Summer 2011

Direction of the Play: The Awesome 80's Prom

Shannon Lynna Hom

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Recommended Citation
Direction of the Play: The Awesome 80's Prom

A Project Report
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
Theatre Production

by
Shannon Lynna Horn
July, 2011
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Shannon Lynna Horn

Undergraduate Study:
Nebraska Wesleyan University, 1991-1995

Graduate Study:
Central Washington University, 2008 - 2011

Professional Experience:
Middle School English and Math Teacher
Seymour, Missouri 1995 – 1997

Middle School English and Social Studies Teacher
North Charleston, South Carolina 1997-2000

Middle School and High School Drama
Summerville, South Carolina 2000-current
ABSTRACT

PROJECT REPORT

The Awesome 80's Prom

Freedom Hall at Pinewood Preparatory School

Directed by
Shannon Lynna Horn
April/May 2011

This project entailed the selection, background research and documentation, improvisation training, casting, direction, vocal coaching, and post-production analysis of Pinewood Preparatory School’s production of The Awesome 80’s Prom. Documentation includes research and analysis of the play, its music, and an evaluation of the musical as a production vehicle for the department of Theatre Arts at Central Washington University. The analysis also includes a discussion as to the non-traditional directorial vision of this production.
Shannon Lynna Horn

Courses presented for the Masters Degree

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<tr>
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CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
Graduate Studies

We hereby approve the project report of

Shannon Lynna Horn

Candidate for the degree of Master of Arts:

Theatre Production

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

7/19/11
Date of Signature

Terri Brown
Committee Chair

7/19/11
Date of Signature

Elise Forier-Edie

7/19/11
Date of Signature

Scott Robinson

Please note:
The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.
MASTER'S THESIS PROJECT
PLAYSCRIPT APPROVAL FORM

(PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE READ THE PLAY SELECTION CRITERIA SECTION IN YOUR GRADUATE HANDBOOK)

SCRIPT TITLE  Awesome 80's Prom

PLAYWRIGHT(S) [If musical, list lyricist/composer]  Ken Davenport

NUMBER OF ACTS 1 APPROXIMATE TOTAL PLAYING TIME 1 HOURS 40 MIN.

CAST (fill in with the appropriate numbers)
MEN 9 WOMEN 8 CHILDREN 2 OVER 40 2 (2 other)

ROLES REQUIRING PEOPLE OF COLOR _______ ROLES COULD DOUBLE _______

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAST 21

OTHER CASTING CONCERNS: * These roles will be played by myself and my headmaster.

ARTISTIC STAFF (check those needed for this play or production idea)
MUSICAL DIRECTOR __________ DANCE CHOREOGRAPHER ________
FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER ________ DIALECT COACH ________ SPECIALTY HIRE ________ (specify what kind)

ORCHESTRA/BAND (specify what size) ________

Will you be fulfilling any of the above? If so, which? ________

Will a guest artist be fulfilling any of the above? If so, which? ________

Yes  - celebrity impersonator

SCENERY/PROPS (check those needed for this play or your concept of the play)
UNIT SET? YES NO (CIRCLE ONE) NUMBER OF SETTINGS
HISTORICAL PERIOD 1980's GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION Anywhere USA
HISTORICAL SEASON ________

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SET CONCERNS OR SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:
As it is to represent a prom in the HS cafeteria, ours will take place in our "cafeteria"

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF PROPS ________ PERIOD 1980's

DIFFICULT OR UNUSUAL PROPS? YES NO (CIRCLE ONE) DESCRIBE:

WEAPONS OR FIREARMS? HOW MANY N/A DESCRIBE:

COSTUMES (CHECK THOSE NEEDED FOR THIS PLAY OR YOUR CONCEPT OF THE PLAY)
APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF COSTUMES PER CHARACTER 1-2
HISTORICAL PERIOD 1980's SEASON Spring
SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHOICE OF SCRIPT
HAVE YOU SEEN THIS SCRIPT PRODUCED? YES NO (CIRCLE ONE)

I saw it off Broadway

HAVE YOU DONE THIS PLAY BEFORE? BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PRODUCTION:

No
WHY SHOULD YOUR ORGANIZATION PRODUCE THIS SCRIPT?
- Because of our facility, this is the perfect show set wise as it is supposed to take place in a cafeteria which is where we do all of our shows anyway.
- My students are also passionate about improv. This show contains lots of guided improv scenes.

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS (IF ANY) TO DOING THIS PRODUCTION AT YOUR SCHOOL?
- I do not see any. My administration is already very excited about us doing this show and are already planning their outfits!

PLEASE GIVE A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE SCRIPT ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER AND ATTACH.
PLEASE INCLUDE A COPY OF THE SCRIPT FOR THE THESIS COMMITTEE TO REVIEW.

SHANNON HORN

Date Submitted: 2/12/10

Terri L. Brown

Date Approved: 2/16/10

Scott Robinson

Date Approved: 2/22/10

Elise Forrier

Date Approved: 

Graduate Coordinator Approval: 

Date Approved: 

Date Approved: 

Date Approved: 
Please note:

Full text of this screenplay has been redacted due to copyright restriction.
This form is to be completed as soon as the student has formed a committee and selected an option from the list below. Submit original to the Office of Graduate Studies in Barge 305.

**Note:**

<table>
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<th>Name:</th>
<th>Birth Date</th>
<th>Student ID</th>
<th>Email:</th>
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</table>

Check option:  

- [ ] Written Exam*  
- [ ] Project  
- [ ] Creative Project  
- [ ] Studio Project  
- [ ] Portfolio Review  
- [ ] Thesis (standard)  
- [ ] Thesis (journal-ready)  

Indicate credits to be received for the thesis or option:

<table>
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<tr>
<td>TH 700</td>
<td>Masters Thesis</td>
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*Students taking written exam option may omit items 1-5 below.

1. Proposed Title (and title of targeted journal if appropriate):

   Direction of the Production The Awesome 80’s Prom

2. Purpose of Study:

   The direction of the production of The Awesome 80’s Prom serves as the culminating experience in theatre arts graduate studies.

3. Scope of Study:

   Documentation of based upon the pre-production research, post-production evaluation, the direction of the production (including casting, rehearsal of the actors, preparation of the Director’s Production Book, and oral examination) shall benefit both the student and theatre arts department.

4. Procedure to be used:

   Three phases of study shall be included: 1) Pre-production research and Thesis Documentation in MLA style, 2) Rehearsal and direction of the production, 3) Post-Production Evaluation and Documentation.

5. Does the procedure involve collection of data obtained from Human Subjects (including use of surveys)? Yes** [ ] No ☒  

   Use of Animals? Yes** [ ] No ☒

   **If yes, your procedures must be approved in writing by the Human Subjects Committee or the Animal Care and Use Committee before you initiate your research.

Terri Brown  
Committee Chair (typed or printed)  
9/9/10

Scott Robinson  
Committee Member (typed or printed)  
7/21/10

Elise Forier Edie  
Committee Member (typed or printed)  
7/21/10

Approved by:  
Scott Robinson  
9/9/10

Roger S. Fouts  
Approved by:  
Dean of Graduate Studies  
10/6/10

Please note: The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.
July 1, 2010

To Whom It May Concern,

Head of Fine and Performing Arts, Shannon Horn has permission to produce The Awesome 80's Prom at Pinewood Preparatory School from April 29 - May 1st.

Sincerely,

Dr. Glyn Cowlishaw
Headmaster
Pinewood Preparatory School

Please note:
The signature has been redacted due to security reasons.
Parameters

For Pinewood Preparatory School's production of *The Awesome 80's Prom* the school has provided the production with a budget of $3000. This will cover the cost of scripts, royalties, costumes, sets, lights, programs, and so on. I am hoping that my productions earlier in the year are able to generate a small profit that I can then apply to this show. If not, I think the costumes will be fairly easy to purchase from Goodwill or borrow from local theatres, community members, and the closets of faculty and staff at school.

Since the prom is supposed to take place in either a school cafeteria or gym, a lot of traditional stage lighting will not be needed. We will only be using the apron of the stage and I have ample lighting here. For the remainder of the room, we will be using light trees, the room lights on their dimmest setting, a disco ball, and candles on the individual tables. The overall ambience of the room should be slightly intimate to help mask the fact that the prom is taking place in a school cafeteria.

The Honors Play Production class will be the student group of performers. In addition, Dr. Cowlishaw, our headmaster, will be taking on the role of the headmaster with a faculty member taking on the role of the drama teacher. If no student can take on the celebrity role, I am hoping to hire a celebrity impersonator to be the "special guest" mentioned in the script.

For once my facility is perfect for a show. Typically, since I am in a cafeteria, we have to edit our set designs, are limited on lighting, and so forth. *The Awesome 80's Prom* craves these "issues." Set wise we will only need tables and chairs for seating, tables for food, a table for the DJ, plus whatever we use for décor once we decide on a prom theme.

The schedule does create a bit of an issue. The students are out of school for Easter Break the Friday through Monday prior to opening. This means that I can not hold a rehearsal
the weekend prior as I am not allowed to schedule during a school vacation. I am trying to work the schedule such that this will not be an issue. Spring Break also runs in the middle of our rehearsal schedule, but I have scheduled auditions a week earlier than I might usually to make up for this time off from school.
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Evaluation of *The Awesome 80’s Prom* as a Production Vehicle

The audience for the Pinewood Preparatory School’s production of *The Awesome 80’s Prom*, will consist primarily of students and adults as supporters of the students. All audience members will also serve as participants. The student portion will consist of students from middle and high school age and college levels. The adult portion of the audience will consist of the actor’s families, teachers, friends, and community members who enjoy live theatre and support the students endeavor in the arts. Using the vehicle *The Awesome 80’s Prom* will provide the audiences with nostalgia and themes which the audience will find fun and intriguing. Exploration of the themes listed below makes the comedy an excellent production vehicle for its audience.

High school students often classify themselves according to the social cliques that they hang out in with such titles as Preps, Jocks, Nerds, Cheerleaders, etc. This social labeling serves as a similarity between *The Awesome 80’s Prom* and its targeted audience. Regardless of age, most people have experienced this social labeling on some level. While the character’s names do not contain the name of their social clique, certain behaviors or choice of attire portray very clearly to which they belong. Even though *The Awesome 80’s Prom*, takes place in the 1980’s titles and social cliques have not changed. Student audience members will recognize these cliques as things they see daily at school, while the adult audience will be reminded of their past experiences. Ideally, this meeting of experiences will mirror itself simultaneously as generations experience and participate in the performance together. Figuratively, during the performance, characters and audience members all become part of the collective experience.

Another theme that will strike a chord with audience members is the inconsistent relationships of the young people. In the play, Davenport demonstrates the cyclical nature of
many high school relationships through Whitely and Blake. They are always breaking up for the smallest reason and getting back together as is often the case with young, immature relationships.

All of the action in *The Awesome 80's Prom*, takes place in school’s cafeteria with brief scenes right in front of the doors. The layout is not specified in the script, therefore making it easy to stage in any school. This is a wonderful production for my school as our facility is a cafetorium (cafeteria with a stage). This lends itself perfectly to a set up where tables and chairs can run along the outside perimeter with a large area in the center for dancing. The DJ and his equipment can be placed on the stage. Likewise, all the scripted scenes can be played on said stage providing ease of lighting, sound, and staging. Audience members will feel comfortable with their surroundings as the location is a typical cafeteria with its square and open shape thus, making it a familiar place.

**Concept Statement**

Ken Davenport’s *The Awesome 80's Prom* is a blast-from-the-past production that transports its audience members, who become participants, back to the days of big hair, big dresses, and big attitudes.

It is often written that Bertolt Brecht was one of the most influential artist in the modern world. He attempted to alter the way that the theatre was used by artists to convey a political message, thus using the stage to provoke audiences into taking some kind of an action. To aide with this radical shift away from the traditional approach, which he called “Dramatic Theatre” to his approach which he coined “Epic Theatre”, Brecht devised a list of criterion for each (Willett 444-61) In looking at a side to side comparison of the elements, I began to wonder if one play could really embody everything from one of the two definitions and be completely devoid of any qualities of the other. In relation to my thesis show I questioned if *The Awesome 80's Prom* was
Dramatic or Epic Theatre?

One could argue that 80’s Prom has numerous qualities of Traditional Theatre. Even though part of the script is written as guided improvisation, there is still a definite plot line that is followed throughout the script. It has a definite beginning, middle, and end. The appearance of plot is one of Brecht’s characteristics of Dramatic Theatre (Willett 444-61). Likewise, the premise for the audience members is to come dressed for a prom that would have taken place in the 1980’s. They experience the events all around them in “real time.” This falls under Brecht’s guideline of the “spectator is in the thick of it, shares the experience” (Willett 444-61). Although in the script the events are written into scenes, just as in life the events happen in a sort of cause and effect kind of way. Brecht’s definition for this was “one scene makes another” (Willett 444-61). For example, when Blake, the captain of the football team, and Whitney, the head cheerleader, have a fight at the end of one scene, they are then breaking up at the beginning of the next scene.

One of Brecht’s biggest problems with traditional theatre was that, “By solving the problem onstage, the audience might not feel compelled to attack the problem in the streets” (Willett 444-61). His solution was Epic Drama where the audience could be provoked to take some kind of an action. While his reasons were mostly political, because it is interactive theatre, some events in 80’s Prom could cause people to take action. According to Brecht, “the spectator is made to face something” (Willett 444-61). I think this is truer of 80’s Prom than many other “traditionally” performed shows as their response may be immediate instead of after the fact. The audience is thrust into any number of situations where there is conflict. Students arguing over who will be prom king and queen, Blake and Whitney’s constant break ups, Fender trying to get audience members to go outside and smoke with him, etc. In all of these situations, the
performers interact with the audience members trying to elicit a physical and emotional response from them. Without the audience having to "face something", they play could not be successful.

