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Under One Sun

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Under One Sun



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Major: Theatre

Minor: Business and Innovation

Faculty Mentors: Dave Rabinow and John Garrity, Theatre, Dance, and Film

Coming soon: Watch *Under One Sun* on the [Theatre Dept. website](#).

Subconsciously deriving from the separation the world underwent this past year, *Under One Sun* was created to explore the difficult and comforting truth about being alive- we never know what to expect. In that space of uncertainty, eleven characters navigate discoveries, news, and realities that they must learn to accept and move forward with. In short, episodic scenes, the eleven characters that we meet along the way introduce and momentarily resolve their struggles in the same time we have with them. The tiny moments of connection we see throughout then brings more clarity of the disassociation between the characters by the end of the play.

[The play] seems to be about life and living, and that we all move through our individual struggles as we share space in our

buildings (and, by extension, cities, states, countries, the planet, etc); we're all alone and together, all the time

DAVE RABINOW

Under One Sun is significant for me as a writer because it is an overview of the themes and subjects that I am most interested in. Instead of writing my first play about one of them, I decided to find the connection between a few and try to fit them in one play. The lack of elaboration dictated the style of the piece, as it reflected the fast and ever changing environment we currently live. I believe there is a lot to explore when it comes to human relationships to one another and the spaces we inhabit, despite how big or small a situation might seem. Much of my interests lie in how our current generations are responding to this new age of technology and media, and how it is affecting our relationships to one another. *Under One Sun* was important for me to get out because it provides me with a foundation of the work I want to further explore while adding this next layer of technology onto it.

Process

I credit much of the process for writing *Under One Sun* to Dave Rabinow who is adjunct faculty in the theatre department and is the reason I started to even consider writing plays. To start off we had many conversations about themes I would want to highlight and Dave provided me with a series of prompts each week for about three weeks which I was expected to complete by our next meeting time. The prompts helped guide my scattered thoughts in a more focused direction, without feeling pressure of having to stay with that direction for my final decisions. Dave Rabinow also recommended reading a few plays for inspiration. I read plays such as *Skeleton Crew* and *The Nether*. Although the plays did not inform the plot's direction, it was good to see examples of language used and the structure. Learning about the different shapes plays can take, definitely informed the structure of *Under One Sun*. The play took on a more circular characteristic and became more structure-driven.

These pieces are all formatted similarly, and the looseness of the formatting (lack of character names, lack of overt distinction between stage direction and dialogue, etc), as well as the reluctance to give specific details (names, places, song titles, etc), gives these pieces (in my opinion) a decidedly dreamlike quality

DAVE RABINOW

After reading published works, I went back to the prompts and used those already written pieces as a foundation for the play. I kept them all in a google drive folder and tried to string them together. Some writing went through more changes than others as I

was trying to have them all meet at a point of even slight connection. I didn't put so much pressure on having things make sense with each, but as long as they had one point that could link the two stories, I kept it in the play. Some of the prompts were writing something based on the color red, or writing something with the letter "o" in it. They were general enough to give me liberty to get as creative as I wanted. These two prompts informed two of my favorite scenes of the piece- the red prompt became the first instance of connection we see between the characters and the letter "o" prompt became a scene about intergenerational responsibility through a mom/daughter relationship.

Gathering all of the writing pieces together, along with my knowledge of other plays I've seen and read throughout the years, and Dave Rabinow's feedback, a coming theme was found- overcoming struggle, difficulty, misunderstanding- these are all things that play a part in our lives and inform our identity, just as much as our accomplishments and triumphs define us.

Some continuities:
- window looking out a window
- food being served, or being present

All the actors sit in a circle backs facing each other, facing the audience who is in a thrust seating. there are screens behind the audience

it starts with one of the actors standing and walking behind the screen & within the span of about 5 minutes the actors join behind the screen gradually. This dance should not be too choreographed, but planned enough where the performers are working off each, but have their own groove, rhythm. thinking of soundless, there is a clear crescendo where the middle of the dance is at its highest energy. the dance winds down and as this is happening the actor starts the first scene.

