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You Can Unmute
A play by Jessica Chipman
Directed By Geralldy Nájera
Livestream Reading | July 9-11, 2021
This play is for mature audiences and contains adult language and situations.

University of Idaho
Department of Theatre Arts
Developing a new play is an entirely different process from producing a time-tested classic written by a well-established (and frequently deceased) author. The majority of plays presented on academic and professional stages around the country have received the benefit of dozens (in some cases hundreds, even thousands) of productions. They have been revised over a period of time within the crucible of rehearsals, until the author is satisfied with a final draft. The publication process further solidifies the permanency of the text for future productions.

By contrast, the unique challenge, and the unique thrill, of working on new plays is that they are not yet “road-tested.” The process is liquid; the text in a period of gestation; the writer still learning how the play functions under performance conditions. Participating in the early developmental life of a play provides us with a marvelous educational opportunity—not only for our playwriting students, but all our students—who come to appreciate, at an almost biological level, the complicated relationship between a play text and its performance.

The playwright needs to hear what works and what doesn’t work, so they can continue the revision process with fresh insight. Your feedback is an important part of that process, and so we encourage you to stick around for the audience “talk-back” directly following the play. We hope you enjoy hearing this new arrival to the stage as much as we have enjoyed nurturing it.

Robert Caisley, Chair
Department of Theatre Arts, University of Idaho

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YOU CAN UNMUTE
by JESSICA CHIPMAN

CAST
KJ................................................... JENNIFER HUGHES*
Mel.............................................. KELLY QUINNETT***
Amanda....................................... SAFFRON HENKE****

ARTISTIC TEAM
Playwright................................. JESSICA CHIPMAN*
Director...................................... GERALLDY NÁJERA****
Cultural Sensitivity Consultant..... TONI HENDERSON-MAYERS*
Scenic Design............................. BRINDLE BRUNDAGE*
Stage Manager, Sound & Tech..... DAVID HARLAN**
Pre-show voices......................... REBECCA HARDY**, SAM CLARK
MAGGIE MATTESON** AND
EMILIA TAPPANA

PLACE
The characters are on a Zoom call from their homes in Sioux Falls, South Dakota and Des Moines, Iowa

TIME
Late summer, 2020

Work on “You Can Unmute” helps fulfill degree requirements for MFA Theatre Arts candidates.
* U of I MFA candidate
**U of I Alumni
***U of I Faculty
****Guest Artist
BIOS

(Alpha Order)

BRINDLE BRUNDAGE (Virtual Scenic Designer) is a Master of Fine Arts candidate in scenic design. She is from Saint George, Utah, and received her Bachelor's Degree in scenic design from Weber State University in Ogden, Utah. Her credits include being the scenic designer for "Everybody," "Little Women the Musical" and "The Revolutionists" and scenic charge artist for "The Moors" at U of I. She received a 2021 national honorable mention for excellence in scenic design for her work on "The Revolutionists" from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival.

JESSICA CHIPMAN (Playwright) is an MFA candidate at U of I and is a playwright, director, and educator from Alexandria, Minnesota, where she has taught high school theatre arts for 10 years. A proud Heideman Award finalist, Jessica has seen her plays produced across the United States and Canada. Most recently, her adaptation of Federico Garcia Lorca’s “Yerma” earned accolades at the Minnesota State High School League State One Act Play Festival. Jessica is the co-founder of Dynamo Creative, a female-led theatre company dedicated to amplifying the stories of women, and Chip and Jack’s Theatre School, an educational theatre podcast. Special thanks to Ana Sofia Villanueva, Rob Caisley, Geraldy Najera and the entire “You Can Unmute” team. Love and gratitude to Jay, Ruby, and Cora.

