Directorial Concept:

Othello takes place, above all else, in a man's world. In Shakespeare's original text, the men in Othello have given their lives to the military, a traditionally all-male organization. Because of this, toxic masculinity infiltrates every aspect of the men's opinions and behaviors in *Othello.* It's my belief that many of the unfortunate events that occur in the play could have easily been avoided, had the male characters not been afflicted with insecurity, hungry for power, or if they had simply trusted the women in their lives. That being said, I didn't want to make my version of Othello an explicitly political piece. I think if an audience goes into a piece that has a very noticeable political agenda, the audience members that don't completely agree will write it off easily. My goal, instead, using Brecht as inspiration, was to set the play in a time period from the past in order to distance the audience from the politics of it, but still bring the issue of toxic masculinity to the surface. I chose a group that is strongly associated with masculinity, gangs, and an organization that has a clear ranking system, the Italian Mafia. I chose to set the play in the 1930's a booming time for the Italian Mafia. By putting the characters into an organization that has less honor and respect surrounding it (the Mob instead of the military), I am hoping that the true evil of the male characters as a result of the cultural dynamic and societal structures, shines through.

Design Concept:

Not unlike the military, the men in the Mafia during the 1930s wore a uniform. Double-breasted suits, fedoras, pin-stripes, etc. I don't want this feeling to be lost. I want them to look like a true gang, like a true Mafia family. Because all the photos we have of the Mafia at this time were in black and white, I've chosen to dress the men in all black or gray, except for Othello, who will be in white to visually differentiate him from the other men, with pops of color for characterization. The women, however, will be in color, to further separate them from the uniformity of the men. The color will be the uniting factor, but the characters and circumstances of each individual will inform silhouette. The feeling will be of coldness, uniformity, and masculinity for the men and the complete reverse for the women.