASTA) conference and the American Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) conference, where I take classes, attend round table discussions, and build national and international relationships with fellow teachers and practitioners.

Directing theatrical productions is also among my responsibilities at Oakland. Since my promotion to Associate Professor, I directed *Seagull* on Oakland’s Main Stage in Winter 2019. This production also received a Certificate of Merit: Ensemble Production from the American College Theatre Festival. Sarah Hovis, had this to say in her review for *Rochester Media*:

The idea of longing and searching for identity are not new, but they are worth exploring. This is what makes the performances given by these university students all the more impressive. The material is meaty and each actor makes the most of the portion he or she is given...your heart breaks for Constantine and Nina because their inner turmoil is so visibly etched on their faces and in the way they carry themselves. These actors aren’t simply speaking their lines, but going all in and inhabiting their characters’ neuroses. It’s both exhausting and exhilarating to watch and all involved should be commended for the level of professionalism they bring to the performance.

I also directed three plays for young audiences: *James and the Giant Peach*, *The Three Little Pigs*, and *Wiley and the Hairy Man*. Each of these plays toured 20 schools in Michigan, each reaching an audience of some 2,600 children. The American College Theatre Festival honored each production with the Certificate of Merit: Ensemble Performance.

As Assistant Professor of Theatre specializing in Stage Voice, I am able to serve the department by vocal and dialect coaching Oakland productions. Since my promotion to Associate Professor, I have coached *Hammer and Nails*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *The Servant of Two Masters*, *Passage*, *The Who’s Tommy*, *Macbeth*, *Into the Woods*, and *Orestes*, the latter on the Greek island of Hydra. I have also continued to develop as a teacher outside of Oakland by dialect coaching *The Cripple of Inishmann* for Case Western Reserve University and *James and the Giant Peach* for Eastern Michigan University.

SCHOLARSHIP

I have also grown as a professional director since my promotion, having directed *The Taming of the Shrew* for the Water Works Shakespeare Festival in 2017. The founder and producer, Ed Nahhat, refers to the production as, “the best show Water Works has ever produced.” I have a standing invitation to direct for them again; however, my summer schedules over the last few years has not allowed it. Among other positive reviews, Patrice Nolan wrote this in *EncoreMichigan.org*:

...Water Works' *Taming of the Shrew*, directed by Oakland University Associate Professor of Theatre Lynnae Lehfeltdt, is performed entirely in the Commedia dell'arte tradition ...It's a blast...You don't have to understand the convention of commedia to appreciate that this cast is amazing...This ensemble works together like a precision military team on crack...We'll never know if Shakespeare intended *Taming of the Shrew* to be played as full-out Italian comedy. But this Water Works Theatre production convinces us - by its effervescent laugh level - that it's a pretty good idea.

And in the *Detroit Free Press*, John Monaghan said:

...This is "Shrew" of a different color as director Lynnae Lehfeltdt has chosen to present the action in the Italian commedia dell'arte style. White-robed clowns in masks both watch and participate in the Water Works version...the Water Works production earns bigger laughs...for those who already know the story, the Water Works production, with its focus on emotion and serious silliness, is the "Shrew" for you.

As pleased as I was to see such a response to my efforts at presenting a well-known standard of the stage in an unconventional form, I found even more joy and satisfaction in being able to cast two recent Oakland University students in their first professional productions.

In addition to directing and coaching, I have continued to develop as an actor. Since my promotion, I have been offered roles in six productions for Meadow Brook Theatre. I performed in four of those productions. Meadow Brook operates under a League of Resident Theatre Association (LORT) contract. LORT contracts are considered Off-Broadway contracts which are uniquely attractive contracts, which makes them highly competitive theatrical venues for actors from across the country. The last production I performed in, *Clue*, had only two Michigan actors in lead roles. The cast included seasoned actors from New York, Cleveland, and D.C. More than 13,000 people were in attendance for that production, breaking previous box office records. In October 2019, I performed the role of Helen Hubbard in *Murder on the Orient Express*, garnering many positive reviews for my work. Among them was this one by Angela Colombo for *Encore.Michigan.org*:

Lynnae Lehfeltdt plays the frisky loud American as if she is channeling Bette Midler in both song and spirit. The character of Helen Hubbard is big. Lehfeltdt embodies it and lets us have it with snarky one-liners.