KELLY EVISTON-QUINNETT (Mel) is a National Member at Large, Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival and Head of Performance at the University of Idaho. Kelly was the recipient of the National Irene Ryan Scholarship presented by the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, which led to her being placed under a development contract with ABC. She appeared on “All My Children” as Maria Monterey and on “One Life to Live” as Blaine Adams. Films include: “The River Murders” with Ray Liotta, “Without a Ladder” with Jack Bannon, “Frank” with John Gries and Britt Robertson, “Home of the Brave” with Samuel Jackson, “Mozart and the Whale” with Josh Hartnett, “The Basket” with Peter Coyote, “Mr. Write” with Paul Reiser and Martin Mull, “Brothers and Sisters” with Franco Nero and Stefano Accorsi. Plays include: “GO.PLEASE.GO.” by Emily Feldman, National New Play Network’s rolling premiere of “Lucky Me” by Robert Caisley, “Bus Stop” with Ellen Travolta, “Circle Mirror Transformation,” “Noises Off,” “Grace and Glory” and more. Kelly has had the good fortune of being a guest artist for the MFA Playwriting Workshop at the Kennedy Center with the National New Play Network and worked on plays with and by Steve Yockey, Martyna Majok, Meg Miroshnik, Michael Mitnick, Dan Le Franc, Aurin Squire and Lindsey Ferrentino. Recently, she was in the workshop performance of Randy Reinholz “Under a Big Sky” with Sheila Tousey. In 2016, Kelly was honored with the National KCACTF, Special Achievement in Performance as Medea in “Medea: Her Story.” She is the first ever Uta Hagen Teaching Award recipient and the Mayor’s Arts Award recipient for Outstanding Achievement in Arts Education. Kelly is a proud professor and Head of Performance at the University of Idaho.

DAVID HARLAN (Stage Manager, Sound Designer & Tech Director) is the founding artistic director of Moscow Art Theatre (Too) and a theater collaborator around the Palouse. Recent stage appearances include “A Christmas Carol,” “The Three Keys of Captain Hellfire” and “A Kind of Alaska” with the U of I Department of Theater Arts; and “The Pillowman,” “Harvey,” “The Odd Couple,” Santaland Diaries” and “God of Carnage” with Moscow Art Theatre (Too). He received his MFA in playwriting and directing from U of I in 2010.

TONI HENDERSON-MAYERS (Sensitivity Consultant) is a graduate of the nation’s first performing arts high school where she studied theater. She performed and directed for many Equity stages such as: Centenary Stage Company, Mill Hill Playhouse and American Stage Company. It was during that time she decided to try her hand at performing full-time in New York City and performed in many off-Broadway productions, industrials, student films and showcases. Toni enjoyed her Readers Theater Workshop in New York, but came to a realization that there weren’t many roles for African Americans on Broadway or TV during the 80’s and early 90’s. She decided to start her own theater company, Alphabet Theater continued on next page
Workshop in NJ and later PA and NC. By the time more roles opened up for blacks, Toni had already met and married actor and playwright Brian McClure Mayers and had two sons. Recently, Toni made a comeback in TV/films, stage and as an author of her book, “Wise Courtship” as well as a few other titles. She serves often as dramaturg and cultural sensitivity advisor for various plays. She made her directorial debut on Broadway at the United Solo Festival for the play, “The Cycle” and served as crowd producer for the Internet, “Never Settle Show” hosted by Mario Armstrong which won an Emmy. Toni is the winner of an ACHI Magazine Award - People’s Choice, Inspire Award - Influencer of the Year, Indie Author Legacy Award Finalist and Audience Award Nominee. She has earned her Master of Arts degree in counseling from Brewer College, Master of Business Arts degree from Liberty University and is a candidate for her Master of Fine Arts degree in theater from the University of Idaho.