When running, the show will be open to the school and community. Tickets will not be presold, so the socioeconomic background and upbringings of the audience members could be quite diverse. This could have quite an impact on how they respond to situations where heightened emotions might be embodied. For example, the character of Fender (the bad boy), spends quite a bit of time trying to engage the female "characters" and audience members/participants. He asks them to dance, if they would like to have a smoke, would they like to meet him after the prom for some "real fun", and so on. The participant’s background, upbringing, and prior experiences could cause that person to react in any number of ways. Realizing that this is for fun they could just laugh it off. However, they could become so caught up in the moment that the emotional and/or physical response could be quite extreme.

As a director, I want to embrace the unique structure of this play and aid the audience in having an experience rather than just the traditional viewing of the performance. The goal will be to recreate the prom in such a way that the older members of the audience will be transported back to their high school days. For the younger audience, there are certain expectations for a prom with theme, lighting, crowning of a king and queen and so on. All these expected experiences will be provided.

For the color palate I plan to have each of the characters with a signature color matching their character. This will be developed by the cast members and me as they begin developing their characters. The unifying colors will come from the prom theme that will be chosen by the cast.

Scenically the set will provide a bit of a challenge. While the pieces themselves are fairly
simple tables, chairs, light trees, décor, DJ equipment, etc., the placement of the items is the
difficulty. The room must be arranged so that there are areas to for people to sit, set the food,
dance, have pictures taken, all while allowing for flow of traffic since the audience and the actors
will be mobile the entire performance. Since the show is supposed to take place in a school
cafeteria and have that look and feel, we will be using the tables and chairs in the cafeteria itself.
Six and eight foot tables will be used for the food, punch, prom favors, and DJ equipment. The
photographer and karaoke station will be set up in an adjoining room.

Lighting will be fairly simple, which is wonderful since I can’t use more than fifteen
lights. For the scripted scenes that take place on both the apron and interior of the stage we will
be using the regular stage lights. The gels for these will be a combination of amber, blue, and
pinks to provide a general wash. For the dance and improvisation sections that take place
throughout the room, we will be using a disco ball with a travel spot, light trees to give a general
wash, strobe lights for a select song, and “DJ” lights that are plugged in to the musical equipment
and blink in time with the music.

Sound is a very important part of the production. Since the audience is at a dance, there
will be 80’s themed music playing almost continually. During the scripted sections or places
where no music is needed we will use sound effects as they are called for. None of the actors
will be using body microphones as they have to interact with the audience. The principal and
drama teacher characters will be given a hand held microphone to use on the stage as is called for
in the script.

Costumes are very important to this production as they must be accurate to a time period
that a huge number of the audience members will remember. After each female character has
chosen a theme color, they will be dressed in an 80’s style prom dress of that color. These will
be found, purchased at discount stores, borrowed, or made as needed. For the men, we will be renting tuxedos from a local costume store. Their bow tie and cummerbund combination will match their dates.

Finally, casting will mainly be handled with members of the class that is putting on the production. The role of the principal will be played by our Headmaster and the Drama teacher by one of our English teachers. The production also calls for a celebrity impersonator of someone from the 1980’s that is recognizable still today. I will be contacting local actors to see if anyone will do it gratis. If not, I will hire someone.

Geographic Location

No specific references to location are made. In speaking with the playwright via email this question was posed. Davenport replied that the intention of the play was to write it in such a way that no reference to geographic region etc. was made. This would allow companies to place the production in their own town (Horn). An example of this is found in Mrs. Lascalzo’s dialogue when she makes reference to the car in the parking lot with the (insert state here) license plate (Davenport 17). This allows groups to make decisions on their own to the location of the high school and thus, Prom.

Date

The year given at the beginning and throughout the script is 1989. While it doesn’t state the month, the Principal Snelgrove in his welcome to the Prom speech states that, “..while we don’t graduate for another two weeks...” (Davenport 18) one can infer that the Prom is taking place in late May or early June since these months signal the end of the traditional school year in the U.S.
Economic

The United States endured a deep recession throughout 1982. Business bankruptcies rose 50 percent over the previous year. Farmers were especially hard hit, as agricultural exports declined, crop prices fell, and interest rates rose. By 1983, inflation had eased, the economy had rebounded, and the United States began a sustained period of economic growth. The American people expressed their discontent with federal policies by turning out President Carter in 1980 and electing former Hollywood actor and California governor Ronald Reagan as President. Reagan (1981-1989) based his economic program on the theory of supply-side economics, which advocated reducing tax rates so people could keep more of what they earned. The theory was that lower tax rates would induce people to work harder and longer, and that this in turn would lead to more saving and investment, resulting in more production and stimulating overall economic growth. While the Reagan-inspired tax cuts served mainly to benefit wealthier Americans, the economic theory behind the cuts argued that benefits would extend to lower-income people as well because higher investment would lead new job opportunities and higher wages. The central theme of Reagan's national agenda, however, was his belief that the federal government had become too big and intrusive. In the early 1980s, while he was cutting taxes, Reagan was also slashing social programs. Reagan also undertook a campaign throughout his tenure to reduce or eliminate government regulations affecting the consumer, the workplace, and the environment. At the same time, however, he feared that the United States had neglected its military in the wake of the Vietnam War, so he successfully pushed for big increases in defense spending. The combination of tax cuts and higher military spending overwhelmed more modest reductions in spending on domestic programs. As a result, the federal budget deficit swelled even beyond the levels it had reached during the recession of the early 1980s. From $74,000 million in 1980, the
federal budget deficit rose to $221,000 million in 1986. It fell back to $150,000 million in 1987, but then started growing again. Some economists worried that heavy spending and borrowing by the federal government would re-ignite inflation, but the Federal Reserve remained vigilant about controlling price increases, moving quickly to raise interest rates any time it seemed a threat. Under Chairman Paul Volcker and his successor, Alan Greenspan, the Federal Reserve retained the central role of economic traffic cop, eclipsing Congress and the president in guiding the nation's economy. (USHistory.org) The students at Wanaget High School cover all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Political

1989 saw the inauguration of George H. W. Bush presidency and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Prior to the Bush presidency the U.S. was plagued by the Iran Hostage Crisis and mounting domestic opposition. In his first term, Reagan introduced fiscal policies aimed at stimulating the American economy after a recession in 1981 and 1982, including oil deregulation policies which led to the 1980s oil glut. He met with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in four summit conferences, culminating with the signing of the INF Treaty. These actions accelerated the end of the Cold War, which occurred during the early part of the Bush presidency, and the removal of the Berlin Wall. The second largest stock market crash (percentage-wise) in United States history occurred in 1987, preceding another recession. (USHistory.org)

The late 1970's and early 1980s marked the birth of an entire industry organized around idealized nostalgia. It first found traction in the 1980's creation of The Fifties. Turning a time period into a distinct brand is common today. Author David Sirota speculates, “Is it consciences that a champion of that idealize decade, Ronal Regan, became our president.” (11)
Social

The 1980’s was considered the “me” decade. Many Americans were investing in the stock market, which at the time was bullish. These Yuppies or Young Urban Professional replaced the conservatism of the 1970’s. Instead, they were on the fast track to executive positions and spent their money on material possessions. Ironically, poverty reached a fifteen year high in 1983 and by 1985 homelessness was at its highest since the depression.

One of the biggest changes to the lifestyles of Americans was the introduction of the personal computer first introduced by Apple in 1977. The personal computer allowed Americans to be more independent by managing their own finances, quick word processing, payroll, mailing lists.

The pleasure seeking lifestyle prevalent in the 1970’s changed in the 1980’s on a national scale. First Lady Nancy Regan campaign to, “Just Say No” to drugs became a catch phrase national wide. The sexual revolution, however, was most noticeably impacted by the spread of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, or AIDS. It was discovered that the disease was most commonly spread through sexual contact and the sharing of needles. Safe sex became important as hundreds began to die from AIDS. (USHistory.org)

Religious

Due to the improvisation style of this show, religion doesn’t specifically factor in. There is no mention of spirituality or religion. Religion does seem in impact any decisions that the students make. For example, both Michael Jay and his girlfriend have chosen to wear purity rings showing that they are abstaining from sex until after marriage. (Davenport 44) There are many religions that include this value, although the characters never mention religion as being a reason for this choice, as part of their back story they could include it.
Polar Attitudes

The free form structure of the script does not allow for character growth for any of the characters, save one, Louis Fensterspock. At the beginning of the show Louis is your stereotypical geek with the pocket protector, taped glasses, and Rubik’s cube. He arrives to the Prom on his bicycle wearing knee and elbow pads and a helmet. We get the feeling that Louis would rather be at home working on a calculus problem, however, his friend and fellow geek-in-crime Kerrie has asked him to come and he has always had strange feelings for her. During the action of the play we need Louis repeatedly picked on, “Fender sees Louis, calls him a geek, and puts him in a trash can.” (Davenport 26) Louis never fights back.

At the end of the play when his lady love Kerrie is being embarrassed, he makes an impassioned plea where he reminds everyone that, “…beneath the Z Cavariccis and leg warmers, aren’t we all the same?” (Davenport 46). He goes on to remind the popular kids that when they were little, they all used to play together. This is the first time Louis has ever stood up for himself or anyone else.

Previous Action

(Page 9) Melissa planned every moment of the prom to perfection.

(Page 9) For four years, Missy has waited to be able to plan a Prom.

(Page 9) When she (Missy) was an underclassman, she used to watch the Senior Prom through the windows with her boyfriend Michael J and she would dream about what her Prom would be like.

(Page 10) Mr. Snelgrove hates Prom because he never got to go when he was a student at Wanaget High School.

(Page 10) Michael Jay quotes Ronald Regan, his favorite president, when shaking hands, and is always giving people the “thumbs up” sign.

(Page 11) Mrs. L wants the students to remember their Prom like she remembers hers at Wanganui High School.
Molly is a member of the Junior Varsity cheerleading squad and thinks Whitley and the Heathers are the most perfect people she has ever seen.

Louis would rather be at home working on a calculus problem but his lifelong friend and geek-in-crime, Kerrie Kowalski, asked him to come.

Louis has always had these strange feelings for Kerrie...when she's around he feels like he did the first time he solved a Rubik's cube.

Kerrie is oblivious to Louis's feelings for her because her heart is lost to Blake Williams.

Louis’s mom told him not to leave his bike outside.

Dickie Harrington doesn’t understand why people think he is gay.

Dickie feels that Missy, his arch enemy, stole his role in this year’s musical.

Blake Williams is captain of the football team.

Whitley Whitiker, is the Head Cheerleader.

Whitley and Blake are the most popular couple at Wanganui High School.

Blake has a wondering eye and Whitley is very jealous.

Whitley has promised to take Blake to a hotel room after Prom.

Joshua “Beef” Beafarowski is the center for the football team and a bit of an animal.

Beef already had a few too many Bartles and James wine coolers in the limo.

Beef is dyslexic and a little stupid.

Heather #1 wears a knee brace from a recent cheerleading accident (which she thinks deep down that Heather #2 caused)

Dickie is the only male on the cheerleading squad, so the Heathers are his only friends.

Ms. L loaned the Prom Committee her Club Card to purchase decorations for the Prom.
Mrs. L chose Missy to play the lead in the musical Funny Girl.

Whitley was voted Most Popular, Best Dressed, and the next Kelly Lebrock.

Kerrie did other people’s homework in exchange for her Prom Court nomination.

At the beginning of the year Blake and Beef made a vow to get their first kiss by Prom night. Everyone succeeded except for Pee Wee.

Blake’s older brother gave him a condom.

Football coach announced his retirement.

Michael Jay was voted class President last year.

The band teacher has been hospitalized.

Missy and Michael signed a purity pledge.

Last year Principal Snelgrove and Ms. L had to choose the Prom King and Queen because no one voted.

Football team had a losing season

Dialogue

Choice of words

The words that Davenport chose to use in The Awesome 80’s Prom are reflective of those used by today’s teenagers; simple and easily understood by all. On some occasions Davenport did choose to use words with double meanings such as “stick” (33) where the character thinks he is talking about driving a stick shift, but due to the slang of the time, the kids could also take it as reference to a penis. This play on words is also evident in the title of the fictional high school that the students attend “Wanaget High School” is pronounced “Wanna Get” as in want to get high.
Widely utilized throughout, and things that might be unfamiliar to my students, are items, words, or trends that were part of the popular culture of that time “doobage” (25) refers to marijuana, “Mello Yellow” (18), “Aresenio Hall” (19), White Snake (19), and Z Cavariccis (46) to name a few.

Phrases and sentence structures

The relative simplicity, but correct usage of the language shows that the students are from an middle class high school, with an basic education and IQ. The idea for everyone who comes to see and participate in the show, regardless of where they went to high school, his/her fictional high school could easily be their own.

Choice of images

The use of figurative language in The Awesome 80's Prom is rare. The majority of the dialogue is literal in its meaning. It is feasible, however, that in the free form scenes an actor may make a character choice and utilize figurative language to express the action and emotion.

Sound of the dialogue

The sound of a dialogue is devoid of any dialect or regional sounds and accents. The purpose of this is so that the fictional high school portrayed in The Awesome 80's Prom could be “Anywhere, U.S.A.”. The playwright wants the audience to relive their Prom or find something in this Prom that takes them back.
A NOTE ON LICENSING AND PERFORMANCE MATERIALS

This publication is a complete master script. If you are interested in licensing this play for performance, you can apply through Samuel French, Inc. at www.samuelfrench.com. Once you are approved and licensed appropriately, you will be sent a rental package which includes a "Character History Bible" for each character and a Director's/Stage Manager's Guide. These items are rented and should be returned after your performances have ended. Specialty Prop and costume rental is also available, as well as wholesale merchandise for purchase. For more information please contact info@samuelfrench.com.