And in *Rochester Media*, Sarah Hovis wrote:

There is humor in this adaptation and quite a bit of it comes courtesy of Lynnae Lehfeltdt as the man-hungry American Helen Hubbard...the breadth of combined stage experience Lehfeltdt and Crawford bring to these roles is evident and they are absolutely amazing to watch.

I also performed the iconic role of Madame Arcati in Meadow Brook's production of *Blithe Spirit* in February 2020, and Mrs. Shubert in *Shear Madness* October 2017. After each production, I received positive reviews as well as numerous laudatory emails from students and colleagues on campus including this message from President Pescovitz, "...We were thrilled to see you in the show and we thought your performance was just outstanding. It was so much fun to see you transformed in that role! Thank you for continuing to represent Oakland so spectacularly."

My scholarly pursuits also include expanding my professional expertise and the reputation I have developed as a local, regional and national voice coach. In 2017, actor Keegan-Michael Key asked me to the Netflix set of *Friends from College* in New York. Having experienced vocal fatigue, he was concerned that he would strain his voice in an emotionally charged scene and wanted me to help him. I invited two recent OU alumni to join me on set, and it was a wonderful, rewarding and enlightening experience for all of us. That experience was one of many I've had in the area of vocal/dialect coaching since my promotion. I have done vocal and dialect coaching for 16 professional productions. The theatres where I coached included Meadow Brook Theatre, the Purple Rose Theatre, Matrix Theatre, Tipping Point Theatre, Theatre Nova, Kickshaw Theatre, and Water Works Shakespeare Festival. These projects have been appraised and evaluated through reviews and professional peer assessments, all to great response. I have developed a reputation as a coach who is able to get results quickly and effectively due in no small part to my ability to speak to actors as a fellow working professional. After my work on *Mazel Tov, John Lennon* for Theatre Nova, Artistic Director Carla Milarch wrote:

I just wanted to thank you again for your wonderful dialect work with Forest on his John Lennon character voice. I was, frankly, amazed at how the work you did with him helped him to completely transform not only vocally, but character-wise as well! ...I am, as always, in awe of the work that you do.

And Bart Williams, Associate Professor of Voice and Movement at the Holland School at Southeast Missouri State University, wrote me to:

...congratulate you on *Murder on the Orient Express* at Meadow Brook. I thought you did a fantastic job, and also realized - wow - you coached the entire cast in eight radically different dialects! Turkish. French. Belgian. Swedish. Hungarian. Russian. Scottish. And British. Every character was believable and authentic...but not so much that I lost any of their words...[There was a]...balance of clarity and authenticity.

Since my promotion I have received invitations to present at multiple national and international conferences. My research into the movement work of Rudolph Laban and how that methodology can be applied to various acting techniques led to an invitation to present my findings at the VASTA Conference in Singapore in the workshops "Exploring Full Body Voice with Laban" and "Vocal and Physical Presence." I was also invited to VASTA's 2020 conference in Sydney, Australia where I was to present "Laban and Voice" and "The Pure Movement Work of Trish Arnold." Although the Sydney conference was canceled due to COVID, I was able to present the latter work at VASTA 2021. In December 2018, I presented "Vocal and Physical Presence" at the International Linguistics Conference, *Finding the Solution*, in Moscow, Russia. I have also

presented at the last three Southeastern Theater Conference (SETC) meetings and will present again this March: “Expand Your Vocal Resonance” and “Shaking Up the Bard with Sound and Movement.” With more than 5,000 attendees annually, SETC is the largest theater conference in the United States.

The Singapore VASTA conference also had the welcome, but unexpected result of taking my work into a brand new direction and arena when a participant in my workshop there recommended me to the *More than ESL* conference planning committee of Information Technologies, Mechanics and Optics (ITMO) in St. Petersburg, Russia. They asked if I would come to St. Petersburg to lead six sessions with English Language teachers. Jerry Frank, who was running the English Language Specialist program at the American Embassy in Moscow, remarked that he had never seen Russians actively participate so enthusiastically at a conference. He then recommended me to the State Department and encouraged me to make a formal application to become an English Language Specialist for the State Department. I applied and was accepted. In December 2018, found myself in Russia teaching at the American Embassy’s American Center, the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (Russia’s most elite institution) and the Slocic-Anglo-American School.

