

You Are Enough: Acting Philosophy and Audition Portfolio

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Abstract

This document is a representation of two years of graduate study, work, teaching, and performance in the field of acting. It is comprised of three sections: an acting philosophy statement, ten journal entries, and documentation of my thesis project including the text of two audition monologues and an interview, production photos from *Vodka Variations*, *The Triumph of Love*, and *Almost, Maine*, as well as a professional bio, headshot, and resume. The aim of these materials is to serve as a calling card for my transition into the field of professional acting.

Table of Contents

Acting Philosophy Statement.....	1
Thesis Journal.....	2
Monologues and Interview Text.....	8
Production Photos.....	9
Professional Bio.....	12
Headshot.....	12
Resume.....	13

You Are Enough: An Acting Philosophy Statement

"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." --Aristotle

I am an actor and teaching artist because I believe in the transformative power of the ensemble. Tasting the synergy of separate parts working as a whole has fueled my dedication to my craft: in the body, in the classroom, and in the theatre.

If the power of the ensemble is to be realized, the work begins with the individual. An actor's instrument is the body. Just as a violinist must know the make-up of their violin, so too must the actor know the make-up of their body. This physical process of de- and re- construction in the body is integral to all acting work. It is a path to identifying the differences between inefficient habits and efficient, natural use. Enter actor training. Through rigorous training in areas such as Lessac-based voice work, Meyerhold's biomechanics, and Shakespearean text, I have gained a deeper understanding of my instrument.

This process of understanding the body requires trust, focus, and dedication. You must trust the process and go on the journey rather than end gaining and skipping ahead to the finished product. You must cultivate the focus necessary to work specifically: to find the turn out in the hips for a physical posture in Moliere's misanthropic *Alceste* or the dexterity to use the voice's entire pitch range in Juliet's bawdy Nurse. Furthermore, successful acting requires that you solve these problems requiring specific attention, yourself. Lastly comes dedication, to be present and precise with the work every day. Only after examining the individual parts of the whole can an actor hope to bring body, voice, and mind together onstage.

The ensemble in the classroom is not altogether different from the ensemble within the body; trust, focus, and dedication are key. Just as an actor must get familiar with his body, so too must an ensemble be allowed the time to form. As an acting instructor, it is critical to provide a space in which students feel safe enough to take risks, to celebrate successes, and most importantly, experience failures. Like a juggler who drops a pin in a routine and keeps on juggling, a student needs to fall and be picked up by the ensemble and keep on going. If an ensemble can achieve this resiliency, successes and failures alike will only strengthen the whole. Developing this trust requires focus, respect, and dedication to work toward these ideals in every class.

Whether in a classroom or in the theatre, the power of ensemble is palpable. If you have witnessed the effect produced by a company of performers standing in a line and crossing downstage for a curtain call, you know this to be true. When a theatrical company comes together to tell a story to an engaged audience, time and space can be transcended. This is no accident. It is oftentimes the result of years of planning, months of rehearsing, and the alignment of countless other preparatory stars. In the theatre each performance, like a snowflake, is beautiful, fleeting, and one-of-a-kind. And time and time again, it is this transcendence that brings me back to the theatre as an audience member, back to the classroom as a student, and back to the stage as an actor.

From the Stage to the Small Screen: A Thesis Process Journal

1/27/16

After hours spent combing through stacks of plays in Clemons library, contacting playwrights, and cutting down page-long monologues to twenty to thirty second speeches, I have, at last, narrowed down my monologue selection to six possibilities. For both practical and artistic considerations, I'm most interested in exploring newer works or works from new playwrights. Practically, I imagine it will be easier to get access to these works. Artistically, I am most excited to explore new works with this project. I'm also thinking, for the first time, of exploring monologues in lighter and darker categories rather than the traditional comedic and dramatic categories. Hopefully this will keep me open to all possibilities which exist within each monologue.

