

Wes Out-Loud

Stories of Place

A site-specific auditory journey

Directed by
Marcela Oteíza

Wesleyan University Theater Department
Middletown, Connecticut
860-685-3355 | www.wesleyan.edu/theater

Director's Note

The idea for *Wes Out-Loud* developed from my research on street and site-specific performances, where audience and performers not only share a space, thereby erasing the divide created by the proscenium theater, but also, on many occasions, they become both actor and spectator by activating the sites with their own bodies. In *Wes Out-Loud*, we utilize the university campus as a stage, transforming an everyday environment into a performative site. Through the juxtaposition of place and stories, we examine the performative and social aspects of public places, while bringing forth the richness and diversity of the students of our campus.

In a way, this performance is an exercise in understanding space as a 'practiced place.' To use Ranciere's words, our campus is:

"... a delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise, that simultaneously determines the place and the stakes of [performance] as a form of experience." -- *Politics of Aesthetics*, Jacques Ranciere, 2006

In *Wes Out-Loud*, each one of the stories that we listen to during the auditory journey is an individual account, life experience or original creation of Wesleyan students. Each story reminds me of the importance of the shared-experience that occurs not only during the theatrical event, but, more importantly, during the everyday interactions of our campus, class room or rehearsal room, where we build ties and relationships based on mutual trust, where a place to voice and create individual stories is generated. It is my hope that this performance promotes inclusiveness and gives visibility to voices that are not usually heard.

Wes Out-Loud was primarily recorded with a binaural, 3D-surround-sound system, which is a method that emulates the workings of human auditory perception. Utilizing an actual scale model of left and right ears, the recording system works with the premise that it is the architecture of our anatomy that dictates how we understand the sounds we hear.

Wes Out-Loud used this simulation technique to fully immerse participants in the performance experience.

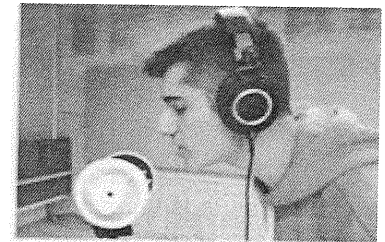
-Marcela I. Oteíza

Collaborator's Notes



Cecilia Cereijido-Bloche '16: In writing my narrative, I thought about why Wesleyan feels so strongly like home even though my time here is so temporary. Living situations here are transient—students only live in each place for nine months, and usually only stay on this campus for four years. Students normally arrive with no family or friends, perhaps a few acquaintances. Still, in coming here, I felt a sense of permanence. Until coming to college, I went back and forth between my divorced parents' houses almost every day. Coming to Wesleyan and being able to stay in the same bedroom every day of the week made it feel like my real base—even with the knowledge that I'd have to move out at the end of each school year. I hope after hearing my story, people will further think about the permanence of Wesleyan and how a place can feel like home when our time there is so limited.

Ali Jamali '17: Memory and trauma go together like hugs and kisses. However, when it comes to sharing traumatic experiences, language can pose a serious issue as a barrier and a degrader in the process of communicating with the audience. Thankfully, performance provides an avenue in response to this issue. My piece has evolved through multiple stages into its current state, mainly because the subject matter is still impending rather than existing in a time frame in the past, which can be looked back on and investigated. In the process of developing this piece, with the generous help of the rest of the creative team, I attempted to explore the struggle of revisiting and re-experiencing trauma, along with the dilemma of sharing, the need of it, and the guilt that can follow after doing so. As for you, the audience, I invite you to observe how I perceive my experience and present you the essence of it. Finally, I believe that there is value in sharing, despite the potential guilt that may come after. After all, it is what we choose to share that shapes who we present to one another and ultimately remember.



Collaborator's Notes

Uma Dieffenbach '17: I almost did not submit this story. I agonized over clicking the send button on my email, knowing that if it were chosen, I would have to openly comfortable showing. Although the process was arduous and terrifying, it allowed myself to open up to first the other cast members and eventually, to strangers. I am grateful for the opportunity to share, and hope that my story can help others feel brave enough to stand on the precipice and ask for help, or to demand change. 23% of women on college campuses have been sexually assaulted. To these women: you are not alone and you never will be.



Maya Herbsman '17: After spending this year dealing with a really severe flare of a really severe chronic illness, I developed a new perspective on what being a college student can be like. When it came time to submit a piece for *Wes Out-Loud*, I knew that I wanted to find a way to frame this experience in a way that could be easily understood by those who do not share my experiences. As sweet and

supportive as those around me were when I was sick at school, I found that not only did I not know people who shared this experience, but I also didn't really even know people who had considered this situation as one that was possible. I found out after I wrote this piece that I would be unable to return to campus this semester due to my illness. It means a lot to me that even though my body couldn't be a part of this production, my cast-mates and the *Wes Out-Loud* team made sure that my voice and story would still be heard. I hope that in listening to my story those who haven't thought about the presence of illness and disability on campus before will begin to think about these issues and that those who relate to my experience will be encouraged to share about theirs. I hope to help create the space to make the invisible more visible.



