

Finding Wonderland

Artistic Identity as a Way of Being

by

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Abstract

As playwright and actor, through the integration of performative and embodied forms of inquiry that embrace autobiographical writing, I explore my history as an artist, and reflect upon the importance of the arts in my life. Performative Inquiry invites the researcher to attend to significant moments that occur through creative action. Embodied Inquiry helps us deepen the connection to our bodies, utilizing them in research through writing, moving, listening and being. Both forms of inquiry use the body, the imagination and personal experiences. By reflecting on those experiences and being awake to those individual moments, we can gain great insight into who we are as artists and educators.

In presuming academic identity to be separate from artistic identity by assuming the role of “teacher”, even that of “music teacher”, I lost the identity of artist. The absence of artist created tension as I thought I had to choose between one or the other. After less than five years of teaching, the disconnect between the artist I was and the person I was becoming, continued to grow. I experienced an absence of artist and I had to find her again. I performed my thesis as a one woman show, with a reflective written piece exploring the shift in thinking necessary to re-imagine myself as both artist *and* teacher. Throughout the process, self-sabotage and self-doubt were at play.

Keywords: identity, performative inquiry, embodied inquiry, autobiographical inquiry, a/r/tography, stop moments, self-sabotage, arts-based research

Dedication

To my children, Michael and Claire, who remind me constantly of what it means to work hard, to grow as artists and to dream. Watching the two of you pursue careers in the arts has helped re-ignite the passion I had as a young artist and to remember how happy I was creating art and collaborating in artistic endeavors. Follow your own passions and ignore those who ask if you have a back-up plan. You are both artists and artists can do anything! I am so proud of you!

To my husband Wayne, for standing by me through thick and thin, for being the first to jump on his feet after I've performed on the stage, for the many bouquets of flowers that came my way when I was booking work and especially for the strong shoulders to lean on and the gripping hugs when my tears flow freely during difficult times as artist, teacher, wife or mother.

And finally, to my parents Daniel and Barbara Donahue for sharing my successes as well as my failures and for being just the kind of parents an artistic spirit needs.

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Preface

This performative thesis explores the identity of artist and teacher through performative inquiry and embodied inquiry which include auto-biographical ways of inquiry. When asked what I did for a living I used to reply, “I am an elementary teacher.” I hesitated to specify that I was an elementary *music* teacher as I was often perceived by others; parents, my own students, colleagues, and truthfully, even myself as being less of a teacher even though it is in practicing and in teaching the arts, where my passion lies. My struggle has been in being able to embrace both professions, not compartmentalizing them as necessarily separate from one another.

Much of my research was spent delving into performative inquiry where I found myself exploring where I came from, where I am now and where I am going, in an attempt to connect to my place in the world as both artist *and* teacher.

When teachers and students engage in performative inquiry, we open up spaces to learn. We open up the possibilities for understanding while we work, and then again after we have done the work because we think back on it, we reflect; we want to see, experience, feel, recognize something in the work, in the moment (Wardrop, 2012, p. 67).

Performative inquiry, as conceptualized and articulated by Fels (1998), is a research methodology that identifies and recognizes moments of learning through performance. By engaging in performative inquiry through writing and performing a play, I was able to be open to the possibilities of the unknown, exploring through performance my identities as artist and teacher. Through performative inquiry, I probed my questions regarding my ways of being as both artist and teacher using my writings, both past and present, and embodying those writings through rehearsing and performing a show in front of a live audience. The process of performative inquiry was as equally important in my learning as was the production of the show. “The conceptualization of performance as an action-site of learning provides the basis for performative inquiry as a research methodology” (Fels, 1998, p. 30).

In writing my thesis performance and reflection, it was important for me to listen to the many “stop moments” (Appelbaum 1995, Fels, 2012) in my life, giving pause and considering their significance. Recognizing what Fels (2012) calls stop moments is key to performative inquiry. I was able to open my eyes and realize I am so busy, that I am

constantly in motion, and as a result I began to acknowledge and linger in those moments. Fels writes, “A stop is a calling to attention; a coming to the crossroads, in which a choice of action or direction must be taken, often times blindly” (2010, p. 3). Fels likens individual stop moments to a child’s “tug on the sleeve” (2010, p. 4). These moments often happen when we are unaware, catching us by surprise. Taking the time to pause and reflect on their significance allows for deep learning and meaning to transpire. Sometimes these stop moments are recognized long after they occurred. I experienced stop moments while writing, rehearsing, in performance and upon writing my reflection of the entire process.

In exploring how I might make this shift in my consideration of myself as artist and teacher, an unexpected dialogue began, one that took me completely by surprise! I received an invitation to reflect and to play using autobiographical stories from my past.

The conceptual underpinnings of performative inquiry propose it is through the interplay of performative explorations and our lived experience, past, present, and anticipated, that we come to moments of learning; moments of recognition which in turn, illuminate our embodied experience in relationship with others (Fels, 2010, p.3).

Embodied inquiry, a way of being in research imagined and explored by Snowber (2016) acknowledges “the body as a place of inquiry, a place of learning, understanding and perceiving” (p.xiii). As the acts of rehearsing and performing certainly emerged from the body, so too did the performative act of writing. In connecting my lived experiences to writing, I was connecting my writing to and through my body. Embodied inquiry “is a method of being, more than doing” (Snowber 2016, p. 43). By recognizing my body as a place of being and using embodied inquiry as research, my voice would emerge onto the page and then to the stage. Knowing the power of embodied inquiry as a way of being in inquiry has taught me to honour my body’s imperfections and limitations using both as openings for creativity and learning to emerge. Instead of focusing on my aging and sometimes injured body as a casualty of a life lived, I can celebrate the body as a place of learning and of a place of being; I can celebrate my body as a place in which to be *grateful* for my life lived.

This venture of performative and embodied inquiry would be risky. “Delving into the autobiographical and personal is an inquiry into opening up all the cracks of our lives; both personal and professional” (Snowber, 2014, p.3). It was often uncomfortable

playing, sometimes blindly, without knowing where I was going. “The body knows where our mind may not be able to lead us” (Snowber 2012, p.120). I was put into a place of vulnerability, realizing that I *needed* to be in this place before I could move forward. Nachmanovitch (1990) proposes that “We know what *might* happen in the next day or minute, but we cannot know what *will* happen” (p.21). I would need to be fearless and to surrender myself to the process and to the possibilities in order to enjoy the mysteries of these unexpected moments.

I came to accept the unknown and was nurtured by the wonders that arose. Snowber (2002) writes about the connection of improvisation to art-making, “Improvisation alerts one to the present, and it is often in this space of not knowing what may happen next that one learns ways to develop a physicality of knowing – of thinking on one’s feet” (p. 20). I tend to overthink everything, worrying about not “getting it right.” Making myself open to improvisation in my process of performative inquiry would allow me space for “discovery and wonder” (Snowber, 2002, p. 25). How exciting, and sometimes terrifying, it was to revel in the idea of not knowing where this journey was going to take me! *How wonderful it was to play again!*

Introduction to the Play

It is the first Tuesday in September in 2014 and instead of the usual first day excitement of children running into the school, fresh from their summer break, teachers getting reacquainted or introduced at staff meetings or putting things up on classroom walls...I am on a picket line. What am I doing here? Everyone has their own opinion about the strike and these opinions are often strong and hurtful. Friends and family members challenge me. I don't dare let people outside of my circle know I am a teacher. Complete strangers yell obscenities as they drive by with a hand out of the car and their middle finger extended. Do they really understand what the job action is all about? Don't they realize how underfunding for more than a decade has made many classrooms unteachable? A colleague received her fifteen minutes of fame after writing a blog in which she stated, "I am no longer teaching. I am providing triage." It is awful to feel so misunderstood, so mischaracterized. In the eyes of others, I was perceived as a greedy, overpaid, lazy, and uncaring human being who worked from 9:00 to 3:00 ten months of the year. I could not proudly proclaim, "I am a teacher."

Earlier in my life, I had always been proud to say, "I am an artist." But somehow, the artist became buried under new roles that jostled for my attention: wife, mother, preschool dance teacher, music teacher and most recently, teacher on strike.ⁱ

Due to district layoffs, this new school year also found me at a different school after losing my position of three years as a full-time music teacher. Over 600 teachers in my district were laid off that year. Some were recalled back to previous assignments but many, including me, were reassigned to new positions. I would now teach music only 30% of the time; the remaining 70% of my load would be teaching students with diverse learning needs. I was most definitely less of an arts teacher in this setting and I had absolutely no knowledge about the world into which I was delving...writing IEP's, administering KTEA tests, creating specialized learning plans. Teachers receive intensive training for these positions; for me, it was baptism by fire! Due to the strike and subsequent late start of the school year, there were to be no in-service workshops, a common practice to train those new to student services.

I had two classrooms, one for music and one for learning support. I was constantly running from one room to the other, often misplacing resources needed for a

lesson as I took on both roles, arts teacher and support teacher. There were days in which I didn't even teach music. I started referring to those days as my "easy" days. There was no creativity happening on my part. Being at a new school with new students meant that I could simply use lessons I had taught before...I was just trying to survive. I struggled to find joy in my career. I would often cry on my morning drive, dreading the day ahead of me. Without access to my creativity, I felt my day-to-day life was pulling me further and further away from my artistic soul. There was a tension building between artist and educator that was becoming unbearable. I was feeling isolated, frustrated and extremely overwhelmed.

As I bounced from school to school in these turbulent years of the teaching profession in our province, the isolation of being alone in my creative passion grew. I no longer resembled the people from my creative past. "Despite having worked with children and youth for much of my life, I have never identified as a 'teacher' and I felt like an outsider in the education building: full of 'curriculum', 'planned learning outcomes', and 'pedagogy' (Tomasson, 2017, p.10). Tomasson likens being an arts teacher in a school to being in a club to which she doesn't belong; "I was still looking for a meeting place for my old artist friends and the new educators in my life, one where I could really zero in on that ever, elusive fixed point" (p.10).

I am still working on finding that meeting place as I search for other artist/teachers in the building and look to connect with them in my district. When I make such a discovery, usually through casual conversation over lunch or after school, *I can feel a breath of life enter into me!* Imagine my surprise when I walked into my music room late one afternoon and discovered a teacher playing the piano! "I'm sorry!", she exclaimed. "I thought you had left for the day." I responded by telling her not to be sorry. *I was thrilled to discover there was another musician in the building!*

I didn't share my successes as an artist with new colleagues for years, after being called out by my mentor teacher during one of my student teaching practicums as being boastful about my achievements. My own stories of success in show business were shared by my fellow student teachers during lunch one day in an innocent effort to connect us to the school's teaching staff. This revelation inadvertently contributed to the downfall of my practicum at the school and I had to start all over at another. It was extremely difficult to be so mischaracterized and it had a lasting effect.ⁱⁱ Only now, after

having performed a one woman show as my thesis and having spent three years with a teaching staff I trust, I am beginning to share with them my life stories from a career in the arts.

Prior to becoming an elementary school music teacher, I was a successful performing artist living and working across the globe. For several years, I called New York City my home as I chased my dream of performing on Broadway. In the end, I was more than ready to leave New York. The dream alone wasn't big enough to commit my life to staying there. The Big Apple took a bite out of me with its grittiness and hard knocks and I found it quite easy to leave after meeting my future husband during one of my performing ventures. I came to Canada in 1994 after getting married and continued my acting career in Vancouver. After starting a family though, it became clear that acting, sporadic and unpredictable as it was with its crazy time commitments and few instances of continual employment, was not conducive to the life I was expected to lead. The disconnect between the artist I was and the person I was becoming, continued to grow.

My roles as a wife and mother would take precedence so I threw in the towel and gave up performing altogether, thinking that at some point, someday, I could step back into the limelight. I sang in a local choir and performed the national anthem for the Vancouver Whitecaps and other smaller organizations for more than a dozen years so that I could feel like I was still in the business. Coleen Hubbard (2001) writes in her book *Big Purple Mommy*, "...working smaller is a better option than not working at all." (p.169) In my heart though, I knew I was pulling farther and farther away from a career I loved. Hubbard also notes the balance an artistic mother must find between her creative passion and the raising of her child;

In order to sustain ourselves on the journey, we must hold our children in one hand and our creative gifts in the other, palms open and uplifted, recognizing that each hand holds something of immense, indescribable value, knowing that each hand tends the other, and that the weight in each hand will shift and change every day of our lives. Most importantly, both hands, while separate, extend from our two arms, which are connected to our body, which house our heart and soul (Hubbard, 2001, p.16).

I recognized when I was pregnant with our first child, our son who recently turned twenty-one, that there would be a delicate balance between a career in acting, thus

maintaining my identity as artist, and motherhood. I knew it would be challenging but I didn't believe those challenges would be insurmountable. I was a member of a group of working actresses in Vancouver that met once a month to discuss the business of acting. Only one other woman in the group was a mother and although being a famous child actress herself, she admitted the difficulty of finding the balance between what our society perceives as being a good wife and mother with the demands of auditioning and performing. Once I became a mother of two, it was virtually impossible to commit to the group and to a career in show business in general.

After the birth of our second child, our daughter, my husband and I bought a franchise through which I taught dance to preschoolers. Although not as financially viable as we had hoped, I was able to spend time with my own children in their early years, taking them to and from school, participating in classroom reading programs and accompanying them on the occasional field trip. These moments with my children were important to me. And as much as I regretted that my artistry was stifled in our business venture, the experience of working with young children gave me the confidence to pursue a career in teaching, something to which I had given serious thought in my younger years. I'll admit it was quite fun to be known as Miss Angie in and around the community. *A slight taste of stardom to quell the ego!*

I have always loved working with young children so this mid-life career decision to become a teacher seemed to make sense. I was a middle-aged woman raising a family with her husband and I had to do my part in assuring our financial security. I was content teaching music full time. I was happiest though when I was on the stage sharing my talents; I thought teaching the arts would suffice but soon discovered it didn't compare to practicing my artistry. I missed the process of preparing for auditions. I missed stepping into the audition room and singing my 16 bars hoping the panel would cast me in their production. I missed the creativity and collaboration that happens when preparing to mount a show. I missed the energy and excitement of working with fellow artists. I comforted myself by clinging to the idea that I could always go back to the stage when I retired from teaching. At the most, I would wait about 20 years and *I didn't really mind being a teacher*. Time has passed quickly but, in the time that I have taken away from performing to nurture my new role as teacher, my acting skills have become less honed, my voice is less strong, and my aging body has become an obstacle.

After only a few years in the teaching profession, I began to feel restless. I didn't realize this restlessness was the absence of the artist and of artistic practice creating a void. There had been a distinct shift in my person that was more profound than simply a change in career.

