

Director's Vision

AN INTERVIEW WITH SARNA LAPINE

What drew you to this piece?

I think the writing is beautiful and I think the music is really beautiful and expressive. I love that it's a period piece, set in Chicago when the first moon landing was televised. I love the metaphors of all of those things—this woman watching the moon landing in her living room on TV, when the world first came into the average American household through the television, and what that experience must have been like. And I thought would be interesting to investigate a rather quiet mid-life crisis that this suburban Chicago housewife was having, and I thought I hadn't really seen anything like that before. And so I was interested in this character and what she was going through.



thought I wanted to be a writer—I'm naturally very introverted. In my mid to late 20s I was working in the non-profit sector in Seattle working with a population of girls in the juvenile justice system, and also really interbreeding literary criticism with gender studies. I was really interested in pop culture criticism, and I think between my interest in that and working with girls, I thought I should develop myself to find my way into more of a leadership position. I thought it was really important for young women to see themselves out in the world doing things they didn't think they could do. I remember thinking, "I should be less concerned with being a cultural critic and be more brave and lead by example and do the thing I'm most afraid of doing." And that ended up being directing.

Tell us more about Diana.

One could argue that she's a passive protagonist, but she's not really passive – I think her internal struggle is actually very real and familiar, and about identity and also about changes in society where a person of a certain age belongs. We're still very ageist, and women after a certain age do become completely invisible. And in this woman's case she could have accepted that post and faded away. But it was something about watching the moon landing that I think broke her out of that malaise and sent her out into Chicago at night in search of something. And she didn't necessarily know she was looking for something.

What do you hope people take away from this show?

I think there's something about Diana following an inner voice, even at a later stage of life, that's very powerful. I think there are a lot of ways in which that guiding inner voice gets drowned out by a lot of external forces. And I think the power of watching somebody who thinks they're reaching the twilight of their life choose to break the mold or do something different is quite inspiring.

When did you know you wanted to be a director? How did you go about doing it?

I don't think it was a clear presentation of an idea for me for a long time, and I did a lot of other things. I always

Through the Intiman Theater, I met and developed a friendship with Bart Sher [the director of several Broadway shows, including the current revival of *My Fair Lady*]. I very casually said "I think I want to be a director, how did you get to do that for a living?" And he said he always had great mentors and had started as an assistant. And he said "I'm doing my first Broadway show in New York if you want to assist me—if you can get yourself to New York I'll give you a job." And I guess that's how it started, but it's been a long process.

Did you always love theater?

Yes. But my first love was literature—I love books, and I love great writers. I love film too, but what I discovered about working in theater was it was sort of this three-dimensional literary analysis; that you could take a text and not just be in your room or at your computer—you were engaged in this process of bringing something to life through conversations with a variety of people.

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