5-2016

From Duke to D: The Range of an Actor in Classical and Contemporary Characters

Damian Oscar Dena
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

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From Duke to D: The Range of an Actor in Classical and Contemporary Characters

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Drama

by

Damian Dena
University of Texas at El Paso
Bachelor of Fine Arts in Performance 2013

May 2016
University of Arkansas

This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

______________________________                              _______________________________
Amy Herzberg, M.F.A                                                          Michael Landman, M.F.A
Thesis Director                                                            Committee Member

______________________________          ________________________________
Jennifer McKnight, M.F.A                                                   Michael Landman, M.F.A
Committee Member                                                           Committee Member
Abstract

This thesis contains my statement of artistry along with photos and materials from both productions *Twelfth Night* and *Mother F**Ker with the Hat*. Also included are links to my website and current copies of my headshot and resume.
Acknowledgments

I’d like to thank all my instructors here at the University of Arkansas that have imparted their knowledge and experience onto me and have made me the confident actor I am today. Amy Herzberg, Michael Landman, Jennifer Ann McKnight, and Mavourneen Dwyer. Thank you so much. I’d also like to thank my fellow grad mates who have been my second family and will always remain in my heart. Guadalupe Campos, Chris Hecke, Stephanie Faatz Murry, Bill Rogers, and Britney Walker-Merritte. Wherever I go, whatever I do, you all will always be with me.
Dedication

I dedicate this to my loving wife Danielle McKnight, who has added so much to my life, supported me and my dreams, and who has proven to me that all good things a wait you when you least expect it.
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Personal Statement of Artistry

As an actor it is our duty to dive into the hearts and minds of every character we portray and tell their story to best of our abilities. Every piece of dramatic literature is different and requires many skill sets to tackle the complexities of classical and modern works alike. Yet universally, we strive to find the values of our characters and connect with them, linking our own experiences with theirs and giving them life on stage.
Damian Dena

Height: 5’11
Hair: Brown/Black
Eye Color: Brown

**Theatre**

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**Dance**

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Pachuco Zoot</td>
<td>Ensemble</td>
<td>Univ. Texas at El Paso</td>
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**Training**

Voice: Carlos Saldana, Mavorneen Dewyer
Dialects: Carlos Saldana, Rebecca Rivas
Acting: Joel Murray, Amy Herzberg, Michael Landman
Shakespeare: Chuck Gorden, Mavorneen Dewyer
Ballet: Andrea Harper, Ingrid Heuser, Gail Leftwich
Jazz: Lisa Smith

**Education**

BFA in Performance
MFA in Performance

**Skills**

Stage combat (Fencing, Broad Sword, Hand to Hand), Wrestling (Professional and Greco), Drawing, Painting, Dagger Throwing, Archery
Link to Website

damiandena.wordpress.com
Damian Dena as Ralph D in Stephen Adly Guirgis’s “The MotherF**ker with the Hat.” Photos taken and printed with permission by University Theatre. (Top, Bottom)
Damian Dena as Duke Orsino of Illyria in William Shakespeare’s “Twelfth Night.” Photo taken and printed with permission by University Theatre. (Top, Bottom)
Program for “The Motherf**ker with the Hat” published by University Theatre pages 1 and 2

Meet the Cast:

Director's Note:

Dear Theatre Parents,

Welcome to the Department of Theatre, University of Arkansas. This is a publication in our efforts to elevate the performing arts within the university community.安全You are one of the lucky patrons who have received this program. We hope you enjoy the play! Photos for our show were taken by自己喜欢, and allow us to continue to promote this publication. We are grateful for your support. If you have any questions or feedback, please feel free to contact us at theatre@uark.edu.