Scene 1

"The Preshow"

The Preshow begins thirty minutes prior to The Prom's official start time (e.g., 7:30 PM for an 8 PM show). There are two main actions of the Preshow: the arrival at the Prom of the STUDENTS and AUDIENCE MEMBERS and the action inside the Prom led by JOHNNY HUGHES.

The following STUDENTS are stationed inside or outside the Prom when the Preshow begins:

MELISSA ANN "MISSY" MARTIN (pronounced: "Mar- tin"), the Head of the Prom Committee, stands by the entrance to the venue (either lobby or outside) welcoming her classmates. She is pretty and perky in pink and has planned every moment of the prom to perfection. Nothing will go wrong. She is constantly checking with AUDIENCE MEMBERS to make sure they are enjoying themselves, if they like the decorations she picked out, etc. As classmates enter, she recognizes them, makes small talk (e.g., "I love your dress, do you like mine?" "I love what you did to your hair!" "Where are you going to college? I applied there too. It was my safety school! I'm going to Vassar," etc.). For four years, MISSY has waited to be able to plan a Prom. When she was an underclassman, she used to watch the Senior Prom through the windows with her boyfriend, MICHAEL JAY, and she would dream about what her Prom would be like. MISSY is from the right family, gets the right grades, has the right boyfriend. The only thing missing from her life is the Prom Queen crown.

MR. RICHARD "DICK" SNELGROVE, the Principal, stands near MISSY. He is not so welcoming. He rules Managet High with a strict and fascist iron fist. He...
Hey, Buddy Boy, "How would you like to do some time in summer school?" "How about a Saturday detention?", etc.). He frisks a few AUDIENCE MEMBERS. He carries a bullhorn and makes several announcements to keep the line moving. He will not let this Prom get out of control.

MICHAEL JAY, Senior Class President and MISSY's escort and "steady" stands at the entrance of the main Prom room. MICHAEL, the eternal poppy politician and President of the Young Republican Club and the Debate Club, is shaking hands and welcoming his fellow classmates. He always says his name and his rank when shaking anyone's hand. "Michael Jay, Class President, Good to see you!" " Aren't you in my calculus class? Sure, sure you are." He quotes Ronald Reagan, his favorite President and is always toasting and giving people the "thumbs up" sign. He hands out jelly bracelets and sunglasses as gifts, encouraging everyone to vote for him for Prom King (if he is lucky enough to get nominated... "Fingers crossed!"). MICHAEL JAY could be a future President someday, and winning Prom King is another step in that direction, just like going to Yale and being a member of the right Country Club. As AUDIENCE MEMBERS pass by his post, he formally welcomes them to the Prom and parts the rain curtains and encourages them to enter the main Prom room.

MRS. PATSY LASALO ("MRS. L.", to her students), The Drama Teacher, is the first person AUDIENCE MEMBERS should encounter in the main Prom room. She is warm and welcoming, embracing the AUDIENCE MEMBERS and STUDENTS after they pass through the rain curtains. She comments on how pretty/handsome all the boys and girls look. "You look all grown up! I'm going to cry!" She hugs the students. You get the feeling that MRS. L. gets this emotional every year. MRS. L. is the exact opposite of MR. SNEGLROVE. She wants the STUDENTS to always remember this time, just like she remembers her Prom at Wansano High. As AUDIENCE MEMBERS enter, she refers to some as members of the marching band. She urges the AUDIENCE MEMBERS to have LLOYD PARKER, the Prom Photographer and President of the Audio-Visual Club, take their official Prom photo.

LLOYD takes pictures of the students in front of a tacky background (The photos should be made available for purchase). LLOYD is a bit of a goof-in-training that feels pretty cool about getting to go to the Prom as a freshman, even if he is working. LLOYD is assisted by MOLLY PARKER, LLOYD's tag-along twin sister and fellow freshman. MOLLY is a member of the Junior Varsity cheerleading squad and thinks WHITNEY and the HEATHERS are the most perfect people she has ever seen.

The rest of the STUDENTS arrive at the Prom just like the AUDIENCE MEMBERS. They should approach the entrance to the venue on the same path as the AUDIENCE MEMBERS, interacting with them as they approach. The timing of the entrances of the STUDENTS should be staggered so that there is a steady flow throughout the thirty minute freshmen.

Outside the Prom, on the street, NICK FENDER, The Rebel, loiters at the start of The Promenade. He is anti-establishment and anti-prom. He tries to bum cigarettes. He asks someone if they want to buy some pot, etc. He reaches into a trash can and pulls out a paper bag. He opens it to find a sandwich or an apple and takes a bite (NOTE: this is preset by the actor before the show). He makes rude comments to STUDENTS and to AUDIENCE MEMBERS as they enter, especially to LOUIS and DICKIE (e.g. "Nice outfit, Sporto." "Hey, what'll ya say we ditch this prom thing and go hang out at the turnaround," etc.). NICK is at the Prom to disrupt it as much as he can. He's a menace.
LOUIS FENSTERSTOCK, The Geek, rides by the entrance to the prom on his bicycle. He falls. LOUIS is your stereotypical geek with the pocket protector, taped glasses and a Rubik's cube. He also wears knee and elbow pads and a helmet. He would rather he at home working on a calculus problem, but his lifelong friend and geek-in-crime, KERRIE KOWALSKI, asked him to come. And LOUIS has always ad has these strange feelings for KERRIE...when she's around he feels like he did the first time he solved a Rubik's cube.

FENDER approaches LOUIS and makes fun of his bike, his clothes, etc. LOUIS doesn't fight back. FENDER asks him if he has a date, etc. FENDER tries to get some AUDIENCE MEMBERS in on the jokes.

KERRIE, The Spats, finally arrives and approaches LOUIS. After a few more jabs at both of them, FENDER backs off.

KERRIE is wearing a pink dress that doesn't quite fit right, glasses and headgear. Her hair is in uneven side ponytails. She is hyper and excitable. She is oblivious to LOUIS' feelings for her, because her heart is lost to BLAKE WILLIAMS, the captain of the football team. She is carrying a cabbage patch kid that is a spitting image of BLAKE (varsity jacket, tuxedo pants, etc.). KERRIE is intent on winning Prom Queen so she can finally dance with BLAKE WILLIAMS, who she is sure will win Prom King. Maybe then, he'll see through the headgear and fall in love with her.

KERRIE enters the Prom with LOUIS following, carrying his bike. KERRIE asks MISSY if BLAKE has arrived then enters. MISSY and SNELGROVE question LOUIS about his bike, but LOUIS tells them his Mom said he couldn't park it outside. He carries it in.

At the entrance to the main Prom room, KERRIE asks MICHAEL and MRS. L., if BLAKE has arrived. She does that a lot. Inside the prom, KERRIE is amazed at the decorations. She wanders to the center of the dance floor and proclaims, "This Prom is Awesome!" and then breaks into a funky dance, all by herself. LOUIS wonders across the dance floor, looking for a place to park his bike.

FEUNG SCHWEY, the Asian Exchange Student, arrives, wandering down the street, with chopsticks in his hand, trying to catch a fly. He speaks very little English, except for a few catch-phrases he learned from watching TV (e.g. "No Woy, Jast!" etc.) He bows to everyone he meets. Outside the Prom, he interacts bit with FENDER, who mocks him. FEUNG has no idea what he's saying so he just smiles and says, "Sorry, you very much." FENDER even gets FEUNG to say rude things to people. FEUNG just smiles and thinks he found a friend. FEUNG, who came to the Prom alone, asks AUDIENCE MEMBERS to be his date. He passes by MISSY and the PRINCIPAL, introducing his date, if he finds one as his "Sty American Girlfriend." He should try to initiate conversation with his date, but then not understand anything that she says.

Throughout the night, he consults an English-Chinese dictionary when talking to people. When FEUNG heard he was coming to the United States, he bought a book called "How To Be A Cool American Teenager," and "Going To The Prom" was chapter 10. Unfortunately, the book was published in 1979. FEUNG is just a little bit behind the times. All that FEUNG wants is to be considered a real American teenager.

DICKIE HARRINGTON, the Drama Queen, arrives dressed like Boy George, yet he doesn't understand why people think he's gay. He struts right up to and confronts his arch enemy, MISSY, who stole his role in this year's musical (Fanny Brice in Funny Girl). He makes a sassy remark to MISSY about her appearance, the color of her dress, etc.

At the entrance to main Prom room, he gives similar sass to MRS. L. but then poses for a fabulous picture.

A limo approaches the venue carrying BLAKE WILLIAMS, JOSHUA "BEEF" BEEFAROWSKI, WHITLEY WHITIKER and the TWO HEATHERS. They are leaning out the windows and sunroof yelling "Class of '89," "It's Prom..."
"Time!" The limo should circle several times. At some point, BEEF should moon the AUDIENCE MEMBERS from the limo.

Finally, the limo stops in front of the entrance to the venue. BLAKE WILLIAMS, the Captain of the Football Team and his date, WHITLEY WHITKIER, The Head Cheerleader emerge. They are the most popular couple at Nanaseg High. WHITLEY is a Prom Queen legacy. Her mother, her mother's mother, and her mother's mother's mother were all Prom Queens, and tonight, the crown gets passed to WHITLEY. Or will it? It's her turn and she won't let anyone, including BLAKE and BEEF, ruin it.

BLAKE and WHITLEY have a very rocky relationship. They are constantly breaking up and getting back together and breaking up and getting back together. BLAKE has a wandering eye, and WHITLEY is very jealous.

Although BLAKE is happy to be at the Prom, all that he really wants is to be at the hotel where WHITLEY has promised to take him after the Prom.

BLAKE waves to the AUDIENCE MEMBERS like a star arriving at a premiere of a new movie. He carries a football which he tosses to AUDIENCE MEMBERS.

Next out of the limo are HEATHER WELLINGTON (HEATHER #1), A Cheerleader, HEATHER WYNTER (HEATHER #2), The Other Cheerleader, and JOSHUA "BEEF" BEAROWSKI, The Football Player. BEEF is the center for the football team and a bit of an animal. He high-fives AUDIENCE MEMBERS, etc. He already had a few too many Bartles and James wine coolers in the limo. When he staggered out of the limo, he wanders around looking a little sick and then...threw up. (The actor should put chunky soup in his mouth right before exiting the limo). After he throws up, he should high-five BLAKE, or yell, "Class of '89" or "Let's party!", etc. BEEF is dyslexic and on top of that, a little stupid.

HEATHER #1 wears a knee brace from a recent cheerleading accident (which deep down she thinks HEATHER #2 caused). HEATHER #2 got her name wrong on her SATs. They are dressed in the exact same dress. They live to serve WHITLEY.

BLAKE and WHITLEY enter. SNELGROVE lets them pass untouched, even telling BLAKE that he had a "helluva season. You reminded me of me when..." BLAKE doesn't even hear him. They are your typical "popular" kids.

Along the way, WHITLEY catches BLAKE making eyes at AUDIENCE MEMBERS and she scolds him. BLAKE denies it, and as soon as WHITLEY's back is turned, he starts flirting again.

INGA SWANSON, The Swedish Exchange Student, dressed in authentic Swedish garb, arrives. INGA speaks little English, but she certainly speaks "the international language." MR. SNELGROVE stops INGA as she enters and tells her he must frisk her for security reasons. INGA kind of enjoys it.

FENDER puts out his cigarette and enters. SNELGROVE stops him and they have their first show down of the evening. He frisks him and finds cigarettes, a bottle of beer, and nunchucks. SNELGROVE warns him not to pull any of his crap or he'll be "out of here." FENDER makes a sarcastic comment and then leaves. (It is very important that none of the SNELGROVE/FENDER confrontations get physical). As SNELGROVE turns his attention away from FENDER, FENDER flips him off and heads in. MISSY and MICHAEL JAY are a little afraid of him as he steps inside the Prom.

Inside the Prom, DJ JOHNNY HUGHES is on the stage. He wears parachute pants and the rest of his outfit is vintage Chess King (or "Cheese King"). He has a mullet. He welcomes the STUDENTS, and AUDIENCE MEMBERS throughout the entire Preshow. He runs a dance contest, invites someone onstage to sing with him, encourages the AUDIENCE MEMBERS to get on the dance floor, etc.

In one area of the room, a Voting Table is set up, where the ballots for Prom King and Queen are handed out (after the nominations are announced).
At this point, all of the STUDENTS should be inside the main Prom room and should interact with the audience, talking about the Prom and how great everyone looks, about plans after graduation, finals, the latest movies, music, and all things 80s! They should all talk about the upcoming announcements for the Prom King and Queen nominations!

BLAKE and BEEF should try and get some guys in the audience to be members of their football team, and make them chant or hoot like Arsenio Hall (with the hand motions), so that every time BLAKE or BEEF is on stage or featured (and does the hand movement), the audience starts chanting as well.

THE HEATHERS and DICKIE meet up and have "girl talk." DICKIE is the only male on the cheerleading squad, so the HEATHERS are his only friends.

As The Preshow starts to wind down, WHITLEY and THE HEATHERS notice BLAKE flirting with an AUDIENCE MEMBER close to the stage. WHITLEY finally loses it, confronts BLAKE and the AUDIENCE MEMBER and then tells BLAKE that, "It's over!"

Scene II
"The Introductions"

(As the scene on the dance floor ends, SNELGROVE and MRS. L take the stage; SNELGROVE blows into his microphone to get the students attention. He blows again and again...)