Teaching is profession that has a dramatic impact on the lives of those who choose to become teachers. As music teachers develop their own professional and personal identities during their career paths, they find themselves constantly reconsidering, deconstructing and renegotiation concepts of their personhood and what that means in relation to being a music teacher in the 21st century (Beynon, 2012, p. 256).

Lorenzino (2012) notes feeling restricted by teaching in a conservative, educational environment while struggling to maintain her own personal development and identity as a musician.

Philosophically, I struggled with my professional identity. Was I a teacher? No, I didn't want to classify myself as such as I overwhelmingly found teachers to be ultra-conservative and could not align this with any aspect of my identity. Was I a musician? Yes, but professional musicians did not view me as such. How then could I define myself? (Lorenzino, 2012, p. 293).

I did not fit into what I perceived to be the traditional teacher mold nor was I any longer a professional performing artist. It was time to create an opening that would allow art back into my life. How could I create this new space and at the same time embrace being an arts teacher?

Maxine Greene writes about the importance of reflective and impassioned teaching as means of exciting and encouraging students of all backgrounds and abilities to "reach beyond themselves, to create meanings, to look through wider and more informed perspectives at the actualities of their lived lives" (Greene, 1995, p.172). I had a notion that the key to finding fulfillment in my teaching and to becoming a better teacher to my students was to reconnect with the passion that drives me. So, in the spirit of improving my teaching, I began a Masters in Education at Simon Fraser University. As I worked with my fellow students in our arts education cohort, I found myself surrounded by enlightened, artistic people...artists, arts administrators, dancers, actors, writers, teachers...I began to feel alive! Now I know, the artist in me was awakening!

My transformation truly began when I discovered writing as embodied inquiry. It was here where I learned to acknowledge my body as a place of inquiry. I embraced the idea, “We do not have bodies, we are bodies, and embodied places of inquiry open up a phenomenological understanding of who one is and who one is becoming” (Ricketts and Snowber, 2013, p.2). This notion was paramount to an understanding that would allow me to explore possibilities beyond my limited perspectives. Instead of seeing my body as a place of learning, I came to realize that my body had become a place of loss. In addition to stripping away my own identity as artist, I had been using age and an aging body as an excuse that kept me from my artistry. I was failing to show up for my own life!

I had kept diaries since I was in elementary school as a way of reflecting on my feelings and recording important events. I continued the practice of journaling into adulthood but then quit writing when I became too busy raising my family. Autobiographical writingⁱⁱⁱ, both past and present has been instrumental to my process of inquiry throughout this thesis, beginning with my initial explorations of loss of artistic identity. I was very happy to return the practice of writing again during my studies.

While re-reading my entries; Surprise! Stop moment! I saw a recurring theme of *being stuck*. I had just hit menopause full force and realized I was in mourning. In addition to trying to adjust to middle age, I began to reflect on my life and career before becoming a wife, mother and teacher. *Why had so much changed?*

I had completely given up a career in performing and now, more than a dozen years later, I felt a deep loss. I worked through this loss, putting together words, pictures, and music into a visual and voice presentation. Snowber (2011) writes “...our lives are art-works, ones in an ever-changing mode of being and becoming” (p.11). This exercise became a process of self-discovery, a process that I knew needed further development, which compelled me to apply for a Master of Arts requiring me to write a thesis. I felt the pull, maybe it was the artist within me, to pursue this process. I simply wasn’t finished with this part of my educational journey. I was now beginning a process of embodied inquiry, heading into a journey of researching who I was and who I was becoming. *I found this possibility of journeying into the unknown to be very exciting!*

Writing from the body provided me with a deeper understanding of myself and where I perceived myself as being in this world. As my words poured from the pen onto

the page, the idea of the loss of artistic identity emerged. I realized that I had been experiencing a long process of grieving. The absence of the artist in me was profound and had begun to affect my day-to-day being. While I felt sadness from time to time after leaving a performance career, the loss of artist became more significant when I took on the role of teacher. I was now committing to a profession that I would keep until “retirement do us part”, putting the proverbial nail in the coffin with regards to the hope of ever resurrecting a career in the arts. I was finally able to acknowledge the impact of the absence of artist. I felt less of a person in my self-imposed role of non-artist. It was in the sharing of my embodied, autobiographical writings with others where the idea of a play was born.

Through performative and embodied inquiry, in which I revisited chosen narratives of my life, those stories that tugged on my sleeve, and those that emerged when I least expected, I was able to write and perform my thesis, a play, a process in which I experienced a re-awakening, a re-birth of sorts. Snowber (2011) writes, “As humans, we have been given the birthright of the imagination, we are in the process of creating and recreating our lives” (p.1). Snowber reminds us of the importance of listening to our lives, noting that discovery often happens during the work.

So, began the questions, my inquiries. My journals of many years ago became primary documents for my research. In creating narratives drawn from those journals, and engaging in performative and embodied inquiry, I wrote through the body, and the artist physically came alive through my script during rehearsal and in performance. During my research. I would make discoveries about myself that I would eventually share on the stage. I was on my way!

Our bodies hold a rich history that is valuable to arts-based research. Jan Chozen Bays (1997) writes, “Embodiment is: frustration of mind-never-still standing square in the way of Mind wonder of using mind-that-can-grow-quiet to encounter Mind, body-that-can-sit to realize Body” (p.171-172). My mind is always at work, worrying, thinking, wondering... I always worry about “getting things right”. I must learn to allow my mind to grow quiet, to simply rest, to enjoy being still. As Kathryn Ricketts (2011) writes,

When we consider embodiment, we recognize that we embody in action through our interactions with others, our narratives, our histories, in relationship with place and time, relationships and experiences

remembered, and newly realized in an ongoing unfolding of new possibilities (p.28).

Journal writing and the keeping of diaries under lock and key had been a significant routine in my daily life as a girl and as a young woman, and the re-discovery of its power in informing me of what matters now prompted me to write a play, a one woman show that I would put on the stage as my thesis. I had long ago lost touch with my former self, Angela Donahue, *artist*; through the practice of daily writing I discovered what a profound impact that loss was on my way of being. I poured through years and years of journal entries beginning in my early teens and ending in my early days of motherhood. This writing covered a span of more than 20 years of my life. In re-reading pages and pages of these old journals, I reconnected to a long-forgotten part of my identity. As I read entries, I was so grateful I had taken the time to write them down as many memories were only rekindled through the words on the page.

Having spent so many years on the stage, playwriting felt natural as a means to tell my story. The play initially began as a long-winded monologue and I was concerned that simply telling stories would not hold the attention of an audience. During the editing process and in consultation with Dr. Lynn Fels, I came up with the idea of a dialogue between Angie Lundin, wife, mother and music teacher, and Angela Donahue, artist. *We decided to invite me, Angela, along for the ride!* So, the monologue became a dialogue in which the two characters shared stories, laughed and cried together as well as teased and admonished one another.

From this new autobiographical writing and subsequent performance, I was able to see for the first time in over a dozen years, how important my artistic identity was to my way of living, to my way of being. By allowing myself to inhabit this space as artist once again, I was able to explore what the arts mean to me and how I might now bring the arts back into my life and into my practice as a teacher.

When the play was in its rehearsal process, I found inspiration and ideas flowed. Dr. Fels was my academic supervisor and the play's director. We shared many tears and joyful moments as the story unfolded and the narrative took a life of its own. The play was becoming a story of my life, of me. There were many unexpected moments of discovery, those stop moments or moments of recognition. Fels & Belliveau (2008) write, "As researchers and as educators, as learners and participants, these stops, these "a-

ha!” moments, these moments of recognition are pivotal to our work. Learning to recognize the stop is a way of being present and aware” (p.37).

We listen to these stop moments as opportunities for learning. My recognition of and tending to those stop moments became key in my writing and during the performance process. I became awake to the possibilities of what my life as artist and arts educator combined could look like. No longer would I wait to become an artist until after I leave the teaching profession. I realized that I could bring my artistry into my classroom, nurturing and embracing that artistry as part of my daily life. What’s more, I could step back out into the world of acting and give it another try.

If I am no longer an artist and I am not a “real” teacher, then who am I? By not taking the time to explore my question deeply, I knew that I would not be able to survive in the teaching profession, nor would my life outside of the classroom be fulfilling. Writing this thesis became a process of self-revelation, of learning who I am. Throughout the process of writing, exploring and performing, I probed the question of identity, specifically my own artistic identity, bringing into the spotlight stories that revealed what matters to me and why. My hope was to create a fresh approach to this troubling question of identity that burdened me. “Life writers are sojourners engaged in a lively life-time pilgrimage of seeking and searching, researching the past, present and future: writing autobiographically, we remember where we have been, attend to where we are, imagine where we might go” (Chambers, Hasebe-Ludt, Leggo, 2009, p.97). Robert J. Graham (1991) refers to the process of autobiographical writing as “the unending journey of self-realization” (p.66).

And thus, a play emerged. It is with deep gratitude to all who were involved in the process and to all that attended on that special summer evening, that I present the following play that is my thesis, *Finding Wonderland*. The premiere of this play took place in front of a sold out audience on Sunday, August 27, 2017 at the Evergreen Cultural Centre in Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada, and concluded with a standing ovation.

Pope's Intention for August 2017

Artists. That artists of our time, through their ingenuity, may help everyone discover the beauty of creation. (Pope Francis)

Show Program

Finding Wonderland



August 27, 2017

Evergreen Cultural Centre

7:00PM

Book

Angela Donahue Lundin with contributions and editing by Dr. Lynn Fels, Dr. Celeste Snowber, Andrew Wolf and Stephanie Henderson

Music

Finding Wonderland

Music by Jack Murphy, Lyrics by Gregory Boyd

I Hope I Get It

Music by Marvin Hamlisch, Lyrics by Edward Kleban

Don't Rain On My Parade

Music by Jule Styne, Lyrics by Bob Merrill

What I Did For Love

Music by Marvin Hamlisch, Lyrics by Edward Kleban

Where Am I Now

Music and Lyrics by Lewis Flynn

Come In From the Rain

Music and Lyrics by Melissa Manchester and Carol Bayer Sager

Journey to the Past

Music and Lyrics by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty



Angie Lundin - Wife, mother, music teacher, proud member of St. Clare of Assisi's choir Canticle. Member of BC Off Board of Directors and is an active member of the Coquitlam Music Teacher's Association. Loves to read and travel when she has time. Love to Wayne, Michael and Claire for their support during the past few months when I wasn't always fully available for them.



Angela Donahue - Actress, singer, dancer - Off Broadway, Regional Theatre, Dinner Theatre, Cruise Ships. Favorite roles include Peggy Sawyer in *42nd Street*, Cathy Selden in *Singing in the Rain*, Elaine in *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Television credits include *The X-Files*, *Cold Squad* and *Millennium* in addition to too many commercials to list here.



Student at the University of Victoria, Studied piano for 13 years, involved in other music and theatre programs. He is very excited to be supporting Angie in this show!

A Note of Thanks

Although this has been billed as a one woman show, it is hardly that at all. There are many people I must thank. First and foremost, I want to thank my tireless director Dr. Lynn Fels. You were the first to say “Yes!” to this crazy idea when presented in your class. Thank you for endless hours of reading, writing, editing and directing, giving this show life. Your writings on and teachings of Performative Inquiry were pivotal in my own writing and my research. Thank you, Dr. Celeste Snowber for your writings which have been inspirational in this journey, for getting me to move in the entire space and for always telling me what I needed to hear! Stephanie Henderson, your contributions were tremendous in helping me find clarity in my character portrayals. Andrew Wolf, my brilliant accompanist and choral partner in crime, thank you for your creative input and for going along with me on this crazy ride! Mom and Dad, thank you for always encouraging me to take risks, welcome change and to follow my heart. Wayne, you had no idea what you were getting into when you married this Indiana showgirl. Thanks for hanging on for the ride, no matter how bumpy! Michael and Claire, I dedicate this show to the two of you. Follow your dreams and don’t ever think you have to have a back-up plan. You are both artists too and I’m so proud of you. And to all who came to share this performance tonight, your support means more to me than you can ever imagine. I am truly blessed.



“I regard theatre as the greatest of all forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being”- Oscar Wilde.

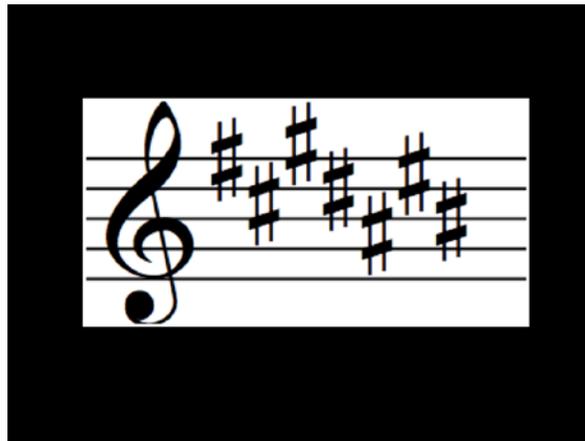
Finding Wonderland

by

Angela Donahue/Angie Lundin

(Lights up, grand piano is SR, next to the piano is a small table with a phone on it, there is a screen upstage centre, a table and a coat rack occupy SL, there are three chairs, two are centre stage and the third is behind the table, there is a suitcase down stage left along with a rolling bag)

Angie Lundin: *(sitting at table writing in her journal)* I've had another wonderfully fulfilling day at school. Everyday there is a child that warms my heart or makes me laugh. *(gets up and addresses audience)* Today a grade four student put her hand up and asked, *(slide of music staff with #'s on it)*



“What’s with all of the hashtags on the music staff?” Yes, I love teaching. I was walking to the gym for an assembly the other day and I actually said to myself, “Teaching is not a consolation prize. *(slide fades out)* I’m good with this.” *(music begins)* I am soooo happy!!! I’m Angie Lundin!!!

(Accompanist begins playing Finding Wonderland from the Broadway Musical Wonderland)

We move too fast

We miss so much

We seldom see all the miracles in front of us

A warm embrace (hug self)

A human touch

And so, it goes (hesitates while singing)

I race around (Angie moves around the stage) “and around and around and around...sorry...(take a sip of water, ad-lib with the pianist)...“I’ve got this.”

And so, it goes

I race around

Search high and low for the truth I used to know

When there was magic to be found

Cause finding Wonderland

Is taking time to see

The child (girl)^{iv} within has always been there smiling back at me.

So when I close my eyes, “I sure didn’t picture this”...(music stops)...“sorry...this is really scary!” (ad-lib with accompanist)

So, when I close my eyes

I just remember and

I can’t help finding Wonderland

(with a bit of confidence) It’s not too late

(We see a complete change in Angie’s demeanour, a shift in posture and body language occurs along with a southern accent^v)

Angela Donahue: You’re 53

Angie Lundin: (confused but keeps singing) *Here in my prime*

Angela Donahue: Well, 53 is a prime number...

