

The Thing About Air Travel

A play by Max Posner
Directed by Sophie Shackleton



A PW 3rd Slot Proposal
October 29th, 2008

The Play

WOMAN
What kind?

MARIE
The magic kind.
It makes your heart beat so fast.

I have been sitting next to this play for a long time. It appeared next to me last January, when Max sent me a draft at the beginning of the spring semester, after I had indicated a strong interest in his writing (I had instantly connected with his work when he first sent me some samples in the fall). I ended up reading the part of Naomi in the staged reading that happened a few weeks later, and subsequently kept an eye on the script as Max continued to develop it further. In the spring, I realized that I had a growing directorial interest in the show, and by May I had decided to propose it to PW in the fall. I had weekly discussions with Max all summer about developing the script and proposal, and after seeing the show at the Hangar Theatre in Ithaca in July, I was really itching to bring my own voice to the script's production. I have grown alongside the play, and I have now spent upwards of ten months immersed in its voice, its questions (some still to be answered), its perspective, its characters, its story, and its hunger to be staged.

At first glance, it may appear that this play is about a journey through a grieving process. Grief is certainly a vehicle in this plane ride, but the script is far more complex and intricate. It is an exploration of loneliness, letting go, holding on, and growing up. We find Marie on an airplane, isolated from her family by distance geographically, isolated by a conduct of privacy, and isolated literally from the ground. A vessel shooting alone through space. In a state of extreme isolation, Marie is faced with immediate loneliness. For her safety, she refuses to let Franklin go. But the airplane is also a pressurizing force, which eventually pushes Marie outside of her head and into human interaction. The airplane forces her coping mechanisms to mature and develop. The play is finally able to land when Marie can step up as an individual and support herself.

This is such an important message for our generation. We are living in a world of separation and disconnect - the availability and speed of travel, combined with an ease of long-distance communication has increased the physical distance between all of us. We live inside our heads, in so many ways. We create our conceptions of each other through our own fears and imaginings, based only on scattered communications. The ability to live alone and far away is much more realistic in our time. Divorce is almost the norm; families have become disparate with regularity. In addition, it is much easier to isolate oneself from reaching out - false companionship provided by TV, iPods, and computers have given our generation the illusion that these are ways to cope with loneliness. We need to rekindle the idea that we don't need these things to cope with isolation. They are crutches in our fear of loneliness - and we need to start looking inside for support instead of out.

It is a play for college students at its core (and successful in this manner because it is written through the mind of an actual college student). Our four years at school are a transitional phase in between childhood, where we are defined by our families, and adulthood, where we are defined by nothing but ourselves. Coping, independence, disconnect - themes college students can really relate to. We are at the brink of growing

up fully and becoming adults, and this play explores this eternal experience of learning to exist as an individual. And the confusion that occurs along the way - the preemptive attempts to cut ourselves off from others (especially our parents), our inability to shed the past - are all part of this play's journey. This is a play about learning to take control of our lives, and not just on Marie's account. Each character in the play is struggling for autonomy - both the parents must learn how to define themselves without their children and the Woman is exploring her true desires and needs against her rigid doctrine. These struggles are all echoed through the construct of Marie's imagination; Franklin, Naomi, and Jerome must learn how to escape Marie's authorship and own their voices in this play.

These journeys are all part of my own. I feel deeply bound to this play as a 21st century youth, a college student, a Brown student, and a senior. God I wish I could figure out how to trust my individuality already! Every day I am reminded of being pitched on the brink of adulthood, flying through some sort of liminal time tunnel between being in college and being "in the real world." I too am trying to figure out how to hold on to people, how to let go of people, and whether or not I'll survive on my own. Three years after leaving home, I'm still trying to navigate how to exist in a world so separate from my family, where they don't know my friends and I am a visitor when I return to my house. I also identify with the text as a sibling. This past fall, my brother started college in San Francisco, California - the equivalent of Africa for my parents, who are already further east than they ever expected to be. This Thanksgiving, he has chosen not to fly home. This will be the first of my plays that he won't see. Yet it's all part of me growing up, and becoming my own person, and allowing him to be present in my world without actually living in it. My plane hasn't landed yet, but it makes me all the more invested in captaining this show. I want to learn the lessons of becoming an individual right beside all of the characters of this play. The play speaks to me, in this moment, and I think it will be similarly near and sharp to college artists and audiences.