PRINCIPAL SNELGROVE. Settle down. Settle down everyone.

Come on, you know what that sound means. - 

Settle down, you bunch of hooligans. (yelling) Quiet!

(MRS. L. steps in before SNELGROVE loses his temper; SNELGROVE steps to the side and looks over the audience suspiciously.)

MRS. L. Thank you, Principal Snelgrove! Thank you.

As your class advisor and Drama teacher, it is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to your senior prom!

As you're all grown up. -

And you're all cleared up!

(MOLLY PARKER runs onstage and hands MRS. L. a note.)

Oh! Thank you.

(SNELGROVE is concerned about the note and tries to read it over MRS. L.'s shoulder.)

(reading the note) There's a blue TransAm with 

(Local State, e.g. "Jersey") plates and fuzzy dice hanging from the rear view mirror parked in the handicapped zone outside. Whoever owns this car, we read your note, but contrary to popular belief, being from 

(Local State, e.g. "Jersey") does not make you handicapped. And now a few words from your principal, Mr. Snelgrove!)
THE AWESOME 80s PROM

Mrs. L. leaves the stage. Snelgrove approaches the microphone. The students boo and hiss.

BEEF. Snelgrove smells!

Principal Snelgrove. Alright listen up. According to my desk calendar we don't graduate for another two weeks. "Gee, Principal Snelgrove, what does that mean?" What that means, dudes, is that your butts are MINE until you have that diploma in your hand! So, here are the Snelgrovian Rules of Conduct for tonight's festivities. Number 1. No drinking. I don't want to see you trying to get these nice bartenders to spike your Mello Yello. Number 2. No smoking... (to two specific audience members) of any kind, Cheech and Bong. And number 3. No dirty dancing. (He looks directly at a female audience member) I'm talking to you, Lambada Lady. Are we clear? (audience) Are we clear? (waits and repeats until response.) Are we clear?

All students. Crystal!

(Missy Martin stands close to the stage and gets his attention.)

Principal Snelgrove. (with disinterest) And now, the head of your prom committee, Melissa Ann Martin.

(Missy runs up to the microphone as Snelgrove leaves the stage.)

Missy. It's Mar-Tin. Mar-Tin. Hi everyone! I'm Melissa Ann Mar-Tin, head of the prom committee and I would like to officially welcome you all to your senior prom! (The students cheer)

Thank you. Before we introduce this year's candidates for prom king and queen, I'd like to thank my vice-chair(s). (Name of audience members, e.g. a bachelorette or a birthday girl. The "vice chair" is a bachelorette, Missy should also say.)

Missy. (Name of bachelorette) is getting married right out of high school! We won't ask why.

(Name of vice chair(s)) helped me fit my Jessica McClinton. (to the audience) Don't I look wonderful?

(She takes a moment to hold for applause, even if there is none.)

Thank you. (beat) And special thanks to Mrs. Lascalzo for letting us borrow her ______ (Local Discount Club, e.g. BJ's) club card for the decorations. Oh, and I'd also like to thank Patzy, (catching herself) uh, I mean, Mrs. Lascalzo, for choosing me to portray the title character of Fanny Brice in the spring musical, Funny Girl.

(Dickie. Yelling) You suck!

Missy. Thank you. (beat) Ok! And now, it's the moment we've all been waiting for. It's time to announce the nominees for this year's prom king and queen. May I have the envelope please?

(Molly Parker runs on stage again and hands her an envelope.)

Our first nominee for prom king is... Blake Williams! (Note: For all of the introductions to the nominees, music can be used to cover the time it takes the actor to get to the stage.)

(BEEF leads "Arsenio Hall" chants and cheers from the audience. Blake takes the stage and heads to the microphone.)

Blake. (Feigning surprise) This is such a shock. (beat) News flash for all the chicks out there! I just broke up with my white snake groupie lookin' girlfriend, Whitley. So tonight it's open season on "The Blakester." (He gives them the look.)

After the prom I'll be partying at the ________ (Local budget hotel, e.g. Ramada Inn outside the Holland Tunnel, Sybaris Pool Suites off of Milwaukee Avenue.)

(He pulls out a hotel key.)

Room 111.

(He tosses the key to an audience member. Whitley sends the heathers to get it back.)
MISSY. Thank you, Michael, for those very inspired words.

And I have a Camaro.

(He steps away again. MISSY steps towards it, and then BLAKE remembers something else again and returns. MISSY backs off.)

And Whitley has crabs.

(BLAKE steps upstage. MISSY is disgusted, heads to the microphone and continues.)

MISSY. Our next nominee for Prom King is...our very own Class President and my escort this evening...Michael Jay!

(MICHAEL takes the stage with a huge smile, waving to the AUDIENCE MEMBERS, pointing at people he knows, giving people the "thumbs up," etc. He is acting like a political candidate that has just accepted the nomination for President. He kisses MISSY on the cheek. She lifts her back leg. He steps up to the microphone beaming.)

MICHAEL JAY. (laughing and smiling big) Thank you, MISSY. (Suddenly, he turns into a serious politician. He stops smiling and his voice drops. He gesticulates while he talks.)

My fellow students, before you cast your vote tonight, remember the immortal words of our fortieth President, Ronald Reagan, who said, "You can tell a lot about a man's character by the way he eats his jelly beans."

(He takes a beat to let that comment resonate and then immediately switches back to his beaming, smiling, self.)

God Bless America!

(MICHAEL JAY steps upstages next to BLAKE, starting to form a line of nominees.)

MISSY. Thank you, Michael, for those very inspired words. Ok, our next nominee is...Louis Fensterpock!

(Louis makes his way to the microphone. BLAKE puts a "KICK ME" sign on his back as he walks by him. LOUIS steps up to the microphone and raises his hand like he's asking a question in class.)

LOUIS. Has anyone seen my Knight Rider Trapper Keeper?

BEER. (yelling) NERD!!!

LOUIS. Thank you!

(He turns upstage, revealing the "KICK ME" sign on his back. He steps in the line next to MICHAEL JAY.)

MISSY. Next we have...Nick Fender!

(There is no response.)

Uh, Nick Fender? Fender?

(FENDER finally makes his way to the stage. MISSY is a bit frightened as he approaches. FENDER stands in front of the microphone, takes a moment and then gives the audience "the finger" and then steps into line.)

(NOTE: If you feel that "the finger" is inappropriate for your audience, you can replace it with a burp or the line: "BITE ME.")

(MISSY steps back to the microphone.)

MISSY. (cont.) I thought he was a junior.

(FENDER flips off MISSY behind his back.)

Our next nominee is...the Foreign Exchange Student from the Far East, Feung Schwey-

(Feung Schwey comes charging through the crowd and takes the stage. He steps up to the microphone, takes a breath and speaks; entirely in Chinese or any Asian language.)

FEUNG SCHWEY. (insert actual Chinese...) "NO WAY JOSE!"

(He bows, then steps in line with the others and MISSY once again steps towards the microphone.)

MISSY. Thank you, Feung-

(Feung bows to her.)

And now our nominees for Prom Queen! Our first is... (she isn't very happy about this)...Whitley Whitleyker!

(WHITLEY takes the stage, walking by all of the male nominees, who can't take their eyes off of her.)

WHITLEY. Warner High...Hi! You all know who I am, but for those of you who brought dates from other schools,
I'm Whitely Whitiker, Head Cheerleader, and voted Most Popular, Best Dressed, and most likely to be the next Kelly Lebrock. So remember, a vote for me is a vote for the person you could be. Thank you!

(Whitley starts to step upstage and then suddenly remembers something and returns to the microphone.)

...And Blake Williams takes steroids.

(She holds up her pinky to show everyone the side effects. Missy once again is disgusted and steps back to the microphone quickly to change the subject.)

Missy. (quickly changing the subject) Our next nominee is... Kerrie Kowalski!

(Kerrie takes the stage. She is super-excited. She’s on her way to being Prom Queen and getting to dance with Blake! She grabs the microphone.)

Kerrie. Hi. Hi. Wow. I feel so cool up here. I feel like Jem!

(She grabs her ear like Jem.)

I want to thank all of the people who let me do their homework for them in exchange for this nomination.

Thanks _______! (Names of actual audience member.)

(Seeing that Kerrie is getting a little out of hand, Missy steps back towards the microphone to try and regain control of the Prom. Kerrie sees her coming and grabs the microphone from its stand and steps away.)

And if I may take a moment... I want to tell certain people on this stage whose name rhymes with... Blake... that even though I came to the Prom with Louis, I’m not “with” Louis. And I’ve never been in a camaro. And I don’t even like crabs. They give me gas. Honest.

(She makes a loud “fart” sound into the microphone and then laughs. Missy is horrified and grabs the microphone from her and continues. Kerrie smiles and waves and steps into the nomination line next to Whitley.)

Missy. (regaining her composure) Our next nominee... is... oh my Gosh, me! I am so honored. I had no idea, did you? (Insert the name of the same audience member that was her “Vice Chair.”) None! Oh my. (She starts to “act.”) Whatever happens tonight, it was an honor just to be nominated.

(She waits for applause, even if there is none.)

Thank you.

(Changing her tone to upbeat again.)

Oh, our next nominee is... our Swedish Exchange student and star of the world-travelling ‘Up With People’. Inga Swanson!

(Missy steps aside to let Inga have the microphone.

Inga approaches the microphone, does not realize understanding why she has been called to the stage. When she reaches the microphone, she looks out over the audience and raises her leg above her head.)

Lloyd. (points to the center of the dance floor, makes a picture of her with her leg in the air and then runs off.)

Inga leaves her leg and then leans over into the microphone to speak.)

Inga Swanson. Yaaayyeyyy.

(She steps back into the nomination line. Missy steps toward the microphone again.)

Missy. Very nice, Inga. You’ve obviously learned a lot while in our country. And our last nominee for Prom Queen is... is this right? (looking around for help and calls out to her “Vice Chair” again) _______! (Name of “Vice Chair.”)

Beef. (yelling) Read it! - =-=?

Missy. Our last nominee for Prom Queen is... Dickie Harrington?

Dickie. (from the audience) What?

(Dickie makes his way through the crowd to the stage. He crosses to Missy. They look as if they are going to square off.)

What’s going on here, Missy Mar-Tin. Is this some kind of joke? Why would anyone nominate me for Prom Queen?

(One look at his outfit tells you why.)
MISSY. I don't know, Dickie, it must be some kind of mistake. I mean, there's no way you can compete with me.

ALL STUDENTS. Oooooooh.

DICKIE. The only mistake was you playing Fanny Brice instead of me.

ALL STUDENTS. Oooooooh.

MISSY. I hate to rain on your parade, Dickie, but you don't have what it takes to be Prom Queen.

ALL STUDENTS. Oooooooh.

DICKIE. Anything you can do I can do better.

MISSY. No you can't!

DICKIE. Yes I can!

MISSY. No you can't!

DICKIE. Yes I can!

MISSY. (singing) No you can't!

(He pushes her aside and takes the microphone.)

DICKIE. Hold your never been french kissed tongue. The students have spoken. And tonight, I'll show you who truly is the greatest star of all.

(to the audience)

I am humbled by your nomination.

(to MISSY)

And you are a fat cow.

(Chaos erupts! MISSY screams and lunges at DICKIE. MICHAEL JAY catches her and holds her back. WHITLEY and BLAKE argue. FEUNG speaks in Chinese. INGA pulls her leg over her head. FENDER tries to give LOUIS a wedge. MRS. L. runs back on stage, goes to the microphone and blows a whistle. Everyone immediately freezes in whatever position they are in.)

MRS. L. (to the audience) Your nominees for King and Queen!

(Everyone turns face front and smiles big, as if having their photo taken, their bodies still frozen in whatever position they were in when MRS. L. blew her whistle.)

Have a totally awesome time everybody!

(Blackout. Strobe lights. The Prom begins.)

Scene III
"Freeform #1"

The NOMINEES all leave the stage, except for INGA, who stands there smiling, not knowing what to do. If an AUDIENCE MEMBER doesn't get her off the stage, then MRS. L. finally explains to her that the nominations are over and helps her off the stage.

WHITLEY leaves the stage in a huff, squabbles with BLAKE and eventually rushes off to the bathroom, pushing through the crowd, yelling at people to get out of her way. The HEATHERS follow after her. They exit to change into their cheer outfits in the bathroom. They interact with AUDIENCE MEMBERS while changing.

BLAKE and BEEF gather a group of guys from the audience for a "huddle." They tell the guys that at the beginning of the year, they all made a vow to lose their virginity by Prom Night. Everyone succeeded... except (and they look at one AUDIENCE MEMBER), "Pee Wee." So tonight, they'll help get Pee Wee laid.

NOTE: If this is inappropriate for your audience BLAKE can say that they all made a vow to "lose their virginity" or "get kissed" by Prom night.

After an inspirational speech, BLAKE gives PEE WEE a red Trojan condom from his wallet that his older brother gave him. He instructs everyone to introduce PEE WEE to girls all night long. They all put their hands into the center of the huddle and break with "Get Pee Wee Laid!"

BEEF then starts roaming through the audience with a giant greeting card that he made for the COACH, who will be retiring this year. He gets audience members to sign the card.

FENDER approaches some AUDIENCE MEMBERS. He asks them if they want to buy some "doobage." He pulls it out and shows it to them, trying to hide it from the chaperones. Suddenly, we hear SNELGROVE calling out
"FENDER!" FENDER freaks and tries to hide the pot on an AUDIENCE MEMBER and asks him to play it cool. SNELGROVE and FENDER have a heated exchange ("Want another?" "Yes," etc.) until finally SNELGROVE questions him about his pot, to which he responds, "It's in AUDIENCE MEMBER'S underwear." SNELGROVE threatens him and walks off. FENDER grabs the dope back quickly and looks at the AUDIENCE MEMBER like he has tried to steal it.