Collaborator's Notes

Nick Byers '19: Often there's a big difference between what I see and what's before my eyes. When I walk around campus, I unconsciously relate my environment to my previous experiences and existing schemas. Our performance concerns itself with the auditory and the visual. I attempted to create my own perception of the world using the auditory, and merge it with the viewer's perception, the visual.

On one level, these two components offer a fitting juxtaposition, a separation between what is heard and seen. Using this rationale, the piece reflects the ever-changing nature of the mind, that can be rigidly present in the physical world for one moment, and adrift in conceptual thought the next. On another level, the differences between the two components can emphasize their similarities. Parallels run through all human experience, whether its our constant, oft-forgotten breath, our intense, complex pain or our strange, fleeting memory. Using this foundation, my piece is an attempt to reach a common ground with another person, to see eye to eye with you.



Calvin Anderson (Sound Designer): *Wes Out-Loud* is a unique experience, an aural tour through the minds of a few students who may or may not represent the campus population. Through words, sounds, music and visuals we wish to take you on a journey that shows these stories simultaneously as individual statements and as a unified performative piece. I hope this journey is stimulating, thought provoking and opens your heart and mind to something you may not have experienced before.

Collaborator's Notes

Jess Cummings '17: Wesleyan is an intensely personal space to me. It is the place where I have experienced the most growth and had the most memorable experiences of my life thus far. Given its significance, the memories of Wesleyan are positive, negative, and everywhere in between. In writing a piece specific to Wesleyan and the space that Wesleyan occupies, I wanted to focus on those disparities between positive and negative, especially those which I often hide. I also wanted to emphasize the way that these memories take on a spatiality and transform the spaces which the original events occurred in. I hope that listening to my story, as well as everyone else's, will allow members of our Wesleyan community and beyond to question their relationships to the spaces they inhabit everyday and recognize the lasting effects that memory and space leave on their lives.



Key Session '17: When submitting a piece for *Wes Out-Loud*, I tried to think of what made Wesleyan so important to me. The options became endless, and I realized that I needed to take on a different approach to my story. I began to think of what was most consistent in my day-to-day life at Wesleyan and schedule popped into my mind. Constantly living my life on a specific schedule that is entered into my

calendar, I always find myself having conversations with myself throughout the day. In order to not make this a normal story about how boring my life is on a consistent basis, I remembered the day in which this VIP changed my schedule completely, turning my day into a wild goose-hunt. What I have valued throughout this process is the ability to use my day-to-day schedule as a way to structure the piece. With my piece being one of the two pieces that have been split multiple times, it is nice to see how my schedule helps provide a timeline for my day, but also a general outline for allowing other stories to tie in with one another.

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Katherine Brewer Ball.....	Visiting Assistant Professor
Rebecca Foster.....	Visiting Assistant Professor
Quiara Alegría Hudes.....	Shapiro Distinguished Professor of Writing and Theater
Ronald S. Jenkins.....	Professor of Theater
Cybele Moon.....	Visiting Assistant Professor
Christian Milik.....	Costume Shop Manager
Cláudia Tatinge Nascimento.....	Associate Professor
Marcela Oteíza.....	Assistant Professor
Anne Swedberg.....	Visiting Assistant Professor
Kim Weild.....	Visiting Associate Professor

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Assistant Stage Manager.....José Luis Sánchez
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Sound Engineer.....Tony Hernandez
Assistant Sound Engineer.....Anthony S. Dean
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Miller-Medzon, Jamie Shi, Samuel Morreale, Simon Morrison, Emma Pasarow,
Catalina Rotjer, Jejomar Erlin Ysit

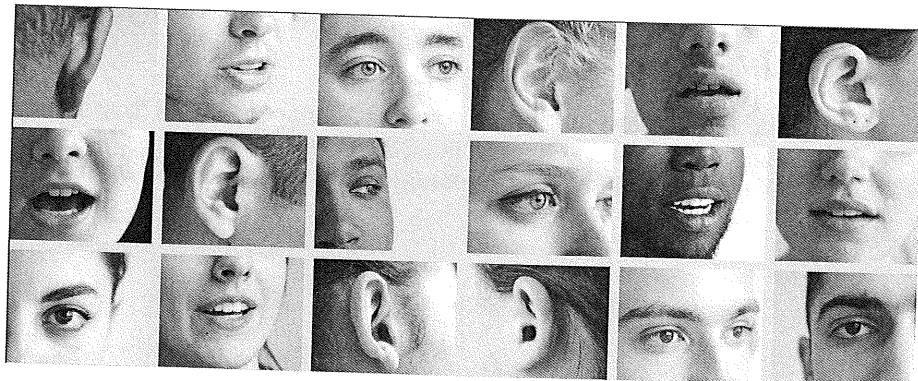
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Shelley Rothman, Rosa-Isela Sánchez, Nicolle Session, Kim Weild

Upcoming Events

“Summertime” by Charles L. Mee

Directed by Visiting Associate Professor Kim Weild
For more details, go to <http://www.wesleyan.edu/theater>



Photos by Sandy Aldieri