AND, it lights my directorial and theatrical FIRE. This script has the potential to be a really beautiful piece of theater. A piece of theatre that can only happen here, and can only happen now. One that assembles a diverse group of artists to do more than realize a play. We are defining a play, we are creating a play. This is one of the more exciting things that can happen in PW, and I truly believe that we will end up with an unbelievably rare, startling, heartbreaking, funny and elegant piece of theatre. First, it is in many ways an ensemble piece; working together to find answers is what being at Brown, being in theatre, and really youth in general, is all about. Secondly, Max's style of writing lends itself to a very interesting type of staging; there is writing in between the actual lines. Unlike Shakespeare, whose language tells you exactly how each event occurs, Max leaves room in between and during dialogue for a 3-dimensional voice. Movement and event are not always driven by the text, but instead by the story at hand. The text is simply one element of the story of the play, not the entire driving force. Max's strange, exaggerated and overly specific realism has the potential to be unbelievably poignant. The play calls for an intricate weaving of rhythm, event, text, and movement to create a complex theatrical poetry like nothing we have seen before! And so I bring it to you, PW, because that's what PW is all about.

Bringing It To Life

My biggest interests as a director are of action and aesthetic - the two things that I believe have the most guttural impact on the audience. With both Rocky and Big Love, these were explicit areas of focus due to the nature of the script, whereas with Air Travel it is more of an implicit task; the goal is to fuse my own work in design, spatial

relationship, and action/event with Max's poetic text and rhythmic stillness. I'm interested in finding where the guttural impact lives in a quieter, more contemplative world. That said, I am also interested in finding where loud frenzy fits into this play, and how movement can be explored in a world of confinement. While I have been involved with developing new plays, and I have directed plays, I have never been at the helm a new play. I feel ready to give the production team a steady, thoughtful and electric vision, but this will be new for me too, which makes it all the more exciting.

Moment Examples

1. The play takes off: the audience enters to "flight preparation" music. Perhaps "Put On A Happy Face" on repeat. The cast, dressed as flight crew, busies themselves preparing for the 'flight' (play). They make sure people take their seats, remove residuals from the aisles, etc. Marie enters among the rest of the audience, but talks to no one. She takes her seat on stage amidst the frenzy. The lights fade. A spot comes up abruptly on the stewardess, who mouths along to an eerie pre-recorded "house management" (airplane safety) speech. The stewardess then stares at Marie for a while. When Marie can't bare it anymore, she begins her first monologue as a violent reaction to the stewardess' provocation. Take-off.

2. The play lands: by the second flight (after the Woman gets off in New York), the entire cast (sans Woman) has assembled "inside" the airplane, in the seats, traveling alongside Marie. As Marie stages her airplane funeral, the play arrives at its most exaggerated weirdness - Marie's sickest creation. Naomi and Jerome enter with life preservation devices, and the stewardess aimlessly wheels on a coffin. Franklin and Marie cheerfully talk about the Facebook album. But as the weight of the event spins out of Marie's control, the plane (play) begins to descend toward the ground. The stewardess becomes very serious. As the funeral progresses, the parents slowly shed their sillier elements until they are wearing plain black clothing and sitting at the front of a church. Blank slides begin projecting as Franklin's Facebook pictures. As Marie and Franklin execute their final urination (literal shedding of poisons, but also shedding of Marie's fantastical world), the plane lands. The stewardess, in her announcement of Marie's final monologue, brings Marie her suitcases. As Marie dresses for the funeral, she begins saying the monologue to Franklin and slowly, as it moves forward, there begin to be subtitles. And on the line "And there will be no language for me to explain to everyone else" she stops talking, and her words are projected only on the screen. And after Franklin and her each have a moment of howling, she watches Franklin, in a full suit, exit the theater. She picks up her bags, and walks to her parents, who are waiting for her arrival.