Angie Lundin: *Hearts can un-break in a story’s nick of time. A happy ending, a perfect rhyme. Cause finding Wonderland is finding who you are...*

Angela Donahue: (*uses "Hoosier twang" in her speech*) Wait a minute! Stop the music. Who did you say you are? Angie Lundin? Mrs. Lundin. Ha! The first time I heard you say that, I started looking for your mother-in-law! Mommy. Mom. Miss Angie. Ange. (*bowing with immense pride*) Angela Donahue. Angie...a very dated nickname...not even a real name!!! Angela...Greek for Heavenly Messenger of God. "What's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet!" (William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*)

Angie Lundin: Are you finished?

Angela Donahue: Nope. (*with piano, picks up headshots from suitcase*) (slide on screen shows Angela Donahue actress, circa 1995)

"Who am I anyway? Am I my resume?"



(picture of Angie Lundin school teacher, 2016 appears on the screen)

That is a picture of a person I don't know..."



Angie Lundin: *(to audience)* Ladies and gentleman, I'm truly sorry. Someone seems determined to rain on my parade this evening.

Angela Donahue : *(to accompanist)* Hit it! *(singing)* Don't tell me not to fly I've simply got to, if some takes a spill, it's me and not you! Don't bring around a cloud to rain on my parade!!!! *(Funny Girl)*^{vi} You know, you say sorry way too much! But at least you don't say "sore-ry"! *(pronounces with a BC accent)*

Angie Lundin: Would you please stop?

Angela Donahue: Honey, I'm only getting started! Do you mind? This is **my** song!

Cause finding Wonderland

Is going home again

To feel the love another gives and giving back again

If you should lose your way

Reach out for someone's hand and you'll be finding Wonderland

Angie Lundin: *(quietly) I'll be finding Wonderland*

Angela Donahue: So...*(music vamp One from A Chorus Line)* are ya gonna introduce me?

Angie Lundin: Why? You don't exist anymore. *(vamp ends)* I've taken on a new identity...Angie Lundin...wife, mother, music teacher...I'm perfectly happy. My life has been so amazing. If I were Buddhist, this would be my last time around.

Angela Donahue: *(mimicking her)* "My life has been so amazing." Right...

Angie Lundin: What do you mean "right..."? It's the truth! I've a beautiful family, I've travelled across the globe and after six years of layoffs I have finally found a home in the teaching profession. I am happy as I go teach every single day!

Angela Donahue: *(aside to audience)* Me thinks the lady doth protest too much...

Angie Lundin: I am blessed to live and work in Canada and have healthy children, a loving husband and a supportive family back in Indiana...

Angela Donahue: But....

Angie Lundin: But? *(showing vulnerability)* But...I'm feeling more and more like the past fifteen years or so have been one big detour from what I originally set out to do. While a detour usually leads you back to your path, I've been stuck. *(to audience)* Now don't get me wrong. My life *is* wonderful....

Angela Donahue: So? What's the problem?

Angie Lundin: Something is missing. *(accompanist plays blues music)* As I've aged and the time away from the stage lengthens, and as my own

children pursue careers in the arts, this feeling of something missing is becoming worse. To be honest, I've been feeling a bit depressed.

Angela Donahue: A bit depressed? Sweetie, for the last few years you've been singing the blues. Look, you say you have everything! You go on and on about your beautiful family and your amazing love of teaching. In spite of having everything, there is a void in your life, an emptiness. Girl, I have the answer! You miss *me!*

Spotlight #1 - Identity

Angie Lundin: (*to audience*) I suppose I should introduce you to Angela Donahue. Most of you have never met her. She is sort of my ghost from the past. I love her and I fear her. As you can see, she sometimes calls me to task. (*give this weight*) I struggle between identities. I revel in who I once was and am desperately trying to accept who I am now.

"Life is difficult." That is the first sentence in *The Road Less Travelled*. I read the book in high school. Those three words Life...Is...Difficult, often come to mind when life throws me one of those detours, diverting me from my path. I need to acknowledge these detours, to tend to them and that's what I'm trying to do as I perform this one woman show. This play is a story of my struggle with identity, change and probably my biggest obstacle of all, time. It is a work in progress, kind of a rehearsal for the rest of my life. Through marriage, raising a family, career changes and enduring physical setbacks (*sit down*) with vocal nodes, a torn Achilles and menopause, I am trying to find my way back. When things go wrong, I tell myself it's God's way of keeping me humble.

Angela Donahue: (*gets up*) Back to where? Where exactly do you wanna go? Let's tell the real story...our story. Confess. You wanna be an actress again.

Angie Lundin: Well, yes...I still have my union cards...I really miss it. I spent so many years here (*indicates stage*) and then things changed.

Angela Donahue: Boy did it ever! Let's talk about that. I moved to BC in 1994 right after I got married. I got an agent right away and started booking TV commercials. In a few short years I went from unknown actress to working actress. I landed roles on *The X-Files*, *Millennium* and a

movie of the week. Do you remember when we got the call that an actress had been fired on set and the casting director called my agent...no audition...just "Get me Angela Donahue!" We were happenin', baby!

Angie Lundin: *(pulls chairs together to make car)* I remember! I was pulling out of the garage with Michael strapped in his baby seat, excited I was finally going to be able to meet my girlfriends at a mom's group in Port Moody. My husband Wayne came running into the garage, "You've got to call your agent right now!" Within an hour, I was on the set of *Atomic Train*. It was about a runaway train with nuclear explosives headed straight for Denver. Quality stuff!

Angela Donahue: *(Stands up)* Hey, I still get royalties from that quality stuff!

Angie Lundin: Those occasional royalties aren't enough to write home about but just enough to remind me of who I was. The cheques are made out to her...Angela Donahue which causes confusion because I don't have legal ID with my maiden name on it. My mom uses her maiden name as her middle name...Barbara Vissing Donahue. Angela Donahue Lundin. I tried to do that when I moved to Canada but the only way it would be allowed was if I added a hyphen and made the whole thing my last name. It was so dumb. I wonder if there's any chance of doing that now?

Angela Donahue: That would be nice....

Angie Lundin: I used to wonder why women kept their maiden names. I thought perhaps it was to cause less confusion should they get divorced. I changed my maiden name as a way of showing my commitment to marriage. After getting married though, I still made sure I was Angela Donahue in acting, so if I ever got screen credit my family would be proud. Name in lights kind of thing...

Angela Donahue: So, change it now?! What's the big deal? You know, I was really moving along when you stopped my career.

Angie Lundin: I never stopped you from doing anything. Life just happened.

Angela Donahue: *(moving quickly about the stage)* My career was happening. Let's talk about *The X-Files* because that's when I was really beginning to

emerge as a Vancouver actress. I had an amazing acting teacher who helped me transition from stage to screen. I prepared myself like I had never prepared before. For the first time, I was able to get out of my head and really embody the role connecting to the art. I was playing a kidnapping victim who would later be killed. (*set up chairs like a bed*) To prepare, I laid on my bed and pretended that I was pregnant and that my husband didn't know it. It was unbelievable how I could take myself to that space. I got a callback after my first audition. At the callback, (*pull centre chair DS*) I removed myself from the other actresses and sat in a stairwell putting myself back into that space again. I walked very quietly to the audition room and did the scene. Chris Carter, the creator of *The X-Files* was there. He gave me a direction and staying in character, I followed his instructions and I got the part. I booked two days as an actor. An actor role is 3 lines of dialogue or less. It wasn't a small part to me. I was on my way. Name in lights baby!

(*phone rings, accompanist answers as Angie gets dance shoes from suitcase*)

Accompanist: It's for you.

Angie Lundin: (*ballet music begins*) "Hello? An audition tomorrow morning? I'm so sorry. I have to teach a dance class." (*hang up phone, ad-lib being in dance class*) Point and flex and point and flex and point and flex... (*phone rings*) "Hello? An audition this afternoon? I'm so sorry. I'll never be able to find a babysitter on such short notice. Wait a minute... (*to accompanist, ad-libs*) Could you babysit for a bit this afternoon? Sorry." (*hang up phone, to audience*) Two babies, buying a business, not available to audition much anymore... I'm still hoping to make this work! (*phone rings*) Don't worry. I've got it. "Hello? The agency Christmas party? Yes!" One evening, I went to a Christmas party held by my agency. (*pianist quietly plays Christmas music*) There's the casting director who put me... her on *The X-Files* and called our agent after firing the actress on *Atomic Train* saying, "Get me Angela Donahue!" I was excited to connect with her again. "Merry Christmas!" She responded with, "Oh, hi." (*music goes into a minor key*) and a blank look on her face and kept on walking. She didn't even know who I was.

Angela Donahue: I was no longer booking young mommy roles in commercials, my mainstay when first moving to Vancouver. Callbacks for local theatres didn't end in parts. My agent told me that I was in the worst possible age and category for actresses... "40 Year Old White Woman". My New York life and dreams of Broadway, our Wonderland that we sang about, were a thing of the past. My many

successes in performing are just now stories of days gone by. My life as an actress was officially over.

Angie Lundin: That is why you are no more, Angela Donahue. It seemed to be the right time to take that final bow. So, with more than a little regret, I did. (*Takes a bow*) Chapter closed. I guess I didn't really fight or resist saying good-bye to you as I didn't seriously look at it as being final. I thought I would make my way back to the stage even if it was to be only a small part of my life.

Angela Donahue: You have been following a script of what you thought it meant to be married and to be a mother. Remember when Michael was a baby and Wayne was out of town and you were on set? You ran into overtime first pushing into the late afternoon, then into the evening. (*phone call*) "Hi, Christine^{vii}? I really hate to ask you to do this, but could you please pick Michael up from daycare? We were supposed to be finished by 3:00. Surely, we'll be done just after dinner time. Thanks so much." The shoot continued later into the evening and you were feeling just horrible. (*phone call*) "Hi, Christine. Yeah, I have no idea when we're finishing. I'm so sorry. Can I talk to him? Oh. You've already tucked him into bed. Of course. Don't wake him. No, I can't have you do that. I'll take him. I really appreciate all you've done for me. Thank you. Good-night." (*sits down in DS chair*) She offered to take him to daycare in the morning but you said, "no". You let yourself into her home at 4Am and slept on the living room floor. You had to be at your survival job at 8:00.

Angie Lundin: I wanted mine be the face he saw first in the morning. Family still comes first. No regrets about this. In putting my *whole* heart into the role of wife and mother, I neglected a very important part of myself. (*music begins*) I do regret that.

What I Did for Love from A Chorus Line^{viii}

Kiss today good-bye

The sweetness and the sorrow

Wish me luck the same to you

But I can't regret what I did for love, what I did for love

Angela Donahue: (stands up) So you left me in the shadows.

Angie Lundin: I never intended to...

Look my eyes are dry

The gift was ours to borrow

It's as if we always knew

And I won't forget what I did for love, what I did for love

Angie Lundin: That's how I look at it now, you know. Performing was a gift. Art was never meant to be a permanent installation in my life. I was just having fun.

Angela Donahue: Did you really think your art was only fun?

Gone, love is never gone

As we travel on

Love's what we'll remember

Angie Lundin: I remember. I was happy...we were very, very happy.

Kiss today goodbye

And point me toward tomorrow

Wish me luck the same to you

Won't forget, can't regret, what I did for love

What I did for love, what I did for love (end here)

Angie Lundin: Goodbye Angela Donahue. I'll never forget you, but I have a new role now and I'm afraid there's no room for you here.

Angela Donahue: (*standing up, furious*) Wait a minute! Really? You're saying goodbye to me? What do you mean your talents were only a gift that you never intended to make a career of it? Why wasn't I meant to be permanent? You lead me on for all of those years! Theatre is our life! We were born to be on the stage!

Angie Lundin: No, no, no... Remember what I said when the director at a callback at the Vancouver Playhouse asked me about my long absence from the stage? I told her theatre is not my life, but only a part of it. She told me she wished more actors had this attitude.

Angela Donahue: Some good your attitude did for me. (*sitting*) You killed me! (*pout*)

Angie Lundin: (*Gets up*) Now you're just being dramatic. This show is about me, remember?! (*confession to audience*) To be honest, I feel a bit selfish considering a return to the stage. If I take time to prepare and give myself as a performer, then I give less to others in my life. Performing was easier when I had no other big responsibilities.

Angela Donahue: I don't really buy that. If you wanted easy, you would have never become an actress.

Angie Lundin: But so much of that *was* easy! I consider so much of my career, especially in its early days, just dumb luck! I was no great actress. I had a theatre minor in university, but it was in technical design. I was too intimidated by all of the acting students wearing their black and smoking pot to even consider making theatre a double major. I took voice lessons and followed a love for performing and it led to jobs. I spent two summers between semesters performing but I never thought I was good enough to consider a career in it.

Angela Donahue: (*pulls 2 chairs DSC, sits down with her dad*). I don't believe you. I remember when Dad used to do my tax returns. I was so proud when he wrote "actress" under occupation.

Angie Lundin: (*to audience*) Now, in my 50's, I realize I have lost a big part of my identity. That is the identity I created in those years where I was artist. (*stand*) What happened to Angela Donahue? One of the identities I've loved the most was that of artist and yet artist was the identity I sacrificed to honour all of the others.

Angela Donahue: You thought that once you became a wife, a mom, a teacher, your identity changed. Truth is, in *addition* to being all of those, you are still an artist. How did you lose your artistic identity? Perhaps the burning question might be "Why is artistic identity so important to your way of being?"

Angie Lundin: Good question! This is what I am exploring. Why did I ever think it was okay to give up performing completely? I know now that there is a piece of me that has been neglected, that is starving and I must nurture that part of me, or I will in a sense, die.

Angela Donahue: (*animated*) Well you'd better figure it out. I'm neglected. I'm starving. I have already died! No one *knows* Angela Donahue anymore. *You* don't even know me. If you didn't say good-bye to me when you said "I do" to that wonderful husband of yours, you most certainly said good-bye when you took that final bow. (Bows, clears CS of chairs) End scene! Blackout! Exit stage left!

(*Lights go out, exits SL*)

Angie Lundin: (*Quietly sneaks back on stage, in almost darkness, maybe only piano light is on, to audience*) Is she gone? I have been quietly mourning a great loss. A loss I feel so deeply. I don't think I can even describe it. It makes me incredibly sad as I often feel alone in the depths of this loss. Perhaps it's something that can't be described, only felt. I don't want to bury Angela Donahue, *artist*, any longer.

