“Elasticity and Image”:
Directing George Bernard Shaw’s Arms and The Man

by

Anne - Marie Parfitt

B.F.A. (Hon), Concordia University, 2001

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in

The Faculty of Graduate Studies
(Theatre)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Vancouver)

April 2011

© Anne - Marie Parfitt, 2011
ABSTRACT

“Elasticity and Image”: Directing George Bernard Shaw’s *Arms and the Man* examines the research, preparation, and rehearsal process behind *Arms and the Man*, staged at the University of British Columbia’s Frederic Wood Theatre from March 18-27, 2010.

My objective was to discover how to create a production that stayed true to the text, while appealing to a more contemporary audience. The ideas of elasticity and image were cornerstones in the development and rehearsal process. I was interested to see in which ways I could stretch the world of the play while maintaining its authenticity. During rehearsal, I wanted to create an environment of exploration and support the actors in staying connected to the text.

Chapter 1 identifies key areas of research on George Bernard Shaw’s life leading up to and directly following 1894, when he wrote *Arms and the Man*. It includes bibliographical information. Chapter 2 is a detailed directorial analysis. Chapter 3 is a journal that follows my process from early design meetings, through development and research, rehearsal and the complete run of the production. Chapter 4 is a reflection, focusing on two elements of the process, using the theme of elasticity as the foundation for creation and the transition from the rehearsal hall into the theatre.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ................................................................................................................................. ii

TABLE OF CONTENTS ................................................................................................................ iii

LIST OF TABLES ........................................................................................................................... v

LIST OF FIGURES ........................................................................................................................ vi

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................................................................ vii

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH ................................................................................................................ 1
  1.1 The Early Years ................................................................................................................... 2
  1.2 The Scribe, The Critic and The Politician ........................................................................ 5
  1.3 The Play ................................................................................................................................ 8
  1.4 Conclusion .......................................................................................................................... 10

CHAPTER 2: ANALYSIS ................................................................................................................ 11
  2.1 Directorial Analysis .......................................................................................................... 11
    2.1.1 Initial Response to the Play ....................................................................................... 11
    2.1.2 Type or Genre .......................................................................................................... 13
    2.1.3 Style ......................................................................................................................... 14
    2.1.4 Space ....................................................................................................................... 15
    2.1.5 Audience .................................................................................................................. 16
    2.1.6 Given Circumstances of the Production .................................................................... 17
    2.1.7 Period ....................................................................................................................... 22
    2.1.8 Emphatic Element ..................................................................................................... 23
    2.1.9 Theme or Idea of the Play ....................................................................................... 23
    2.1.10 Action of the Play .................................................................................................... 24
    2.1.11 Dramatic Metaphor ................................................................................................. 26
    2.1.12 Mood ....................................................................................................................... 26
    2.1.13 Characters ............................................................................................................... 27
    2.1.14 Structural Elements ............................................................................................... 36
    2.1.15 Directorial Approach ............................................................................................... 38
    2.1.16 Design Words ......................................................................................................... 39
    2.1.17 Audience Orientation ............................................................................................. 40
    2.1.18 The World of the Play ............................................................................................. 41
    2.1.19 Special Problems .................................................................................................... 41
  2.2 Given Circumstances .......................................................................................................... 42
    2.2.1 Given Circumstances ............................................................................................... 42
    2.2.2 Previous Action ....................................................................................................... 44
    2.2.3 Polar Attitudes of Principal Characters ..................................................................... 45
  2.3 Question Analysis .............................................................................................................. 48
  2.4 Scene Breakdown .............................................................................................................. 63
CHAPTER 3: JOURNAL ........................................................................................................... 64
CHAPTER 4: REFLECTION ................................................................................................... 99
BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................................................................................. 104
APPENDIX A: PRODUCTION CREDITS ............................................................................. 106
APPENDIX B: DIRECTOR’S NOTES .................................................................................. 110
APPENDIX C: PRELIMINARY DESIGN FIGURES ............................................................... 112
APPENDIX D: PRELIMINARY COSTUME DESIGN FIGURES .............................................. 116
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Scene Breakdown ........................................................................................................... 63
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Act 11 Wall rendering................................................................. 112
Figure 2: Act 11 Wall initial drawing............................................................. 113
Figure 3: Wall rotation drawing ................................................................. 114
Figure 4: Photograph of wall construction .................................................. 115
Figure 5: Costume rendering for Raina Act 1 with cloak................................... 116
Figure 6: Costume rendering for Petkoff with cloak........................................ 117
Figure 7: Costume rendering for The Officer ................................................ 118
Figure 8: Costume rendering for Bluntschli .................................................. 119
Figure 9: Costume rendering for Nicola ...................................................... 120
Figure 10: Costume rendering for Catherine Act 1 ....................................... 121
Figure 11: Costume rendering for Catherine Act 11 and 111 ............................. 122
Figure 12: Costume rendering for Raina Act 11 with cloak and hat inset ............... 123
Figure 13: Costume rendering for Petkoff without coat.................................. 124
Figure 14: Costume rendering for various hat, shoes and hairstyles ....................... 125
Figure 15: Costume rendering for Louka ................................................... 126
Figure 16: Costume rendering for Raina Act 1 without cloak ........................... 127
Figure 17: Costume rendering for Sergius .................................................... 128
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my husband, David and my two sons, Jackson and Miles (who was born the summer between my two years of study at UBC) for their unending patience and support during this pursuit.

To the cast, thank you for keeping track of our language and for your talent, dedication and willingness.

And to the designers and crew, thank you for your commitment to the vision. I couldn’t have done it without you.

A great big thank you to my Advisor, Stephen Heatley, for his guidance and perspective.
CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH

George Bernard Shaw (GBS) was a man of many words. Over his 94 years, he wrote 5 novels, over 60 plays, short stories, countless essays, hundreds of music and theatre reviews and thousands of letters. His work as a writer and his passion as a Socialist drove him to continually put pen to paper in order to create a society that not only understands its framework and constructs but questions the ethical and moral foundation from which it grew. For the purpose of this thesis, I have chosen to centre my research on the part of his life leading up to and directly following the first production of Arms and the Man, as I believe this is the most relevant to my work as a director.

In respect to bibliographic information I have chosen to rely most heavily on A.M. Gibbs A life, as I found his portrayal of Shaw well rounded and thought provoking. He seems the least tainted by Shaw’s own hand, as GBS was known to be very involved in the creation of biographies written about him. Gibbs questions the common picture of Shaw’s upbringing as unloving and inadequate. He instead deciphers the historical information to portray Shaw’s early years with less hardship, poverty and lack of emotional support. Gibbs suggests that although his family home may have been lacking in physical tenderness, that the artistic environment in which he lived encouraged him to seek out a wide range of knowledge and laid the foundation for him to be the charismatic, ambitious and warm hearted individual that he became. I was particularly taken by the following quote from the introduction, as it speaks to me of the essence of Arms and The Man. “The present study is dedicated to a greater understanding not only of Shaw the
controversialist and social critic but also of the man who celebrates, and often exemplifies in his many friendships, the intelligent heart.”  

1. The Early Years

George Bernard Shaw was born in Dublin, Ireland on July 26, 1856. His parents, George Carr Shaw and Bessie Gurly had three children: Lucinda Francis (Lucy), Elinor Agnes (Yuppie) and George Bernard (Bob, Sonny and later known as GBS). They lived in Dublin in “genteel poverty”\(^2\). George Carr Shaw was an unsuccessful mill owner, civil servant and a heavy drinker. His appreciation for alcohol was a crucial factor in the disintegration of his marriage. Bessie was a talented singer and piano player who taught and performed throughout George’s life. What is of interest is GBS’s desire to “present himself as a self-created phenomenon,”\(^3\) as a man who has risen out of deprivation and desolation, when in fact he acknowledges his wit, mischievousness and sense of humour were inherited from his father while his musical interests and abilities stem directly from his mother. “For a budding creative artist and radical thinker, the Shaw household provided an extraordinary fertile background of religious, cultural, social, and intellectual influences.”\(^4\)

Shaw’s youth was filled with music. His mother’s mentor and musical collaborator, Vandeleur Lee, was of great influence on the young Shaw. There is much speculation if, in fact, Mrs. Shaw and Lee did not have an affair with GBS as the possible result. With the inclusion of Lee in his life, musical theory also became a constant in Shaw’s upbringing. “The foundation of Shaw’s

\(^3\) Gibbs, *A Life*, p19.
\(^4\) Gibbs, *A Life*, p42.
superb equipment as a musical critic had been firmly laid by the time he left school.”5 In 1866, Lee and the Shaws moved to Dalkey Hill, nine miles south of Dublin. The expansiveness and beauty of the countryside engaged Shaw’s imagination. The years he spent there were some of the most influential of his childhood. It was this beauty of land and sea that kept Shaw forever Irish in his heart. His parents separated amicably in 1873, when Bessie moved to London, shortly after Lee had relocated to the English city. She took her two daughters but left her son in Ireland with his father. Whatever the environment in which Shaw was raised, he took from his early years a sense of negativity and ineptitude that coloured his future perceptions.

Shaw’s two sisters were both musically orientated. Lucy was a singer of musical comedy and opera. She and Shaw had a close relationship. She married and had an established career in England. Agnes died in 1876 from tuberculosis at the age of 21. The severity of her illness may have been one of the reasons Shaw left Dublin and his father, arriving in London just after his sister’s death.

Shaw disliked formal education immensely. He did not prosper in an institutional environment, moving to numerous schools throughout his youth. At one point he was sent to a Catholic school which greatly damaged his reputation as a protestant. He compared schools to prisons and was finally rid of them at the age of fifteen. The last school he attended was where he met his lifelong friend Edward McNulty, “the closest and most significant friend of his Dublin childhood, one with whom he shared the secrets of his dreams and ambitions.”6 Shaw was hungry for knowledge and sought it ferociously. The National Gallery was an important venue for Shaw’s

---
5 Gibbs, A Life, p51.
self motivated education. It was here that he encountered more sensuous and imaginative imagery than that of his daily Protestant existence.

“Some of the most powerful and significant influences on Shaw during his childhood derived not from real people or his schooling but from the realm of the imagination, from literature, music, opera, and art.”⁷ Mephistopheles, the demon in the Faust legend, was an important figure that inspired curiosity and intrigue. Not only did it effect Shaw’s self image, but it also worked its way into his writing. Faust is the opera referenced in *Arms and The Man*. Mephistopheles inspired much of Shaw’s impish behaviour as a critic and a radical political socialist. Another inspiration for Shaw’s early imagination was John Bunyan. “What particularly seized his imagination and greatly influenced his stance as a critic of society was the way the seventeenth-century nonconformist and outsider attacked the outwardly righteous and respectable pillars of his own society.”⁸ Another early literary influence was Charles Dickens. Shaw’s early works are greatly inspired by Dickens’ sense of comedy, social commentary and accessibility.

In respect to his moral and political views and dedications, Percy Bysshe Shelley was of the utmost influence on the young Shaw. Upon reading Shelley, Shaw became a vegetarian in 1881 and remained so until his death in 1950. A critical view of marriage, support of women’s rights and a rejection of God are all areas in which Shelley provided inspiration and guidance for Shaw.

---

⁷ Gibbs, *A Life*, p39
“Identification with the revolutionary romantic Shelley - especially in his political, social and religious views - became part of Shaw’s self-definition in his twenties.”

Shaw’s vegetarian diet had to be temporarily abandoned in 1881 when he became ill with smallpox. He suffered some scarring on his face from the illness and so grew a beard which became his identifying feature.

1.2 The Scribe, the Critic and the Politician

Shaw spent the first ten years in London relying heavily on his family for financial support. His critical reviews began shortly after his arrival in 1876, when Shaw started ghost writing for Lee as a music critic on The Hornet. It wasn’t until 1880 that Shaw began his political career as a public speaker and writer when he joined the Zeteticca Society.

Shaw was a man driven by his philosophical and moral ideas. He adamantly believed in the betterment of society and the equality of people. Social standing and wealth, in Shaw’s perspective, did not equate to a superior rank or position. His involvement in the Fabian Society drew him towards changing legislation to balance the wealth between rich and poor. He was an avid supported of women’s rights. Shaw’s ethics and reason were so deeply entrenched in his daily conduct that they became the compass from which he directed his life. The societal issues that Shaw continuously grappled with were the starting point for all his writing, be it a Fabian lecture or a comedic play. Shaw was constantly seeking ways to encourage society to understand its flaws and achievements in order to better itself for future generations.

---

9 Gibbs, A Life, p94.
Between 1879 and 1883 Shaw wrote his 5 novels *Immaturity, The Irrational Knot, Love Among the Artists Cashel Byron’s Profession* and *An Unsocial Socialist*. Although he spent much of his time during these years trying to have his work published, he was repeatedly rejected. His work was often described as too intelligent for the general reader. “The novels provide a unique perspective both of the way in which Shaw was reacting (as an Irish outsider) to his new social environment in England and to the internal dialogues he was conducting about his own character and destiny”.\(^{10}\) It wasn’t until 1884 when the Journal *To-Day* serially published *An Unsocial Socialist* and 1885 when the same Journal serially published *Cashel Byron’s Profession* and the Journal, *Our Corner*, serially published *The Irrational Knot* that Shaw found any success with his novels. *Cashel Byron’s Profession*, his penultimate novel, was his most marketable due to its shorter length and fast moving plot. “The uses Shaw made of romance conventions in this work are similar to those he was to make in his fourth play *Arms and the Man*, which marked a turning point in his career as a dramatist comparable to that effected by *Cashel Byron’s Profession* in his career as a novelist.”\(^{11}\)

As a critic, much like his career as a novelist, his work was slow to be accepted. Along with his ghost writing, which lasted until 1878, he had only a few essays published. It wasn’t until 1880, when he wrote his first dramatic review and began his political public speaking and writing activities, that he also established a career as an art critic. From 1883 onward he wrote numerous essays in various Journals and in 1885, along with the publication of his novels, his first article of musical review was published in *The Dramatic Review*. As well, in that same year, Shaw’s first book review was published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. From this point onward Shaw had a

---

hectic schedule of attending political meetings, speaking engagements, writing his own work and attending and reviewing performances. In 1886 Shaw became the art critic for The World, adding musical criticism in 1890. In 1889 he wrote, under the name ‘Corno di Bassetto’, a musical column for the The Star. He continued this work until 1890. In 1894 Shaw terminated his writing for The World and took up the position of Theatre Critic for The Saturday Review. It was this appointment that solidified his significance as a Theatre Critic.

“Until Bernard Shaw began to write for the theatre, there had been no modern British dramatist who took current social, political, and religious problems as subjects for plays.”\(^{12}\) Shaw wrote his first script, The Widowers’ Houses in 1884, which was first produced in 1892. In 1885 he wrote the second and third of his Plays Unpleasant, The Philanderer and Mrs Warren’s Profession. The same year he began work on the first of his Plays Pleasant, Arms and the Man.

