

# Transcript for The Ume Group’s “Voices in the Stone”

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This transcript is part of *Storytelling on Screen: An Online Playback Theatre Archive and Guidebook* and was derived from The Ume Group’s “Voices in the Stone” video available on YouTube at [https://youtu.be/sT4crieg\\_y4](https://youtu.be/sT4crieg_y4) and VTechWorks at <http://hdl.handle.net/10919/103917>.

Additional information on the Playback Theatre methodology is available in J. Rosin and H. Winters Vogel, *Storytelling on Screen: An Online Playback Theatre Archive and Guidebook* (Blacksburg: Virginia Tech Publishing, 2021).

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## Production Credits

*Conductor:* Jordan Rosin

*Musician:* Kate Douglas

*Actors:* Jorge Luna, Keelie Sheridan, Karina Sindicich, Kaitlyn Samuel Rosin, Yokko

*Producer/Director:* Jordan Rosin

*Community Partners:* Robert H. Leonard, Council on Virginia Tech History and the School of Performing Arts; Christina Miller, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences; Ren Harman, VT Stories

About The Ume Group: <https://theumegroup.org/>

Video length: 78 minutes and 45 seconds

## Transcript

**Jordan Rosin:** Welcome to anyone who's just arrived. Kate, why don't we resume the music and the actors can take their places. It will be good. Thanks for your patience as we deal with this technical trouble.

**Collective Voices:** How do you, as an instructor, not be the most important person in the room? I mean, that's the hardest thing to get across to some of our faculty. They're used to being the lecturer on the stage, lights shining on them, the star of the room. When you get into things like portfolios, your students really are the feature. It shifts in my mind, I've always shifted away from being what I call the lecturer, an imparter of knowledge, to your manager. I think what's this person learning? How can I bring those together? We are the Hokie. We will prevail. We will prevail, we will prevail. We are Virginia Tech. On your left. Hokie, Hokie, Hokie Hy. Tech, tech, VPI Sola-Rex Sola-Rah Polytechs Virgin-i-a rah rah VPI. Team, team, team. On your left. Did you know students who dress as the HokieBird remain anonymous until commencement when they reveal their secret by wearing HokieBird feet during the procession into Lane Stadium. Are you the HokieBird? I think that was really the start of me being super active in Blacksburg because that paper covered all issues. We worked on the environment, we worked on women's rights, we worked on LGBTQ rights, world peace, and justice issues.

I owe Virginia Tech. I mean, I feel truly indebted to the university for what I was able to achieve in my career. Without my Virginia Tech education, I wouldn't have the career. I wouldn't have the happiness later in my life, and I wouldn't be where I am today if wasn't for that education. I think that was really the start of me being super active in Blacksburg. Hokie, Hokie, Hokie, Hy. Tech, Tech VPI sola-rex Polytech Virginia, Polytechs Virgin-i-a. Do you know how to get to Boris Hall? We

are the Hokies. We will prevail, we will prevail, we are Virginia Tech. What is this person learning? What is this person learning? How do you bring those together?

We live in a community where on the whole our citizens read. They figure things out for themselves, they have opinions, and they are willing to share their opinions. I think our community is as good as it is because it's a community of individuals who are willing to participate and to speak up and to speak out. That paper covered all the issues. I love the giant chocolate chip cookies and pizza at the late night. Ut prosim, ut prosim, ut prosim, that I may serve.

Though I'm profoundly grateful and I attribute every bit of that success more to my education from Virginia Tech than my efforts alone and coming back became a very natural thing. Why would you not? On your left. The start of me being super active in Blacksburg because that paper covered all the issues. We are Virginia Tech. How do you, as an instructor, not be the most important person in the room? Do you know how to get to the quad? They have opinions and they are willing to share their opinions. They have good reps and I love it. We will prevail, we will prevail. Ut prosim, ut prosim. We will prevail. Students who dress as the HokieBird remain anonymous until commencement when they reveal their secret by wearing HokieBird feet during the procession into Lane Stadium. Pokie, pokie high. Tech, tech VPI Sola-Rex Sola-Rah Polytech Virginia. On your left. We are the Hokies.

