



SCOTT BRADLEY

Q Do you have a routine? A regular time when you write?

A I'm a morning writer. Before emails or other business clutter my head, I try to get in at least three-hour blocks of uninterrupted time for generative writing, two-hour blocks if I'm working through edits and rewrites.

Q Once you have an idea, how do you proceed? Do you take notes? Do you outline? Do you plunge right in?

A I like to play with the idea first as a piece of flash fiction. I experiment with tone and rhythm and language. The brevity of it demands that I really crystallize the main action. Then I go down the research rabbit hole for a couple months. I give myself crash courses on agronomy, opera, Elizabethan cuisine, whatever may deepen my understanding of the context I'm exploring.

Q When you begin a first draft, do you write straight through? Do you write in order? What's your process?

A I start at the top and write straight through, letting it teach me how we get to the end. It

rarely follows the path I thought we were taking. Sometimes it chooses a different ending. Not only is it a joyride for me, but I learn so much about the play's personality and mechanics.

Q Once you're at work, are there other art forms you go to for continued inspiration?

A For every play, I find a handful of musicians and visual artists whose work feels in conversation with the play's energy, tone, rhythm, maybe time-period. Whenever I return to a play after "drawer time," I'll revisit these artists and they quickly propel me back into the world.

Q What aspect of the craft is most difficult for you?

A The hardest part for me is staying focused on a singular path for a play over the course of its development. Plays can take a long time to write and revise. Life events pull my interests and attention to different themes or ways of creating theatrical experience that can muddy the waters of a play that began with such clarity. That's when I enlist the critical eye of a trusted collaborator or mentor, to let me know when I veer off course.

Q What do you do when you get stuck?

A If I'm stuck, it's usually because I'm bored by a character or the character is bored. That means backing up to the last moment we were both engaged and trying a new direction that ups the stakes.

Q Do you have any thoughts or advice about exposition and/or dialogue?

A When I try to get clever about sneaking exposition into dialogue, it always convolutes the scene and stops the action cold. If a past event drives the central action, its revelation usually comes out organically. If it doesn't drive the action, I might let the information color the character for me, but I leave it off the page.

Q How much do you think about the audience while writing?

A I write plays and musicals to give audiences memorable experiences, so "this would be incredible to see on stage!" is what attracts me to an idea in the first place. Then I put the audience out of my mind and write the first draft just for me and my own pleasure. The play may never grow up to be produced, so I want to

enjoy its birth! I consider the audience's experience again as I head into draft two.

Q How extensively do you rewrite, and is that mostly before or during rehearsal?

A I love rewrites! A rewrite is just a new experiment with the play's ideas and characters. I don't show a play to anyone until the second rewrite, and it'll go through two more revisions before I pass it around widely. During rehearsals, I'm constantly revising because I learn so much about the play when it's coming out of actors' mouths.

Q What's the most important craft advice you can give?

A Imagine a world onstage you've never seen, that you'd sell everything you have to see just once. That's the only play you should be writing.

SCOTT BRADLEY's musicals include *We Three Lizas*, *Alien Queen*, *Carpenters Halloween*, *Tran: The Atari Musical*, and *Mollywood*. *Plays include* *Trocadero Rose*, *A Kingdom Jack'd*, *Seed*, and *Packing*, which premieres Fall 2019 at *About Face Theatre*. Scott is a 2019 *Iowa Arts Fellow* and alumnus of *Iowa Playwrights Workshop*. scottbradleyink.com