

THE PRODUCTION PHASES OF A HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE PROGRAM

By Richard Gremel

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ISBN: 978-1-64479-030-4

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THE PRODUCTION PHASES OF A HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE PROGRAM

A One Act Comedy

By Richard Gremel

SYNOPSIS: Ever wonder how the plays you see in high school end up on the stage? *The Production Phases of a High School Theatre Program* offers a glimpse into the world of a stereotypical theatre class. Take a journey through the many phases of a production, from the first day to the final bow. This hilarious one act will have everyone laughing while your actors try to figure out which theatre stereotype they fit, and your audience gets a glimpse of all the work that goes into creating a play.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 females, 1 male, 7 either; gender flexible)

DRAMA TEACHER (m/f) Teacher to drama students.
(67 lines)

STAGE MOM (f) Shy Kids Mom, Annoying.
(21 lines)

DRAMA STUDENTS:

DIVA (f) (35 lines)

OVERLY DRAMATIC (m/f) (33 lines)

KNOW-IT-ALL (m/f) (27 lines)

FINE ARTS CREDIT (m) (39 lines)

MUSICAL FANATIC (m/f) (28 lines)

SHY KID (f) (38 lines)

EXTREMELY DEDICATED (m/f) (42 lines)

STAGE MANAGER (m/f) (42 lines)

TECH KID (m/f) (38 lines)

DURATION: 40 minutes

TIME: Present day

SETTING: School stage

SET

This play can be performed with a simple set. A few small boxes or chairs can be spread about the stage for actors to sit on. In the original production, slides were projected to display the title of each phase.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

PROLOGUE

PHASE ONE: THE ANNOUNCEMENT

PHASE TWO: THE AUDITION

PHASE THREE: THE POSTING OF THE CAST LIST

PHASE FOUR: THE REHEARSAL PROCESS

PHASE FIVE: THE OFF BOOK DATE

PHASE SIX: THE MAKE-UP OFF BOOK DATE

PHASE SEVEN: TECH WEEK

PHASE EIGHT: OPENING NIGHT

PHASE NINE: CLOSING NIGHT

EPILOGUE

PROPS

- Headshot
- Resumé
- Script
- Cast List
- Apple
- Long List or Scroll
- Costume Rack
- Bouquet of Flowers

COSTUMES

Costumes should reflect the character's stereotype. Costumes can be different for each character, or as simple as each character wearing black, with a small costume piece or hat, to suggest character type.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This play can be performed for Middle School, as well. Just change all the “High School” to “Middle School” in the spoken text. Also if your theatre program is a club and not a class, you can change all the “class” to “club” in the spoken text.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

This play was originally performed at Empire High School in Tucson, AZ on April 6, 2017, with the cast as follows:

DRAMA TEACHER.....	Hope Hamil
DIVA	Cierra Parker
OVERLY DRAMATIC.....	Emily Gates
KNOW-IT-ALL	Trenton Hilliker
FINE ARTS CREDIT.....	Koltin Feery
MUSICAL FANATIC.....	Amelia Creason
SHY KID.....	Gabi Barnes
EXTREMELY DEDICATED	Ysenia Nava
STAGE MANAGER.....	Karly Moyers
TECH KID	Justin Lemieux
STAGE MOM.....	Lily Bartholomew

This play is dedicated to all the students of Empire High Theatre

Department, who make teaching theatre each day, a new adventure.

PROLOGUE

AT START: *During the Prologue, the cast directly addresses the audience in a more presentational style, with the actors portraying themselves rather than the characters they play. However, during some lines, the characters begin to emerge.*

DIVA: Many of you, sitting here today, have probably watched a high school theatre performance before.

STAGE MOM: I know I have!

KNOW-IT-ALL: And if you haven't, well then you're watching one right now.

STAGE MANAGER: And while some of those performances you sat through might have been really good...

OVERLY DRAMATIC: Chances are, most of them were really, really bad.

MUSICAL FANATIC: Hey!

OVERLY DRAMATIC: Let's hope this is one of the good ones.

TECH KID: Either way, good or bad, there is tons of work that goes into the making of a high school theatre production.

FINE ARTS CREDIT: It's not just what you see on the auditorium stage.

EXTREMELY DEDICATED: No. It's the many days, weeks, or months of auditions, rehearsal, blocking, memorization, character development, tech, and all the other theatre mumbo jumbo which happens behind the scenes.

SHY KID: And the many students who make up the theatre production, like...

DRAMA TEACHER: *(Building in intensity.)* The boy who only took drama class to meet girls, the "too sensitive" also known as the "takes everything too personal", the talented student with no drive or passion, the "loud and proud", the "committed to too many other clubs", the "too analytical" also known as the "has to follow every stage direction written in the script and overthink every blocking note the director gives them"!