Angela Donahue: Enter, stage right! Spotlight! Angela Donahue resurrected! (*clapping hands*) Applause ladies and gentlemen!!! (*lights back up*) You had me a bit freaked out! You know, this struggle of yours with identity has been years in the making. You act like it's something new. I've lived with it most of my life so why is it so important to you now?

Angie Lundin: Why now? Maybe I spend too much time reflecting on the past. Maybe I'm afraid of the future. (*To audience*) I struggled with identity beginning as early as my college years, that's university here in Canada, when I couldn't decide whether or not to tell people I was from Indiana or Kentucky.

(slide of map of Indiana and Kentucky)



I was born in Louisville, Kentucky, that's how you say it...NOT Loueyville or Lewisville...Louisville, but grew up just across the Ohio River in Jeffersonville, Indiana. We call the area Southern Indiana. No matter where I am in the world, if I say, "I am from Kentucky", people expect a real southern girl who loves horses and says y'all as she greets her friends. When I say I'm from Indiana, they definitely don't expect a midwestern girl with a southern twang.

Angela Donahue: You sure don't have much of an accent now. You should of heard me before I came to Canada! (play video clip from *Busch Gardens show*)^{ix}



- Angie Lundin: You have to admit it was put on little thick for the show! There you were a legit soprano in a country show. It was pretty rough!
- Angela Donahue: Good thing I was going to college to become a broadcast journalist. At the time, Indiana University had one of the top programs in the country.
- Angie Lundin: I'm fairly certain you were attracted to the performance aspect of broadcasting. You had dreams of becoming a news anchor. A single incident during a radio station internship made it clear that you weren't cut out for it.
- Angela Donahue: It's 5AM on a Saturday morning and I've just begun my shift. I do the rounds calling the police and fire departments to see if anything happened over night. (*pick up telephone*) "Hello, it's Angela Donahue from WB. Did anything happen last night?" (*to audience*) Usually, there's nothing. But today is different. (*Jotting down notes as I listen...*) "A car accident...highway leading to town...young man has died. Got it, thank you." I don't see anything on the Associated Press newswire so I give them a call. (*on phone*) "Angela Donahue, WBWB, Bloomington, IN. There was a single vehicle accident coming into town last night, one man dead. I'm the first to report it?" (*to audience*) My heart is racing! "Yes. That's right. Angela Donahue. D-O-N-A-H-U-E. Yes, like Phil! Thank you." (*hangs up phone*) My name is on the Associated Press newswire...Name in lights!!! I'm the intern the news director praises for being on the ball. I got the scoop! There I am celebrating like crazy when my boyfriend reminds me that a family was mourning the death of a son. Big, huge stop moment. I can't work in an industry that focuses on the misfortunes of others. I can't stick a microphone in someone's face after their house has burned to the ground and their dog is still somewhere in the ashes. Shit. This is my last semester of college. Now what?^x
- Angie Lundin: (*to audience*) Oh, man. It completely changed her path.
- Angela Donahue: (*goes to suitcase*) I go through commencement but hold off on receiving my diploma. I moved back home for the summer so I could do a TV production internship in Louisville. (*place a chair down stage centre as if she is sitting in the interview room*) I'm already committed to the Miss Indiana pageant so I might as well stay close to home. (*to accompanist*) What? Why are you looking at me like that? I entered a beauty contest on a dare. And I won! Please don't

judge me. *(gets tiara from suitcase)* I am not a pageant girl! No identity crisis here!

Angie Lundin: I know! Which is why I was so surprised you did it. You said no to a gig at Opryland in Nashville, TN, which was the biggest theme park gig next to Disney World.

Angela Donahue: I know! And I regret it to this day. But I did make Top Ten in the pageant.

Angie Lundin: *(to accompanist)* Out of 20 contestants...

Angela Donahue: *(ignoring her, puts on tiara)* Do you know what made me really mad? I told my sponsors that I wanted to present myself at the state pageant as a performer! But they said no. I would do much better in the interview as a broadcast journalist.

Angie Lundin: *(to audience)* Identity is at play once again...

Angela Donahue: *(to audience)* So what does the judging panel ask me? An easy, straightforward question...for someone who wants to be a journalist. *(sitting very properly like a pageant girl)* "If you could interview anyone in the world, who would it be?" *(indicates wait a minute to judges, to audience getting out of chair)* I have no idea! Panic! My family has made the five-hour trek to Michigan City, spent \$300 on a pageant gown and more money on a vocal arrangement that I'll never use again and I am drawing a complete blank! *(sits in chair)* "Muammar Khadafi!" *(hops out of chair, to audience, pacing)* The panel was as puzzled as I! Muammar freakin Khadafi? It's the first name I can think of! He's all over the news right now but all I know is he is the dictator of Libya and is not a very nice man. *(sits properly in chair)* "Yeah. I'd want to ask him why he's doing all of the horrible things he's doing..." *(to audience)* I knew in that moment I had no chance at the crown. *(takes off tiara, puts it back in suitcase)* So back I went living with my parents while I worked in a department store as I tried to figure things out.

(Phone rings. Accompanist answers, then holds the phone out towards Angela.)

Accompanist: It's for you. A friend of yours wants you to audition at Kentucky Kingdom tomorrow morning at 10:00.

Angela Donahue: (*Slide non-equity images of Angela as actress*) Through a series of lucky breaks, I fell effortlessly into the life of a performer. These were mostly non-union jobs. (*setting up chairs to indicate living space*) I packed my little station wagon and drove from one town to another going from show to show having the time of my life. I got my first steady pay check when I played Liesl in the *Sound of Music...* (*singing*) I was 23 going on 24^{xi}. I was working at a dinner theatre in Rock Island, Illinois thinking, "Wow! I'm getting paid to do this!" I made \$200 a week and got great reviews. It was pretty amazing.

Angie Lundin: Do you remember Hazelton, Pennsylvania?

Angela Donahue: Oh yes...Hazel-hell we called it. I am playing Kathy Selden, the leading lady in *Singing in the Rain*. Dream role!!! It's such a lovely cast but these are by far the worst accommodations in my career. My room stinks of mold and mildew. Every morning there is a brand-new moldy ring on the inside of the toilet (*use chair as toilet*) and all of my sheet music that I store under the bed is damp and wavy. I sprained my ankle in the big finally because the inside of the rain tank warped. (*sings, performs jump kicks in chorus girl style*) I'm singing, singing with a sprain.

Angie Lundin: Those were good times...no, really...these are memorable moments.

Angela Donahue: The final kicker comes when there is a fire and the theatre burns to the ground. We lose all of our personal belongings and several guaranteed weeks of lively-hood. Worst of all, we have to say very quick and unexpected good-byes.

Angie Lundin: Wages and working conditions improved considerably when you got your Actor's Equity Card. Now you were ready for the big time! You took your new status as serious, professional actor and went straight to New York y'all!

Angela Donahue: Yes, I did. I sold my little station wagon, hopped on a plane and was off on the adventure of a lifetime!

Angie Lundin: (*animated*) New York! I can't believe I actually lived there. What an amazing city! God, I'd love to go back. I was living the dream of so many actresses. I did temp work, waitressed and danced for an entertainment company called Chez-zam^{xiii} to pay the bills. I took dance and acting classes from master teachers. I was on cloud nine as I took the subway to rehearse a tour of *42nd Street* with Jerry Orbach and Karen Ziemba who were big Broadway stars.

Angela Donahue: It all sounds so glamorous, doesn't it? Need I remind you of your love/hate relationship with that city?

Angie Lundin: What are you talking about? It was a place of immense opportunity and I loved that. I saw as many Broadway shows as I could possibly afford. I still have all of my Playbills. (*show stack of Playbills, picks up journals*)

Angela Donahue: (*walks to table with journals in hand*) Let me remind you what you were really thinking. I think age and time away have clouded your memory.

Angie Lundin: Wait a minute! What are you doing? My diaries? Where did you get these?

Angela Donahue: (*walks to CS*) "July 14, 1993. Men are such assholes! I was told by some jerk today that I'm not a person, that I'm not Angela. I'm just a receptionist. I was so angry and am now determined not to do this much longer. This guy called and asked to speak with someone. He got very huffy, raising his voice at me saying he left a message two hours ago and blah, blah, blah. I said, "Sir, there is no reason to be nasty," I apologized for calling him nasty. He would not let it go. He asked me my name. I told him and he kept badgering me. I finally hung up on him. He called back and yelled at me saying he was the president of "Phase Out". I wanted to say, "I don't care if you're president of the fucking United States!" but of course I didn't. I apologized for hanging up on him. I just wanted to take the message. He wouldn't let up until he realized I was in tears. Then he gave me the whole song and dance about not taking it personally. He tells me he says that to all of his "girls". I wanted to tell him how sexist that was but...He went on to say that when I'm answering phones, I'm not Angela, I'm not a person. I said, "No, sir, I am Angela".

So, this is life in the big city. I have never been treated this way anywhere. (*shuts diary with a flourish*)

Angie Lundin: (*setting up chairs like an airplane, to audience*) Whenever I returned to the city after spending time back home, on a job or with Wayne, I would get increasingly anxious as the plane neared LaGuardia. A woman apologizes for kicking a man's seat. "Oh, sorry!" "You've been doing it the whole fuckin' trip!" Everyone gets up to get their belongings out of the overhead compartments before the plane comes to a stop, ignoring flight attendant's requests for them to sit down with their seat belts securely fastened. I would often cry silent tears. (*gets up*) I had battled a taxi driver in cabby court only to be hit on by his sleazy lawyer. Our apartment was burglarized just before Christmas. I'd had it with yelling bosses and insults on temp jobs. I had helped carry enough baby strollers up and down subway stairs to know I didn't want to raise kids in the city. I guess I didn't want the Broadway stage badly enough to put up with the day to day beatings. I've always hated that I'm so soft. It's probably one of my biggest character flaws and I think it might have cost me my career.

Angela Donahue: (*walking to coatrack to get apron*) So that's your story? You couldn't handle New York because you were a softy from Indiana? I think you were just waiting to find a prince charming to take you away from the big bad city.

Angie Lundin: And I did. (*puts on apron, phone rings*)

Angela Donahue: "Hello? This is she. Oh hi!!!" (*to audience*) It's the cruise ship production company. "You've fired a singer and you're looking for a replacement? When would you need me? Sunday?! I'm just on my way to my waitressing job. Could I give you a call back this afternoon? Oh, I see." (*to audience*) They are going down a list of names and the first person to say "yes" gets the job. (*in phone*) "Yes!"

Angie Lundin: This was the contract on which I met Wayne, my husband of nearly 23 years. Amazing how a single phone call changed the course of my life! (*takes off apron*)

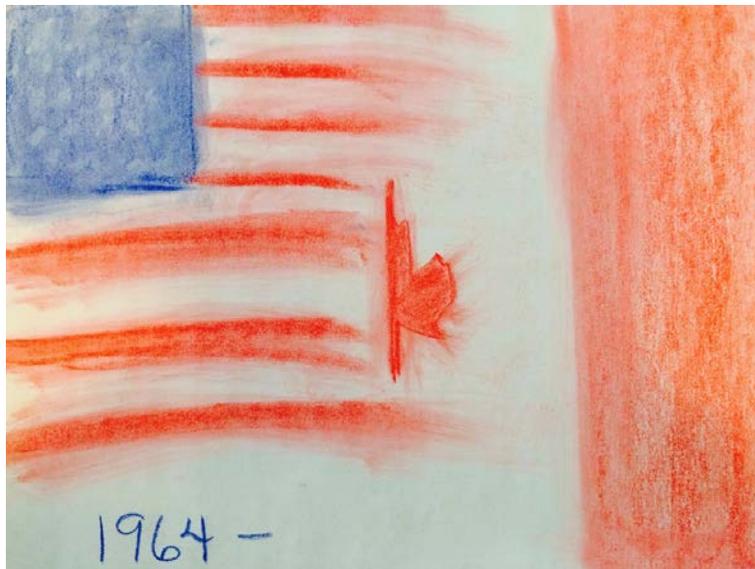
Angela Donahue: You followed the script! I see self-sabotage written all over this! I see self-sabotage even now! New York would have been a great

place to raise kids. Your daughter would have loved it if you had raised her in New York! Cue mother guilt!!!

Angie Lundin: How was I to know I would raise a child who wanted to be on Broadway?! (*to daughter Claire in audience*) Sorry kiddo. Okay, 23 years later, I'll admit I'm finding it difficult knowing I don't belong there anymore especially when I see people I know working on Broadway. I'm sad and even embarrassed that I am a non-artist when I correspond with them on Facebook. I see myself as something less. Did I sell myself short? What if I'd had stayed in New York? I went there so I would never play the "what if" game and here I am. Playing the "what if" game.

Angela Donahue: So she falls in love, gets married and moves to Canada. Cue cultural identity crisis! (*Show slide of US/Canadian flag drawing from my embodiment course*)

(*Accompanist plays Star Spangled Banner. Angie goes to suitcase down stage left, and takes out and puts on USA scarf, Canadian hat. She stands CS, holding American and Canadian flags*)



Angie Lundin: "O Canada, our home and native land, true patriot love at all our sons command." (*she exchanges confused glance with accompanist*)

Angie Lundin: *(to audience, while putting away props)* The script never had me moving to another country. I never gave any thought to the differences in cultural identity between the US and Canada but they became apparent almost immediately. Many Canadians have very strong opinions about their neighbours to the south.

Angela Donahue: Oh yeah...It's 1996, and I've been in Canada for just over a year. I constantly feel the anti-American sentiment and it's taking its toll. *(position three chairs to match configuration of the bus)* I am on a bus headed to an audition and I hear an older woman on an anti-American rant..." *(sits in woman's seat)* Americans don't know anything about Canada. They call our money funny money. They think we all live in igloos and say "eh". Americans are so stupid." *(moves to Angie's seat)* We are approaching my stop, and for once I do have to say something. So, I turn to her and calmly say, "You know, some of us stupid Americans like Canada so much, we've chosen to make it our home. Have a nice day!" Sometimes it's hard being the only American in the room.

(to Angie) So do you identify as American or Canadian?

Angie Lundin: I don't know. Can I identify as both? I feel like I have to make a choice. Legally, I am both. My daughter Claire gave me the name Usadian. I carry two passports as I'm required by law. I have to file tax returns in both countries and that's plain expensive. I guess I'm feeling more and more Canadian which makes me feel less and less American and I'll admit that makes me sad. I love that I grew up in the United States but I don't identify with the America that is now. It may seem silly but this mixed cocktail of an identity has really had an effect on me.