“It was not a coincidence that from 1889 until 1893, the dominant cultural influence in his life was Henrik Ibsen.”\(^{13}\) The Norwegian playwright’s controversial approach intrigued Shaw and reawakened his interest in playwriting. During this time Shaw also wrote his most significant critical essay, The Quintessence of Ibsenism, which was initially a Fabian lecture.

As a political activist, Shaw started his career as a speaker and writer in 1880 when he joined the Zetetica Society that discussed political, social and philosophical subjects. In 1882 he heard the American economist, Henry George speak “later declaring this to be a momentous event in his career.”\(^{14}\) From the onset of his integration into the world of socialist politics, Shaw was an avid


\(^{13}\) Gibbs, A Life, p153

writer of political essays, books and manifestos and a dynamic debater and public speaker. He soon was attending numerous weekly political meetings and lectures. In 1884, Shaw attended his first Fabian Society meeting. He joined the organization the same year. He was elected to the executive in 1885. Shaw became deeply involved in the Socialist organization and it was through his involvement in politics that he developed important and lasting relationships.

1.3 The Play

*Arms and the Man* was first produced in 1894 at Florence Farr’s Avenue Theatre. The initial run was fifty performances. It played in an Irish playwright season that consisted of works by Todhunter and Yeats. *Arms and the Man* was not ready for production at the beginning of the season, but due to Todhunter’s failure with his play *Comedy of Sighs*, Shaw had to quickly polish it up in order to dissuade Florence Farr from mounting his play *Widowers’ House’s*. He had it typed and ready and in rehearsal in two weeks.\(^{15}\) Shaw’s response to a single boo amongst a riotous applause at the end of the opening performance was, “I assure the gentlemen in the gallery that he and I are of exactly the same opinion, but what can we do against a whole house who are of the contrary opinion.”\(^{16}\), became a famous Shavian quote. Yeats declared “that from that moment Bernard Shaw became the most formidable man in modern letters.”\(^{17}\)

War and marriage are the two major themes of *Arms and the Man*. Shaw was an advocate of peace and believed that war was an unnecessary evil. He states that, “I wanted to write a play to destroy the romantic idea of a soldier as a sort of knight in armour. I got the notion that if I could

\(^{15}\) Gibbs, *A Bernard Shaw Chronology*, p115


\(^{17}\) Gibbs, *A Bernard Shaw Chronology*, p115
show a cavalry charge against a battery of machine guns it would be a dramatic illustration of my argument.”\textsuperscript{18} Shaw knew nothing of the Serbo-Bulgarian War, but was encouraged to research it as various similarities existed between it and Shaw’s original ideas. He later met with a Russian ex-naval officer who promptly and repeatedly corrected him on the details of the war and Bulgaria, forcing Shaw to rewrite his play. \textsuperscript{19}

Throughout his life, marriage had been a topic rife with turmoil and discontentment. Shaw himself did not marry until 1898 at the age of 41. “He thought of marriage not as a means of satisfying the personal desires of individual men and women, nor as a means of strengthening family ties, but as the means of bringing to birth a new and better generation.”\textsuperscript{20} What Shaw was depicting in \textit{Arms and the Man} was the movement away from societal misconceptions of right and wrong based on maintaining class structure and hierarchy. He was greatly influenced by many of the highly politicized and free thinking women he encountered who sought equality and recognition. He based both the leading characters, Raina and Louka, on close friends who were pushing against the gender divide. The discourse between men and women in \textit{Arms and the Man} was revolutionary in that it exposed the true human connection that lay hidden beneath the veils of artificial conventions.\textsuperscript{21} Shaw was inspired by other colleagues and friends in the creation of \textit{Arms and the Man}. Sergius’ repeated line, “I never withdraw”, was taken from his socialist associate Graham Cunninghame, who used this phrase in Parliament.\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{flushright}
\begin{mini-_slot}
19 R.Page Arnot, p 125
20 Ward, p99
21 Gibbs, A Life, p 172
22 Gibbs, A Bernard Shaw Chronology, p352
\end{mini-_slot}
\end{flushright}
Arms and the Man had a provincial tour following its inaugural run in London and was taken to New York in the same year by Richard Mansfield. The play has had a long and varied life, being remounted with various levels of success.

1.4 Conclusion

Shaw was a man steeped in artistic expression from an early age. He was incredibly self-driven and a non-conformist. His dislike of institutionalized education resulted in him being exposed to a myriad of different influences. Shaw always saw himself as other, apart from the status quo. This is true of his childhood and was echoed in his move away from Ireland to England, where his sense of being an outsider was intensified. These experiences enabled Shaw to attack ideas and ideologies from a new perspective. His thirst for knowledge gave his socialist motivations a framework not only within a political context, but he was also able to use his knowledge of music, literature and the dramatic arts to motivate people to question their own perceptions and ideas. Shaw believed he was working from a place of reality and truth, not romance or idealism. Indeed, his dislike for the latter two concepts is, in part, what motivated him to write Arms and the Man.
2.1 Directorial Analysis

2.1.1 Initial Response to the Play

While reading *Arms and the Man* I was initially struck by the intellectual argument, the complexity of the characters and was immediately challenged by the comedic elements within the play.

Shaw’s writing is so deep in meaning and so thick in reference, I was drawn to its density. I’m interested in the balance that lies within the play between the philosophical and moral elements and the comedic lightheartedness. Finding the line between these two opposites will provide an interesting challenge. The war in which Shaw has chosen to set *Arms and the Man* was an event I knew little about. I was interested to learn more about this period in Bulgaria’s history and discover where Shaw kept to the facts and where he bent the truth for his own storytelling purposes. I was struck by the traditional nature of the piece and the opportunity it provided me to create a set that evokes the period without portraying it so naturalistically. In respect to costumes, I was drawn to the flamboyance of the ladies dresses contrasted with the military uniforms. Each woman distinguishes herself through her attire. This seems an exciting place to develop each characters eccentricities.

Shaw has written such well defined characters, which automatically drew me into the play. I felt that each of the roles provided a dynamic challenge for the actor. I also loved the romantic nature
which imbued all of Raina’s actions, for instance the sense of play between her and Bluntschli and the ridiculousness of her entanglement with Sergius. Sergius himself is so over the top, that I was intrigued by his sense of self. With Catherine and Petkoffs’ relationship, and her obvious intelligence and pride, I was drawn into the elements of truth and love. I believe the Petkoffs have a passion for one another that is based on a real appreciation for each other. This in contrast to their daughter’s frivolity, creates an interesting tension within the play. Louka’s incredible sense of injustice and her constant drive for a better life fascinated me. She is a woman living above her status, away from her comfort zone yet she is constantly reaching for more. Nicola’s clarity in his position and duty juxtaposes the other characters need for status and acknowledgement. He often speaks the morality for which Shaw is so famous. The elements of secrecy and conspiracy also jumped out at me. They provide opportunities for humour, connection and encourage characters motivations and actions.

Usually I am drawn to plays whose primary focus is to uncover or unearth some aspect of society which is difficult to examine. In *Arms and the Man*, Shaw buries the social and moral elements within the comedic context. This is a new framework for me to be working within and I am intrigued by this challenge. I was instantly aware that I was out of my area of expertise, which is exactly what I was looking for in a thesis production. The comedy has been placed during a war and I do not want to lose the immediacy, desperation and depravation this provides. I was immediately interested in how to portray this sense of war. I imagined a stage filled with soldiers, soldiers running through the theatre house, video footage of war images and soundscapes that would draw the audience into the reality and proximity of the war. I have not yet answered the question of how. I plan to experiment with using actors in the theatre as
soldiers during Act I, creating a commotion. This, augmented with sound effects and possibly live music, may create the sense of chaos and revelry that I believe crucial during this initial act.

2.1.2 Type or Genre

*Arms and the Man* is a comedy. Shaw has infused it with moral debates and discussion around war, love and status which give the piece depth and complexity. There is a physicality to the characters, which enhances the humour. I have been dialoguing with the set designer to ensure the space has some actual items for physical play. As well, the positioning of set pieces will be critical to enhance the physical comedy. I have brought on board a movement coach who will aid in creating physical moments of comedy as well as track physical continuity. Shaw has included props and costume pieces that act as igniters for comedic exchange.

Shaw’s writing is so rich with meaning and context that it will be a challenge to stay away from over intellectualizing the piece. Getting the actors on their feet and staying active in their motivation will help lift the play from its moral undercurrent. That said, I do not want to lose the richness this infusion provides.

The play is set at a particular time, in a real place, during a real war. And although Shaw himself admits to taking artistic liberties, which thankfully opens the door for creative license on my part, the history that surrounds the play in an important element. During rehearsals I will continually bring in images, text and sound from Bulgaria to help the actors locate themselves in space and time.
2.1.3 Style

The style of *Arms and the Man* is Ruritanian Romance. This was a well established comedic framework at the time that included intrigue, sword fighting and love. The name Ruritarian comes from a novel published in 1894, *The Prisoner of Zenda* written by Anthony Hope, and references the imaginary place in which the novel is situated. Shaw takes this style and turns it upon itself by exaggerating the characters and infusing moral debate within the dialogue. Shaw is constantly undercutting idealism by having his characters turn on their idealistic beliefs to form new more realistic attitudes. He believes idealism is a destructive force that causes war and removes romance from love.

Shaw’s purposeful deconstruction of a style allows me to play and discover the elasticity of the text. I am interested in staying true to time and place but finding how far I can stretch the physicality and language, keeping the play realistic but enhancing it with farcical exchanges and attitudes.

I have reduced the set to the minimal requirements. I have stripped it of its clutter to allow the characters and their actions to be more focal.

The language of *Arms and the Man*, its intellectual debate, moral discussion and comedic sparring are crucial to the play. The actors must understand what they are saying, its context and motivation. The women in particular need to keep their speech active to avoid excessive flightiness.
I will be monitoring the success of this by making sure that we are telling the story, making the ideology clear while stretching the realism of the characters.

2.1.4 Space

*Arms and the Man* will be presented at the Frederic Wood Theatre. It is a proscenium theatre with a capacity of 400. This type of theatre is ideal for this play as it provides a traditional experience for the audience.

The space has some limitations. Sight lines are problematic on both upstage right and left, which hinders entrances and exits. The revolve which we are using for scenery changes between acts is placed fairly upstage. Due to the sightline issue we have had to place the wall downstage of the centre line on the revolve to make sure the doorways are far enough apart for the needed furniture for Act I but not too far apart that a large part of the audience can’t see them. When the set revolves 180 degrees for Act II it will then be fairly upstage. The garden will be large. This will cause some problems for entrances and exits, exchanges that demand quick movements and filling the space without a lot of clutter but making it not seem entirely barren. I have chosen to use downstage right or left as the stable entrance. This will allow action to be brought downstage in Act II. The placement of the garden furniture is crucial to maximize its use for comedic purposes as well as to create interesting images and pictures.

Due to the fact that the main set piece is a wall that runs from stage left to stage right, we are bringing on furniture and shrubbery that will provide depth and allow the actors to utilize the space more thoroughly. Some pieces will be placed off the revolve on to the apron to allow for
some action to be played further downstage. These will have to be placed on and off the revolve during transitions.

I have never directed a play in a fairly large proscenium theatre. I am nervous about the transfer from the rehearsal space to the theatre. At this point, I don’t know how much time I have in the theatre for rehearsals, some adjusting will need to occur when that shift finally happens. We are pulling most of the set pieces so hopefully we can have those early on in rehearsal to maximize their benefit.

I am contemplating using the theatre house as the exterior of the Petkoffs’ home. That way I can have the officers enter through the audience in Act I, bang on the apron, have Nicola come out and that exchange happen in front of the audience instead of backstage. I am planning on getting some actors together before rehearsals begin to experiment and see if it's worth exploring or if it is just irritating and pulls too much away from the stage. If Nicola uses downstage right as the front door for Act I then in Act II the stable door will be downstage left.

2.1.5 Audience

The expected audience for Arms and the Man consists of UBC students, friends of the cast and crew, UBC theatre subscribers, Shaw enthusiasts and theatre professionals. I imagine it will be a wide range in age and income bracket. I am not involved in the publicity of the production, which is a rare situation for me, so I have no idea how the play is being marketed.
My experiment in finding the elasticity of the piece is partially to discover where, for this play, the balance lies between contemporary aesthetic and traditional theatre.

A large part of my choosing *Arms and the Man* for my thesis is to explore how to do traditional or classical work in a mainstream environment while staying true to my own aesthetic and creative interests. Potentially the stripped down set, use of live musicians and song and visible scene transitions may pull some audience members who are traditionalists out of the production. I am hoping they will do the opposite and provide older audience members a fresh, yet familiar experience and provide younger audience members with a connection to more traditional theatre.

### 2.1.6 Given Circumstances of the Production

**Rehearsals**

I have approximately 150 hours of rehearsal before tech weekend. This feels like just enough. I have some concern that working with students will elongate the process.

We will be moving from a rehearsal room to the theatre, which will provide challenges for blocking and maintaining sight lines as the rehearsal hall is much smaller. I have a 5 day break two and a half weeks into rehearsal. I’m not sure how this will effect the working process. Potentially it could hinder the build or it could provide a needed rest for the actors and crew.
We are rehearsing during the Olympics, who knows what chaos that will create! I know that traveling across the city will take much longer and I expect students to be late as they adjust to these changes. I have ensured that we will be able to access the rehearsal room.

One of my actors is away for the first three days of reading week, which will mean that I can not do a run before the 5 day break. this feels problematic in that the actors won’t have had a chance to feel the rhythm of the entire piece.

Ana, the set designer, will not be available to do a presentation until day three of rehearsals. I actually like this and look forward to breaking out of the standard mould.

One of my actors is busy for the first 12 days of rehearsal, he is available but intermittently, so I have to schedule around his absences.

There is only one day break for some of the actors between Romeo and Juliet and the start of our rehearsals. I am sensitive to the quick shift they need to make. The production was a great success, which will facilitate a positive environment but I need them to realize they are embarking on a new journey.

Cast
One month before rehearsals begin I still do not know who will play Petkoff. Due to conflicts with the Olympics, the student originally cast has been asked to choose between performing at the Opening Ceremonies or doing his roles for the department. I have re-auditioned the other
male actors, none of which I felt had the weight needed for this role. I have asked the department to reconsider their action in forcing this particular actor to choose, thus allowing him to still perform in this production. If they return to me with the same decision, I will hire a professional actor. I am concerned about the mix of a professional and student cast and although the role is of an older man, I think the actor would need to be more in line age wise with the students as opposed to the age of the character.