TECH KID: Whoa there. Calm down.

DRAMA TEACHER: Sorry. That last one drives me a little crazy. Where was I? Oh yeah, the overly protective prop master, the student who actually signed up for choir, the student who only took theatre to be famous, or the student who took drama for an easy “A”. Then there are the other people who also contribute to the high school production including the incompetent, and often scared out of their mind student-teacher or the dad who wants to help build all the sets—

STAGE MOM: Don't forget the annoying Stage Mom.

DRAMA TEACHER: (*Sarcastic.*) Who could forget that one? And the list of people goes on and on and on and on—

TECH KID: —But if we included all of the students who make up the average attendees of a high school drama class—

DRAMA TEACHER: —And on and on and on and on—

TECH KID: -Or people who are involved in the play production—

DRAMA TEACHER: —And on and on and on—

TECH KID: —this play would be like six hours long.

DRAMA TEACHER: So, in an effort to speed this show along, we've omitted those people and instead, present you with the more typical assortment of high school theatre students like...

As each student announces their character, they strike a pose to reflect the character.

DIVA: The Diva.

OVERLY DRAMATIC: The Overly Dramatic.

KNOW-IT-ALL: The Know-it-all

MUSICAL FANATIC: The Broadway Musical Fanatic.

EXTREMELY DEDICATED: The Extremely Dedicated.

SHY KID: The Shy Kid, Trying to Break Out of Their Shell.

STAGE MANAGER: The Power Hungry Stage Manager.

FINE ARTS CREDIT: The Kid Who's Only in Drama for the Fine Arts Credit.

TECH KID: And, The Tech Kid.

STAGE MOM: And that's what this play's all about.

DRAMA TEACHER: The people who contribute to the play and the many phases which make up your typical high school theatre production.

DIVA: Because so many of you have absolutely no idea what we students go through when prepping for a show.

OVERLY DRAMATIC: Yes even you, mom and dad.

STAGE MOM: What?!

OVERLY DRAMATIC: You may think you know, but you don't have a clue about what happens at school once we enter "production mode".

STAGE MOM: But...

EXTREMELY DEDICATED: Sure you help me run lines and hear about all of the backstage drama...

FINE ARTS CREDIT: Wait. You're telling me there's drama in drama class?

Everyone laughs.

MUSICAL FANATIC: But, unless you've been a part of a play in your high school, you have positively no understanding of what it takes to put on a show.

EXTREMELY DEDICATED: So in order to share with you a glimpse of what the production process is like...

STAGE MANAGER: We proudly present...

ALL: The Production Phases of a High School Theatre Program.

STAGE MOM and DRAMA TEACHER exit.

PHASE ONE: THE ANNOUNCEMENT

AT START: *All STUDENTS are seated around the stage.*

DIVA: *(Steps forward.)* While none of us can truly know what goes on in the crazy—

OVERLY DRAMATIC: —*(Steps forward.)* You could say borderline psychotic—

DIVA: —Mind of the theatre teacher, or why they pick the plays we do.

OVERLY DRAMATIC: Every production officially begins the day our teacher announces what play we'll be performing.

DIVA: We call this phase "The Announcement".

DIVA and OVERLY DRAMATIC return to their seats. DRAMA TEACHER enters.

DRAMA TEACHER: (To *SUDENTS*.) Attention class, attention class. Gather round. I have an exciting announcement to make.

DIVA: They've decided to dedicate a seat in the auditorium, in my name, to honor all of the outstanding performances I've given in the past?

DRAMA TEACHER: Ummm... no.

MUSICAL FANATIC: You've decided to stage the famed, Broadway musical, *Phantom of the Opera* for our fall play casting myself as Christine, naturally, because I know every word to the soundtrack and have seen the movie version a whopping 386 times?!

DRAMA TEACHER: No.

OVERLY DRAMATIC: You're going to quit being our drama teacher which will leave our theatre program in shambles and will eventually cause the school administration to cut our funding and ultimately cause them to disband the theatre program all together?!

DRAMA TEACHER: Absolutely not! Now can I get on with my announcement, please?

EXTREMELY DEDICATED: Everyone, quiet down and listen to what our drama teacher has to say.

STUDENTS quiet down to listen.

EXTREMELY DEDICATED: Go ahead with your announcement. I'm listening.

DRAMA TEACHER: Thank you. My exciting announcement is that this year, I have decided...

STUDENTS listen in.

DRAMA TEACHER: For our fall play...

STUDENTS listen with more excitement.

