STEVIE AND THE REAL WORLD

Written by
IRAISA ANN REILLY

Directed by
JI WON JEON

CREATIVE TEAM

Director: **Ji Won Jeon**
Playwright: **Iraisa Ann Reilly**
Scenic Design: **Kessler Jones***
Puppetry Design: **Kessler Jones***
Costume Design: **Katherin "KAT" Poon**
Sound Design: **Brandon McDuff***
Lighting Design: **Bunni Gutierrez**
Props Artisan: **Erin Riley**
Co-Media Design: **Alison Dobbins**
Co-Media Design: **Lauren Spiegel**
Dramaturg: **Daniel T. Smith**
Intimacy Director: **Alexis Black**
Fight Captain: **Kim Seabright Martin**
Assistant Scenic Designer: **Melina Rodriguez**
Assistant Sound Designer: **Ben Barber**
Assistant Props Artisan: **Julie Clampitt**
Charge Artist: **Hope X. Still**
Assistant Charge Artist: **Olivia Bath**
Additional Voices: **Michael Bolanos, Jazlyn Dingfelder, Mandy Michele Marsili**

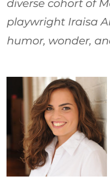
CAST

Katherine M. Clemons*: Athena
Christopher Eastland*: Peter
Mona Eldahshoury*: Francesca
Stefon Funderburke*: Promise
Ural Grant*: Andre
Kim Seabright Martin*: Shelby
Oscar Quiroz*: Fred
Jacob Theo Squire*: Sebastian
Cassidy Williams: Lead Stevie Puppeteer
Lexa Busch: Understudy Athena/Shelby/Stevie

*denotes Master of Fine Arts Candidate

MFA PLAY COMMISSION

Michigan State University Department of Theatre put out a call for emerging playwrights of the global majority to write a new play for our diverse cohort of Master of Fine Arts Acting and Design candidates. After over three hundred submissions, the students selected playwright Iraisa Ann Reilly to write a play specifically for them. Through a series of interviews and exercises, Reilly created a play full of humor, wonder, and… puppets.



Iraisa Ann Reilly (She/Ella) is a writer, performer, and educator who is half-Cuban, half-Irish, and whole New Jersey. Select full-length plays include Good Cuban Girls (Teatro del Sol, at The Arden Theatre), The Jersey Devil is a Papi Chulo (Winner, Latinx New Play Festival at La Jolla Playhouse 2023, Sol Fest 2022, Yale Drama Series Shortlist 2022, Finalist Leah Ryan Prize, KCACTF) Saturday Morning Cartoons (Winner, Bay Area Playwright's Festival 2022, Arkansas New Play Festival 2023, Finalist Goldberg Playwriting Prize 2022, Semifinalist Blue Ink Award 2023, Semifinalist Premiere Stages).

Her work has been developed with Theatre Exile, The New Harmony Project, The Chain Theatre, The Workshop Theatre, ARTHouse INKubator, NYU Production Lab's Development Studio and the Latinx Playwright's Circle. Her play "House Bill 3979: Amendment #10: The Life and Works of Dr. Hector P. Garcia" was commissioned and produced by Texas A&M-University-Corpus Christi in 2022.

Iraisa Ann is currently under commission with the Arden Theatre Company in Philadelphia. She is a recipient of the 2023 Latinx Playwright's Circle Mentorship, working with mentor Migdalia Cruz. Thanks to a Lucille Lortel Micro-commission, Iraisa Ann is currently writing and developing her one-woman show "January 6th: A Celebration," to reclaim the date January 6th, a significant religious holiday in the Catholic Latine community.

As a screenwriter, her screenplay La Reina del Bronx won best screenplay at Fusion Film Festival and was a semifinalist for the Vail Screenwriting Competition. Iraisa Ann recently performed off-Broadway in Arlene Hutton's According to the Chorus. She's taught students of all ages and is an adjunct professor of Dramatic Writing at NYU.

MFA in Dramatic Writing, NYU, BA Theatre and English University of Notre Dame. iraisaannreilly.com

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Just because you fit in does not mean you belong.

