

## **WAYS YOU CAN SURVIVE THE WORLD CONCEPT and PICTURES**

**Director: Sarah Gordin (Muhlenberg College Production)**

I choose *Ways You Can Survive the World* by Jennifer Tuckett because it spoke to my fears of the world. I chose it when there was one bad news of a shooting after another and I was not sure how to handle all of the grief that seemed non-stop. I felt heavy and I felt lost. I wanted to choose a play that spoke to that feeling of being overwhelmed by the world.

This play is about two young teens and their attempt to deal with the heaviness of the world. In part one, Yasmin goes about it by deciding that she is a superhero. In part two, Katie decides that she is Jesus and so she must die for mens sins by crucifying herself. In part three, Yasmin, after deciding that the superhero plan was not working, two years later, decides to hibernate the world away. It takes an adult, their mother or therapist, to tell them that is is all going to be okay to continue on with their lives and get help.

The way the story is structured is in three separate parts that are all intertwined. I decided to cast five female identifying actors. The scenes were all two people and the other actors were utilized in a chorus way in the scenes whenever possible, creating an interlap of stories. One way I did this was with transitions. For example, the actor playing Katie's mom in part two was a non-speaking student in Yasmin's class in part one. Part one ends with all the classmates on stage. This actor, playing a young teenager, then takes off her overalls to reveal a "mom sweater" while singing acapella "Don't Ever Let Your Children Grow Up," by Maddie Poppe- a song about what it means to lose your innocence because of the world as the audience watches her "grow up" before their eyes. I also used dance for transitions. For example, Yasmin's mom set up Yasmin's bed on the couch while dancing with her teddy bear to "Secret for The Mad," by Dodie. This dance was a commentary on the mental illness that Yasmin's mom is dealing with, depression, as she tries her best to be a good mother.

I thought about each part as the world of the teenage character. So in part one, we are in Yasmin's world, part two, we are in Katie's world, and part three, we are back in Yasmin's. So often, a teenagers world is not taken seriously. I wanted to make sure that each teenager has agency over the story they are telling as the story is uniquely from the young person's POV.

The set was easy to set up in the space as it was simple. I had two chairs on the raised triangle to be used in part one for the therapist office. The therapist office had a table with a lamp on it. The couch right in front was used as the bed and roof of the school, and the bottom part was able to be used as the schoolyard and classroom. During Katie's part- the second part. I had the lamp turned on to illustrate her attempting crucifixion in the dark, and this created a very cool glow for a very intense moment.

This show was only the second show I ever directed by myself. Going from *Cagebirds* where everyone (all eight actors) were onstage the whole time to a show that was monologue and dialogue based caused me to think of new ways to approach the material, while creating a body ensemble to tell the story when appropriate. This script really fed my soul and gave me comfort in a time when I really needed it but it also caused me to think of what it means to grow up and to deal with the evils of the world. I was so grateful to have such a great cast to really dive into the text and language and these questions with.

# WAYS YOU CAN SURVIVE THE WORLD CONCEPT and PICTURES

Director: Sarah Gordin (Muhlenberg College Production)



# WAYS YOU CAN SURVIVE THE WORLD CONCEPT and PICTURES

Director: Sarah Gordin (Muhlenberg College Production)



# WAYS YOU CAN SURVIVE THE WORLD CONCEPT and PICTURES

Director: Sarah Gordin (Muhlenberg College Production)



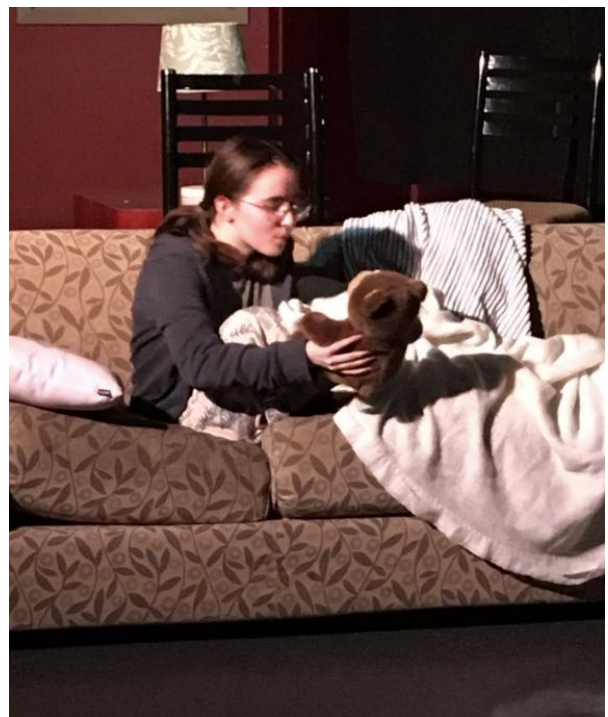
# WAYS YOU CAN SURVIVE THE WORLD CONCEPT and PICTURES

Director: Sarah Gordin (Muhlenberg College Production)



# WAYS YOU CAN SURVIVE THE WORLD CONCEPT and PICTURES

Director: Sarah Gordin (Muhlenberg College Production)



**WAYS YOU CAN SURVIVE THE WORLD CONCEPT and PICTURES**

**Director: Sarah Gordin (Muhlenberg College Production)**