DRAMA TEACHER: We will mount the famous story of love and tragedy...

STUDENTS listen with even more excitement.

DRAMA TEACHER: *Romeo and Juliet* by Willy Shakes.

Everyone, except EXTREMELY DEDICATED sighs.

TECH KID: Who?

KNOW-IT-ALL: I believe our drama teacher is referring to the famous playwright, and father of the Elizabethan theatre, William Shakespeare.

FINE ARTS CREDIT: You mean, we do plays in this class?

EXTREMELY DEDICATED: Yes. And now I need to work on preparing for the show. I must go home right now and learn everything I can about Shakespeare. Where he was born, what his life was like, all the plays he wrote, what flavor toothpaste he used...

DIVA: Well, I need to go pick out my costume for Juliet.

SHY KID: Um... who says you are going to be Juliet? We haven't even auditioned yet.

DIVA: We don't have to. Who else in this theatre department has the acting chops to play such an iconic character?

OVERLY DRAMATIC: I can't believe my second to last play of my high school career is going to be a Shakespeare play. This is absolutely the worst possible thing that could ever happen in my entire life.

TECH KID: I don't care what play we do as long as I get to run the lights.

DRAMA TEACHER: But that's not all. I have also taken the liberty to adapt this classic play to better suit the needs of our modern day, tech reliant, teenage audience, by setting the play in a galaxy far, far away where Romeo is from a Martian country at war with the Capulet planet. All the characters are aliens and we will include an epic space battle with flying ships and a laser light show. The script will also include many *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* references. What do you think?

Silence as STUDENTS are stunned.

PHASE TWO: THE AUDITION

AT START: *All STUDENTS are lined up onstage.*

EXTREMELY DEDICATED: *(Steps forward.)* Usually not too long after the announcement comes the second phase in the production process.

SHY KID: *(Steps forward.)* Some people, like myself, might consider this the scariest most stressful part of the production.

EXTREMELY DEDICATED: I would probably say it's slightly more scary than off book date and opening night combined, but less stressful than tech week.

SHY KID: No matter how scary you think this next phase is, if you want a part in the play, you have to go through with it.

EXTREMELY DEDICATED: We're talking about "The Audition".

TECH KID: *(Steps forward.)* What about me? Do I have to audition?

SHY KID: No. You just run the lights.

TECH KID: That's what I'm talking about! *(Exits.)*

SHY KID and EXTREMELY DEDICATED join other STUDENTS. STAGE MANAGER walks down the line of STUDENTS like a drill sergeant.

STAGE MANAGER: Alright. We're going to begin the auditions. I run a tight ship around here, so make sure you pay attention and are ready to go when it's your turn. Also during the auditions, I need absolute quiet from everyone. And I mean everyone. Do you hear me?

STUDENTS respond.

STAGE MANAGER: I said quiet!

FINE ARTS CREDIT: Do you want us to be quiet when we're acting?

STAGE MANAGER: Of course not!

DRAMA TEACHER: *(Enters.)* What are you doing?

STAGE MANAGER: Oh, I was just... warming them up for you. They're all yours.

DRAMA TEACHER: Alright class. I am so excited for these auditions today. Now remember, as you present your audition pieces, you need to not only show the character, but you need to be the character, feel the emotions, breathe life into the text. So...

STAGE MOM: *(Enters.)* Oh excuse me. Have the auditions started yet?

DRAMA TEACHER: No. Can I help you?

STAGE MOM: I'm just here to watch my little angel perform her audition piece.

DRAMA TEACHER: I'm sorry, but these are closed auditions.

STAGE MOM: Okay. I'll just be right over here. I promise to be so quiet you won't even know I'm here.

DRAMA TEACHER: I think you misunderstood me. Closed auditions mean that you can't be in here.

STAGE MOM: Are you sure? I'm only here to show support for my talented daughter. *(Waves at SHY KID.)* Hi honey.

DRAMA TEACHER: Please leave.

STAGE MOM: Fine. *(Exits.)*

DRAMA TEACHER: Anyways, are there any questions before we begin?

EXTREMELY DEDICATED and a few other STUDENTS raise their hands.

DRAMA TEACHER: (*Points at EXTREMELY DEDICATED.*) Yes?

EXTREMELY DEDICATED: This isn't really a question. I just wanted to give you my headshot and résumé.

DRAMA TEACHER: Thank you. But, you do know it's not required for our audition, right?

EXTREMELY DEDICATED: I know... I just thought, "oh what the heck?!"

FINE ARTS CREDIT: I have a question.

DRAMA TEACHER: Yes?

FINE ARTS CREDIT: Were we supposed to prepare something for the audition today?