The highlight of my experience in Moscow was receiving a formal invitation from the American Ambassador Jon Huntsman to a reception at Spaso House in celebration of the English Program. The participants I had worked with in 2017 were all part of this program and communicated that my work with them had proven invaluable. During this time, I also taught one-week courses for ITMO’s international Master’s students. I was invited to return again in 2019 but had to decline due to performance obligations. A further invitation the following year was accompanied by this note from Mikhail Kurushkin: “On the basis of astonishing stories of your professionalism and zeal told by Maria Didkovskaia, may I invite you as a teacher for *Public Speaking/Vocal Presence* workshop my upcoming Internationalization of Research course during the last week of October 2020?” The Covid lockdown made this impossible, but in November of 2021 I was able to teach for them again. I am scheduled to teach again late October 2022 as well. In October 2021, I received the Oakland University Faculty Recognition Award for my work with the US Department of State as an English Language Specialist.

I have also continued to find projects that allow me to collaborate with fellow professors from Oakland University, University of Michigan, and Wayne State University. I collaborated on an original piece with Wayne State’s Assistant Professor of Music, Dr. Joo Won Park, and Oakland University’s Special Lecturer of Music, Bret Hoag. This piece, *Hungry*, was performed at the 2021 College Music Society Great Lakes Regional Conference in April, 2021. I performed *The History of Physics in 13 Songs* with University of Michigan Professor Michael Gould and Oakland’s Professor of Physics Alberto Rojo at the American Physics Society Conference in Boston. We also performed on the campuses of the University of Michigan and Oakland University in 2020. Currently, I am working as a vocal coach for Oakland University’s Associate Professor Thayer Jonutz on an original work entitled *Hammer and Nails*.

SERVICE

My service work has increased dramatically since my promotion. My most important professional service has been realized in being the creator and conference host of the Great Lakes Gender Parity in Theater Conference held on Oakland University's campus in August 2017. Inspiration for the conference came after I attended the Statera Conference in Denver in 2016. Over 50 participants from several states and Canada were in attendance at the Oakland conference, and the feedback was uniformly enthusiastic. Professor Jeanne Keep, of Edgewood College in Wisconsin, wrote:

The Great Lakes Gender Parity Conference gave me a way to discuss important issues in gender equality in my field and create strategies to put them into action on my own campus. A fantastic meeting of the minds, I applaud this effort and am honored to have been part of the first conference.

And Nancy Lipschultz of Indiana University said:

This conference was an inspiration. How can we truly move forward when over 50% of our stories are excluded? We as theater artists and educators found action items to use every day to create inclusion in everything we do.

Guy Sanville, Artistic Director of Michigan's own Purple Rose Theatre, wrote:

Attending the Great Lakes Gender Parity Conference was an exciting and illuminating experience I will continue to carry with me. The discussions were incredibly informative and passionate and of importance to every educator and theatre practitioner eager to provide more opportunities and to make better work. And the opportunities to network with others in the field was invaluable.

In addition to my artistic work, my professional service includes serving as an Associate Editor for the International Dialects of English Archive (IDEA). IDEA was created in 1997 and is the first online archive for primary-source recordings of English dialects and accents from around the world. The archive provides actors with real-life models that enable them to create their characters' accents and dialects. I have recorded subjects, transcribed the recordings and, when necessary, added scholarly commentary. I have contributed Michigan and Spanish dialect samples to this archive of source material that actors and scholars consider invaluable to their work. I also serve on the Kristin Linklater Artistic Core, where I provide programming and support of the center.

At Oakland, I continue to collaborate with Professor William Solomonson and his students in the Master of Training Development Program in the School of Education and Human Services, Department of Human Resource Development. My students and I provide voice-over narration for instructional e-learning courses designed by his students. Over two-week sessions in November and April we produce approximately 12-24 modules per year. Professor Solomonson wrote:

This great opportunity for both SMTD and HRD students would not exist if not for Professor Lehfeldt's efforts. I am certain the qualities Professor Lehfeldt has demonstrated through her work on this project must also be evident in her teaching, scholarship, and other service actions.

I also continue to work in the Embark program for the William Beaumont School of Medicine, teaching every year in the M2 medical student Capstone program. For health care professionals, an ability to project confidence and communicate clearly fosters improved relationships and better patient care. I provide Capstone students with two hours of instruction in public speaking skills. My evaluations continue to show class ratings as "outstanding." It is incredibly rewarding to realize that my work has an impact on professional fields and practices far beyond my own immediate discipline and areas of expertise.

