2023 WAGNER NEW PLAY FESTIVAL UC San Diego
ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Theatre and Dance

# WNPF One Acts

grippy sock vacation

by Beth Hyland, directed by Ludmila de Brito

Just the Two of Us

by Pha<mark>nésia Pharel</mark>, directe<mark>d by Madison Mae Willia</mark>ms

## Boxed

by Mylan Gray, directed by Allie Moss

May 19th, 20th, June 9th @ 7:30pm, May 20th @ 2:00pm, June 10th @ 10:30am Arthur Wagner Theater

## grippy sock vacation

by Beth Hyland directed by Ludmila de Brito

#### CAST

Isabella Sabrina Liu Caroline Iris Feng

#### CREATIVE TEAM

Scenic Designer
Costume Designer
Lighting Designer
Sound Designer
Production Stage Manager
Assistant Director & Isabella Understudy
Assistant Director & Caroline Understudy
Assistant Scenic Designer
Associate Sound Designer/Composer
Assistant Stage Manager
Movement Coordinator
Sound Programmer
Faculty EDI Advocate
Voice & Text Coach

Frank Seed
Lauren Agas-Dominguez
Stephaney Knapp
Aaron Mencher
Avery Simonian
Mawce Dunn
Vivian White
Gabi Chen
Roselle-Angeline Castro
Tess Twomey
Mia Van Deloo
Johnathan Ventura
Mark Guirguis
Ursula Meyer

#### **CONTENT & SENSORY WARNINGS**

grippy sock vacation discusses the following topics: suicide and suicidality, self-harm, depression, anxiety, borderline personality disorder, OCD, mental illness stigma, eating disorders, postpartum depression.

#### SUMMARY

It's Family Weekend at Hollybrook Knolls Residential Treatment Center. Caroline is visiting her younger sister, high school senior Isabella. Isabella has a lot to say. Caroline doesn't want to hear any of it, but maybe she'll learn the TikTok dance Isabella wants to teach her. A darkly comic exploration of sistererhood and mental illness, grippy sock vacation explores the secrets we can't afford to keep.

#### Note from the director

Family; How do we navigate generations of collective unprocessed pain, and how long is survival mode sustainable?

When did we inherit the need to pretend everything is okay?

The stigma of mental illness across cultures and generations is something that I had to personally fight against and grapple with myself this past year after being diagnosed with depression and anxiety on top of ADHD and getting family backlash for considering treatment.

Among the many divides in this country, we see generaitonal polarization.

Grippy Sock Vacation by Beth Hyland holds your heart and shakes it to the beat of a Tik-Tok viral dance. Caroline and Isabela, Gen Z'er and Millennial sisters, fight to connect across generational trauma in our tech dystopia to remind us that there is always something we must learn from each other.

Thank you for being here.

#### THE PLAYWRIGHT

**Beth Hyland (Playwright)** is a first-year MFA student. UC San Diego Credits: *Fires, Ohio* (staged reading). Her plays, which include *Fires, Ohio, SYLVIA SYLVIA SYLVIA SYLVIA SYLVIA, Seagulls, Killed a Man* (Joking), and *nurse/juliet*, have been produced and developed at Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf LookOut, Actors Theatre of Louisville, The Kenndy Center, The Hearth, Rivendell Theatre, B Street Theatre, Know Theatre, The Sound (in association with Joe Swanberg), and First Floor Theatre, among others. She is the 2023 recipient of KCACTF's Paul Vogel Award and the Mark Twain Prize for Comic Playwriting. Representaiton: UTA. <a href="https://beth-hyland.com">beth-hyland.com</a>

#### THE DIRECTOR

**Ludmila de Brito (Director)** is a Brazilian-Indigenous director. Her focus is on works that urge us to move beyond survival and truly start living. Directing credits: *Alma excerpt*, by Ben Benne (U.C. San Diego), Emily J. Daly's *MTARadioPlays episode* (Rattlestick), collaboration with Nilaja Sun on *Project Transform* (Hartford Stage), and with Addie Gorlin for the *East-Rock Halloween Project*. She is a Lin Manuel Miranda Family Fellow and an alum of United World Colleges and the National Theatre Institute at the O'Neill. Ludy has AD'd for Jenna Worsham on *The Siblings Play* by Ren Dara Santiago and Megan Sandberg-Zakian on *Much Ado* at the Boston Common.