It's really important to me that each moment in this play is very specific. Because Max and I are going to be trying to find an intricate balance between his text and my infusion of event and movement, we can't afford to be muddy in our choices. For that reason, I want to block the whole show in the first week. This requires a lot of pre-preparation on my part, but I believe it's the best way to get this show living and breathing in time for edits and re-working. And because each moment is being created as we work, I plan for an acute attention to detail - I want to bring a new level of precision and control to my explorations with exaggeration and the extra-worldly. In order to further emphasize the importance of structure and quality in working with this play (and new plays in general), rehearsals will be run with as much structure as possible (think equity breaks and records of late arrival... for those who don't know, in an equity show actors must have 5 minutes every hour or ten minutes every hour and a half, it keeps breaks efficient and actors productive). After every rehearsal we will set aside the appropriate amount of time to run as much of the show as we've worked. The arc of this play is difficult, but

so important: it is a journey play. Running each night will allow the actors to get this journey in their system early, and also allow Max to make structural changes to the progression of the story.

Specificity is also going to be an important component of design. Because there are many worlds in which this play exists, it is going to be imperative to control focus, and design will support this. Pete's set stems from a place of realism (the airplane), as does the play, but also allows for significant deviation from that world. That said, its playing areas are specific - a top platform, three to four entrances, and an aisle. This confinement will help ground the deviations. Lights are going to be vital as well. We want to use practicals to make aesthetic gestures that specifically define each world; a red light bulb as the "fasten seatbelts" light, lamps in the parents' home, rows of light bulbs as aisle lights. Once they are established, we can use them to weirdly intermingle worlds - seatbelt lights at the kitchen table, aisle lights that turn on sequentially as moments progress, lamps that function as cabin light, etc. In addition to practicals, we had a great discussion with Arik about using the light plot to create varying "airplane" worlds - extreme brightness (artificial lighting, the presence of air and sky) in contrast with dim, forced sleep and how those two intersect (especially in the Marie pretending to sleep scene). This, playing with the use of "realistic" lighting, will help us both define and then integrate the realms of the play. Integration of the projector light will also be essential.

Once the structure is in place, I want to explore the ideas and inspirations of the actors and creative team -- moments like the barking, the peeing, or even the funeral can't be left to planning. They have to be lived and developed by those embodying them. While I have some moments planned, I have so many more that I have questions about: how does Marie interact with her airplane chair? Must she always be connected with it? Drag it; push it when she wants to move? Is there a way to keep Franklin in the space once he enters, existing throughout the play in some sort of Marie-inflicted jail (dog house)? How do each of the barking scenes weave together? How do we indicate when Marie has control over characters and when they have control of her? How do we do the final urination? While I'm excited to incorporate specificity and detail into my work with actors, I have always felt strongly that the greatest work comes from actors who feel valued and excited by their own contributions. While specificity will be imperative, it will be as a vehicle for the actors' imaginations. Ensemble work and team building will be key. Group bonding, outside rehearsal, five-minute dance breaks, and barkbark sessions will be imperative to the actors' investment. We plan to be very specific about barking vocabulary, deciding exactly what bark word translates into words like "love", "person", and "testicles". They will be encouraged to play with the possibilities of the text. I want us all (actors, managers, designers) to find this world where Max's writing lives - already I see rehearsals in confined spaces, workshops in air pressure and density, and countless other work to stretch the imagination into the realm of the strange and absurd. I want to stretch this text beyond its comfort zone and see what happens. Especially in a process of new play development, discovery is invaluable.

New Play Development

One of the most exciting things about this project is that it provides PW with the opportunity to contribute hugely to the development of a new play. I have had a significant amount of experience with new plays both at Brown and outside in a more professional capacity, and it has come to my attention that this is something that we don't do very often. There seems to be a misconception within the theatre community here that the best way to serve a new play is to treat it the same way one would a

published play - respect the text independent of the author, and freeze the script. In the professional sphere, however, plays aren't written, signed, and then directed. Staging a play is an integral part of its evolution, and therefore the relationship between playwright and director becomes highly collaborative. This doesn't devalue the script; it simply allows the playwright to use the whole process to finish developing the text. Furthermore, because it is a play that has never before been truly witnessed, it is important that the playwright be a strong voice in the process so that their script is presented in the way they desire (compromises are made, of course).