My current six selections, though I need only two, are:

SWIMMING AFTER DARK
by Emily Dendinger

DARKER

"When people live in a house I think they must leave behind an energy, a residue of emotions, like a stain on a rug. Spilled coffee or a drop of blood. All the sadness, joy, anger. It's permanent. I think a house remembers the patterns of life long after the people who lived there are gone. You'd have to tear it down to get rid of that stain, and I don't want to do that so I think I need to go."

LIGHTER

"You should've woken me up. I didn't realize how late it was....You know, you have really nice feet. Most people have ugly feet or they're hairy or they have yellowed toenails, but you— you always had great feet."

DARKER

"...I was just standing there, waiting for her to check out, and suddenly, you were there, too. Or your scent was, and I don't mean your perfume— this was...it was like your coconut shampoo and detergent and baby powder— it was the smell of you, your sheets, clothes, everything and miles away, in this campy shop in Haworth, I had this inexplicable urge to call you, talk to you. I couldn't shake it for the rest of the day. About three weeks later I heard from my sister that your father had passed away, and it was on that very day that I was in Haworth."

TAKE ME OUT
By Richard Greenberg

LIGHTER

“...Baseball is better than democracy--or at least than democracy as it's practiced in this country--because unlike democracy, baseball acknowledges loss. While conservatives tell you, leave things alone and no one will lose, and liberals tell you, interfere a lot and no one will lose, baseball says: someone will lose. Not only says it--insists upon it! So that baseball achieves the tragic vision that democracy evades. Evades and embodies.
Democracy is lovely, but baseball's more mature.”

THEY HAVE OAK TREES IN NORTH CAROLINA

By Sarah Wooley

LIGHT/DARK

“Me and this girl, well we had a canoe. We used to row out into the middle of the lake and attach these little red pellets onto a hook and line
We didn't catch much, just guppies
And the lake had leeches
Yeah
Slimely little bastards
Freaked her out
and mosquitoes too
Man they'd eat you alive
You'd be all bitten up by noon.
But I loved it
I felt...free
Stopped me thinkin' too much.”

2000 FEET AWAY

By Anthony Weigh

LIGHT/DARK

“Routine's the key to sleep.
Get in the routine of doing the same thing every night and pretty soon your body knows that routine means that it's time for sleep.
Like me it's: TV off, trash out, feed cats, teeth, lights out.
I'm asleep before my head hits the pillow.”

Now, to take these into class, take them for a spin, and see what Kate Burke, our faculty coach, and my colleagues think.

1/28/16

Class was extremely helpful, I eliminated three of the six original monologues and added another. I will almost certainly be doing something from

Swimming After Dark by Emily Dendiger as two of the three selections from that play were well received by my colleagues. I love this play. It has an engaging generational time gap that is similar to Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*. I worked on a production of it in Orlando, FL for the Women Playwrights' Initiative. Since that time, Emily has graduated from the playwriting program at the University of Iowa. As this is a personal connection, hopefully she will allow me to use her words however I please. I already have an email out asking for her permission.

The other finalist is from *2000 Feet Away* by Anthony Weigh, an Australian playwright, currently an Associate Artist at London's renowned Donmar Warehouse. This play, set in modern day Iowa, features an upstanding deputy I connect with -- simple and honest. Interestingly, the cohort liked the underlying mischief and possible criminal element in my first reading. I'm drawn to the monologue, but I'll have to secure permission from Anthony Weigh's agency, United Agents, before I can move forward. I'll send an email ASAP.

The last option will be a great alternate if either of my first two choices fall through. It comes from Denise Stewart's *The Sugar*. Denise is a local playwright, and has already given her permission should I choose to use her work. The piece is a fun, quirky, lawyer-like interrogation over a box of doughnuts. The trick to showcasing this piece will be in playing it with drive and high stakes. Here is the text from *The Sugar*:

"You cracked. You didn't eat a doughnut? Did you break off a piece of the icing? Did you lick the top of any of these doughnuts? Did you TOUCH any of these doughnuts? Even one tiny little touch or push with your finger. Did you? If I ran a file under your nail and sent it away for a sample, would it come back positive for traces of sugar? Mizz Dawson...it would come back positive, wouldn't it? You will crack, and I think it'll happen in the next 24 hours."