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the sense of belonging comes right after one's physiological and safety needs are met. It is indeed one of the most fundamental human desires. We all want to fit in and to belong. To achieve that, we often present slightly different versions of ourselves depending on the environment. We put on numerous social masks for school, work, home, and even online, all tweaked to fit different circumstances. Despite how hard we try to fit in, I'm sure we all share similar moments where we still feel like we don't really belong.

Iraisa Ann Reilly's new play *Stevie and the Real World*, however, offers an alternative path to belong for those who are unwilling or unable to mold themselves to fit in. They are therefore often perceived as "strange" and "weird." Yet, Stevie relentlessly continues to search for their own way to connect and belong, not by changing who they are, but by choosing themselves. In doing so, Stevie encourages others to find their own light. In today's climate where social conformity is highly encouraged, I find so much power and beauty in Stevie's journey. As you experience the play, I invite all Stevie(s) in our world to find their courage to always choose themselves.

Ji Won Jeon

DRAMATURG'S NOTE

This is the not-so-true story of nine college students…picked to go to a lake house together… and have their weekend filmed… to find out what happens when people stop being polite…and start turning into puppets…

Inspired in part by MTV's once-groundbreaking show *The Real World* and written specifically for the eight actors in our third-year MFA cohort, Iraisa Ann Reilly's play raises questions about self-actualization, memory and perception, technological change, and dairy farming as the characters journey through space and time trying to re-open a portal to another dimension. Having variously left Boston, Paris, Los Angeles, and Kalamazoo to travel "up north" to a Michigan vacation home, they jog their memories in an effort to recapture their undergraduate experience from sixteen years earlier.

Their memories share some core elements, but the disparities highlight the importance of perception as each character remembers feeling left out or hurt, or in some cases making a particular connection. Peter and Sebastian express mutual enmity due to their competing romantic interest in Shelby. While Fran remembers Promise rejecting their familial relationship as siblings, Promise remembers being overshadowed and scolded by Fran. Andre recalls feeling like an outsider, but making a decision to befriend Athena because she respects him enough to try to communicate with him and learn his name. Shelby's memory focuses on her own efforts to make Athena feel welcome, despite Athena's recollection that everyone ignored her. Fred offers a more detached point of view, framing himself as a director exploring film noir style in contrast to the documentary style envisioned by Shelby.

Stevie, the ninth member of the group, is almost entirely left out of these memories. In the intervening years, others have become quite successful as an internationally renowned wedding planner, a filmmaker and television producer, two Michigan-based on-air television personalities, and two feuding ice cream entrepreneurs. Viewing Stevie as a loose end that threatens their ambitions, they return to the lake hoping to make amends or further conceal their past. Stevie revels in disrupting their comfortable lives, sending the others on a quest to reflect on beginnings and betrayals in their relationships with one another. As their perceptions change, all must seek reconciliation, or at least resolution.

Daniel T. Smith

SPECIAL THANKS

Rob Roznowski, Karen Kangas-Preston, Our Generous Donors Whose Unrestricted Gifts Have Made This Commission Possible!, Brittany Brewer, Juliet Guzzetta, Lynn Lammers, Laura Lodewyck, Laura MacDonald, Deric McNish, Johanna Schuster-Craig

