Musical Director

VICKY NOOE

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Adjunct Assistant Professor, Collaborative Pianist
Interviewed by Savannah Bohl, Maverick Theatre Company Student Dramaturg

INTERVIEWER: What do you love most about the music in SONGS FOR A NEW WORLD?

PROFESSOR NOOE: I appreciate that Jason Robert Brown's score has some very clear unifying elements, both in reusing melodies as well as consistent harmonic language. Yet, each song has a unique sound that clearly comes from the characters and dramatic themes for the song. As a pianist, Brown is known for his difficult and rich piano writing, so I enjoyed the challenge as I learned the score. It is a challenging work for both singers and instrumentalists, but is immensely rewarding!

INTERVIEWER: How have you had to adjust rehearsals to fit the needs of social distancing and quarantine?

PROFESSOR NOOE: We thankfully did not have many quarantine issues. Two cast members had reason to be tested and as a result each missed one or two rehearsals but tested negative, so we did not have to recast or coordinate rehearsals online—something particularly tricky with musical rehearsals. With that not being a hurdle, we practiced in a socially distanced manner, which for singing means remaining 18 feet apart. This required each cast member to take ownership of learning their part, as the distance made it impossible to hear each student accurately in rehearsals. Staging and filming also had to incorporate the 18 foot distance. Not only did the cast have to retain that distance, but camera crew had to be 18 feet apart as well. Though this did add a layer of difficulty to the process, I believe that every person's rigid adherence to these, and all the regular COVID-19 regulations, is what allowed us to work successfully.

INTERVIEWER: What do you hope that audiences will take away from seeing SONGS FOR A NEW WORLD?

PROFESSOR NOOE: First, I hope they see the hard work and talent of the students. This show required the students to take ownership of their part both musically and in terms of acting choices. All of the students stepped up and I saw growth in each member of the cast, as well as in our student director, Sid Polezецek. Second, I hope that the overall theme of the show, being brave enough to step out in a new direction, inspires audience members. Last, but perhaps most importantly, this production proves that our world needs art more than ever. We need art that challenges us to keep us from complacency and to have more empathy. This is the greatest takeaway I hope our audiences have.