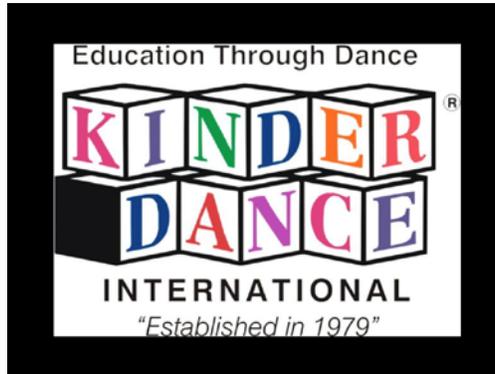
Angela Donahue: So cultural identity *is* a struggle.

Angie Lundin: It's not unique to me but I don't think my friends and family understand how it affects me. Maybe I'm making too much of it.

Angela Donahue: I don't think so. It would be easier on both of us though if you could find a way to embrace both identities. Usadian...I like that!

Angie Lundin: My break away from performing arts and the move into teaching the arts has been a great struggle as well. Art became more functional

and less creative. I think this is where the real trouble begins. (*Slide showing Kinderdance® logo*)^{xiii}



Angie Lundin: (*putting on Kinderdance® tee-shirt and dance shoes*) Year 2000 and I am now a business owner. Kinderdance®. No surprise that I am teaching dance for a living.

Angela Donahue: (*to audience*) Well, I was a bit surprised...

Angie Lundin: (*ballet music plays, over the top*) I am now "Miss Angie". Pizza feet everyone! I love promoting education through dance. I love working with children all over the lower mainland. I could create my schedule giving me time with my own kids. Rookie of the Year. Check. Franchisee of the Year. Check. People know me everywhere! Every time I'm out with my friends and family, we're always interrupted by a "Miss Angie!" Name in lights...?

(*music goes to blues, Angie picks up bean bags*) I tried to make it work, juggling family life and the occasional acting gig with running a business. I took this on because we needed for me to have a steady income, one that is not afforded by acting. Truth be told, I never really made any money with Kinderdance®. All of my lessons are strictly dictated by the franchisor and my own artistry is completely gone. (*drops beanbags*) "Hold the ball. Drop the ball. Reach up and pick an apple from the tree..." This is not okay. (*kicks beanbags toward the suitcase*)

Angela Donahue: I don't think it's a coincidence that nearly all of my commercials involved working with young children. I was always able to connect with them. (*to audience*) Don't blink or you'll miss me. (*Tickle Me*)

Elmo commercial shows on screen. Angela puts Elmo doll in chair, takes off tee-shirt)

Okay, come on, Angie. It's time to really start talking about the reason for being here today, in this space, on this stage. Tell us your greatest struggle with identity.

Angie Lundin: *(to audience)* The biggest struggle I've had with personal identity has been...ta-da... Angie Lundin as school teacher. It is here where the artist in me has become completely erased. First, I was a teacher on call. That's not even a "real teacher". When I finally got a contract, I wasn't a "real teacher" because I taught music. One year, when I taught grade 2, a parent actually said to me, "I didn't know you were a real teacher too." And to be honest, I often feel that way. Not a real teacher...

Angela Donahue: So, this is about your ego. You don't want to be called "music teacher".

Angie Lundin: No, that's not it at all. I love being a music teacher. It goes much deeper than that. *(picks up writings)* From the journal writings I've done in my Masters program, *(as if reading)* "In addition to being less of a teacher in the eyes of others, I have stripped away my own title as artist." I thought that if I wasn't paid to be an artist, then I could no longer call myself artist. I've taken a leave of absence from the performers unions so I could go back some day but will someday ever come?

Angela Donahue: Angie, it's not too late. You know what happened? You assumed because you took on other identities that your acting career was over. Perhaps your career has taken a detour but you're still an artist. You never even considered creating your own work in the past but look at where you are today! *(to audience)* Everyone, please, some applause for Angie Lundin!! Starring in her first one woman show!!

Angie Lundin: This is all so overwhelming. Really, why am I standing up here? I have a great career as a music teacher. I have wonderful colleagues who support what I do in the school. Why isn't it enough?

Angela Donahue: Because you are holding back. You've kept me hidden. I think they would like me! I am you. Show them who we are! You would give anything to go back to a life on the stage! You are here on this stage! Maestro, please!

(Accompanist plays Where Am I Now from musical Lysistrata Jones)

Angela Donahue: *Fight go Angie^{xiv} go!*

Angie Lundin: *What a joke, that much I know
Seems so strange now and always so complex
and I have no clue what comes next*

Angela Donahue: And you'll never know what comes next if you don't just take a chance and go for it.

Angela Donahue: *Maybe just some more time, just a little more fight
Like they say, no guts no glory*

Angie Lundin: *All and all I did fine or maybe I'm like a hundred miles off course
Well maybe that was too much
Maybe not enough
Maybe I should just turn back now
Cause how do I go on
When everything's so wrong

Where am I now, how am I here
Which way do I turn when it's all so unclear
I'm standing alone with nothing but fear
Where am I now, now that I'm here*

Angela Donahue: You're not alone. You have me! And after tonight, you might even have them.

Angie Lundin: *All I wanted was this (want is), just to feel how it feels
Just to say again "I did it" ("we did it")
Just to open my eyes and see something different than before
So maybe that's too much
Maybe too big a dream
Too late to turn back now
So how do I go on when everything's so wrong, wrong, wrong,
wrong, wrong*

Again! The guilt! I love teaching! But I don't feel as alive as I am on the stage with other artists who share my passion!

Angela Donahue: Ah ha! You did it! You just called yourself an artist! Yes!!

Angie Lundin: *Where am I now, how am I here
Which way do I turn when it's all so unclear
Please give me a sign, will an answer appear
Where am I now, now that I'm here*

Angela Donahue: Why do you feel like you sold out?! You can have it all! Why can't you get this into your head? Teaching itself is a performative act. Instead of giving on the stage, you give each and every day in and out of the classroom. You said it yourself. Your identities were never meant to be separated! We are meant to be together! You and me!

Angie Lundin: *I want more, something more, I want more!
Where am I now,
Where am I now,
I'm standing alone with nothing but fear
Please give me a sign
Will an answer appear
Where am I now, where am I now
Where am I now*

Spotlight #2 - Change

Angela Donahue: It's not too late! We can come back!

(Slide of Angela's younger, skinnier self appears on screen.)



Angie Lundin: Seriously? I'm stuck and am trying to accept a changing, aging body and you throw her (*pointing to screen*) in my face?!!

Angela Donahue: Well, this a problem. You don't love your body. I never loved my body so I can't blame this entirely on you. I was always being told to lose weight. I remember attending a second callback for a European tour of *42nd Street*, a show I had done three times with original choreography only to hear, "Ladies, I could hire any one of you for your talent but you're all too fat for the costumes." Maybe if I hadn't chosen a career where I was constantly told I needed to lose weight, your body image wouldn't be such a big deal to you today.

Angie Lundin: Maybe. I've never loved my body. I realize I'm not a large person but I have put on a lot of weight over the years. (*looking in mirror*) I look in my bedroom mirror each morning and the image that stares back at me looks a bit familiar but at the same time I don't know who she is. My daily mood hinges on the number I see on the scale in the morning. Do I step on that scale? (*ad-lib self-talk in the morning, it's a ritual*) I know this weight gain is part of menopause and aging but I find it incredibly frustrating. (*slide disappears from screen*)

Angela Donahue: How can you complain about your body? Look at all it has done for you. You need to look after yourself, make peace with your body. Your body is your personal place of being, of acting, of living, of loving.

Angie Lundin: (*sitting*) I am getting older. I know I simply need to accept it but I haven't. I joke that it's better than not getting older. The truth is, getting old terrifies me. Dying terrifies me. And dying without loving every part of myself...that's just...well...shameful.

Angela Donahue: My parents always told me that change is part of life. When I was trying to figure out what to do after my college years, they encouraged me to follow my passions and gave me important words to live by, "What you do now, might not be what you choose to do 20 years from now. So do what you love." These words have given me permission to follow my heart and encouraged me to accept change.

Angie Lundin: I was taught to embrace change so why am I resisting it now? I hate this feeling of being stuck. I am stuck in a pattern of rushing around, of taking on too much. I've spent years being stuck in between lives, in between careers, in between hometowns, and now in between youth and old age.

Angela Donahue: (*gets up, to audience*) This place of being in between is called liminal space. (*to Angie*) You act as if it's a bad thing. Instead, look at it as a way of growing, a way of moving forward. Living and being in these spaces allows us to explore who and where we are. By being in this space, you have been able to imagine what it would be like to be an actress again.

Angie Lundin: (*firmly, resisting*) Being stuck in liminal space causes me a great deal of pain.

Angela Donahue: You're exhausted, emotional, forgetful and clumsy. Be gentle with yourself. I can see it is unbelievably frustrating and oh so difficult. I'm proud at how desperately you are fighting to not become unraveled.

(*Accompanist plays music intro for Come in from the Rain*)

Angela Donahue: Maybe it would help if the two of us could be reacquainted.

*Well hello there, good old friend of mine
You've been reaching for yourself for such a long time
There's so much to say, no need to explain
Just an open door for you to come in from the rain*

*It's a long road when you're on your own
and someone like you will always choose the long way home
There's no right or wrong, I'm not here to blame
I just want to be the one to keep you from the rain, from the rain*

*And it looks like sunny skies
now that I know you're alright
Time has left us older and wiser
I know I am*

Angie Lundin: *And it's good to know my best friend has come home again
Cause I think of us like an old cliché
but it doesn't matter cause I love you anyway
Come in from the rain*

*And it looks like sunny skies
now that I know you're alright
Time has left us older and wiser
I know I am*

Angela Donahue: *And it's good to know my best friend has come home again
Cause I think of us like an old cliché
but it doesn't matter cause I love you anyway*

Come in from the rain

Come in from the rain

Come in from the rain

Spotlight #3 – Time

Angela Donahue: Okay! Here we are! We're back in business! Where's the script? What are my lines?

Angie Lundin: Hold on. Script? What script? I don't have time to write a script! (*to audience*) I constantly give my time to others, which leaves very little time for me. It's as if I'm addictive to volunteering. I feel bad saying "no". As a result, I am over tired, over scheduled and over committed. It's like a sickness, this over committing. The thing is, I really like helping people and being involved in the greater community.

Angela Donahue: But you always go overboard.

Angie Lundin: I know. I blamed a busy family life and financial commitments for putting my artistic dreams on hold. I'm certainly the master of my own undoing now. Why do I feel the need to be so scheduled in my life when I dread having to keep up a frantic pace?

Angela Donahue: (*walking to suitcase*) There is never enough time. You are constantly running here and there trying desperately not to be late, not to disappoint, not to drop the ball. Many times, you seem to pull a rabbit out of the hat as you get things done.

Angie Lundin: (*pulls out bags*) Every morning, I prepare a number of bags for the day. I have my rolling bag for school. I call it walking my dog. I have my lunch bag. This is my bag for the after-school music program on Tuesdays. This is my bag for catechism. This is my bag for Church choir. And this is the bag I use for my laptop when writing in a location outside of the home. As I leave the house, I always make sure I have three things, my wallet, my glasses and my phone. "One, two, three." Into a bag they go. In my head I actually count to three as I know I must have those three things with me as I venture

in the world along, of course, with the right bag or bags! Stop moment. I am a bag lady!

Angela Donahue: As long as one of those bags has a script in it, I'm in! (*to audience*) My first acting teacher in New York, asked the class during our first session what we did for a living. We went around the room...waiter, office worker, student, unemployed..." Me? Actor." Do you know what my acting teacher said? "The only person to answer that question correctly, was Angela. In order to be an actor, you must call yourself an actor." Angie Lundin, the theatre has called you again. It's time for you to answer. You've pushed this love of yours out of your life and you've missed it.

Angie Lundin: I have to weave all of my identities together as one. I am an American who now calls Canada my home. I am a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a friend. I am a teacher. I am an artist. I think I'm ready to celebrate all of those identities. I've missed you, Angela Donahue.

Angela Donahue: Let's lay down the path so you can walk again. You are taking the first step. Freely. Without guilt. The stage is yours. The theatre is calling you.

Angie Lundin: I don't have to quit teaching to practice my artistry and I don't have to wait until I retire from teaching to put myself on the stage.

Angela Donahue: Yikes. I've never worked without a script before.

Angie Lundin: I'll help you and you know what, I might even get up the nerve to audition again.

Angela Donahue: We can do this together. And as you said at the beginning of this evening, teaching is not a consolation prize! You just have to teach what you love.

Angie Lundin: (*walks to phone*) Hang on a sec. There's this call I have to make. (*picks up phone*) "Hello, Actors Equity? I would like to re-activate my membership. Fantastic!" (*hangs up phone*) Baby steps.

Angela Donahue: Baby steps! No way! It's showtime! We have an audience here! We are home.

(Accompanist plays music for Journey to the Past from the musical Anastasia.)

Angie Lundin: *Heart don't fail me now
Courage don't desert me
Don't turn back now that we're here
People always say life is full of choices
No one ever mentions fear
Or how the world can seem so vast
On a journey to the past*

Angela Donahue: *Somewhere down this road
I know someone's (something's) waiting
Years of dreams just can't be wrong
Arms will open wide
I'll be safe and wanted
Finally, home where I belong
Well, starting now, I'm learning fast
On this journey from our^{xv} past*

(Accompanist plays transition into Finding Wonderland)

Angela Donahue: *This is your show. Take it away!*

Angie Lundin: *Cause finding Wonderland
Is going home again
To feel the love another gives and giving back again
If you should lose your way
Reach out for someone's hand and you'll be finding Wonderland
I'll be finding Wonderland*

Performing Learning: Reflections from Angie and Angela

Angie: As I wait in the wings of the theatre listening to the buzz of the audience, watching Dr. Celeste Snowber await her cue for the curtain speech, I am surprisingly calm. I say to myself over and over again, “No self-sabotage. No self-sabotage...”

As the months until performance turned into weeks and weeks turned into days, I was full of self-doubt. Would I really be able to pull this off? Would people really buy tickets to see my little one woman show? When I boldly proclaimed my intentions in my theatre class 18 months ago, I wondered if I would really do it, if I *could* really do it. I had no idea what I was in for! It was one thing to write a play but to actually, as Snowber eloquently phrased it in an earlier conversation, go from the page to the stage would be a monumental task. I knew there was no turning back when I booked the theatre and tickets began to sell right away. I was more than just a little scared. I was downright panicked!

