

PlayNotes

Season | 48 Issue | 4

Talent show



SENIOR LIVING

Written by Tor Hyams & Lisa St. Lou

PS
PORTLAND
STAGE

Discussion Series

Due to Covid-19 our regularly scheduled discussions are moving online. Head to portlandstage.org/senior-living to view our discussion schedule and Zoom links.

Join us for a Book Club-style **Page to Stage** with the Portland Public Library. Check out your copy of the script and join us two weeks before previews of each Mainstage Production. Scripts are available at the reference desk at the Main Branch of the Portland Public Library. This year discussions will be held over Zoom at 6pm. Feel free to come and chat about the plays with Literary Manager, Todd Brian Backus; his Directing and Dramaturgy Apprentices, and special guests. Visit portlandlibrary.com/programs-events/ for more information.

The Artistic Perspective

Hosted by Artistic Director Anita Stewart, is an opportunity for audience members to delve deeper into the themes of the show through conversation with special guests. A different scholar, visiting artist, playwright, or other expert will join the discussion each time.

Curtain Call

These discussions offer a rare opportunity for audience members to talk about the production with the performers. Through this forum, the audience and cast explore topics that range from the process of rehearsing and producing the text to character development to issues raised by the work.

All discussions are free and open to the public. Show attendance is not required.



MEREDITH G. HEALY



TODD BRIAN BACKUS



CAITY-SHEA VIOLETTE



ERICA MURPHY



CATHERINE BUXTON



HANNAH DALY



KAREN BLACKMORE



MOIRA DRISCOLL

LITTLE FESTIVAL '21
OF THE UNEXPECTED

MEREDITH G. HEALY LEADS A CONVERSATION WITH THE PLAYWRIGHT, DIRECTOR, AND CAST OF RX MACHINA BY CAITY-SHEA VIOLETTE
AS PART OF THE 2021 DIGITAL LITTLE FESTIVAL OF THE UNEXPECTED.

Senior Living

by Tor Hyams & Lisa St. Lou

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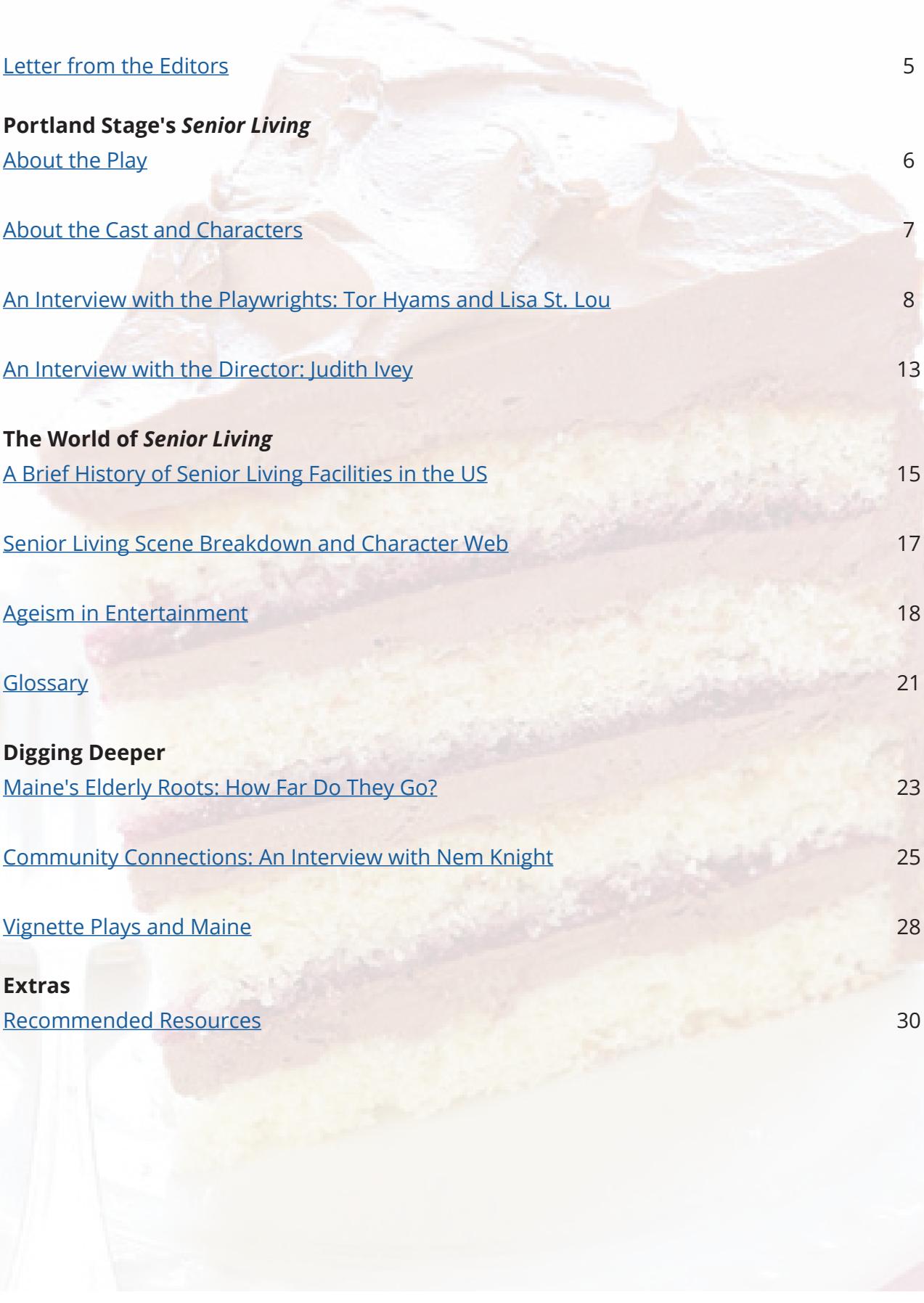
Cody Brackett

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Letter from the Editors

Dear *PlayNotes* Readers,

Happy New Year and welcome to our fourth issue of *PlayNotes* for the 2021-2022 Season!

In this issue, we explore Tor Hyams and Lisa St. Lou's new comedy *Senior Living*. This play weaves through vignettes featuring a wide array of a retirement community's residents who are "dying to live." *Senior Living* uses humor to engage audiences with themes of growing older and rediscovering the simple joys of being alive. We aim to give context to the ins-and-outs of senior living facilities and their roles in American society by including the article "A Brief History of Senior Living Facilities in the US" (p. 15), as well as an interview with Nem Knight, a former activity director for retirement communities (p. 25). We also interviewed several members of the creative team: writers Hyams and St. Lou (p. 8) and director Judith Ivey (p. 13). Their insights, along with an article positioning *Senior Living* in the larger theatrical canon titled "Vignette Plays" (p. 28) and a visual "Scene Breakdown and Character Web" for better understanding the play's overlapping relationships (p. 17), seek to deepen understanding around this new play's artistic development. We put *Senior Living*'s creativity in conversation with real-world patterns with the articles "Ageism in Entertainment" (p. 18) and "Maine's Elderly Roots" (p. 23), which look at the experiences of seniors in our society through a sociological lens.

When compiling each issue of *PlayNotes*, we strive to provide articles and interviews that give you insight into what the process has been like behind the scenes (see articles in "Portland Stage's *Senior Living*"), contain pertinent information about the play's setting and major themes ("The World of *Senior Living*"), and provide deeper dives into specific subjects that compelled our literary department ("Digging Deeper"). We include a list of books, films, plays, and television shows that we hope audiences will access for more cultural content that relates to the play ("Recommended Resources").

We hope you enjoy this issue and we look forward to seeing you at the theater!