Later, he wonders the crowd, bullying folks, "What are you looking at?" He sees LOUIS, calls him a "geek," puts him in a trashcan, etc.

KERRIE then starts asking audience members if they have seen BLAKE. She tries to get up the courage to talk to him. When she finds him, she approaches him from behind and taps him on the shoulder. He turns around. She runs away.

MISSY walks around checking in on all her fellow classmates, making sure they are having a good time at their prom. She asks them to sign her yearbook, and then urges them to vote for her for Prom Queen.

MICHAEL JAY does the same as MISSY, re-introducing himself to all of the students as their "President" and quoting Ronald Reagan. He thanks them for voting for him last year and tells them he hopes to get their vote again.

INGA wanders around, smiling at everyone, not understanding what people are saying. INGA wants to stay in this conference so she is constantly asking people if they will let her live with them for the coming year. She asks a lot of guys who have been this question. Since she can't speak to them, she tries to get people to dance with her. When she dances, she jumps up and down a lot, because people seem to like it when she jumps up and down.

FELING SCHWEY wanders around talking to women, asking them if they will dance with him. He constantly checks his yearbook. When he gets a girl to dance with
Titles of the Units and Summary of the Action

- **Unit 1 – “The Arrivals Begin”**
  Missy, Michael Jay, and Principal Snelgrove, greet students arrive outside the entrance to the Prom.

- **Unit 2 – “Mrs. L’s Welcome”**
  Mrs. L makes everyone feel welcome and wishes them well.

- **Unit 3 – “The First Photo”**
  Lloyd and Molly snap photos of students as they enter.

- **Unit 4 – “The Bad Boy”**
  Nick Fender makes the Prom guests feel unwelcome and uneasy by offering cigarettes and insulting them.

- **Unit 5 – “The Bicycle Arrival”**
  Louis arrives on his bike, falls off, and is confronted by Fender.

- **Unit 6 – “The Save”**
  Kerrie helps Louis into Prom and tries to get him excited about being there.

- **Unit 7 – “Dickie does Sassy”**
  Dickie arrives dressed as Boy George and immediately confronts Missy about her attire.

- **Unit 8 – “The Cool Kids”**
  The popular kids arrive in a limo causing quite a stir.

- **Unit 9 – “Beef and the Heathers”**
  When Beef exits the limo he is ill. The Heathers, his girlfriends, follow him.

- **Unit 10 – “Blake and Whitley Make an Entrance”**
Principal Snelgrove lets Blake and Whitley enter unscathed by him. Whitely catches Blake “making eyes” at another girl.

- Unit 11 – “Fender vs. Snelgrove Part 1”
  Fender and Principal Snelgrove have their first show down of the evening.

- Unit 12 – “DJ Johnny Hughes Gets the Party Started”
  DJ Johnny is on stage getting students to begin dancing and enjoying themselves.

- Unit 13 – “Beef and Blake do Arsenio”
  Beef and Blake get the students to chant like “on the Arsenio Hall Show” every time Beef or Blake is on stage.

- Unit 14 – “Girl Talk”
  Dickie and the Heathers meet up to have girl talk.

- Unit 15 – “Blake vs. Whitley Part 1”
  Whitley catches Blake looking at other girls and breaks-up with him.

- Unit 16 – “The Official Welcome”
  Principal Snelgrove and Mrs. L officially welcome students to the Prom and go over the “rules”.

- Unit 17 – “Welcome from the Prom Committee and Announcement of Prom Court”
  Missy welcomes students, thanks Prom Committee and begins announcing the Prom Court.

- Unit 18 – “Blake’s Acceptance”
  Blake gives his acceptance speech and publicly insults Whitley currently his ex-girlfriend.

- Unit 19 – “Michael Jay’s Acceptance”
Michael Jay accepts his nomination as though he was accepting the nomination for President of the United States.

- Unit 20 – “Louis Accepts”
  Super nerd Louis doesn’t realize he has been nominated and asks about his Trapper Keeper.

- Unit 21 – “The Finger”
  Fender accepts his nomination by giving everyone the finger.

- Unit 22 – “Whitley’s Gratitude”
  Whitley makes sure everyone knows who she is and insults Blake.

- Unit 23 – “Kerrie’s Excitement”
  When Kerrie is called to the stage as a nominee, she is giddy and tries to let Blake know that she did not come to the Prom with Louis.

- Unit 24 – “Missy’s Humility”
  As Missy announces herself as a Prom Queen candidate, she mentions “what an honor it is just to be nominated”.

- Unit 25 – “Dickie vs. Missy Part I”
  Missy announces Dickie as the final Prom Queen candidate. Dickie thinks Missy has done this to embarrass him. The two of them argue and the audience discovers that Dickie is bitter towards Missy as she got the female lead in the school musical.

- Unit 26 – “Blake vs. Whitley Part 2”
  Both Blake and Whitley publicly insulted the other during their acceptance speeches. As they are leaving the stage, they argue and Whitley runs into the girl’s restroom with the Heathers.
• Unit 27 – “The First Kiss”

Blake and Beef round up a group of guys reminding them of their vow at the beginning of the year that they would all get their first kiss by Prom. Pee Wee has failed to fulfill his vow, so they must now assist him in his quest.

• Unit 28 – “Coach’s Card”

Beef roams through the audience trying to get people to sign the retirement card that he made for Coach.

• Unit 29 – “Doobage”

Fender approaches audience members and asks if they want to smoke some doobage with them.

• Unit 30 – “Fender vs. Snelgrove Part 2”

Principal Snelgrove calls out Fender’s name and in a panic Fender hides his “doobage” in an audience member pants. Once Snelgrove is on the scene he and Fender have a heated exchange.

• Unit 31 – “The Return of the Doobage”

Once Snelgrove has finished his lecture, Fender retrieves his “doobage” from the audience member’s pants.

• Unit 32 – “The Trashcan”

On his way out to smoke, Fender sees Louis looking at him wrong and puts him in a trashcan.

• Unit 33 – “Where is Blake?”

Kerrie continues to ask audience members if they have seen Blake. When she runs into him she taps him on the shoulder. He turns around. She freezes and then runs away.
• Unit 34 – “Missy Makes the Rounds”
Missy works her way through the crowd asking her classmates if they are having a good
time and asks them to sign her yearbook. In addition, she is reminding people to vote for
Prom King and Queen.

• Unit 35 – Michael Jay Makes the Rounds”
Michael Jay is also working the crowd. He thanks them for voting for him as last year’s
Class President and hopes he can count of their vote again. Michael continues to quote
Ronald Regan.

• Unit 36 – “Dickie Gets Catty”
Dickie is wondering around commenting on people’s outfits, and asking people if they
saw Missy as Fanny Brice. He reminds them how he would have been so much better.
He wants to get back at Missy and tries to get people to vote for him for Prom Queen.

Mood/Sense Adjectives

• Unit 1 – “The Arrivals Begin”
Touching: enjoyment, pleasing, warm
Tasting: clean, significant
Smelling: aromatic, fresh, remarkable
Hearing: bouncy, gaily, lively
Seeing: amusement, cheerful, dazzle

• Unit 2 – “Mrs. L’s Welcome”
Touching: cozy, tender, warm
Tasting: dainty, gingerly
Smelling: aromatic, delightful, sweet
Hearing: calm, comfortably, joyful
Seeing: admirable, authentic, energetically

- Unit 3 – “The First Photo”
  Touching: pleasing, romantic, tender
  Tasting: delicacy, gentle, smooth
  Smelling: bright, fresh, perfumed
  Hearing: blaring, cheerful, gleeful
  Seeing: adventurous, candid, lively

- Unit 4 – “The Bad Boy”
  Touching: biting, corrosive, oily
  Tasting: blunt, dreadful, rough
  Smelling: deceptively, harsh, noxious
  Hearing: alarming, clashing, crude
  Seeing: blatant, brusque, uninhabited

- Unit 5 – “The Bicycle Arrival”
  Touching: detached, flimsy, man-handled
  Tasting: cool, bad taste
  Smelling: awful, decayed, disgusting
  Hearing: dominant, explosive, forced
  Seeing: intense, painful, reek

- Unit 6 – “The Save”
  Touching: delicate, smooth, soft
  Tasting: light, dewy
Smelling: earthy, pure, sweet
Hearing: fresh, pleasant, steady
Seeing: modest, polite, rosy

• Unit 7 – “Dickie does Sassy”
Touching: biting, blunt, coarse
Tasting: cheap, feverish, gusto
Smelling: acrid, decayed, harsh
Hearing: acidic, brassy, obnoxious
Seeing: animosity, avengeful, conceited

• Unit 8 – “The Cool Kids”
Touching: lavish, skillful, vast
Tasting: powerful, significant
Smelling: intense, overbearing, strong
Hearing: blaring, bouncy, jovial
Seeing: admirable, animated, flashy

• Unit 9 – “Beef and the Heathers”
Touching: excessive, irritate, unyielding
Tasting: repulsive, tainted
Smelling: intense, piercing
Hearing: dominant, erratic, hearty
Seeing: bloated, clumsy, crazy

• Unit 10 – “Blake and Whitley Make an Entrance”
Touching: broken, cool, feverish
Tasting: dash, painful, repulsive
Smelling: nauseous, ripe, seedy
Hearing: explosive, gloomy, piercing
Seeing: confusedly, dark, ghastly
• Unit 11 – “Fender vs. Snelgrove Part 1”
  Touching: gripping, massive, rocky
  Tasting: powerful, rigid, thorny
  Smelling: noxious, overbearing, potent
  Hearing: dissonant, gritty, harshly
  Seeing: brazen, burly, clashing
• Unit 12 – “DJ Johnny Hughes Gets the Party Started”
  Touching: contagious, magnetic, titillation
  Tasting: cool, dexterity, gusto
  Smelling: bright, explosive, robust
  Hearing: ambitiously, bright, hearty
  Seeing: agility, animated, dapper
• Unit 13 – “Beef and Blake do Arsenio”
  Touching: enjoyment, contagious, feverish
  Tasting: gusto, magnetic,
  Smelling: dominant, strong
  Hearing: blaring, lively, raucous
  Seeing: energetically, focused, frenzied,
• Unit 14 – “Girl Talk”
Touching: intimate, pleasing, satisfying
Tasting: imperfect, spiked
Smelling: contagious, potent, random
Hearing: devilish, frivolous
Seeing: brazen, crafty, deceptively

• Unit 15 – “Blake vs. Whitley Part 1”
  Touching: questionable, ruffled, splinter
  Tasting: sharp, spicy, tainted
  Smelling: sour, vaporous
  Hearing: harping, harshly, loud
  Seeing: corrupt, forlorn, hateful

• Unit 16 – “The Official Welcome”
  Touching: rigid, unfeeling, warm
  Tasting: sharp, tender, unfeeling
  Smelling: sweet, tart, volatile
  Hearing: harping, intense, jovial
  Seeing: conditional, crabby, crusader

• Unit 17 – “Welcome from the Prom Committee and Announcement of Prom Court”
  Touching: clean, satisfying
  Tasting: gingerly, remarkable, significant
  Smelling: pure, sweet
  Hearing: harmoniously, lightly, peacefully
  Seeing: courteous, coy, delightful
- Unit 18 – “Blake’s Acceptance”
  Touching: irregular, sweaty, warp
  Tasting: powerful, repulsive
  Smelling: athletic, dominant, intense
  Hearing: acidic, artificial, frivolous
  Seeing: animosity, blatant, boorish

- Unit 19 – “Michael Jay’s Acceptance”
  Touching: gripping, starched, solid
  Tasting: sharp, typical
  Smelling: steady, rich
  Hearing: direct, extemporize, gusto
  Seeing: boisterous, comic, contradictory

- Unit 20 – “Louis Accepts”
  Touching: questionable, ruffled, starched
  Tasting: stiffly, limp
  Smelling: homely, odd, random
  Hearing: distant, forced, awkward
  Seeing: abnormal, alienated, ambitious

- Unit 21 – “The Finger”
  Touching: blunt, corrosive, nasty
  Tasting: horned, repulsive, spicy
  Smelling: stagnated, tainted
  Hearing: harshly, intense, moody
Seeing: corrupt, cunning, demented

- Unit 22 – “Whitley’s Gratitude”
  Touching: detached, prickly, smooth
  Tasting: bad taste, dense
  Smelling: annoying, dominant, forceful
  Hearing: ambitiously, acidic, callous
  Seeing: amusement, arousing, cunning

- Unit 23 – “Kerrie’s Excitement”
  Touching: feverish, massive, vast
  Tasting: strange, voracious, unique
  Smelling: homely, plain
  Hearing: disjointed, erratic, gaily
  Seeing: budding, candid, detached

- Unit 24 – “Missy’s Humility”
  Touching: judge, smug
  Tasting: chipped, pleasing
  Smelling: annoying, bothersome, irritating
  Hearing: arrogant, snobbish
  Seeing: conceited, proud, vain

- Unit 25 – “Dickie vs. Missy Part I”
  Touching: biting, corrosive, volatile
  Tasting: dreadful, repulsive, unstable
  Smelling: explosive, unpredictable
Hearing: devilish, erratic, fickle
Seeing: blatant, clever demanding

- Unit 26 – “Blake vs. Whitley Part 2”
  Touching: rocky, rough, sharp
  Tasting: irritate, painful, prickly
  Smelling: acrid, caustic, noxious
  Hearing: awful, callous, muddy
  Seeing: cunning, diabolic, frenzied