transition

First scene - Jeffrey

first actor is facing the audience speaking the monologue. she is speaking to the other actor who is clearly distracted, his laugh breaks her away from the audience & turns to him, scene keeps going

transition to crossed out we did not ask for the room or the music

we did not ask for this room or the music will be one of the sections we go back to throughout the play, but this scene ~~section~~ will end when the man in the scene walks out

transition to Pro scene, the younger man in this scene should resemble the man from the previous scene & should come through the same place he exited. these actors are not younger versions of the previous / are not related. This scene keeps going until the end.

transition to the letter O scene, the same setup should be used for this scene as the previous, something should slightly change, may a tablecloth, or a portrait. This scene goes on until the end.

transition to continuing we did not ask for this room, the scene of the mom & one of the children, in the mums bedroom. The stage should look full.

transition to poetry of The New Room (won't be the same as what was used for Cast(e))

As this is going on there should be a transformation going on on stage and that will mark the transition to the next scene.

transition to Pro scene once again, the writing is different, it is a less empowered version. The two characters should be the same as when the first version of this scene ~~came~~ ~~along~~ was on

next **transition** will be from Ped, instead of a trapeze artist, the character of Nani will be on a high elevated point on stage & by the end of this transition she should be on the ground of the stage. (how will she get there?)
the actor who does this transition should be the same as the actor who plays the mother from the main storyline
transitions to 1,2,3 scene, the scene goes to the end.

transition to Jeffrey's scene again, the line from 1,2,3 scene - "What can be more straight forward than trying to get an innocent man out of jail" should start the transition to Jeffrey's scene.

Moving into the second scene of Jeffrey's section, (need to write this)

this scene should connect to Estela's scene, and Estela's will be next. (no transition)

Context of Apartment Complex



This play offers a glimpse of what many of us already think when we pass by those tall buildings and we wonder, what is going on in there?

JOHN GARRITY



This was a photo pulled up by director John Garrity and it was such a great connection made. Though I was hesitant to provide a stage direction that specified time and place, during production it became more necessary. John used this image to inform his direction for the piece and it just so happens I was raised and lived for most of my life in a building that looks just like this one in the Bronx, NY. The lifestyle that is taken up in urban cities became an important detail during and post production. Such a setting helps the idea of being alone and together all at the same time. The way many of these buildings are structured is with a closeness that can sometimes feel congested, but it also allows for a closeness between neighbors while still allowing for distance between them. I like to think this closeness is what has built community in my neighborhood and many neighborhoods across New York. It is still New York, so there is a sense of mistrust, judgment, and defensiveness, but in between those, there is also a wholesome feel of being so close to strangers that have the potential of becoming family.

Clearly, the idea of “family” is important in these snippets; it seems that these characters are either – literally -searching for family members, or seeking to define their own understanding of what “family” is

DAVE RABINOW

Play Chunk (Red Scene)

Pro stays onstage she is in a tableau from where we saw her last. There is a blackout. Lights come back up and are red flood lights, we then see the last actors in their final positions from the last scenes (Pro, Woman, Mariana and her mom, Kels and Jaz). They are holding the tableau position. The dialogue should sound like a flowing conversation, with overlap, response, pauses. Only characters that are in the same scene can speak to each other. Pro breaks the tableau.

Pro: Number 16. How do I manage to mess up everything I touch? **reaches for the flower, hesitates**

Woman: **typing furiously** It's not like I ask for much. I thought he'd be excited even!

Pro: Let me not. More like Number 10.

Mom: **cleaning countertop** Besides, it'll be a nice walk. Think of it as your exercise for the day.

Mariana: **tying her shoes** But I'm too young for exercise.

Mom: Who told you that?

Kels is still on the opposite side of Jaz's door.

Kels: I just wanna be there for you.

Mariana: Papi did.

Mom: **chuckles** Mhm, listen to him and you'll never play a sport a day in your life.

Kels: Should I tell the others?

Mariana: No. **pause** He's right. I can strain a muscle. **she's quoting her father here**

Woman: The only one who moves a muscle here is me. And I don't even get a "good job, baby" or "good luck, sweetie." It's always him and that dumbass laugh **mimics his laugh from earlier**

Pro: **joins Woman's laughter and sighs** I'm sick. *grabs fruit and walks out*

Mariana: **finishes tying shoes and heads out. She leaves mom cleaning.**

Woman: *stops typing and looks around the room*

Kels: *Leaves her side of the door*