My departmental service has increased significantly since my promotion to Associate Professor. In addition to teaching an overload of classes, I taught four independent studies in script analysis, audition technique, and Realism. When the School of Music, Theatre and Dance was formed in 2017, I agreed to serve as Co-Chair of the Department. In addition to the administrative duties of an academic chair – leading a department with multiple undergraduate degree programs of approximately 120 students, eight full-time and 21 part-time faculty, and two staff - the role also includes performing the duties of a producing agent. The production side includes leadership in season planning and at least seven productions annually, representing the department in outreach and engagement, and overseeing department recruitment and auditions.

Leading up to my time as Co-Chair, there had been ongoing, problematic behavior by one of the tenured faculty members. In the fall of my term as Co-Chair, a restraining order was filed between two team-teaching faculty members related to this behavior. I needed to take immediate and decisive action to address and document numerous student and faculty complaints working closely with our Human Resources department to determine the appropriate course of action. Ultimately, this led to the removal of the faculty member. During the process, I had to make adjustments to find replacement adjuncts and pianists to allow classes to continue where the pair was team-teaching.

Subsequently, in order to address the loss of the faculty member, I needed to find replacements for his teaching, directing, and music direction responsibilities. Two weeks into the Winter term, the Assistant Professor who had raised the concerns about the behavior of the other faculty member decided the emotional toll was too much and resigned. I took over teaching THA 4051 Meadow Brook Estate and the planning and organization of the one-week, spring Musical Theatre Showcases. I took graduating Musical Theatre students to the New York and Chicago spring showcases in conjunction with a team from Western Michigan University. It was a significant amount of additional work in addition to a 2/2 load. While the year was the most crucial and challenging of my career, I know that my leadership in these difficult times was invaluable to the Department.

The professional relationships I have developed over the years have enabled me to arrange Master Classes for the Department with notable leaders in the industry. In the last six years I have brought: *Acting Shakespeare* with Colm Feore, a 13-year veteran of the Stratford Festival,

who has also played characters in *The Umbrella Academy*, *House of Cards*, and *The Chronicles of Riddick*; *Scene Designing for Television* with Los Angeles-based set designer Andrew Layton (*Utopia* season one for Amazon, *Fargo* season 4 for FX, and *Kevin Can F*** Himself* for AMC); *Introduction to Improvisation* with Timothy C. Goodwin; *On-Camera Technique* with David Vegh; *Patsy Rodenburg Technique* with Nancy Lipschultz; and others.

The greatest source of pride for me has been the summer Linklater Master Class series I provided current students and alumni during the Covid lockdown of 2020. I brought in five Master Teachers for seven Master Classes, and gave instruction for six sessions. Alum and professional actor, Lily Talevski wrote of this experience:

Lynnae's summer Linklater Master Classes were, at one point, the only reason to get out of bed in the morning. She helped me get back in tune with my body, soul and voice during a time that was full of uncertainty, loneliness and fear.

I have also been asked to provide bi-weekly warm-ups for our students during the Fall 2020 and Winter 2021 terms. Each Tuesday and Thursday, students can Zoom in for a 20-minute physical and vocal warm-up for 12 hours of instruction.

I also continue to engage in community outreach by working with local High School and Middle School students and have, since my promotion, provided dialect and vocal coaching for the following productions: *Mary Poppins*, at Troy Athens High School; *Romeo and Juliet*, *Almost, Maine*, and *The Brothers Grimm* at Royal Oak High School; *Peter and the Starcatcher* at Detroit Country Day School; and *In the Heights* at Pioneer High School. I have also served as dialect/vocal coach for the Fenton Village Players production of *Something Rotten* and the Flint Community Players production of *The Secret Garden*.

CONCLUSION

My 12 years at Oakland University have been a time of tremendous growth for me as a teacher, artist, and human being. I have relished the opportunities to create new courses and curriculum, direct productions, and build supportive and collaborative relationships with faculty across multiple disciplines. Witnessing the growth and improvement of students as they blossom and mature into true artists and scholars has been a deeply rewarding experience. It is especially satisfying to see the ways in which they begin to make connections between their coursework and practices. Developing that sense of the interconnectedness of their studies is what nurtures and creates the "lifelong learner" which should be the goal of any teacher in any discipline. I understand my role as a teacher who inspires students to become better human beings and to build richer lives through connections with others. The arts are a search for that richness and that connection, an effort to create meaning out of life and relationships through work. At Oakland, I am proud to share a home with a family of artists, educators and co-collaborators in that shared mission.