**Jordan Rosin:** Hello and welcome everyone. My name is Jordan Rosin, I'll be our conductor for this evening. Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedules to join us, and we apologize for any technical difficulty you might have had in getting here tonight. You've made it and we're glad you're here now. This is "Voices in the Stone," a Playback Theatre experience. It'll be audience interactive. So in a moment, I'll ask folks to turn on their cameras. But first I want to just say thanks to the Council on Virginia Tech History, the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, VT Stories, the School of Performing Arts, University Libraries, for all of their support in putting together tonight's program. We are The Ume Group

and this is “Voices from the Stone.” As far as some technical instructions are concerned, note that there are closed captions available for tonight’s performance. You can find those by clicking on the CC icon at the bottom of your Zoom panel or in activating Live Transcript or Subtitles. You can look for any of those words. Also, tonight’s performance is best viewed in Gallery View rather than Speaker Mode. You can usually toggle that in the upper right-hand corner of your Zoom screen, there’ll be something that says “Speaker” or “Gallery.” In the Gallery View, you should see me and also we hope you have “Non-video participants hidden” so that at this moment you see me and not a bunch of little black rectangles. If you’re not familiar with that feature, here’s how to use it. If you do see, in the Gallery View, other black rectangles with folks names in them, you can hover your cursor over one of those and from the three little dots in the upper right-hand corner, access a drop-down menu by which means you can hide non-video participants. I’ll pause for a moment so that you can make that adjustment if you need. I’ll take any questions if there are questions about those settings. If at any point you need help technically, you can feel free to chat privately to me or Christina Miller and we should probably be able to help you out. The last thing, because it is audience participatory, that you’ll need to know is how to find your video and microphone controls. Usually if you’re on a desktop computer, there’ll be in the lower left-hand corner. Why don’t we go ahead and begin by turning on our video and waving hello. [LAUGHTER] Hello! [LAUGHTER] You’ve found your video, perfect. You’ll also find your microphone, unmute yourself, and say, “hello.” [LAUGHTER]

**Keelie Sheridan:** Hello. [LAUGHTER]

**Jordan Rosin:** Hello, and welcome. I’m so glad you’re here. You can stay on with me if you like, with your camera on. In a moment, I’ll ask you a couple of questions. But first I just want to say, what is Playback? Let’s have a show of hands. Who’s ever seen a Playback Theatre performance before? Anybody? A few in our company. Yeah, [LAUGHTER] great, and who has never seen Playback before? [LAUGHTER]

Catherine, Thomas. I love it. Well, welcome. You should be in for a treat. Playback Theatre is a form of community-centered storytelling theater where the audience tells stories, which are then reflected by a company of actors and musicians. We believe everybody has a story to tell and that those stories deserve to be heard. Also, you should know that today's performance is being recorded and will be released publicly as part of *Storytelling on Screen*, an online, open access, educational resource about Playback Theatre, which is being published by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University under a Creative Commons license. You can learn more about that license by clicking the link that Jorge just dropped in the chat. In light of the open access nature of this recording, we encourage folks to monitor your own participation to make sure you feel safe and comfortable telling whatever stories you happen to share. If you have questions about this project or need to revoke your consent, you can feel free to contact me, Jordan Rosin, at [jordanrosin@gmail.com](mailto:jordanrosin@gmail.com).

Continue with getting to know each other a little bit here. You've found how to turn on and off your cameras. I'm curious when you all graduated. How about this, if you graduated in 2020 or before, turn your camera on, that would be everyone unless you are a current student of which we might have a few. No? [LAUGHTER] Great. How about if you graduated before 2000? If you graduated before 2000, go ahead and keep your camera on. If you graduated after turn your camera off. Welcome. How about this, if you graduated before 1990, keep your camera on. Welcome. Thomas and Howard, can I ask what years did you graduate?

**Howard Sholl:** I think 1966.

**Jordan Rosin:** 1966 for Thomas, wow.

**Thomas Tilar:** No, '69.

**Jordan Rosin:** Okay, '69 for Thomas and '66 for Howard. We're honored you can be here. Thanks everybody. Great. At this point, everybody can bring their cameras back on. Good. Let's see. [LAUGHTER] Let's do a couple other questions here. Raise

your hand if you lived on campus during your time at Virginia Tech? I don't know whether or not it's a requirement that everyone does or not. How about this, raise your hand if you lived off campus at any point during your time at Virginia Tech? All right, everybody as well. [LAUGHTER] I think that's typical college experience. [LAUGHTER] If you like, what about dropping the name of your dorm in the chat? Where did you live when you are here on campus at Virginia Tech. [LAUGHTER] I'll drop mine in because I didn't go Virginia Tech, but at Syracuse, my dorm was Day Hall. [LAUGHTER] I see Newman Hall, Hoge, and Vawter. The New Yorker, my friend Keelie. [LAUGHTER] Wonderful. Well, now that we've gotten to know each other just a little bit—Thomas Hall and Major Williams Hall excellent—why don't we introduce the company, The Ume Group. All of our audience members can go ahead and turn your cameras off, and we'll introduce ourselves. Let's watch.

**Kaitlyn Samuel Rosin:** Hi, everyone. My name is Kaitlyn Samuel Rosin or KSR. My pronouns are she/her/hers. I'm calling from Blacksburg, Virginia. I'm in the home of the Monacan and Tutelo people and I went to University of Evansville in Evansville, Indiana. I'm originally from Los Angeles, so it was very different and I felt like a stranger in a strange land. But I learned to understand and love people very different than myself and I am so grateful for that.

