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## **BGSU Dept. THFM Elsewhere: "Two Rooms" by Lee Blessing**

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Now, a month removed to the day from the final performance of *Two Rooms*, I feel a distance from the piece that allows me to more fully evaluate the work that was done. I am satisfied with the process; I was able to execute my primary goal which was to get the production mounted. Thankfully, I feel as though my secondary and tertiary goals were also achieved: the actors seemed to have gotten something out of the experience educationally and I feel that I did as well. The final goal of the production for me was that I wanted the performance to be high caliber. This is still something I struggle with determining and I hope that by unpacking the first three goals, I can eventually come to a conclusion.

First, the production was mounted. I had struggled in the past with putting together performances of a more substantial length; my advanced directing project was in many regards an exercise in failure that I am now thankful for, but was none-the-less, a mortifying experience at the time. I attempted to inform the way I prepared for this production with that failure. By looking at what paperwork and preparation was lacking in that project and how it could make this a more perfect experience. I found flaws primarily in how I conducted rehearsals and resolved to be more decisive and to bring my vision and intention to the forefront. Largely I think it was a confidence issue and I knew I needed to be fully confident in what I believed was the story I wanted to tell. Without that, it would be a repeat of the muddled mess I had previously put together.

Second, making certain that the actors were benefitting from the process was crucial to me. As an educational theatre experience I wanted them to feel as though they had the freedom to learn, try new things, and explore their characters. Particularly them being first and second year college students, I hoped to be a resource for them to ask questions both about *Two Rooms*, but also more generally about university theatre. As another exercise in expanding their learning, I attempted to give them an overview of Michael Chekhov acting technique as a means of expanding their performance toolbelt. Overall, I saw substantial growth from all four actors and I was very proud of the hard work that they put in. I think they took away a lot from the process and I think that I was able to successfully facilitate that as their director.

Third, I was able to continue my own process of learning and growth as a director. I was better able to assess my leadership skills and understand how to talk to actors about what my own particular vision was for the script. I think at the beginning of the process, I lacked the decisiveness that would be necessary to push forward. I was worried about toeing the line between giving the actors the freedom to make choices and still giving them the proper amount of direction and for a while, I tended toward giving them the freedom. What eventually became clear was that they, being a younger, less-experienced group, needed me to be more direct and in some cases, simply tell them what they needed to do. Coming to this realization sooner may have saved on some time and given us a longer period to polish the production, but I think that it was not as detrimental as it could have been if I had maintained the same approach the entire rehearsal process. I think I learned a lot about myself as a director and teacher and in the future, I hope to take this and continue to run with it.

Lastly, as to whether or not the production was good, I think that that may be beside the point. Particularly as a first time director (for a full length production, at least) with a young cast in an

educational setting, the process and learning with one another was far more valuable than making sure the performance itself was of high quality; that is simply going to be a product of the work put in and I think we did the best show we possibly could have all things considered. There were moments of real stress and attempts to push ourselves as artists and I am proud to say that everyone involved rose to the challenges presented. I mean it when I say that I would not change the process, because it led to so much growth and improvement. I have no reservations calling this production a success.

Baxter Chambers