



Centre for Drama, Theatre & Performance Studies  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

**THE CENTRE FOR DRAMA, THEATRE & PERFORMANCE  
STUDIES PRESENTS**

# **DIRECTORS' SHOWCASE 2023**

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**THE SOUND OF A VOICE  
THE MOST MASSIVE WOMAN WINS  
SURE THING**

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# THE SOUND OF A VOICE

BY DAVID HENRY HWANG

DIRECTED BY XINXIAN XU

*The Sound of A Voice* is a ghost story inspired by Japanese folklore. Set in Edo period Japan, the play explores the relationship between a wandering samurai and a mystical woman. A fable full of mysteries and visions, this production aims to take the audience on a thrilling, breathtaking visual journey.

DIRECTOR **XINXIAN XU**

STAGE  
MANAGER

**DON KU**

LIGHTING  
DESIGN

**ABBEY  
KOWALSKI**

SET +  
PROPS  
DESIGN

**LIZ SO**

COSTUME +  
MAKEUP  
DESIGN

**VAL  
VERGARA**

SOUND  
DESIGN

**EVAN  
MORITZ**

CAST

**GRACE LI  
LARRY NG**

## SPECIAL THANKS

"Special thanks to our mentors Banuta Rubess and Evan Moritz, who have been our lights of guidance and voices of reason."

**XINXIAN XU**



# THE SOUND OF A VOICE

BY DAVID HENRY HWANG

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

**A witch? A woman in solitude?** Or perhaps...something else? *The Sound of A Voice* is a ghostly fable revolving around an aging samurai and a strange figure that lives in the forest. Set in late Edo period Japan, the wandering samurai seeks to regain his glory and purpose in a quickly changing world. In his travels, he finds a cabin in the forest with a welcoming host. The woman is strange and beautiful, but full of mysteries. Together, they find consolation in each other's voices, which soothes the pain of solitude. However, as they grow closer together, the air begins to change, secrets are revealed, and their voices will never be the same.

**The Sound of A Voice** was written by Asian American playwright, David Henry Hwang. His work includes the renowned *M. Butterfly*, *Yellow Face* and *Golden Child*. In his work, Hwang portrays the nuances of Asian cultures, traditions and practices in ways that fully engage the audience, which is what draws me to this play. The setting of Japan is not only the backdrop of the story; The narrative and structure demonstrate the influence of Noh and Kabuki theatre. This production aims to convey those influences onstage. The creative team worked collaboratively to demonstrate our understanding of these sources by creating a world that, we hope, will spark the audience's interest in these traditions.

**The play also invites different** creative interpretations. In our exploration of the text, we found a new understanding of the characters and the story that hadn't been fully explored in previous productions. By pairing this understanding with strong visuals, we hope to take the audience on a thrilling visual journey. For our experienced guests who are familiar with the play,

**Beware.**

**XINXIAN XU**



# THE SOUND OF A VOICE

## CAST



### GRACE LI

(SHE/HER)

**Grace Li** is a third-year drama student at U of T. Originating from Hong Kong, Grace is incredibly grateful and excited to have this show be her introduction to Toronto's theatre scene. Growing up a big theatre kid, she has been performing bilingually since middle school and had her directorial debut last year. Recent acting credits include Molly in *The Handbook of Restoration We Lost* (Windmill Grass Theatre HK) and The Subject/Hathaway in *The Void Memorandum*(HKBU).

Beyond acting and directing, she also has a background in ballet. On sunny days, Grace is easily found in her natural habitat - cool cafés and record stores in artsy neighbourhoods.



### LARRY NG

(HE/HIM)

**Larry Ng** is an actor, director and movement coach specializing in physical theatre, mime and mask, as well as a registered drama therapist under the NADTA. He was theatrically trained in Physical and Devising Theatre at LISPA and Corporeal Mime at the International School of Corporeal Mime. With over 10 years of teaching experience in university for Philosophy, Sociology and Humanities, he is currently pursuing his MA at the CDTPS. He has taught multiple forms of theatre in over 10 cities in Europe and Asia, and has

performed in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau, Mainland China and London. He was also a residential artist at the Warsaw International Mime Art Festival in 2015 and returned to the Warsaw Mime Centre to lead an intensive training program in 2018. Recently, he instructed a Drama Therapy Masters program at the University of Hong Kong and worked as a practicum supervisor.



