

# MIDDLETOWN

## Design Meeting Notes

*Date:* 3/28/14

*Time:* 10:00am - 11:00am

*Location:* Jackie Liebergott Black Box Theatre

### **Present:**

D. Burmester, E. Cahill, K. Cornelius, R. DeMarco, K. Dewitt, A. Elliot, S. Hickler, P. Hoover, T. Jozwick, B. Lehrer, A. Lewis Millard, A. Loppert, S. Rosenfield, S. Swords, M. Teevan, A. Witten.

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### **General Notes:**

Thank you all for attending!

1. Please find a Contact Sheet attached to this email.
  2. Sarah talked about how she's seen photos from other productions and they range from being very literal with real facades for the houses to very minimalistic with a few pieces of furniture and props. She feels that for our production there is a need to think literally to start but then work on breaking it down to the items that are absolutely necessary to tell the story of the characters and the town. Less is more.
  3. The play has a bit of an edge to it and there is no reason to hide the fact that we are in a theatre presenting a show. Sarah would like to play with using the items within the space including the garage door and the catwalk or hiding them completely. She doesn't feel that the brick wall fits in with the theme of the show and would like the design to try to conceal that.
  4. Sarah talked about the theme of macrocosm to microcosm in the play. Examples of this are how our galaxy has the same shape as that of a sea shell and the dessert looks the same as the bottom of the ocean.
  5. Sarah advised everyone to also read reviews from previous productions including the Vineyard Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre and Actors Shakespeare Project.
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### **Scenic Notes:**

Please see General Notes #1 - #5

Please see Props Notes #1 and #2

Please see Lighting Note #1

1. Katie started by presenting 2 different options for seating arrangements. Both had one bank of seats which would live on either the side in front of the garage door or on the side with the angled wall. Both Sarah and Katie agreed that this play lends itself to a proscenium style layout where we emphasize the depth of the space. Unlike Nightingale there will not be an issue with the audience being too high off the deck as Sarah likes the idea of audience members having a birds eye view of the space.
2. Sarah talked about using the depth of the space to our advantage to reduce the number of scene changes. If we use levels then the houses can be elevated to live within the same space as the town square and it might even be possible to carve out a space on the deck for the library desk to live.
3. A challenge we will have to solve is finding a way to have the windows appear and disappear. Throughout the play there are many moments that take place behind the windows like miniature plays of peoples lives but there are also times where those windows go away to reveal the interiors of those houses. Sarah talked about the window units being on wheels or even being able to be flown out to the grid.
4. Sarah also talked about what to do for Act II when the houses turn into hospital rooms. Do the houses stay and we just add hospital beds, furniture and equipment in front of them or do we transition from houses to hospital rooms completely?

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## **Properties Notes:**

Please see General Notes #1 - #5

Please see Scenic Notes #1 - #4

Please see Costume Note #1

1. The props are very important to the story and are very detailed in the script. Sarah talked about how all of the information about props can be found in the text. Some examples are the monument that the Tour guide shows to the tourists. It is a 3' by 3' by 3' square of granite with a small plaque. Later in the show there are 3 rocks that are dug up and stacked to create a new "monument".
  2. The greenery within the town square will be important along with the small tree that gets planted and a park bench.
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## **Costumes Notes:**

Please see General Notes #1 - #5

1. Sarah loves the idea of metal name tags for the stereotypical characters such as the librarian, the tour guide and the police officer. The mechanic would have the stereotypical blue coveralls with his name in red script. The librarian would have half rim glasses on a chain.
  2. Sarah talked about how the fashions in urban areas are different from suburban areas same as the difference between Midwestern and Coastal fashions. This play is very middle America and so the characters would not have the most hip and up to date fashions.
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## **Lighting Notes:**

Please see General Notes #1 - #5

1. A challenge that we will have to solve is creating a night sky with stars without a scrim. Some ideas that were brought up were Christmas lights or fixtures that would hang down into the space from the grid in between the regular theatrical fixtures. Katie talked about the possibility of creating a cyc or sky drop effect as the backdrop of the playing space.
  2. Sarah talked about how the light in the houses and through the windows is warm and dimly lit while the hospital light is cold and sterile. She would like to continue to play with the idea of using light to create different spaces on the stage.
  3. Amy suggested creating a light specifically for the Astronaut to create a sort of window that he looks down onto the world through.
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## **Sound Notes:**

Please see General Notes #1 - #5

1. Sarah would like to play with the difference between the sounds that imply that the characters are outside versus inside. She would like to have as many options for atmospheric sound and then pear that down to what is needed for the audience to understand the setting. It is still up in the air of how much of the off stage sounds will be live or pre-recorded depending on the moment.
  2. Sarah talked about the different sounds found in a hospital including beeps from heart monitors and the whirring sound from breathing machines.
  3. Although space does not have any sound, Sarah is interested in using in-utero sounds to create the outer world sounds that people associate with space.
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**Fight Notes:**

Please see General Notes #1 - #5  
No Notes at this time, Thank you!

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**Scheduling Notes:**

2. Friday, April 4th: Production Meeting in the Tuftes 5th Floor Conference Room from 12:00pm to 1:00pm
3. Thursday, April 10th: Scenic and Costumes Preliminary Design Deadline
4. Friday, May 23rd: Scenic and Costumes Final Design Deadline
5. Friday, August 15th: Lighting and Sound Preliminary Design Deadline
6. Monday, August 25th: First Rehearsal
7. Friday, August 29th: Lighting and Sound Final Design Deadline
8. Thursday, October 9th: Opening Night