The students are a mix of intermediate and final year. The actor playing the lead, also played the lead in my 520 production, so I am familiar with her strengths and weaknesses. I have not worked with any of the other actors, so there will be a steep learning curve in figuring out their abilities. I have noted tendencies during auditions and while watching them work on their current production. I have the cast I originally wanted (except for Petkoff). I feel confident in these choices. I have some concerns with their ability to handle the text, as it is so dense. My main approach is to keep them grounded, understand what they are saying, who they are speaking to and why they are talking. As well, being as prepared as possible on my part, understanding the historical, political and ideological references will help me to make the text clear for them. In respect to physicality, I want to create an environment of exploration. I’m not sure how much they will engage with me in play and offer options and choices.

I find the shift of working with professionals to working with students sometimes lumpy. I need to not underestimate their abilities while at the same time not get frustrated with their lack of experience.
I have not been very involved with the BFA students, so I am as unknown to them as they are to me. I am starting rehearsal with the movement coach coming in and teaching them a waltz. I am doing this as a way to ease the transition from one play to the next while still using the time for something useful. I think teaching them the waltz will help with physicality. I’m remembering Mary Overlie saying she always started rehearsal with a surprise - so the actors learn to expect the unexpected. I want to create an atmosphere of play and exploration.

**Crew**

Most of the design team I have brought on board from my professional life. I have never worked with the stage manager, although to date she has been incredibly thorough and organized.

My set designer is a friend and colleague from Montreal. We have a fluidity in communication and a similar aesthetic. I am very thankful she is on board. Working with her is always easy and stimulating. She lives in Montreal and is not physically available, however, we have worked long distance before and I do not find it a challenge. Between her and her assistant they will be in Vancouver three times before tech weekend. We have organized her to be at production meetings via Skype. This will not be problematic for her, but I worry that this may cause some frustration for some faculty.

My sound designer, also a friend and colleague from Montreal, has recently moved to Vancouver. I am also very pleased to have him on board. He is very busy from mid-January to mid-February, which makes me a little nervous but I am confident in his ability to pull through. We have been very proactive in meeting and he was set to generate work at an early date.
The department has been slow in finding him some student assistance, but I think they are now located. I have never met any of them.

I have brought on board a musician, who is familiar with Bulgarian Folk Music. She will be teaching the cast the songs and helping the sound designer work with the live musicians. She has never worked in theatre before and teaching in also new to her. But I am confident in her abilities.

As of one month before rehearsals, the live musicians have not been confirmed.

I feel slightly nervous about the component of live music, especially since it is still not completely organized. I have never incorporated live musicians before, and not being a musician myself am unclear on what they need regarding structure, rehearsal time and support. I am very excited by the possibility of live music and am willing to allow it to, hopefully, unfold. The costume designer is the only student designer. I have never worked with her before. She has generated some interesting images but I’m slightly concerned that she does not grasp the concept. She seems motivated.

The lightening designer is a professional in the community and I have worked with him only as a technician. I don’t know that much about his work or his approach.
Other

I have a 6 month old son who doesn’t take a bottle and has never been put to bed by anyone other than me without screaming himself to sleep. Although my husband and I are taking January to train him, this is causing me some stress and I’m not exactly sure how it will all work out.

My husband will be traveling periodically during rehearsals. We have set up some support but this will also create some extra stress on the family.

I will need to be very concentrated in my prep time each day as I won’t have excessive amounts of time during the day.

The budget for the production is small. This is limiting choices in respect to set and costume in particular.

2.1.7 Period

*Arms and the Man* is set in Bulgaria at the end of the Serbo-Bulgarian War. Act I takes place in November 1885 and Act II and III take place in March 1886. The play is indicative of its time, however, Shaw turns the style in on itself by questioning the idealism of the characters and infusing the play with his own moral beliefs. He attacks the idealism of the time by forcing his lead characters to question their own idealism and choose a more realistic approach. The props that provide comedic play, the lovers finding each other at the end are all indicative of a comedy from this period.
Although I am keeping the play in the same period because it is a vital aspect of the script, I have chosen to remove some of its formality by stripping down the set to its bare essentials. I am adding music from the period, as well as traditional Bulgarian singing. I find this culture rich in its musicality and am excited about drawing on it to augment the play. The costumes will be period, with a focus on textures and fabrics as opposed to colour.

2.1.8 Emphatic Element

Character is the most important element. The action, comedic play, rhythm and morality are all based in character. Each actor has a huge job in discovering the intricate desires, obstacles and needs of these characters. Shaw of course is known for his use of language, but I believe if the actors are clear on their sense of drive, the language and what they are saying will be grounded and clear.

Time will be spent on how these people move, how they express themselves physically. The focus on physical specificity will help the actors ground their characters and provide moments of comedy. Keeping the characters focused on what they want and their tactics will be crucial to ensure they play has drive and rhythm.

2.1.9 Theme or Idea of the Play

In *Arms and the Man* the themes of love and war are the most prevalent and to which Shaw is directing most of his commentary. Predominantly, he is addressing how a romantic notion of either of these elements is dangerous as it removes the concept from reality. In his prologue,
Shaw speaks to personal responsibility and accepting one’s circumstances and contexts. The notion that idealism and romanticism remove us from the ability to see and act from a place of truthfulness is vital for him. He distills this in the action of the play in several ways: Bluntschli’s ability to make Raina face herself and stop her effected behaviour, Sergius’ marriage to Louka who he admires more than Raina even though her social standing is inadequate as a potential mate, Nicola playing the moral pillar even though he is the servant, and the dynamic between Sergius and Bluntschli in which we see idealism played against the harsh brutality of war.

2.1.10 Action of the Play

Stasis

The Serbo-Bulgarian War is ending. Bulgaria has been at war for some time, but this war has lasted 14 days and they are winning. Catherine and her daughter Raina are at home alone with their servants Nicola and Louka while their husband and fiance are away fighting. Both women desire to live a life filled with the grandeur of art and intellectual discourse. Raina is particularly romantic in her notion of her self and her world. Catherine, being slightly more pragmatic, has had an electric bell installed in the library.

Turning Point #1

The inciting incident is when the man, later discovered to be named Bluntschli, enters Raina’s room. He climbs through the window after being chased down the street by Bulgarian Soldiers. He himself an Austrian soldier, exhausted and famished, has discovered Raina, dressed only in her night dress. He is hiding for his life in the hands of the enemy. Bluntschli does not take Raina’s idealism and romanticism seriously. The particular moment when he informs her of
Sergius’ inept soldiering entices her to engage in even stronger verbal sparring. Their exchange of wit and intelligence is what intrigues each to the other.

**Turning Point #2**

Bluntschli returning with the carpet bag filled with Petkoff’s coat is the point in the action where everything shifts into high gear. His presence is enticing for the women, especially Raina, but also very dangerous. When it turns out Petkoff and Sergius know the man and insist on his staying on, the women must cover their tracks and return all to its proper place.

**Turning Point #3**

When Bluntschli discovers Raina is older than he thought, he shifts his perspective on her actions and motivations. He deems her as a suitable age and immediately asks Petkoff for her hand in marriage. At this point we know how things will end, as at this point we have all the pieces of information.

**Turning Point #4**

The new stasis at the end of the play is that each has found their appropriate match. Raina and Bluntschli, Louka and Sergius. Petkoff’s military difficulties have been solved. Catherine has found an appropriate match for her daughter and Nicola has maintained his station and potentially gained a better job. All problems solved.

What intrigues me about this journey is its focus on Bluntschli’s actions. All the major events happen around him. I have always seen Raina as the protagonist, but this is forcing me to
question and rethink that perspective. It also solidifies what Jackie Maxwell and I were discussing regarding the importance of keeping the woman focused on action. I’m not interested in this being only a man’s story. I think Raina’s journey is crucial to what Shaw is addressing in respect to forgoing idealism and romanticism.

2.1.11 Dramatic Metaphor

*Arms and the Man* is like a box being opened. In Act I this metaphor is very strong in the movement in and around the shutters. Initially the are open and the war and romance are one. Then they are closed to protect the romance by separating it from the dangers of war. Bluntschli then penetrates this barrier, mixing romance and war and questioning both.

2.1.12 Mood

I’m interested in exploring a few interlocking moods or ambiances in the script. I am intrigued by the environment of war at the onset of the play. How does this effect and work in contrast to the lighter, more romantic tone of the play? I think it’s interesting, and maybe surprising, to have the sense of war at the top enhanced. Most people will know it is a comedy and to have the initial mood be that of more militaristic and serious allows for an immediate juxtaposition with the text. The sound designers and I are hoping to have some live music been played as the audience enters, I imagine them entering the lobby and then inviting the audience into the theatre. I think the tone of this music could be more serious and then as the play progresses, as the musicians play at the transition, intermission and after the show, the mood could lighten and become more fun and gypsy sounding. In Act I, when the officers are chasing “the man”, I think it's important that the audience feel a part of this group, that they too are surrounded by chaos,
drunkenness and disorderly conduct. I imagine this being a combination of live sound and effects.

In respect to set, costume and physical action, the designers and I have been using the idea of a museum quality. This originated from the use of photography as a backdrop for the set. This will translate visually into the piece being pared down in its manifestation. The set pieces will be real wooden furniture. The costumes will focus more on silhouette and texture as opposed to colour. The idea is that the visual aspects of the production are working together not in contrast. The actors will then be able to play with physical posturing and gesture, again an idea motivated by the characters and the photography.

2.1.13 Characters

Raina

Qualities  Romantic, idealistic, nationalistic, intelligent, posturing, courageous, determined, perceptive, earnest

Metaphor  Like a dyed rose coloured blue. Romantic in nature, but falsely derived.

Rhythmic/Musical  Fast paced and fluttering but also able to languish in the moments.

Quality

Major Desire  To live a life of romantic and aesthetic excellence.
Major Action  To learn more about Bluntschli.

Moral Stance  She believes in herself and her ability to get what she wants, to stand behind one’s country, to see romance in all actions, to have ideals and stick to them

Decorum  She believes in her ideals and has a romantic sensibility. Actions are exaggerated.

Initial Character  Heartbeat: Quick, not too fast

Mood Intensity

- Perspiration: none its unladylike
- Stomach Condition: a flutter constantly
- Muscle Tension: chest is held high - mid back tense, shoulders solid, movements intentional
- Breathing: shallow and quick but not rapid

Bluntschli

Qualities  Contained, intelligent, well mannered, well preserved, romantic, opportunistic, courteous, curious, blunt, organized

Metaphor  Like a well groomed horse
Rhythmic/Musical: A bass that is being tuned and then finds pitch

Quality

Major Desire: To learn more about Raina

Major Action: To propose and become engaged to Raina

Moral Stance: One should do what is right, behave honourably, romantic but in a straightforward sort of way - less exaggerated

Decorum: Straight forward, speak your mind, no nonsense

Initial Character: Heartbeat: steady and solid

Mood/Intensity

- Perspiration: normally none
- Stomach Condition: hungry
- Muscle Tension: thighs are tight
- Breathing: solid, smooth - lots of air, deep
Catherine

Qualities  Intelligent, competitive, astute, takes charge, caring, friendly, adoring, affectionate, striving but not quite achieving, concerned about others perceptions, posturing

Metaphor  Like a christmas sweater

Rythmic/Musical  Steady and spirited. A Tambourine.

Quality

Major Desire  To solidify high social standing

Major Action  Getting Raina married

Moral Stance  Do what you have to in order to maintain appearances and keep social standing.

Decorum  That of a more sophisticated European than a common Bulgarian.

Initial Character  Heartbeat: Quick

Mood/Intensity

  Perspiration: light under the arms - well concealed
Stomach Condition: slightly uneasy
Muscle Tension: shoulders and neck
Breathing: more shallow than deep, easy to quicken

Petkoff

Qualities Content, adoring, good hearted, well natured, oblivious, naive, not very driven, can be gruff when pushed, posturing, easily volatile

Metaphor Like a bear in the fall - full and slightly drowsy

Rhythmic/Musical Slow and low. Sometimes being prodded into faster pace by the other instruments.

Major Desire To come home, finish his work and unwind from the war.

Major Action Uncovering the deception and secrecy.

Moral Stance Lead when you have to, rest when you can

Decorum Let others do the dirty work while holding onto the reins

Initial Character Heartbeat: steady but easily pushed into sudden irruptions
Mood/Intensity

Perspiration: when working - heavy
Stomach Condition: often hungry
Muscle Tension: back
Breathing: deep, and strong

Sergius

Qualities Arrogant, posturing, naive, inept, determined, self-righteous, physically able, handsome, uninhibited, romantic
Metaphor Like a rooster - a cock

Rhythmic/ Musical Giant cymbals crashing unexpectedly. No constant rhythm. Great Qualities movements forward followed by exaggerated pauses ensued by gentle tapping.

Major Desire To be seen as the romantic hero he believes himself to be

Major Action Relinquishing Raina to Bluntschli and becoming engaged to Louka

Moral Stance Never give in, never back down, never apologize, never buckle and then do all those things
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Decorum</strong></th>
<th>Complete conviction to whatever one is saying even if it is in complete hypocrisy to what you just said</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial Character</strong></td>
<td>Heartbeat: Quick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mood/Intensity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspiration:</td>
<td>constantly a little sweaty - not stinky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stomach Condition:</td>
<td>ravenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle Tension:</td>
<td>tight buttocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breathing:</td>
<td>shallow, uneven - the occasional deep breath - when it is needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Louka</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualities</td>
<td>Determined, smart, confident, defiant, sexy, flirtatious, driven, pouty, grumpy, heavy hearted, hard done by, conniving, opportunistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>Like a well used silk negligee: slightly seedy but dangerous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythmic/Musical</td>
<td>Bagpipes: droning and depressive but you can’t help but listen. And</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>are they wearing underpants...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Desire</td>
<td>To stop being a servant and marry above her status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Action</td>
<td>Becoming engaged to Sergius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Stance</td>
<td>Get to higher ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorum</td>
<td>Do what you want, what you desire - not what is expected of you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Character</td>
<td>Heartbeat: steady and quick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood/Intensity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspiration:</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stomach Condition:</td>
<td>tight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle Tension:</td>
<td>lower back from sticking out her buttocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breathing:</td>
<td>shallow - easily quickens, haughty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Nicola**

| Qualities                  | loyal, well mannered, determined, obedient, steady, smart, respectful, desirous, sense of dignity and self-respect |
| Metaphor                   | Like a well-trained dog. |
| Rhythmic/Musical Quality   | Steady drum             |
| Quality                    |                           |
Major Desire  To leave his job with the admiration of his employers and open up his own store

Major Action  Trying to keep Louka in line. Maintaining the equilibrium amongst the chaos.

Moral Stance  Do not rock the boat, the road to prosperity is through a gentle manipulation, not a sudden storm

Decorum  Act as you are expected to, always defend your boss.

Initial Character  Heartbeat: Steady

Mood/Intensity

   Perspiration: cool
   Stomach Condition: contained
   Muscle Tension: arms
   Breathing: steady, deep

**The Officer**

Qualities  Obedient, physically able, respectful, reliable
Metaphor
Like a whisk. Does its job but manipulated by others.

