



PRE-SHOW
/
POST-SHOW

WITH

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1

My morning ritual... I am fortunate to live in a beautiful place, nestled at the edge of the Cascade mountains, and my third-floor bedroom window provides a fabulous view of the towering pine trees that surround my house. It feels like I am waking up in a treehouse every morning, so on most mornings, I take an extra moment or two to soak in the view before climbing out of bed. Then, depending on the day and the weather, I usually step onto my yoga mat or lace up my running shoes. Either way, I like to start the day with what I call my “moving meditations,” as I have discovered that they help me segue into the day with more focus and intention, and inevitably weave their way into my artistic and pedagogical work for the day. Once I finish my savasana or four to six miles, I shower, feed Bogart the cat, and eat breakfast—by far my favorite meal and one that almost always includes a banana. Over breakfast, I usually take stock of what is on my calendar for that day and sometimes sneak in a bit of prep work for the class I am teaching or rehearsal.

2

On my commute, I read/listen to... Myself think. I find my commute to be a wonderful time to think, plan, scheme, brainstorm, and create. In addition to my treehouse bedroom view, I am lucky to have a gorgeous 30-minute commute down the mountain into the lower Kittitas Valley, a drive that normally includes seeing the snowcapped peaks of the Stewart mountain range in my rearview mirror—a view that I find particularly inspiring and almost always makes me smile. Some days, I won't listen to anything at all, instead allowing my thoughts and ideas about an upcoming creative project to carry me through the commute. On other days, I rotate between SiriusXM's Coffee House station, Pandora's U2 station, or the playlist on my phone that I've fondly titled “Soundtrack of Life” and that includes songs from some of my favorite artists, such as Frank Sinatra, the Indigo Girls, U2, Dave Matthews Band, Adele, and Aretha Franklin. As a director, I also am strongly influenced by the soundscape and musical world of a play, so when working on a production, I often use my commute to find musical inspirations and explore the aural world of the show.

3

If I could, I'd go back to... Admittedly, I am a theatre history nerd, so my answer to this question varies daily. However, if I had to pinpoint one time (at least for today), I would go back to 1937. Not only is this an era in history that intrigues me, but also it would afford me the opportunity to see firsthand Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock* and the dramatic events surrounding the provocative, “too radical” play. To be one of the audience members who walked the 21 blocks from the padlocked Maxine Elliott Theatre to the Venice Theatre and watched the actors bravely continue the performance in the face of censorship would be an incredibly powerful experience. An added appeal to going back to 1937 would be watching Amelia Earhart's final flight unfold. I have long been fascinated by Earhart and have thought more than once about creating a play or performance project about her, so to watch the drama unfold around her final flight might prove inspiring.

4

A performance I wish I could see again...One of the most wonderful things about art and live theatre is that there is always room for change and growth, so, of course, as a performer and director, there are many moments in past productions that I would love to revisit and see or work on again. However, if I limit my response to my experiences as an audience member, there are two performances I would love to see again. First is the very first professional production I saw: *Annie*. Now, my mother would tell you that I have always been performing and directing; growing up, my best friend and I would stage plays in my basement and charge our families admission to see them. With that in mind, it was quite momentous for me to go to a professional theatre production, and, as I recall, one had to be five years old to attend this particular dinner theatre company's performances. So on the day of my fifth birthday, my parents—ever supportive of their theatrically inclined daughter—took me to see *Annie*. While I don't remember many of the details of the show, I do remember the surprise, joy, and excitement that I felt when Annie opened a trunk and a real dog jumped out. I would love to relive that moment and feel the magic of theatre take hold of my heart and soul.

Interestingly, the second performance I wish I could revisit involves young audiences as well. Several years ago, I directed *A Year with Frog and Toad*, and some of my favorite moments were witnessing our youngest audience members respond so actively and invest so fully in the world and magic of the show. Thoreau wrote that "the world is but a canvas to the imagination," and I think that theatre, especially theatre for and with young audiences, reminds us to access that imagination and find renewed faith in the magical, transformative capabilities of theatre.