**Keelie Sheridan:** Hi. My name is Keelie Sheridan. My pronouns are she/her/hers. I am calling from Florence, Alabama. I went to a couple of colleges [LAUGHTER], but I went to the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, first, in Manhattan. I had moved from a very small town to the middle of Manhattan, and so my college experience was overwhelming and exciting. It was really exciting after growing up somewhere where everybody knew you and everything about you to be in a city where you could be anonymous and be whoever you wanted to be.

**Kate Douglas:** Hello, my name is Kate. I use she/her pronouns. I am calling from London and I went to New York University. My time at college was really one of big

expansion and testing out identities and new things to try. It was really just an experimentation, a laboratory of myself.

**Kazzy:** [NOISE] Hi, everyone. My name is Karina, call me Kazzy. I use pronouns she/her/hers. I'm calling from Sydney, Australia, and I went to college. I did my bachelor's in Singapore and then I did my master's in New York. In my master's program, I went through two pregnancies and one birth. [NOISE] It was a lot. [LAUGHTER]

**Jorge Luna:** [NOISE] [LAUGHTER] Hi. My name is Jorge Luna. I'm originally from Puerto Rico, and I am in Florence, Alabama, right now. I went to [NOISE] undergrad at the University of Puerto Rico, and it took me six years instead of four, so it was a time of coming out of a very protective shell. I was very shy, so it took me a little while to come out of that shell.

**Yokko:** [NOISE] Hi. My name is Yokko. I'm tuning in from Brooklyn, New York. My pronouns are she/he/they. I'm from Japan and I went to three bachelor undergraduate. First one was Tokyo, but way too long time ago. The college that I really fall in love with, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. And my college experience is, coming from Tokyo and busy city, nature, and it's so much focusing on study and it was healing.

**Jordan Rosin:** Excuse me. Look at that flower. [NOISE] Hi, I'm Jordan Rosin, pronouns he/they. I'm also calling from Blacksburg, Virginia. I went to Syracuse University, Upstate New York for my undergrad, which was super cold and I felt well prepared for the world, but I got chilly doing it. [LAUGHTER] [NOISE] Thank you, ensemble. [APPLAUSE] [LAUGHTER] At this point, all our audience can bring their cameras back on. Now that we've told you a little bit about our college experiences [LAUGHTER] and our feelings about college, I'm curious, what would you put in the chat if I asked, "How do you feel when you hear the words 'Virginia Tech'? What does that mean to you?" If you're willing, go ahead and put a couple of words in the chat about how you feel about Virginia Tech, maybe your time here.

[LAUGHTER] Lovely. Already I'm seeing the word "home." [LAUGHTER] Friendly. Great place to learn. Happiness. [LAUGHTER] Wonderful. If you haven't put something in the chat and care to, you may still. But we'll start now with a Fluid Sculpture based on some of these feelings. Home, friendly, great place to learn, happiness. [LAUGHTER] Our audience can go ahead and turn their cameras off one more time and we'll turn it over to the actors for a Fluid Sculpture based on our collective feelings about Virginia Tech. Let's watch.

**Kazzy:** [NOISE] [MUSIC] [NOISE]

**Jorge Luna:** Whoa. [NOISE] [MUSIC] Whoa.

**Kaitlyn Samuel Rosin:** [NOISE] Yeah. [NOISE] [MUSIC] [LAUGHTER] No way. [MUSIC]

**Jorge Luna:** [OVERLAPPING] Wow.

**Keelie Sheridan:** No way. [NOISE] [MUSIC]

**Jorge Luna:** Whoa. [NOISE] [MUSIC] Whoa.

**Jordan Rosin:** Thank you, actors and musicians. [APPLAUSE] [LAUGHTER] At this point, the audience can bring their cameras back on. [NOISE] If at any point you want to show your appreciation, feel free to clap. [APPLAUSE] [LAUGHTER] I'm curious if anyone particularly saw one of their feelings in that Fluid Sculpture. Did anyone especially resonate with something they saw there? [LAUGHTER] I see Catherine nodding. Would you mind saying something about what resonated with you?

**Catherine Crossett:** Of course. I [LAUGHTER] actually feel all of them resonated with some portion of my experience. I felt that every time I looked at the mountains and the buildings around, I was just like, "Whoa, it's such a great place to be here." But then I was looking around, that reminded me of being a freshman and seeing all of the people walking around, studious, and I was like, "I don't know what I'm doing here." [NOISE] Yes.

**Jordan Rosin:** Wow. Wonderful, Catherine. Thank you. I'm curious also if there are feelings you had about Virginia Tech that weren't represented by this sculpture that we've created. Do you have other feelings about your time here that you care to label or talk about?