Rhythmic/Musical
A trumpet: a sudden entry and then nothing

Quality

Major Desire
To find “the man”.

Major Action
Looks for “the man” in Raina’s room

2.1.14 Structural Elements

Arms and the Man is a three act play. Each act is then divided into French Scenes, approximately seven or eight per act. Most of the scenes have two or three characters, however, Act II and III both end with scenes containing more people. I will structure my rehearsal around the French Scenes. Most of them are short enough to manage, while a few may need to be divided in half. An intermission will be placed between Act II and Act III. There are few long monologues, most of the text is dialogue.

The exposition is mostly introduced at the beginning of Act I and II as there is a time shift of 4 months that happens between these two acts and many elements have shifted over this time including the end of the war and a season. The conclusion of the war is especially significant as it allows for the men to return home and Bluntschli to return with the coat and it alters the environment or mood in which the characters are living.
Act I establishes the war and introduces us to the women of the house. The intrusion of the Man and Raina’s subsequent interaction with him creates the first major complication. Her decisions to hide him, lie to her mother and then help him escape all carry serious ramifications. His being found asleep on her bed is potentially scandalous and Shaw purposefully builds the tension by not letting us know how they will overcome this obstacle.

Act II introduces us to the men in the play. The war is over and they are returning home. The main obstacle in the act and for the play is when Bluntschli returns with Petkoff’s coat. When he is discovered by Petkoff and Sergius, their invitation to him to remain for lunch builds the tension as the women, especially Catherine, fear the potential scandal that may ensue. We also learn that Petkoff has work to complete, with which he is having difficulty. Bluntschli’s arrival is a blessing as his military prowess may enable him to find a solution. Sergius’ flirtatious nature and his interactions with Louka bring about more complication. Sergius learns of some possible indiscretion of Raina’s which rouses his jealous sensibility.

An interesting element of Act II is that it begins with a discussion between Nicola and Louka in which Nicola is trying to persuade Louka that to achieve a higher position, she must first play within the rules of servitude, that to gain respect is the road to betterment. Deception and lies will only lead to social failings and disappointment. This, juxtaposed with the complexities of the ladies’ secrecy that are unveiled during the act, gives Shaw an opportunity to address his social commentary on our morality.
Act III focuses on the unravelling of the secrets and deceptions forming the final stasis of love and union. The action of the act starts immediately as Petkoff almost instantly asks for his coat. Shaw has, again, finished Act II without letting us know where the coat is, so we are instantly drawn into the action. The climax of the play occurs in this act as does the important moment when Bluntschli calls Raina’s bluff and forces her to face her affected behaviour and posturing.

It’s important to note that *Arms and the Man* is a comedy and the plot is not so difficult to follow or unexpected in its meanderings. The physical comedy and verbal sparring are what provide much of the interest and intrigue. In rehearsal, time will be allocated to discovering and understanding these elements. Due to the fact that most of the play is dialogue as opposed to extended monologues, it will be important to spend time with the actors getting them to understand the relationships that exist between these characters.

### 2.1.15 Directorial Approach

My work with the actors will focus on character and physicality, as these two elements are crucial in grounding the play in its comedic context. Focusing on relationships, strong character motivations and actions, responding and listening to one another and finding fun physical lives for the characters will be key.

I’m interested in exploring the tension that exists between the comedy and the morality of the play and so am interested in spending some time trying scenes or moments numerous ways to find the subtleties and richness of the text.
I will have time dedicated to music and movement as learning a song in another language will be difficult and I want the actors to feel very confident and playful in their character choices.

In respect to creating a working environment, I want the rehearsal hall to be a place of experimentation, fun, commitment and dedication. I think specificity and timing are crucial in a successful comedy and so some time will need to be allocated to working the blocking and movement of the piece. The play’s rhythm is quick.

I have some concern about the scale of the garden in Act II. I will need to work with the actors in the space to justify and sell their extended entrances and exits. Learning how to protract these actions will be crucial for building the comedy.

2.1.16 Design Words

The concept for this production of *Arms and the Man* was derived from a desire to move away from the cluttered ultra-realistic set described by Shaw and move more towards a sleeker more contemporary feel. The word “elasticity” has been important in my discussions with designers as I am interested in exploring how much we can stretch the form around the play without losing its authenticity. How can I keep the piece grounded in 1885/86 while making it interesting for a contemporary audience? The inclusion of live musicians and song, a reduced set and breaking the fourth wall are all explorations in elasticity.

The set designer and I have decided to use photographs as backdrops for the scenes, with actual set pieces in front. This concept originated from Ana’s research in slide galleries in Montreal.
We felt the posturing that was so alive in the pictures was reminiscent of the characters in the play. The museum quality of these images was also interesting to us and will be manifested with the real furniture against a painted backdrop.

In respect to costume I have been discussing the sense that the costumes must not pop out from the set but must work in conjunction with the environment. Thus, silhouette and texture will be more important than colour. We are talking about a grey scale, with a hint of reds, especially on the servants’ costumes and for Sergius, who is undoubtedly the most flamboyant character.

Thankfully, Shaw himself has taken great artistic license with the historical accuracy of the play which allows me some freedom in respect to depicting the play in a specific time and place. Although the play will be set in Bulgaria in 1885/86, these years are not being rigidly adhered to for set and costume pieces.

2.1.17 Audience Orientation

I am planning on using the theatre house and aprons for both musicians and action during the play to bring dialogue downstage and to bring a sense of inclusivity for the audience.

Much like Shaw, who pushed the boundaries of theatre by maintaining its normal framework while critiquing its parts, I am working to find the elasticity that exists between a traditional script and a contemporary aesthetic.
2.1.18 The World of the Play

What is most fascinating to me about *Arms and the Man* is Shaw’s ability to bring morality and social consciousness into a comedy. I want to create a world that does not forget it is based in a time of war, nor that it is fun and full of life. Shaw is asking us to contemplate love and war. To understand, for him, they are not romantic notions but experiences based in reality and that we must face them with honesty and dignity no matter what the consequences. Shaw is asking us to accept who we are and to face our lives, our social, political and economic environment with reality not romanticism so that we can act as more responsible citizens. For Shaw, the romantic lens was a dangerous one as it removed the viewer from any sense of truth or reality. For me this is crucial in creating the world of the play, that we must see who and where we are and then throw up our hands and laugh.

2.1.19 Special Problems

The main problem I see lies in inexperience. On my part, I have never directed Shaw or a comedy nor have I worked on a proscenium stage. The actors have little to no experience working with Shaw whose writing can be dense and provides inherent challenges. In my experience in working with any kind of heightened text with students, there is difficulty in staying grounded and making the words their own. Fortunately, I have the help of a great vocal coach, who can work with the students and I am a director who is focused on connection to the text and each other. I’m looking forward to playing and giving myself permission to experiment. Working outside my comfort zone, I have given myself permission to play, to throw up my hands and laugh.
2.2 Given Circumstances

2.2.1 Given Circumstances

Environmental Factors

Geography: Bulgaria, a small town outside of the Dragoman Pass. Although it is not noted in the text, I have chosen this town to be on the west side of the pass, so that the Serbian soldiers are passing through on their way back home. The location is close to Slivnitza, the town in which the great battle took place. The town is located in the Bulgarian mountains. The house in which the action of the play takes place belongs to the Petkoff family. The Major, his wife Catherine, their daughter Raina and their two servants Louka and Nicola.

Date: Act I takes place in November 1885. Act II and III on March 6, 1886. Act I takes place in the late evening, it is dark outside. The night is cold, but clear and beautiful. Act II takes place in the morning over breakfast, it is a warm spring day. Act III is later that afternoon after lunch.

Economic Environment: The 1877/78 war between Russia and Turkey removed the feudal system from Bulgaria making independent development possible. In 1885 Bulgaria’s economy was agriculturally based (primarily small holder). The Petkoffs are a family with financial stability. They have servants and live in a large house. The community's perception of their wealth is of great importance to the Petkoffs, especially Catherine. Who Raina marries is very much based on wealth and status.
Political Environment: In the 1300’s the Bulgarian Empire was taken over by the Ottoman Empire and they remained under Turkish rule for the next 400 years. In 1879 (The Treaty of Berlin), after the Russia - Turkey War, part of Bulgaria was given independence but Eastern Rumelia remained under Ottoman control. At this time Prince Alexander became Prince of Bulgaria. He had strong Russian ties, being a nephew of the Tsar. He was well received in Bulgaria. The Prince was caught between his ties with Russia and the politicians of Bulgaria and in 1881 with support of the Tsar he suspended the constitution and took complete control. This infuriated the Bulgarian politicians and two Generals were sent from Russia to take leadership. In 1883 Alexander restored the constitution after trying unsuccessfully to rid Bulgaria of the Generals. A serious division with Russia followed and his subsequent encouragement towards Bulgarian nationalism widened the gap. During this time, Bulgaria negotiated to have Eastern Rumelia returned and in September 1885 riots and revolts (supported by the Prince) finally ended in Eastern Rumelia seizing control and returning to Bulgaria. This union (entitled the Act of Unification of Bulgaria) was threatening especially to Austria - Hungary as well as Serbia, who feared Bulgaria would take them over. The 14 day Serbo- Bulgarian War (led by the Prince for Bulgaria) is the backdrop for the play and was initiated by Serbia (backed by Austria-Hungary who promised Serbia land when they won). It was perceived as an easy win for Serbia. Due to a lack of well-trained soldiers, new equipment and the soldiers confusion on who they were fighting, the Serbs fell to the less armed but more nationalistic and passionate Bulgarian Army. Act I starts right after the battle of Slivnitza, which was the decisive battle within the war, securing Bulgaria's hold on Sophia, the capital, and driving the Serbian Army back over the border. Act II takes place after the war and after a peace treaty had been signed in which no land is handed over to Bulgaria, but the Act of Unification is acknowledged. Relationships with
Serbia greatly suffered. Petkoff, Sergius and Bluntschli are all soldiers and therefore the war and the political environment is a significant element to their characters and relationships.

Social Environment: Due to the religious separation between Ottoman (Muslim) and Bulgarian (Christian) culture, Bulgaria isolated itself from the progressive advancements of Europe. Under Ottoman rule, all state and religious structure were destroyed. The Bulgarians had no legal, national or biological rights. Mid 1500’s the Ottoman Empire declined and Bulgaria, which was a labour-driven country, prospered over the Muslims. Bulgarian bourgeoisie took control of manufacturing and agriculture and small and large farms operated and owned by Bulgarians began to grow. The Bourgeoisie spearheaded the National Liberation Movement. The independence of the Church and the establishment of a National Education were the first elements of independence. In the 1876 battle in Plovdiv, Turks committed atrocities and massacred hundreds of Bulgarians. This brought international attention to and support for the Bulgarian people. Russians who shared a culture and language with Bulgaria forced their leaders to declare war on Turkey in 1877. Wealth and social standing were important elements of the society. For both Catherine and Raina, this is a key element to their motivations and desires. It was a patriarchal society, but in this time of war women at home were left to take responsibility for the household. Parental involvement in marriage was common.

2.2.2 Previous Action

Petkoff and Sergius have left home to fight in the Serbo-Bulgarian War leaving Catherine and Raina alone with their two servants, Nicola and Louka. Catherine has had an electric bell installed in the library, the latest in modern technologies, and speaks to a social and economic standing and sensibility. Raina and Sergius are engaged to be married. Their union is supported
and encouraged by Catherine, who adores Sergius’ social standing, physical attributes and wealth. Raina did not immediately accept his proposal.

Nicola introduced Louka to the family, under the false premise that she is his fiancé, to save her from a life of poverty and possible fall into prostitution. They do speak of marriage, although it is unclear if they are really committed to each other. Louka has worked at the house for many years.

Meanwhile, Bluntschli, a professional Swiss Soldier, has joined the Serbian Army as they were the first to come calling. He has no direct affiliation with them. He is running away from the Bulgarian Army at the top of the play.

2.2.3 Polar Attitudes of Principal Characters

Raina

At the beginning of the play Raina is obsessed with a romantic sensibility. Her behaviours and mannerisms are exaggerated to augment this perspective. Through her verbal sparring with Bluntschli, Raina comes to see her effected behaviour as a cover and begins to desire interaction that is more based in reality and truth.

Bluntschli

At the top, he is a desperate soldier running for his life finding refuge in the hands of the enemy. He believes Raina to be a young, naive romantic who is, although beautiful and interesting, unattainable due to age and social standing.
By the end, Bluntschli has returned as the able soldier and due to his father’s death has inherited a great wealth. He has come to see his own romantic notions and, upon learning of Raina’s true age, sees her as a possible bride.

Catherine

From the onset, Catherine is committed to Sergius’ as a prize son-in-law. She is taken in by his effected mannerism and takes great pride in her daughter’s relationship with him. By the end, she sees Bluntschli as a reasonable suitor.

Petkoff

Wants to come home and rest from the war. Wants things to be easy and peaceful and wants to complete his chores with ease.

At the end, Petkoff wants to find out what is happening in his house, has a desire to unearth the mystery. He wants to return to a sense of normalcy.

Sergius

From the beginning, Sergius always wants to be given the utmost respect. Wants the approval of the Petkoff family and to be gallant and chivalrous. He is marrying Raina because it is what is expected of him and it’s the right thing to do.

By the end, he has been led by Louka into loving from a more truthful place. Bluntschli points out his mask and he is more able to see the ridiculousness of his actions. He is still caught up in what is right, his compass has just changed directions.
Louka

At the beginning, Louka sees the road ahead laid with hardship and frustration. She knows what she wants but doesn’t see how it can be achieved.

By the end of the play her engagement to Sergius has evened that road and given her a clear path to a better future.

Nicola

At the top of the play, Nicola wants to marry Louka and sees a future for them. He understands the path he must take is that of service and that over time and through hard work he will achieve his goals.

By the end he has given up Louka as he sees he is more able to achieve what he wants without her. It’s not calculated or cruel, just truthful. Married to Sergius, she will benefit him more than as a wife. His notions are consistently unromantic.
2.3 Question Analysis

These questions were asked as the script was being read aloud by the cast for the first time. Any one in the room was encouraged to pose questions. Each French Scene was read and then we stopped to ask questions. No answers were given.

Act 1

1.1

Should we keep all the stage directions, or can I scratch them out?

Byron and Pushkin – What specifically did Catherine and Raina take from them?

How is the army organized? What exactly is going on? Why did Bulgarians not have the position of “officers” in their armies?

When Raina talks about “our” ideas… whose ideas?

How are we pronouncing Sergius’s name?

What was Raina’s intention around Sergius before the war, and how exactly has it changed now that this information comes to pass?

What does Raina usually do with her evenings – instead of gazing off into the stars?

What is Louka’s normal situation – for her to send Raina away? What is that server/served relationship?

What is the dynamic in the house?

How long have the men been gone?

What did they see at the opera that year?

