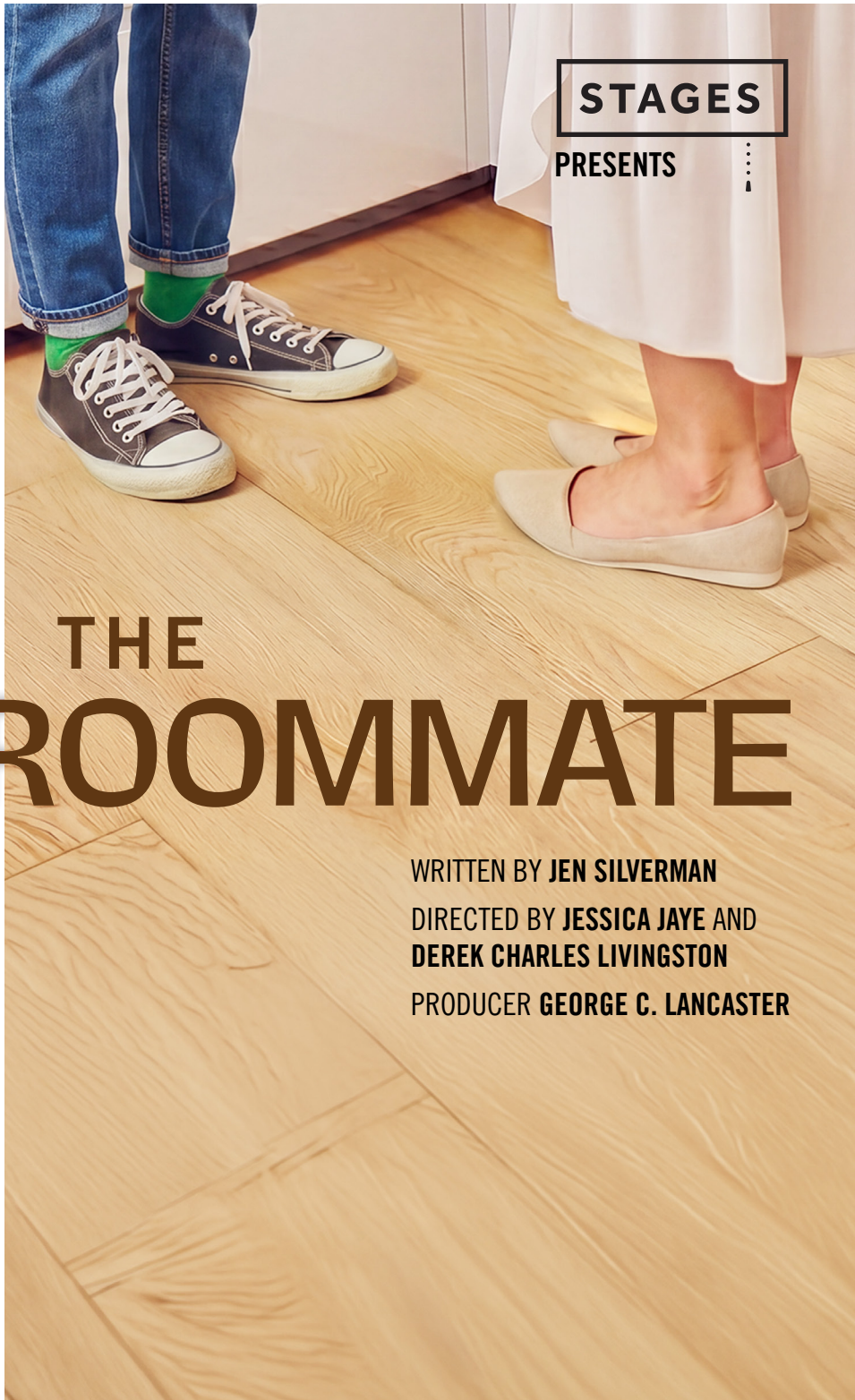

THE ROOMMATE

WRITTEN BY **JEN SILVERMAN**

DIRECTED BY **JESSICA JAYE** AND **DEREK CHARLES LIVINGSTON**

PRODUCER **GEORGE C. LANCASTER**

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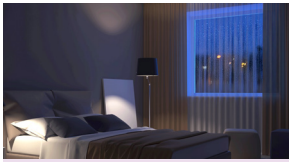
11.4–11.8, 2026

SIGNING THE SONG

11.20–12.27, 2026

The Great American
TRAILER PARK
Christmas Musical



2.5–2.28, 2027

THE MOUNTAINTOP

2.23–3.19, 2027

Sister's Irish Catechism:
SAINTS, SNAKES, & GREEN MILKSHAKES

3.12–4.4, 2027

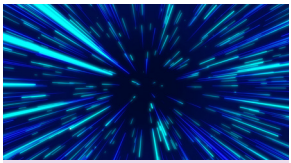
LATIN HISTORY FOR MORONS

5.28–6.20, 2027

ONCE ON THIS ISLAND

6.18–7.11, 2027

SILENT SKY

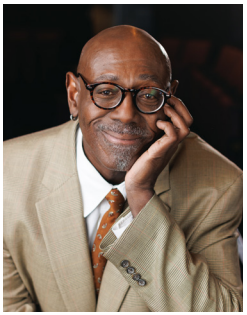


7.20–7.25, 2027

ONE MAN STAR WARS TRILOGY

"IT IS A SEASON FILLED WITH MUSIC, MAGIC, AND MYSTERY."
—Derek Charles Livingston, *Stages Artistic Director*

FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Hi friends,

Years ago, I directed Robert O'Hara's *Insurrection: Holding History* (brilliant play, by the way). One of the actors, Gina, stated that she kept having the roommate from hell. Then it occurred to her: *They* all couldn't be bad. It was *she* who was the roommate from hell. She stopped living with other people.