EXTREMELY DEDICATED: Are you serious? We were supposed to prepare a one-minute memorized monologue from the play.

FINE ARTS CREDIT: What's a monologue?

KNOW-IT-ALL: It's a long speech, in a theatrical play, spoken by one individual actor. It derives from the Greek word, monólogos. Meaning "speaking alone".

FINE ARTS CREDIT: So I have to give a speech? Like from a play? And I have to have it memorized?

DRAMA TEACHER: Yes. That's the requirement.

FINE ARTS CREDIT: I have another question.

DRAMA TEACHER: What is it?

FINE ARTS CREDIT: Can I go last?

DRAMA TEACHER: (*Ignoring FINE ARTS CREDIT. To STUDENTS.*) Okay. Let's just begin, shall we?

DRAMA TEACHER sits off to the side or in the audience. During the following auditions, the actors can stand in a line and step forward for their lines/auditions or they can enter from the wings. When their audition is finished, they can go back to the line or exit the stage.

EXTREMELY DEDICATED: (*Steps forward.*) I'll go first. (*Getting into character doing some quick warm-ups.*)

What light through yonder window breaks.

It is the force and Juliet is a Jedi.

Arise fair Jedi and kill the evil Empire. (*Steps back.*)

STAGE MANAGER: Next!

MUSICAL FANATIC: (*Steps forward.*) Can I perform mine in a song?

DRAMA TEACHER: No.

MUSICAL FANATIC steps back in disappointment.

DIVA: (*Steps forward.*) For my audition, I'll be performing the role of Juliet, naturally. Be prepared to be amazed.

Oh Romeo, Romeo.

Wherefore art thou, Romeo?

Thou hast a Vulcan death grip on my heart.

STAGE MANAGER: Next!

MUSICAL FANATIC: (*Steps forward.*) How about a rap, like in the Tony Award-winning musical *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda?

DRAMA TEACHER: No.

MUSICAL FANATIC steps back.

SHY KID: (*Steps forward. Whispering.*) What's in a name?

DRAMA TEACHER: Could you speak a little louder?

SHY KID: (*Whispering.*) That which we call a rose.

DRAMA TEACHER: Louder.

SHY KID: (*Whispering.*) By any other name would smell as sweet.

DRAMA TEACHER: Open your mouth and project! Speak from the diaphragm. Try again.

SHY KID: (*Loud whisper and spoken quickly.*) What's in a name? That which we call a rose By any other name would smell as sweet.
(*Steps back.*)

DRAMA TEACHER: (*Sarcastically.*) Good... great... thank you.

STAGE MANAGER: Next!

OVERLY DRAMATIC: (*Stepping forward.*) I will perform the tragic death scene of poor Romeo.

Arms, take your last embrace! and, lips, O you

The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss

Not set to stun, but engrossing death!

Come, bitter conduct, come, photon torpedo!

Thou Enterprise pilot, now at once run on

The dashing asteroids and do to me as all red shirts!

Here's to my love! Live long and prosper. (*Acts out a very long and dramatic death.*)

STAGE MANAGER: (*Beat.*) Can someone please clear them off the stage?

TECH KID enters and drags OVERLY DRAMATIC off stage, exiting.

STAGE MANAGER: Thank you. Next!

KNOW-IT-ALL: (*Steps forward.*) I will perform Romeo's soliloquy from Act 1, scene 5. I think what Shakespeare is trying to demonstrate here is that Romeo is taken aback by Juliet's beauty when he sees her for the first time and...

DRAMA TEACHER: We just need the performance, not an explanation.

KNOW-IT-ALL: Okay. I just thought... I'll just begin.

O, she doth teach the lightsabers to burn bright!

It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night

Like a death star in the Empire's eyes;

Beauty too rich for use, will be my demise! (*Steps back.*)

STAGE MANAGER: Next!

FINE ARTS CREDIT: (*Step forward.*) It is my lady,

(*Looks at script.*) O, it is (*Looks at script.*) my love!

(*Looks at script.*) O, that she knew she were!

I'm sorry, is this even written in English? (*Steps back.*)

DRAMA TEACHER: Thank you!

DRAMA TEACHER and STAGE MANAGER: Next!

MUSICAL FANATIC: (*Steps forward.*) Interpretive Dance?

DRAMA TEACHER: No! (*To STUDENTS.*) Okay. I think I've seen enough for one day. I will try to have the cast list posted by Friday. (*Exits.*)

PHASE THREE: THE POSTING OF THE CAST LIST

AT START: All STUDENTS are seated.

KNOW-IT-ALL: (*Steps forward.*) After we students have battled through auditions, and spent many sleepless nights waiting in anticipation of what roles we will receive, comes the third phase in the production process.