How exactly did Catherine hear about this?

How far away is the war?
Did Raina jump to marry Sergius... if not, why?

How does Catherine’s opinion of Sergius differ from Petkoff’s?

What does it mean to “buckle on Sergius’ sword”?

1.2

How patriotic is Louka? Does she buy into the politics of the time?

How evident is Louka’s insolence?

What is it about Raina’s past behaviour that makes Catherine need to be so strict/strong-willed about what she has to do?

Why hasn’t someone fixed the bolt on the window?

Why is Raina not scared?

How religious is the family?

1.3

Where does Raina get her gumption/courage?

How does this man get on her balcony and through her window?

What’s it like to find a soldier in your room?

Why doesn’t Raina yell?

What exactly will they do if they get ahold of him?

What’s his next plan of action?

What does he expect is behind those shutters?

Does he choose this house for a reason?

Is he (the man) as brave as he makes out to be?
What does the fact that Shaw writes with “grim gritted humour” tell us about him?

What is a weapon of a gentleman?

Why did he pick this balcony?

1.4

How does the man’s countenance change when he hears the noise in the street?

What is Raina’s first instinct when she hears them downstairs?

How much resistance is actually put up at the front door?

1.5

Why does Raina decide to help the man?

How excited is Louka about the action?

Why does Catherine let Raina talk to the officer instead of herself?

Why doesn’t Louka mention the revolver?

What is Louka doing while they are trying to break into the house? Helping? Spying?

What does it do to them having gun-shots come through the room?

Why does Raina talk to the officer, not Catherine?

Does Louka know The Man is there? How much is she trying to find him?

What is The Officer’s reaction to bursting into a young lady’s bedroom? Is he drunk?

What does it mean that The Officer has to go back and tell them there is no Serb in there?

How long has Louka been working in the house?
1.6A

Why does Raina offer The Man his gun?

How long has he been a military man?

Has she omitted the creams? Or are the creams her favorites that were saved?

What does she think of the Swiss?

How long has it been since The Man had real food?

How dirty is The Man?

Why is The Man fighting for the Serbian army?

When was the last time he saw an upper class woman (in her night gown)?

How long has The Man been on the run?

How frightened is The Man when Raina jumps up with a shriek?

How cold is it?

How late is it?

1.6B

What are the reasons one would pull out the horse? Is there more than one reason?

What are their education backgrounds? They know about Don Quixote? Who is Don Quixote?

What is Raina’s plan at this point?

Why does she let The Man stay?

What are The Man’s feelings towards Don Quixote/Sergius? And how does that change as soon as he finds out Raina is engaged to him?

What time does The Man become intrigued with Raina? Is he jealous now?

Why does she defend Sergius?
1.6C
Why is Raina suddenly trying to bolster him?
How clearly is he thinking if he hasn’t slept in 2 days?
What does Raina feel about national pride or the war effort? Why is she so willing to make sure that he can get out safely? Why is she so nurturing?
How tired is The Man?

1.6D
Have there been sounds from the street this whole time?
What does it look like in the street? Dynamic of the buildings? Is their house the only one with 2 levels?
“Private house”… What other kind of houses are there on the streets?
How much is The Man enjoying himself?
What are the consequences of having a man sleeping on Raina’s bed?
How does Raina expect her mother to react?
Is the opera The Man refers to the only one he has ever seen? Has he seen it?
Was Ernani the last opera Raina saw? Or an old one?
When The Man asks Raina when she will tell her mother… is that when he first thinks of it?
Who wrote Ernani? What is it about?
How sleepy has The Man been the whole scene? Or does it just hit at the end?
1.7

What does Raina feel when she thinks The Man is gone?

What does she tell her mother downstairs?

Why does him sleeping making him a brute?

What is the dynamic of the family? Is Raina the only child? Can Raina do anything wrong?

ACT II

2.1

How long have Louka and Nicola been working for the family?

How did they meet?

Was she a prostitute?

What was Louka before this?

Are there only 2 servants?

Is there any attraction between the two of them?

Where is Sophia?

What is a Japanese forehead?

How big is the house/property? Orchard? Wall?

Is it bad that Louka is smoking a cigarette? Will she be smoking?

How sexual is Louka? How does she use it?

How far away is the gate?

What kind of customary greeting is there between Nicola and Petkoff that he calls for Nicola primarily?

“Master! back…” why is the “b” not capitalized?
Why doesn’t Louka want to have the soul of a servant? What kind of soul does she want?

2.2

How much does Petkoff drink?

How much does Catherine know about military politics?

Are Catherine’s ideas very good?

How long was Petkoff gone?

What is all this bathing business?

How much sway did Petkoff have in the creation of this peace treaty?

Where is Philopopolis?

Why is Catherine so adverse to peace?

What does Catherine think about her father-in-law?

How did she find out about an electric bell? When was it invented?

What has Catherine been doing while the men have been gone?

Why is the washing hanging in the yard? Is there underwear?

Is Catherine aroused when Petkoff acts like a barbarian?

Does Catherine know the war is over already? How much does she know?

How glad is Petkoff to be home?

Did he fight?

How long was the war going on?

Did Petkoff actually learn something about people's washing or did he make it up?

How has the war changed Petkoff?

Are the servants made to wash?
What clothes are hanging?

How much/what kind of love is there in the relationship?

How long has it been since they had sex? Do they? What’s it like?

What’s the shift that happens for Louka and Nicola once Petkoff comes home?

2.3

How does Catherine feel about Sergius?

How does Petkoff feel hearing that Sergius is going to resign?

How exactly do you pronounce Sergius’ surname?

How much of this has Raina heard?

How long has Petkoff known Sergius?

Why is Petkoff letting Raina marry Sergius?

How does Nicola feel about Sergius?

Why is Petkoff surprised that Sergius arrived so suddenly?

Did the army just get back? Why did they arrive at the same time?

How much power do the women have? “The women are on your side”.

How do we feel about the Cossacks?

Have Sergius and Petkoff spoken before about the debacle?

Does Petkoff not want to promote him due to combating power?

Are Sergius and Petkoff of equal rank?

Why does Sergius never withdraw?
Did The Man know who the two men were when he told them the story?

What is the reaction of Catherine and Raina to Sergius’ perception of the story?

Is Catherine actually going to show Petkoff the electric bell?

What was the interaction between The Man and Petkoff and Sergius?

What did they do with the chargers?

Why did they trade horses with the enemy?

“A volunteer, of course: keen on picking up his profession” why is this funny?

Why were they trading men for chargers? How did they get swindled? What does that mean?

Values? Why? Who were the soldiers? Prisoners?

How do we feel about the Bourgeoisie?

What are Sergius’ feelings towards The Man?

Were the two men together throughout the war?

How has the war changed Sergius?

How long have the families known each other? When did the engagement happen? Whose idea was it to get engaged?

Was Sergius faithful when he was away?

What is Petkoff’s relationship to Sergius’ parents? Do they live in this town?

How comfortable is Sergius in this home? How much time has he spent there?

What’s forage?

Why did Sergius come here instead of going home? Where does he live?
2.5

Does Raina actually love him? If so, why?

Does Raina actually envy him?

Does Raina believe all the things she’s saying?

Does Sergius believe all the things Raina says?

How sincere is Sergius? Does he believe what he is saying?

What was their banter/relationship like before he went to war?

2.6

How long has Sergius had a thing for Louka? How far have they gone? Has this happened before?

Why does Louka give up the information so easily?

How attracted to Sergius is Louka?

How in/out of control is Sergius around Louka?

Which Sergius comes out when he is with Louka/Raina?

What is Sergius going to gain out of marrying Raina… if his love is not true?

How many times before have they talked about “the higher love”?

How tormented is Sergius about the idea of having these different identities? How much has he thought about it before?

How transparent is Louka being, as far as how much attraction is she letting show? How much is she playing up the innocence?

How much does Louka actually know about The Man?
What are the stakes here? How nervous are Louka/Sergius that someone might come out and see them?

How often does Sergius revert to violence to get what he wants?

How aware is Louka over her sexual power over Sergius in this scene?

What does Sergius feel towards servants in general?

2.7

What is the shift that happens when Sergius leaves?

How worried is Catherine?

Why are they sending regiments to Philipopolous?

What is the relationship between Catherine and Sergius?

What’s a “salver”?

Why is Raina half hoping Sergius finds out?

What kind of “dreadful shock” has Raina dreamt of doing to Sergius?

Would Sergius continue with Louka even after he got married?

Who actually has more power in the Catherine/Raina relationship? Does that dynamic change when Petkoff is around?

Is Catherine trying to get rid of Sergius so she can talk to Raina?

Where is the library in relationship to where they were currently standing? Would Sergius/Louka have been seen?

How much did Raina see of Sergius/Louka? Did she?

How reluctant is Raina to talk to Catherine?

Have Petkoff/Sergius made the connection that it was their house The Man stayed in?
2.8

Does Louka know that this is actually the Chocolate Cream Soldier?

What was Bluntschli hoping to achieve by coming back?

Does Bluntschli assume Raina is the only woman in the house? Who was he looking for?

Does Bluntschli know that Major Petkoff is who he talked to before? Has he made the connection that this is his house?

What is a carpet bag?

Has Raina been listening?

How exciting is this for the women?

How much is this like reenacting an opera?

2.9

Why are Petkoff and Sergius friendly with Bluntschli when before, they said he had swindled them?

How much of their outward behaviour to Bluntschli is sincere?

Is a Captain higher than a Major? How does Captain Bluntschli know how to reroute these troupes better than a Major?

What is “ice pudding”?

How does Nicola feel about being the scapegoat?

Act 3

3.1

What is a Mackintosh?
How intently is Raina listening to the conversation?

Why are they letting a Swiss man draw up plans without checking them over?

Why isn’t Petkoff signing?

Is Sergius sarcastic when he is talking about the division of labour?

How does Sergius feel about Bluntschli doing the work?

Is Petkoff serious about Catherine frightening the troupes?

Where is Sofia, is it nicer?

What is a braided coat?

How can Sergius sign if he has resigned?

Does Raina have more horses?

Does Petkoff actually want to be involved in the papers?

What is the difference between a Charger and an Arab?

What does Sergius mean when he says “if one of them is man enough to spit in my face….?” Is that reward or punishment?

Is it unusual for a daughter to speak up against her mother in shared company?

3.2

What does “pawning” something mean here?

When Raina says “I wonder… is he… I thought that…” What was she going to continue on with?

How many people has Raina ever revealed her true self to before? Has anyone called her out on her affected attitude?

Why doesn’t Bluntschli like gratitude? What is the something else?
How much of this conversation does Louka overhear?

Where is Pirot?

3.3

What do each of the numbers correspond to?

How much does Bluntschli know his father owns?

What was Bluntschli’s relationship with his father?

How does Bluntschli feel about his mother? Where is she? Does he have siblings?

Who is Louka referring to when she says “your soldier”?

3.4

How much does Nicola know about Bluntschli and about the lies that are being told?

Did Louka breakup with Nicola? Do they usually talk like this?

How close is Nicola to opening his own shop?

How serious is this engagement? How attached?

What’s the servant hierarchy?

Was there ever a point in Louka/Nicola’s relationship when they loved each other?

Who knows they are engaged?

How did they meet?

When did she wear black hair and red lips?

How often are they alone?
3.5

Who is driving this scene?

How in love is Louka with Sergius? Where is she on the spectrum between losing him to get a higher place? Or is she really in love with him?

How manipulative is Louka?

What does Sergius want from Louka? Is he actually in love with her?

How do Sergius/Louka change when they are with each other as opposed to when they are with everyone else?

Does Sergius just want what he can’t have?

3.6

Why did Shaw not capitalize god?

What is the definition of “making love”?

What happened with Raina at the window? What’s the truth?

3.7

How does Bluntschli feel when Petkoff says he found the portrait and read the inscription?

Why does Bluntschli give himself up as the chocolate cream soldier?

How does Louka feel when Sergius keeps saying she belongs to him?

3.8

What is an omnibus?

Does Nicola speak French and German?
2.4 Scene Breakdown

Table 1: Scene Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act</th>
<th>SCENE</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
<th>CHARACTERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Raina/Catherine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Louka/Raina/Catherine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Raina/Bluntschi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Raina/Bluntschi/Officer/Nicola/Other Officers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Raina/Bluntschi/Louka/Catherine/Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Raina/Bluntschi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Raina/Bluntschi/Catherine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nicola/Louka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nicola/Louka/Petkoff/Catherine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Petkoff/Catherine/Nilcola/Sergius</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Petkoff/Catherine/Sergius/Raina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sergius/Raina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sergius/Louka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sergius/Raina/Catherine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Catherine/Louka/Bluntschi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Catheine/Bluntschi/Petkoff/Sergius/Raina/Nicola</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Petkoff/Catherine/Nicola/Bluntschi/Raina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bluntschi/Raina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bluntschi/Raina/Louka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Louka/Nicola</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Louka/Nicola/Sergius</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sergius/Bluntschi/Raina/Louka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sergius/Raina/Bluntschi/Louka/Petkoff/Nicola</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sergius/Bluntschi/Raina/Louka/Petkoff/Catherine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 3: JOURNAL

September 3rd

Finally after phone tag extravaganza Ana and I had a conversation on Skype. We discussed ideas originally brought forward in April concerning how to create the world of the play without recreating a realistic set. This is of primary importance for me during this production. It’s an experiment at how to recreate a historic period for a very naturalistic set without having to have all the furniture and the painted flats. We discussed the use of enlarged photographs from the time period as backdrops with doorways and a revolve so that the furniture can be brought in through the openings. I’m interested in the idea. I fear it may be too flat. I am interested in creating the world of the play before the piece begins. Marching soldiers. How war encompasses an environment. I’m interested in starting from this point as then the comedy can travel into this place of destruction. We talked about the use of voices, war, actual people, just feet, stomping, the lobby. All is still developing.

Ana had some books and between baby changing and nursing I took a look at some of the pics and was intrigued.

September 10

Have been keeping the dialogue going with Ana. Working out when we can see each other and her coming out to Vancouver. I really want her to see the space and for us to talk face to face.
September 15

I just found out about a female directors conference in Toronto that I am very interested in attending. They have a speed dating event for which I am going to apply. Jackie Maxwell will be there and I’m very interested in sitting down with her and talking Shaw and *Arms*. I’m hoping that she can be on my committee. That would be so fantastic to have her as a resource. At least it would be great to have the opportunity to sit with her and chip away at her wealth of knowledge and experience in Shaw and directing his work.

I watched a BBC version of *Arms* on Youtube. It eased some of my fears about the piece and has given me some ideas around the comedy and how it can be played. I’m excited to have fun with a text instead of feeling like I have to mine it for all its dark undercurrents.