Gina's decision is not as easy for many people (nor is that level of self-awareness common). Choosing to cohabitate with a relative or a nonrelative is usually simple economics: the expense of living alone is simply too much. When I started writing this, as if on cue, *The New York Times* published a list of the best cities in which to have a roommate (Sorry, Jen Silverman, Iowa City didn't make the list). The article's writers pointed out that having a roommate saves the cohabitants about $6,700 a year. As someone who, except for one year of abject poverty, has lived alone since 1998, that number was particularly sobering. In the time I've been a solo renter, if I'd had a roommate, I'd have amassed a pretty hefty home down payment. Or, as someone saddled with graduate school debt, I might be done paying for that degree by now (although I've come to believe that I will die owing Sallie Mae. Such is life…or death, but I digress).

Back to the timeliness of the *Times*…

With Stages production of Jen Silverman's *The Roommate*, the design team and the staff have pondered roommates—like the famous Laverne & Shirley and Oscar & Felix. For our audiences, the Silverman play is a chance to understand why they're consider one of America's foremost younger playwrights, with *The Roommat*e currently ranked as the tenth most produced play in America, with our recent production of *Come from Away* also heading this list. When Stages chose these works, neither play had earned that distinction. Now, you'll have a chance to understand the hype. *The Roommate* was chosen because it is a smartly written, layered play with great story arcs for its two leading characters, features roles for mature female actors (often the most seasoned, experienced, and available thespians with the fewest opportunities available to them). And it was a chance to produce a Jen Silverman play (and congratulations to the audience members who also saw Mildred's Umbrella's recent production of *Collective Rage: A Play in 5 Betties*).

Robyn and Sharon's journey at times seems preordained, and, at others, jaw-droppingly unexpected. But it is clear that Silverman has written two women whose cohabitation is a treatise on how two people can change each other's lives. For better? For worse? By being the roommate from hell? I'll let you decide, but lean in and enjoy the ride. Silverman is a masterful writer.

Yours,

Derek Charles Livingston
Artistic Director

FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

Dear Stages Family,

I'm so glad you're here for this performance of *The Roommate*. There are many things to love about this story, and it has been gratifying for us to see Houstonians' enthusiastic response to this wonderful show, following its recent Broadway run.

When I first read the script, what struck me about this story was the feeling of relief and lightening it gave me. "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players", and sometimes we feel cast in an inevitable role. Our parents, our town, our colleagues, our kids, our neighbors—everyone expects us to behave in the way we "should". But sometimes in life, there are people or events that jolt us into realizing that we have freedom. Those other options exist, and we can take them! We can be something other than what is expected. In the end, will people even care? And, if they notice we've acted out of the norm, will it really matter? Are we using those expectations as a defense against taking responsibility for our own fear of vulnerability? Philosophers will always search to answer the question of the meaning of life, but one answer surely must be that we are here to experience it. So, join Sharon and Robyn in bucking the trend (hopefully with a bit more restraint than Sharon). Open your heart to someone new and challenge your assumptions about what makes life fulfilling or peaceful.

I'm so proud of the plays we present at Stages, and I am heartened by the incredible response of our community to Derek Charles Livingston's artistic curation now into his second season as Artistic Director. We have sold out or extended all three of the first shows of this season, including this one, and our subscription base has rebounded to pre-pandemic highs. Stages strives to present plays that speak to the variety of perspectives that exist in a city as diverse and unique as ours, and it is rewarding to see that Houstonians want to join us in this journey of discovery and shared experience.

Thank you for being here—as a ticket buyer, season ticket holder, or donor, you make what we do possible. You help us employ full-time artisans, cast the best talent in the city for each production, and sustain full on-site production facilities to tell these stories through our own unique interpretation. (Please see page 15 for a spotlight of our wonderful prop shop manager, Jodi!) Your support of artistic organizations like ours helps strengthen our entire community. I hope you enjoy this performance, and I look forward to seeing you back at Stages soon.

All my best,

Gwen Watkins
Managing Director

OUR MISSION

Stages makes plays and tells stories that invite everyone to live more deeply and love more boldly. We hold up a mirror to our community in order to crack open the question:
"WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HUMAN?"

OUR CORE VALUES

COURAGE
GENEROSITY
INCLUSION
INTIMACY
TENACITY

PEOPLE MAKE THEATER.

OUR LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Stages sits on the unceded traditional land of the Atakapa-Ishak, Caddo, Coahuiltecan, Karankawa, and Tonkawa peoples. The name "Texas" comes from the Caddo word táysha, which means "friend". We honor, with gratitude, the Alabama-Coushatta, Aranama, Aztec, Athabaskan, Comanche, Jumano, Kickapoo, Kiowa, Maya, and all Indigenous peoples who have inhabited this place for generations. They continue to remain in relationship with the land and resources through ceremony, culture, and stewardship.