Michael Landman
Director

Program for “The Motherf**ker with the Hat” published by University Theatre pages 3 and 4
Program for “The Motherf**ker with the Hat” published by University Theatre pages 5 and 6

WHO’S WHO IN THE PRODUCTION

**Directors:**

1. Michael Wilson - University Theatre Director & Chair of Theatre
2. David Saltzgiver - University Theatre Production Manager
3. Patrick Adair - University Theatre Technical Director
4. Linda Simpson - University Theatre Wardrobe Manager

**Associate Directors:**

1. Lesley Stang - Associate Director of Productions
2. Paul Spera - Associate Director of Administration

**Production Staff:**

1. Sarah Cannon - Production Assistant
2. Megan Lynch - Stage Manager
3. Amanda Egan - Assistant Stage Manager
4. Robyn Van Etten - Props Manager
5. Cameron Smith - Lighting Designer
6. Michael Marquardt - Sound Designer
7. Emily Chappell - Costume Designer
8. Parker Wade - Technical Director

**Casting:**

1. Jackie Hecke - Playwright
2. Ralph Daisy - Director
3. Damien Dana - Co-Director
4. Veronica Campos - Co-Director
5. Britney Walker-Merritt - Co-Director
6. Charlie Rodriguez - Co-Director

**Production Staff:**

1. Taylor Fugel - Assistant Director
2. Christopher Shinn - Assistant Producer
3. Eric Siler - Assistant Stage Manager
4. Jennifer Lapham - Production Assistant

**Design:**

1. Lighting Design by Camilo Pineda
2. Set Design by Jenna Kramer
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**Production Manager:**

1. Joel Miller

**Stage Manager:**

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**Program for “The Motherf**ker with the Hat” published by University Theatre pages 7 and 8

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Department of Theatre Patrons and Scholarship Supporters

SUPER ANGELS............Joe Brown, Bobbi Vecher, Bill and Margaret Deakos, Cevilla and Susan Hall, Morgan Hicks, Eliza James and Megan Myers James, Lisa Malmon, Friends May, David Nelson, and William McElvain, Homy and Barbara Shattuck

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MEMBERS.......................Wayne and Sherri Brocks, Tom Hill, Brandon Kanier and Elizabeth Anonymous, Kudie Penner, Jim, Frank and Sara Sharp, Les Wade, and Helen Roberts

Every gift, no matter the size, is instrumental in helping to provide an environment where students can react to their fullest potential with the latest technology, opportunities to work with guest artists, and adequate materials necessary to create our sets, lights, and costumes. Our future success depends on the involvement of our friends and supporters like you!

To become a 2015-2016 Supporter for the University of Arkansas Department of Theatre Call (479) 575-6067 or Email theatre@uark.edu.

Program for “Twelfth Night” published by University Theatre pages 1 and 2

MEET THE CAST

Dear Theatre Patrons,

Welcome to the second production of 2015-16 at Washington Square. Whether you are new to University Theatre, or a returning individual, I hope you will enjoy viewing the Twelfth Night production of William Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night. Set in Paphos, this is a New Orleans area production of the Bard’s work at the beginning of the 20th Century. These days, if you still have romantic notions about the Elizabethan period, you may want to keep reading.

Love often fails. How does one balance a season of Shakespeare for the University Theatre stage? Early, early theatre is not considered. Instead, an audience is being sent to a New Orleans area production of the Bard’s work. I hope you will enjoy the play for the same reason that I did—because it is a timeless story of love, friendship, and forgiveness.

The cast is comprised of a group of students who have worked hard to prepare themselves for this production. I am proud to present them to you.

Sincerely,
Michael J. White
Chair of Theatre

Program for “Twelfth Night” published by University Theatre pages 3 and 4
DIRECTOR’S NOTES

When producing a play by William Shakespeare, many directors choose to set the play in a more contemporary time and place than the playwright intended, to illuminate the themes, relationships and spirit of the play in a modern audience. I’ve chosen New Orleans, a vibrant watercity, home to storms, with rich cultural heritage and adventuresome, fun-loving, passionate and resilient people.

During the early years of the 20th century, folks of all ethnic and cultural backrounds lived together in what jazz musician and New Orleans historian Winston Marsalis calls a “meeting pot,” but a “gumbo.” At that time, jazz was beginning to emerge as a musical form in its own right, improved from origins in blues and ragtime, and the social structure of those in power and those who served them was extremely important. Not to mention New Orleans carnival, the history of legal prostitution in Storyville, gambling, jazz funerals, the French Quarter, The Garden District, marrows, piranhas...

As we researched the play and honed our design ideas, we uncovered even more parallels between 1920s New Orleans and Shakespeare’s Illyria.

Thanks for joining us – we hope you’ll enjoy the trip as much as we have!

- Jenny McKnight

GETTING TO KNOW...