# THE SOUND OF A VOICE

## CREATIVE TEAM



### DIRECTOR

#### **XINXIAN XU** (HE/HIM)

**Xinxian** is a fourth-year student majoring in Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies and double minoring in Cinema Studies and Psychology. He is a director, playwright, designer and stage manager. Creating theatre has always been a passion for Xinxian and directing his own project has been a goal since childhood. He has previously directed smaller projects, such as drama festivals and staged readings, but the privilege of

participating in this year's Directors' Showcase is a dream coming true, for which he is so grateful for the support and guidance from his instructors, creative team, and CDTPS faculty. Later this year, he will be directing his first full-length original play *On Spring's Promise* with UC Follies. His directing style is heavily visually oriented, constantly aiming for breathtaking visual elements created by innovative production technology to explore new ways of storytelling.



### STAGE MANAGER

#### **DON KU** (HE/HIM)

**Don Ku** is a theatre student majoring in Drama with a double minor in Writing and Rhetoric and Creative Expression and Society. He has been in theatre since high school, where he played minor roles in shows. At U of T, his experience lies in dramaturgy and stage management. He is happy to be part of the Directors' Showcase and is honoured to be the stage manager for *The Sound of a Voice*. He also loves creative writing; he writes short stories and is planning to get into playwriting.



# THE MOST MASSIVE WOMAN WINS

BY MADELEINE GEORGE

DIRECTED BY LISHA ZHAO

*The Most Massive Woman Wins* employs a surrealistic setting to tell realistic stories. This play delves into the complex issues of body image and self-acceptance. Set in the waiting room of a liposuction clinic, the story unfolds as four women share their experiences with weight and societal expectations through a series of monologues, short scenes and rhymes.

DIRECTOR **LISHA ZHAO**

STAGE  
MANAGER

**QILIN YU**

COSTUME  
DESIGN

**LIZ SO**

ASSISTANT  
STAGE  
MANAGER

**SICHUN XIA**

SET  
DESIGN

**JINGYUAN  
CHEN (JESSIE)**

LIGHTING  
DESIGN

**MADELEINE  
KING**

ASSISTANT  
SET DESIGN

**ATHEN GO**

SOUND  
DESIGN

**EVAN  
MORITZ**

CAST

**FIONA DU**

**CANDICE ANN JUTTLAH**

**CASSANDRA MARRAZZA-RADESCHI**

**MADELEINE THOMPSON**



# THE MOST MASSIVE WOMAN WINS

BY MADELEINE GEORGE

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

**Thank you for joining us** on a journey with four women as they explore their body insecurities. Set in a liposuction clinic, these women with diverse backgrounds share their experiences dealing with weight issues. *The Most Massive Woman Wins* intertwines fun elements like children's games, songs and nursery rhymes, while addressing serious issues beneath its humour. This play takes us on a journey through time to glimpse into the lives of these four women. It explores how past experiences shape our present decisions, highlighting the costs of conforming to society's beauty standards.

**I chose to direct this** play to spotlight the societal judgments we often face about our bodies. In many places, the pursuit of weight loss is almost a public obsession, reflecting a society that often measures a woman's worth by her looks. Conversations about dieting, weight loss and cosmetic surgery are all too frequent, showing an unhealthy fixation on physical appearance. I encourage you, as an audience member, whether you have personal connections to this topic or know someone who does, to reflect on society's fixation on physical appearance. I encourage you to reconsider your preconceptions about body image. I encourage you to leave this theatre with a question in mind: Why should we dislike ourselves because of society's expectations? By the end of this show, I hope you'll have an emotional workout with the four women on stage.

With all that being said, **let's now find out which woman wins!**

## SPECIAL THANKS

"I am deeply grateful for Banuta Rubess and Evan Moritz for their advice and guidance. I want to thank Aliyah Kashkari and Ethan Persyko for their contributions and dedicated time. Lastly, I want to thank Bo Xue, my beloved mother, for her encouragement and support throughout this remarkable journey."

