

AUTHOR'S NOTE, OR WHY PRODUCE NEW WORK ON OUR MAINSTAGE

Bringing new work to the mainstage at Marymount is a vital part of theatre education for our students and an integral part of the new play pipeline. By working on a new play students actively engage with a living playwright (in this case, me!) who like them is going through a process of transformation. A new play changes in large and small ways on an almost continual basis – new scenes, new lines, changes in sequence, revelations of character all stem from the collaboration between director, playwright, stage manager(s), dramaturg, performer, and designer. This collaboration requires all to be malleable, open to possibility, willing to take a risk on a new idea and most importantly willing to fail. It is essential that young theatre artists see their mentors and professors engaging in this work with the same inquiry we ask them to pursue. A student who works on new play while in school will be better equipped to enter the professional theatre – where most of their initial opportunities will come from supporting the development of new plays through readings, workshops and eventually first productions. As you watch the play this evening, consider the impact these young theatre artists have had on this play – their questions, impulses, and analysis shaped this production, informed my work, and elevated the play's essential idea.

Outside of an academic setting, it is quite rare for a new play to be produced on this scale. I cannot highlight enough the immense impact developing a new work at a college/university has on the work of the playwright. Seeing *A Thousand Years* fully realized has allowed me to dream larger and reach farther. Through every step of this process, I've been grateful for the gift of getting to do this work with students and colleagues I respect within an institution that has been so welcoming to me as a teacher and artist. My greatest hope is that this production, the first time a new work has been presented on our mainstage, serves as an inroad to support the development of original, ambitious works by living and breathing playwrights for generations to come.

- Kenny Finkle, Playwright