**Catherine Crossett:** The end was hard. The end was difficult. I graduated in 2020. That community that Virginia Tech is all about, was gone at the end. I joined the theater program really because I was looking for that place that I felt I was like, "Okay. I'm here, this is my version of home." Because their slogan is, "This is home." I walked around and I was like, "I don't know where home is." I walked into Henderson, and I said, "This is it." Not getting to say goodbye at the end was very painful in the midst of everything.

**Jordan Rosin:** Yeah. Wow. Thank you, Catherine. I think this would be a lovely story to see in our Three-Part Story form. If I can recap a little of what it sounds like you're saying Catherine, it sounds like when you first arrived, there were of course these magical feelings, the mountains, being in this place of learning, and that you were looking for especially this kind of a home feeling and got it in the theater department in the Henderson Hall with those people. But that 2020, this global pandemic, maybe going remote, were we remote at that point, I can't remember. [LAUGHTER]

**Catherine Crossett:** We were leading up to *Pippin*. We had one week of rehearsal for *Pippin* and then disaster.

**Jordan Rosin:** Then disaster. How do you feel now, Catherine?

**Catherine Crossett:** I gave myself a lot of space from even thinking about my feelings about this because there was a lot that I missed out on. I come from a big family. They didn't get to come see me graduate. I had been to all of their graduations. They didn't get to see me do that. They didn't get to see the theatre department and everywhere, not just Henderson, T101 and Blacks—that little section, that little street of Blacksburg. It's been a hard thing to process at the same

time of a natural transition. I think I would be feeling a lot of these things anyway. I have a little bit more of a resolution. I'm coming back to Blacksburg next week. I'm fully vaccinated so I get to do the ceremony next week. I was hesitant at first to do that because I think it was opening up all of these unresolved feelings, but now I get to come back and say goodbye. [NOISE]

**Jordan Rosin:** Thank you, Catherine. Finally here in this last phase saying goodbye. Well, as I said, we'll take this as a Three-Part Story and everyone can go ahead and turn their cameras off. We'll hand it over to the actors. Christina, we'll wait until the end of this to admit our next person here. This is Catherine's story. Let's watch.

[NOISE]

**Kazzy:** Do I have to say "bye?" But I just . . . [NOISE] Okay, bye. Is anyone out there? Bye.

**Jorge Luna:** Dear diary, I am finally vaccinated, and I can't wait to share with you the fact that I will finally, finally be able to walk and be with my friends. Even a little bit. I can't wait. I can't wait. Thank you. Actors and musicians. [APPLAUSE] At this point, the audience can bring their cameras back, and we'll check in with Catherine. How was that for you Catherine?

**Catherine Crossett:** I started tearing off at the first vignette. That was good. Thank you. That was poignant.

**Jorge Luna:** Well, thanks for sharing your experience with us, Catherine. We very appreciate it.

**Catherine Crossett:** Thank you for having me.

**Jordan Rosin:** We've heard about how Virginia Tech feels like home, feels friendly, is a great place to learn, is a place of happiness, and we've felt some of the pain and the sadness in Catherine's story. I'm curious, what else, what other stories do you have to tell about Virginia Tech? If anyone who'd like to speak, feel free to just unmute yourself and jump in or wave a hand and I'll be sure to call on you. Yes, Thomas.

**Thomas Tillar:** Tom is better. Tom is better.

**Jordan Rosin:** Oh, excuse me Tom, go for it.

**Thomas Tillar:** I found, because I didn't graduate in theatre, I was in Arts and Sciences, but I did discover the theatre department when it was created. It was created in the late '60s, but since you're on campus, you understand Burruss Hall and the scale of that building and so forth. That was the only theater at the time. Three thousand seats on one floor but the faculty were housed in the dressing rooms offstage with Burruss Hall. That's how this theatre department started. So long before Henderson, then other buildings that may have been used to grow the faculty, but I really discovered some wonderful friends and faculty in that program and they wouldn't, they would also use some small theaters off campus to do productions and found places to build sets and so forth, but, but Burruss Hall was truly the beginning of a theatre program for the university.

**Jordan Rosin:** Wow, and what year did you say that was, Tom?

**Thomas Tillar:** It was in the '60s, I think it was 1968, '69, late '60s.

**Jordan Rosin:** Yeah, '68, we had the theater in that beautiful Hokie Stone Burruss Hall. Wow, beautiful.

**Thomas Tillar:** Burruss Hall was a WPA project that was built in the '30s. Some of the craftsmen were from that period right after the Depression.

