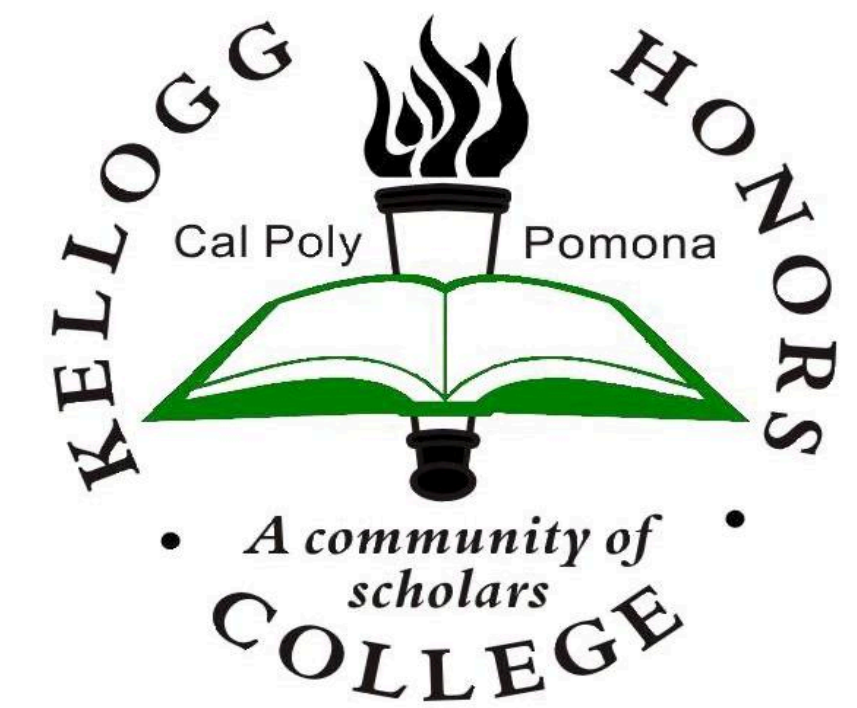


It's Tough to Wait for a

Musical Cara Megan Vilencia

Mentor: Bernardo Solano

Kellogg Honors College Capstone Project



This project was first conceived in December 2016 when I visited New York on a trip with the Cal Poly Pomona Theatre Department. During my visit, I went to wait in line to watch *Hamilton* which happened to be the most popular show at the time on Broadway. I waited in the freezing cold for seven hours to get a chance to get in. By the time I reached the front of the line I was told by the house manager that the show had been sold out. Feeling overwhelmed and frustrated my peers and advisor suggested I dream big and create an entire show on what had happened. I decided to go one step further and create a musical. In total, I wrote, directed, acted in, lighting designed, props designed, and produced a musical about waiting in line to see a musical. The results turned out positive and the show is continuing to grow.

Process

I wrote the piece from 2016 till the summer of 2017. I collaborated on the music with Chris Hollis, an alumni of the Music Department at Cal Poly Pomona. I also collaborated with Thomas Terrazas, my brother in law, on the instrumental for three other songs I added. The piece was basically finished by December 2017. After that any changes occurred during the rehearsal process with the best intentions for the show behind each change.

The cast and I rehearsed for ten weeks before opening the show to the public. Our first night was filled with presentations from all the designers and a dramaturg presentation from Rebecca Ojeda. From there we broke the show down into segments and would work nightly on songs and dances. At first the process was a nightmare with constant scheduling conflicts and every night being changed, however, all of us work together to find a flow that worked best for us.

I was lucky enough to have another five seniors choose aspects of the project to be their senior project allowing me to focus more on the writing, producing, and directing. Kyle Schriver designed the set, Amber Acosta was the choreographer and co-director, Christina Otarola was the stage manager, Gabriel Ortiz was the lead male actor, and Deanna Reis costume designed the show. Together we worked to create a stable and strong show. Each of us took on a heavy part of the show to ensure it was the best show possible. As the producer I struggled heavily in creating a budget while trying to direct, advertise, and organize the show. It became complicated and in order to sort through it all I had to stay fully organized and set reminders for myself daily.

We had production meetings weekly to sort out any complications and to stay up to date. We also helped each other on the project when we could. For instance, the cast and I helped Kyle build the set and paint after rehearsals before we opened.

Two days before our preview we programmed the lights and the sound for the show.

We then had previews for two nights and officially opened on March 16th, 2018. The audience filled up half way each night which is successful as we planned to have just family members show up originally.

