

Mara Palma's STEADY AS SHE GOES

Orientation (noun) - basic attitude, beliefs, or feelings in relation to a particular subject or issue

Orientation (noun) - a program of introduction for newcomers to a college or other institution

Staff orientation is familiar to all of us who's ever had a job, while I think of orientation in a diverse context, and not everyone is familiar. The setup brings the audience in, but there are ways to use "orientation" to bring a new light to them.

"Alright, alright, settle down! Todos! Madames et monsieurs! Hoy, pare!" (pg 4)

The first phrases the audience hears are three to four languages. English immediately brings a generally English-speaking American audience on board, then it "alienates" them with other languages. Interesting. Perhaps, play with what the first words are and see how you feel in the audience if you didn't know the language.

"Ay nako..." (pg 4)

The first phrase of song. Now the audience may associate the Filipino culture to music.

"IN JESUS' NAME AMEN."

Back to "orientation," it is a common religion that the audience would *understand*. It unifies the culture and gives the "we are not so difference" feeling.

The opening number has the capability to plant a "four-dimensional" utilization of the sense of smell. When production happens, consider scented motifs with melodic leitmotifs. The clapping gets the audience to assimilate as though they are part of the staff orientation. I imagine the orchestra members being a part of the orientation, with one pulling out a guitar. After the plates of food are passed around, they must head to their orchestra seats (because as an instrumentalist, we can't touch or eat food).

This is only if you want the audience to immediately know that Reyna is the protagonist: The only way I feel it's hinted that Reyna is the protagonist is when she says: "It's my first day." I wouldn't know for sure. Generally, an individual who has the most potential to be outcasted will be the lead. Another way would be if Kalamncee-Cee absurdly starts the dialogue after the song with: "You a virgin?" That feels impactful. And I'd know for sure that Kalamncee-Cee may be the comic relief or buddy of the lead. So many potential ways for Reyna to show that newbie-ness through her distinct actions of digging into the food.

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"Just graduated college a couple months ago. I'm gonna do a tour on a cruise ship, and then do a national tour, and then go to Broadway." (pg 6)

This is definitely directed towards an audience full of theatremakers. Anyone who frequent a theatre as an audience member may not pick up on how many dreams start off with cruise ships. It certainly may help these unacquainted audience form newfound respect for theatre actors.

In general musical structure, the second song is the "I Want" song. "Welcome" and "I Made a Vow" is an interplay. Like anyone, Reyna wants to be welcomed. The strumming of "Welcome" is so welcoming and makes me want to run across the deck. The sub-want that Reyna has seems to be "to serve." What "I Made a Vow" does to "Welcome" is (non-negatively) undermine "Welcome." The phrase, "I want to come home," makes that apparent. But I question if she wants to make a home out of a non-home. The story seems to answer it. It's up to you if you want to be upfront with that answer.

I'm so interested in hearing "Welcome" in a minor transcription; great work on ensuring it is a reprise later on. I'm drawn into it being a motif. "I Made a Vow" is my favorite musical number of the story.

"Home" or house-related words are the most common words in this musical.

Solo songs: "Welcome" → "I Made a Vow" → "Someday"

Consider mixing it up a bit and having a duet or small ensemble or simply incidental music in between musical numbers to change up the audience expectations.

"Mag-Ingat K," which is a partial duet, is nice to return to. Otherwise, I'd expect a personal song from everyone on this cruise ship.

KAHIT SAAN KA PUPUNTA,
SANA MAG-INGAT KA.
AT ANUMAN ANG NASA IYONG HINAHARAP,
SANA MAG-INGAT KA. (pg 32)

The triplets get me. It makes these phrases sound urgent. Then...

SOMETIMES WHEN MY HEART IS ON THE FLOOR. (pg 32)

It is rather impactful to our hearts as a listener.