**Jordan Rosin:** Wow, and were you a student at that time?

**Thomas Tillar:** Yes, I was.

**Jordan Rosin:** Awesome. Do you have any particular memories in that space from your time as a student?

**Thomas Tillar:** In that space? Well, it was, in terms of that hall, it was a wonderful place to see some concerts and speakers and also musical events. It was not a good place for live theater because it was such a giant hall and sound was not amplified well for actor's voices, but I did see several traveling shows that came through. One of which I thought was really transformative for the campus was a roadshow of

*Hair*. There was a roadshow out of New York of *Hair* completely done exactly like the show in New York with nudity and it was just a fabulous show for the campus and I remember everybody was hesitant to bring it here because they thought the president might object, but when asked he said, "I've seen the show, I loved it. New York bring it." That was a transformative show for theatre, and then to bring it on a college campus and in the early '70s was even more so.

**Jordan Rosin:** Wow, I can only imagine yes, [LAUGHTER] what a shaky [LAUGHTER] proposal there. What did you feel about the show? Did you enjoy it?

**Thomas Tillar:** I was exhilarated. I thought it was just exciting and to see the emotion in the young actors and they're singing, "Let the Sunshine In" to close the show and they all have tears streaming down their face standing on the front of the stage. It was an emotional show. Well-done music, lyrics, everything about the show. That show has reappeared in Blacksburg several times, not a roadshow, but it's been done by local companies and even student actors. *Hair* has been repeated in a couple of decades since the '70s.

**Jordan Rosin:** Okay.

**Thomas Tillar:** You can tell that was my favorite.

**Jordan Rosin:** Your favorite show. [LAUGHTER] That's wonderful. Let's see. I think this would be interesting *If This Was a Dream* form. *If This Were a Dream*. Some of our actors over in Florence, Alabama, are having a bit of a tornado watch at the moment, so we have some issues there. Can I ask Keelie and Jorge are you still with us and want to play or should we count you out?

**Keelie Sheridan:** Hey...

**Jordan Rosin:** [LAUGHTER] Okay, I'm going to interrupt and say, You all should take care of yourselves and your safety as we can't hear you.

**Keelie Sheridan:** [DISTORTED]

**Kazzy:** Can we mute Keelie just for a moment?

**Jordan Rosin:** Why don't we do that, why don't we do that . . . muting Keelie. Okay. Thank you, Kazzy, for that intervention. Good, and yeah, Jorge and Keelie, if you can hear me, take care of yourselves and your safety, feel free to sit out the next few forms or all if you need. We're here though still to reflect on Tom's beautiful story of seeing *Hair* [LAUGHTER] and how transformative that was, how exhilarating that was, and it would be lovely if we could have then Kazzy, Yokko, and KSR in "If This Were a Dream." Everybody else can go ahead and take their cameras off. Let's watch. [NOISE]

**Kazzy:** If this were a dream, I would be at my favorite carnival fair. I would be in my favorite outfit, running around, looking at all the bright lights in the night sky with all my friends, feeling that elation and excitement as I look up and hear the screams of joy and exhilaration, and seeing that roller coaster go all the way up and all the way down and feeling myself getting ready to do the same. It would be a real trip.

**Yokko:** If it were a dream, I see many colors, red, and orange, and yellow, and blue, and purple. They're shining like a disco ball. I see rainbow in a blue sky. Double rainbow and triple rainbow in a mountain. I feel like I can do anything. I really can feel anything and so inspired now as a shining day.

**Kaitlyn Samuel Rosin:** If it was a dream, there would be hair everywhere. There would be long hair, there would be wavy hair, and everything would be free, and moving, and full of life, and maybe can still work with racy, but more about being joyful and life and hair.

**Kazzy:** If this were a dream, I would be at my favorite carnival fair.

**Yokko:** If it were a dream, I'm in a triple rainbow world.

**Kaitlyn Samuel Rosin:** If it were dream there would be hair everywhere.

**Jordan Rosin:** Thank you actors and musician. [APPLAUSE] Our audience can come back on with their cameras, and we'll check in with our teller, Tom. Did you resonate with that? Was that of the exhilaration you felt?

**Thomas Tillar:** Yes. I think that was representative and it was like living a dream.

**Jordan Rosin:** Beautiful. Thank you very much for sharing, Tom. I'm curious what other stories folks might like to share about their time at Virginia Tech. We've heard about it feeling like home. We've heard of this fun, excitement, this somewhat taboo thing of *Hair* [LAUGHTER] being welcome on this college campus. What other stories are in the room?