MEET THE PLAYWRIGHT:
JEN SILVERMAN

by Eboni Roberts

Photo by: The New York Times

Jen Silverman knows how to write characters who are complicated, curious, and ready to shake things up. The playwright, novelist, and screenwriter is known for stories that explore identity, relationships, and what happens when someone decides they're ready for something different. Their work can be funny, unexpected, and a little messy, with characters who aren't afraid to make bold choices along the way.

Silverman's plays include *The Moors*, *Witch*, *Collective Rage: A Play in 5 Betties*, *Spain*, and *The Roommate*. Their work has been produced on Broadway, Off-Broadway, across the country, and internationally. Outside of theater, Silverman has written the novels *We Play Ourselves* and *There's Going to Be Trouble*, along with the story collection *The Island Dwellers*. They have also written for television, including *Tales of the City* and *Tokyo Vice*.

One thing that stands out about Silverman's work is the people they choose to put at the center of their stories. Their characters are often still figuring things out, questioning the lives they've built, and wondering what else might be out there. That idea is at the heart of *The Roommate*.

The play follows Sharon and Robyn, two women in their 50s who become roommates despite having very different personalities and life experiences. Sharon is recently divorced and looking for a change. Robyn arrives with a past that is much more mysterious. As the two get to know each other, their unlikely friendship begins to push both women outside of their comfort zones.

The idea for the play came from real life. Silverman learned that their partner's mother had taken in a roommate around her own age. The arrangement got them thinking about what could happen when two grown women, already established in their lives, suddenly find themselves sharing a home.

That simple idea became a funny and surprising story about friendship, identity, and starting over.

Reinvention is something that shows up often in Silverman's work. Their characters want more from their lives, even when they aren't completely sure what that "more" looks like. In *The Roommate*, that journey belongs to two women at an age when people often assume the biggest changes in life have already happened.

Silverman reminds us that starting over doesn't have an age limit. Sometimes a new chapter can begin with something as simple as a new roommate.

DIRECTING *THE ROOMMATE*: A CONVERSATION WITH JESSICA JAYE

1. Jen Silverman's *The Roommate* moves between humor and more serious or intimate moments. How have you approached finding the right balance between those different tones?

   Jessica Jaye: For me, it's really about finding the truth in each moment. I don't want us to play for the laughs because I think the comedy is already there in the writing. A lot of the humor comes from how seriously these women take themselves and the situations in which they find themselves. Throughout rehearsals, I've really encouraged the actors to focus on what their characters want from each other and what's happening underneath the dialogue. Because even in some of the funniest moments, there's something deeper going on. I also think it's important that we allow those more intimate and vulnerable moments to breathe. We don't always have to rush to the next laugh. Sometimes the silence or the discomfort is just as important as the humor. Ultimately, I want the audience to laugh with these women, but I also want them to connect with them. So it's about allowing the comedy and the heavier moments to exist naturally together, without forcing either one.

2. How has your understanding of Robyn and Sharon evolved throughout the rehearsal process?

   JJ: I think initially it's easy to look at Sharon as this sheltered, somewhat naïve woman who's stuck in her routine, and Robyn as this bold, free-spirited woman who comes in and shakes everything up. But throughout rehearsals, I've realized they're both a lot more complicated than that.What I find interesting is that they're both looking for something that's missing in their lives, whether they realize it or not. Sharon is discovering parts of herself that she's probably suppressed for years, while Robyn, who comes in seeming like she has everything figured out, is actually carrying a lot of her own

baggage. And I think what's been really interesting to explore is how the power shifts between these two women. In the beginning, Robyn seems to be the one influencing Sharon, but as the play progresses, we start to see Sharon making choices that even surprise Robyn. So for me, it's become less about one woman changing the other and more about how these two women unintentionally push each other to confront who they really are and what they want out of life.

3. What, if anything, has directing *The Roommate* revealed or taught you about yourself as an artist?

   JJ: I think directing *The Roommate* has reminded me how much I enjoy exploring the layers of a character and finding those little moments that make people human. As a director, I love digging into the why behind what a character says or does, and this play has really given me the opportunity to do that. It's also challenged me to trust the simplicity of a moment. Sometimes we feel like something big has to happen onstage for it to be impactful, but with this show, I've been reminded that a look, a pause, or even what someone chooses not to say can tell us so much. I think more than anything, it's reminded me that I don't have to have every answer as a director. Some of the best discoveries have come from conversations with the actors and allowing them the freedom to explore and make choices I may not have initially considered. I love that collaborative part of the process, and this show has reminded me just how important that is to the kind of artist I want to continue becoming.

4. What do you hope audiences will take away from their experience with *The Roommate*?

   JJ: First, I hope they laugh and have a good time because it really is a funny show. But beyond that, I hope they walk away thinking about their own lives and the idea that it's never too late to change or rediscover who you are. I think so often we get comfortable in our routines or allow other people's expectations to determine how we live our lives. And sometimes it takes someone coming into our world and shaking things up for us to realize there's so much more we haven't explored about ourselves. But I also think the play asks an interesting question about how far we're willing to go in that process. Change can be exciting and freeing, but it also comes with consequences. Ultimately, I hope audiences leave thinking about the people who have influenced their lives, the parts of themselves they may have put aside, and whether they're truly living the life they want or just the life they've gotten used to.