Max and I hope to bring perspective on the new play production process to PW. We envision a highly cooperative working relationship in which the staging and the writing come into constant conversation with each other. Edits will be allowed until opening night if it means it will better serve the play. If I become endlessly frustrated with a moment, I will be able to turn to Max and ask for his help, either textually or artistically. It's true that this relationship could easily become confusing, but Max and I have a lot going for us; we've both been a part of numerous new plays developed in this manner, we have worked together in this capacity during *Big Love*, when Max wrote a few monologues, and we work together incredibly well. We both have strong opinions and different perspectives and aren't afraid to voice them to each other, but we're also both very respectful of the other's opinions and are always open to being convinced that we are wrong. It may be confusing to unpack our playwright-director relationship in this process, because we will both be actively involved with the creation of the piece. This muddiness is completely necessary to the process of working on a new play. My job is not to simply realize a text, but to allow both the physical production and the text to evolve symbiotically. I will be the one staging the play, and Max will allow our experiments in staging to inform the direction of the words. There will be lots of evolution, and Max's revelations will affect my revelations. We both have a lot of respect for each other, and while it may be complex to have both of our voices central to this process, we are very prepared to navigate this complexity. I will be the chief communicator. I will be the one thinking of exercises and tricks and shortcuts to get the team erupting with ideas and approaches to these characters. I will lead rehearsals and be the one speaking directly to actors. I am sure Max will have ideas, and these ideas are welcome, but he will not be the primary communicator with actors. Both Max and I will be collaboratively thinking and defining the script as it progresses. We realize that this is scary for both actors and designers, but is an essential experience for them to have, and we will do our best to be reasonable in our demands. Brown artists are both smart and game; if anyone can handle an evolving script, they can.

In fact, we hope to show Brown's theatre artists how exciting working in this manner can be. This project offers the opportunity to approach a play in a new and different capacity - it will be an incredible learning experience for actors, designers, audience members, as well as myself and Max; even PW board members will be on a new producing journey! Everyone will get to have a hand in this play's creation, which is exhilarating. We plan to have assistants for every possible staff position. We want to make sure everyone is learning from the process of realizing a new play in the PW downspace. It doesn't happen all the time, and this seems like a really special opportunity to get new people involved in the exploration of new play development at Brown. With the playwrighting program in flux, it is especially essential for new students to learn the importance of working on new plays with the whole team in the room. We hope to ignite a fire for developing new theatre inside the rising body of students at PW and Brown. Hopefully this fire will continue long after the play is over, and people will have a context and concept of what working on a new play can entail. Inviting people

into this process of creating a new work, collaborating, and adapting to changes and breakthroughs will be a great thing for PW to be in on.

We have decided to have open rehearsals. We want people in the room. The process of working on this play will be as rich as the play itself. We want designers in the room as much as possible, and we plan to integrate tech as much (and early) as we can. We are growing all of this from the ground up, and that requires more technical integration in the earlier weeks. The design informs my work informs the script informs the actors. We also are encouraging designers to be active and artistic voices in the room. It's easy to lose perspective, so a designer's eye will be helpful. We want the designers to own this project as a whole, not just their own work in it. Every decision alters and affects the whole thing. We can't compartmentalize our work. Therefore, the door is going to be open and we are all gonna learn the language of barking together.

It is true that this script has been very lucky in the opportunities it has been given. It received a staged reading in Denver, in the upspace of good old PW, and then a workshop production at the Hangar Theatre as part of the Lab Company season. These venues, audiences, and participants have allowed the play to go through a significant process of development already, which makes it a very exciting project to bring to the downspace. What this play yearns for, however, is a venue like PW. This is because it simply hasn't been staged with attention yet (the Hangar production was a twenty-seat house in a partitioned corner of the theatre lobby). PW has the ability to really show this play to the world in a big space with lots of resources. More importantly, PW exists in a theatrical universe unavailable anywhere else, even in professional theatre; our houses are always comprised of smart, intelligent, and young eyes. This is the ideal place for Air Travel to find its home on stage: it desperately needs an audience, a cast, and a team of designers that will bring both a youthful and thoughtful perspective to this production. For many of the same reasons, this project would be invaluable to PW. Every arena, facet, and possibility that PW gives its artists will be fully used and artfully demonstrated to collaborators and audiences. This will be an inclusive process that lets the audience and the community dig really deep into this story and the process of realizing it for the first time.

Are We Ready For Some Air Travel?