**Heather Massie:** I guess I'll say that part of the reason I said home is because it literally is home. [LAUGHTER] Blacksburg. The pandemic has brought me back here. I'm still based in New York City, but nothing's happening there. I'm back here in Blacksburg in the house I lived in when I went to Virginia Tech. My sister and my dad and my mom went to Virginia Tech, but I started at UVA. Of all places, of course, if you know Virginia Tech. I started there in astrophysics because I wanted to be an astronaut really. I ended up with a Theatre Arts degree at Virginia Tech. I loved it there. My dear Bob Leonard is here on today. I guess my time at Virginia Tech, I really think of PAB, the Performing Arts Building, which is pre-Henderson. [LAUGHTER] Henderson still hadn't been renovated at the time I was there. It was a hospital, that's what it was built for. I remember having an on-camera class in one of those rooms, but it was so echoey. [LAUGHTER] Anyway, I loved the Performing Arts Building, it's been since taken over by guests, administration of some sort. My time there was really based around that building. Anyone who was at Tech in theatre arts in those years seems to be very fond of being there. Now I put together my science person and my theatre person and I do a show on the actress and inventor, Hedy Lamarr. That's how I brought the two parts of myself together and I toured the world with that show, and I was very honored to present the show in the Cube at the Moss Arts Center a couple of years ago. That was a really lovely thing for me.

**Jordan Rosin:** Wow, Heather. Thank you for sharing how full circle your story is. [LAUGHTER]

**Heather Massie:** Exactly, because we also performed at the University of Virginia, so both of those things. He was saying about missing graduation, is she still here? Anyway, the big thing at UVA is walking the lawn, and because I didn't graduate from UVA, I didn't walk the lawn. It was risky for me to do the show there because I was in Old Cabell Hall, which was built for commencement. Of course, I was lucky enough to get my graduation from Virginia Tech and have that clean stadium and of course, also, my time there Don Drapeau was the head of the theater department and I remember us all sitting on the stage for graduation because that's how we had class. You would sit, you'd be usually barefoot, and if you wore jeans, you were sent home. [LAUGHTER] You couldn't move in those. Anyway, I loved my time at Virginia Tech and my time back here has been comforting and agonizing because of COVID.

**Jordan Rosin:** I'm sure. Well, thank you Heather for sharing your experiences with us. I think this would be interesting to see in Perspectives. For this forum, I'll ask Heather for you to cast someone as yourself. Of our actors remaining here, Kazzy, Katelyn, KSR, and Yokko, who would you like to play you?

**Heather Massie:** KSR.

**Jordan Rosin:** Okay, KSR. Heather is your name? Heather, you're a performer and an astrophysics student early on, and you put those loves together in your one-person show? I love that. Let's see some of the other characters that I heard, there are these beautiful spaces. The old Performing Arts Building sounds like it could be a character here. Between Kazzy and Yokko, who do you think could be that lovely old building?

**Heather Massie:** I don't know if they can do this. I would have them do it together cause it's more than just one person.

**Jordan Rosin:** It's a two-person building here, housing all [OVERLAPPING] this industry all this creative activity. Wonderful. We'll look forward to seeing that then. At this point, all the audience can turn their cameras off. We'll make our

Perspectives on Heather's journey at Virginia Tech and with the performing arts building. Let's watch.

**Kaitlyn Samuel Rosin:** These feel like, no that's not her. Do these feel like her? You could still write, you could still invent things while wearing these bracelets. I think these feel heavy. Yeah. Let's see. Maybe, I don't know. No, these are too heavy. Shine with light. She likes light. Perfect. I'm going to make this show great. This is what I'm born to do. Yeah, I think I like these. Yeah, these feel heavy. Now. [NOISE] Perfect. Hedy Lamarr, I like it.

**Yokko:** I'm looking at you Heather. I'm looking at you Heather. She is good.

**Kazzy:** Oh, isn't she beautiful?

**Yokko:** She's good.

**Kazzy:** Just want to give her a big hug, come in here honey, come in here. Let's have a cup of tea.

**Yokko:** I haven't seen so many students in the past, and the performers, a lot of performers. It's good. She has like a right heart. I said good passion.

**Kazzy:** Look at this heart just bursting.

**Yokko:** She so caring about work. That we need. We need a care.

**Kazzy:** Following her heart.

**Yokko:** Then we will hold the performance.

**Kazzy:** Yes. You can do it honey.

**Yokko:** You can stand. You can fly. You go to the edge and fly.

**Kazzy:** We'll be here. We got a big hug and a cup of tea and love just waiting for you, you just be who you want to be.

**Yokko:** Just go to journey and then come back here, we waiting for you. Yeah.

**Kazzy:** We love you.

**Yokko:** We love you.

**Jordan Rosin:** Thank you actors and musicians.

**Jordan Rosin:** [APPLAUSE] At this point we can bring our audience back onscreen and check in with our teller. Heather, how was that for you?

**Heather Massie:** Well, I have to say I was very shy just to talk today. I thought, Oh, goodness, I just want to watch. It was really nice and that was really lovely and something I needed to hear today and KSR, yes. I've got my heavy right here. Yeah, there is a lot of that choosing what's right, and it was lovely to have P.A.B. welcome me home. Thank you very much I appreciate that.