- Unit 27 – “The First Kiss”
  Touching: lustful, skillful, titillation
  Tasting: pleasing, restless
  Smelling: cheap, fresh, intense
  Hearing: gaily, gusto, impulsive
  Seeing: confusedly, cunning forlorn

- Unit 28 – “Coach’s Card”
  Touching: feverish, enjoyment, intimate
  Tasting: robust, satisfying, significant
  Smelling: athletic, unusual
  Hearing: candid, cheerful, gleeful
  Seeing: boisterous, energetically, flattering

- Unit 29 – “Doobage”
  Touching: corrosive, gripping, rough
  Tasting: sharp, strange, unconventional
Smelling: smoky, strong, tainted
Hearing: harshly, intense, moody
Seeing: concealed, cunning, deceptively

- Unit 30 – “Fender vs. Snelgrove Part 2”
  Touching: hot, rigid, thorny
  Tasting: heavy, irritate, prickly
  Smelling: intense, piercing, pungent
  Hearing: demented, erratic, splinter
  Seeing: abrupt, barbarous, harshness

- Unit 31 – “The Return of the Doobage”
  Touching: blunt, flinching, mangle
  Tasting: prickly, restless
  Smelling: intense, piercing, pungent
  Hearing: distorted, exotic
  Seeing: crazy, cunning, dirty

- Unit 32 – “The Trashcan”
  Touching: rough, thorny, unfeeling
  Tasting: painful, repulsive, stiff
  Smelling: moldy, overbearing, rancid
  Hearing: dissonant, dreadful, forced
  Seeing: intense, potent, rank

- Unit 33 – “Where is Blake?”
  Touching: dainty, lifeless, limp
Tasting: lukewarm, mildly
Smelling: light, minor, mild
Hearing: dimly, faint, odd
Seeing: devoid, faint

• Unit 34 – “Missy Makes the Rounds”
  Touching: enjoyment, feverish, magnetic
  Tasting: pleasing, remarkable, smooth
  Smelling: primary, savory, soothe
  Hearing: direct, extemporize, fresh
  Seeing: boisterous, cheerful, delightful

• Unit 35 – Michael Jay Makes the Rounds”
  Touching: skillful, smooth, stiff
  Tasting: solid, magnetic
  Smelling: intense, overbearing, robust
  Hearing: direct, dominant, fluency
  Seeing: broad, budding, clever

• Unit 36 – “Dickie Gets Catty”
  Touching: horned, mash, nasty
  Tasting: irritate, painful, prickly
  Smelling: acrid, pungent, rank
  Hearing: acidic, bad taste, erratic
  Seeing: blatant, brutal, colorful.
Characters

Mr. Richard “Dick” Snelgrove:

Desire: Principal Snelgrove’s desire is to keep the students from having any “fun”
Principal Snelgrove hates Prom night because the students get to have fun. He never got to go to his own Senior Prom so his hate comes from resentment. He will not let this Prom get out of control.

Will: His will is very strong. He will do everything in his power, including using a bullhorn, frisking and threatening students to keep them in line.

Decorum: Principal Snelgrove is a fascist dictator.

Moral Stance: Principal Snelgrove has very strong morals and believes that rules are black and white and should always be followed.

Summary list of adjectives: Principal Snelgrove is threatening, strong willed and angry.

Whitley Whitiker:

Desire: Whitley’s desire is to be the Prom Queen to fulfill the family legacy.
Whitley desires but also expects to be crowned Prom Queen. Whitley’s mother, grandmother, and great grandmother were all Prom Queens. She believes tonight the crown will be passed on to her.

Decorum: Whitley is an elitist snob.

Moral Stance: Whitley will do whatever it takes to get what she wants.

Summary list of adjectives: Whitley is sexy, bitchy, proud, and vain.

Melissa Ann “Missy” Martin:

Desire: Missy wants everything at Prom to go perfectly.
For four years Missy has been waiting to plan a Prom. She has planned this Prom down to the last detail so that everything will run smoothly.

Decorum: Missy is a people pleaser and is constantly checking to make sure everyone is enjoying themselves.

Moral Stance: Missy is from the right family and gets the right grades; therefore, morals are extremely important to her.

Summary List of Adjectives: Missy is perky, beautiful, and a goodie-goodie.

Reviews

The original production of *The Awesome 80's Prom* opened September 10th, 2004 at Webster Hall in New York City for a six week run. Due to its success and popularity, it is still running today and won the 2006 Improvisational Theatre Association Award for Best Show.

Original reviews were mixed. In their article *Theatre Review: Awesome 80s Prom Lightweight Fun* The Gothamist said:

The Gothamist knew after the first ten minutes that this premise required many, many drinks. The music sounded great and we loved dancing to these tunes, but the premise grated on us quickly.

However, David Sanchez for OffBroadway.com said. "*The Awesome 80's Prom* isn’t just a show- it’s an experience."

Productions all over the United States have opened to overwhelmingly positive reviews. Rohan Preston from the Minneapolis Star Tribune says of its local production:

Like the real event, it’s what you bring to it. It’s so obvious in many ways and that’s really the point of this show. I found myself laughing and having a mindless good time.
Playwright Ken Davenport

Ken Davenport is primarily a producer of Broadway and Off-Broadway shows. His productions have grossed over $100 million dollars world wide. These shows include the popular titles *Oleanna* by David Mamet starring Bill Pullman and Julia Stiles, *Speed-the-Plow* by David Mamet starring Raul Esparza, Will Ferrell's *You're Welcome America*, *Blithe Spirit* by Noel Coward starring Angela Lansbury, and *13 The Musical* music by Jason Robert Brown and book by Dan Elish/ He is the only independent producer to have had three shows running simultaneously Off-Broadway. Recently, Ken was named to Crain's “40 Under Forty” which recognizes the top business men and women under the age of forty.

Ken grew up in Massachusetts as a child actor. He graduated with honors from New York University's Tisch School. When asked where the idea for *The Awesome 80's Prom* came from he replied:

I was a child of the 80s and grew up watching *The Breakfast Club, Pretty in Pink*, and all the new classics. When watching these movies, all that I used to think was, “Wouldn’t it be great if I could be a part of that school?” The show allows you to experience that. (The Producers Prospective)

Ken Davenport’s blog, The Producers Perspective, has been featured in numerous print publications including *Vanity Fair* and *New York Magazine*. The daily blog provides readers with his opinion as a producer on all things Broadway. From audition tips to how to invest in a Broadway show and how to get a producer to read your script his blog site is a treasure trove of information.
Mr. Davenport is also responsible for creating BroadwaySpace.com which is the only social networking site completely devoted to Broadway fans and the community. (The Producers Prospective)

Learning Goals for the Pinewood Stage Company

- Characterization – *The Awesome 80's Prom* will be the ultimate test of “staying in character” for my students. I want them to be able to maintain their character not only in the scripted scenes, but during the free form scenes when they must interact with audience members who may be their friends and family. The temptation might be to sit and hang out with people they know and chat about things not relevant to the play. I would like the student to be able to rebuff these topics of conversations and keep themselves and audience members in the show.

- Thinking on their feet – Although we can prepare by studying our characters and all the given situations, because the audience will be different each night and have different experiences or ideas about the 1980’s, the students will never know what someone might say or do. By maintaining focus and character they will be able to stay in character and think on their feet. I hope that this skill will help them in later productions in situations where a cast member, or themselves, forgets a line. It is also a useful skill when interacting with people, job interviews, and other such life situations they will find themselves in.

- Historical context of characters - We have not done many productions over the past few years that require students to study a particular time period. A lot of what we have done has taken place in present day. Due to the audience interaction, and the anticipated average age of the audience, students will need to be aficionados on the 1980’s. Not only will this aid in the authenticity of their character when interacting with others, but by understanding the political,
social, and economic history of the 1980’s, it will help them understand where their characters are coming from.

- Script analysis – I found a wonderful article by Bruce Miller on the SchoolTheatre.org website called “Prompt and Circumstance”. It uses improv as a tool for script analysis. It gives a wonderful outline and step by step guide on how to use improv to analyze a regular script. It, of course, works with our scripted scenes, but also as a WONDERFUL tool for our unscripted scenes. Ultimately, Miller wants to students to:
  o Possess an understanding of the play and their individual character.
  o Know how your character serves the overall story as well as the stories contained in each scene you appear in.
  o Create a body of choices for your character based on their objective (Miller)

My goal with this is to share the article with the kids and apply it to our show. My hopes for growth after the show are that they will find some or all of it helpful and apply it to other shows in their future. I found that it works for me as a director as well. (see appendix for a copy)
Auditions

Well over a year prior to production our head master had agreed to play the Principal in the production. I was so excited to have him as it would be perfect for an adult, especially our actual principal to play this role. Two days prior to auditions he tells me that because he has taken a new job, he is not sure he can make all the rehearsals and the commitments. While I understand and appreciate him being honest I wish I would have known sooner. I feel like I have exhausted all avenues to find an alternate adult male to take on this part and had no success. I don’t think I can’t wait and not cast this part, as what happens if I can’t fill it? Also, I don’t want an adult female to play the teacher and a teenager to play the principal....that won’t work either.

I have wrestled with this and think I will just cast all the roles from my high school students. I am concerned about the students having to play older. I can’t do much with makeup since they are constantly interacting with the audience. The teacher I can make a young teacher...there is only one line in the script that gives us an idea of how old she is...and we have cut that line due to the sexual innuendo. I will have to rely on a wig, facial hair, and glasses for him. Again, there is no reference to his age, so he doesn’t have to be really old. This is not an ideal situation, but I think we can make it work. It is easier to do this now then struggle and rearrange the cast later if we cannot find anyone.

Other than this dilemma, I am very happy with how the cast has turned out. I needed a few more students than I have in the class for a couple of the smaller parts (celebrity impersonator and dance contest winner...listed as the plant). I cast 2 of our varsity soccer player who, strangely enough, possess these talents. Taylor is a great Michael Jackson impersonator and Justin can break dance like no one else! So excited to have them on board! The honors class
does not have any freshman, but I did pull 3 from the Advanced Drama class to play some of the freshman in the production. I needed them for numbers and it is a great chance for them to be part of the honors production I hope for them to be a part of in the future.

**Sunday, March 20th**

Still frustrated with scheduling of our extra rehearsals. Because my high school is small, most of our kids do a little bit of everything. While this is nice, it makes it difficult to schedule things after hours as I am “expected” to schedule around athletics. It was very hard to schedule around baseball, soccer, softball, and track...but I managed. Sigh...my rehearsals are actually a required part of the class....when will this seem important to parents? I guess when I start impacting their child’s grade. Also cannot hold rehearsals over spring break...but I did know about this....still don't like it though, but most of the families are on trips anyway.

While we do have class time each day to work, we do have other things I have to cover in the curriculum...and we can’t get through the entire show in our 45 min daily class time. Hence the need for our extra time together. I have been spending 3 days a week in class working on characterization...back stories...studying the 1980s...etc.

Each student has been assigned an area of the 1980s (music, fads, fashion, politics, world events, slang, etc) and will be presenting a PowerPoint to the class. In addition, they will be providing people with a “cheat sheet” of info that will be used as a study aid. The students will be having a test over all these aspects of the 1980’s since they really need to be experts in all the things of the latter part of the decade.
Class time March 21st – 24th

Although the kids had the scripts prior to auditions, we did our first read through this week with them reading the part in which they had been cast in. Kids seem to be on the right track.

Each student has been assigned their PowerPoint to present to the class based on what their character might be interested in. For example, the actor playing Michael Jay will be presenting about politics in the late 80s since his character emulates President Ronald Reagan. They will be presenting these beginning the week after spring break.

We talked about Prom themes this week. Students with an idea had to work up a presentation for the class on what the décor would be (wall décor, table decorations, invitations, etc). They had to either put together a “set” model, a two dimensional drawing, or a PowerPoint. They could also work in groups. They presented these on Thursday this week and did a great job! We narrowed it down to 3 themes (Neon Lights, Viva Las Vegas, and Starry Nights). The kids voted and Viva Las Vegas won by a landslide.

We looked through Prom catalogs for other ideas and found a couple of things. However, the stuff the kids came up with was better! Maybe they should work for the Prom company!

The kids and I will be building/creating 90% of the decorations. This is typical with a set as I want them to feel some ownership. In addition, it is a learned experience. I don’t want them to go away feeling like the actors do not have to participate in the construction of sets and props, painting, technical elements, etc. I know some schools who do this and not only do the kids miss out on learning about different areas of the theatre, but I feel like it produces actors who have the diva like attitude that they are above doing any of the manual labor. Arrggghhh...drives me
crazy! Plus, my kids LOVE doing it! They would be sad if they didn’t get to use power tools and paint!

Also started work on characterization this week. The kids each had to create a back-story for their character. Then, we set up several school scenarios, (example... lunch in the cafeteria) and let them play out. Cliques that would “normally” sit together did. I had different characters visit different tables and see how that played itself out. We also put the characters at a Pep Rally, Football game, and the Mall. This helped not only to develop the individual characters, but even more so to develop the relationships between the characters which is essential for this production. Kids really enjoyed this and so did I!!! We will continue to do this throughout the rehearsal process and see what new discoveries we can make.

**NYC – March 26th – 29th**

This is not a rehearsal, but this info is important to the production. I took the kids on a trip to NYC. While we were there we went to the Off-Broadway production of *The Awesome 80s Prom*. Normally, I would not encourage the kids to see the production/movie so close to the time we are doing it for fear of them parroting what they see. However, with a production like this, that really isn’t a concern. I wanted them to see how everything fit together, the nonstop energy, and how the characters work with the audience. It was spectacular. I knew they understood the concept of what we were doing, but to experience it was sooo helpful! Even though I only took 3 kids... they were able to bring back pictures and share their experience.