5

Guilty pleasure...My annual tradition of watching all seven seasons of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. I didn't watch the series when it originally aired and only discovered it after watching another of Joss Whedon's TV series, *Firefly*. However, there's something about Buffy and her Scooby gang that resonated with me. Many of the films and television shows I watched as a young girl featured male protagonists, so to see a strong young woman kick some vampire butt and deal with the complex realities of the contemporary world was refreshing. So every year, my guilty pleasure is to watch the series again, from start to finish—all seven seasons.

6

My Netflix queue says I would love...A really eclectic mix of shows, to be honest. However, one of the first categories Netflix points me toward are films and shows with a "strong female lead." (Is it any wonder that my guilty pleasure is *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*?) As a feminist artist and someone deeply invested in supporting women's and other diverse voices, I am deeply drawn to films, shows, and plays that bring those stories from the margins to the center.

A closer look still at my Netflix queue would also reveal an interest in television series such as *Homeland*, *Stranger Things*, and *The Crown*. I think this is true for several reasons: one, I don't have cable, so any and all of my television viewing comes in the form of online streaming services like Netflix. More importantly, as theatre artists and directors, I believe we are consummate storytellers, and what I appreciate about

a well-written television series are the ways the form allows long-term story and deep character development, especially if the series unfolds over multiple seasons. Yes, I fall prey to the binge-watching impulse more often than I'd like to admit, but I think that is also one of the benefits of Netflix—the ability to watch multiple episodes in succession allows us to track the overall development of a theatrical world, and I love watching that story unfold, drawing me more deeply into the world.

7

I am actually watching...This Is Us. I have had several colleagues recommend it to me, and while I was initially a little hesitant, thinking it would be too melodramatic and sentimental for my tastes, I have found the characters, the overlapping storylines, and the larger social issues addressed in the series quite compelling.

8

I'm reading or I want to read...Walden by Henry David Thoreau. As an English major in college, I read *Walden* in one of my lit survey courses, but I don't recall really digging into it too much. However, over the past few months, several references, political moments, and conversations with people very dear to me all brought Thoreau and *Walden* to my attention. As a result, I am currently renewing my acquaintance with Mr. Thoreau and his wilderness experiment.

Right next to *Walden* on my coffee table is a hefty stack of new plays and manuscripts, as I am also incredibly interested in new plays—so much so that whenever I find a new play that piques my interest, I'll add it to the stack, and I regularly stash one in my bag to read during any unexpected free moments in the day.

9

To wind down, I...Do yoga. Again. In addition to my work as an artist and teacher, I practice Ashtanga yoga and am a part-time yoga instructor, so doing yoga typically frames my day. I particularly love practicing at the end of the day. There's something soothing and complete about coming back to the breath (*prana*) and moving through the familiar postures (*asanas*) after a busy day and rehearsal. It is said that "to do every action artfully is yoga," and yoga does indeed inspire my creative spirit. In fact, the more I practice yoga, the more overlaps I find between yogic philosophy and theatre—being present and in the moment, recognizing and appreciating that each day or each performance is different, the dedication to regular practice of your craft—all of which inspire me further as a yogi and an artist. **sc**

A freelance actor/director and SDC Associate Member, **EMILY ROLLIE** has worked on productions in Minnesota, Washington, Oregon, New York, California, Missouri, and Illinois. She spent five years as the artistic director of Independent Actors Theatre, a "purposefully nomadic" company, and producer of the "short Women's Play Festival" (the plays are short, not the women). Emily also is an assistant professor of Theatre Arts at Central Washington University. Her scholarly work investigates the intersections between directing practice and theory, focusing on feminist theatre and Canadian theatre, and it has been published in *Theatre Annual*, *Canadian Theatre Review*, *Theatre Survey*, and several edited volumes.