Everyone at Brown has incredible talent, but so often these talents just get submitted to professors. This is an opportunity to really showcase the talents of Brown students, and subsequently showcase PW as a house for Brown talents to grow, develop, and collide. Why we think we, with this show, are the ones to do that: we've assembled a team and planned a process that can provide the utmost support. New plays are very difficult endeavors, and we want to feel like we're giving this play as much of an opportunity as possible. We feel like we can provide extra support in the following ways:

- 1) We have assembled a highly experienced and talented staff. We feel it is imperative that our designers are both efficient and inventive in order to not only execute the requirements of the script but also to further develop the aesthetic world within the text. This also allows for the opportunity for new faces to assist many of the best students in each field, and learn in an environment of competency but talent. I feel very strongly about PW's new commitment to assistantship, because my successes with directing stem from my own invaluable assistantships at PW. I therefore have a strong desire to see that given back. A strong and competent team also provides the opportunity for taking risks. This play is going to be a real challenge for everyone involved, but I trust my collaborators implicitly. We all are going to have to push ourselves into new realms of

our imagination, but with support and trust we can run towards big ideas rather than shy away. If we fail with this group, we'll have gone down fighting. Hard.

2) We have received a CAC grant for an extra \$550, making our total budget \$1200. This allows us not only to have more developed design elements, but also to advertise and produce the play in a much greater capacity than usually afforded to PW shows. Which leads us to:

3) We have an extensive publicity agenda. Because a new play carries no name recognition, and because students can be skeptical of new plays (their difficulty makes their successes less frequent), it requires a huge publicity effort to attract an audience. [See attached publicity agenda for details]. Being able to show student work to as much of the Brown community as possible is just as important as making sure the design elements are in place. PW's name and spirit will be artfully and extensively plastered across Providence.

It is time for a new, student-written play at PW. 3 Chairs 2 Cubes just cultivated a really positive attitude towards student-written work, creating an environment where the community could get really excited about a new play being produced in the downspace. This semester's season has been much older in sensibility - Arcadia is very adult in its presentation, and JB is very dated. The Changeling is a restoration drama, and Death of a King's Horseman is a play about adults during British colonialism in Africa. We want to put on a play about being YOUNG, and not just about being young in general, but about being young TODAY, in our own world! We need a young voice amidst all these other plays. There has also been a hunger expressed for a well-run, efficient process. Both JB and Arcadia were young, first-time directors, and even senior slot is a mildly scattered process (God love Michael, but even he wouldn't call organization his strength or goal.) As the semester moves forward, there is a growing desire among actors for an experienced production team and a well-run, organized rehearsal process. The freshness of this project will create a contagious excitement for all involved, and will fill T.F. Green Hall with an urgent theatre event by a voice that hasn't yet been seen on a Brown stage. Though time may be tight, the team on this project can provide a disciplined, supportive, challenging and positive experience to everyone involved.

Inherent in PW's structure (an entirely student-run theatre) is a commitment to the talents and competencies of students. We want to show what students are capable of. Every single element of this process will be the idea of a Brown student, and we want to bring all of those ideas out into the world. Brown and PW have taught us all how to push our imaginations, to believe that we can do anything if we work as a team and combine our strengths. This is a play about active imaginations, and the beauty and perils that come with them. We hope to ignite the entire team's imaginations on this project. We want to invite everyone's bizarre terrors and joys into these characters and designs. My directorial imagination has been on the tarmac for a little while, and I think it is ready to jump into the clouds. This whole project will be an exciting, fast, and cathartic flight into the unknown. We can guarantee a few things: minimal turbulence, a completely fresh story, and an inclusive, fierce, theatrical project that will show Brown the power, care, and fearlessness of PW's imagination.

LET'S HOWL.

Flight Staff

Director - Sophie Shackleton
Playwright in Residence - Max Posner
Assistant Director - Drew Foster
Stage Manager - Aaron Malkin
Assistant Stage Manager - Alex Keegan
Production Manager - Alex Lubensky
Set Design & Props - Pete Fallon
Technical Director - Peter Scheidt
Lighting Design - Arik Beatty
Assistant Lighting Designer - Doug Eacho
Costume Design - Kait Stanhope
Sound Design & Composition - Caleb Townsend
Dramaturg - Daria Marinelli
Dramaturgical Mentor - Greg Moss
Publicity Designer - Chris Tyler

To be added if interest is expressed or need is presented:
Assistant Stage Manager(s), Assistant Costume Designer, Assistant Set Designer (will have to consult with Pete), Build Crew, Sound Collaborators, Musicians, Publicity Team

Publicity Calendar

Note: I would like, if I can figure out how to do it, to assemble a publicity team for the show. I think it is very difficult for the production manager to take on all of this, and at this time in the semester even the board will be stretched. This team could comprise members of the board, cast, crew, and even outside supporters.

