

Directing Proposal Form
The Vagina Monologues

Director: Whitney Akers Phone(s): [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED] What is the best way to contact you? 1) email 2) phone

Please answer the following questions as completely and coherently as possible. We will refer to all portions of the proposal in your interview but feel it is necessary that you understand and appreciate the goals and beliefs of the V-Day Initiative. Feel free to check out www.vday.org for information regarding the Monologues and the Initiative. The UNC Library has copies of the script (subject to some changes) available.

1. Why do you (personally) want to direct this production?

Since the first time I saw this play on HBO, during my early high school years, I knew that it was something groundbreaking that would inspire consciousness, passion, and an undeniable call for action. I was immediately transfixed by this provocative play, and have remained so ever since. Each time I read or see this play, I experience emotions I never previously felt and examine new perspectives on women's connections to their bodies and their relation to their larger society as a whole. If I can change one woman's relationship to her vagina in a positive manner, I feel that I would be doing the play justice. Directing this play would allow me to further the impact of this precious material in a manner that would force people to claim their personal responsibility for facilitating awareness about and action to change situations of violence against women.

2. What does v-day mean to you and what do you hope to accomplish with this production?

Personally, I think V-Day embodies an anti-sexist, anti-racist, anti-classist, anti-heterosexist, anti-imperialist demand to end the systematic violence against women and girls, enabled by the vast web of oppressions in our society. V-day amplifies the often-muted voices of women around the world, depicting our similarities as women, as well as celebrating our differences as women of diverse race, class, sexual orientation, ability, etc. I hope that this production will inspire people to reject the notion of power-over others, the dominating power which benefits privileged groups of people, and instead, seek a new kind of power—a shared power. Hopefully, this production, along with the V-Day Initiative, will create an active space in which people can collaborate to dismantle the foundations of domination and the consequential subordination upon which our present society thrives. Through activist art, I aim to influence people to continue to expose and dispose of the rape culture in which we live.

3. Submit a list of the technical demands of the play. How do you plan to make the technical aspects of your production integral and complementary to the spine of the play?

I have seen many productions of this play, and have found it most effective when the attention was predominantly focused on the actors, but I feel that the play should appeal to as many senses as possible. Aesthetic appeal is a major concern, and to maximize the impact of each monologue, I would like to incorporate aspects of lighting, selective sound effects, and costume into this production.

Obviously the technical demand of the play are subject to change depending on the venue in which we present the play, but so far, I find these elements to be key:

- Lighting- spot and wash with color gels
- costumes appropriate for each character
- minimal but effective props
- one or two projection screens
- PA system of some sort for background music or sound effects

4. How do you plan to direct the play? What are some of the techniques you would like to include in your direction? Also list any personal experience that you have that you feel will make you a good director.

I think that it is extremely important for each actor to wholly and completely feel their role. I want them to actually feel what the subject of their monologue felt. Hopefully we could do a few exercises to help the cast become familiar with their role. I also think that with the importance of familiarity and empathy, the actors should be allowed to suggest their own blocking so that it takes a natural and fluid form. I always want actors to maintain contact with the audience through eye-contact or touch. If each actor believes their character's story and mindset, the cast will be able to connect with the audience on unsurpassed levels. I feel that it is vital to look into the eyes of the audience members, never breaking the tie between actor and audience, inviting the audience members to take part in an emotional dialogue. The stronger connection the audience feels with the cast, the more successful and unforgettable this play will be. I strongly promote method acting to evoke emotion from the actor and the audience, respectively. Only when the actor believes her role will she make others do the same. I do not want to rattle off a list of commands to the actors—if they know their characters, they should be able to act as their characters would, and we can pursue a partnership in creating an incredible work.

5. What qualities/experiences/skills do you believe qualify you for the director position?

While I have not directed a theatrical production, I have taken a few theater and stagecraft classes. I am extremely passionate about this material and would put my heart and soul into this production. My life has been significantly changed ever since I was introduced to the Vagina Monologues, and I can only hope to do the same for someone else. I am a very visual and creative person and have a lot to offer this play.

6. Anything else?

I am extremely passionate about all things feminist and vagina (I doubt “extremely passionate” even begins to sum up my devotion and dedication to these subjects). V-Week is an immensely important celebration of women and their bodies, as well as an opportunity to teach, learn, and vocalize about issues of sexual violence. Though I feel these issues should be on the forefront at ALL times, V-Week has had an international effect on infinite people. I want nothing more than to be a part of this life-changing, woman-positive, love-promoting experience.

Submit answers to the above questions and any other supplemental material you feel necessary to the producer and events coordinator by emailing vday@unc.edu. These materials will be made available to actors and other parties interested in being involved with your production.

Please feel free to correspond by email with any questions or concerns regarding your proposal, including rights or any other concerns you may have. **Proposals due October 22nd**