Angela: I was scared too! I mean, come on! It had been a long time since I'd been on the stage and to jump back in via a one-woman show? To perform for so many people who had never met me? It was risky. But I was always one to take risks. I would never have become an actress if I had been afraid of failure. A one woman show though would be way harder to pull off than working in an ensemble. In an ensemble, we sink or swim together. This was all on me! I remember my first solo performance, a cabaret act on a cruise ship. It was dreadful. Seriously! I'm not kidding. It was singularly the most humiliating experience of my professional performance career. I was so nervous I couldn't control my breath. At one point I actually said to the audience, "Look! My knees are shaking!" A passenger came up to me and said they were looking forward to seeing my cabaret after having seen the bigger productions in which I was the female lead singer. "What happened?!", she exclaimed not even trying to hide her dismay.

It took a long time for me to take to the stage again in a solo act, but I eventually got there. I'm glad Angie didn't remember that experience on the cruise ship while contemplating her show! While I often considered the limitations of my talents...maybe I thought I wasn't good enough for Broadway as a young actress...I did know that I was

good enough to get cast in roles...in shows with other people...and continued a performance career. I simply foolishly allowed myself to get side-tracked.

Angie: Through autobiographical inquiry, I re-visited my own stories and through performative and embodied inquiry, I have now physically shared them with an audience. It has not been an easy process, remembering, writing, sharing, reflecting; but I am left with a better understanding of how stories shape us and why my story is so important to my artistic way of being. It was also important to me that others know who I am. I had in a sense been hiding a secret identity while in my world of teaching.

My story is myself: and I am my story. This is all you will know of me; it is all I will know of you. This is all that will survive of us: the stories of who we are, the ways that people speak our names and remember something we did, an event we lived through, a clever story we were known for, or hopefully, some wisdom. They are mostly gone now – grandparents, aunts and uncles – and you and I will soon be gone, too. What is left of their lives, and what will be left of ours, is story (Baldwin, 2005, p. 21).

Angela: You're right. I was your secret identity! You were so hesitant to talk about me but at the same time you were always so proud of me. Were you afraid of living in the past? Are you still worried that we cannot do it again because I know we can! Our story is not over. We've many more chapters, more scripts to write.

Angie: The day after the performance, my mother asked me what I had learned from the process. As I reflected, I immediately responded with three things. First, I was moved by the number of people who attended the show, making me suddenly aware of the many identities I had taken on in my life, some quite obvious in their importance...wife, mother, daughter, sister, school teacher...but there were many others to which I had given little consideration of their significance. There were many friends and family members along with soccer moms, church choir members, community choir members, mothers of children to whom I taught dance, colleagues from my SFU cohort, artistic team members, school colleagues and administrators and yes, actors...fellow artists. Most in attendance had never met Angela Donahue. All knew Angie Lundin. It was a night of sharing my life, my journey, my passion, my story. There was both laughter and tears as my words came to life on the stage.

Angela: I was touched too to see all of the people that had come into Angie's life since we came to Canada. I enjoyed meeting them and sharing our stories with them. I learned that Angie's life is very full of people who love and support her and am happy she has that. Now that they've met me, they can support her choice to live as an artist again.

Angie: Secondly, I hadn't considered that my own children had never seen me on the stage. Claire recalls listening to CD's from Broadway shows in the car. We both fondly remember me trying to teach her how to sing harmony. She would plug her ears to hold on to the melody while I sang the harmony to *Dancing Queen...* "You can dance, you can ji-ive, having the time of your life. ooh, ooh, ooh"... I used to sing *Bushel and a Peck* from *Guys and Dolls* to both of my children at bedtime... "I love you a bushel and a peck, a bushel and a peck and a hug around the neck..." I would read stories using different accents and voices and encouraged them to try to do the same. It was a fun and natural way for me to convey the stories. Unknowingly, I suppose I was sharing my artistic identity with them.

Angela: That was most definitely the performer in you. You were never afraid to share your talents with your children whether you would have called it such or not. You've had a profound effect on their artistic selves whether intentional or otherwise.

Throughout their early days, my children had heard me sing solos in church and community choirs, perform the national anthems for the Vancouver Whitecaps and they'd viewed clips of me as an actor in small roles on television but never had they seen me, their mother as a performer, an artist on the stage. After my performance, I felt both joy and sadness. I was incredibly humbled by their praises and their pride in me as I received congratulatory and loving embraces from both. At the same time, I was saddened by the realization that by letting the artist in me slip away, by stripping away that part of my identity, my own children really didn't have a sense of who I was beyond lullabies and bedtime stories, and why the loss of artistic identity was so detrimental to my well-being. As they both pursue careers in the arts, I want them to realize how important it is that no matter where their lives and careers take them, they must always nurture the artist within, or they too might experience a profound loss of their own identities. Should they choose not to pursue the arts as a profession, they will still need to make room for creativity in their daily lives.

Angela: Gosh. I hadn't considered this either. They had no idea who Angela Donahue was. Is this unusual? Is it important that children know their parents' histories? I think in this case, it is very important. Angie can really connect with her children and their desires to work in the arts knowing that being an artist is a calling, a vocation of sorts. Most people don't understand the depths of artistic passion. Although as a mother, I think she will always worry about them as they step into the world, I don't think she will ever treat their dreams as whimsical. Artists can take many different shapes and forms with possibilities only being limited by one's own visions and expectations. Angie thought she couldn't call herself an artist when she no longer earned a pay cheque for her efforts. I hope now she realizes just how wrong she was. This will be important to her children as they move forward as artists themselves.

Angie: Third and perhaps the thing that was the biggest surprise upon reflection was how much I allowed self-doubt to torment me through the entire process. I cannot believe just how significant the impact of self-doubt and self-sabotage has been. I need to further reflect and as such, put time into researching self-sabotage and self-doubt and how they caused tension in my creative process.

There are stigmas one can have about the creative process whether it is singing, writing, or acting. Self-doubt and insecurities can raise their alarming heads. One can be proficient in one creative form, but swear off another. We can think it is only the professional imaginations that can do the creating. However, we are all called to create, just as we are called to breathe (Snowber, 2016, p.34)

The topic of self-doubt is universally understood. Often heard is the phrase, "You're your own worst enemy". Perhaps that is true but to the self-doubter, in this case me, those words don't carry much weight. I have learned it is okay to experience self-doubt as long as I keep moving forward not allowing negative feelings to prevent me from progressing in my artistic journey.

A study out of York University entitled *Perfectionism, Control, and Components of Performance Anxiety in Professional Artists* (Mor, Day, Flett, 1995), links self-doubt to anxiety. One important idea that came out of this study was the link of perfectionism to anxiety. Perfectionism...as one who always worries about "getting it right", aptly applies to me. I often worry about the discrepancies between my high standards and what I can actually achieve. While the study is specific to performing, I see my writing as

performance and therefore feel the anxiety in both areas. "...perfectionist standards may be difficult to modify because striving for perfection is also a socially acceptable behavior and is often demanded in certain occupational groups, such as professional performers" (Mor, et al., 1995, p. 221). I see this pattern of seeking perfection in high levels of achievement in the school setting as I plan complicated and elaborate performances that include the entire student body and again as a performer who takes on a complicated piece of music or monologue when something simpler would indeed suffice. Sometimes I set the bar so high for myself, I create an immense amount of pressure to succeed. "Stated simply, the higher the standard of success, the less likely it is that a successful result will be perceived as a probable outcome. Thus, the perfectionist minimized outcome efficacy by setting over-ambitious goals and nearly inaccessible goals" (Burns, 1980, p.3).

Was I repeating this pattern by writing and performing a play?! I could have opted out by simply receiving my Master of Education without the time-consuming task of writing a thesis.

Angela: For you, a traditional form of thesis most would expect wasn't enough. You wanted to perform. You had to see if you could perform again and had to visit your past in order to do so, therefore you undertook the enormous task of writing and producing a show.

Angie: The biggest reason for my success in this undertaking was that I told family, friends and colleagues that I was going to create a live show, so I wouldn't back down. I was so scared of failure, of giving up.

As I researched the topic of self-sabotage specifically in performing artists, I found information in this area to be quite elusive. Forbes Magazine ran an article entitled Seven Steps to Conquering Self-Doubt (Riordan, 2012), in which self-doubt is connected to self-sabotage. While the suggested steps in the article might be more appropriate to the traditional workplace, they can most certainly be applied to artists as well. I focused in on a few concepts; Key to my learning has been the realization that although I can often feel isolated in my quest, my situation certainly is not unique. Key to my success in writing and performing my play was seeking support in the form of collaboration and mentorship with my director and a few other key individuals whom I could trust with

something so personal. Facing the fear of stepping out on the stage to present my own work has made me confident that I could write and perform another show. I've decided it is time to reclaim my artistic self by auditioning and re-connecting with artists in my community. I am able to move forward.

Angela: I really had to pause and give this a bit of thought as well. I know I appear to be very confident, but I assure you, so much of that is an act of self-preservation. There were many times I doubted my abilities especially when there were significant gaps in employment as an actor. I don't recall though ever coming up with the idea of self-sabotage. That seems so counter-intuitive.

Angie: Dr. Fels suggested the idea of self-sabotage early in the script writing process. She was referring to my own part in the undoing of Angela Donahue. What or perhaps maybe more importantly, *who* really led to the end of my identity as artist? While some of the self-doubt had been imposed by those naysayers who contended that performing was a feast or famine business, I had to fess up to my own hand in that undoing and stop blaming others.

Angela: Society assumes the idea of the starving artist. I have always maintained that I didn't need to be a household name to be deemed successful. I simply wanted to perform my craft and be well respected within the realms of my chosen industry.

Angie: I want to be clear that my self-doubt was not imposed as a means of degrading myself or to downplay my talents. I knew I had a basic skill set that would allow me to walk on that stage in front of an audience. However, even with that in mind, I was seriously doubting my ability to resurrect the performer. Would she show up? I had never written a piece for public performance. Could I really do this? I think the idea of self-sabotage was presented to me so that I wouldn't let those doubts get in the way.

Speaking colloquially, chronically self-doubtful individuals might be viewed as having a wide confidence interval around judgments of their ability. Rather than straightforwardly seeing themselves as incompetent or expecting poor performance, seeing themselves as gifted and expecting excellence, these individuals entertain the prospect that they are not easily able to point confidently, with precision, to their level of competence (Braslow, Guerrettaz, Arkin, Oleson, 2012 p. 472).

Angie: “No self-sabotage.” This became a bit of a personal mantra during the rehearsal process as well. I was so anxious about saying my scripted words out loud, I actually dreaded getting together with Lynn and my accompanist Andrew. Inside, I often hoped one of them would cancel so I wouldn’t have to go through with it. I just didn’t feel it was good enough. I didn’t feel like *I* was good enough. By the time our sessions were over, I was always flying high. It was like a dose of confidence was injected into my body. The adrenalin of performing was intoxicating! Why was I so scared? What’s more, why did this cycle repeat itself over and over again? It was exhausting!

Angela: You never once shared this with your team. You didn’t share this with anyone until now. You should have known that you could trust me to show up. You knew you could trust Lynn and Andrew during those rehearsals. Why was there such a lack of confidence? Could you ever do this again? I know you really want to...

Angie: I was full of self-doubt through the entire play writing and performing process, right up to the bitter end. I joked that I was awaiting earthquake, fire, or flood to cause the event to be cancelled because in my heart, I really didn’t think I would be able to go through with it. I told myself the more I talked about the show the more confident I would become but there were days, many days, that I just wanted the whole thing to be over. I was emotional and exhausted and filled with anxiety. I procrastinated on editing, memorizing lines and rehearsing because many times I thought to myself, “Who really cares about my journey and my loss of artistic identity other than me?” or “There is no way I’m going to get through this.” Although I had a talented team of artists helping me shape the script, rehearse the songs and direct the show, I still felt alone in my day to day worries and self-doubt continued to grip me tight. I kept this feeling to myself. I couldn’t let down the many who supported my efforts. I was so afraid of falling on my face, had I not had a supportive team around me, I could never have pulled off my writing and ultimately my performance.

From a journal entry written the night before the show;

To say I am scared is an understatement. For months, I kept somehow thinking this night wasn’t going to happen. That I really wasn’t going to pull off this show. As I kept telling people I was writing a one-woman show, I didn’t think I had the guts to do it and here I am. Performing tomorrow night in front of 100+ people who are there to support me and to share my story.

Holy cow. The adrenalin pumps whenever I think about it. I hope I can sleep tonight.

My biggest fear is forgetting my lines. I insisted on memorizing the script so I could really treat it as a play. I know the piece. I sometimes forget the order. I am working with a novice accompanist and I'm hoping he will be able to throw me a line should I need it. I just practiced and stopped only twice. I'm hoping that I will not be paralyzed by fear and that things will just flow. God, I'm scared.

I was also very afraid of not connecting with the audience. Why should they be interested my journey, about my struggles? Would they understand? Would they care? How would they respond? Initially, I was afraid of not selling tickets and then I was terrified as in the days leading up to the performance, ticket sales topped 100! I was shocked to find out that 160 people attended the show.

I question now whether ego was connected to those fears. I no longer worry about performing as a means of paying the rent or putting food on the table. I desperately want to be on the stage again and find myself fretting as I await news of a callback or wonder when the next audition might be. I really want people I know to see me as an artist again.

Angela: I think you're forgetting that the people at your performance clearly saw you as an artist. You asked during the talk back after the show if the audience felt that you lost your identity as artist once you became a teacher. In unison they answered with a resounding "No!" You were so surprised! Really you were dumbfounded. This goes back to you stripping away your own artistic identity and what you think the definition of artist really is.

Angie: I was very surprised at the audience's reaction. I must accept that for the most part, this loss of identity has been self-imposed. As I wrote and probed into my past, pouring through years of old journals and photographs, I began to experience clarity in a story that had become a bit clouded over the years. Things weren't always as I had remembered.

A reflective grasp of our life stories and of our ongoing quests, that reaches beyond where we have been, depends on our ability to remember things past. It is against the backdrop of those remembered things and the funded meanings to which they gave rise, that we grasp and understand what is now going on around us (Greene, 1995, p.20).

Although writing had been a prominent part of my life as far back as my early teen years, I had never given thought about writing being an act of performance. Harris and Holman Jones (2016) speak to the common practice of looking at performance as embodied while writing is typically a record of an occasion or occurrence. They reject a traditional view of writing, citing that “writing and performance are two arms on the same body” (p.1). Writing, they ascertain is as physical a practice as performance, as writing too is an act of embodiment. My writing was for performance and at the same time was an act of performance.

As I wrote, I knew that it was crucial that I not only find my voice in the text but that I did it in such a way that my story would hook my audience and capture their attention. My words came alive through my body, carrying the live performance word into the theatrical space where they connected to the senses of those present. “This means that language in performance is enacted in relationship to bodies – the performer’s and the audience’s. Words join the body of the performer with the ears, eyes, noses, and bodies of the audience that can be felt, heard and seen” (Harris & Holman Jones, 2016, p. 37). My intention was writing for performance allowed me to be open to the possibilities of how my text might come alive in that theatrical space.