Also while we were there, we had the unique opportunity to meet the playwright/producer of the show and take an improv class with one of the cast members. Craig, the cast member, went through some different games and exercises that he and the cast do when working on characterization or when new people join the cast. I will be using both of these with
the kids as they will really help. Characterization is really what this show is all about. Without strong characters the show will not work. That is another point that was driven home in the production. He also provided us with a character list that contained different movie references for different characters. This was something the playwright put together to give people an idea of where his inspirations came from. He makes no secret that he patterned his characters after familiar characters from the popular John Hughes films of the 1980s.

**Class time April 4 – 8**

Now that we are done with our spring break, it is time to hit the scripted scenes in the script. The blocking isn’t too difficult. I wrestled with the “Announcement of the Court” and “Crowning” scenes as I NEVER put kids in a line across the front of the stage. However, that is what is traditionally done in these situations; I tried to break it up by making a sort of triangle. Stage right will see the DJ and MC; stage center (forward of the DJ and MC making the point of the triangle) is where Mrs. Lascalzo and Principal Snelgrove speak that the microphone as do each of the court members when announced, and stage left (up stage of the mic) are the court members. Not perfect, but it looks authentic which is what we are going for. We don’t want people to think they are at a play. We want them to have an experience.

I also choreographed and taught the cheer and dance to the cheerleaders. The script calls for them to be “video vixens” and we did do that, but tamed it down a little. Whitley will not rip off her shirt to reveal her bra with the word “ME” on the cups. Although funny, and we are marketing this for high school and up, that may go a little too far and my Whitley is not comfortable with it anyway. It is really nice that the playwright allows organizations to tailor the production to suit their audience. I don’t think it hampers the integrity of the script at all, as there is actually very little to change.
For the choreography I watched several videos that had “video vixens” however I found very few of them actually “danced” in the traditional sense. I used mostly Janet Jackson, Michael Jackson, and Paula Abdul videos for choreography inspiration.

The other idea the kids had, which I thought was genius, came to them when we were talking about popular movies from the late 80s and theorizing why they might be popular and the target age group. Most of them had seen *Dirty Dancing*. Several of them, not serious at first, said, “Wouldn’t it be funny if we did the final number like they do in *Dirty Dancing*?” Most people were quiet at that point and so I said well, why not? They were game, so we are doing a modified version. Decided to do the classic slow opening and the group part after Patrick Swayze jumps off the stage onto the floor. For the famous lift, the kids decided it would be fun to have Dickie be the one who is lifted. He is game so that is that! I think the audience will get a laugh out of it for sure.

This week saw us learning about politics, clothing fads for men and women, hairstyles and music. The kids are actually loving taking ownership of their topic and presenting it to the group. Each person must also provide an outline or cheat sheet for all cast members so they can use it to study.

We continued our improv study and run through of the scripted scenes.

**Thursday, April 7th**

Again, not a full cast....one student has a baseball game. Although not a major player in the show, we all know how hard it is when someone is missing. I keep reminding myself that I did everything I could with the schedule to keep these absences to a minimum, but it wasn’t always possible to find a day when no one had a game or a meet. This Sunday I will have 3 soccer players out at a tournament if the team wins on Friday and Saturday. I suspect that they
will since they have won the State championship for the last 6 years and show no sign of stopping. One student is our celebrity impersonator and one is the dance plant. These two will be pretty easy to skip over. However, the other is our Principal Snelgrove. He has been to every other practice, so I can’t really complain. He knows his lines, etc....just getting nervous as we have so few rehearsals left. We can’t practice the weekend before the show as it is Easter and we are off school. Most of the kids will be out of town. Sigh....I just keep telling myself it will be ok.

Rehearsal itself was good. We worked out the rest of the dance number we added. In our study of 80s movies, we all love Dirty Dancing. We thought it would be fun after the crowning of the King and Queen for the entire cast to do the finale of Dirty Dancing (with some changes of course....not all of us can dance like Patrick Swayze). The kids LOVED this and we had a blast putting it together! I think it will be a nice surprise for the audience. After the choreography, we played Scene It: 1980s. It is a board game (trivia type thing with DVD clips of shows, videos, movies, etc). The kids love this as they actually get to “see” the things we are talking about. Also a fun way to learn the 80s trivia they need to know.

For the last part of rehearsal, we ran the show...slightly shortening the free form scenes. On Sunday, we will be using costumes for the first time and running the show all the way through with the free form scenes running their full length. We have done this once before. Even though the free forms are only 3 songs each...it is much longer than it sounds. The kids are learning not to rush what they are supposed to do in each of these....they have plenty of time.

**Sunday, April 10th**

Today was costume day. Two weeks ago we traveled to Theatrics Unlimited to size the kids and pick out their costumes. Finding these at Goodwill or Thrift Stores probably would
have been some what easy, but part of our characterization exercises was for the kids to assign a color to their character and I wanted to honor this. Plus, the alterations were included…this is something I am able to do, but need to spend my time elsewhere with this production. There were also a few more difficult pieces that we would have had to order anyway. Most of the boys will be wearing wigs of some sort (mullets!) By this Friday, the girls are supposed to bring or email me a picture of their hair and makeup. We can’t afford to take class or rehearsal time for this, so it is their homework.

The cast was really excited to be in costume! It helped them get into their characters. We ran the show with the entire soundtrack. It is still a challenge to do the free form scenes without an audience to interact with. Once they are done with the parts that involve other cast members, they have to pretend to dance or converse with imaginary people. I know they can’t always plan on what will happen, but I wanted to play all the songs in each free form so they could feel how long they really are. 3 songs go by a lot slower than I think they realized. They were rushing through the improv stuff, so this showed them that they could slow down.

After we finished with the run through we did a Q and A session with each character. The character sat in the middle of the circle and the other characters asked them questions (Favorite songs, why they call them a nerd) anything was game. This was very helpful as the kids found them stumbling on some things.

We are continuing our study of the 80s and they have a test at the end of this week. Music is not an issue, but naming some of the bands/singers is. Also politics and world events. Will hit these hard this week.
School time April 11 – 15

The beginning part of the week we finished up the PowerPoint’s studying World Events, Sports, Movies/TV, and Fads. The remainder of the week we spent reviewing scripted scenes, improv and making props and set pieces.

As part of the design, the kids decided to make several large pieces. One group worked on recreating the famous “Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas” sign. Their plan is to have it be 13 ½ feet tall with lights around it like the original one.

The other groups are using foam board (4 ft by 6 ft) to create 2 large playing cards, 2 large dice, 4 show girls, and a large “89” for the year the Prom is supposed to take place. All will hang on various walls in the space. To help create levels for the attendees and characters, we took our black cubes and painted them to look like dice; we placed them in the main room as places to sit and safe places for the actors to stand, etc. They were also placed in the rooms with the food, again as seating areas, one for the photographer, and again place to sit if the moment struck.

The kids decided, while looks at images on Las Vegas for inspiration, that we needed a wedding chapel of some kind. One of my students volunteered to paint a Little White Wedding Chapel. We taped two pieces of foam board together. We will also place a couple of veils and top hats on a table next to the chapel so people could put these on and take pictures. This will be in the room adjacent to the main room.

Also in this side room will be 3 tables of food and a photographer. After looking at old prom pictures, we decided that something “cheesy” would be best. Most of the pictures contained balloons and arches. We worked this week on constructing an arch and putting white Christmas lights all over it.
Publicity began this week as well. Kids are hanging posters around school and in downtown. I have contacted and scheduled a time for the kids to go on a local show called *Low Country Live*. We have done this before and it is great free publicity. One of the cast members interviewed some of the characters about their feelings about the upcoming prom. He made this into a video and it is also playing on the in house TV system we have. We decided to make one for each week before the show. The office has business cards that they are handing out to people who come in.

I also wrestled with my Hodge for this production, but then it came to me (a duh moment) that the entire room is really our playing space, not just the stage. And although the center of the room is empty for the dance floor, once the show starts, the obstacles appear in the form of attendees at the Prom.

**Wednesday, April 13**

Sigh...once again I did not have a full cast for rehearsal. Although the kids all know their lines, etc, it is still so hard when someone is missing as that character and their relationships with others cannot be developed. Damn athletics!

Rehearsal tonight did not go particularly well. Their heads seemed to be somewhere else. Prom this weekend, upcoming tests? Not sure. Our next run through is not until next Wednesday and I am hoping that the time away actually helps to make it fresh again. Maybe they just need a break. I know I get that way sometimes.

I am frustrated with a few characters who think showing anger means yelling. We have been over and over this, done exercises where we just breathe and how that feels/sounds, used facial expressions only, body movements and posture, basically anything that takes the vocal out of it. A couple of them get so caught up in the moment, they just go to yelling. Maybe since this
show is closer to "reality" than others might be, this is their natural instinct. I have reminded them that while they might do this, they are portraying a character and the audience doesn't want to hear just yelling. Plus, their diction is compromised when they do this. What little language is scripted is important for everyone to hear.

I decided that we really need a "practice" audience for the free form scenes. The kids have been doing their best rehearsing these, but there comes a point when you really need the audience since it is 50% interactive. I told the kids that each cast member was to bring one person to our next run through. This needed to be someone who would still come to the show was it was opening and officially running (mom, dad, sibling, etc) My only fear would be that these 20 people won't come back and see it. However, I think since it really is more fun the bigger the audience, they will. Also, you don't quite get the full effect and we cannot put up the "set" until the day of since we are holding it in our cafeteria (where the stage is).

The admin team has been gracious enough to allow me to make alternate plans with the cafeteria people so that our space is not used at all on the 29th so we can have all day to decorate. Otherwise, it would be 3pm on opening night before we could even start. In no way would this be possible. It will be hard enough to get it done in one day, but we will do our best. There are some things we can do ahead of time and that will help.

I decided to give the kids this Sunday off since it is the day after prom. I hope I do not regret this, but I am not sure how alert a lot of them would be that day.

**School time April 18-21**

PowerPoint's are finished, so we are using the 80s info in our free form conversations. This part of the outside work has been very helpful to the students in building characters.
I challenged the kids, with permission from the admin, to talk to their friends today only as their character. We decided not to do this in the classroom as, for example, the girl playing Whitley is a top student, but she has decided that her character is not. Certainly don’t want to impact their grades! It was a HUGE success. Not only did it help the kids talk to others as their characters, but it got the student body curious about the show. They want to do it again! Who am I to say no?!

Since this show is targeting high school age and up, this leaves out a large portion of our student body and typical audience. We want the community to come in and see what we are doing. We had this for *A Christmas Carol* and the musical this year, but want them to come all the time. It is only $5 after all! This Thursday we will be going to downtown Summerville to the Third Thursday event that happens once a month. Artists get to show off their work and get some free publicity. The kids will be going in character, handing out invitations to the Prom. In addition, Michael Jay will be interviewing some of the students in front of the audience (it is too hard to do an actual scene, plus not all of them can not attend).

During homeroom this week, we handed out Prom invitations, that the kids designed, to every high school student. I am not allowed to charge faculty, staff, and students (don’t ask) so unlike the regular Prom this one won’t cost a fortune!!!!!

We finished hanging stuff on the stage this week as well as finishing the other pieces. I finished sewing the black fabric that will hang on the walls, covering all the patriotic murals in the room. The kids and I are working on the 100+ grommets that will be needed. Yeah for child labor!
Rehearsal – Wednesday, April 20th

We did a complete run through today, playing the entire soundtrack for the show. The kids are always surprised at how long the free form sections are. We made them each 3 songs, but it seems longer to them. I told them once they have lots of people to talk to and dance with the time will fly by. We used costumes, makeup, and hair today. Couple of changes to make. As usual the girls don’t apply enough makeup...don’t know what that is about. True they will not be under stage lighting, but we pasted it on in the 80s! Definitely wanted to be noticed!

I have one student and mom that are driving me crazy. Normally I do not have any stage mom issues. In fact, this is really the first time and I have had this student since the 6th grade. She is very talented (had a major role in the musical and in last year’s play). I cast her as the teacher, and a fun role that I would love to have played! She and her mom complained that she did not get any part that she auditioned for and then questioned me on her outfit choice. I see her as earthy, exocentric, etc. She is very concerned about looking pretty. AARRRRGGHHH......she says in every show she has to look some quirky way. While this may to true...so what! She wanted to be one of the cheerleaders (Whitley, Heather, and Heather). Not sure why however. She does not have good self-esteem and these characters have to wear short cheerleading skirts. She only wears pants. She can’t dance; the characters have to dance well. And.....although this usually does not matter....since we are following stereotypes, the cheerleaders need to be thin or athletic looking since they are known for their looks. She is overweight. I am perplexed as to why she would even audition for these characters knowing these things.....and why is this an issue now? I wanted her to dress in a long flowy skirt and top, big jewelry, sort of messy hair and big glasses. She and her mother fought me all the way. I decided that this was not the battle I wanted to fight with this show...wasn’t worth it. There was
nothing in the text that referred to her personality or how she dresses, so I let it go. I did require her to have big 80's hair and heavy makeup to age her a bit since we cannot do traditional age makeup (because they are face to face with audience members). Sigh.......I hope this is not an issue next year (her senior year). Because my school is small, I do not subscribe to the “major roles go to the upper classmen” theory. I cast who is right for the role. A lot of times this is the junior or senior, but not always.