#### THE CAST

Iris (Liting) Feng (Caroline) is a second-year MFA student born and raised in China before moving to the US at age ten. She received previous acting training from RADA and Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. UC San Diego Credits: The Winter's Tale, Dance Nation, Fifty Boxes of Earth, Everybody. Select Credits: Romeo and Juliet (Guildhall), Blank (Guildhall), Cymbeline (RADA), Aloha Attire (Kumu Kahua Theatre), Sganarelle (Hawaii Shakespeare Festival). Iris holds a BA in Psychology from Harvard College.

**Sabrina J. Liu (Isabella)** is a third-year MFA Acting candidate at UCSD. She is originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and holds a BA in Government and Psychology with minors in Inequality Studies and Theatre from Cornell University. Regional Credits: *Here There Are Blueberries* (La Jolla Playhouse), *In Every Generation* (San Diego Repertory Theatre), *Exotic Deadly: Or the MSG Play* (Play Reading, Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center). UC San Diego credits: *The Winter's Tale, Dance Nation, Hells Canyon, Everybody, Twelfth Night, End Days, Town Hall* 

#### THE CREATIVE TEAM

**Lauren Agans-Dominguez (Costume Designer)** is a fourth-year double major in Theatre and Studio Art. UC San Diego credits: *Into the Woods* '23, *Winters Tale* '23, *Rocky Horror* '22, *American Idiot* '22

**Roselle-Angeline Castro (Associate Sound Designer/Composer)** is a fourth-year interdisciplinary computing and the arts music major and theatre minor. UC San Diego credits: *blu* (ASD). Select credits: *Heathers: The Musical, The Rocky Horror Show, Spring Awakening, You're a Good Man Charlie Brown, Pippin, Songs For a New World.* Film credits: *Hiraya: a devised piece.* 

**Gabi Chen (Assistant Scenic Designer)** is a third-year theatre and dance major in Eleanor Roosevelt College. UC San Diego credits: *A Flea in Her Rear, Exotic Deadly: or the MSG Play.* UC San Diego LABs: *Best Years.* Company 157: *One Line or Two* (Winter New Play Festival).

**Mia Van Deloo (Movement Coordinator)** is a third-year theatre and history double major from the Bay Area. UC San Diego credits: *A Flea in Her Rear* (Assistant Director/Dramaturg), *Dance Nation* (Choreographer/Assistant Director), *BAAL* (Dramaturg), Everybody (Assistant Director/Understudy), Backwaters (Assistant Dramaturg). Other Credits: *A Chorus Line* (Choreographer), *Into the Woods* (Dramaturg), *Big Fish* (Assistant Choreographer). Mia is currently the Marketing Assistant at La Jolla Playhouse.

**Mawce Dunn (Assistant Director/Isabella Understudy)** is a theatre and clinical psychology major. UC San Diego credits: *The Winter's Tale, Machinal* Other credits: *hey Ester, Rot, Paranoir* 

**Stephaney Knapp (Lighting Designer)** is a third-year undergraduate theatre major. UC San Diego credits: *The Winter's Tale* (ALD). *Baal* (ALD). *Hells Canyon* (ALD). *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (ALD). Muir Musical Credits: *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (LD).

#### THE CREATIVE TEAM cont.

**Aaron Mencher (Sound Designer)** is a second-year PhD student in music composition. Previously, he received an MM in music composition from the Peabody Conservatory in 2021 and a BM from the University of Missouri in 2019. His concert works have been performed by the St. Louis Symphony, the Albany Symphony, Alarm Will Sound, the Mivos Quartet and many others.

**Frank Seed (Scenic Designer)** is a third-year theatre major. UC San Diego credits: *BAAL, A Flea In Her Rear*. Other Credits: *I You, Embers Adrift* (Company 157).