THE ROOMMATE

WRITTEN BY **JEN SILVERMAN**

featuring

SARA GASTON* **DEBORAH HOPE***

SCENIC AND PROPERTIES DESIGNER
LIZ FREESE

LIGHTING DESIGNER
JADE CHANG

SOUND DESIGNER
J. SALAZAR

COSTUME DESIGNER
KARINA KAMYSHIN

INTIMACY DIRECTOR
LAURA MORENO

STAGE MANAGER
EMMA BACON

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
MAKENZIE OWENS

ASSISTANT SOUND DESIGNER
CELESTE CERENIO

DIRECTED BY **JESSICA JAYE** AND **DEREK CHARLES LIVINGSTON**

PRODUCER **GEORGE C. LANCASTER**

Costumes created in the Myrtle Jones Wig and Costume Shop
Properties created in the Jo and Jim Furr Prop Shop

ON THE MAX AND ROCHELLE LEVIT STAGE
OCT. 23–NOV. 22, 2026

THE ROOMMATE was produced by Williamstown Theatre Festival in July 2017
Mandy Greenfield, Artistic Director
World premiere in the 2015 Humana Festival of New American Plays at ACTORS THEATRE OF LOUISVILLE
THE ROOMMATE was developed in part with assistance from SPACE on Ryder Farm (www.spaceonryderfarm.com)
THE ROOMMATE is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com

Stages is funded in part by grants from the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance. This project is generously funded by the Houston Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs and Mid-America Arts Alliance.

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

CAST LIST

(in alphabetical order)

SARA GASTON* .....Sharon
DEBORAH HOPE* .....Robyn

UNDERSTUDY
FELICIDI SCOTT

PRODUCTION

SHOW CONTROL	A1	WARDROBE SUPERVISOR	DECK CREW
RIVES SCHERER	**M. FLOCKA**	**VIC LUCAS**	**EMILY KNEISLER** **SHELL LE**

TIME AND PLACE

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WHO'S WHO

SARA GASTON* (Sharon) Past credits include: Alley Theatre: **The Farnsworth Invention**, **Rock 'n' Roll**, **The Man Who Came to Dinner**, **A Christmas Carol**; Main Street Theater: **Time Stands Still**, **The Real Thing**, **Red Hot Patriot**, **Present Laughter**, **Ouroboros**, **Margin for Error**, **The Rice**; Stages: **Hank Williams: Lost Highway**, **The Courage of Mandy Kate Brown**, **The Toys Take Over Christmas**; Imperial Theatre: **Steel Magnolias**; Unhinged Productions: **The Long Christmas Ride Home**, **Boston Marriage**, **Laura's Bush**, **Free Will** and **Wanton Lust**; College of the Mainland Arena Theatre: **Always, Patsy Cline**; Mildred's Umbrella: **A Long History of Neglect**; CSU Arena Theatre: **Balm in Gilead**; Ashland Street Theatre: **Femme Fatale**; Actors Theater of Houston: **Taking Leave**, **Spike Heels**, **The Debutante Ball**, **Book of Days**, **Wild Oats**, **A Saturday Night in Uncertain**. She has appeared in many independent films including *Lars the Emo Kid*, *Jacob* (with Michael Biehn), *In a Mad Man's World*, and *Dead of Knight*. Several of the films she has appeared in have won awards at various film festivals. Education: B.A., University of Texas at Austin, Drama; has also studied with the Groundlings, Jeff Perry (*Scandal*, Steppenwolf Theater), Second City (under Dave Razowsky), Lesly Kahn (LA), Margie Haber Studio (L.A.), and Guy Roberts of the Prague Shakespeare Company. For a complete list of work, please visit her website www.saragaston.com.

DEBORAH HOPE* (Robyn) Stages: POTUS:.. (Harriet), **Who Am I This Time?** (Doris/Gloria); **Shear Madness** (Mrs. Schubert), **Searching for Eden** (Eve), **Communicating Doors** (Ruella), **Company** (Amy), **Memory of Water** (Violet), **Fit to be Tied** (Nessa), **Jack and Jill** (Jill), **Heart of a Woman** (Mary Alice/Hotel Mgr/Darla), **Three Viewings** (Mac), **The Maiden's Prayer** (Cynthia); Alley Theatre (All-New Festival), **A Loco-Motive for Murder** (The Baroness); Main Street Theater: **Present Laughter** (Mrs. Erickson/Lady Saltburn), **Marisol** (June), **A Piece of My Heart** (MaryJo); Mighty Acorn Productions: **Almost, Maine** (Marvalynn); Queensbury Theatre: **Love Letters** (Melissa Gardner); A.D. Players: **Steel Magnolias** (Ouiser), **God's Favorite** (Rose); 4th Wall Theatre Company: **Reckless** (Doctors 1-6); Mildred's Umbrella: **The Last Yiddish Speaker** (Chava); Celebration Theatre: **Love, Loss & What I Wore** (Dora/Merrill/Nora), **Me & Jezebel** (Elizabeth), **The Glass Mendacity** (Maggie the Cat); Houston Shakespeare Festival: **Measure for Measure** (Mistress Overdone), **A Midsummer Night's Dream** (Titania/Hippolyta); Theatre LaB: **The Kathy & Mo Show** (Mo), **Dark Rapture** (Julia), **Catholic School Girls** (Elizabeth); Bayou City Concert: **A Little Night Music** (Charlotte); Off-Broadway: Producers Club: **Drummers**, **Dreams & Family Matters** (Millie); Vital Theatre: **The World's Longest Kiss** (Lily), **Politics & Bedfellows** (Tillie Luck), **Voices Carry** (cabaret singer); Manhattan Theatre Club: **Two Cats & a Kid** (Evalina Bell); Actors' Theatre Workshop: **Preacherosity** (Christine); Skirball Center for Performing Arts: **Home for the Holidays** (Mrs. Spencer with the NY Gay Men's Chorus); Dirt Dogs Theatre: **Airline Highway** (Miss Ruby), **August: Osage County** (Violet). Trained at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts.