Angela: Yes! Yes! I get this! Even my writing in those early days of keeping journals was an act of performance. I thought I was simply recording daily events and had no idea they would make it to the stage in the form of a show but I’m so glad they did. My voice sang out from those pages written so many years ago. Angie embodied the words in her performance as they came to life and those words connected her to a room full of people who came to hear her story. What’s more, Angie finally has some clarity with regards to what happened to her artistic identity and where she can go next.

Angie: I hadn’t allowed my immediate family to read the script because I wanted them to be surprised. Upon reflection, not sharing my writing made the process much more difficult as I wondered and worried about whether or not the script was good enough. A lot of it would be very personal. Would they laugh? Would they be moved? I had warned them that I would be sharing stories about them but promised nothing would harm or embarrass them. I had their full trust.

Angela: By going deep into your personal life, you spoke to your audience including your family. While sharing personal stories, you connected to each and every person in that theatre as you touched on themes that are truly universal. This show has legs and needs to be produced again! I don't think that it will matter if it is performed to a room full of strangers. They will understand, and they will appreciate your sharing of your story.

Angie: My audience was able to identify with the themes in the play. "The work of moving through the world with an embodied understanding opens up the possibility to rechannel a sensory awareness into creative constructs that resonate for others and us" (Ricketts and Snowber, 2013, p. 15). Researching and telling my story connected me to a broader community and helped me realize that we are connected through common themes of identity, time and change. Lea (2013) notes "Interaction recognizes that human experience does not exist in isolation but emerges as interplay between external and internal conditions, between the social and the personal" (p. 18-19).

Angela: I was so excited when Angie announced she was taking to the stage once again, but I was equally surprised at the level of self-doubt that tormented her throughout the process. I never would have thrived in the business had I felt so insecure about my talents. I don't know why she felt so irrelevant. How could she possibly think an audience wouldn't care about her story? Humility maybe?

Angie: I was worried about living in the past and wondered why and how it mattered now, noting from a book I read on Buddhism "Happiness is internal, not external, and chasing externals is a waste of time, a cycle of longing, an endless wandering in the wrong place after the wrong thing" (Moore, 1997, p. 43). I chose performative and embodied inquiry along with autobiographical writing-based research as I would be exploring myself, searching for that internal happiness that would help me get unstuck, from always looking for the external.

Angela: Although I often appeared confident, (admittedly I was very confident when I had a job!), I was always doubtful that I had the goods to go far in show business. Compounding that fear were the times in my career when I was not hired back by a company after having worked for them. The first instance was the year after I performed in that country show at Busch Gardens. It was my first big job and I was insecure most of the summer. The soprano part really was written way too high above the other vocal

parts and was not appropriate to a country sound. I was extremely intimidated by a fellow performer who was both beautiful and ridiculously talented. She went on to be the first runner up in the Miss America Pageant the same year I made the top ten at Miss Indiana.

As well, I was plagued with shin splints from dancing in five to six shows a day, six days a week wearing character shoes. I looked like a little pony with both legs taped up under my tights, visible under my country skirt! I was not offered the job again the following year and I was crushed. The producer said they had so many great performers audition and not to take it personally. How could I not take it personally? I was offered a position the following summer but I turned them down, not out of malice, but because I was in the Miss Indiana pageant. I had the job offer at Opryland that would have trumped Busch Gardens anyway, but that conquest was moot because of my commitment to the pageant. Ugh! Nothing is ever easy!

Remember my big brush with fame when I was cast in the production of 42nd Street with Jerry Orbach? I struggled with the dancing. I mean I really struggled! One of the dancers told me I was hired for my voice, which didn't give me a lot of confidence as the dance captain spent extra time helping me with the steps. Still, I felt I did well. Then came an audition for the show with the same music director and I didn't even get a callback. I felt like a one hit wonder all over again. "Don't hire Angela! She's amazing in auditions but she sucks when you really get to know her insufficiencies!" This could have been the end of my career, but I loved performing too much to let it stop me.

Angie: "No self-sabotage," I whisper aloud over and over. The crowd is noisy. I wonder who's here. In this moment I realize everyone in that audience is there to support me. I breathe deeply. Celeste does her curtain speech and I walk onto the stage in a room filled with love. As I take my seat, I whisper only loud enough for me to hear, "They are here to support me." Another big breath. I begin...I do falter over lines three or four, maybe even five times. But as the play unfolds, I allow myself to let go.

Angela: I tell my story. I am filled with emotion and excitement as the audience is taken on a journey while I share the stories of my life. The audience laughs where I don't expect laughter to occur and I let them laugh until they are done. Often, I break the fourth wall acknowledging their presence, making them part of the show.

Angie: This reciprocal acknowledgement wasn't planned. It just happened organically - their laughter and my response to it. I knew in these moments that I was connecting to my audience and that gave me a real sense of relief. As the moments continued to present themselves, I felt myself settle into the spaces they occupied. There were times of pure silence and I sat in that silence neither comfortable nor uncomfortable, moving only when I felt the time was right. This was me, creating art *with* an audience and allowing them in. I was on the stage. It felt like home.

Angela: I was back home, only this time, the act was selfless. I was there to give. It wasn't for the applause or the pay cheque.

Artists and athletes, musicians and mediators, dancers and inventors or children playing all know these moments where time stops, and brilliance happens. A physiological rhythm occurs where a kind of surrender happens, where body and mind, heart and soul are in unison (Snowber, 2016, p. 17).

Angie: Upon reflection, I might consider my act of giving as an offering, much like my teaching is an offering. I offer up my talents to others in my life whether it be on the stage or in a classroom. Just as I offer up my talents at home as a wife and mother.

When I reached the last page of the script, I remember thinking, "Oh my gosh. I did it. I really did it!" I took my time with that last page, savouring every word, determined to remember every last minute of my moments on the stage. Angela loved the standing ovation that followed. Angie was tremendously humbled and grateful.

It was only during the talkback after the performance that I realized just how many people were there to support me. I was so nervous as I answered questions, feeling in the moment I was rambling, sometimes forgetting what the question was in the first place but eventually finding a way to speak in a way that made sense!

Angela: She's right. I loved the standing ovation! Wow! I wish though, that Angie had savored^{xvi} the entire performance and not only the last page. I know she had moments of play and of surprise, but she worried so much about "getting it right" that I'm almost certain she wishes she could perform it again. Maybe by having another go at it, knowing that an audience appreciated and connected with her work, she would give her

the opportunity to enjoy the performance a bit more. Can Angie get out of her head and fully immerse herself into a character? I worked so hard to get to that point in my career. It would be exciting to see her start over. This won't be easy.

Angie: By exploring my question of identity through autobiographical writing and performative inquiry, I was able to bring this artist called Angela to presence. Through a process of embodied inquiry, she surprised me by showing up fully, ready to perform. Angela instinctively remembered how to play to an audience, moving around the stage with confidence and determination as if this place was still her home. She refused to allow the years in between performances deter her from her mission. She was so brave. Angela came to life on the stage that August evening.

Angela: Well of course I showed up, sweetie! I had never left you in the first place! Brave? Well...I don't know. You obviously didn't remember how much self-doubt I had as an artist, especially in those days in which I struggled in New York. I don't think we'd be human if we didn't have a bit of self-doubt. When self-doubt turns into self-sabotage, then you've got trouble. You didn't let yourself get in the way this time. You performed your show. I am so grateful that you and I have become re-acquainted. We need each other in order to live a fulfilled, artistic life.

Angie: My biggest boost of pre-show confidence occurred during a trip back to Indiana to visit my family just weeks before the performance. My parents had decided they would not make the journey to Vancouver because it was too long of a trip and circumstances back home would make it very difficult for them to leave. I spent every spare moment while there out on their deck facing the beautiful Ohio River memorizing the text. It seemed only appropriate that I should be taking this walk down memory lane where my journey began.

I shared the script with my parents. They have always been a source of support. My father read it first. His response was that it was very good and that if I really was going to memorize everything, they just might have to come after all. I told him he'd better buy a couple of plane tickets because I wasn't going to be carrying a script on the stage! The night I before I flew back to Vancouver, I performed the first eight pages for my parents and my 94-year-old grandmother.^{xvii} I knew then, I had something worth sharing and that I just might be able to go through this process after all. Mom and Dad did fly out and

they sat in the front row along with my husband and two children. During the performance, I realized what a gift I was giving to them. This performance was in a way a tribute to all of them, a testament to what a beautiful life they have given me.

As I reflect on the writing of the script, and its rehearsal, a number of key stop moments arose, that made me pause and think. One of these stop moments occurred as I spoke the line,

“Angie Lundin, the theatre has called you again. It’s time for you to answer. You’ve pushed this love of yours out of your life and you’ve missed it.”

The stop was really two-fold. First was simply acknowledging the loss. This wasn’t something insignificant. The loss of the artist in me was profound. There were times I cried about it, but I always cried alone as I felt the sadness was my own burden to bear. One winter evening, I saw an actress in a large role on a television movie of the week with whom I used to sit side by side at auditions. I was envious of her success and that envy made me feel horrible. It wasn’t her fault I felt so low. She stuck it out. I didn’t. I convinced myself it was okay that I wasn’t performing, that I made the decision that made the most sense for everyone in my life. I paid little attention to what I really wanted. The second stop here was when in a conversation with Dr. Celeste Snowber. I proclaimed my plan to return to the performing arts after I retired from teaching. Celeste asked me a very simple question I couldn’t answer on the spot but considered deeply, “Why wait?” In that moment, I suddenly felt quite foolish.

Another stop moment in my learning process occurred when I realized that none of my identities were ever meant to be separated.

“I have to weave all of my identities together as one. I am an American who now calls Canada my home. I am a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a friend. I am a teacher. I am an artist. I think I’m ready to celebrate all of those identities.”

Prior to my writing those lines, I had compartmentalized my identities . Thus, as I write through my reflection of my performative and embodied inquiry, I turn to *a/r/tography* as a means of rethinking the interplay between the multiple identities that we perform in our lives. *A/r/tography*, that falls within the umbrella of arts-based research, a living art practice, is “...a living inquiry of what it means to know and search as artists, as

researchers, and as teachers” (Springgay, Irwin, Kind, 2005, p. 900). The practice of a/r/tography is inquiry through a process of art making and writing and can involve any form of art; dance, music, drama, ecetera, although primarily conceptualized and articulated through the lens of visual arts. “It is a process of double imaging that includes the creation of art and words that are not separate or illustrative of each other but instead, are interconnected and woven through each other to create additional meanings” (p. 899). A/r/tography dwells in the spaces between artist, researcher and teacher, space which are living places of inquiry.

This is not to suggest it privileges one form over another. But allows for these dynamic practices and identities to interface and collide with one another so that meanings, understandings and theories generated become multiple, tangled and complicated (Irwin and de Cossen, 2004, p.159).

In the play, I share my disdain about being stuck in between. The words of Angie;

“I hate this feeling of being stuck. I am stuck in a pattern of rushing around, of taking on too much. I’ve spent years being stuck in between lives, in between careers, in between hometowns, and now in between youth and old age.”

Angela responds;

“This place of being in between is called liminal space. (to Angie) You act as if it’s a bad thing. Instead, look at it as a way of growing, a way of moving forward. Living and being in these spaces allows us to explore who and where we are. By being in this space, you have been able to imagine what it would be like to be an actress again.”

I have learned that these in between spaces call us into action. Acknowledging liminal space allows one time for discovery. I have also learned that living inquiry^{xviii} is fluid, refusing the absolute. Through living inquiry, I dance with the unknown as I search for meaning. “I know what I know, but what is it that I don’t know” (Ricketts and Snowber, 2013, p.7). Here in the unknown, I am free to move, to ponder, to create, to act, to be... A/r/tography allows me “...to make sense and create meaning out of difficult and complex questions that cannot be answered in straightforward or linear tellings” (Springgay, et al, 2005, p. 902).

I have learned that arts-based research offers researchers multiple ways of exploring issues, relationships, ways of being in and understanding one’s relationship in the world.

Research-based theatre, for example, is another form of arts-based methodology that can be utilized along with performative and embodied inquiry in telling and performing story, whether in script-writing or on stage. “Researched-based theatre may be a more inclusive term to describe the multiple ways of integrating theatre throughout the research process” (Lea, 2013, p. 29). Research-based theatre is “the use of dramatic form to capture research knowledge” (Sinding, Gray, Grassau, Damianakis and Hampson, 2006, p. 694). I produced a theatrical script using personal diaries and accessing my own memories of past experiences and created from them a theatrical presentation, which I then offered to an audience. The development of this theatrical piece was my primary research objective, a stepping stone to my return to the stage. Richardson (2000) maintains that playwrighting becomes “a way of ‘knowing’ – a method of discovery and analysis” (p. 923). Performance, living in my body, on stage, allowed me to experience what I had been yearning for, and yet had not yet realized was possible...

Angela: So now we will continue to play in the unknown. Now that you know you were always an artist, regardless of the other titles you wore, you can move forward. You can live as an artist lives, creating art as part of your daily practice.

Angie: I can see now, it was my perception of what had to happen for me to be called “artist”. I look back and marvel that I could be mother, wife, daughter, sister, friend, and teacher. Why did the additional title of artist elude me? How on earth did I think being an artist was an all or nothing thing? Although not an easy admission, I know in my heart it is because society in general paints the occupation of artist with one broad stroke...dreamers who starve for their passions...

Angela: That's simply not true! One does not have to be a household name to experience success in the arts! One does not need a pay cheque to validate one's self as an artist.

Angie: I know! I get that now. When I proclaimed, “I am an artist”, I felt the presence and the acknowledgement of approval from the audience. They were completely silent as we shared this critical moment of discovery. I did indeed feel pressure to leave the arts in that I wasn't making enough money to help support my family. But the thought that I was no longer an artist at all now sounds ludicrous!

Angela: I had a stop moment too when you proudly proclaimed, "We are home!" I had been a bit selfish judging you for so long regarding your choice to leave the performing arts as a career. I learned how important family, teaching and your community are to you. I am happy that you've welcomed me back and at the same time I recognize that you've many identities, many roles to play that are important in your life and to the lives of others. Home is the two of us embracing every part of both identities both on and off the stage. I walk with you every day.