Sincerely yours,

The Portland Stage Literary Department
Macey Downs
Meredith G. Healy
Todd Brian Backus

About the Play

by Meredith G. Healy

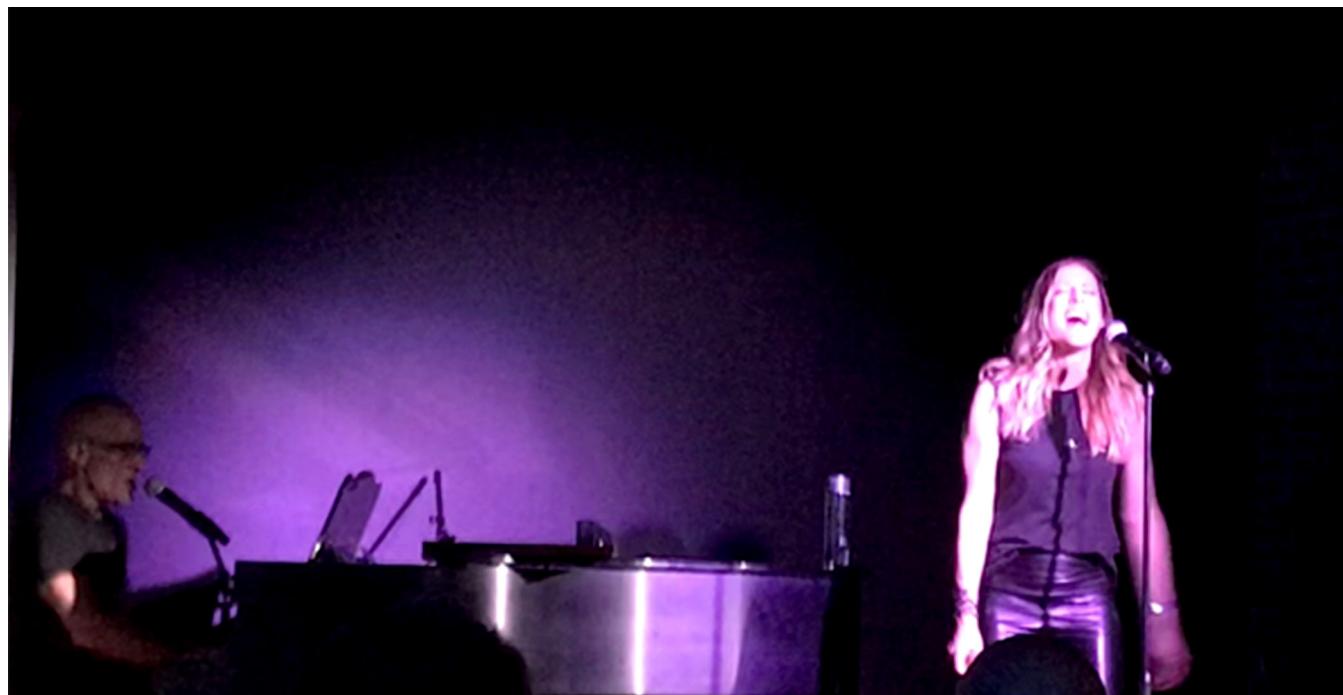
"A play about people dying to live. Though the characters in this play are 'of a certain age,' this is not a play about old people or death."

- Authors' Note, Senior Living

In the first scene of *Senior Living*, the audience is introduced to Morty and Angelina, a couple who are, respectively, in their late sixties and early seventies. Morty walks Angelina by Riverdale Manor, a senior living community in Riverdale, NY, and tentatively suggests that they consider moving in. Angelina bristles at the very suggestion. Why would the couple need to move into an "old age home?" What could a place like this offer them?

The vignettes that follow give us a loving look at the residents who reside in Riverdale Manor, the connections they've formed, and the community they've built. Although the characters are at a similar stage in their lives, they are each navigating different hurdles that might arise as one ages, but that are seldom explored onstage. What does it mean to get a divorce after decades of marriage? Is it possible to greet a potentially devastating diagnosis with humor? How can one explore intimacy and sex in their seventies? Tor Hyams and Lisa St. Lou use the script to grapple with these questions by infusing the scenes with humor and an appreciation of what it means to get older. The production at Portland Stage will be the world premiere of the play, following a 2019 reading at Cherry Lane Theatre (NYC) and a 2021 virtual reading at Portland Stage. *Senior Living* has also been adapted as a half-hour television pilot.

Hyams and St. Lou are a duo who have worked together on numerous projects for stage and screen. Hyams is a Grammy-nominated songwriter and St. Lou is a Broadway performer. Their original scripts are known for blending comedy and heart, and they often incorporate music. Hyams and St. Lou have penned over 20 projects together and have been produced at theaters across the country, including Joe's Pub (NYC), the New Victory Theater (NYC), the Goodspeed Opera House (CT), and the Rose Theater (NE).



TOR HYAMS AND LISA ST. LOU PERFORMING AT THE BLUE STRAWBERRY IN ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, 2019.

About the Cast and Characters

by Meredith G. Healy



Name: Cynthia Barnett

Characters: Alice, Ellen, Lynn, Mary

Alice - 72, married to Lou, former marketing director.

Ellen - 70, married to Richard, former Director of Librarians for the NY Public Library system. Lynn - 64, partner of Susan, former executive assistant, a hopeless gossip.

Mary - 67, divorced, former docent for the Met with a passion for opera.



Name: Grace Bauer

Characters: Angelina, Susan, Edith

Angelina - 68, married to Morty, works part-time from home as a bookkeeper.

Susan - 63, partner of Lynn, former housewife and cheerleader.

Edith - 81, married to Joe, former gal Friday turned housewife.



Name: Beth Glover

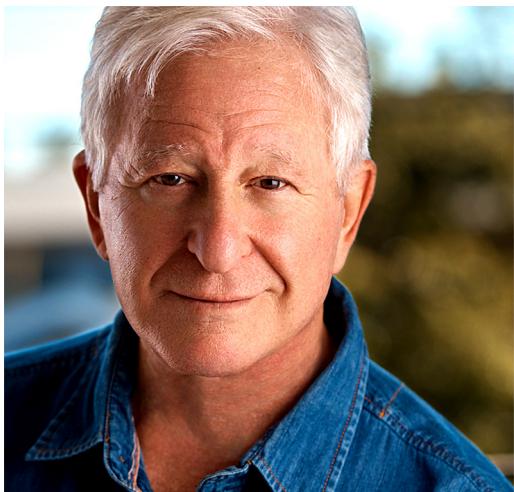
Characters: Lily, Carol, Denise

Lily - 70, widow, former human resources executive.

Carol - A "certain" age, divorced, former Broadway chorus girl from the Midwest.

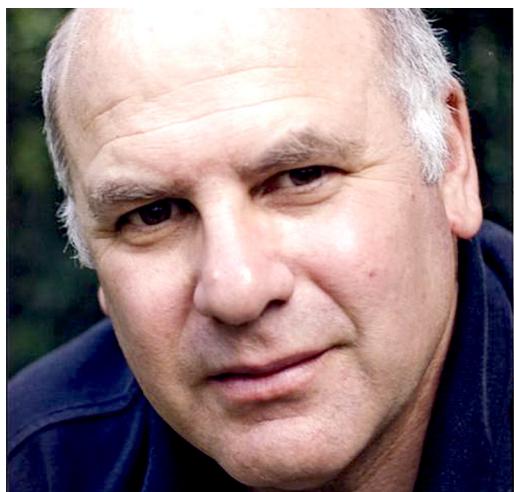
Denise - 68, widow, still working as a clinical psychologist.





Name: Steve Vinovich

Characters: Morty, Brobson, Richard, Paddy, Lou
Morty - 69, married to Angelina, recently
retired from his job as a taxi dispatcher.
Brobson - 65, married to Frank, former nurse
and amateur musician.
Richard - 72, married to Ellen, former high
school chemistry teacher with dementia.
Paddy - 70, widower, former cop originally
from Ireland.
Lou - 72, married to Alice, veteran and
former lawyer.



Name: David Wohl

Characters: Joe, Robert, Dr. Miller, Frank
Joe - 83, married to Edith, former union
foreman.
Robert - 71, divorced, former professor of
mathematics at Fordham University.
Dr. Miller - 65, the resident doctor at
Riverdale Manor.
Frank - 72, married to Brobson, tailor.

An Interview with the Playwrights: Tor Hyams and Lisa St. Lou

Edited for Length and Clarity by Meredith G. Healy

Directing and Dramaturgy Apprentice Meredith G. Healy spoke with Tor Hyams and Lisa St. Lou, the playwrights of *Senior Living*, during the second week of rehearsals about the genesis of the play and their working relationship.

Meredith G. Healy (MGH): *Can you give me a little background about yourselves? What have your careers in the theater looked like?*

Tor Hyams (TH): I came from the world of songwriting and record producing, and Lisa comes from the theater world as a performer. We've been together for ten years, and I do feel that we're just starting to really get somewhere in our careers. Anita approached us about having the premiere of *Senior Living* at Portland

Stage on the day that the world shut down in 2020. We were really excited about that because Portland Stage has been a very special place in our minds. Our friend John [Cariani] premiered his play *Almost, Maine* here and we thought this would be a great home for it.

Lisa St. Lou (LSL): I started out at a state school in Missouri where I got my Bachelor's in music and moved on to get a Master's in opera at Boston University. Turns out, I didn't love opera and shifted my attention to musical theater. After doing lots of regional theater and yes, the occasional dinner theater, I moved to New York City. The thing that seemed to set me apart from the crowd, was that I always showed up to auditions with original material

and on one fateful day, that material booked me the role of Lick Me-Bite Me in the second national tour of *The Producers*. After the tour I ended up playing two roles in the Broadway company which seemed to be a launching pad to greatness. However, the balance was tipped in favor of building a family which seems to be a crossroads for many career-driven women. At that time my partner was not compatible with the demands of the theater world. So, ten years and two kids later, I met Tor at an industry meet and greet, and experienced that "POW" moment that everything was going to change. We've literally been writing together since the moment we met.