**Jordan Rosin:** Thank you Heather for your experience and your story. We welcome it and are so honored.

**Heather Massie:** Made me weep a little, so very good job. Thank you.

**Jordan Rosin:** Thank you. Wow. We've heard so many variations on how Virginia Tech has been a home to people. I invite at this point, anyone who cares to tell a story who hasn't yet, you're most welcome. But I can also pose this question, the Council on Virginia Tech History, and as they prepare now for the Sesquicentennial, the 150-year anniversary, upcoming this year. It's very much interested in stories that perhaps had gone hidden or unheard. Maybe stories that are contested or suppressed. I want to say at this point, too, that if someone has a story that they care to share of that nature, that it is also welcome. It would be interesting and fine to hear a story maybe that you've never told. But, of course, it's an option. We're very happy also to hear about how Virginia Tech has been home in some other way or something else entirely. Are there other stories that feel important to tell at this time?

**Catherine Crossett:** I'll go. So football is a huge thing at Virginia Tech. I can probably say I went to five football games. I don't know if I really stayed through all of them. I can confirm when I stayed through two. Of course, football, it's a whole day event. I never really got into it, but I remember walking around the stadium and just feeling very overwhelmed and pondering why it was okay that people didn't know where they were. They were so far gone from drinking or whatever substance

they were on, how that was such an accepted thing that I was like, “I want to be present.” Theater is all about being present and in the moment, and yet it was expected that you wake up at 7:00 AM and start chugging beer, and I was like, [LAUGHTER] “I don’t want this. I don’t want to be a part of this.” I would like my coffee in the morning and then maybe a glass of wine with dinner. I don’t know if fear is necessarily the right word, but just curiosity is, and a little bit of sadness maybe that that was the accepted and encouraged thing to do.

**Jordan Rosin:** Sure. Some sadness that so many were so un-present, yeah. Thank you, Catherine, for sharing that experience as well. Such an interesting flip side that a place of so much home can also contain such contradiction or paradox. I think this would be lovely to respond to with a Three-Minute Poem. A Three-Minute Poem. At this point, I’ll invite the audience to turn their cameras off. If you’re just joining us as I think one person has, I’ll remind you that this performance is best viewed with “Non-video participants hidden” and in the Gallery View mode. I’ll turn my camera off. This is a three-minute poem about Catherine’s experience. Let’s listen.

**Kazzy:** In between worlds of what’s expected, I will take the trees, and the flowers, and the green grass over that fifth glass. I’d like my eyes open, rather than halfway awake. I’d like to feel open and ready than pretty much bait. It’s interesting I’m curious as to why this is the way when don’t people want to see the whole thing play? No matter, you do you and what service you’re soul okay, but I’ll take being present any day.

**Kaitlyn Samuel Rosin:** Big game day. Beer, beer, beer. Get your beer, beer, beer. Game Day, ready. Game day, not so steady. Beer, beer, beer. This is fun, right? This is safe, right? Beer, beer, beer. Oh, watch out, that’s puke. Beer, beer, beer. Get back into this. They seem to be enjoying this, but all of this gives me is fear, fear, fear.

**Yokko:** [NOISE] Football stadium, loud noise, excitement, scream, yet somehow empty. Cheering sound, fun. Dancing mascot, fun. I love the path to the cafe, the

cafe hidden in the trees. I love that moment I feel green, squirrel running, in the mountain and blue sky and clouds. Green field, I lie down, close my eyes, hearing the sound. People chattering and loud voices, laughing, cheering, bird noises. Tree and the wind, cup of tea, and a breath, be with a friend.

**Jordan Rosin:** Thank you actors and musicians. [APPLAUSE] At this point, the audience can bring their cameras back on. We can check in with Catherine. How was that for you?

**Catherine Crossett:** That was excellent. That captured I think, little bits of what I feel or felt in that situation, each story. Each poem had different elements that resonated. [NOISE]

**Jordan Rosin:** Wonderful. We're nearing the end of our time. We could have one or maybe two shorter stories. There were stories yet to tell. Again, if anyone wants, feel free to unmute yourself or raise a hand. If there's something you're inspired to say. [LAUGHTER] I know we're a small crew here today, so no need to speak more than you feel moved. You may speak again or speak for the first time if so moved. [LAUGHTER]

**Thomas Tillar:** Tom. Students are known for loving to demonstrate. I remember when living in the residence hall and eating in the dining hall, how poor the food was, and there was a cockroach found in one of the puddings, a picture of it made it into the campus paper, and all the students formed a demonstration a few days later. Invited the newspaper press and cameras to come and had a student dressed as a cockroach carried on a stretcher and paraded into the dining hall, which is followed with a food fight. There were people throwing food and everything. It ended up being a mess but made a lot of press for the university or at least the students who wanted to make a point. Did the food improve? Yes, the food improved. All it took was a little bit of fun demonstrating. It was all peaceful, nothing too outrageous, but that was also in the 1960s.