2/5/16

Good news on all fronts in the selection of materials. I've obtained permission from Emily for *Swimming After Dark* and from Abigail Darling at United Agents for use of the short cutting from Anthony Weigh's *2000 Feet Away*. This likely means that I will no longer need to use the piece from *The Sugar*, but it's worth keeping on as an alternate.

Yesterday, we did our pieces over pizza (thanks to cohort member Les Rorick) for Michael Duni, our Richmond-based casting director and filmmaker. He had a clear preference for the shorter piece from *SAD* and the deputy piece from *2000 Feet Away*. So it looks like I have narrowed my choices to two finalists from *Swimming After Dark* and *2000 Feet Away*.

Michael asked us a great question today -- where do you see this taking place? What are the givens? Because I'm so used to performing the givens in the audition room, no matter where it is, I lost sight of the fact that this is a FILMED project, and I need to set the scene to support the givens. So, it's time to

figure out two doable locations to shoot these pieces. Michael mentioned the second piece being right before bedtime with a television on in the background, which I like. The first is a morning-after monologue...so I'm thinking in the doorframe of a kitchen somewhere. Precisely where will be the issue moving forward. Locations are due in a week to our google drive document that Les set up, and filming will be a short week or two after that.

2/10/16

Big discovery today working with our guest artist and Alexander Technique expert Sarah Barker on my 'feet' piece from *SAD*. I need to develop a relationship with whatever it is that I am leaning on. Yes, I will have a relationship with my imagined other, my ex-girlfriend in this instance. However, how I play with the architecture of the door frame during my shoot will be essential. I can use it as a bed-surrogate as I did in class today. Whatever the case, I will make friends with my environment when I get on set.

Another challenge from Sarah: Can I keep my eyes open and focused on my other while imagining something as gross as 'ugly feet, hairy with yellowed toenails?' Worth considering.

2/12/16

My thesis monologue selections have been finalized. They are now uploaded on my thesis Collab site. I've also decided that I would like to use Les' house, the kitchen specifically, for my first location, and the UVa Caplin Green Room for my second location.

Selection #1:

SWIMMING AFTER DARK
by Emily Dendinger

Selection #2:

2000 FEET AWAY
By Anthony Weigh

Alternate:

THE SUGAR
By Denise Stewart

2/19/16

It was informative to bring in a trial filming for critique in voice class this week. I now feel confident with the language of these two pieces and have a bit more insight into what I need come shoot day in two weeks' time. Also, thirty seconds is not a lot of time! I can say maybe three to four sentences, which

doesn't feel like enough time to show off my range. However, I have to trust that thirty seconds will be enough for future employers to respond to my work. A foot in the door, that's all I'm after. Back to the trial run from today's class.

Some helpful feedback from both of my selections:

Use the Moment Before. Because I have enough time and we can always shave off opening silence, I can really take the time with my moment before. It's dangerous for me because I will take waaaaay too much time, but I can really relax into these pieces and let my imagination get cranking before I speak.

Find the edge. What is interesting about the simplicity of my 2000 FEET AWAY deputy is that he seems like he might be hiding something. I took this initial clip and tried to make it feel a bit like a commercial. However, this strips the piece of the intrigue and mystery that my cohort liked so much initially.

Use the antithesis. Her feet versus most people's feet. See the difference, play with the possibilities.

Land the piece. Use the final phrase to really end the monologue. Think inflection arcing down to put a period on my last thought.

2/26/16

Well that was a surprise. I went over to Les' house to assist Carolyn, Dana, and Lauren with their filming only to have Michael ask me if I was ready to film mine. Thank goodness I was. I didn't have my planned wardrobe, but Les lent me a tee-shirt and we made it work.

We took about seven or eight takes of me in the kitchen leaning on a shelf. In the frames afterward, I loved seeing how the audience walked into the kitchen with me. For the moment before, I conjured hearing my ex-girlfriend singing in the kitchen after having delivered a mug of tea to me in bed. I carried the mug into the kitchen with me. The combo of hot tea and cold feet was nice to work with. Overall, the process was smooth and easy. I didn't have time to worry about it because I wasn't expecting to go. It's like the Boy Scout motto: always be prepared.