**Avery Simonian (Production Stage Manager)** is a second-year theatre major. UC San Diego Credit: *Bach at Leipzig* (ASM) *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (ASM), WinterWORKS 2022 (ASM), New Directions (ASM), *Men on Boats* (PA), *A Night at the Grand Guignol* (Fall LABS '21). Other Credits: *Heathers the Musical* (Choreographer)

**Tessa Twomey (Assistant Stage Manager)** is a second-year psychology major with a double minor in theater and political science. UC San Diego credits: *Flea in her Rear, Limp Wrist on the Lever, The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity.* Other Credits: *Into The Woods, The Rocky Horror Show* (Muir Musical); *Mary Poppins* (Forest Theater).

**Jonathan Ventura (Sound Programmer)** is a fourth-year media major. Company 157 Credits: *Colors Eve, Seer, Embers Adrift*.

**Vivian White (Assistant Director/Caroline Understudy)** is a third-year transfer and a lifelong theatre lover. She is honored to be on the directing team for *Grippy Sock Vacation* and would like to thank everyone involved for allowing her to be a part of such a beautiful piece of theatre.



## Just the Two of Us

by Phanésia Pharel directed by Madison Mae Williams

#### CAST

Lady of Mind Bean Leovina Charles Colby Muhammad

#### CREATIVE TEAM

Scenic Designer
Costume Designer
Lighting Co-Designer
Lighting Co-Designer
Sound Designer
Production Stage Manager
Assistant Director
Assistant Scenic Designer
Assistant Stage Manager
Production Manager
Associate Production Manager
Faculty EDI Advocate

Frank Seed
Lauren Agas-Dominguez
Stephaney Knapp
Brandon Chaing
Jennifer Hernandez
Hannah Marie Gallagher
Tova petty
Gabi Chen
Aaronne Louis-Charles
Michael Francis
Laura Manning
Jade Power-Sotomayor

#### SUMMARY

Bean needs her stubborn Haitian American mother to slow down and take her health seriously. Bean's mother needs Bean to get her life together and listen to her advice. A story of two strong women who love each other mightily but don't see eye to eye, Just The Two of us explores the complicated bond between mother and daughter and what it means to live your own version of the American Dream.

#### Note from the director

"you—enigmatic woman exploding from clouds and intestines, riverbanks, kneecaps, veins and horizons tongues embroidered with eyelashes. you burn in my throat i walk your footsteps singing.

you are here. you are there.
you will never go away.
you kiss your own breath
sleepwalk your eyes
stretch out with mouths
singing your legs."
— Sonia Sanchez, "Belly, Buttocks, and Straight Spines"

Just the Two of Us is a play that places bonds at its core—who we connect with throughout our lives, what relationships we prioritize, and how love and caretaking play a role in those connections. The thematic intersections of motherhood, daughterhood, Blackness, and womanhood are key to the relationships that Phanésia Pharel explores in this play, and it has been an immense privilege being a part of the development of new work that centers that which is so often pushed to the margins. Moving between the present and the past, shifting temporally through memories that Lady of Mind and Bean—mother and daughter—share, this play is a beautiful reflection on family, legacy, mortality, and the equal ephemerality and weightiness of what it means to achieve excellence. Just the Two of Us asks us to engage with the questions—What is that unnamable covenant formed between mothers and daughters? How do we grapple with achieving The American Dream? and, who are our forever friends?

#### THE PLAYWRIGHT

**Phanésia Pharel (Playwright)** grew up on a dragon fruit farm in Miami and is a recent graduate of Barnard College where she majored in Urban Studies. Her plays include: *Lucky* (New York Stage and Film, KCACTF's 2023 Rosa Parks Playwriting Award) and *Black Girl Joy* (a finalist for the Jane Chambers Award). Phanésia is a member of EST/ Youngblood, and has commissions with City Theatre Miami, the Latinx Playwrights Circle, Pregones/PRTT Greater Good Commission, and Thrown Stone Theatre. Phanésia is a 1st-year Playwriting MFA candidate at UC San Diego. Representation: Bonnie Davis, Bret Adams.