NOVEMBER 3rd - 7th

Audition Publicity: one week of tableslips, 100 well-designed flyers, Morning Mail, Events Calendar, Facebook, emails and announcements to Literary Arts, English, and Theatre departments. At least five scripts available in the Becker and online. Significant audition publicity raises awareness about the production early, even for those who don't plan to audition.

Other preliminary publicity: Brown University Events calendar as well as any area arts calendars as soon as possible.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10th: Invitations mailed to out-of-town guests, sheet space reserved for performance week

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20th: Poster design due

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23rd: 100 11x17 color posters widely spread all over campus, except for obvious tear-down locations such as bulletin boards. Thayer Street, Downtown, Wickenden, RISD included! I want to get specific - Literary Arts & English buildings, libraries, as much as we can do with as many helping hands as possible.

*A small handful of posters will be written in Bark Bark. Our goal will be to have some posters with all the same images and info as the regular ones, but written in barking language. People will look at these posters and think, "What the fuck is this? It's like a poster for a dog tribe." and then they will see one of the posters written in English and they will say, "Hmmm. It's the same poster." And they will look at the show times. And they will reserve tickets. And their curiosity will lead them to PW where they will see our production of The Thing About Air Travel. The imaginative playfulness of the script and the process should also transfer over into our methods of publicizing the play.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24th: Invitations mailed to professors and area artists.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25th: PowerPoint slide due to the advertising screens; press releases sent to all local papers [BDH, Indy, Projo, Motif, etc.]; tableslips due to Metcalf; new media released w/ help from Drew (?)

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30th: Facebook Event, Morning Mail, PW listserv, Connie's listserv, concentration listservs, anything else we can think of.

DECEMBER 1st-3rd: Possible guerilla marketing (Franklin and Marie stand in the blue room silently with a sign advertising the play or something...)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 1st: Tableslipping begins, sheet hung on Faunce.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2nd: All tear-down poster zones covered.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3rd: Blue room opened.

Production Calendar

November 1st-9th: design meetings, auditions & casting, edits

November 10th: First read-through / meet & greet, Strike See What I Wanna See

November 11th-16th: Blocking and team-building

November 17th-23rd: Scene work, staging development, play & workshops; 1st round of edits
incorporated; 1st design run, early integration of tech if possible

November 24th & 25th: Fine-tuning, 2nd design run, more tech integration, and paper tech

November 30th-1st: Wet & dry tech*

December 1st-3rd: Tech runs with note work

December 4th: Dress rehearsal

December 5th-8th: Performances

*Working around Thanksgiving...

B u d g e t:

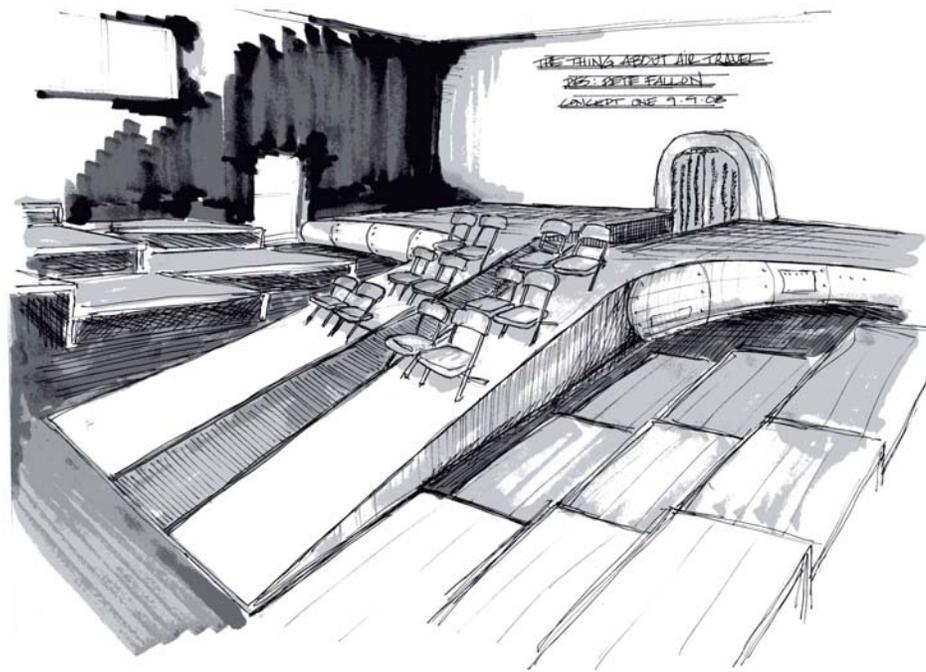
M a t e r i a l s

Printed scripts	Free (PAWPrints, etc.)
Set (see attached design)	\$600
Microphone batteries	\$20
Costumes	\$200
Props	\$100
Programs	\$50
Practicals	\$60

P u b l i c i t y

100 Color Posters	\$100
1 week tableslips for auditions	\$30
100 flyers for auditions	\$10
1 week tableslips for performances	\$30

Total: \$1200



THE THING ABOUT AIR TRAVEL
RESERVE FALL ON
CONCEPT ONE 9.9.08

A Note From Max:

Script Stuff

I have done one re-write on the script since you guys last read it. The big stuff is largely in the same place it was in September, but I have tried to further prepare the script for a production. I have made attempts to push the parent stuff into a more complete, and vital place. There is still much to be done, but I have done as much as I can do alone at a desk. It's not about sitting, thinking, typing, or editing on my MacBook. The play is screaming for people. I like to think of this process as a science experiment. I have written my hypothesis, I have a sense of who these people are, but we have not really gotten to the most important part of the experiment. Data & Observations. The people involved with this project will push and inspire and confuse and illuminate this play for me, and it needs this very badly. Here are the questions I plan to focus on in re-writes:

1. Parents. What are they doing physically during this play? How does this inform what they say? They need to be in a different place every time we visit them. What places can we take them that I haven't thought of yet, and what does their journey of disorientation mean for their own relationship? When are they Marie's versions of them, and when do they break out and become something else?

2. Marie. She's gotta lose control of the play. She can't be the one inciting everything. The Hangar workshop and the re-writes created for that production took the play in a direction that did not work... How do we show that Marie creates the world and then quickly loses control and becomes subject to its chaos? Some of this will be accomplished through physical work, but I do think there are some additional moments that can be filled to create this sense.

3. Airplane as Form. If this is a play about an airplane, how can the Stewardess and other airplane events inform the way we navigate this universe? The world should be defined through relatable language, images and objects that we associate with air travel. How can I continue to fill the play with this language and claustrophobia? How can we riff on this?

4. Franklin. Is there a missing scene? Their relationship and facility with language advances from one scene to the next, but it seems that there might be a few instances where we can't figure out how they got better or closer or more ready to let each other go.

5. Africa/James. Marie's African love interest is under developed. I want to feel more pull towards him, so that the entire flight is an internal duel between her love of James and her love of Africa, and her need to get home to her parents and the reality of Franklin's death.

The Fierce Urgency of Now

PW is incredibly really important to me artistically and personally. I think we have already described why this project would be really great for PW and the Brown community, but I don't want to leave out or abandon its personal importance to me. I have never gotten to work with a full design team from the first meeting on. I have never gotten to work with a director who I already feel comfortable with, and who is truly living inside the world of the play. This is new for most of the team. I am beyond excited and terrified and thrilled to share this with people who are so ready to let it take hold of them. This story is deeply personal, and it's actually scary to think about it becoming such a communal thing. Ultimately, I feel really stoked about it because I think it is also universal and meticulously wired to the college experience. It's my story,

but I think we all can see ourselves and our fears and our families and our strangers and our sadness and our joy in this play.

This play is about here and now for us young, confused, weird, and awesome Brown students. But it is also here and now for us theatrically at Brown. So many plays and playwrights have had the honor of being nurtured by PW and the larger Brown theatre community. Some of my favorite playwrights were able to spread their infant wings in the 02912 area code, and it would be a gift for this play to continue in that tradition. This play is a product of Brown; of the way theatre is approached here, of the playfulness and fearlessness that students bring to our work. This is a play meant to live in a theatre, and PW is the theatre it wants to detonate in. At Brown there is a contagious hunger for fresh theatricality and new voices and insane collaboration. Let's all dig into this piece with our entire bodies, senses of humor, and youthful wisdom.

Thanks for reading,
Max