FINE ARTS CREDIT: (*Steps forward.*) We call this phase “The Posting of the Cast List”.

DRAMA TEACHER enters and post the cast list and the other students gather round it.

KNOW-IT-ALL: I know what you’re thinking, how bad can it be, right? Well, this phase is downright frightening. In an instant it can change your mood from good to absolutely dreadful, can drastically alternate your entire outlook of a production, and can easily destroy friendships.

FINE ARTS CREDIT: Whoa there. Isn’t that a little over dramatic?

OVERLY DRAMATIC: Yes, but what did you expect? We’re in a drama class and to us, theatre is life. My entire existence rests on the role I’m assigned on that cast list.

STAGE MANAGER: (*Looking at the cast list.*) You got the Nurse!

OVERLY DRAMATIC: No! My life is over. I will never be the same. There goes my hopes and dreams. With a role like the Nurse on my resumé, I will never get into Juilliard or get my big break on the silver screen or Broadway stage. It’s the life of an extra in D-rate indie films and community theatres for me, from here on out. I just don’t understand. Was it my audition?! Was it my acting in the previous plays? What could have caused me to get this role?!

DRAMA TEACHER: You listed the Nurse as your top choice.

OVERLY DRAMATIC: Well, I changed my mind.

DRAMA TEACHER: And the Nurse is great role. It’s one of the most sought after roles in theatre.

OVERLY DRAMATIC: Just... just leave me to weep on my own.
(*Exits.*)

MUSICAL FANATIC: (*Looking at the cast list.*) Chorus?! Does that mean I get to sing?

DRAMA TEACHER: No.

MUSICAL FANATIC: Oh.

DRAMA TEACHER: But you will get to dance in Act 1, scene 5.

MUSICAL FANATIC: I will?! Best. Day. Ever! (*Exits.*)

EXTREMELY DEDICATED: (*To TECH KID.*) Hey. Did you see they posted the cast list?

TECH KID: Nope.

EXTREMELY DEDICATED: Well, aren't you interested to see who got what roles?

TECH KID: Not really.

EXTREMELY DEDICATED: Not really?! Are you serious? This is one of the the most important moments in our lives? I have dedicated hours of preparation and rehearsal to see where my name is placed upon that cast list, and you're not interested to see it?

TECH KID: I don't care, as long as I get to run the lights. (*Exits.*)

FINE ARTS CREDIT: (*Looking at the cast list.*) Friar? Who's that? Like a cook or something?

KNOW-IT-ALL: The Friar is a crucial role in the plot of play. He is the one who secretly marries Romeo and Juliet in an attempt to end the feud between the two families, and it is he who provides Juliet with the sleeping poison which eventually leads to the lover's tragedy.

FINE ARTS CREDIT: Yeah but, do I have any lines?

KNOW-IT-ALL just shakes head in disbelief.

DIVA: (*Looking at the cast list.*) Yes! I got Juliet. I mean I really had no doubts, but it's good to finally be recognized for my talent and beauty. (*Exits.*)

SHY KID: Why did she get Juliet? I should just never audition as the same role as her, everyone knows she gets whatever part she wants.

STAGE MANAGER: That's not true.

SHY KID: Yes it is. Our drama teacher picks favorites. Wait until my mom hears about this! (*Exits.*)

DRAMA TEACHER: (*Sarcastic.*) Yay. I can't wait to get that phone call. (*Exits.*)

PHASE FOUR: THE REHEARSAL PROCESS

AT START: *All STUDENTS are scattered on stage.*

MUSICAL FANATIC: *(Steps forward.)* Once the initial shock of the cast list has worn off, we begin to enter the longest, and most grueling phase of the production process.

TECH KID: *(Steps forward.)* This process can last anywhere from weeks to months, depending on the play.

STAGE MANAGER: *(Steps forward.)* We're talking about "The Rehearsal Process".

MUSICAL FANATIC: Rehearsals, for you non-theatre types, consist of blocking, memorization, character exploration and development, re-blocking, more memorization, blah, blah, blah.

STAGE MANAGER: Yeah... they can get pretty boring.

TECH KID: So, in order to save time, we've decided to speed this phase along and wrap up the entire rehearsal process into something we like to call "The Sounds of Rehearsal".

MUSICAL FANATIC, TECH KID, and STAGE MANAGER join other STUDENTS. All STUDENTS speak their following lines in the style of a choral reading. The lines should bounce around the stage, almost on top of each other to be a constant stream of sound.

DRAMA TEACHER: Lights up.

EXTREMELY DEDICATED: I'm not sure my character would cross on that line.

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