TH: Right off the bat there was a lot of creative chemistry. We ended up writing a musical together called *Stealing Time*, which is really the process of two people running back to their hearts. It was very powerful. From that point we realized that this relationship was everything. We continued writing and started getting hired to write things like *Green Acres* the musical. I feel like that opportunity seeded us in our genre, which is comedy with a lot of heart and a lot of pathos. That was the show that defined us as comic writers.

LSL: Agreed. I think *Green Acres* was the show that forced me to acknowledge that I AM a writer. Many creatives feel like interlopers in whatever field they are "playing" in. But there comes a point, or a project, that doesn't allow you to deny your role any longer and you finally give-in to the reality that, yes indeed, you are this or that.

TH: Because you're making a living at it!

MGH: *Can you talk about your experience as co-writers and how exactly you work together?*

TH: We share everything!

LSL: We do! I will say Tor has more expertise in sitting down at the piano, finding the chords and programming the tunes. But many times, I'm the melody-driver which dictates what the sentiment is and what the vibe will be.

TH: What's interesting is that people always assume that I'm the composer and Lisa is the lyricist. Part of that is that I'm the guy at the piano, but I also think part of it is because she's the woman. The fact is that composition



TOR HYAMS AND LISA ST. LOU.

is a melody, you don't copyright chords, you copyright the melody. We are both exactly 50/50 on melodies. I might start something, but Lisa jumps in and we change notes or go in a different direction. It's very back and forth, and super collaborative. Sometimes she'll sing a melody and I'll hear in my head what to play, there's a constant back and forth and interplay between us. That process is even more satisfying than hearing the song onstage.

MGH: What was the inspiration for creating this piece?

TH: My mother's hair. For about a year Lisa and I were contemplating writing a two-hander, but we couldn't come up with an idea that worked. So we put it away. Then I was on the phone with my mother one night, I hadn't talked to her in about a week, and I asked her how everything was going. "Great," she said, "really great!" So I asked why. "My hair is long again. Finally." And I said, "Was it not?" and she said, "No, but it is now! I've been wanting my hair long again for 30 years." I woke up the next morning at 5am struck by this idea. I realized that you get to an age where something like that means everything. It was very powerful and I couldn't stop thinking about it. So, I woke up with this idea of an older woman wanting to have sex. We don't like to hear or talk about old people having sex. I sat at my computer and wrote the line, "I want to have sex again." I was thinking about if I was old and didn't have a companion, I would want to. And then the idea of the man wondering "Is she talking to me?" was really funny. Then I realized the story didn't feel like it was about old people, it was just about people, and I wrote 25 pages.

LSL: This was before I woke up! So, I get up and we read the scenes together.

TH: We were laughing together, and I said, "Okay do you want to write this now?"

LSL: And I said, "Nah. I don't need to write this play. You should write it."

TH: Which was disappointing because we write everything together.

LSL: But then the next morning I woke up and couldn't get the word "it" out of my head. And then I sat down and wrote the first version of Carol's monologue. I wrote about how the concept twists and what it means for a woman, and what it means for me through the eyes of Carol. So Tor said, "I guess we're writing this." And I said, "I guess we are." We also pulled from people in our own life. The "licking and lapping the spoon" is a direct quote from my mom to my father. A version of that whole scene played out in front of my eyes as a kid.



Lisa St. Lou.

TH: All these people are pulled from people in our own lives. Some even have the same names! If you just look around, there are characters everywhere. There are a lot of things that we didn't make up. Edith and Joe in particular. When I was a kid, I heard them argue at every family occasion, but it never made me feel yucky because they were in love. That was their vernacular. My Uncle Joe was a short stocky Russian guy who couldn't see, but if he heard me near him he'd call me over and say, "Tor, everything copacetic?" I'd

respond, "Yeah, everything's great," and then could go. There was something for both of us that felt very satisfying and safe in that interaction. But, as is true in everything we write, all of the characters are Lisa and me. All of those characters are us, all of those neuroses are our neuroses.

LSL: We both provide our perspectives from life, and both, male and female experiences are important to balance the story. But when we're writing we're still in our two-person bubble. It takes the rehearsal process to make a good show great. We can't see certain things, but development process and collaborating with other creatives is what allows us to get a consensus before the show goes to print. We're so fortunate to be able to get to this with the actors and the creative team all chipping in, because it does take a village. Great art does not get made in a bubble.

MGH: *The actors and Judith have been so thoughtful in thinking about both the arc of the narrative and the truthfulness of individual lines.*

TH: I actually feel like I've gotten to know some of the characters better through the fictionalization and the manifestation of the action happening on stage. I think everyone is fully committed to the work, and that they have a deep admiration for that work.

MGH: *I'd also imagine that for older actors it is exciting to have an opportunity to be the focus and the center of attention in this story.*

LSL: That was also part of the inspiration for creating this piece. The older generation in this country is so often tossed to the side and treated as an afterthought. That is a group that still has so much to give.

TH: No one talks about old people because we don't want to think about them. We don't want to face our own mortality, or face the idea that we will also eventually be old. Everyone gets old. We did not set out to write a play because of that, but it became a byproduct of what we're doing.



TOR HYAMS, JOSH GRISSETTI, JOHN CARIANI, AND LISA ST. LOU.

MGH: You mentioned your friend John Cariani earlier in this interview. His play *Almost, Maine* is a very famous vignette-style play. What made you decide to use that format for this play?

TH: We are working on three different projects with John right now. When we started working on *Senior Living*, we were working on a project with him and we talked a lot about *Almost, Maine* and *LOVE/SICK*. When I finished writing the first scene of *Senior Living*, it was just two characters, and when I started working on the next scene, I felt no need to continue writing for them. It felt like that story was done, and were lots of different stories to tell.

LSL: It's much easier to write a linear story with a beginning, middle and end as opposed to a "vignette" play where you have to find a way to connect everything and everyone.

TH: The first version was very unconnected. It was just fourteen individual scenes with a talent show.

LSL: We originally had a woman named Shirley who announced all of the acts and served as a pseudo-narrator.

TH: Actually, what we haven't talked about yet, and what I think is the best story involving this play, is why there is a talent show! So, Lisa and I got hired to play at a retirement community in Boca Raton, FL. We go to this place and there's a woman named Shirley who is very excited to welcome us. They have a whole night planned around us in their pavilion. Five minutes before we go on stage, Shirley finds us behind the curtain and says, "Just so you know, we're not serving the cake until after the performance." We told her that wasn't necessary, they could serve the cake whenever they wanted. But she said, "No no, you don't understand. If we serve the cake before, everyone will leave. They come for the cake." And that was it, so when I sit down for the first number all I'm thinking about is the cake and I'm fixated on this idea.

LSL: She also made a speech before we started performing! "Everyone, don't forget, odd tables first, and then the evens. We don't want what happened last time to happen this time." So we're wondering, what happened? Did they rush the cake?

TH: We finish the gig, and then all 200 people are totally focused on their cake. We knew one couple and we went up to them, and they couldn't focus while the cake was there and once it was gone, everyone immediately left. Lisa and I kind of took a pause to wonder what was going on with this cake?

LSL: There's something about a cake at an occasion that means so much. As you get older, it's those little moments that mean so much. You really start to savor them.

MGH: Why do you think it is important to do this show right now?

TH: Because it's about hope, love, and humanity. In this time of such tension across the planet, I think we could all use a break from the noise to see a reflection of ourselves on a stage. I want people to come out of the show feeling like you can have hope and can have love.

LSL: I feel like COVID has been really difficult on this age group, especially before we had vaccines. To have a focus on them brings warmth. I think the show is hopeful. It's not just to let the older generation see themselves, it's for everyone to recognize that if this generation has gotten to this point, then I can, too. This is a time that might feel like the end of the world, but we will go on.

TH: Everything in the play addresses the idea that "this too shall pass." This all will pass too. We will evolve and things will change.

LSL: I think the tagline that Tor thought of for this play is very true. It is a play about people dying to live, which is what we're all doing. Deep down inside of everyone there is a hope that tomorrow will be better and that we will have the courage to keep going.

An Interview with the Director:

Judith Ivey

Edited for Length and Clarity by Meredith G. Healy

Directing and Dramaturgy Apprentice Meredith G. Healy spoke with Judith Ivey, the director of *Senior Living*, during the second week of rehearsals about the play and about her time working in theater.

Meredith G. Healy (MGH): *It is likely that our audience will be more familiar with your work as an actor as opposed to your work as a director. Could you tell me about what made you decide to try your hand at directing?*

Judith Ivey (JI): I get to credit three different men. It began with my friend Stephen Stout, who had access to the Westport Playhouse (Westport, CT) in the winter. In 1993, he asked me if I would direct him in something. So I did it! We did the play *Two for the Seesaw*. Then, about three years later, another friend, Kevin Flynn, who is a standup comedian, had written a one-person show about his family and asked me to direct it. Then, about five years after that, another friend, Lew Arlt, asked me to do a fundraiser as an actor, and then asked how he could convince me to work at that theater, and I told him I would come to direct. I had participated in readings as an actor for a play called *Secrets of a Soccer Mom*, and I approached the playwright about directing it. I directed it for that theater and then it transferred to Off-Broadway. So those three guys, over the course of about ten years, made it possible for me to direct. It wasn't until after *Secrets of a Soccer Mom* that I seriously began to pursue directing, and I began to get hired consistently as a director. I would weave it in and around my acting, so there was occasionally a year that I didn't direct at all. It can be difficult to balance the two,



JUDITH IVEY.

because acting jobs happen more out of the blue, and directing jobs require you to be booked far more in advance.