Budget

Here is the final budget that the show ended up with:

Item	Gain	Loss	Total
T-Shirt Order (Approximately \$8 per shirt)	X	\$522.10	-\$522.10
T-Shirts Paid for (\$20 per shirt)	\$1010	X	+\$1010
Donations	\$370	X	+\$200
Posters	X	\$161	-\$161
Props	X	\$20	-\$20
Food/Catering	X	\$150	-\$150
Programs	X	\$136	-\$136
Gift Cards for Cast and Crew \$5 each	X	\$120	-\$120
Scenic	X	\$150	-\$150
Total:	\$1380	\$1259	+\$121 For cast party

Results, Critiques and Feedback

Denny Siegel (actress/writer best known for *Whose Line is it Anyways and House*):

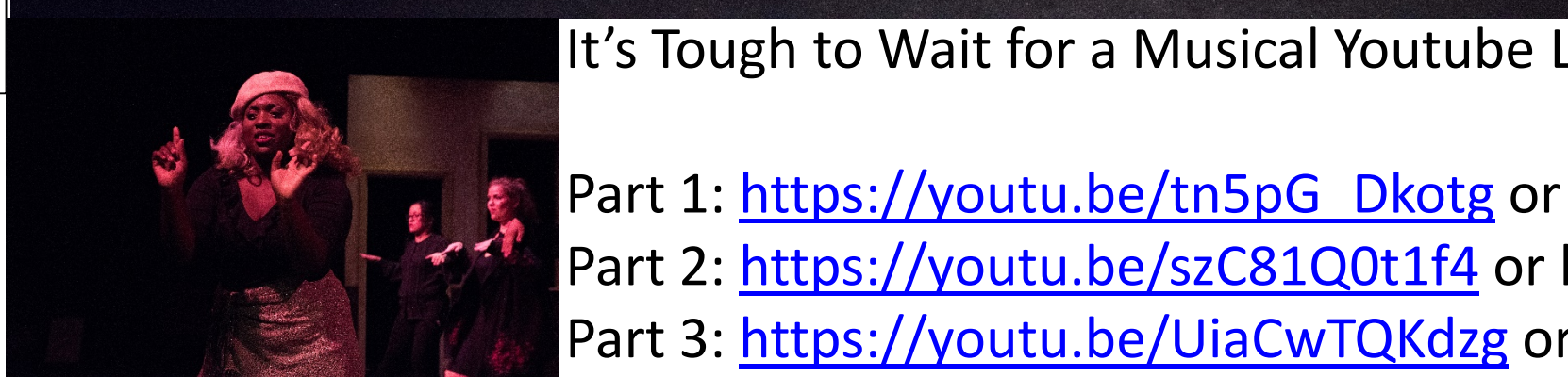
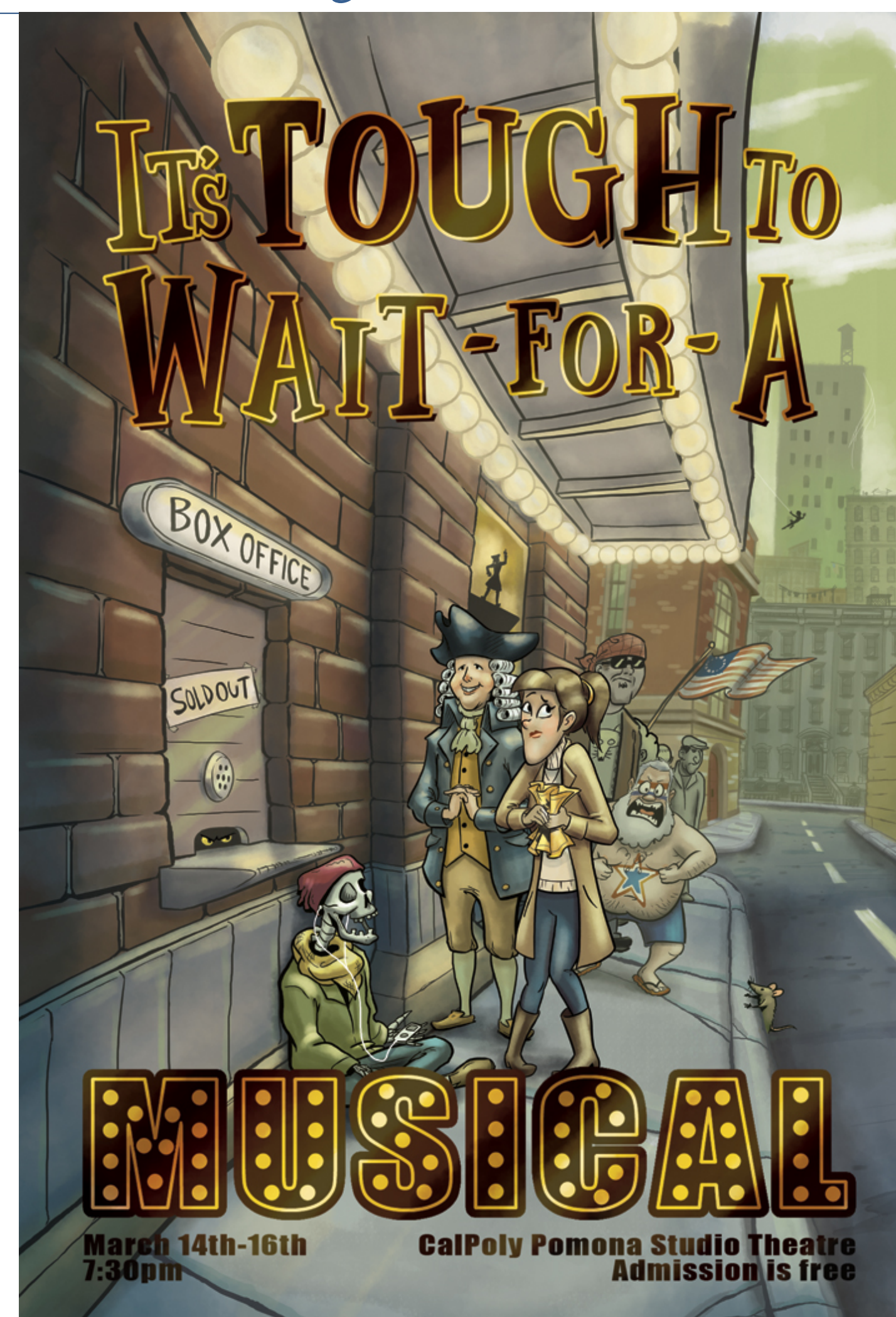
Denny and I have been emailing and talking back and forth about the show. She loved the concept and idea from the beginning. Sadly she could not make the production but she planned to watch the YouTube video and give future feedback. Her last comment to me was that she was inspired by the story.