#### THE DIRECTOR

Madison Mae Williams (Director) (she/her) is a fifth-year PhD candidate. Born and raised on Cape Cod, she received her BA concentrating in musical theatre, poetry, and Africana studies from Hampshire College. Maddie's dissertation project focuses on alienation in countercultural performances of the Long Sixties. Her other research areas include American musical theatre, the Black Power/Arts movements, horror and the uncanny, performance for children, and the films of Stanley Kubrick and John Cassavetes. Maddie has worked with La Jolla Playhouse, the Old Globe, South Coast Repertory, Cygnet Theatre, the New Cosmopolitans, the Playwrights Realm, and the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. She is passionate about theatre work that is accessible, radical, and increases visibility and representation for people of marginalized identities. Maddie is a proud member of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas and the Black Theatre Network. UC San Diego credits: Machinal (Dramaturg), Baal (Director), Elektra (Music Director), Man In Love (Dramaturg), Incendiary (WNPF '19 staged reading), Everybody Black (Assistant/Music Director, Dramaturg). madisonmaewilliams.com

#### THE CAST

Leovina Charles (Lady of Mind) is a third-year MFA candidate. Born and raised in Brooklyn, NY, she discovered her love for acting at a young age, making her professional theatre debut as Young Nala in *The Lion King on Broadway*. Graduating summa cum laude from Howard University with a BFA in Musical Theatre, Leovina is also an alumna of The Maggie Flanigan Studio's 2-year Meisner Conservatory, and has studied at the British American Drama Academy (BADA) in Oxford, England. UC San Diego credits: *Bunny, Bunny, Dance Nation, Promithes, Promithes, In the Red and Brown Water, Twelfth Night, Town Hall.* Select credits: *Lempicka* (La Jolla Playhouse), *Maribel in Sonadora* (Tribeca Film Festival), *Ismene in I Am Antigone* (Theatre for a New City), *Clytemnestra in Oresteia* (BADA), *Young Brooklyn in Brooklyn* (Howard University), and *Passing Strange* (Howard University).

**Colby Muhammad (Bean)** is a second-year MFA student from Richmond, VA. She graduated cum laude from Howard University with a BFA in Musical Theatre. UC San Diego credits: *Bunny, Bunny, Dance Nation, Nonna Kills the President, and In the Red and Brown Water.* Select Theatre credits: *Anything Goes, Spunk!, and Fabulation, or the Re-Education of Undine.* Film credits: *Centerfold, Transcend, and Doing it Wrong.* 

#### THE CREATIVE TEAM

**Lauren Agans-Dominguez (Costume Designer)** is a fourth year Theatre and Studio Art double major. UC San Diego Credits: *Into the Woods, Winters Tale, Rocky Horror, American Idiot* 

**Brandon Chaing (Lighting Co-Designer)** is a fourth-year undergraduate student. He is majoring in computer science and has minor in theatre.

#### THE CREATIVE TEAM CONT.

**Gabi Chen (Assistant Scenic Designer)** (she/her) is a third-year theatre and dance double major in ERC. UC San Diego credits: A Flea in Her Rear, Exotic Deadly: or The MSG Play. Additional credits: One Line or Two (Company 157 Winter New Play Festival '23), Best Years (UCSD LABs)

Hannah Gallagher (Production Stage Manager) (she/they) is a third-year theatre major. UC San Diego Credits: Fifty Boxes of Earth (ASM), Everybody (ASM), peerless (PA)

**Jenn Hernandez (Sound Designer)** (*she/her*) is a fourth-year theatre major. This is Jenn's first sound design opportunity! She is very excited for this opportunity and she would like to thank everyone for supporting her journey here!

**Stephaney Knapp (Lighting Designer)** is a third year undergraduate theatre major. UC San Diego Credits: *The Winter's Tale* (ALD). *Baal* (ALD). *Hells Canyon* (ALD). *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (ALD). Muir Musical Credits: *Rocky Horror Picture Show* (LD).

**Aaronne Louis-Charles (Assistant Stage Manager)** (*she/her*) is a fourth-year theatre major. UC San Diego acting credits: *In the Red and Brown Water* and *Men on Boats*. This is her first time being an ASM at UC San Diego!

**Tova Petty (Assistant Director)** is a fourth-year theatre major currently in her last quarter at UC San Diego. UC San Diego credits: *Placeholder, Four Ghosts in a House on Fire, Dance Nation, Color's Eve, Into the Woods, Another College Musical.* 

**Frank Seed (Scenic Designer)** (he/him/his) is a third-year theatre major. UC San Diego credits: BAAL, A Flea In Her Rear. Other Credits: I You, Embers Adrift(Company 157).