FELICIDI SCOTT (Understudy) is beyond thrilled to make her Stages debut. She returns to the Houston theater scene after twenty years away, having devoted that time to raising her family. Select theater credits include: Alley Theatre: **House and Garden** (Mrs. Eldridge); Unity Theatre: **The Stranger** (Mrs. Huggins), **The Miss Firecracker Contest** (Elaine), **Our Town** (Mrs. Webb); Houston Shakespeare Festival: **King John** (Lady Falconbridge), **Romeo and Juliet** (Lady Montague), **Comedy of Errors** (Messenger); Main Street Theater for Youth: **The Diary of Anne Frank** (Edith Frank); Children's Theatre Festival: **Jack and the Beanstalk** (Jack's Mother), **Princess and the Pea** (Queen). She holds an MFA from the University of Houston and has trained with such notables as Sir Peter Hall, Uta Hagen, Edward Albee, José Quintero, Stuart Ostrow, Sidney (Doc) Berger, Jack Waltzer, Stephen Bogardus, The Acting Company, and The London Academy of Radio, Film and TV. She is profoundly grateful to her husband, son, and daughter, whose unwavering love and encouragement make this return to the stage both possible and deeply meaningful. Enjoy the show!

Photo credit: Dane Laffrey

JEN SILVERMAN (Playwright) is a playwright, novelist, and screenwriter. Plays include: **The Roommate** (Broadway: The Booth Theatre; Regionally: Williamstown Theatre Festival, Actor's Theatre of Louisville Humana Festival, Steppenwolf, South Coast Repertory Theatre, etc.), **Highway Patrol** (The Goodman), **Spain** (Second Stage Theater), **Collective Rage: A Play in 5 Betties** (Woolly Mammoth, MCC, Southwark Playhouse London); **The Moors** (Yale Repertory Theatre, The Playwrights Realm) and **Witch** (Writer's Theatre, The Geffen, The Huntington). Books include: the debut novel *We Play Ourselves*, story collection *The Island Dwellers*, and novel *There's Going to Be Trouble from Random House*. Silverman also wrote the bestselling narrative podcast *The Miranda Obsession* for Audible, starring Rachel Brosnahan. Silverman is a three-time MacDowell Fellow, a member of New Dramatists and a Scholar of Note at the American Library in Paris. They write for TV and film, including *Tales of the City* (Netflix) and *Tokyo Vice* (Max). Their OSCAR qualifying short film *Troy* screened at 70 festivals internationally, including the 2023 Sundance Film Festival, and is featured online in The New Yorker's Screening Room. Honors include fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim. More info at www.jensilverman.com.

JESSICA JAYE (Director) Director: Main Street Theater: **Cold War Choir Practice**, **Georgiana & Kitty: Christmas at Pemberley**; Shamelessly Saved Productions: **Heart of Hope**; Stacy J Productions: **Smoke Screens**; Fade to Black Fest: **Measure of a Man**, **Just Like Family**; The Ensemble Theatre YPP: **Fame**. Actor: Main Street Theater: **Georgiana & Kitty: Christmas at Pemberley** (Mary), **The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963** (Wilona Watson); Sankofa Collective: **Holy Ordinary** (Moses); Stages: **POTUS** (Chris), **cullud wattah** (Marion); Rec Room Arts: **Is God Is** (Racine); Orlando Shakes: **A Midsummer Night's Dream** (First Fairy/Mustardseed); The Ensemble Theatre: **Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters** (Messenger), **Brer Rabbit** (Brer Raccoon); Fade to Black Fest: **Choices** (Amos), **Hot Potato** (Zora), **To Each His Own** (Emma), **Sweetie's Confession** (Sweetie). Jessica is a native of Houston, Texas. She earned her B.A. from Texas Southern University and her MFA from the University of Central

Florida. In addition to her professional theatre career, Jessica is a theater professor at Houston City College, a high school theatre teacher at Ross Shaw Sterling High School, a debate coach at Texas Southern University, as well as a videographer and photographer. Follow Jessica on all social media platforms @jessicajaye35.