SAFFRON HENKE (Amanda) Saffron is an assistant professor of theatre at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, CO. Previously, Saffron was at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, where she established The Brink Theatre Company and serves as its artistic director. She received her Master of Fine Arts degree from the Professional Actor Training Program at the University of Washington, during which she also performed with Montana Shakespeare in the Parks, Idaho Rep, Seattle Children’s Theatre and the Recklinghausen Ruhrfestspiele in Germany. She then joined the acting company at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (two seasons) where she also devised and directed The Pale Fire Project. From there she became an associate artist and resident acting company member for four seasons at the Sacramento Theatre Company, where she was also the director of STC-2, a 10-month young professionals training conservatory. With STC-2, she developed and directed “The Tale,” a rock musical about Greek mythology that toured Greece and headlined the Mioulia Festival. Her last West Coast stop was in Los Angeles, where she taught (University of Southern California, Center Theatre Group, A Noise Within Theatre), assistant directed The Heretic Mysteries with David Bridel, and expanded her on-camera resume, including a web series for HBO’s True Blood, and played Fiona in the online series for “Web Therapy.” A Midwest native, she has worked with Working Group Theatre and Riverside Theatre as an actor and voice/text coach. She has directed at Coe and Augustana Colleges (Women in the Shadow, Metamorphoses, The Bock-Eye), and taught and directed at St. Ambrose University (Les Liaisons Dangerous-}

JENNIFER HUGHES (KJ) is passionate about the arts, education, people, and community! Currently, Jen teaches at Saint Joseph Catholic High School in Ogden, Utah. She has been training, teaching, and directing high school-aged students for the past 22 years in Utah, Idaho, and Southern California, where she is originally from. Jen is a professional singer, actress, dancer, choreographer, and director of theatre. She is a graduate of Weber State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in musical theatre. Jen began her U of I journey last summer as a directing Master of Fine Arts candidate. Jennifer is married to her favorite Southern gentleman, Douglas Hughes. Between them they have eight children and nine grandchildren, which makes for an adventurous, amazing life!

GERALLDY NÁJERA (Director) is a Mexican actress, theatre director and producer. She has been a producer for Nocturno Teatro Theatre Company since 2013, where she has procured funds and produced plays and tours in Mexico. She trained at one of the most important acting schools in Mexico City, Escuela Nacional de Arte Teatral, on an acting conservatory program, and later won a scholarship by The Anglo Mexican Foundation and The British American Drama Academy (BADA) to study a Shakespeare based Midsummer in Oxford Program, U.K. Geralldy has worked as an actress, director or producer in more than 30 plays in well renowned theatre venues in the city. Her play “Ernest & Bottom” was nominated as Best Play for Young Audiences at the Premios Metropolitanos de Teatro 2019. She is currently doing the professional Feldenkrais Method Teacher training Awareness Through Movement.
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Directed by Jeffrey Miller, MFA candidate

THE DURABLE BARFLY
By Kelsey Rain, MFA candidate | First Bite New Play Series | Oct. 1-3, 2021
Directed by Autumn Tustin, MFA candidate

MACBETH
Adapted by KT Turner, Bethany Paulson, Rachel Fortunato, MFA candidates
Directed by KT Turner, MFA candidate | Oct. 15-24, 2021

A CHRISTMAS CAROL
Adapted by Kendra Phillips, 2021 MFA Playwriting Alumna
Directed by Craig A. Miller | Dec. 3-12, 2021

STRETCHED ON YOUR GRAVE
By Carolyn Murphy, MFA candidate | First Bite New Play Series | Feb. 4-6, 2022
Directed by Toni Henderson-Mayers, MFA candidate

CASTLEWOOD
By Bethany Paulson, MFA candidate | First Bite New Play Series | Feb. 11-13, 2022
Directed by Anna Marie-Brendel, MFA candidate and Robert Caisley

MR. BURNS-A POST ELECTRIC PLAY
By Anne Washburn | Directed by Carly McMinn, MFA candidate | March 4-13, 2022

INTO THE WOODS
Music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, Book by James Lapine
Directed by Jeremiah Downs, MFA candidate | April 22-May 1, 2022
Kelly Quinnett - Acting Coach

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