## **Boxed**

by Mylan Grey directed by Allie Moss

#### Cast

Ryan Jalen Davidson David June Nyong'o

#### CREATIVE TEAM

Scenic Designer
Costume Designer
Lighting Designer
Sound Designer
Dramaturg/Fight Captain
Production Stage Manager
Assistant Director
Assistant Scenic Designer
Assistant Costume Designer
Assistant Stage Manager
Script Production Assistant/Script PA

Frank Seed
Caprice Shelly
Brandon Chaing
Padra Crisafulli
Haïa R'nana Bchiri
Lauren Guiso
Riohn Jones
Gabi Chen
Madi Hoffman
Charity Reid
Connor Rankin

#### CONTENT & SENSORY WARNINGS

Depictions of physical violence against Black men, Strong language/profanity, References to death, suicide, and murder, Described violence, Blood, References to generational and family trauma, Yelling/loud sudden sounds, Flashing lights, use of FIRE ALARM sound at the end of play.

#### SUMMARY

It's Ryan's first day at a mysterious office where Black men occasionally fight each other to the death. David, the old-timer, does all he can to stay on top, but can't keep up to save his life. In a world that encourages Black men to kill each other to survive, Boxed asks if it's possible for Black men to love each other in the face of state-sanctioned brutality and a culture where lethal violence is an everyday reality.

#### Note from the director

Boxed is a play for our times. We witness David and Ryan, two Black "employees" in what seems like the office from hell. They must navigate the dangerously arbitrary rules of their surroundings that encourage them to undermine each other in order to get ahead. To me, this is the crux of the play: patriarchal white supremacy thrives when marginalized groups (in this play, specifically Black men) are prevented from collaborating and creating community. This feels especially relevant in 2023, as we continue to march through the violent backlash against the "woke" progress that was almost made during the so-called racial reckoning of 2020. We're deep in a culture of gaslighting and lies packaged as truths designed to undermine the very real experiences of racism and anti-Black violence. These lies also purposefully obfuscate the persistent, calculated tradition of this violence in our country by placing it squarely in the realm of "history," seemingly far away and disconnected from our current situation. This play brings it to the fore and serves as a stark reminder that our history is not as far behind as we are encouraged to think it. In doing so, it exposes the sinisterly intertwined lineage of racism and capitalism. Both are far-reaching systems deeply entrenched in American life and psyche, and Boxed poses the question: given all of this, can you ever really get out?

#### THE PLAYWRIGHT

**Mylan Gray (Playwright)** is a first-year MFA student. UC San Diego credits: Buried in Blood (staged reading). They use they/he pronouns. They received their BAH in Black Studies and Theater and Performance Studies from Stanford University in 2020.

Other full-lengths include: when boys // soft (First Lit(e) Reading Series at The Tank, Workshop Theater Company), Buried in Blood (Staged reading: Stanford, KC Public). 10-minute Plays Include: The Dress (Whim), RepCoin (The Tank) Awards include: Lorraine Hansberry Award (KCACTF), Kennel Jackson, Jr. Award (Stanford) Chappell Lougee Award (Stanford). Residencies: Writing Downtown, and O'Neill Playwright Observership.

#### THE DIRECTOR

Allie Moss (Director) is a first-year MFA student. UC San Diego credits: Late: A Cowboy Song. Additional credits: Far Away (A.C.T. MFA Program), Restoration Master Reset (Cutting Ball Theater), Cloud 9 and American Hero (Cutting Ball Theater), Hookman (A.C.T. Young Conservatory) and Stop Kiss (A.C.T. Fellowship Project). Assistant directing credits: Love and Information, Let There Be Love, Chester Bailey, and The Hard Problem (American Conservatory Theater). she/her/hers. alliemossdirector.com.