October 3

Met with Jackie my SM. She seems totally on the ball and very easy to be with. She is game for organizing the call backs and auditions which will be fantastic. Saw the opening of *MK Woyzeck*. Was horrified to see their use of projections to create environment as it echos what Ana and I had discussed. Yikes. I’ll have to talk with Ana and get her some images so we can change course if need be. Spoke with Stephen about auditions and all seems to be in order. I’m really interested to see what the students bring to the table. I’ve asked them to do anything they want.
To surprise me. I don’t know the intermediate year very well and I’m interested to see their hidden talents.

Went to the library to attack the wall of literature about Shaw. My card isn’t working so after hours or mulling and choosing I walked out empty handed. Annoying. Well at least I have faced the beast and have a small idea of what I am in for. No shortage of research, that is for sure.

October 6

Heard from Nightwood and I’ve been accepted. I’m thrilled. Going to Toronto and the opportunity to talk about my work and possibly meet with Jackie - I need to email her. Good incentive to do some research so I have some understanding on the man and the work. Don’t want to look like a complete nimrod. My experience of working with Miles has been very fulfilling. Luckily he is a happy baby. At two months he has been integrated into this experience. Coming to meetings and auditions. I am so thankful for working with the collection of moms on Palace in May. At UBC, which is a very male dominated environment, it is great to come feeling confident and assured at my choice to integrate my family with my work. It is not being mentored or exhibited, so it could feel awkward and uncomfortable - but so far it has been wonderfully satisfying to have all parts of my life intersect.

Auditions went very well today. I’m really glad I sat in on Catriona’s as it gave me a good idea of their vocal and physical strengths and weaknesses. It was so fascinating to see what the students did with an open plate. Not sure it was an entirely successful idea on its own - worked in combination with Cat’s - as it was slightly limiting. It was interesting to see what people chose
to show and how they felt this gave me insight into their strengths and how it led me to think of them for the play. They are a talented bunch and it was really fun. Some people did an incredible amount of work and really studied the play.

October 13

Call backs - epic. It was a lot to organize and sort through between burping and playing monster with Jackson. The start of his preschool has been so very time consuming and its combined with this has been fairly exhausting.

The students did a great job. So many of them were very prepared and did some fine work. I’m excited about my casting choices. Scared by some. Sure about others. I am feeling fairly nervous about this whole comedy thing. I feel like a fish out of water. It was great to hear the script spoken and it actually relaxed me. I’m feeling more confident.

Ana is going to meet me in Toronto - which will be great. Having time with her to discuss ideas and look at images will be fantastic. It is so great to work with her. Easy.

October 15

Met with the casting committee. It is a challenge I find to be diplomatic, speak my mind, stay open minded and be assertive. Casting is such a crucial part of a directors job. The idea of those choices being threatened by someone else’s poor planning and inability to be accountable for
their own mistakes causes me much grief. I can’t help but feel that Catriona and I are being made to suffer the consequences of the department’s lack of leadership. Instead of taking responsibility and standing up for the mistakes they made, we are being asked to compromise. As a student, paying for this opportunity, I can’t help but feel frustrated at their shortcomings. It brings up so many issues I have with this department. I mean to mention to me that I need to give allowance to an actor because he supports his family while I bounce Miles through the meeting seems incredibly ignorant. I can’t help but feel the lack of women has given the department such a male perspective. It is so entrenched that it becomes almost invisible until you bump against it, recognize it and then it feels like I can’t get away from it.

I feel torn because they want me to cast a man of colour in the role of a servant. The idea of having an all white cast and then one person of colour playing a subservient role makes me really uncomfortable. Yet the idea of not casting him because of his colour is also an issue. This, in conjunction with the fact that I don’t think the role suits his acting abilities seems dire. I have said that I will read him for the part - but I hope for some divine intervention.

October 19

Had a great meeting with Carey today. So nice to see him and chat about what he has been doing. He’s good people. I hope he can be involved in the sound design in some capacity. He is busy during rehearsal and tech due to the Olympics. Swear words to follow. But he had some great ideas that have really stimulated my thinking about what the sound could be and how it can really have its own life. He knows a woman who plays in a Yugoslavian band and will send me a
link to her myspace sight. Having some live music or her teaching some folk songs all seem compelling. We talked about the actors generating all the sound - which would be fantastic. I’m going to send him a copy of the play. Maybe I’ll create a sound collective. I feel very excited by these possibilities and wonder how much the play can hold in respect to experimentation with sound. How far I can stretch the edges of the play and still maintain the form. This is the equilibrium I seek and want to navigate.

October 20

Divine intervention. Don’t need to read the actor - he has decided he does not want to read for the part. Now hopefully no other obstacles will be placed in front of getting that cast list on the wall. Been really thinking about sound today and the possibilities. I want to read the play with just this in mind. Have to email Jackie.

October 25

Jackie has just confirmed that we can meet in Toronto - thank god. She said she found it a deceptive piece - its bound to be bloody Greek to me then. Hopefully she can decode some of it for me and will have some good resources. Just talked with my good friend Maya, who is completing her PhD in England, about note taking while reading - she suggested using a program called dragon softly speak - I’ll look into it. Been reading over the weekend - he was a fascinating man. Looking forward to learning more.
November 1

Met with Alyssa, the Bulgarian music expert, who was great. She seems interested and had some great things to say. I’m hoping she comes on board to do some singing with the group. She has a plethora of information and said she had sheet music for folk songs. So fun.

I bought the dictate software - its great. Will make ploughing through the literature and note taking much easier for this slow typer.

November 8

Had another great meeting with Carey - looks like he may be able to work on the piece. We have set up a rough outline and are going to get together in the beginning of December to work out cues/effects. Its great to banter with him. He would like Alyssa to teach the song if possible but says that he is good at listening to people and hearing what they are good at and accentuating talents and abilities. Which is great.

November 10

Met with Saghar today - she seems great. I’m interested to see what she brings to the table next week when we meet. She seems prepared and draws, which is a bonus.
Ana is sick with the H1N1 so won’t come to Toronto, which is a bummer. But she is bringing an assistant on board who is going to do some drawings etc. I have to send the initial responses Ana sent me onto Saghar. They are old photos Ana found from the Concordia University archives.

November 16

Just back from Toronto. Had a great few days meeting friends and doing work. It was great to get out of Vancouver, see old buddies, talk shop and spend some alone time with Miles. Toronto has such an active theatre scene. It’s amazing to go there and really feel people entrenched in the art form. The population and support that exists there for the medium is refreshing and exhilarating. The speed dating at the 4X4 Festival was a blast and great to meet some AD’s around the country.

Had such a great conversation with Jackie. It was so relieving to talk with her and feel comforted that I am on the right track. She is so generous with her time. I’m very thankful I worked with her all those years ago.

She can’t sit on my committee - ah well.

Miles beckons.
December 3

Been working on my analysis, its great to be doing it and to be diving into the undercurrents of the play. The dialogues with the designers are going fantastically. Ana and I have had several meetings and we are working through some of the hurdles. I love creating an image and seeing how it develops and expands. She is coming out next week which will be amazing to sit down and see pictures, stand in the theatre together and bash ideas around. Had a great meeting with Carey today. I’m so excited about the sound. We are talking about some musicians which is something I’ve wanted from the beginning. I love working with designers where the creative dialogue is inspired by each other. I was saying to him today the challenge I find in having to come to the table with an idea early on in the process. It’s so very counterintuitive to my working style. I like to be able to dream and conceptualize with my designers, incorporating and shedding as we discuss. I don’t like having to come forward with an idea, confining myself to budget lines and early concepts before these dialogues have been thoroughly fleshed out.

I’m starting to get panicky about time lines. But also any work done before this probably would be lost in the vast fog of baby brain.

It happens when it happens.

Met with the actors this week. They are starting in on R&J - so their minds are filled with Shakespeare, but it was good to see them and just give them a brief window into the world. I don’t ever see them, so it was good to let them know I’m alive and thinking.
December 11

Andy has decided to tap dance his way to stardom across the Opening Ceremonies for the Olympics. I wish him all the best. I’m trying to find compassion but all I see is voodoo dolls and me running full tilt at him as he smiles that smile and does his little toe tinkle under the big lights.

I hope it gives him whatever he is looking for.

Now I have to recast. There seems no possibility in the department. I have asked Stephen to look into the possibility of hiring someone if I find the money. Seems problematic on many levels. Time. Ethically, it seems sticky. I find I am often balancing the line between accessing the resources at my disposal due to my husband David’s work and working within the confines that seem appropriate. I also question the rationale of fitting in, or not stirring the pot. This is, after all, my thesis and I should do what I need to do to make it work the way I want it too. I imagine this may be an ongoing discussion in my brain. David is who he is and the arts are what they are. There is also something for me in not relying on David and his working environment to facilitate my work. And then I feel that is just ego and I should be more concerned with doing the work and if I have a means then why not use it.

Ana is here. It is always so good to see her and chat. I feel excited and stimulated by our work and appreciate the fluidity in which we discuss. We were talking about women in theatre and it was fascinating to hear her perspective. I had never imagined she would sense a discrepancy -
but she does. It’s a man’s world she confessed. I was listening to her talk with the props department and at the design meeting. She has a way of playing herself down. As I listened and watched people’s responses, I wonder if this tactic works well with women, makes her seem less threatening, but allows men an opportunity to disqualify her experience. It is not a typical male approach. Of course these are generalizations, but when Ana spoke of her experience of being disrespected I was amazed. I guess it is with different eyes that I see her great abilities and strengths.

Anyway, the meeting went well, problems were solved and it felt like a real true honest beginning. Exciting.

There is some concern I have with Act II having so much space. It will be vast. But hopefully we can work it out. I’m really interested in the transition between Act I and II. I think this gives us so much room for play and exploration and to provide me with some place to have some expression of my vision. It was great to speak about the museum like quality, the sense of images in front of a backdrop. Posing of the characters. I think we have found some functionality of the set to facilitate this kind of experience.

I’m still working on gathering musicians. Some people said they would send out the word. Hopefully that will bring them running.
December 18

Auditions are set. Catriona feels that some of the others may be up for it - so hope rises gently. Met with Stephen today, and it was confirmed that I could have someone donate the money and they could get a tax receipt. I’ve decided to audition the students and see if any of them can play the part. If not I’ll have to consider that option in more depth.

It was good to talk with Stephen today. Keeps me on track and it’s a place I can discuss my concerns and we can build some strategies around them. Frustration with the department that they have not assigned a sound designer. What goes through their minds sometimes astonishes me. The cracks are crevasses and it sometimes feels that they grease the edge making a spill into them inevitable.

Met with Carey and we went through the script, choosing all the places for effects and cues. It was good to do and get a sense of place and space and what may be possible. Carey is busy as of mid-January - so it was good to ensure that he is on track.

Continuing the analysis process. It’s always exhilarating to sit down and dissect. I feel closer to the piece and more at ease with my own knowledge and understanding. I’m feeling really excited to get into the rehearsal hall and have fun. Maybe comedy won’t be so bad after all...
December 23

Met with Alyssa and she is on board for finding and teaching some folk songs. So fantastic. We talked about them singing during the transition and that it could be the same song that Louka sings as she works. A nice echo. She is going to help find musicians - but thinks gathering them from the music department may be more feasible.

December 30

Had an interesting call from Andy today. Couldn’t chat at the time. The saga continues.

January 1, 2010

A new year dawns and with it the month countdown begins. I have a slight fret on about getting prepared in time, but I also feel trusting and at ease. It will all work out as it should.

So Andy is still interested in the part and shed some interesting light on the situation. I’ll spare the details as it reads more like some bad college movie instead of a academic masters thesis...I’ve decided to hold the auditions tomorrow and then see where I sit. If I feel at that point he is still the best then I will fight for him. Boxing gloves on. Mouth guard in. Makes typing or talking difficult. I’ve decided to incorporate some tap into my show. Un petite homage.
January 3

Auditions went well. Andy is still the best bet, so into the ring I must step. Did a first draft of a rehearsal schedule to make sure his conflicts won’t be too problematic. Looks workable. A couple hiccups but I think I can work through it. Good to get an initial framework to see how things may play out. Of course it will all change - but a skeleton is always an important start. The beginning will be a bit funky as Ana won’t be there for the first day. I’m not worried. Its good to bust out of the conventions established by some unknown predecessor.

January 8th

Had a great meeting with Carey and Alyssa. Good for the three of us to sit down and work things through. I am giving over so much trust to those guys as the music component feels so foreign to me but it’s exciting and also good to not hold the reigns so tight all the time.

I feel, by necessity, that this process is a lesson in trust, in myself and others. I’m not getting too worked up about all the possible hiccups. Its good to feel that confidence in myself and others. I appreciate and understand the importance of being surrounded by a good team. As well, it’s a thesis, an exploration, and although I am of course seeking a level of success, I’m as interested in the risks I take as I am in the final outcome.
January 15

We got Andy. I feel like I’m in a B-Movie remake of Little Orphan Annie and I’m that really annoying secretary/love interest. Anyway he’s back on board and all is cast and off my plate. Or on plate - not sure which. He better be good after all this.

I’ve organized some bigger blocks of time to prepare which is needed.

Looks like we may have a trumpet player, who needs an honorarium, but that is fair. Alyssa sent me some great music, which is really exciting and makes me feel more at ease that the whole thing is piecing together.

Had a good costume meeting with Saghar, Alison and Stephen. It confirmed a few things and I think it was good to have the advisors around to hear the discussion and make things stay on track.

January 22nd

Been doing some more research which has opened the script up for me, understanding more of the references and communications. It’s fascinating the different layers that reveal themselves and this will only continue to occur. The research has made the historical environment of the play more apparent and the dichotomy between Bulgaria and the rest of Europe. The tension
between these two extremes that is inherent in the play, I need to make sure this is understood verbally and visually.

Saw *Romeo and Juliet*, it’s fantastic. It’s so Catriona - which is wonderful to see. It made the one day break between the two shows seem impossibly short and I’m worried about the shift some of the actors will have to make. I need them to change their head space and move from one piece to another. I think I need to ease them in slowly so as to facilitate that transition.

Ana and I have continued to work together, tweaking and finalizing, it’s exciting. We got some trees donated from my sister-in-law’s family nursery, we’ll have to go out and look at them when she is here.

January 30

Had a meeting with Saghar, saw some swatches and costume pulls and they look great. Seems like the concept has indeed landed.

I’ve decided to ask Andrea to teach the actors how to do a waltz on Monday evening. Hopefully she can do it. I think it would make for a good transition and give them some physical information about how to hold their bodies.

Mishelle has come on board as an accordion player – thankfully, but the trumpet player backed out. Met one this week - but not convinced he’ll do it.
Met with Catriona and working out her involvement.

I still feel some stress about Miles making the transition. He’ll figure it out but I do worry about him. Hopefully he’ll continue an early to bed thing and just sleep through my absence - that would be best.

Did a course on thesis preparation - which was very helpful. I need to find a course on formatting with pages - I think it will save me time and a good thing to learn anyway.

