In this chapter we will explore

- graduates of the class in real situations;
- possible negative repercussions;
- possible adaptations for the course; and
- collaboration beyond theatre.

Reflections

We have seen the graduates of this studio in action in actual production meetings and the result is exactly as wished. They are, for the most part, healthy production team members. Like most emerging artists they have only to refine their process and gain confidence, but the groundwork laid by such a course has immeasurably improved the level of design as well as the entire production experience for all involved. From actors to technician, the collaborative experience has become part of an entire community vocabulary.

Students who worked in design areas other than their own in class now seem to respect the demands of their fellow designers. These graduates now have a clearer definition of their own duties as well as those of each designer. Now, the collaborative process runs more smoothly due to an experienced and shared vocabulary. This newfound knowledge impacts each element of their contribution from research through implementation.

Costume designers are now more likely to ask for a light lab to check fabrics. The request for the lab is now promptly answered because of the knowledge by the lighting designer of the importance of this event. And, finally, the reciprocal question is posed by the costume designer, “What do you need from me?”

Directors from the class now have a deeper appreciation for the work of their designers. Directors now recognize the arduous process of designers as a path different, yet completely as difficult, as their own. Directors are now more likely to find research to incite their designers. Designers in turn respond to these abstract images with more adventurous designs. Ultimately all involved are more satisfied.

R. Roznowski et al., *Collaboration in Theatre*
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On the most basic level, the knowledge and vocabulary gained in these projects has accounted for respect. On a greater level, the deep impact of experiential learning of director as designer (and vice versa) has created a bridge between these disparate disciplines. Designers and directors working together have created a mutually respectful community of artists who share an understanding of the responsibilities and demands of disciplines. The collaborative process has been completed. There is no more to be taught as educator.

The rest is up to fate . . . and producers.

*R*: Since this class, I have worked with several of the student designers and beam at what I know they learned in that course. I see their healthy manipulation of the entire collaboration as they become equals in the process. We were in a production meeting for Bock and Harnick’s *She Loves Me*, in which one of the past students was designing both costumes and scenery. His constant desire to keep his fellow collaborators and assistants in the loop was heart-warming. One day, while sharing his research, he pulled out an image and handed it to the lighting designer saying, “I heard what you were talking about at the last meeting and I found this image. I thought you might like it.”

*K*: I found the same to be true in regard to the excitement that the students share when successful collaboration takes place. They are so happy when their voices are heard. Those students are also teaching others. They pass this information along to up-and-coming designers about “the way things should be.”

**Approaching New Students**

The positive feelings created by this course also have a flip side. When collaboration is not a priority in the design process, students are the first to point fingers. Their understanding of the “best way” to collaborate makes for a team that demands the understanding of the theories in this book.

Students experienced in the process expect all involved to collaborate willingly and effectively. Some theatrical artists simply do not work that way. These students may be unprepared for such a realization. While their naiveté may be problematic now, through experience they will be able to work effectively with any artist by adapting their definitions of collaboration. By leading through example and making sure they always enter the process with their collaborative filter engaged, students may affect their production team. In working with these students perhaps dictatorial directors and facilitating designers may be transformed.

Collaboration is about adaptation and leadership within your best artistic sense.