3/2/16

Tomorrow, I will film my second piece and my personal statement on the set of *The Triumph of Love* in the Caplin Theatre.

I'd like the feel to be that of a sixty second conversation. I do not want this rigid or memorized at all. I'm going for natural, relaxed, and welcoming because that is me on a good day. Questions to fire the imagination: How did I get my start in theatre? What have I taken away from my time in Charlottesville at UVa? What was the most impactful training experience at UVa? What do I want art to be for me and others in my life?

I want to be sure to talk about mask work, and to apply Declan Donnellan's idea of masks taking many forms: the physical mask or a pair of shoes, or a key

prop like glasses or a cane, or even the heightened language of Shakespeare's characters. All of these are masks that the actor must know how to wear and perform.

I want to talk about the power of the ensemble, both creating ensembles in teaching Acting Classes and being a part of an ensemble in this cohort and in the cast of a show. As Hamlet says, "The readiness is all."

3/3/16

Working with Michael a second time proved a bit more complex than the first. There were a few x-factor elements such as figuring out the lighting of a television on my face and working in the right background in the Caplin Green Room since there are so many mirrors. However, the most difficult part for me was balancing my focus -- which camera was I looking into when -- with my intentions.

Taking my colleagues' feedback, I had a hard time letting go of the more menacing, 'I'm-hiding-something' take I had on this piece. We must have done the piece five times before Michael asked me to lighten up and let more of myself into the room. Once I did that, my focus was still shaky, but Michael didn't seem to care. "Great! Let's do that again just to make sure we have it, but I think we have a keeper." So we did it again, and I lightened up and just had fun with the piece. "Even better," came the response from Michael. I didn't see the frames after the fact, so it is hard to say which was better. I certainly felt looser and more open to impulses in the last two or three takes. So, it's important to come to a session loaded with initial ideas and plans, but it can be just as important to throw all that out the window and come up with something on the spot.

As for the personal statement filming, what fun! I had a great time talking with Michael for 8-10 minutes about theatre and the training that I've received at UVa. I really look forward to seeing how the final product turns out in a month's time or so. I hope the joy and enthusiasm I felt today translate into the polished result.

4/12/16

I couldn't be more satisfied with the final product. Michael's work editing is masterful. There are a few vocal ticks that I discovered after watching my interview eight times in a row to capture the exact text I spoke, but I doubt viewers will watch my video on repeat. Still, 'you know' and 'um' are phrases that I will be erasing from my speech patterns in future interviews and speaking engagements. This interview, like a good headshot, captured me on a good day.

The audition pieces are nice and contrasting. They both live in a lighter realm, but pull out vastly different faces of self. *Swimming After Dark* is intimate and confessional, while *2000 Feet Away* is inviting and quirky. My imagined others, an ex-girlfriend and a new best friend, are specific and present. I'm quite pleased!

The Proofs: Thesis Project Text and Supplementary Materials

A) Monologues and Interview Text

SWIMMING AFTER DARK

by Emily Dendinger

(The morning after. In clothes from the night before. Framed in the kitchen door.)

“You should’ve woken me up. I didn’t realize how late it was.... You know, you have really nice feet. Most people have ugly feet or they’re hairy or they have yellowed toenails, but you— you always had great feet.”

2000 FEET AWAY

By Anthony Weigh

(Night. On the couch, beer in hand, flicker of the tv on his face.)

“Routine’s the key to sleep.

Get in the routine of doing the same thing every night and pretty soon your body knows that routine means that it’s time for sleep.

Like me it’s: TV off, trash out, feed cats, teeth, lights out.

I’m asleep before my head hits the pillow.”