Worked with the actors on the idea of coming through the audience - not sold. It felt too university - trying too hard. Not sure the script is that elastic. Haven’t quite found that moment. I like the image of Nicola coming out - but I’m not sure about breaking the 4th wall and about all the commotion - haven’t found the answer about how to bring in the idea of war yet.

Do I want to create a powerpoint for my preparation - not sure if that’s too academic and worth the time...

Feb. 3

So we have done three days of rehearsing. It has been an interesting transition for everyone. For me navigating through my family and trying to get the home front in some sense of ease has been challenging, but I think we are coming to a place of understanding. Getting there is the hard
part. I’ve been late twice only by a few minutes, but I hate it. I spoke with the cast and told them why - which I think has helped. I see these past few days as being primarily a transitional period and a time to get to know each other. Sometimes it has felt unfocused and like I should know more or be better organized, but on the other hand I think its good to have some time just being people together. Its easy to beat my self up, instead of accept what is happening, assess and move on. The psychological. Taking the helm, sometimes I forget about the depth of that role, the complexities. Having all my ducks in a row is so different than being in the room with living breathing 20 year olds.

Ana came out and we figured out lots of things, it was great to see her and jam through some of the glitches. We had our first production meeting, which seemed to go off without too many hitches. All seems in order.

Day one we waltzed, which was great and did a chocolate box meet and greet. We then spent approximately 4 hours over the next day reading French scenes and asking questions. I find it such a great exercise, labourious at times, but really fascinating to hear different people’s perspectives and thoughts.

I think we need to do a bit more discussion, less general and more focused, on characters, given circumstances and dynamics. And then we will be ready to rise.

This is going to go by so fast.

And to remind myself of Ana’s parting words

Enjoy it.
February 7th

Did the first read on Thursday. It was interesting to hear the play in its entirety for the first time. We discussed and did some more specific table work around Act I.

Today we started to block Act I. I’ve decided to be fairly instructive around blocking to have more time for investigation later. I’d really like to have the play in good shape by the time we get into rehearsing in the theatre, because we will have to spend a bit of time working on transitions, music and singing at that point.

I’m not dealing too much with details of speech or physicality at this point but getting the shape of the Acts. Sometimes I can’t help myself and some exchanges are further along than others, which allows some more in depth work. If something really isn’t making sense or I find myself spacing out I focus on what is being said through action and making sure the context is understood.

February 11th

Monday we finished blocking Act I and then we spent the last three days doing Act II. Tuesday I tried to open the blocking process up, making it less about me moving bodies but I found it really unsatisfying and too time consuming. I think it’s important to give them the structure, the framework and then allow them to play within that. It demands me to be prepared and have
images and general movements established. I’m feeling aware and interested to see how the shift goes into the theatre as I imagine it is going to feel so different in there. I’ve included a bench for the mid space and I think I’ll put a tree mid stage left. As a place to go. I’m really happy with the shape of it so far and the actors are making some interesting discoveries. Some need more encouragement and attention and I need to get them talking to one another, listening and playing with physicality.

February 14th

Happy Valentine’s Day. Well we had our first song rehearsal - which sounded good. I think I want to try singing, at the top of the show behind the curtain in darkness. Maybe this will be the way I can evoke war. Then we ran Act I and II which are in pretty good shape. I wanted to give Catriona a sense of where we are at, as she was coming in to work with the actors on physicality. She did a great job and it was interesting to see how she works. A very different angle in - which is always fun to witness. In the afternoon we started blocking Act III. I found it really uninspiring and sluggish. Not sure if it was me or them. I didn’t feel prepared enough, not quite sure if I have the furniture placement right so am a little ambiguous about the blocking. One of the actors feels like he has made no choices, or that he has such a different slant on the character. I’m wanting to allow that freedom obviously but I feel that his is really off the mark. I’ve asked to have some time with him alone on Tuesday. Which I think will be helpful - just to talk through some of his choices. David Kaye is away now until we are back so I won’t get to finish Act III, but I’ll get through enough and work some details of the other Acts.
Wednesday February 17

So I’ve worked through as much of the play as I’ve been able to with the various actors away, I’m happy with most of the first two acts but feel there is some lumps and bumps in the blocking of Act III. Partly to do with everyone having to be in a smaller space - this may of course be resolved when we move into the theatre. I’m also trying to figure out how conventional I want the ending to be. As of now, I’ve blocked it fairly conventionally, which I think is what it demands. It’s been satisfying to go back over the play and fine tune moments, figure out what is exactly happening, why are they saying what they are saying, what is the scene about. I’m always amazed at how a play unravels itself.

I’m looking forward to having a few days off. I’m feeling pretty exhausted and I think the actors are too. I’m not feeling too worried about them losing the play. They are working hard and seem very committed.

I really want the play to be in good shape by the time we leave the rehearsal hall - so need next week to be very productive and focused.

Production meeting today went well. Carey was there, good to see him. No Craig. I’m worried about his commitment and availability.
Tuesday Feb 23

Well the break seems to have caused no problems. Most people are refreshed and happy to be back at it. Some haven’t had a break for some time and so needed a little R&R. Ryan came back with such incredible physicality - it was like Sergius had finally arrived. I think it was watching all that figure skating. I knew the Olympics would come in handy somehow.

I worked extensively with the actor who was away. He really has no handle on the character. I think he doesn’t really understand who he is and what his motivations are. I feel frustrated because it’s very evident he isn’t doing any work, he isn’t trying, he isn’t bringing anything to the table. It’s annoying. I left him to do work over the next day, hopefully he comes back with a little more to offer.

I finished blocking the scenes I hadn’t blocked - not totally satisfied with them yet. Act III is the most challenging to move through. It’s where all the meat of the play is and so more difficult to keep active.

Alyssa came today and the song is sounding great.

Wednesday Feb 24

What is working with Andy is to make him completely physically controlled. This stops him from commenting and forces him to connect with what he is saying. I’m constantly shouting out
“stop. Commenting. Go back. More control.” It seems to be working - so I’ll probably keep doing it.

David came with no work done. No decisions made. It was really frustrating and so I was forced to tell him who the guys is, what his role in the play is and what is significant about him. I hate doing that, but time is ticking and I need those scenes to move along. I had to ask Fiona, his scene partner, to resist falling into his rhythm, because their scenes are just so deathly slow and boring. Hopefully she’ll remember. He is really bad at integrating any work we’ve already done. He is constantly forgetting past decisions and blocking and seems totally unavailable. What I have learnt is that he needs something to do. So I’ve got him shelving books - hopefully we can lose it, but we’ll see.

A couple of the scenes, I’ve removed all the original blocking and am letting the actors play, although they aren’t very skilled at finding good places to speak from I think its helped us unearth the story of the scene. Some of the moments in Act III are very dense, a lot is being said and it’s tricky to find the line through it. Understanding the social commentary is one thing, but keeping it motivated and telling a story is quite another.

Thursday Feb 25

Well the added bookshelf has everyone in a bit of a tizzy. I’ve said it may not remain, but the efficiency is such that last minute add ons seem fairly overwhelming.
We did a run today, which felt slightly premature, as we hadn’t worked everything again - especially in Act III. It was good to see it though, where things were, and I think it will really help me in organizing the rest of this week.

Act III needs work, which is understandable. Much of it hasn’t had a fine tooth comb pulled through it.

I worked more with Fiona and David on Act III. We have at least discovered the point of the scene in which the deal is made between them to stand by each other. I think this is really important. Playing an older person, who is supposed to be physically controlled is really squashing David. He has no impulses and is just playing age and status, which is astonishingly boring.

Friday Feb 26

I tracked through Bluntschli’s “tired” path today in Act I, which has been a great thing to do. Not that he can play tired, but I think it needs to be in the scene or the end of the scene is totally unjustified. So good to see the highest and lowest moments. I fine tuned the rest of the Act, which I feel is really coming along. I’ve asked Barbara to be stronger and scarier and she is really bringing a lot to the table and Catherine is becoming more and more complex - which is lovely.
I worked Act II, which seems in pretty good shape, especially now that Ryan is bringing so much to the table. Andrea worked on the bench choreography and the dance and they are both fantastic. The end of Act II needs a little more work. I re-blocked it today, which I hope will help immensely.

I’ve enjoyed having the staff around and have found them all incredibly helpful.

I’ve decided to move the run to Sunday as I really want a whole day to pick through Act III.

The song is in great shape - I’m so thrilled we’ve included it. I think it will work well.

Saturday Feb 27

I spent the whole day on Act III and much was accomplished. I especially worked on the scenes where the blocking was still not set. We finalized that, tried to integrate Ryan’s physicality and are working hard not to play into the moral stance that Shaw is putting before us, but keeping it motivated so that the story just comes out.

We’ve decided that David needs to sweep. It was amazing the transformation in his body once he was physically engaged in something. He is a young actor that needs those big gestures. I’m not sure I’ll ever get him to the place physically that I think he needs to be but as long as the story and relationships are clear, I’ll be happy.
I’m finding the final picture really hard to nail. I played with many ideas today and I think the more traditional the better. I’m trusting that the theatre will provide some answers. We also discovered so much in Bluntschli’s last speech. He needs to take his time and make it specific.

Kim is doing such a great job. She continually comes to the table with so much to offer, is taking responsibility, is always ready and has done so much work.

Sunday Feb 28

The last day in the rehearsal hall. I’m so ready to move into the space. This process is whizzing by. I think I really told myself the play has to be in good shape by this point as from now on it’s all fine tuning. Much of that is accurate, but there is also still time to fine tune and play.

The song is sounding so lovely. We did a run today and I think the play is in a good place. Act I now feels a little slow and I think we need to look over where they get attracted to one another and see how this can nuance their performances. Jameson wasn’t as tired today - which makes the end difficult. It’s very complex. There are so many layers.

I’d like to spend some time running all the scenes of the couples to get a sense of their journeys.

Some of Act III still needs clarifying and integrating into the world of the play. Some things I haven’t worked or commented on, as I’m interested to see how moving into the theatre effects how the play feels and how big the actors can go.
Tuesday March 2

We moved into the theatre today, it is exciting to be in the space. As expected the actors were fairly distracted and the largeness of the space diffuses the energy so it’s more difficult to keep them focused. We started reworking the piece in the space - doing Act I and III as the revolve still isn’t really working. Mostly things were looking pretty good. Not too much adjusting.

Wednesday March 3

We finished walking through Act III and then I did some work on a few particular moments in Act I and III. It’s interesting to see the piece in the space. Some problems are still happening with the revolve and there are plenty of small technical glitches to keep us occupied. It’s interesting that no matter how mentally prepared I was for this week being a bit of a bust it’s still frustrating to experience the decrescendo.

Thursday March 4

I’m not convinced that moving into the theatre at this point was all that helpful. It’s good, I suppose, to have experienced the problems with the revolve so they can be fixed in time, but the change in rhythm has been so drastic and each day I’m having to come into rehearsal and re-jig what I was going to do. I hate feeling unprepared. I’m able to roll with the continuous obstacles but I’m not convinced that moving into the theatre at this point was a great idea. I think it’s
challenging to encounter the space when its not ready, or at least in the same place of readiness as the actors. Our rhythm has been drastically slowed down, which has only been augmented by the fact that we’ve gone from full day rehearsals back to evenings only. I’m managing to get everything on my list done - but I would reconsider a move into the theatre at this stage if it was proposed to me again.

Friday March 5

The musicians came tonight - it was so great to have them and the inclusion of the music is so fantastic. It’s like the play has gone from 2D to 3D. Some things we’ve tried I’m worried may be too much, but I think others will be fantastic. I have always wanted live music, so its great that it has finally come to fruition. The band needs a lot of practice, tonight was their first time together, I’m confident they will get it together. We blocked the transition and I think its going to work well. We need more time running it with all the props and the song needs some readjusting, but I think it will provide an interesting texture to the production.

Sunday March 7

Well we worked some bits and then did a run which was alarmingly rough. I was expecting bumpy but full on thick gauge emory board was more than I had anticipated. I suppose to be fair there is a lot they are incorporating with the set, some new blocking and the transition. The song was horrible, the relationships were weak and the pace was slow. I’m having my first anxiety
of this whole process, fearing the move into the theatre has killed my piece, that they won’t get enough runs in, that we are running out of time - ahhh.

I’m doing two more runs next week and now I have to let things sit and not readjust them anymore so that the actors can feel confident. I need to think about what the two next runs should be about - I was thinking listening and pacing. These are the keys.

Monday March 8

We worked a few bits and rehearsed the song. I’m feeling more confident as I see their relationships coming alive again. I just want to run it and run it. I’m thinking of maybe doing another run Wednesday, but I’ll see how the run goes tomorrow.

There are so many little things to look at and adjust. We have to work the transition, have Nick in to do some sword etiquette, work a few moments in Act II and keep practicing the song. It will all come to pass. It’s starting to effect my sleep. Good thing the end is near.

Tuesday March 9

Well another run. Slightly less rough but still not where it was. Moving into the space at this point has been a mixed blessing. It was good to get in and realize the revolve wasn’t working - that would have been problematic to figure out on tech weekend. Having time to work the
transition and the song in the space was helpful. But it has been very challenging to not have the set at the same state of readiness as the actors - it really held us back.

There are still bits I want to work, the transition and song need help and some of the blocking isn’t satisfying. I’m a little hesitant about the music. They aren’t getting a lot of time to practice and it’s a bit rough. I just have to trust that it will come.

Wednesday March 10

Working on the transition - it doesn’t feel like they are getting it. I’ve moved Mishelle onto the stage which helps them a lot as she has a great voice and it’s keeping them in time. It feels so functional still, it needs more life. To be fair, we are constantly tweaking it so they are constantly having to readjust what they are doing. The actors are coming already having worked on the bits I want to rehearse - which is so great, it helps move through things.

Thursday March 11.

The final day they are all mine. Tech comes and we all move more into the hands of the lights and sounds. The separation starts. The play becomes theirs and I, as any good parent, slowly and gently back away. Well not quite yet. I’m in the preparing to back away stage. It’s a strange time though when my focus moves away solely from the actors and continues to incorporate the technical elements.
The run felt better, more integrated. The work we’ve done on Act I has really helped define when they become attracted to each other and how the different elements that we have discussed and rehearsed come together into a cohesive whole. They are having more fun and playing with each other. The transition needs a complete overhaul.

Saturday March 12

Ana has arrived.

We ended early.

What else.

It’s coming together. I love working with Ana, its so easy and smooth. We bounce ideas off each other, it just feels so egoless. The lighting doesn’t feel like a cohesive unit. I tried really hard to bring Craig into the discussion, but he seemed really resistant to dialogue about what we are trying to do and how that will be achieved through light. It’s difficult bringing him into the fold. I’m not sure how much heart he is putting in, which is so very important for me.

I reworked the transition and I think we have finally figured it out.

Sound has also been an issue - but Carey is coming in tomorrow to work things through. Luckily we don’t have that many cues.