Future Productions and Publication:

Morgan Grace is planning to do this show for her senior project in Spring 2018 if approved by her professor.

Force of Nature Productions will be producing a show in their 2019 season.

A director from Heather's school offered to publish the show so that high schools can perform the show and use it for competitions.



Results, Critiques and Feedback (Cont.)

Bernardo's Talk Back:

There was quite a bit of positive feedback from several audience members. Many were curious as to how it was all created and how long the process took.

A great note that both Lous Fossum and Nancy Kyes gave was how easily the show followed from beginning to end. It was easy to see what was going to happen but the question was how was it all going to unravel.

The audience truly enjoyed the show. One suggestion I got was to create a longer song after Cara gets rejected from the show. That will be something I'm looking into doing in future productions.

Gerard Alessandrini (creator of *Spamilton* and *Forbidden Broadway*):

Gerard Alessandrini enjoyed many ideas and the design of the show. He commended me on the layout of my script and how everything was organized. He gave me a few suggestions like saying to get to a point in the song. Say the meaning during the song. He also did not like Gabe's line of "let's not go to the movies they can go straight down to hell" so we changed that in *Mostly at a Broadway Musical* to "they can go straight down a well." He advised me to get creative and not repeat too much but to have fun.

Overall, he was enthusiastic and wanted to see the YouTube production link. Alessandrini said it was a major comment on the Theatre world today and how crazy the industry is becoming.

Reflection

I have learned so many different things from this production. It turned out to be way more difficult than I could have imagined. The budget came to me as a complete surprise and the fact that we still manage to come out on positive numbers demonstrates how strong we were as a company.

One of my greatest takeaways from this is the idea that it is possible to collaborate with peers to make an entire show and a successful one without the constant assistance or help from the faculty. We have found a way as seniors to produce our own work and it became entirely a success.

I also had to learn how to put my foot down on decisions and how to have a final say. I struggled quite a bit with who was controlling what and being talked over by cast members when I was trying to give directions. In the end it worked out though and by the second or third week my cast would focus fully on me when I needed to speak.

I took quite a bit of advice from Bernardo Solano during this project as well as Julian White and Linda Bisesti. From Julian I learned quickly how to structure the rehearsals and when to let the actors go and find their own moments. Linda helped quite a bit when she joined us for rehearsals and gave us vocal notes and help pull more specificity from the cast. Bernardo constantly reminded me that if necessary I would be able to do a stage reading or that I could cut back on something if necessary. I took my own interpretation on this and decided that instead of cutting back I would find another way to move around it. For instance, the lighting design was originally from *Spring Awakening* by Dane Bahia. Jon Bastow and myself took those cues and found which ones worked best for the show and the songs then proceeded to add lights where the stage seemed too dark. Dane received credit in the script and was there when we programmed some of the cues. I am incredibly grateful for her work. It was times like this where I slipped around what could have been a major obstacle. Bernardo also mentioned how when seniors placed up a full production they would direct themselves which became too much a difficult task and would not interpret properly for the audience. To resolve this Amber and I co-directed so as it got closer to show dates I took over the role of the lead as she focused on giving notes.

Another major challenge when doing this project was finding a cast and crew that could physically be present when we needed them. I was lucky enough to only have one actor who could not join us till the last two weeks. He had a small role however and ended up doing a great job once we taught him what to do.

In the end the show turned out to be a successful piece and looks like it will be a promising show in the future!

It's Tough to Wait for a Musical Youtube Links (also can be found under user Cara Vilencia at <https://tinyurl.com/CaraVilencia>)

Part 1: https://youtu.be/tn5pG_Dkotg or <https://tinyurl.com/ItsToughtoWait1>

Part 2: <https://youtu.be/szC81Q0t1f4> or <https://tinyurl.com/ItsToughtoWait2>

Part 3: <https://youtu.be/UiaCwTQKdZg> or <https://tinyurl.com/ItsToughtoWait3>