MGH: Do you feel as though your experience as an actor has informed the way that you direct?

JI: I think I work exactly the same way. You certainly learn a lot about acting when it becomes your job to sculpt and shape the show. I think I became a better actor after I started directing because I so appreciated the role of the director. At this point in time I prefer directing over acting, but I didn't shape my directing career the way I shaped my career as an actor.

MGH: Is there something in particular that drew you into this script? How did you become involved with this project?

JL: I was on the board of the Cherry Lane Theatre (NYC) and the artistic director, Angelina Fiordellisi, knew I was directing, and I had helped with lots of events at the theater. *Senior Living* came to her and she asked if I would be interested in directing it. I read it and said, "Yes!" I have a certain affinity for older people, my mother is about to turn 100 and my dad is 94, and it's pretty amazing to still have your parents at my age. I know what my parents go through being older, and now I'm reaching the age where you start to become aware of being a senior citizen. So I thought the script was refreshing.

MGH: You get to see the characters take center stage and discuss topics that we don't see older actors having an opportunity to address onstage. There are emotional connections and moments, but we really get to experience the characters' everyday lives.

JL: We watch a couple start dating! We don't usually think about older people doing that.

MGH: What elements of the show are you most excited to explore with the cast?

JL: This play is, strangely, very musical. And I mean musical outside of the music that exists in it. The way it's structured has a musical approach that will really make it move. That's what we're about to start embracing. So far we've just rehearsed the scenes, but to get the action to keep moving will be the next phase of the process. I think those elements will breathe another level of life into the production.

MGH: What do you anticipate will be the most challenging part of directing this production? Have you experienced anything so far that hasn't come as easily as you expected?

JL: I did think of it as a small little play, and it's not! I've only directed one other musical, and I think it's very challenging to get the flow of many scenes joined together.

MGH: What are you hoping audiences will take away from this production?

JL: I hope that they will rejoice in these stories. I hope they walk away celebrating what it is to grow older.

MGH: Do you have any advice for young people pursuing a career in the theater?

JL: I always say, "Make sure you really want to do it." It is really hard work. You're going to be your own cheerleader, your own boss, and your own teacher. So you really need to want it. It's too hard to do if you approach it without that level of commitment. I think you need to be a student of life, and an observer of all those around you.



JUDITH IVEY IN HURLYBURLY, 1984.

A Brief History of Senior Living Facilities in the US

By Meredith G. Healy

ANGELINA

It looks okay for an old age home.

MORTY

It's Senior Living. Says so right there on the sign.

ANGELINA

That's just a nice way of saying old age home.

MORTY

I heard they have golf.

In the US, there are currently over 1 million seniors (people over the age of 65) residing in senior living facilities. The National Center for Assisted Living expects that this number will easily double in the next decade as the country continues to make medical advancements and the Baby Boomer generation continues to make their way into old age. Despite the growing interest in and popularity of this option for older couples and singles, the concept of a senior living facility like Riverdale Manor is relatively new. How has senior care in the US shifted and adapted? What factors have led to the increased demand for residential facilities?

As colonizers came to the US in the 1600s and 1700s, the care of seniors fell to their immediate family members, meaning that grown children became caretakers of their aging parents as had also been the case in Europe. During this time, the majority of the population of the country lived in rural areas with extended family, making it easier to support the older generation. Those who were childless, or had children who were unable to provide care, became dependent on the public welfare system. At this point in time, the US modeled their system on the English poorhouses and almshouses. These facilities were operated by local

governments, and were used to house not only the elderly, but also the poor, orphans, and those with mental health issues.

During the 1800s, the population of the US continued to grow and the government offered financial and property incentives to encourage westward expansion. One result of this push is that grown children became less likely to live near their aging parents, and thus were unable to provide care. The poorhouse population continued to grow, and people began to express concerns about the treatment of residents. Nine states (Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin) formed "Boards of Charities" in the mid-1800s as a way to try and regulate better living conditions for those in the institutions. Additionally, different religious, cultural, and social groups began to establish old-age assistance programs for their members. Amongst these groups were the Masons, the Indigent Widows and Single Women's Society, and the German Benevolent Society. Young members of these organizations paid dues which then supported the older members. This support initially came in the form of food and social services, but eventually expanded to include the funding of group homes where aged members could live.



THE PHILADELPHIA INDIGENT WIDOWS AND SINGLE WOMEN'S SOCIETY.

THE WORLD OF SENIOR LIVING

From 1900 to 1990, the life expectancy in the US increased by 25 years, which added to the demand for options to house seniors. The Great Depression served as a catalyst for the federal government to stimulate the economy by providing older workers with financial incentives to encourage retirement. The goal of this was to open up jobs for younger people. In 1935, Congress passed the Social Security Act which included the Old Age Assistance (OAA) Program. The OAA used federal funds to match state-level assistance, and gave money regardless of work records. This program didn't explicitly help fund or regulate housing, but was responsible for the development of Medicaid, which is largely responsible for funding facilities today. After President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Medicaid and Medicare into law in 1965, the government became more involved in the regulation of the nursing home industry. One result of this regulation was the conversion of boarding houses into more hospital-like facilities to qualify for federal funding.

Dr. Keren Wilson is credited for opening the first assisted living facility in Oregon in 1981. Assisted living is defined as "a long-term care option that combines housing, support services, and health care as needed" by the Assisted Living Federation of America. Dr. Wilson's goals were to let seniors have a sense of autonomy and independence, while also providing different levels of care to different residents depending on their needs. For example, many facilities have units designated for residents with Alzheimer's or dementia who need more support than those in the general population. In 1988, Dr. Wilson's facility, Park Place, became the first licensed assisted living facility in the US.

As illustrated in *Senior Living*, there are many benefits to living in an assisted living facility like Riverdale Manor. These facilities still strive to give residents as much independence

as possible. Rooms and apartments can be decorated with personal furniture and belongings, many locations allow pets, and residents have control of their schedules. Residents can form lasting and meaningful relationships, and there is a range of activities and programs to encourage connections and a sense of community. It is no surprise that after attending the talent show and sampling the layer cake, Angelina is willing to reconsider her stance. Perhaps life at Riverdale Manor wouldn't be so bad after all!



DR. KEREN WILSON.

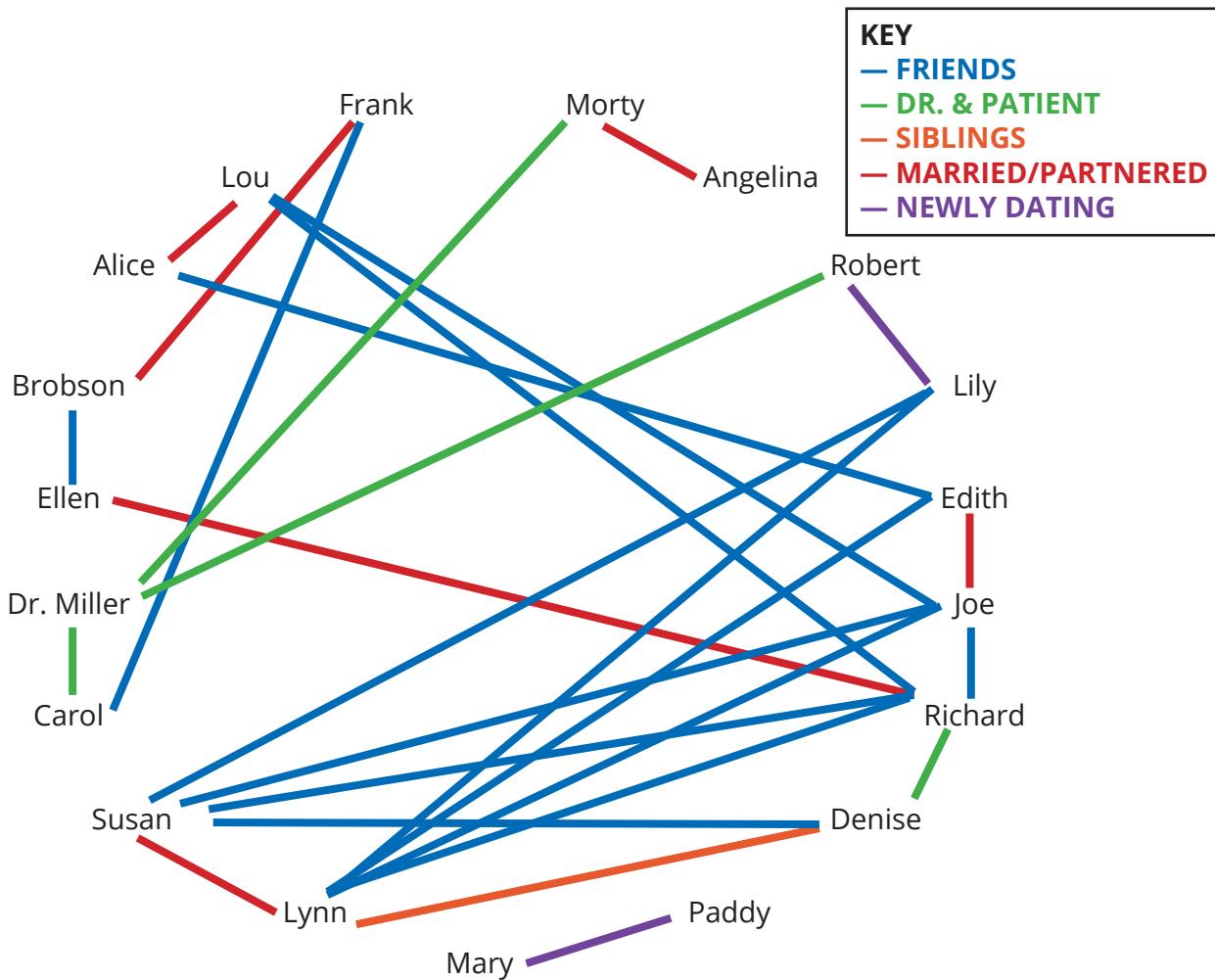
Senior Living Scene Breakdown and Character Web