Angie: Carl Leggo (2009) in his essay *In Praise of Stepping Stones* writes, "In middle age, I am learning finally how the journey is the destination" (p. 114). Christina Baldwin (2005) writes, "story is how we come home" (p.224). I have written a personal story, a play, and writing has brought me back home. Life with its many twists and turns led me away from the identity of artist and at the same time never led me away at all. I thought my artistic identity was gone but I had simply strayed a bit wayward from the path I had envisioned as I explored other identities. It was I alone who thought I had to be one or the other in terms of my identity as a teacher and an artist. I discovered through performative inquiry that artistic identity isn't a choice. It doesn't simply disappear. It is an integral part of who I am along with many, many other identities.

I decided early in the process that my play would encompass three themes that I had discovered in my autobiographical writing of the past two years; Identity, Change and Time. I came to realize in the writing and the subsequent performance that the issue of not only artistic identity but in realizing so many of my identities was complex. It wasn't as simple as labelling each one. I was trying to figure out how they all worked together so as to live a harmonious life. Bateson (1989) addresses the complexities women face as they challenge the obstacles that arise as they balance family life with their professional pursuits. "Women today, trying to compose lives that will honor all their commitments and still express all their potentials with a certain unitary grace, do not have an easy task" (p.282).

While identity had been a topic I'd written about in my undergraduate studies, the concepts of change and time emerged through my more recent autobiographical writings. When I re-read writings from my days as a young actress, I was surprised to see that both change and time had been at play for many years. Through my research as a playwright, I became aware as an older adult reflecting back on my life, how big

was the significance of change and time. There is a long history of tension as I struggle with both. I've come to know that this tension is universal, something we all experience. I've always used time as an excuse for not getting things done. I've used age as an excuse for not being able to do things.

Angela: I moved to New York when I was 26 and assumed that I was too old to become a dancer or to really better my skills as an actress. I thought, "If only I'd moved here sooner. Everyone here has a head start on me." Hmm...there's that idea of self-sabotage rearing its ugly head again...the master of my own undoing.

Angie: I allowed the change of motherhood to disrupt my acting career. Truthfully, as a white woman in my early 40's (as my agent at the time so eloquently put it), the roles just weren't there. I had an itching to explore teaching and the timing was right.

Coming to terms with my sense of identity took on more urgency as I shed the role of artist while becoming a teacher. I experienced a change in professions and change in my body and through engaging in performative ways of writing and my own autobiographical narrative, I explored those changes in the writing and performing of my play. I will continue to further explore my body as a place of inquiry. As I age, it is easy to begrudge the many changes that have occurred, easy to treat age as a loss rather than as a means of exploration. I need to honour my body as the vessel, which carries me through this life. Celeste Snowber (2016) connects the body to our passions, "To listen to one's own passion is to listen deeply within the body. The most important thing you can do is to show up for your life" (p. 60). As a result of my inquiries and subsequent performance, I work hard towards being more loving and accepting of my body as I move closer towards the end of my life.

Angela: I moved differently than Angie does today. I had a younger, thinner, more flexible body. It's hard to believe how critical I was of it. Angie navigates her body through this world a bit slower and more cautiously than in her younger days. I'm not putting her down because of it. It's just that we were both made more and more aware of her aging body and how she can honour it as we interacted with one another. I sound different than Angie too. I still have my Indiana twang. While my accent is not as bad as a lot of people I grew up with due to my theatrical background and my father being an English major from Pittsburgh, it still pops up now and then especially if Angie's really

tired, when she returns to Indiana or if she is watching a show set in the south! Her family finds it quite funny. Oddly, her Hoosier friends think she sounds Canadian!

Angie: I want to continue to write, perhaps even another play but finding the time is still a huge challenge. There is never enough time to do all the things that I want to do. I think there simply isn't enough time in the world for us to do all that we *can* do so we must make choices. While I've made some changes in my obligations outside of work and family, I've still much to attend to with regards to stopping and smelling the proverbial roses. "We are rushing, always thinking of the future, of our destination, focusing on what is four hours, or four hundred miles, or four years ahead, and constantly missing what is right there, just then, at the moment" (Moore, 1997, p.143). There it is again...being in the moment, being wide awake (Greene, 1978). Why is this so challenging? So many of us exist in this frantic manner, barely noticing the beauty in our lives, thinking and worrying only about what is to come. How many more years to retirement? Can we pay off our mortgage before we do? How can we afford to travel before we're too old? We act like these things are key to our happiness but we're missing the point!

As a result of my writing and my research, I've become more mindful of how I live my day to day life. I had often felt so stuck, I had forgotten what it was like to live in and appreciate being in the present moment. I am learning again what it is to attend to the moment and to be grateful for the ability to give these moments attention.

Gratitude is formed in the openness to the moment. If I cannot relinquish my way of perceiving reality, I can too easily miss the possibilities for the grace of life. The expectations I bring to each moment may need to be shattered, even arrested, in order for me to hear a new song (Snowber, 2011, p. 39).

While I have a long way to go before reaching peace and simplicity, I've made some significant decisions that will allow more time for me and for my family. I've learned that it is okay not to give my time away, that it is okay to say, "no". "I need to go slower – to catch life, to live life" (Snowber, 2011, p. 39).

Angela: Angie will never find time to create. She must make time to create. At least she knows that she can create her own work. I just hope she makes the changes in her life that would be necessary for her to do so.

Angie: Making time for my art will only happen when I realize in my heart that my creative identity is worth nourishing. I have to say “no” to the naysayers who think I cannot pursue my artistry as they project their uncertainty on me. In many cases, I can see their concern comes from a place of caring, not from one of intentional harm but such attitudes are indeed potentially damaging. I recognize too, how important the reflective practice of writing is for me for it is in my writings that I experience clarity. This journey has been a reminder of the importance of the arts as my livelihood and in my life and I must recognize my own self-worth if I want to be fulfilled. Before I wrote this thesis, I would have felt selfish entertaining such a notion. Now I see it as self-survival.

Angela: At the end of the play, Angie places a call to Actor’s Equity to re-activate our membership. We have begun auditioning again and are enjoying throwing ourselves back into the role of artist. In these moments, I feel alive again!

Angie: Chatting with other actors, going to shows and seeing actors on the stage or in the audience with whom I’ve auditioned gives me the feeling of being connected to the industry and to other artists again. I see friends of my son or daughter in the beginning stages of what I hope will be long performance careers for them. I don’t watch the unfolding show with envy as I had often done in the past, yearning to be on the stage too. I can now immerse myself into the performance, enjoying every nuance, appreciating the beauty of the performance. I am an artist too. The stakes are much lower now. I have a job I love, and I don’t need to act to pay the bills. That’s not to say I don’t want to find myself on the stage sometime soon. I crave the experience of belonging to an ensemble again.

Angela: In fact, we’ve done quite well. We’ve gone to several auditions and have received a few callbacks for roles. We didn’t make fools of ourselves as Angie had once feared we might. Our body is older and our voice not as strong as it was in our younger days, but I think we’re good enough to get back in the game. A dance callback in which we dusted off our tap shoes and showed ourselves that, once a hooper always a hooper, left us sore and limping for a few days after but man, was it fun! If we want to work again on the stage though, there’s a good chance we will have to give up our Equity status. That will be hard, but we don’t have to make that decision today.

Angie: It took nearly three months for me to get up the nerve to watch a playback of my performance. I was afraid I would view it with a critical eye. I was afraid of what I would look like, what I would sound like. The point of writing this play was to explore identity. Performative Inquiry was the process that brought me to the stage. When I did watch the video of the play, I laughed, I cried, I didn't care about the imperfect body, the dropped lines, or the messy hair. I saw a woman, an artist on the stage sharing her story in a complete act of giving to an audience who was there with open arms to accept what came from the stage.

I find myself telling friends, family and colleagues that going through this process has been transformative. When asked if the journey was worth it, I answer with a resounding "Yes!" I am in a much better place personally and professionally than I was a few short years ago. I feel alive again! I indicated at one point in the script, that when I could not call myself an artist, I felt less whole as a person.

"Okay, 23 years later, I'll admit I'm finding it difficult knowing I don't belong there anymore especially when I see people I know working on Broadway. I'm sad and even embarrassed that I am a non-artist when I correspond with them on Facebook. I see myself as something less."

Meeting Angela again has helped close the gap between my perception of myself in the world and my perception of how I thought others saw me in the world. While I never made it to the Broadway stage, I have found my own special place in this world. It's doubtful that when I pop up on one's Facebook feed that their first response is, "Oh poor Angie. She used to be an artist." Yet somehow, I had concluded that those who are successful in show business and who had stayed in show business somehow looked down upon those of us who left it.

By bringing to presence this woman called Angela, I was reminded that it is due to her that I am the person, the artist and arts teacher that I am today. Teaching is a performative act of giving. Music and the performing arts are a path to creativity in my classroom. I become more alive, more me when I engage with children through the arts whether it be in playing a song game, creating a musical composition, or putting on a Christmas concert. I am able to connect with children in a unique way simply by being an arts teacher with a welcoming space called a music room.

Angela: I think a lot of the fear Angie continues to experience is in trying to figure out her place in the world. How can she navigate this longing of wanting it all?

Angie: Post-performance, my life continues to feel out of balance. I've had a few moments of real artistry since the performance just over one year ago. I have stepped down from several of my volunteer activities that consumed much of my time. I have joined a community choir and I have started taking voice lessons. I still do a delicate dance at home where the duties of wife and mother continue to take precedence. I still often feel the artist in me is suffocating but I do speak up more and more as I demand time for 10 or 15 minutes to write or rehearse a song. I don't feel guilty about attending an audition on a weekend.

Angela: Ten or fifteen minutes? That's all?! You're going to need a lot more writing time than that to pen another play for us!

Angie: I have learned in my ten years of teaching that public perception of an arts teacher as a "real" teacher may or may not change. The onus is on me to adjust my own perspective, to value my own self-worth as both artist and teacher. I appreciate teaching even more now that I can proclaim to my students, "I am an artist!" and I have learned that "artist" is much more than an occupation to put on my tax returns.

Angela: That is because teaching is also a calling. It is a vocation. Just like being an artist is a calling. You just have to respond to the call.

Angie: Eisner (2002) speaks to research in arts education saying, "Arts-based research begins with the recognition that the arts as well as the sciences can help us understand the world in which we live" (p.213). McNiff (2014a) describes arts-based research as "a process of inquiry whereby the researcher, alone or with others, engages the making of art as a primary mode of inquiry" (p. 259). Through performative and embodied inquiry, both recognized forms of arts-based research, I was able to explore artistic and teacher identity in a holistic way. By engaging through the art forms of playwriting, music and drama, I was taken from a place of being to a place of knowing. "Arts based researchers are carving new tools, forging new pathways to knowledge and imagining new shapes for the outcomes of research" (Leavy, 2017, p. 11). Writing and performing this thesis has helped me understand where I came from and who I am in the world today. Reflecting on my past as I have remembered and even as I didn't remember until

reading my old journals, and exploring the writing and performing of my play, this thesis, has given me clarity with regards to how I can live my daily life embracing all of my identities.

I embody teaching with my whole heart. I am now able to embody the *artist as teacher*. It took a two-year graduate program and another two years of inquiry and writing to get to a place where I feel like a whole person again, to feel present in my own life, embodying all who I am, and who I will be. All of those fragmented identities interwoven together make a complete person, me—

Angela: Wait, let me make the introduction.... ladies and gentlemen, a round of applause for—

Angie: Wait a minute. What are you doing?

Angela: Introducing us to the world!

Angie: Don't you think that's a bit over the top?

Angela: Of course, it is!

(Angela grabs Angie's hand in hers and raises their clasped hands in the air)

Ladies and gentlemen, a round of applause for—

Angela Donahue Lundin...artist!

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End Notes

ⁱSeptember 2, 2014, Walking the picket line

ⁱⁱ A funny side note; this would be the school where I would end up with a full time position teaching music! I had no choice but to make peace with the mentor teacher although she did say to me that the music room was where I belonged, not the classroom.

ⁱⁱⁱ Autobiographical writing is engaged in both performative and embodied inquiry.

^{iv} Changed line in *Finding Wonderland* to “the girl within...” from “the child within...”. This show is about the struggle between my identities as a woman. I have dialogue with the younger me.

^v Playing two characters, essentially the same person, in a one-woman show was one of the most difficult challenges in this process. My director and I had to find ways to embody and define each character both physically and vocally so that the audience was not left confused. I attempted to give my audience a clue in the program noting that there were two actresses in the cast played by the same person.

^{vi} Line from the Broadway musical *Funny Girl*

^{vii} Christine was the first really good friend I made after moving to Canada. We are still very close today.

^{viii} *What I Did for Love* from the Broadway musical *A Chorus Line*.

^{ix} I spent a summer working as a performer at Busch Gardens, the Olde Country, Williamsburg, VA, *Good Time Country Show*, 1984.

^x Without knowing it by name at the time, this was a stop moment in which I knew I had chosen the wrong major in university. It was important to acknowledge it in the play as had it not happen, I might not have found my way into the arts. One of my professors at Indiana University had just offered to introduce me to a news director in Great Falls, Montana for a job opportunity. This defining moment told me I had to decline.

^{xi} Reference to the song *I Am Sixteen Going On Seventeen* from *The Sound of Music*. I included this line referring to a memory of the wardrobe mistress at the theatre where I was performing the show, while fitting me for my costumes noted that I was a bit young to be living and travelling on my own without my parents!

^{xii} Chez-zam is a company in New York City that provides musical entertainment for large parties. If I worked for the company every weekend, I earned enough money to pay my rent.

^{xiii} Kinderdance is an American franchise in which children are taught an education through dance program at early childhood learning centres. Franchisors are trained at Kinderdance headquarters in Melbourne, Florida and are required to attend conferences in Florida every summer. It is a great program but worked much differently in Canada than in the United States causing it to be a much less profitable venture. Daycare Centres in the United States can be very large corporations with 100 or more children enrolled. Here in British Columbia, the limit at the time was 25 children in the 3 to 5 year old age group. In the United States, tuition was based per child. Here in British Columbia, the daycare centres believe in inclusion and I was forced to charge a flat rate.

^{xiv} Changed text from “*Go, Athens, Go*” to “*Go, Angie, Go.*”

^{xv} I changed the lyric from “to the past” to reflect my own journey.

^{xvi} Angela is from the United States, therefore she uses the American spelling for “savored.”

^{xvii} Sadly, my grandmother passed away at age 95 on the first day of the following spring. I’m so glad I shared part of my work with her..

^{xviii} While a/r/tography speaks to living inquiry as one of its rendering (Springgay, S. Irwin, R. & Wilson Kind, S. (2005). *A/r/tography as living inquiry through art and text. Qualitative Inquiry*, (11)897. (pp.897-912).;

education scholar Karen Meyer has conceptualized and articulated living inquiry in terms of place, self/other, time and language.