INTERVIEW TEXT

“Hi, I’m Joseph Bromfield. And you know, I actually received a lot of training to learn how to pronounce my name like that. *(laugh)*

I’ve had the great fortune to come across several revelatory ideas in my time here at UVa, and one of those ideas is that of the mask. ...faces of self and how we all have different faces that we put on for different people that we are talking to. *(Explosion sound)* Lightbulb. Flash.

My grandfather went to Virginia, of course, you know, that’s not why you pick an actor training program, but legacy and family history and knowing where I come from is a very big part of who I am.

The training and the teaching opportunities and the production opportunities, that kind of trifold approach to theatre training— intensive, immersive training— is exactly what I was looking for, and it’s exactly what I’ve received.

You can go study anything, but to be in a classroom environment from day one and be working with undergraduates on their craft, not only, you know, helps me clarify what it is that I’m doing for myself, but it also helps me to see their process of self-discovery. Acting is, I believe, self-discovery and self respect. My name is Joseph Bromfield, and thank you very much for watching.”

B) Production Photos



Death of a Civil Servant, 'Vodka Variations'
UVa Drama, Photo: Michael Bailey



A Tripping Tongue, 'Vodka Variations'
UVa Drama, Photo: Michael Bailey



'Almost, Maine' Heritage Theatre Festival
Photo: Michael Bailey



'The Triumph of Love' UVa Drama
Photo: Michael Bailey



'The Triumph of Love' UVa Drama, Photo: Michael Bailey



'Peter and the Starcatcher' Virginia Repertory Theatre, Photo: Aaron Suttan



Teaching Sectional Work in Drama 1010 in 115B, Photo: Denise Stewart

C) Professional Bio, Headshot, Resume

Joseph Bromfield is an actor and teaching artist. Originally from Tennessee, he completed his MFA at the University of Virginia, earning his BA from Rollins College in Winter Park, FL and a Postgraduate Diploma from The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. Joseph has performed professionally with Virginia Repertory Theatre, The Cumberland Theatre, The Public Theatre of Maine, The North Carolina Shakespeare Festival, and Heritage Theatre Festival. At the University of Virginia, Joseph has taught Acting 1, Improvisational Theatre (long-form and short-form), and served as a T.A. for Drama 1010: How Theatre Works. Other teaching stints span from Live Arts in Charlottesville, VA to MaineStage Shakespeare in Kennebunk, ME to the California Theatre Center in Sunnyvale, CA. Favorite roles include Algernon in *The Importance of Being Earnest* with Dana Ivey, Richard Hannay in *The 39 Steps*, Hamlet in *Hamlet*, and East, Jimmy, Chad, Phil, and Dave in *Almost, Maine*.