LIZ FREESE (Scenic and Properties Designer) Stages: **LET. HER. RIP.**, **The Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx/Latine Vote**, **Houston for the Holidays**, **Panto Little Mermaid**, **Panto Star Force**, **Life Could Be A Dream**, **Wonderettes**, **Honky Tonk Angels**, **Honky Tonk Christmas**, **Gidion's Knot**, **Wittenberg**, **Four Places**, **The Andrews Sisters**, **Rounding Third**, **Rabbit Hole**; Houston Grand Opera: **The Refuge**, **The Little Mermaid**, **New Arrivals**, **Nanita Learns to Make a Flan**, **Hansel and Gretel**, **Cinderella**, **A Way Home**, **The Magic Flute**, **The Princess and the Pea**, **Romeo and Juliet**, **Courtside**; Alley Theatre: **I, Barbara Jordan**; American Players Theatre: **Molly Sweeney**, **American Buffalo**; Williamstown Theatre Festival: **Spring Awakening**. Over 100 other Houston-based scenic and costume designs for A.D. Players, Main Street Theater, Main Street Youth Theater, Unity Theatre, The Ensemble Theatre, Classical Theatre Company, among others. International credits include **Gianni Schicchi** for Dnipropetrovsk Opera and Ballet Theatre, **Ukraine and The Caucasian Chalk Circle**, **Company**, **The Architect**, **Oh! What A Lovely War**, **The Weavers** for Judy Dench Theatre, London. Her designs have been published in *Opera America*, New York Times, and PBS. MFA: University of Missouri, Kansas City. Assistant Professor of Technical Theatre at San Jacinto College.

JADE CHANG (Lighting Designer) works within various areas of the arts industry including lighting and costuming theatrical design, music and composition, stage management, and graphic design. Some of their credits include Main Street Theater for Youth: **The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical**, **Sleeping Beauty**, **Sherlock Holmes and the Mystery of the Crown Jewel**, **The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe**, **James and the Giant Peach**; The Ensemble Theatre: **Pick Me Last**, **Don't Worry Willy**; Creative Movement Practice: **Treasure Island**, **Harry Potter: A Yule Ball Celebration**; Drunk Shakespeare: **Houston**; Weathervane Theatre: **Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks**, **Spring Awakening**; Brave Little Company: **Paper Offerings**, **Missing from the Museum**.

KARINA KAMYSHIN (Costume Designer) studied Theatrical Costume Design at Houston City College, graduating with a level 2 certification in fashion design and construction. Her designs have been shown in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the Rice Moody Center for the Arts. Her previous credits at Stages: **Spamilton/21 Chump St.** (Wardrobe), **The Lehman Trilogy** (Wardrobe), **Das Barbecü** (Wardrobe), **the ripple, the wave that carried me home** (Wardrobe), Costume Shop Intern; Brave Little Company & Stages: **Winter of the Snow Queen** (Costume Design); San Jacinto College South: **All in the Timing**, **Secret Menu**; HITS Theatre: **Ride the Cyclone**, **Beetlejuice Jr.** (Wardrobe Coordinator); RISE at the Warehouse: **Something Rotten Jr.**, **Shrek Jr.**, **Nutcracker Musical**. Lone Star College Montgomery: **Little Shop of Horrors** (Assistant Director), **This is Our Youth** (Assistant Director), **The Normal Heart** (Props). Karina combines a passion for visual language and world building with a love of fashion history and personal styling to create dynamic character wardrobes. She would like to thank her wonderful fiancé, family, and friends for their endless love and support, as well as the creative team and the community for allowing her to be part of the journey.

J. SALAZAR (Sound Designer) Sound Design credits include Alley Theatre (ECE): **The Brainstormers & Their Cosmic Mission**; Stages: **The Twelve Dates of Christmas**, **Panto Pinocchio**, **Othello: The Remix**, **POTUS: Or, Behind Every Great Dumbass Are Seven Women Trying to Keep Him Alive**, **Drag Wonderettes**, **ROE**, **Dream: The Music of the Everly Brothers**; Duchesne Academy: **You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown**; Sin Muros: A Latinx Theater Festival: **The Texas Ocean**, **los pecados de iberia**, **How Should a Conversation Be?**, **Body of Christie**, **This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero**; Main Street Theatre: **Present Laughter**, and **Mother of the Maid**; Sam Houston State University: **The Prom**, **Hands on a Hardbody**, **The Mountaintop**, **Pride and Prejudice**, **The Wolves**, **Once on this Island**, **Eleemosynary**, **She Kills Monsters**. Sound Engineer credits include HITS: **Xanadu Jr**, **Once on This Island**, **Hadestown**; Stages: **Das Barbecü**, **Thunder Knockin' on the Door**, **Panto Snow White and the Seven Dorks**, **Panto Little Mermaid**, **Plumshuga: The Rise of Lauren Anderson**, **Song of Me**, **Black Super Hero Magic Mama**, and **Sunrise Coven**. J. holds a BFA in Theatre from Sam Houston State University. She believes in the power of storytelling and advocates for accessible opportunities for young artists seeking involvement in the arts. She currently serves as the Theatre Manager and Technical Director for Duchesne Academy. J. would like to thank her family and friends for their utmost love and support in her career. Huge shout-out to her four-legged best friends: Quency, Técnica, and Blue, who lend their ears for countless audio sessions. (EQTB) She would like to honour her mother who is her rock, and whose sacrifices have made this possible. ¡Gracias Ma!