RUNNING TIME

2 hours including a 15 minute intermission.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Stage Manager
Abagail Mullen
Assistant Stage Manager
Jackson Cosme-Brooks
Assistant Stage Manager
Kate Shaffer
Department of Theatre Chairperson
Stephen Di Benedetto
Production Manager
Abbie Tykocki
Director
Ji Won Jeon
Technical Director
DJ Selmeyer
Costume Shop Supervisor
Angie Wendelberger
Scene Shop Manager
Levi Galloway
Head Carpenter
Marc White
Fiscal Officer
Sara Allison
Office Operations
Kath Clark
Lead Electricians
Matty Peterson and Lauren Spiegel
Lighting Board Op
Ebony Battle
Sound Board Op
Zhanna Yakubova
Media Board Op
Bobby Conlan
Deck Crew Head
Reese Martin
Fly Rail Crew Head
Preston Lyford
Costume Crew Head
Samantha Stanton
House Manager
Ariana Temple
Publicity Lead
Cayla Hadaway
Publicity Team
Ava Ballagh, Shelby Ginsburg, Anna Yarnal
Promotional Photography
Harley Cook
Production Photography
Raymond L. Black Photography
Costume Shop Employees and Students
Cailee Bywater, Evie Shadoff, Emily Rosolowoski, Ray Snively, Kat Poon
Scene Shop Employees and Students
Thalia Lara, Gaby Castillo, Kessler Jones, B Beethem, Erin Riley, Nicole Merchant, Christophe Straub, Kyle Konopaska, Julie Clampitt, Emma Jestila, Matthew Peterson, Marcus Pennington, and Mandy Marsili
Scenic Painters
Matty Peterson, Tyler Radze, Alex Spevetz, Zach Deande, Cayla Hadaway, Jhon Govaere, Connor Reilly, Renee Kinsler, Mandy Marsili, Kyle Angiolino, Reese Martin, Meghan Hill, Rose Babicz, Thalia Pearce, and Gaby Castillo
Deck Crew
Kyle Jedrusik, Noah Trapp, Camron Rost, Hailey Slutzky, Sophia Catella, Aryne Drews, Katelyn Kraemer, Gabe Budinger, Thomas Evansky, Alexander Adamski
Costume Crew
Caitlin Myers, Julie Clampitt, Brandon Dinh, Mara Vander Beek, Iris Widlansky, Jessica Pollok

FACULTY MENTORS

Stage Management: **Tina M. Newhauser**
Costume Design: **Karen Kangas-Preston**
Scenic Design: **Ranae Selmeyer**
Scenic Art: **Ranae Selmeyer**
Sound Design: **Lucas Nunn**
Lighting Design: **Shannon Schweitzer**
Intimacy Direction: **Alexis Black**
House Management: **Abbie Tykocki**
Publicity: **Abbie Tykocki**

CAST & CREW BIOS

+ LEXA BUSCH (Understudy Athena/Shelby)
+ JULIE CLAMPITT (Assistant Props Artisan)
+ KATHERINE CLEMONS (Athena)
+ JACKSON COSME-BROOKS (Assistant Stage Manager)
+ CHRISTOPHER EASTLAND (Peter)
+ MONA ELDAHSHOURY (Francesca)
+ STEFON FUNDERBURKE (Promise)
+ URAL GRANT (Andre)
+ KESSLER JONES (Scenic and Puppetry Designer)
+ KIM SEABRIGHT MARTIN (Shelby)
+ BRANDON MCDUFF (Sound Design/Composer)
+ ABBY MULLEN (Production Stage Manager)
+ KATHERIN "KAT" POON (Costume Designer)
+ OSCAR QUIROZ (Fred)
+ ERIN RILEY (Props Artisan)
+ MELINA RODRIGUEZ (Assistant Scenic Design)
+ KATE SHAFFER (Assistant Stage Manager)
+ JACOB THEO SQUIRE (Sebastian)

− HOPE X. STILL (Charge Artist)

HOPE X. STILL *(Charge Artist)* Birmingham, MI; Junior. BFA Stage Management, Arts & Cultural Management Minor, and secondary focus in Scenic Painting. Some of Hope's recent productions include *Temporary* (Production Stage Manager) at Hope Repertory Theatre, *Clue* (Assistant Stage Manager) and *Bright Star* (Scenic Artist) here at MSU. She would like to thank her parents and best friends for all their love and support. Website: Hopexstill.com"

+ CASSIDY WILLIAMS (Primary Puppeteer)

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We collectively acknowledge that Michigan State University occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg – Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. In particular, the University resides on Land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw. We recognize, support, and advocate for the sovereignty of Michigan's twelve federally-recognized Indian nations, for historic Indigenous communities in Michigan, for Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and for those who were forcibly removed from their Homelands. By offering this Land Acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty and will work to hold Michigan State University more accountable to the needs of American Indian and Indigenous peoples.

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We would like to express our gratitude to the following friends who have generously supported the MSU Department of Theatre during the past year. If we have inadvertently left your name off this list, please accept our apologies and contact us so that we may make the correction. This list is current as of 12/31/23.

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