#### THE CAST

**Jalen Myles Davidson (Ryan)** is a second-year MFA student. UC San Diego credits: *Bunny Bunny, Dance Nation, Nona Kills the President* (WNPF'22), and *In the Red and Brown Water.* Jalen received his BA in Theatre and Performance Studies from Kennesaw State University in 2020. KSU credits: *Bring It On: the Musical, The Normal Heart, Our Town,* and *As You Like It.* 

Junior "June" Nyong'o (David) (he/him) is a third-year MFA Acting Candidate. He is from Nairobi, Kenya and holds a BA in Theatre and Digital Arts from Stetson University. UC San Diego credits: Bach at Leipzig, Promithes, Promithes, In The Red and Brown Water, 12th Night, Midsummer Night's Dream. Select credits: Dallas Winston U/S in The Outsiders (La Jolla Playhouse); Valor (Guthrie Theatre); Hamlet in Hamlet (Orlando Shakes).

#### THE CREATIVE TEAM

Haïa R'nana Bchiri (Dramaturg/Fight Captain) is a third-year PhD student. UC San Diego credits: Winter's Tale (Dramaturg), Trojan Women (Dramaturg) and Uncle Vanya (Dramaturg). Selected recent credits: These and Those (Ayala/Dramaturg) with San Diego Rep; Eurydice (Director), Fefu and Her Friends (Emma), Circle Mirror Transformation (Theresa), and Peer Gynt (Solveig/Aase) at Brandeis; and interactive Hamlet (Director), Midsummer (Puck/Facilitator), and Taming of the Shrew (Kate), plus Julius Caesar (Decius Brutus/Fight Choreographer), Cymbeline (Director) and Henry VI Part III (Dramaturg) with the Public Domain Players, where she's also Director of Development, Intimacy Coordinator, and co-Fight Choreographer.

**Brandon Chaing (Lighting Designer)** is a fourth-year undergraduate student. He is majoring in computer science and has minor in theatre.

**Gabi Chen (Assistant Scenic Designer)** is a third-year theatre and dance major in Eleanor Roosevelt College. UC San Diego credits: *A Flea in Her Rear, Exotic Deadly: or the MSG Play.* UC San Diego LABs: *Best Years.* Company 157: *One Line or Two* (Winter New Play Festival).

**Padra Crisafulli (Sound Designer)** is a first-year MFA student. UC San Diego credits: *I Found a Zipper* (SD+Composer), *Mortal Digits* at the Qualcomm Institute (Co-Creator), *blu* (SD), *Dance FallWorks* '22 (AS+VD). They received their BFA in Directing from Carnegie Mellon University. Other credits: *As You Like it* at La Jolla Playhouse (ASD), *PETROV: A Mono-Opera* at the National Museum of Serbia (Director), and *Suicide Forest* at the Bushwick-Starr (PA).

**Lauren Guiso (Production Stage Manager)** is a fourth-year theatre major. UC San Diego credits: *Dance Nation* (SM swing), *Machinal* (Assistant Costume Designer), *Limp Wrist On The Lever* (ASM), *Rot* (PSM) with Co. 157, *A Chorus Line* (ASM) with Muir Musical. She is grateful to be closing out her time at UCSD on this project and sends love to her cast and crew.

#### THE CREATIVE TEAM CONT.

**Madison Hoffman (Assistant Costume Designer)** is a fourth year theatre major and history minor. UC San Diego credits: *Baal, The Winter's Tale* 

**Riohn Jones (Assistant Director)** is a third-year Theatre major and member of UC San Diego's premier acapella group "The Tritones". UC San Diego credits: *The Nether, Into the Woods, Big Fish.* 

**Connor J. Rankin (Assistant Stage Manager, Script PA)** is a second-year neurobiology major with a minor in theatre.

**Charity Reid (Assistant Stage Manager)** (*she/her*). First-year transfer theater major. This is the first show she has worked on at UC San Diego.

**Frank Seed (Scenic Designer)** is a third-year theatre major. UC San Diego credits: *BAAL, A Flea In Her Rear.* Other Credits: *I You, Embers Adrift* (Company 157).

**Caprice Shirley (Costume Designer)** is a fourth-year theatre major. UC San Diego credits: *Boxed* (CD), *Bunny Bunny* (ACD), *Baal* (CD), *Napoli* (ACD), *Men on Boats* (ACD) Other credits: *It's a Wonderful Life* at Victor Valley College (CD)

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