

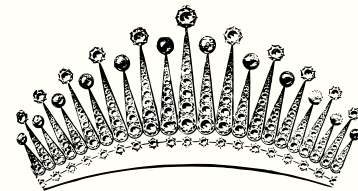
WHY PIPPIN?

A SENIOR THESIS IN THEATER, DANCE AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES

Elsie and Clara will be using this production to conduct academic research for their senior projects--Elsie in acting, and Clara in directing. But the only differences that means for you as an auditionee are more resources for the production than a typical CPA show receives and the opportunity to perform in the Theater, Dance and Performance Studies Blackbox. Below is information about their research if you are curious!

"I will be using gender defamiliarization to consider simultaneous engagement with fantasy and reality for both audience and actor. In general, I am interested in **what happens when the distance between actor and character, and more broadly, real and fictional, is pointed out to an audience.** Pippin is already a musical that aims to visibly build a world and put on a show, but by doing so it makes clear that the story being told is fictional. Yet by the end of the play, the boundary between the worlds bursts and the story feels realer than ever. Moreover, musical theater as a medium takes advantage of blatant fantasy and fourth wall breaking not to push its audience away, but to bring them closer. Can distance counterintuitively increase an audience's emotional and intellectual engagement with a piece? I will explore this question **as a female actor playing a male role,** Pippin, with the goal of visibly exacerbating the distance. This will also allow me to interrogate thematic elements of Pippin that are already present in the script, to incite a heightened audience experience of these elements, and to research an actor's approach to a demonstrated onstage difference between the fictional and the real worlds."

–Elsie



"My objective is to subvert theatrical realism in casting and stage a gender-expansive production that interrogates the gender roles and narratives present in this musical, as well as musical theater and storytelling as a whole. As a director, I'm interested in acknowledging and interrogating dissonance between character and actor, which is why I'm so drawn to *Pippin*, a musical known for its metatheatricality and a presentational style, as an avenue for exploring **cross-gender and gender-expansive casting.** In researching the lineage of epic and didactic storytelling that informs Pippin, and other **mock-epic** storytelling in literature, film and theater, I'd like to **call into question and expand the idea of a hero protagonist,** both in terms of gender and narrative structure. How does musical theater provide a heightened experience of gender for performer and audience, and how can staging the Brechtian alienation/distancing effect change this musical for each party?"

–Clara