LAURA MORENO (Intimacy Director) is a multi-faceted theater artist and arts leader, known for her work as a producer, film and stage director, intimacy, cultural, and sensitivity/mental health consultant, costume designer, and arts admin. Some of her credits include: Intimacy Directing: Stages: **Come from Away**. Directing: Alley: **El Chuco Town Forever**, **The Odyssey of Professor Blume**; Main Street Theater Youth: **Carmela Full of Wishes**, **Last Stop on Market Street**. Assistant Directing: Alley: **Midsummer Night's Dream**, **What-a-Christmas**, **Born with Teeth**. She received her MFA in Theater, MA in Arts Leadership, and BFA in Acting from the University of Houston. Laura is a member of the Stages' Sin Muros Latinx Theater Planning Committee. Her other projects include: Chief Rep for the Parent Artist Advocacy League (PAAL), Member of the LatinX Theatre Commons Steering Committee, co-founder of Beans & Rice Media Arts, ¡Que Onda! LatinX Theater Collective, EL LABO: A Latine Theatre Experiment, and co-fellow for DiverseWorks Project Freeway Fellowship.

EMMA BACON (Stage Manager) is delighted to be back at Stages! Select credits include: STAGES: **Ms. Holmes and Ms. Watson, Apt. 2B** (Stage Manager), Sin Muros '23: **619 Hendricks** (Stage Manager). HAPPY HOUR READINGS: **Frankie & Johnny in the Clair de Lune** (Director), **The Goat, or Who is Sylvia** (Director). REC ROOM ARTS: A**ngels in America** (Assistant Director), **Toros** (Assistant Director), **Betrayal** (Stage Manager), **Peter Pan** (Stage Manager). Emma is the Company Manager and Artistic Producer at Rec Room Arts and a proud Co-Artistic Director of Happy Hour Readings. She often searches for the meaning of life and finds that creating art in community comes remarkably close.

MAKENZIE OWENS (Assistant Stage Manager) is excited to be assistant stage managing **The Roommate**. Most recently, she stage managed **Dolores Who Now Knows Everything** and worked as deck crew for **that drive thru monterey** at Stages. She holds a BFA in Theatre Arts with a concentration in Stage Management from Coastal Carolina University. Film and television credits include: *Whatever Happened to Daisy?* (2nd Second AD), *Revenger: Revisited* (2nd Second AD), *Hot House* (2nd AD), *Don't Let the Cat Out* (First Team PA), and *Ladybug* (First Team PA). Makenzie would like to thank her family and her cats, Bean and Sprout, for their endless love and support.

CELESTE CERENIO (Assistant Sound Designer) is grateful to be back at Stages! Selected credits include: Stages: **The Texas Ocean** (Director, Reading), **Caravan** (Sound Designer, Reading), **619 Hendricks** (Assistant Director, Reading); Brave Little Company: **Wildest Dreams** (Costume Designer); San Jacinto College: **Secret Menu** (Assistant Sound Designer); Alley Theatre: **The Girl on the Train** (Stage Op); Teatrx: **Botas de Papá** (Director); HITS Theatre: **Alice by Heart** (Costume Designer); Fade To Black Reading Series: **Two Cans of Chicken** (Director, Reading). Celeste is a Houston-based artist who began as a Production Mentee right here at Stages. She would like to thank Lauren Smith, Tyrone Mathis Jr., Robert Meek, and Joel Burkholder for teaching her a thing or two about the world of sound, and she is deeply grateful to J. Salazar for being her sound mentor and dear friend. Thank you for coming, shout-out to the crew, and enjoy the show! IG: @celestecerenio | TikTok: @celeste.cerenio

DEREK CHARLES LIVINGSTON (Artistic Director) joined Stages in 2024. He has directed **LET. HER. RIP.**, **The Lehman Trilogy**, and **It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play** at Stages and **Fat Ham** at 4th Wall. For this body of work, BroadwayWorld Houston Critics named him Best Director. He served four seasons at the Utah Shakespeare Festival as the Director of New Play Development and two seasons simultaneously as the Interim Artistic Director, played Thurgood Marshall in the one-person play **Thurgood** (about the Supreme Court Justice), and directed **A Raisin in the Sun** and **Henry VIII**. For San Diego's Playwrights Project, Derek led four different new play development processes in partnership with local theaters. Prior to San Diego, Derek served over four years as the Managing Artistic Director of Los Angeles' Celebration Theatre, the United States' second-oldest continuously operating LGBT theater. Selected work as a director: **Six Degrees of Separation**, **Tru**, **Sweeney Todd** (LA Scenie Awards – Best Musical, Best Director), **M. Butterfly** (LA Scenie Award – Best Director, LA Weekly nomination – Best Director), **Shakespeare's R&J** (Ovation nomination – Best Director), **Hedwig and the Angry Inch** (Ovation Award – Best Musical), **Insurrection: Holding History** (LA Weekly nomination – Best Director), **Naked Will** (GLAAD/LA nomination – Best Play), **Jesus Christ Superstar**, **Love! Valour! Compassion!** As an actor, he's played multiple lawyers: Pridamont (**The Illusion**), Jerome (**Merrily We Roll Along**), Billy Flynn (**Chicago**), and Thurgood Marshall (**Thurgood** – twice!). Some favorites: Simon (**The Whipping Man**), Hoke (**Driving Miss Daisy** – New Hampshire Drama Award/ Best Actor), Tupolski (**Pillowman**), Jackson (**Judy at the Stonewall Inn**). BA in Theatre (Brown University), MFA in Filmmaking (UCLA's School of Film and Television). He co-chaired the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, & Bi Equal Rights and Liberation–the largest LGBT march on Washington in U.S. history. And his portrait, taken at the Million Man March, hangs in the Smithsonian Museum of African American History.