by Meredith G. Healy

The residents of Riverdale Manor are connected in more ways than just the fact that they live in the same senior living community. Throughout the show, we are introduced to friends, siblings, and spouses, and we are also given an opportunity to watch new relationships blossom. This scene breakdown and visual map is to help show the different ways that the residents are connected.

SCENE 1 "Senior Living Part I": Morty, Angelina
SCENE 2 "A Little Romance Part I": Robert, Lily
INTERSTITIAL 1 "A Penny Saved": Brobson
SCENE 3 "Copacetic": Edith, Joe
SCENE 4 "Check!": Denise, Richard
SCENE 5 "Natural Causes": Lynn, Susan
SCENE 6 "A Little Romance Part II": Lily
INTERSTITIAL 2 "Ballroom Dance": Edith, Joe
SCENE 7 "The Connoisseur": Mary, Paddy
SCENE 8 "Certain": Carol, Dr. Miller
SCENE 9 "A Walk In The Country": Ellen, Brobson
INTERSTITIAL 3 "Golf Tap": Robert

SCENE 10 "Reconcilable Differences": Alice, Lou
INTERSTITIAL 4 "Wheelchair Ballet": Alice, Edith
SCENE 11 "Gay Pride": Frank, Brobson
SCENE 12 "It": Frank, Carol
INTERSTITIAL 5 "When You Have IT": Carol
SCENE 13 "Man's Best Friend": Lou, Joe
SCENE 14 "Early Inheritance": Susan, Lynn, Denise
INTERSTITIAL 6 "The Demented Comic": Richard
SCENE 15 "A Little Romance Part III": Lily, Robert
INTERSTITIAL 7 "Love Is A Rebellious Bird": Mary, Paddy
SCENE 16 "Senior Living Part II": Morty, Angelina



Ageism in Entertainment

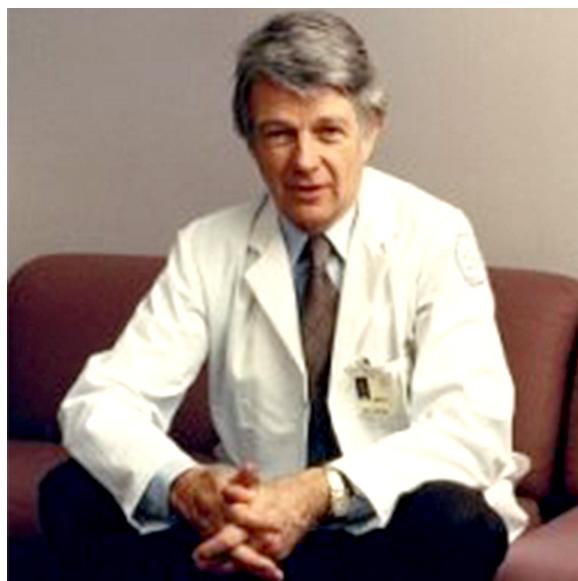
by Macey Downs

"It.' My whole life I was told I had it. Yes, that 'it.' And maybe I did, but I feel like over time, it just deteriorated or something. Like there's just less of it than there was... 'It' is that nagging feeling that you are about to lose 'it' at any second. And you know the day is coming when it's gonna be gone, or at least it won't be what it used to be. Then where will you be? Who will you be? What will you do without it? Because it defined you your whole life. So what happens when it's gone?" - Carol, Senior Living

Carol, who spent much of her younger life as a dancer and eventually a chorus girl on Broadway, shares this sentiment just before performing a burlesque dance onstage during Riverdale Manor's talent show. She strips down to almost nothing as she sings, "They say that it never gets old / Or at least that's what I'm told / When you have it." Carol is now "of a certain age" and living in the retirement facility, but chooses to reject societal attitudes that women in the entertainment industry lose the "it" factor as they get older. Carol made a conscious effort to continue embracing her sexuality in performance despite the prevalence of ageism in the arts.



SHAKIRA AND J.LO PERFORMED AT THE 2020 SUPER BOWL HALFTIME SHOW AT AGES 43 AND 51.



ROBERT N. BUTLER.

In 1969, physician, psychiatrist, and gerontologist Dr. Robert N. Butler coined the term "ageism" to describe the systematic discrimination against older people. He first spoke of ageism in regard to its intersection with racism when a housing project that would primarily benefit elderly African Americans was met with intense public opposition. Throughout the rest of his life, Butler often wrote about how ageism is exceptionally prevalent in American culture, but very rarely identified as a form of systematic oppression.

Several career paths in the US favor older workers due to the experience, recognition in their field, and expertise that comes with spending more time in a particular position. For example, the median age for CEOs is 52 years old, which is one of the older-skewing jobs in the American workforce. It's also worth noting that many high-paying jobs like CEOs skew heavily toward White, cisgender men due to other overlapping systems of oppression—racism, sexism, and classism bar the global majority of individuals from powerful decision-making rooms and positions. Older workers may maintain certain privileges due to seniority and holding higher-power positions, but ageism remains

prevalent—in 2020, an American Association of Retired Persons survey found that 78% of older workers saw or experienced ageism. Much of ageism's pervasiveness in the workplace comes from its normalization. Even older adults in senior leadership positions are increasingly pressured to step down as they age to make way for younger employees.

Ageism exists across all industries, but actors in particular experience some of the most blatant and visible ageism in their line of work. Even in the arts, ageism disadvantages people the most when looked at through the lens of intersectionality, a term coined by civil rights activist and law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw that acknowledges the ways in which intersecting axes of identity—such as race, class, gender, and sexuality—mutually construct one another. Ageism doubly disadvantages women performers. Women ages 45 to 74 make up over 28% of the US population, but are rarely cast in leading roles in theater, film, or television. Once women actors reach age 40, their careers start to decline, whereas when men reach age 40, they are often still in the midpoint of their



KIMBERLÉ CRENSHAW.

careers. This is especially apparent when looking at Hollywood, where we frequently see leading women alongside men in movies (and oftentimes as love interests) with an age gap of over a decade between them. In 2021 alone, we saw movies with middle-aged men starring alongside younger women like *Free Guy* with Ryan Reynolds (45) and Jodie Comer (28),



RYAN REYNOLDS AND JODIE COMER IN FREE GUY (2021).

THE WORLD OF SENIOR LIVING

Don't Look Up with Leonardo DiCaprio (47) and Jennifer Lawrence (31), or *No Time to Die* with Daniel Craig (53) and Léa Seydoux (36). Across theater, film, and television, older women are primarily cast as mothers or comedic bit parts, and rarely do we see older women co-starring with a younger man, especially if their characters are love interests. Even in other aspects of theater, such as directing or playwriting, artists are expected to have entered the field at a young age and worked their way to success—there are few routes for older adults to begin making theater if they discover their artistic voice later in life.



DANIEL CRAIG AND LÉA CRENshaw IN *NO TIME TO DIE* (2021).