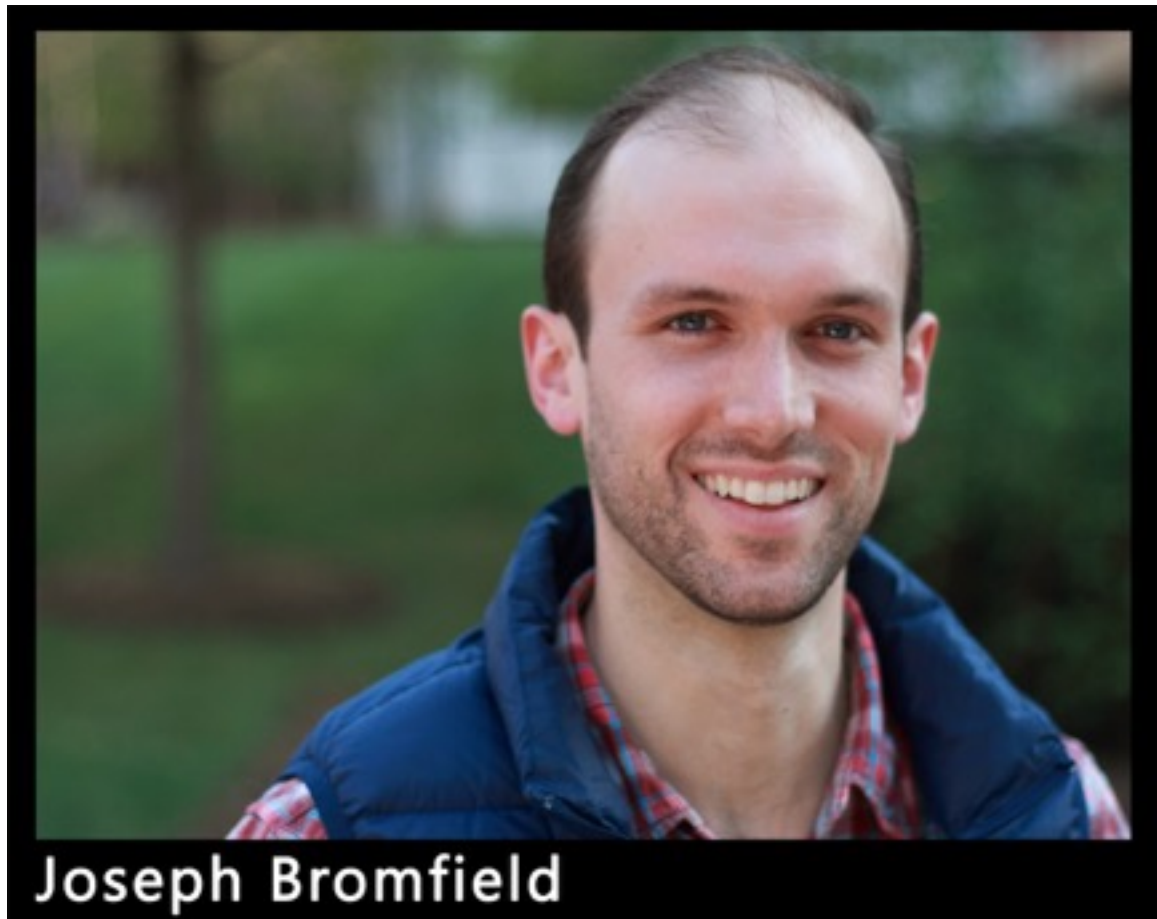


Photo: Les Rorick

Joseph Bromfield

EMC

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Height: 6'3" — Weight: 175 lbs



Theatre

Quill Theatre

The Merchant of Venice (Summer 2016)

Bassanio

Dir. Jan Powell

Virginia Repertory Theatre

Peter and the Starcatcher

Lord Aster

Dir. Nathaniel Shaw

Heritage Repertory Theatre

Almost, Maine

East, Jimmy, et al

Dir. David Dalton

North Carolina Shakespeare Festival

Hamlet

Hamlet

Dir. Michael Huie

Such Sweet Thunder

Petruchio

Dir. Pedro Silva

The Cumberland Theatre

The 39 Steps

Richard Hannay

Dir. Don Whisted

MaineStage Shakespeare

Much Ado About Nothing

Claudio

Dir. James A. Bond

Love's Labor's Lost

Berowne

Dir. Chiara Klein

The University of Virginia

The Triumph of Love

Hermocrate

Dir. Chase Kniffen

Wonderful Town

Chick Clark

Dir. Bob Chapel

Vodka Variations: Chekhov Shorts

Lomov, et al

Dir. Marianne Kubik

Annie Russell Theatre — Rollins

The Importance of Being

Algernon

Dir. Fred Chappell

Earnest w/ *Dana Ivey*

Training

University of Virginia, MFA Acting Candidate 2016

LAMDA - The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, Classical Acting 2010

Rollins College, BA, Theatre Arts, Magna Cum Laude, 2009

Awards

Fullbright Scholarship Finalist for UK, TN Governor's School for the Arts,

Rollins Outstanding Achievement in Theatre, Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award.

Special Skills

Dialects: British (RP, Cockney), Scottish, Irish, Russian, German, French ♦ Language: Spanish (Fluent) ♦ Juggling: Balls, Clubs, Rings ♦ Sport: Tennis, Basketball, Ping Pong ♦ Full Clean Driver License ♦ Sitting in Silence for Eight Hours a Day ♦ Expertise in Growing a Beard.