**Jordan Rosin:** What an era?

**Thomas Tillar:** No more cockroaches in dining hall puddings. [LAUGHTER]

**Catherine Crossett:** I feel I need to go back in time to [LAUGHTER] the '60s.  
[LAUGHTER]

**Howard Sholl:** The food was much better for you, Catherine. The food was not as good as it is now. [LAUGHTER]

**Jordan Rosin:** Well, thank you. Tom, if I can ask, where were you in the middle of all of this?

**Thomas Tillar:** I was a spectator when the cockroach appeared on a stretcher but I was part of the food fight. I did join in the food fight. Throwing food instead of eating it.

**Jordan Rosin:** [LAUGHTER] Yes. Okay.

**Howard Sholl:** One of the best things Virginia Tech ever did was turn the dining hall into the Mass Ark Center. [NOISE]

**Thomas Tillar:** True.

**Jordan Rosin:** Wonderful. The Mass Ark Center, we've heard a little already today about that Performing Arts Building, if I'm correct. Howard, do you care to say anymore about that?

**Howard Sholl:** Just made a much better use for that facility. [LAUGHTER] They no longer provided food. The food is much better elsewhere on campus and it was the truth.

**Jordan Rosin:** Wow. Yeah. Well, thank you Howard for chiming in here. I appreciate it. Why don't we see a Fluid Sculpture based on Tom's experience enriched here by this insight we have from Howard. [LAUGHTER] What an experience to have the cockroach and food fight and all else. We'll see this as a Fluid Sculpture. The audience can go ahead and turn your cameras off, so will I and let's watch.

**Kaitlyn Samuel Rosin:** Take this mashed potatoes. [NOISE]

**Kazzy:** I'm just a little cockroach, I didn't mean any harm. [NOISE]

**Yokko:** Take orange.

**Kaitlyn Samuel Rosin:** I'm going to eat.

**Yokko:** Take the orange.

**Kaitlyn Samuel Rosin:** I'm going to eat.

**Kazzy:** I'm just a little cockroach. I didn't mean any harm.

**Jordan Rosin:** [LAUGHTER] [APPLAUSE] Thank you, Tom. [LAUGHTER] If Howard is still here, did that resonate with any of your experience as well? Just to check in with our secondary.

**Howard Sholl:** Not really, but it was good.

**Jordan Rosin:** Was something missing? Is there something you'd like to add, Howard?

**Howard Sholl:** No, I don't think so. [LAUGHTER]

**Jordan Rosin:** Thank you for those stories. At this point, I think unless there's anything else that needs to be told, we can begin to wrap up. We can pick a space, I think first to just acknowledge the stories that have gone untold. Whether or not you spoke today, there might yet be something in your psyche, something in your heart. A special meaning that Virginia Tech has. As I said before, in Playback, we believe everybody has a story and those stories deserve to be told. If not now, then maybe later, maybe some other time. [LAUGHTER] I invite us to close then with a little audience participatory ritual, we can reflect on the things we've heard tonight using this little phrase, "once upon a time there was." You can fill in the blank with anything you remember or found special from tonight's stories. [LAUGHTER] For example, once upon a time, there was a story about a cockroach. [LAUGHTER] Anyone can chime in.

**Kazzy:** Once upon a time, there was a story about feeling torn between presence and nonpresence.

**Kate Douglas:** [NOISE] Once upon a time there was a story back home.

**Kaitlyn Samuel Rosin:** Once upon a time there was a story about a tough goodbye.

**Yokko:** Once upon a time the story of using a place and changing the place as a better use.

**Catherine Crossett:** Once upon a time, there was a story about community.

**Thomas Tillar:** Once upon a time, there was a story about discovery and exhilaration.

**Howard Sholl:** Once upon a time, there were stories about Virginia Tech.

**Jordan Rosin:** Thank you all so much for coming and participating in this performance tonight. We have so much enjoyed hearing your stories. I want to extend a special thank you again to our partners, the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences and the alumni director there, Christina Miller; in the School of Performing Arts and Council on Virginia Tech History, Bob Leonard in Virginia; VT Stories, Ren Harman; in the University Libraries, Anita Walz. Thank you all for your support behind the scenes here. As I said before, you could look forward to reviewing tonight as part of *Storytelling on Screen*, an online, Playback Theatre archive, open education, resource on Playback Theatre. Again, we are The Ume Group. And if you want to find out more about us, you can at [www.theumegroup.org](http://www.theumegroup.org). Once again, thank you all so much for joining us tonight and have a great rest of your evening. [LAUGHTER]