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Fiala, Elizabeth Ann

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2016

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Removing the Mask:
Revealing Imperfection through Authentic Leadership

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements

for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Theatre and Dance (Stage Management)

by

Elizabeth Fiala

Committee in charge:

Lisa Porter, Chair
Charles Means, Co-Chair
Jim Carmody
Pasquale Verdicchio

2016

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The thesis of Elizabeth Fiala is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Co-Chair

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2016

DEDICATION

To my family:
Thank you for the unconditional love and support.
This wouldn't have been possible without you.

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File 1. *The Venetian Twins* Calling Excerpts

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my mom, for always instilling faith in my life. Your faith gives me the hope and confidence to continue pursuing what I love.

To my dad, for reminding me I'm tough. I'm a stronger (and perhaps funnier) woman because of you.

To my brother, for always giving me the supportive words I need to hear.

To Frank Wukitsch, for igniting my love for stage management.

To Narda E. Alcorn, for encouraging me to strive for excellence. You inspired me to take this journey, and for that, I'm forever grateful.

To Lisa Porter, for trusting me even when I didn't trust myself. Your confidence in my abilities has given me the world (and taken me across the globe). Cheers to wine in Paris and polka dot pajamas.

To Chuck Means, for teaching me how to ask for help. You've shared an invaluable gift, and taught me to love myself even through my failures. I'm forever grateful for your patience.

To the Trifecta, Mandy and Morgan. You two are my everything. Thank you for the incredible, hilarious, and unforgettable memories. You added love, sparkle, and wine to this journey, and I can't imagine grad school without our sisterhood. We did it!

To my stage management team, for whole-heartedly embracing the world of *The Venetian Twins*. Jackie, Plato, Kiko, and Savannah: you're remarkable teammates, and I couldn't have asked for a stronger group of women to have by my side.

To the faculty and staff of UCSD and La Jolla Playhouse; your mentorship is a gift I will always carry with me.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Removing the Mask:
Revealing Imperfection through Authentic Leadership

by

Elizabeth Fiala

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

University of California, San Diego, 2015

Professor Lisa Porter, Chair

Professor Charles Means, Co-Chair

I have always strived to be perceived as the perfect stage manager. To me, perfection means never making a mistake or appearing vulnerable. Trying to achieve this perfection has meant avoiding moments when I could appear weak, or even worse, risk the possibility of failure. As a result, my attempt toward perfectionism created boundaries that kept me safe, but also kept me from authentically connecting with my collaborators.

In *The Venetian Twins*, the citizens of Verona wear masks to tell the tragic story of Zanetto and Tonino Bisognosi, twins separated at birth. It is not until Zanetto's death

at the very end of the play that characters unmask themselves, revealing their humanity – their authentic selves. Throughout this process, I have strived to unmask my authenticity and become a leader who values mistakes as moments of growth, unconditionally trusts my collaborators, and cultivates connections amongst my colleagues. Asking for help, having difficult conversations, and embracing the disorder of a complex process has required me to courageously allow others to see my imperfections and abandon my rigid sense of right and wrong. I have challenged myself to take substantial risks by questioning my intentions before having a hard conversation, expressing my artistic opinions and concerns, and trusting my team with increased responsibility while allowing for the possibility of mistakes. In my journey to embody authentic leadership, I have actively made the choice to stay present and in response to the work, leading my fellow collaborators through this multifaceted production process.