Matthew Phillips

Purpose Statement

My goal in the field of theatre is to learn all that I can about technical theatre and to refine my performance skills so I that I can have the foundation that will allow me to be involved in many aspects of the field. There are so many different experiences to be had in this one field, from the rush of being onstage in front of an audience to the satisfaction of seeing something you're building come together piece by piece and eventually get used.

What I value in the field of theatre is the fact that hard work does not go unnoticed or underappreciated, and progress is directly seen by both the person doing the work and by others as well. For performing, that may be an actor making their character more believable, interesting, or visceral. Or possibly finding a source of emotion they didn't know they had or had long forgotten. Or even seeing the reactions of an audience, whether they be joyful, fearful or anywhere in between. For tech, that could be seeing a set go from a jumble of plans and a pile of lumber to a fully realized set piece which could represent anything imaginable. It could be a group of actors in street clothes being turned into a group of medieval nobles or rag-tag adventurers or perhaps something not human at all. Perhaps it's the sterility of work lights becoming something like natural sunlight, or lighting showing the inner emotions of a character and affecting that of the audience, or even an entire environment being created from light alone. There are so many different experiences and sources of pride for those involved. No matter what you do, you will see the progress of your actions.

Performing and design/tech are exciting to me, but for different reasons. I am an empath. I feel and even sometimes feed off of the emotions of those around me. Being onstage and causing emotional change in those around me is therefore a very intense and empowering experience for me. When my audience laughs, it brings me joy. When I am not playing something so jovial, it gives me a chance to delve into the depths of myself and explore what makes me, and others tick.

For tech, whatever work I do, I feel useful. It's empowering to know that your actions are contributing to a larger overall purpose. It makes me feel like an integral part of a whole to know that my actions are important and appreciated. All of the learning opportunities in this area are exciting as well. There are so many practical skills to be learned and used. When I work in a shop I relish in the feeling of putting my practical skills to use and the possibility of learning more.

I want a career in theatre because I can't really see my life without it. In the few years that I've had it, it's given me so much that I wonder how I went without it for so long. It's given me goals, objectives, sense of purpose, confidence, self-respect, and an understanding of people that I may not have had otherwise. It is such a unique field; it is the intersection of art and practicality, one of the few places where they can coexist in perfect harmony. When I work on a theatrical production, it doesn't feel like work at all. In theatre I don't believe I will fall into the cycle of life that many seem to fall into: going to work just so that they can enjoy themselves away from it. I will be going to work to enjoy myself there, then afterwards enjoy myself elsewhere as well. In my opinion this seems like a much better cycle.