Playwrights Tor Hyams and Lisa St. Lou wrote *Senior Living* exclusively about characters over the age of 60. While often comedic, the residents of Riverdale Manor are also written as complicated individuals, each with their own struggles and joys: from ending their marriage to finding resilience through a medical diagnosis to rediscovering their sexuality. Not only does this provide representation for older communities



LAURA DERNS AS MARMIE AND MERYL STREEP AS AUNT MARCH IN *LITTLE WOMEN* (2019).

onstage, it also adds to the theatrical canon roles for older actors that often counter ageist stereotypes. We get to see Carol redefine what having "it" means for herself as she reconnects with performance despite her age, and simultaneously make space for the actor playing Carol to do the same.



ANDRÉ DE SHIELDS WON HIS FIRST TONY AWARD IN 2019 FOR HIS ROLE AS HERMES IN *HADESTOWN* AT AGE 73.

Glossary

by Meredith G. Healy

42nd Street: An American musical film, released in 1933, which was named for the Manhattan street that hosts many Broadway theaters. The story follows the lives and careers of numerous individuals involved with a big-budget Broadway musical. The film inspired a long-running Broadway hit of the same name in 1980.

"L'amour est un oiseau rebelle": An aria, better known by the name "Habanera," from Bizet's *Carmen*. It is the entrance aria of the title character, a mezzo-soprano role, in scene 5 of the first act.

Aneurysm: An excessive localized enlargement of an artery caused by a weakening of the artery wall.

Arthur Murray Dance Studio: A dance center with 270 studios across the world that provides beginners' dance lessons, wedding dance lessons, ballroom dance lessons, and dance classes.

Georges Bizet (October 25, 1838-June 3, 1875): A French composer best remembered for his opera *Carmen* (1875).

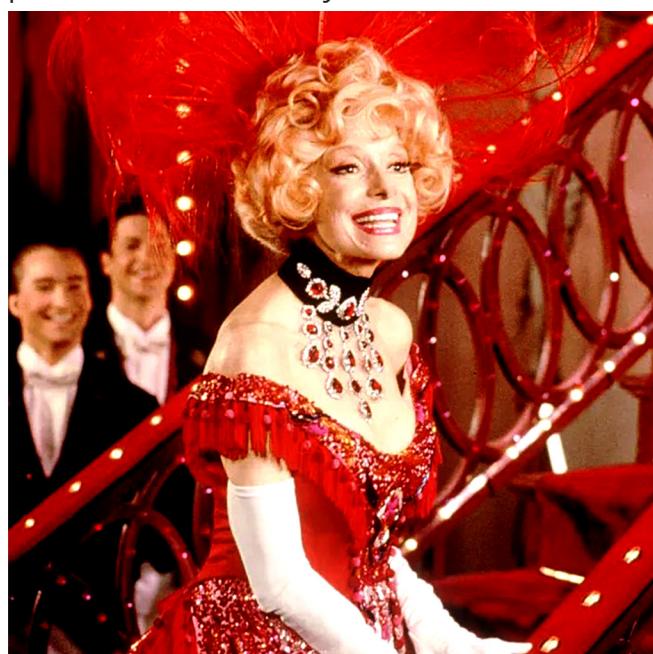


GEORGES BIZET.

The blue pill: An allusion to Viagra, a prescription drug used to treat erectile dysfunction in men.

Cardiologist: A doctor who specializes in the study or treatment of heart diseases and heart abnormalities.

Carol Channing (January 31, 1921-January 15, 2019): An American actress and singer known for her comically outsized performances, gravelly voice, and animated features. The defining role of her career was that of Dolly Gallagher Levi in the 1964 Broadway production of *Hello Dolly!*



CAROL CHANNING IN HELLO DOLLY! (1964).

Copacetic: In excellent order.

Court: To be involved romantically, typically with the intention of marrying.

Dementia: A chronic or persistent disorder of the mental processes caused by brain disease or injury and marked by memory disorders, personality changes, and impaired reasoning.

Embolism: Obstruction of an artery, typically by a clot of blood or an air bubble.

Judy Garland (June 10, 1922-June 22, 1969): An American singer and actress whose exceptional talents and vulnerabilities combined to make her one of the most enduringly popular Hollywood icons of the 20th century. Garland was best known for her roles in movie musicals including *The Wizard of Oz* and *Meet Me in St. Louis*.

Handicap: A number that signifies how many strokes above or below par a golfer should be able to play.

Kol b'seder: "Everything's fine" in Hebrew.

Machu Picchu: A mountaintop citadel located northwest of Cuzco, Peru. Machu Picchu is believed to have been constructed in the 1400s as a royal estate or sacred religious site for Inca leaders. Today it is a popular travel destination for tourists.

Mes cheries: "My dears" in French.

Bette Midler (born December 1, 1945): An American actress and singer who is known for her dynamic energy, comedic wit, and campy humor. Midler is best known for her roles in films including *The Rose*, *Beaches*, and *Hocus Pocus*.

Nuremberg trials: A series of 13 trials carried out in Nuremberg, Germany, between 1945 and 1949 that were held for the purpose of bringing Nazi war criminals to justice.

Pride: A public event, typically involving a parade, held to celebrate LGBTQIA+ identities, culture, and experience.



PRIDE PARADE IN PORTLAND, MAINE.

Pyeongchang: A county in Gangwon Province, South Korea, that hosted the Winter Olympics in 2018.

Rice pudding: A sweet food made of rice cooked with milk and sugar.

Savoir faire: A French phrase meaning the ability to act or speak appropriately in social situations.

Sherpa: A member of a Himalayan people living on the borders of Nepal and Tibet, renowned for their skill in mountaineering.



GELJEN SHERPA AND NIRMAL "NIMSDAI" PURJA WHILE EXPEDITIONING TO CLIMB THE WORLD'S 14 HIGHEST PEAKS IN 7 MONTHS, 2019.

Urologist: A doctor who specializes in the study or treatment of the function and disorders of the urinary system.

Yiddish: A language used by Jewish people in central and eastern Europe before the Holocaust. It was originally a German dialect with words from Hebrew and several modern languages and is today spoken mainly in the US, Israel, and Russia.

Maine's Elderly Roots: How Far Do They Go?

by Macey Downs

Mainers are often proud to list off the Pine Tree State's claims to fame: Maine has the first sunrise in America, is the birthplace of Prohibition, produces over 90% of the nation's blueberries and lobsters, and produced authors Stephen King and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Maine has also continued to hold onto another title for over a decade: the oldest state in the nation.

The age of a state's population is usually standardized as the median age of that state's residents—the age at which half the population is younger and half the population is older. In Maine, the median age in 2019 was 45 years old, while the median age for the US as a whole was 38 years old. The six states of New England all rank among the top nine oldest states in the nation, pointing to the northeast more generally as the home for older members of the US population. Maine not only boasts the highest median age, but is also ranked number one in the country for its percentage of the population aged 65 or older, which was over one in five Mainers in 2020. Both Maine residents and the larger US population have been steadily getting older over recent

decades, as the populous Baby Boomer generation continues to age, but the rate at which Maine's median age has increased is higher than the national average.

There are three main factors that have contributed to Maine's older population. The first is Maine's low birth rate, which is one of the lowest in the country at 10.2 births per thousand—around 25% less than the national rate of 13.5. When fewer babies are born, the median age naturally starts to skew higher. On the flipside, an older population can also lower birth rates, as older adults are less likely to be able to, or choose to, have children.

The second factor is out-migration in search of education and job opportunities. Maine is historically known for its manufacturing jobs, which have been lost over time as revolutionized technology has replaced the need for as many millworkers or shipbuilders as Maine previously employed. There's a net population loss for Maine residents aged 18-34 as they move to bigger cities out of state in search of higher paying jobs that fit their interests. The median age of Mainers born in-state in 2019 was 40 years old, while that of those born out-of-state was 51 years old. People who were born in Maine are more likely to leave before they reach middle age, while people born out of state are more likely to move to, and stay in, Maine when they get older.

Maine's racial demographics point to a third factor contributing to the state's older population. In 2021, Maine was the whitest state in the country, with 94.4% of residents identifying as White alone. While Maine has been home to Indigenous communities for over 11,000 years, and to Black Mainers and other people of color for as long as White



SOUTH PORTLAND RESIDENT BEVERLY MOVED TO MAINE IN 1967, AND HAS LIVED HERE EVER SINCE.

DIGGING DEEPER

people have colonized this land, the current predominantly White population contributes to the out-migration of young people. Generation Z is the most diverse generation in history, with 48% of its members identifying as people of color in 2018, and they strive to live in more diverse neighborhoods. A survey by Homes.com—a large real estate portal—polled 1,000 adults in Generation Z and found that 58% of those polled prefer to live in diverse communities, compared to 12% who prefer homogenous communities. Young folks who grew up in Maine may be more likely to then move out of state into more diverse regions; young people growing up in other states could be less attracted to Maine's already older and whiter population; and people of color from out of state may not be actively welcomed into Maine's predominantly White communities.

