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Cultivating Mindful Leadership: Engaging Wholehearted Practices in the Hamlet Process

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Cultivating Mindful Leadership:
Engaging Wholehearted Practices in the *Hamlet* Process

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements

for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Theatre and Dance (Stage Management)

by

Rachael D. Albert

Committee in charge:

Lisa Porter, Chair
Liam Clancy
Charles Means
Daniel Vitkus

2015

The thesis of Rachael D. Albert is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2015

DEDICATION

Grandpa, Moses, and Dad:
I wouldn't be here without you.
I miss you. I love you.

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File 2. *Hamlet* Calling Excerpt

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Cultivating Mindful Leadership:
Engaging Wholehearted Practices in the *Hamlet* Process

by

Rachael D. Albert

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Stage Management)

University of California, San Diego, 2015

Professor Lisa Porter, Chair

The production process of *Hamlet* provided me with opportunities to embody various attributes of conscious leadership. In *Hamlet*, the eponymous character asserts “there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.” This quotation relates to the practice of mindfulness, which I have incorporated into my work as a leader. As the Production Stage Manager of *Hamlet*, I was a conscious leader, cultivating awareness of the production’s collaborative dynamics and ways in which I could actively and intentionally facilitate continual change.

The majority of the characters in *Hamlet* are woefully unaware of the disturbing realities of their lives. Hamlet, however, is arguably the most aware being in Elsinore; he knows that he must confront his inner demons to bring justice and righteousness back to his world. He realizes, “I must be cruel only to be kind, thus bad begins and worse remains behind.” Only by exposing the people of Denmark to this painful truth can they begin to restore balance, harmony, and peace to the kingdom.

Conscious leadership means being aware of the adaptive challenges surrounding collaboration. It means remaining flexible in the midst of change and empathically speaking truth to foster trust. By culminating my graduate studies with *Hamlet*, I have grown to understand that support cannot exist without presence, flexibility cannot exist without compassion, and curiosity cannot exist without courage. Through my journey towards conscious leadership, I have discovered how to guide with an open mind and an open heart.