**Show week! Rehearsal April 26th**

During the day today we were finally able to move the tech stuff onto the stage. We all felt that it was important for the DJ and MC to be seen on the stage at all times. We used our old light board so that almost all the lights could be controlled by those on the stage. The only lights we are not able to control are the spot light, and these “dance” lights that one of the kids had that hang on a light tree. The lights blink based on the base in the music. The faster the base or beat, the faster they blink. We are only using the spot for a few things....to light the disco ball during slow songs, to spot light the dance contest and final dance number, as each character is named to the Prom court, whom ever the MC is interviewing between songs, etc. The lights on the disco ball make the kids dizzy if we have it on too long. Sadly we were not able to put it on a dimmer pack (we only have 3 and we needed all of them for the stage lighting). We can’t even plug it in anywhere where on the stage....it is plugged in to an outlet on a side wall. We plug and unplug it as needed.....oh well. We do the best with what we have.

We ran the entire show today....last full costume/makeup/hair rehearsal as some of the costumes need to be spot cleaned or Frebreezed! Each of the kids was challenged to bring one or two people to this rehearsal. The only requirement was that these were people who were coming to the actual run. I wanted the kids to have a sort of practice audience and they were hungry for
it. I am so glad we did this! We had about 40 people show up and it was wonderful. It was the last piece that we needed to feel like we were really ready. The kids really got into their characters and the audience was into the show. As always, they laughed in places we didn’t expect and booed one character as she insulted another. No one expected this, but she held it together wonderfully! What a pro!

I am so proud of my kids! This is a very different kind of show for them. They have embraced the challenge and delivered. I am a lucky teacher!

Today was the last show run through before we open on Friday. Usually this makes me very nervous not to be running the show each day for 3 or 4 days prior to opening. But on this show, it is ok. I don’t want them to get too settled or bored with it. There is nothing to change at this point, so we just need to keep it fresh.

**Class time Wed-Friday**

Set wise the only thing we had left to do was paint the floor. We decided on a black and white checkerboard looked with the squares tilted to a diamond shape. The kids taped out the floor and did the painting. I love that they love to do this stuff and don’t just expect our techie to do it. My set design and construction crew is always the entire cast. As I have said before, I feel this is important.

We spent the rest of the time making our game plan for Friday’s “set construction”...assigning people jobs and such, running the scripted scenes, double checking props (kids are each responsible for their own), and playing some improv games.

Friday’s set construction was really a group effort. Everyone had their assigned task and when they finished they moved on to help others I was nervous about the actual look of the set as we couldn’t put it up until opening day, since the space we used is also the cafeteria. If
something didn’t look or go right, we would have little to no time to “fix” it. Happily, everything turned out wonderfully. We finished the main space by 2:30pm (thanks to the school for making other arrangements for lunches that day) and started on the adjoining space. We finished this by 3:30 so the kids were able to go home and relax before the show. They were prepared to stay and work for as long as it took since we could only estimate the actual time.

Tonight’s show was a triumph! We had a lot more people than any of us expected (250+ which is a lot for us since our HS only has 220). The kids had soooo much energy and really embraced their characters and the free form scenes! We had a post show talk about what went well, what they might change or do differently, surprises, etc. I find these post show discussions to be really helpful to the kids and their cast members. We do this before they even change out of costume as it is very fresh on their minds. They were so excited they all wanted to talk at once. Mostly they were thrilled that the audience “played along” and seemed to embrace the concepts. For the arrivals we had the “popular” kids arrive in an old 1983 convertible, and the “bad boy” drove his motorcycle right into the playing space and chased down the principal. This really got the crowd going and set the tone for the rest of the show. Kids said it was difficult, as always, when the audience does not react how you think they will, but they held it together. They were also surprised at how much the audience laughed.

Other “trouble” were when people wanted to talk to them as themselves and not their characters. We had planned for this. They either ignore it or ask who that person is and walk away, or redirect the conversation. Also, some people used cell phones to text or take pictures. Again, we had planned for this. The kids just ignored the cell phone altogether. The students found that all of these things worked well. Mostly they were frustrated by their mothers who wanted to say, “Corey you are doing such a good job”. Hahaha...moms...got to love them.
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
THEATRE ARTS GRADUATE PROGRAM

THESIS PROJECT/PRODUCTION PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

STUDENT: Shannon Horn
ID#: -

UNDER CONSIDERATION IS DIRECTION OF: The 1980's Prom

EVALUATOR’S NAME: Scott Robinson
TITLE: Professor

PLACE OF PERFORMANCE: Cafitorium, Pinecrest Prep, Greater Charleston, SC

DATE OF VIEWING: April 30, 2011

DESCRIPTION OF PERFORMANCE VENUE:

The venue is a multipurpose cafeteria/auditorium with limited lighting fixtures and positions. A modest stage is on one side which has very little wing or back stage space.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTUAL PRODUCTION DIRECTION AND/OR REALIZED DESIGN OF SETS, PROPS, COSTUMES, LIGHTING, SOUND:

The set encompassed the entire facility. It was well done in a Vegas theme. The scenic elements were supportive of the production and fulfilled the function. The entire facility was used including the main hall/room, stage, and a side room for prom photos and snack tables. A portion of the production began in the actual parking lot of the space.

HOW DID THE PRODUCTION DIRECTION OR DESIGN IMPLEMENT THE IDEAS EXPRESSED IN THE CONCEPT STATEMENT?

Yes. Shannon was looking to recreate a prom, specifically from the 1980’s which was accomplished. She has great support from the school including faculty attended in appropriate attire and the food service prepared a nice selection of treats and nibbles, setting a very nice mood for the event. The addition of a motor bike coming into the prom was a spectacle on its own.

APPROPRIATENESS OF CHOICE OF SCRIPT FOR ABILITIES OF PERFORMERS, AUDIENCE, VENUE, AND/OR ACADEMIC SETTING?

Shannon was seeking a new and company building experience for her students and I feel she achieved that goal. The students later reflected with me on the experience. All felt they had experienced other types of opportunities but this was a valuable change to the typical production they do as a group. This project helped them grow in ways a more formal script would not have done.

ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING IF APPLICABLE: CLEAR DELINEATION OF UNITS OF ACTION, MOTIVATED BLOCKING, VISUALLY INTERESTING COMPOSITION, VISUAL EXPRESSION OF METAPHOR, USE OF PICTURIZATION IN STORYTELLING, CLEAR AND BELIEVABLE CHARACTERIZATION, ADEQUATE USE OF BODY AND VOICE, UNITY OF PRODUCTION ELEMENTS, CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING.
With an improvised script that happens in multiple locations often at the same time it is difficult to clearly delineate units of action but the use of multiple areas and rooms help make that possible. The whole production was well thought out and completely encompassed the idea of senior prom. The actors did a great job of creating characters and maintaining them in all aspect of the production scripted and improvised.

I wondered out loud with Shannon after the show what might have changed if the actors had been equipped with wireless mics. It was her feeling that the production is about a natural life-like experience as though we were at the prom ourselves and mics would interrupt that experience. Although I agree to a point I felt cheated as an audience member, especially knowing some of what I ultimately missed from the production, since I was not able to be in every venue all of the time.

When interacting with the audience the actors had more trouble truly working their intentions. One young lady trying to “earn money for the club” was easily turned away. This made me wonder how badly she really wanted to make money for the club. Others encouraged the audience to dance but if they did not they quickly abandoned the request. The interaction with the audience was troublesome trying to keep motivated action.

The committee will want to discuss the Hodge model and how Shannon used or did not use the theories of directing in capsulated in the model.

**WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THIS PARTICULAR PERFORMANCE VENUE, WAS THIS PRODUCTION SATISFACTORY OR UNSATISFACTORY?**

Satisfactory
Final Self Evaluation

The production of *The Awesome 80s Prom* was meant to look as authentic and realistic as possible. The intention was for the audience to feel like they were at an actual Prom and not a theatrical production. It was difficult at times to walk the fine line between the two and working that duplicity worked sometimes and at other times could have been improved upon.

Having never done a show like this, often I had to go with my gut instinct. The production I had seen of this show, while somewhat helpful, took place in a nightclub that served alcohol. While they did not impose an age limit, most of the audience was twenty-one and older.

I felt strongly about our costume choices; including hair and makeup. As part of the character development, the students each had to do research and come up with several different styles of outfit that their character might have worn to Prom...including color choices. The designs were presented to the cast and discussed. This helped us also to make sure they were not only consistent with their character, but didn’t overlap with others. They took these designs when we visited Theatrics Unlimited and used them to select their outfit. The same went for the hairstyles and makeup choices. I was very happy with the way this turned out and the kids really liked taking ownership and contributing their research.

Lighting is always a challenge as I am working with only three dimmer packs. We moved the light board on to the stage so that all the tech aspects could be run from the stage by the visible MC and DJ who were handling this. The two main purposes for our lighting choices were to add atmosphere and to direct the focus of the audience to where their attention needed to be. For atmosphere, a spot light and “DJ Lights” were utilized. The DJ lights didn’t do much, but they flashed to the beat of the music. These also did not need to be run from a dimmer pack, but could plug into a regular socket on the wall. The spot was used on the disco ball, on dancers
in the dance contest, the conga line or when the audience needed to “see something” in one of the free forms that was happening. Traditional stage lighting was used for anything that actually took place on the stage itself. Since these were the scripted scenes and meant to be seen by everyone, I thought this directed the focus of the audience to where it needed to be. I struggled with lighting the non-group events in the free forms since they were everywhere in the venue. After reading and rereading the script, I realized that not all the little events in the free forms advanced the plot. Any that did would be highlighted so that the audience took note. If we had more lighting capabilities, I would have put the disco ball on a dimmer and put lighting in all four corners of the room.

Characterization was probably the biggest component to make or break this production. The actors had to be on the entire time. There would be no on and off stage as the entire venue was a stage; even when going to the restroom. The actors and I worked the most on this aspect using all sorts of rehearsal tools, games, activities, etc to make sure they were rock solid in the choices they were making, and also to ensure their confidences for the unscripted interaction with the audience. This was a new experience for us all. There were a few choices that were made by the students that I wrestled with, namely the Principal getting drunk. This wasn’t a choice I necessarily agreed with, but couldn’t decide if I should just tell him no, or let him try it out himself. It wasn’t anything that was going to derail the production and the actor had solid reasons for doing it. I wanted him to learn why this is a difficult and maybe not a good choice, but would it be better learned from me telling him or him experiencing it? I come upon this situation somewhat often. I usually side with that I am a teacher, and this is a learning environment. If it doesn’t hurt the integrity of the overall production, maybe I should let him flush this one out for himself. The kids are here to learn after all. I shared with him my concerns
and let him make the decision for himself. He went the drunken route, but in hindsight saw why it might not have been the best choice.

The free form scenes were also a concern. There were things that were supposed to happen simultaneously in different locations throughout the venue. Hence, it is impossible for everyone to see everything. After pouring through the script it was decided that little to none of it advanced the plot. Anything that did was brought to the forefront. In speaking with the playwright and the cast in NYC, I felt strong in this decision. For example, one of the scenes takes place in the women's restroom. Obviously not everyone will see this. The playwright said this was his intention. This should feel like an actual Prom and like an actual Prom, you will miss things. However, there were a few things that we should have highlighted, one being the arrival of the “popular” crowd. It was important for the audience to know that the captain of the football team and the head cheerleader (dating) were fighting before Prom even began. They arrived in a car and we did have the car honking and the actors making lots of noise, but this still didn’t get enough people outside to witness it. I should have had the DJ/MC make an announcement that they were arriving and have everyone go out to meet them.

The set was quite a tricky aspect of the production. The actors voted on a Prom theme and decided on *Viva Las Vegas*. Each was assigned a responsibility, based on their characters as much as possible, in putting together the décor for the venue. The trickiest part was that we couldn’t put up the entire set until the day of since our shows take place in both rooms of our school’s cafetorium. While the venue added to the authenticity of this being an actual Prom, it could have turned into a nightmare for us. Fortunately, we planned ahead by measuring, drawing a ground plan for each room, and putting together one table with the table décor decided upon to see if it worked and rehearsing with the motorcycle that was driving through the “audience” to
see how we needed to set the tables to give him enough space. Only problem we encountered was that we would not be able to put the disco ball on a dimmer.

Casting the show turned out to be more difficult than I first planned. Before I submitted my script for committee approval, I talked with our headmaster to see if he would agree to be the principal in the script. He agreed. I then asked a local actress friend of mine to play the teacher, she too agreed. I felt this important to the authenticity of the production since these were the two adult in the cast. Sadly, a week before auditions, my headmaster took a different job for the following school year. This meant he would not be able to commit to our rehearsal schedule. I tried to find another adult male, but was unsuccessful. I thought it would be strange to have one and not the other adult character to be played by an adult so I opted to cast these two characters from my student actors. Certainly not my first choice. I was not concerned about the students not being able to play them, but since they would be face to face with the audience members, I could not rely on makeup to age them. Fortunately the venue would be somewhat dark, so the facial hair, and wig for the principal and heavy makeup for the teacher (who we played a bit younger than the script called for) seemed to work. For me it did take away a bit from the reality of the Prom, but the audience still seemed to enjoy themselves and I was proud of the kids for taking this on.

Like most productions, overall I was pleased with this outcome. Especially since the actors and I took on a genre that none of us had any experience with. However, looking back, there are always things that could have been done differently.
Works Cited


Welcome Class of 1989!
At the entrance of Freedom Hall (above the awning)

Decorations Stage left (audience wall)

Decorations Stage right (audience wall)
Poker chips that hang from the ceiling
Awesome 80's Perm
Main Tables

- Black table cloth
- Poker chips
- Feather centerpiece
  - Red/White

Cocktail Table

- Balloons
- Poker chips
- Red toile
- Black cover
"Let's get hitched sign"

"A Little White Chapel arch"

White Chapel backdrop/cut out and cloud cutout
WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS... KARAOKE

"WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS... KARAOKE"

giant cocktail glass w/ balloons
Poker chips that hang from the ceiling