GWEN WATKINS (Managing Director) is a native Houstonian who has been working in Houston's vibrant cultural sector for more than 15 years and possesses a passion to connect the community's diverse audiences through the arts. She joined the Stages team in July 2024 as Managing Director, overseeing the fundraising, marketing, finance, and operations teams. She holds a bachelor's degree in English from Texas A&M University and an MBA from Rice University. Prior to joining Stages, she served as the Houston Symphony's Chief Marketing & External Relations Officer. During her time with the Houston Symphony, Watkins spearheaded transformation within the marketing department, oversaw community engagement and education initiatives, and was a part of the leadership team that saw the organization through the pandemic. Before her time at the Symphony, Watkins served as Associate Head of Marketing & Communications at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH) where she managed marketing initiatives in support of the many facets of the institution including its hundreds of thousands of square feet of gallery space, tens of thousands of art objects, art school, art house film program, cafes, shops, and more, as well as serving a key role in the communications and marketing plans for their $450M capital campaign project. Earlier in her career, Gwen held marketing roles at the Houston Zoo and the Houston Galleria.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT *by Mark Bailes*

Jodi Bobrovsky, Prop Shop Manager

Behind every Stages production is a team of dedicated, skilled artisans who help bring the show to life. Without the tireless work from members of the Production team, the actors would be standing on a bare stage, in the dark, wearing nothing.

Our longest-serving employee, Jodi Bobrovsky, first joined Stages in 1999 where she has headed the prop department ever since. The first show she worked on was *The Moon is Blue*, a romantic comedy set in New York City.

When asked to recall one show as her favorite, amongst the hundreds she's worked on over the years, Jodi selected *Lobster Alice* (2002). "The props played an integral part in visually telling that story. It was a fun challenge to create a theatrical landscape populated with three-dimensional sculptures based on Salvador Dali's paintings."

When choosing props or furniture for a show, Jodi notices every small detail of a script. Most obvious is the time period the story is set, but also the geographic location, time of year, socioeconomic status, and age of a character all help to inform her selections.

In *The Roommate*, for example, Sharon is middle-class, middle-aged, and in the middle of the country, all characteristics playwright Jen Silverman selected to depict her as a very middle-of-the-road type character. Jodi helps communicate this through an overabundance of neutral beiges populating Sharon's home. When Robyn enters her life, she becomes influenced by this colorful, larger-than-life character, which is translated by introducing small pops of color throughout her otherwise achromatic home.

THE JO AND JIM FURR PROP SHOP

Recently, we were also delighted to honor longtime Stages patrons and supporters **Jo and Jim Furr** in a naming dedication ceremony of the prop shop and storage spaces. Their support ensures Stages will continue producing high-caliber, professional theater while providing opportunities for talented Houston artists, like Jodi, to shine.

Behind-the-scenes: Many of the items you see in Sharon's kitchen are sourced directly from Jodi's own home. The cookbooks, small appliances, and pots and pans are her personal, real-world belongings.

SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT JODI'S WORK

From left to right: Jodi Bobrovsky, Derek Charles Livingston, and Jo Furr at the naming dedication

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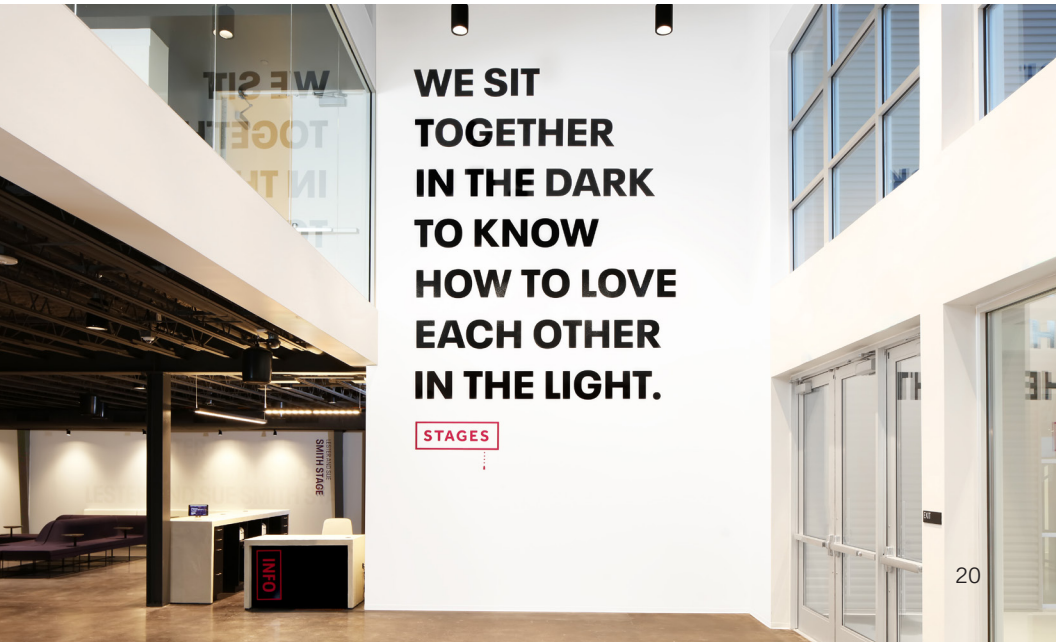

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