Kiah Kayler, Scenic & Projection Designer

When I first met the director, Rich Harrip, and the design team of Callie Brown, Tyler Nieuwland, and Sarah Ehsan, I had no idea what to expect. I was asked to design the set and projection for a production of Twelfth Night, and I was excited to begin the process. As a scenic and projection designer, I am responsible for creating the visual elements of the production, and I work closely with the director and other design team members to create a cohesive and visually stunning experience for the audience.

The first step in the design process is research. I spent time studying the play and its historical context, as well as the director’s vision for the production. I also worked with the costume designer to ensure that the visual elements of the production would complement the overall design.

Once the design is complete, it is brought to life through the technical process of building and setting up the set and rigging the projection equipment. It is a collaborative process, and I work closely with the technical crew to ensure that the design is realized on stage.

As a scenic and projection designer, I am constantly learning and growing, and I am grateful for the opportunity to work with such a talented and creative team. I am excited to see the production come to life on stage and to share it with the audience.
WOH’S WHO IN THE PRODUCTION

Jacqueline R. Cox Lighting Designer is from Cheatham County, TN. She is a 2nd Year MFA Lighting Designer with her BA Musical Theatre and Peace Studies. Her previous credits include Cymbeline, Titus Andronicus, Peter and the Starcatcher, The Comedy of Errors, The little Matchgirl, Anna Christie, Shakespeare at the Fiji Theatre, The Lover, The runners, and The Two Gentlemen of Verona, University of Arkansas, University of Kansas, the University of Alabama. Jacqueline can’t control the proximity of her lighting design projects. She has had the opportunity to work on multiple projects in New York City, as an assistant lighting designer. She would like to work as an assistant lighting designer. She would like to work in the design of her own projects.

Annika Martin Costume Designer is a professor of costume design at the University of Arizona. She has designed costumes for the Department of Theatre and Film at the University of Arkansas, the University of Kansas, and the University of Oklahoma. She is also a freelance costume designer for various productions in New York and has been a designer on a variety of Broadway productions and as a costume designer for the Colorado Shakespeare Festival and the Irish Repertory Theatre. She has also worked on various productions in New York as a costume designer on a variety of Broadway productions and as a costume designer for the Colorado Shakespeare Festival and the Irish Repertory Theatre. She has also worked on various productions in New York as a costume designer on a variety of Broadway productions and as a costume designer for the Colorado Shakespeare Festival and the Irish Repertory Theatre.

Ashley Nolen (Widow of Production Designer) is a senior theatre major from Little Rock, AR. She was recently seen on the University Theatre stage in Laura’s Heart and has been involved in previous acting and design roles.

CAST

Orino, Duke of Milan.................................................David Denoda
Victor, his Son .........................................................Thomas Denoda
Valentine, a gentleman attending on the Duke...........................Brian Andro
Curtis, a gentleman attending on the Duke..................................................Kevin Kelly
Oklahoma, a rich Quaker .................................................Stephanie March
Fawdy, a young man ..................................................Todd Miller
St. Luke (shepherd), with Orino...........................................Brian Andro
Dampier, a shepherd ..................................................Kevin Kelly
Southerns, Zapp, and the Duke ........................................David Denoda
Herman, a servant .....................................................Brian Andro
Sebastian, a servant ....................................................Kevin Kelly
Tyrone, a servant .......................................................David Denoda
Gregory, a servant ......................................................Brian Andro
Chambers, a servant .....................................................Kevin Kelly
Gavroch (husband to Valentine) .........................................David Denoda
Hood (husband to Valentine) .............................................Brian Andro

GETTING TO KNOW... Jenny McKeever, Director

Who is Jenny McKeever?

A director, actress, writer, actor, and daughter of actress, Ainsley McKeever, Jenny McKeever is the Artistic Director of the University Theatre and Drama Department. She is also a professor of theatre and drama at the University of Arkansas.

What made you decide to join the faculty here at the University of Arkansas?

I was drawn to the University of Arkansas because of its strong theatre program and the opportunity to work with talented students. The university’s emphasis on collaboration and innovation appealed to me.

What is your favorite thing about this production?

My favorite thing about this production is the cast. They are talented, dedicated, and fun to work with. I am excited to see how they bring their unique interpretations to the roles.