Senior Living is the first play Portland Stage has done in recent years that explicitly speaks to senior communities. This is an important step to engage with Maine theater audiences, whose demographics historically reflect the aging trend of the state's population. The populations of Maine and the US will continue to get older as we strive toward medical advancements and increased accessibility



IN 2021 SOUTH PORTLAND ELECTED DEQA DHALAC, THE FIRST SOMALI-AMERICAN MAJOR IN THE US.

of basic necessities. As the composition of Maine's population continues to shift, it is important that theaters like Portland Stage continue to adapt their programming to meet Maine's changing demographics. Understanding more about Maine's population can help theaters better produce content that will acknowledge, nurture, and entertain all of Maine's incredibly vital communities, no matter their ages.



RESIDENTS AT SABLE LODGE RETIREMENT COMMUNITY, SOUTH PORTLAND, ME.

Community Connections: An Interview with Nem Knight

Edited for Length and Clarity by Macey Downs

Directing and Dramaturgy Apprentice Macey Downs spoke with Nem Knight about her previous work as an event coordinator at senior living facilities.

Macey Downs (MD): *Talk to me a bit about your previous work with senior centers.*

Nem Knight (NK): My job was called a “program coordinator,” typically you’re just called an “activity director,” but I worked as the Program Coordinator at Bay Square in Yarmouth for a few years, and I worked as the activity director for a brand-new assisted living in Florida for a while, and I worked in the activities department at a skilled nursing facility—St. Joseph’s—in Portland. I also worked as a CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) and in social services for a while, and did some administrative stuff as well. So I’ve been in the senior care industry for the last 10 years.

MD: *Can you talk about the differences in your day-to-day experiences with the various jobs you’ve held in the senior care industry?*

NK: I worked in a skilled nursing and long-term care community, where there are folks who either have fallen and broken a hip and they’re only there for six weeks to get rehab, or [there are] long-term care people who require greater levels of medical care. From my perspective as activities coordinator, those were people who probably weren’t able to transport themselves from one location to another, and so the level of independence within the activities for that population was very different. These were people who may have amputations or severe developmental disabilities, so that really influenced the types of activities that you do, so that they have the greatest level of independence within them. I saw my job as an activities coordinator as working toward



NEM KNIGHT.

ways to maintain that independence and that autonomy as long as possible and in as much capacity as possible.

Assisted living is on the other end of the spectrum. Those people are, for the most part, able to get to all the activities, and that really changes what we do. When I worked with these communities, they loved to do flower arranging, they loved bingo—bingo among the older population is such a stereotype, and when I started in activities, I was like, “I think this is a stereotype and I’m not gonna do bingo!” And immediately people were like, “You have to do bingo!” I think it’s almost a generational thing. I talked to people who said that, when they were kids, their parents would have people over and sit around the dining room table and play bingo after the kids went to bed. I learned really fast, bingo is a staple. You don’t mess with bingo!

DIGGING DEEPER

They also love learning new things. Everyone loves learning new things. Anything to do with travel is really popular, regardless of ability. With my assisted living folks, we would do different travel videos and we would pair it with cooking something from that country as one educational morning. I also worked with one gentleman who had pretty advanced Alzheimer's, and his parents had immigrated from Italy, and he had gone back to visit the town that they were from as an adult. That was a really important trip in his lifetime, and even as his Alzheimer's progressed, he still remembered taking that trip for a long time. So with him I'd sit and pull up Google Maps, and we would do a street view of that city that he had visited, and that was meeting his needs as far as travel and exploration in a way that he was able to participate in. So travel was always really popular, food things were always really popular. I was reminded all the time by the residents that many of them lived there because they were tired of cooking, but they loved watching other people cook and being able to eat that food afterwards. I think there's something very comforting and home-like in sitting around a table while someone prepares a meal, and it's something that you lose when you move into a community like that. So those activities were really popular both in nursing and assisted living.



NEM KNIGHT AT BINGO.

MD: Why did you start working at the senior center? What has your career journey looked like?

NK: I majored in theater performance and directing. I also taught for a little while—my mom was a teacher and I liked the creativity and organization of teaching. I stage-managed too and learned that I like managing people. And then on a whim I thought, "Maybe I should go into the medical profession." So I got my CNA certification and planned to become a nurse of some kind, and really quickly was like, "I don't want to be a nurse, but now I have this CNA certification, so I may as well work with it and make money." I got a job at an assisted living as a CNA. In assisted living, the CNAs spend the most time with the residents. They're there for all of the meals, they're helping them get to and from, they're waking them up in the morning, getting them dressed, they're there when they go to bed at night. The CNAs are really the people who are caring for our older adults. And I found that it was a generation of people that I really liked working with! So I just kinda started hopping from there: I worked as a CNA, and then ended up being hired in administration as the receptionist. Then I moved from the receptionist to an assistant for social services, which I kind of liked because it involved a lot of organizational details, but it still wasn't quite right. Then we had someone in the activities department quit, so I filled in there, and was like, "Whoa, this matches all my skill sets!" It had the creativity, and the interpersonal relations, and it's working with this population of adults, and this is where I really thrived.

Just recently I actually moved to Equality Maine as a program coordinator, specifically focusing on our SAGE program, which works with older LGBTQ adults throughout the state. It's the first time I've branched out of health care in a long time.

MD: What are some things you have enjoyed most about your work with senior members of our community?

NK: As we age we have a lot of autonomy and independence plucked from us, but there's also this sense that as we age we become less relevant—that as we're no longer the

ones that media caters to or things are being sold to, that we cease to exist, and become invisible. And there's so much knowledge, and wisdom, and history, and vitality in this whole generation of people that are being shuffled to the side. So I loved living in this really vibrant community of people that I felt like we weren't paying enough attention to. I think that they're overlooked, and they know so much more, and have experienced so much more, and have seen so much more, and I just can't fathom why everyone doesn't want to hang out with them all the time. I like to choose my friends based on people who are smarter than me. Those are the people I liked to surround myself with because I think it makes me a better person. And when I hang out with the older generation, I feel like I'm just automatically surrounding myself with people who are more experienced than me.

MD: I love how you're describing this work also as an extension of your own personal growth, while also being a way to help them continue to learn and grow as well.

NK: It's definitely a two-way street. I get just as much out of it. They don't need to be "saved," but sometimes they do need someone who's gonna listen to them, and someone who's going to talk to them like an adult and treat them with respect. We often want to talk to people who we're caring for with a tone that we'd talk to our children with, because we also care for our children, but it's not the same. The people that do that are coming from a good place, but it becomes demeaning really fast. So I also found that a lot of those people needed someone who was gonna level with them, and treat them as an adult.

MD: The playwrights of Senior Living describe the play as being about people who are "dying to live." Would you say that sentiment holds true to your experience with residents of the senior communities you worked with?

NK: For sure, and the other thing that's interesting about this generation is there is this acknowledgment of death. I've had people say to me things like, "There's nothing left on my to-do list." Sometimes there is just a sense of waiting, which is also really interesting to experience. We spend so much of our lives

being like, "I'm not gonna die, it's not gonna be me!" And then to witness people really embracing it with grace and being like "this is where I am" is interesting. I hope when I'm that old I can approach the world with that much grace, and approach my own death with so much acceptance. It's also just such a lesson in how you want to live your life, being around people who have lived theirs and are now looking back on it.

MD: What are some of the biggest things that you've learned from watching people who are looking back on their lives?

NK: I had a resident once, Patsy, who told me that all of life is a lesson in learning how to let go. You have kids and you have to let go of them on that first day when you send them off to school, and then they grow up and you have to let go of them when they move out of your house, and then you work your job and you have to let go of working a job, and then your house is too big and you have to let go of all of those rooms. All we're doing is just letting go. I think about that all the time now. It was so powerful to hear her looking back at her life and being like, "This is the lesson I've learned, how to let go of everything and to just be as I am."

MD: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

NK: One other thing that I think is important is that there's sometimes this portrayal in the media that people who live in assisted livings are capable of living on their own. And, in reality, that's not how it works out, because nobody voluntarily gives up that autonomy until they don't have another choice. People living in assisted livings most often either aren't living there by choice, or are living there because they are physically or cognitively incapable of living on their own. They're still full humans, and the spectrum of people living in these communities is pretty broad, but all of them have something going on that disabled them from living independently.

MD: Right, it's important to normalize that we still maintain our full humanity even when we need help.

NK: It's a really powerful thing when people allow themselves to be taken care of.

Vignette Plays and Maine

by Macey Downs

Playwrights Tor Hyams and Lisa St. Lou wrote *Senior Living* in an engaging style that jumps between short, self-contained scenes surrounding a single theme: what life looks like for senior residents who are still “dying to live.” *Senior Living* fits into the theatrical canon of vignette plays, named for their brief, descriptive scenes. Vignettes in theater or literature are often impressionistic and focus on one particular moment rather than a long-form plot. “Vignette” in French means “little vine,” as nineteenth-century printers would decorate the title pages of stories with drawings of looping vines. This definition creates intriguing imagery for vignette plays like *Senior Living*. The winding, intertwining short stories can feel like lots of little vines weaving together to create a full intricate picture. The individual parts of vignette plays may be simple and small,

but the ways the vignettes speak to each other add varying perspectives and ideas to an overarching theme.