We have decided to do some photo flashes during the piece - capturing images. It’s still being worked on - but I like the idea.
Sunday March 13

A couple tech runs later and things are coming together. Carey came and fixed the sound cues and found a sound for the light bulb flashes.

This design team is not working together. Which is unfortunate as there is so much potential for exchange and discourse. Some egos feel fragile. There is resistance from the staff in working with a designer from another city. I feel a division between the people who work at the theatre frequently and those of us that are new. I also see that the technical side of a show is not my strongest area. I especially don’t always see the delicacies of light. As I’m fairly clear about set and sound. I think it’s hard for me to remove myself from the actors and just look at the picture. Good to know. Always have a great lighting designer.

Tuesday March 15

Working a few bits, changing a little bit of blocking, finessing moments and run.

It's good to get them in their costumes and makeup and see it all together. The lights still seem to be clunky and Craig hasn’t been here for two nights. I’m just cutting all the internal cues as they are distracting. Its interesting that as I become more satisfied with the acting, I become much more aware of the light and I am really seeing how those cues are distracting. I finally think they are ready for an audience. I’ve probably been hand holding one night too many, but I wanted to get them as confident as possible. The audience will be such a new element that I want them to know what they are doing so as to navigate themselves with as much grace and ease as possible.
I flashed my mama bear claws today, I think the cast was agog at my attack and destroy reaction when I felt they were being messed with - I have to say my protective instinct even amazed me. Some of the faculty in the department have difficulty respecting student directors. I think they feel at more liberty to gives notes or feedback than they would if the outside director was deemed a professional. A part-time teacher asked one of my actors to perform moments from a previous production and from Arms. She then started to critique his work. This was, understandably, very disconcerting to him. Actors can be so fragile, especially close to opening, and what happened today was not in the least bit constructive or well thought through. I know her intentions were good, but what happened could have been disastrous. I have really appreciated all the support and help from the faculty and also some of them need to be watched and kept on a tight leash.

Wednesday March 16

Preview, check.

The most interesting thing was that people did not understand to follow the musicians into the theatre. I would have never guessed that. I will get them to play longer in the lobby and outside on their way in as well Mishelle could say something if needed. The band has come along way and are adding a great texture.

It was great to get an audience in the house and see where things hold together. I think the actors are doing well and I feel ready to let them go. I feel remarkably sane. I wasn’t too nervous. It is
odd to have people laughing at my work. Not really what I have grown accustomed too, but its good, refreshing.

I have to say I’m a comedy convert.
And a Shaw fan.

Thursday March 17

It’s here.
It’s open.
The show went really well, the house was full and the sounds of laughter were booming in the house. Opening night is always such a rent a crowd, but it felt good and people seemed to be having fun. I think the work is solid.

I’ve given the actors the note to stay true to the text and to what we have created. To not diminish it or cheapen it by playing for laughs.

Hopefully they will be able to do this.

I can’t believe two years of work is over, done. My kids will be happy to have me home and I have to say I’m looking forward to a little romp in the playground. Some unstructured time.
Wednesday March 24

Usually I hate going back to see my work. This time wasn’t so bad.

There are a few things I would change and some of the actors are taking liberties that I don’t think work or are in the world of the play, but mostly I’d say they are doing a good job keeping the artistic integrity of the piece. We had a talk back afterwards and it’s always interesting to hear what the actors have to say. I wasn’t surprised by much - but interesting to hear them articulate their thoughts.

This period, when the play is running but my work is done, is such an awkward and strange kind of limbo. When the play isn’t over, in fact it’s in its blooming phase for the actors, but for me it’s done. It’s an odd dichotomy. Me at home returning to my life knowing the play is out there being performed and watched. Sentimental, I suppose.

Saturday March 27

The revolve has spun for the last time.

It’s all done, all finished, all over.

Two years of work come to completion.

The actors wanted notes. I laughed.

Ahh the ever hungry theatre student.

I hope I get to do a Shaw again. I woke in the night wondering if I could run a mini Shaw festival here in Vancouver.
CHAPTER 4: REFLECTION

My initial intention for directing *Arms and the Man* was to gain experience working with a comedic classical text, as this was a new field of exploration, my learning was centered in two significant areas.

From the first read to the preparation to rehearsal period, I used the word elasticity to describe the primary focus for my directing vision. It was my aim to see how elastic this particular classical text was to a contemporary aesthetic, as I wanted the production to stay true to the text and the era in which it was created but also encompass my own contemporary sensibility. There were a few particular ways in which I was exploring this elasticity. It was fascinating to see which of these were successful and allowed the production to stay true to the time period and text and which, when I experimented with them in rehearsal, drew me away from the integrity of the script.

The five main ways I explored with elasticity were, the inclusion of music, using the theatre house as an entrance, placing some of the furniture downstage of the curtain, including a traditional Bulgarian song sung by the company and breaking down the set to the bare essentials.

From the onset I wanted to include live music as I felt it would create a new dimension for the production. I have never worked with musicians and do not have any personal musical abilities, so as a director I felt I had to trust the sound team to learn the material and create a rehearsal schedule that best suited their needs. Although I kept in close contact with the team, I felt their
inclusion at tech was not as integrated as I would have liked. We decided the band should use one song and play it progressively more upbeat, which I think worked to some extent but it would have been good for them to have more material. Because the musicians were not brought on board until late in the process and their other commitments made it difficult to find extensive rehearsal time, I didn’t want to overload them with a multitude of songs. As an exploration in elasticity, I think it was a successful experiment as it fed into and strengthened the world of the play without jarring the audience.

Using the house as an entrance was varied in its success. The idea of using the house as a entrance point for the army chasing Bluntschli, in order to surround the audience in the chaos of war, was quickly abandoned once I tried it in the space. Initially, I was very determined to have the audience be aware that the play was starting in a war, but as I dug into the play through rehearsals, I became less interested in this concept. It felt too contrived and overburdened one aspect of the play. Shaw’s writing is complex and subtle and I found anything that was too heavy handed weighed the production down.

The decision to place some of the furniture downstage of the curtain arrived out of necessity. I needed to bring some set elements downstage in order to draw action onto the apron. As well, the curtain is quite far upstage and there simply wasn’t enough room to have all the furniture between it and the set wall. I didn’t want furniture to be moved at the top of the play, as I wanted the first image of Raina standing on the balcony to be uncluttered. Once we started playing with the idea, I liked the intrigue it provided and how it set up for the band and actors to interact.
The song and the transition between Act I and II feels in many ways like the strongest manifestation of my directorial concept. It was tricky to find the exact feel for this moment, we spent a good deal of time on it once we moved into the theatre. I feel that we eventually found the tone, physicality and choreography that maximized on the all the elements that were at play. At times watching the transition, I worried that the song was too slow and affected the pacing of the play, that the actors at the top of Act II had to work too hard to get the piece moving again. However, I was so taken by the piece of music and I suppose, in someway, it provided the ambience of war, loss and destruction that I had been seeking during my initial conceptualization.

Keeping the set simple, removing all the clutter and detail of the original design, was my initial response to the play and is an extension of my continued aesthetic as a director. My work with Ana, the set designer, in stripping the set down to its bare essentials was a satisfying and successful venture and I felt that it enhanced and strengthened the work. *Arms and the Man* is such a character driven piece that reducing the set allowed the actors to become the focus instead of that which surrounded them. The idea that the costumes should work with the set instead of pop out and the use of texture over colour was challenging to commit to, as it provided some obstacles for the costume designer. Working with a mainly existing wardrobe, the number of available items to pull that came from this period were limited. It was essential however, that we stayed away from contrast in order to uphold the idea of old photography.
I very much enjoyed working with the concept of elasticity to see how a contemporary aesthetic could be applied to a classical text and I feel happy with the final results from our experimentation.

The second significant area of interest for me lay in the move to the theatre and integrating the technical elements of the play. Partially due to the fact that I was working within a University setting, in which some members of my design team were chosen for me, and partially due to the close and extensive working relationship I have with Ana and Carey, the set and sound designers, there were many times that I did not feel we were working together as a team. Both of them were largely physically absent from the process, either due to distance in the case of Ana as she lives in Montreal or Carey’s prior commitments. In someways this set a precedent for participation, however, because the other working relationships were new, it was critical that those designers be more available for meetings and discussions. Because the team had not met regularly through production meetings, the exchange of ideas and sense of collaboration was missing once we reached tech weekend. Dialogue between the creative team was strained and lacking which inhibited the full integration of all the design elements. In particular, lighting became an issue as it felt that the designer was not working with or interested in the world in which we were creating. I was sensitive to not wanting to override his impulse and to not exacerbate his potential sense of being the outsider, but I was also feeling unsatisfied with his collaboration and his willingness to partake in any discussion around the larger concept for the piece. He was also very busy in the lead up to the production with the all-consuming machine known as the Olympics. In hindsight, after realizing he had such an overloaded schedule, I would have asked to have him replaced. It was also not made clear to me from the department
that he was being paid. I only discovered that after the show closed. If I had known this I would have fought to have another designer, I was under the impression he was doing it for credit that he needed to complete his degree. As was often my experience with the theatre department at UBC, there was a lack of communication between the various departments and the students which resulted in unnecessary frustration and work that did not fulfill its potential.

Moving into the theatre two weeks before tech weekend seemed, initially, like a wonderful idea as it would afford us time to rehearse in the space. This is especially useful when working with a student cast as the move from rehearsal room to theatre is so drastic. However, it was very difficult that the set was not at the same place of readiness as the actors were. The pace of rehearsals slowed down drastically as we dealt with technical problems mainly centered around the revolve. Of course it was essential to get those problems ironed out before tech weekend, and it was useful to have the theatre for the actors and musicians but if faced with the same situation again, I may choose to move in only a week early in order to maximize on time to work with the actors. I was prepared, intellectually and logistically, for this decrescendo but actually having to experience the frustration, chaos and lack of focus it created was difficult.

I am extraordinarily happy with my choice to direct Arms and the Man for my master’s thesis production, as it exposed me to work I have otherwise not had the fortune to direct and it built my confidence in my ability to work in these genres. As always, the importance I place on clarity, simplicity and connection, be it in the design, between the actors or in the rehearsal room remained the foundation for my work. Building upon this by challenging myself to take creative risks has strengthened me as a director.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

“Aleksandr Pushkin.” Odessa Globe. 21 January 2010


APPENDIX A: PRODUCTION CREDITS

The University of British Columbia

Department of Theatre and Film Presents

Arms and the Man

by George Bernard Shaw

March 18 - 27, 2010

Director     Mindy Parfitt
Scenic Design    Ana Cappelluto
Costume Design Saghar Bazargan
Lightening Design Craig Alfredson
Sound Design Carey Dodge
Composer Alyssa Semczyszyn
Stage Manager Jackie Buck
CAST

Andy Cohen  Petkoff
Barbara Kozicki  Catherine
Ben Whipple  Russian Officer
David Kaye  Nicola
Fiona Mongillo  Louka
Jameson Parker  Bluntschli
Kim Bennett  Raina
Ryan Warden  Sergius

BAND

Leader/Accordion  Mishelle Cutler
Trumpet  Michael Neale
Trombone  Brian Cochrane

PRODUCTION

Directing Advisor  Stephen Heatley
Scenic Design Assistant  Cassandre Chatonnier
Amanda Larder
Costume Design Assistant  Jen Waterhouse
Costume Supervisor   Jean Driscoll-Bell
Sound Design Assistant Hana Johnson
Jenny Kim
Christina Istrate
Props Supervisors Janet Bickford
Lynn Burton
Assistant Stage Manager Colette Brown
Gaby Holt
Jessica Jeffery
Movement Coach Andrea Rabinovich
Vocal Coach Gayle Murphy
Make-Up Artist Jill Wyness
Production Manager Jay Henrickson
Technical Director Jim Fergusson

THEATRE AT UBC ADMINISTRATION

Department Head Jerry Wasserman
Associate Head, Theatre Production Stephen Malloy
Business Manager Gerald John van der Woude
Communications Ian Patton
Marketing and Communications Deb Pickman
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program and Graduate Secretary</td>
<td>Zanna Downes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Clerk</td>
<td>Carol Lai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box Office</td>
<td>Tony Koelwyn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marijka Brusse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodial Services</td>
<td>Gene Baedo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B: DIRECTOR’S NOTES
from Theatre at UBC House Program

As a masters student choosing my thesis production, I was interested in exploring a form of theatre that differed from my previous work. Until now, my professional career has consisted of tackling contemporary plays that dive deeply into the edgier aspects of the human experience.

I thought a comedy would be good for me.

*Arms and the Man* was written to adhere to the theatre conventions of the time, however Shaw turns these customs upon themselves to comment on the social morals and politics of his day. He has set the piece within the Serbo-Bulgarian War but allowed himself artistic license through not strictly adhering to the complexities and details of this period. This freedom he allowed himself immediately intrigued and inspired me to discover how I could stay true to the time, place and conventions while finding the elasticity of the piece. Where could I stretch and pull the production while still upholding the integrity of the script?

It has been a great privilege to pour over these words and to work with this talented group of artists. When directing a play, I always love the way the story emerges and opens. How the subtleties gradually rise and the text continually deepens and expands before me. This play was no different. GBS continually speaks to us of courage, identity, the ridiculousness and harshness of war and social incongruities. All ideas that still bristle with relevance.
Theatre is an important, indeed vital, vehicle in which we can investigate the nuances and intricacies of society and humanity. I have grown to understand that through humour we can more easily access those aspects of ourselves and each other that may otherwise be difficult or uncomfortable to reach.

I thank you for supporting the arts and for choosing theatre this evening. Enjoy.
APPENDIX C: PRELIMINARY DESIGN FIGURES

Figure 1: Act 111 Wall rendering

All drawings and photographs in Appendix C by: Ana Cappelluto
Figure 2: Act 11 Wall initial drawing

All drawings and photographs in Appendix C by: Ana Cappelluto
Figure 3: Wall rotation drawing

All drawings and photographs in Appendix C by: Ana Cappelluto
Figure 4: Photograph of wall construction

All drawings and photographs in Appendix C by: Ana Cappelluto
APPENDIX D: PRELIMINARY COSTUME DESIGN FIGURES

Figure 5:  Costume rendering for Raina Act 1 with cloak
Figure 6: Costume rendering for Petkoff with cloak
Figure 7: Costume rendering for The Officer
Figure 8: Costume rendering for Bluntschli
Figure 9: Costume rendering for Nicola
Figure 10: Costume rendering for Catherine Act 1
Figure 11: Costume rendering for Catherine Act 11 and 111
Figure 12: Costume rendering for Raina Act11 with cloak and hat inset
Figure 13: Costume rendering for Petkoff without coat
Figure 14: Costume rendering for various hat, shoes and hairstyles
Figure 15: Costume rendering for Louka
Figure 16: Costume rendering for Raina Act 1 without cloak
Figure 17: Costume rendering for Sergius