Shuffling

A Short Comedy by
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Dedication

To the artists who make the music,
and to the loved ones who make it meaningful.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Lacey, a teenage girl, has finished work at the mall and is waiting – and waiting – for her boyfriend to pick her up. Left stranded yet again, she reevaluates her love life while shuffling through the songs on her iPod. Actors portraying each of the songs appear with comedic monologues that stir her emotions, offer advice, and affect her decisions. Ethan, a good-humored co-worker, offers her a ride home and the possibility of future romance.

The play may be performed with anywhere from 3 to 16 actors. Actors playing Songs portray the spirit and style of the genre rather than a particular musical number. Without mimicking a specific artist, your audience may make their own connections - creating individual personal playlists - as the performance unfolds.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

Shuffling was first performed November 19, 2010 by Greenwood Lakes Middle School in Lake Mary, Florida. It was directed by Suzanne Reeves and stage managed by Olivia Hagerman. The cast was as follows:

Lacey - Rebecca Petty
Ethan - Braden Rollins
Song 1 - Eric Topolewski
Song 2 - Lilly Vreeland
Song 3 - Nick Kosteski
Song 4 - Austin Alber
Song 5 - Allison Lo
Song 6 - John Stoops
Song 7 - Tristan Temmel
Song 8 - Mason Wood
Song 9 - Kaylyn Vega
Song 10 - Ali Sang
Song 11 - Laura Simpson Linck
Song 12 - Janesha Jones
Song 13 - Maddie Bright
Song 14 - Ben Brent
Understudy – Brea Jones

CAST

(1 m, 1 f, 1-14 flexible)

LACEY: Kind, confused, and stranded in a tenuous relationship.

ETHAN: Friendly and funny, and a possible way out.

SONGS 1-14: Various tracks on Lacey's playlist.

NOTES

Actors playing SONGS should remember that they are portraying the spirit and style of the genre rather than a particular musical act. Although having a song and a performer in mind will help the actor and director create each character, the specifics should not be shared with the audience. It will be more fun and effective for viewers to make their own connections as the performance unfolds.

There is a lot of flexibility within the playlist. Any script references to gender are simply suggestions, and most, if not all, may be changed with little effect on the story. Costumes and accents may be adapted as needed. SONG 1, for example, might be portrayed as an '80s metal-head, a pretentious Brit, a southern rocker, or an indie chick, among others.

The 14 SONGS may be performed by 14 different actors or by a smaller number with several appearing in multiple roles. If need be, all 14 could be performed by one or two talented actors with an abundance of energy and large assortment of hats.

Simply put, feel free to personalize the playlist to fit the needs of your production.

SETTING

A shopping mall/present day.

Shuffling

(AT RISE: LACEY enters. She looks around then takes out a cell phone. As she starts to dial, ETHAN steps up behind her. He taps her gently on the shoulder, surprising her slightly. She relaxes into a smile.)

ETHAN: Sorry. Didn't mean to startle you.
LACEY: No problem.
ETHAN: Another fun day at work, huh?
LACEY: *(Playfully sarcastic.)* Yeah. Nothing I love more than selling books at the mall.
ETHAN: *(Playing along.)* Same here. *(Points around, leans in secretively.)* If any of these people discover this town has a library, we're in serious trouble.
LACEY: It'll be our little secret.
ETHAN: Deal. By the way, thanks again for bailing me out with the crazy lady.
LACEY: My pleasure. She was an interesting one. Still not sure if she was looking for books *about* her cats or *for* her cats.
ETHAN: Well, getting her to buy a calendar was a great idea.
LACEY: And, with the whole "nine lives" thing, think of the repeat business.

(THEY share a nice laugh followed by a beat of silence.)

ETHAN: Well. Speaking of buying things, I think I'm going to look around for a while before heading home. You don't need a ride, do you?
LACEY: No, thanks. I'm meeting someone any minute.
ETHAN: Okay then. Just wanted to make sure you weren't stranded.
LACEY: That's sweet. I'm good though.
ETHAN: Cool. When do you work again?
LACEY: After school, Monday.
ETHAN: Guess I'll see you after the weekend, then.

LACEY: Sounds great. Happy shopping.
ETHAN: Happy waiting.

(ETHAN exits right. LACEY smiles a beat, watching him go then dials her phone. We see a little disappointment as the call goes to voicemail. She recovers quickly and leaves a pleasant message.)

LACEY: Hey, Trevor, it's me. I'm not sure why you're not answering, or why you're not here yet. *(Checks the time.)* It's after seven. I'm done with work and waiting in the lobby like we planned. I hope you're here soon. Can't wait to see you. I love ya. *(SHE hangs up and dials another number. SHE sighs as she leaves another message.)* Hey, Vanessa. Just calling to see what you're up to. I'm at the mall waiting for Trevor. Again. Hope your Friday night's more exciting than mine so far. Give me a call if you're bored. Later.

(LACEY places the phone in her purse and pulls out an iPod. As she does, a group of actors enter single file. They are an odd assortment; each costumed slightly differently to represent the SONGS on her playlist. LACEY crosses right center, unraveling her headphones. The SONGS follow, staying in a line, each trying to get a peek at what she is going to do. LACEY sits, puts on the headphones, and presses the shuffle button. In a quick display of choreographed chaos, the SONGS begin to rearrange themselves, spinning, shifting, and shuffling as they switch order. In a moment's time, they have formed a new single file line. SONG 1 stops just left of LACEY, facing front. The subsequent SONGS line up behind, somewhat obscured from the audience. SONG 1 takes a step forward, raising his arms in triumph.)

SONG 1: First! *(Looks to the other SONGS for some enthusiastic support, but finds none. Calls to them.)* You guys are just jealous. *(To LACEY who sits as if she is listening to the song.)* You're happy I'm here. I can tell.

SONG 1: *(Cont'd.)* I know I'm not your favorite song ever, but you didn't skip over me when I popped up, so I am taking it as a win. I'm the perfect song to kick off a "waiting for your boyfriend" mix, anyway. My acoustic guitar intro, relaxing your mind. My rhythm slowly increasing, building up the anticipation….

(LACEY'S head nods slightly to the beat.)

SONG 1: *(Cont'd.)* There you go! I see you nodding. *(Speaks for her with each movement.)* Yes. Yes. Yes. *(To the other SONGS.)* See that? That's approval! *(To LACEY.)* I'll admit that I'm a fairly unremarkable rock song. Basic chords. Simple lyrics. Catchy hook. Nothing to love, but nothing to hate either. All these years, I've just sort of been here. Underappreciated. Overlooked. Tolerated. But this time, I'm making an impression. I know I don't cause you think of Trevor. You've never listened to me while you were together. I'm not romantic in any way…but I'm having an impact. I'm setting a mood. *(Moves his arms as if playing the drums, really getting into it.)* Listen to my drums. They're building perfectly. Growing louder like Trevor's footsteps getting closer. *(Shifts his arm movements so he is now slapping the "air bass.")* Listen to that bass. Quickening like your pulse. Increasing the excitement. Heightening the tension. *(Switches to "air guitar" and does a furious solo.)* And here's the guitar solo. It's wailing… screaming… just like you did when you were *solo*…in the days before Trevor. *(Begins switching between the drums, the bass, and the guitar, building in intensity until the end of his monologue.)* Those days are over. He's part of your life now. He's going to walk in the door right as I reach my crescendo. It's going to happen. I can feel it. You can feel it. You're going to love him forever and you're going to love *me* forever, too! I'm about to cement my permanent place in an "I love Trevor" playlist! Get ready. This is it! The big finish. Here it comes! Here he comes!

End of Freeview

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