This vignette play style will be familiar to frequent Portland Stage audience members. Perhaps the most famous vignette play is John Cariani’s *Almost, Maine*, which premiered at Portland Stage in 2004; its 2020 production is also Portland Stage’s best-selling show. John Cariani grew up in Presque Isle, Maine, and wrote *Almost, Maine* about members of the fictional town of “Almost”—its residents never got around to incorporating a town formally, leaving it indefinitely an “almost” town. The play is made up of nine short scenes, each of which take place on the same night and feature two to three characters. The scenes all center around themes of love, loss, and human connection against the



JOHN CARIANI AND KATHY McCAFFERTY IN PORTLAND STAGE 'S ALMOST, MAINE, 2020. PHOTO BY MICAL HUTSON.

backdrop of this remote, forested town. Each scene in *Almost, Maine* could stand alone as its own story, but the synthesis of all nine short plays into one creates a larger arch of hope and finding love. Its vignette-style storytelling and simple yet universal themes have made the play a nationwide favorite. *Almost, Maine* is the most frequently produced play in American high schools of the last two decades, surpassing Shakespeare plays and classics like *Our Town*. Despite premiering in 2004, it maintains its strong hold—in 2021, *Almost, Maine* was the most streamed play of the pandemic.

Portland Stage also premiered what has been described as a “darker cousin” to *Almost, Maine*, John Cariani’s *LOVE/SICK*, in 2013. *LOVE/SICK* is another vignette play that similarly consists of nine thematically interdependent two-person scenes that could each stand alone in terms of plot. Each of the nine stories are linked by the backdrop of the “Super Center,” a Walmart-style grocery store, on a single Friday night in an alternate suburban reality. The scenes share a common language of humor, love, and loss, and together tell a cohesive story that Cariani describes as “the lifecycle of a



DAVID MASON AND ABBIE KILLEEN IN PORTLAND STAGE 'S LOVE/SICK, 2013. PHOTO BY AARON FLACKE.

typical relationship from meeting through divorce...and afterwards.” Two years after its world premiere at Portland Stage, *LOVE/SICK* went on to its New York premiere by Royal Family Productions in 2015. Seven years later, Cariani’s characteristic vignette style of writing has remained a critical influence on Hyams’ and St. Lou’s *Senior Living*.



DEE ROSCIOLI AND JOHN CARIANI IN ROYAL FAMILY PRODUCTION'S LOVE/SICK, 2015. PHOTO BY RUSS ROWLAND.

It feels appropriate that vignette plays from or about Maine have been some of the most significant pieces of theater to come out of this state, and that Portland Stage is continuing that tradition by premiering *Senior Living* this January. Life in Maine sometimes feels like a series of vignettes—embracing slower living, moments of stillness in the outdoors, close-knit communities, and snapshots of changing seasons. Bordering only one other state and being home to a sparse population separated by forests and rivers creates the illusion of separation. The distance further required by the pandemic may exacerbate feelings that each person is leading their own solo journey apart from the whole. Vignette plays help to remind us that our slice of community may tell one story on its own, but it is most powerful when intentionally connected to the stories of others.

Recommended Resources

by Editors

Books

Almost, Maine: A Novel by John Cariani
These Foolish Things by Deborah Moggach

Plays

Almost, Maine by John Cariani
The Dining Room by A.R. Gurney
Love and Information by Caryl Churchill
LOVE/SICK by John Cariani
The Vagina Monologues by Eve Ensler

TV

The Golden Girls
The Golden Palace
Grace and Frankie
Murder, She Wrote

Film

The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel
Book Club
The Farewell
Philomena



THE GOLDEN GIRLS.

Portland Stage Company

Education and Outreach

Join Portland Stage as we discuss, debate, and explore the plays on our stage and in the classroom! Portland Stage is dedicated to bringing exciting theater, inspiring conversation, interactive experiences, and thought-provoking literature to a wide audience of youth and adult learners. Whether you take part in a discussion, subscribe to *PlayNotes*, take a class in our Theater for Kids space, or bring a group of students to see a performance, there is something here for everyone. How would you like to participate?

Student Matinee Series

The Portland Stage Student Matinee Program annually provides more than 7,000 middle and high school students from Maine and New Hampshire with discounted tickets for student matinees. This season, we are offering this program digitally. Portland Stage can send you the video in a way that works best for your group. We would be happy to do a workshop with you too!

Play Me a Story

Experience the Fun & Magic of Theater on Saturday Mornings at 10:30am with Play Me a Story: in your living room! All ages can enjoy a free performance of children's stories on Facebook live. Ages 4-10 are welcome to participate in an interactive workshop over zoom for \$5. Build literacy, encourage creativity and spark dramatic dreams!

After School Classes

After school classes at Portland Stage produce a safe environment for young people to find a higher sense of play, stretch their imaginations, and gain valuable social skills such as listening, risk-taking, ensemble building, public speaking, and leadership through storytelling. These classes are wildly fun, creative, spontaneous, and begin to build skills for the young actor or non-actor's voice, body, and imagination. Visit our website for this year's offerings!

Vacation and Summer Camps

Our theater camps are fun, challenging, and enriching. We use stories of all kinds to fuel these active, educational and lively, process-based week-long school vacation and summer programs for youth. Theater for Kids works with professional actors, directors, artisans, and composers. Students are invited to think, speak, and act, and even sing imaginatively, critically, and creatively in an environment of inclusivity and safe play.

Virtual Portland Stage PLAY

An interactive dramatic reading and acting workshop for elementary school students in grades K – 5. Professional teaching artists perform children's literature and classic poetry for the entire school, and then work with select classrooms in workshops based on the stories. Actors actively engage students in small groups/workshops using their bodies, voices, and imaginations to build understanding of the text while bringing the stories and characters to life. PLAY helps develop literacy and reading fluency, character recall, understanding of themes, social emotional skills, physical storytelling, and vocal characterization. The program also comes with a comprehensive Resource Guide filled with information and activities based on the books and poems.

Virtual Directors Lab

Schools get access to a 50 minute filmed production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* performed by professional actors/teaching artists. After the performance, students engage directly with the text in an interactive virtual workshop with the actors and creative team. In these workshops, students practice effective communication, creative collaboration, rhetoric, and critical analysis. The program also comes with a comprehensive Resource Guide filled with information and resources about the play we are focusing on. Directors Lab puts Shakespeare's language into the hands and mouths of the students, empowering them to be the artists, directors, and ensemble with the power to interpret the text and produce meaning.

Portland Stage Company

2021-2022 Staff

Anita Stewart *Executive & Artistic Director*

Artistic & Production Staff

Meg Anderson *Props Master*
Todd Brian Backus *Literary Manager*
Daniel Brodhead *Production Manager, Lighting & Sound Supervisor*
Hannah Cordes *Education Director*
Ted Gallant *Technical Director*
Nate Genrich *Carpenter*
Myles C. Hatch *Stage Manager*
Meg Lydon *Stage Manager*
Julianne Shea *Education Administrator*
Susan Thomas *Costume Shop Manager*

Affiliate Artists

Ron Botting	Callie Kimball
Peter Brown	Daniel Noel
Daniel Burson	Ed Reichert
Maureen Butler	Hans Indigo Spencer
Ian Carlsen	Dustin Tucker
Hannah Cordes	Bess Welden
Moira Driscoll	Monica Wood
Abigail Killeen	Sally Wood

Administrative Staff

Paul Ainsworth *Business Manager*
Cody Brackett *Marketing Associate*
Chris DeFilipp *House Manager*
Nolan Ellsworth *Front of House Associate*
Marjorie Gallant *Graphic Design Associate*
Beth Given *Development Director*
Lindsey Higgins *Development Associate*
Mical Hutson *Marketing Director*
Zoë Lewis *Executive Assistant*
Jennifer London *Company Manager*
Martin Lodish *Finance Director*
Renee Myhaver *Assistant Box Office Manager*
Donald Smith *Audience Services Manager*
Madeleine St. Germain *Front of House Associate*
Nathan Sylvester *Front of House Associate*
Adam Thibodeau *House Manager*
Shannon Wade *Front of House Associate*

Intern/Apprentice Company

Julian Bencze *Costumes Intern*
Casey Boriskie *Stage Management Intern*
Sophia B. Diaz *Education Apprentice*
Macey Downs *Directing & Dramaturgy Apprentice*
Savanna Genskow *Props Apprentice*
Meredith G. Healy *Directing & Dramaturgy Apprentice*
Audrey Kastner *Electrics Apprentice*
Taylor Kibbler *Sets Intern*
Katie Ludlam *Company Management Intern*
Jessica Mount *Education Intern*
Mallory Topel *Stage Management Intern*
Kelly Yamahiro *Costumes Intern*