WHO’S WHO IN THE PRODUCTION

Bill recently appeared in Todd Talley’s The Yellow Jacket with the Black St. Theatre Co. University of Arkansas credits include The Importance of Being Earnest, A Door in the Chamber, The Three Sisters, and The Importance of Being Earnest. His most recent university production was the world premiere of John Murrell’s The Importance of Being Earnest. He has been involved in numerous productions at the University of Arkansas, including productions of The Importance of Being Earnest, The Importance of Being Earnest, and The Importance of Being Earnest. He has also been involved in numerous productions at the University of Arkansas, including productions of The Importance of Being Earnest, The Importance of Being Earnest, and The Importance of Being Earnest.

Bilal Turner (Officer) is from Lubbock, Texas. He received a B.A. in Drama from Texas Tech University. Turner has been active in various productions at the University of Texas at Dallas, including productions of The Importance of Being Earnest, The Importance of Being Earnest, and The Importance of Being Earnest.

The University of Arkansas is located in Little Rock, Arkansas. The university has a strong tradition of producing outstanding theatre productions and is known for its commitment to education and community engagement.

Program for “Twelfth Night” published by University Theatre pages 9 and 10

Program for “Twelfth Night” published by University Theatre pages 11 and 12
WHO'S WHO IN THE PRODUCTION

Guadalupe Corpuz (Violette Corneill) is a 2nd year MFA Acting student at the University of Arkansas. Recent credits include ensemble and understudy roles in A Midsummer Night's Dream (The Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles); The Comedy of Errors (South Coast Repertory); and As You Like It (Theatre 40).

Demiessa Paul (Ophelia) is a 2nd year MFA Acting student at the University of Arkansas. Recent credits include The Wiz (Casa Maestra); and 1984 (Faison Dance Company).

Elijah Delfino (Sibelli) is a 2nd year MFA Acting student at the University of Arkansas. Recent credits include The Cherry Orchard (Theatre 40); and The Skin of Our Teeth (South Coast Repertory).

The STORY OF TWELFTH NIGHT, OR WHAT YOU WILL

Orohena, the Duke of Myla, is in love with the Countess Ophelia. She is in danger of death from her brother, so she rejects his suit. Another young woman, Viola, has just arrived on a ship and washes up on Eyre's shore, believing that her twin brother has died in the storm at sea. Vida is able to dress as a boy to go on an adventurous voyage as an attendant to Duke Orohena.

Orohena sends his new servant "Creuse" (Viola) disguised as a boy to win Ophelia. Viola, given unwittingly, is already in love with her. She already falls in love with Viola. Orohena is attracted to "Creuse" and the soft butter, Malvolio, after him with the gift of a ring.

Othello's uncle, Sir Toby Belch, his servant Maria, and Sir Toby's wife but public theatre, Sir Andrew Aguecheek (who also hopes to win Othello's love) all plot to expose the Duke's perfidy, sanctimonious Malvolio. Maria flings a letter that indica Malvolio into thinking that his wife, Ophelia, loves him. Malvolio appears absurdly helpless, believing and believing strange things as he was told in the letter. Ophelia's trick, Othello is horrified, and he does Malvolio, unseized as a madman.

Meanwhile Vincenzo's twin brother, Sebastian, having survived the shipwreck, comes to the Duke accompanied by his master Antonio, who has crept into Myla. Sir Andrew challenges Sebastian to a duel (thinking he's "Creuse") and Othello laughs with Sebastian (thinking he's "Creuse")

Finally, the twins reunite exactly as a thousand others are in town. "Creuse" reveals that he's actually Othello, and he and Sebastian celebrate their reunion. The play ends as Orohena announces Othello and Sebastian. Then, acknowledging his defeat in love to Creuse, he promises that one she is named a woman again she, too, will be married. Sebastian sings a final song to conclude the play's action, and invites the audience to celebrate the restoration of balance to the world of the play.
Works Cited


To: Graduate School and International Studies, University of Arkansas
From: Ashley Cohea, Business Manager for Department of Theatre
Date: January 20, 2016
Re: Use of Department of Theatre production programs, photos, and publicity materials in thesis publications

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If there are any questions on this matter, or any dispute over whether production material is being used in an inappropriate manner, please contact the Department of Theatre Business Manager, listed below.

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Hi Damian!

Here are your edits. I made a few different crops on the first one. Feel free to download any of them you like. If you’d like any other adjustments on these, please let me know in detail what you’d like for me to do.

Thanks,
Jess