

Dramaturgical Research

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What’s Dramaturgy?

- Dramaturgy is the multi-faceted study of a given play undertaken in order to enrich both the process of rehearsing the play and the audience’s experience with the final product
- Every day in rehearsal, the cast of a play is tasked with making bold choices to help tell the story
- By providing the director and actors with detailed, targeted research on the world of the play, these choices can find grounding in careful research instead of being simply based on intuition or found on a whim
- A dramaturg is also present and attentive in every rehearsal, paying close attention to each actor’s performance and responding appropriately and generously

Before Rehearsals Begin

- Consult with director to discuss pertinent research areas
- Consult various editions of the text and footnotes to compile glossary
- Read books and scholarly articles pertaining to areas of research
- Synthesize research into concise essays
- Compile and format completed rehearsal packet



Josh Rahman’s “angry-face” as Charles the Wrestler
Photos: Pin Lim



Laura Frye’s “angry-face” as Rosalind, being playful with Le Beau, played by Clare Keating

•After providing in-depth dramaturgical research on the history of wrestling as a popular entertainment Europe, the director decided to emphasize “angry face” to help tell the story of the play.

During the Rehearsal Process

- Present and attentive at each rehearsal
- Watching performances closely and responding appropriately and generously
- Provide additional research assistance based on questions that arise that day. For example:
 - Clarifying the meaning of a word or phrase
 - Expanding on topic covered in rehearsal packet
 - Searching for and providing supplementary materials (videos, pictures, etc.) to actors based on the wishes of the director
- Attempting to answer any questions that arise that could help the team

Opening Night and Beyond

- Program note provides context to the audience on any given night of the performance
- Talk-backs facilitate thought and discussion about the play
- Once the play is on its feet, a dramaturg interacts with the audience to encourage discussion and learn how the play affected its audience

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