**LISHA ZHAO**



# CAST



## CASSANDRA MARRAZZA-RADESCHI

(SHE/HER)

**Cassandra** is a third-year student double-majoring in English and Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies. Her passion for the arts is lifelong, though her journey with acting began in the tenth grade during her tenure in her school's specialized performing arts program. Ever since, she's dedicated a majority of her academic career to bettering her craft and, with this show, takes her first step towards honing her skills outside the classroom.



## CANDICE ANN JUTTLAH

(SHE/HER/THEY/THEM)

**Candice Ann** is a proud Scarborough resident who has been performing since her childhood in school choirs and church. Her performance abilities are rooted in musical theatre and improv comedy, though she is currently pursuing training as a dramatic actor. After starting her family in her early 20s, Candice Ann decided to pursue her studies with the CDTPS to further hone her skills as a performer. She has been featured in performances of *Grease* as Joannie Casino, *Two by Four*, an original production written by her musical theatre class at R.H. King Academy, and

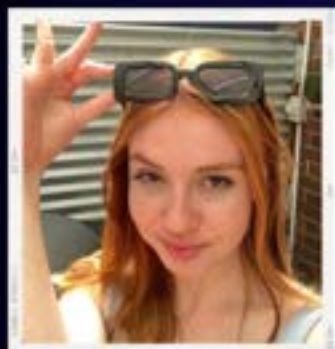
*Annie* as Ms.Hannigan. In her spare time, she enjoys watching horror movies, writing plays, cooking delicious food, and spending time with her two beautiful boys.



## FIONA DU

(SHE/HER)

**Fiona** is a fourth-year drama student. She studies acting at the CDTPS, and will be performing in the DRM403 Mainstage Show in March 2024 with her castmate Cassandra. She has a background in dance and aspirations to work in filmmaking. Outside of drama, she works in diversity, equity and inclusion advocacy and mental health advocacy. She is very excited and grateful to be a part of the showcase this year!



## MADELEINE THOMPSON

(SHE/HER)

She is **Madeleine Thompson** and she IS a superstar. She is currently in her third year at U of T, double majoring in Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies and Cinema Studies. Previous performance training includes musical theatre at Bravo Academy for the Arts, acting and choir at Cardinal Carter Academy for the Arts, dance (jazz, tap, ballet) at Randolph College for the Performing Arts, and horseback riding! She loves all her fans!



# THE MOST MASSIVE WOMAN WINS

## CREATIVE TEAM



### DIRECTOR

#### LISHA ZHAO (SHE/HER)

**Lisha** is an actor and dancer in her third year at the University of Toronto majoring in Drama. Her passion for theatre and performing arts has led her to be actively involved in theatre on and off campus, including her work as lighting designer for last year's Directors' Showcase (*He Said Yes / He Said No*) and lighting designer/technical support mentee at 2022's Shakespeare in Action. This year she is the artistic director at 881 Chinese Drama Club at the University of Toronto, where she aims to build an inclusive drama community for Chinese students.



### STAGE MANAGER

#### QILIN YU (HE/HIM)

**Qilin** is a current third year student from Beijing, China, studying Drama, Psychology and Education. Qilin is most active as a stage manager and producer. For the CDTPS, he stage managed *He Said Yes / He Said No* (Directors' Showcase 2022). He also is a producer for the SMC Troubadours on campus. In addition, Qilin worked on *Siranoush* (RUTAS Festival 2022, Aluna Theatre),

*Harabogee & Me* (Shakespeare in Action), *Amistade* (Aranya Theatre Festival, Sardegna Teatro), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Aranya Theatre Festival 2023, Compagnie Point Zéro), 漂流 *The Outcast* (U of T Drama Festival, Hart House Theatre). Qilin is honoured to be working with all these brilliant women in this production. It has been an incredible experience!



### ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

#### SICHUN XIA (SHE/HER)

**Sichun** is a second-year student at the CDTPS from Guangzhou, China. She began dancing at a very young age and, at the age of four, she took her first steps onto the stage. Later, in the hopes of pursuing a career in the field, she decided to educate herself on the subject. She also enjoys cooking and is a passionate cat lover. Theatre, cats and food are the three most significant things in her life.



# SURE THING

BY DAVID IVES

DIRECTED BY MIRIAM SOSSIN

*Sure Thing* tells the story of Betty and Bill, who meet in a café one night. The two strangers fall in love, though not on their first try, over the course of a conversation. Through the structuring presence of a bell that gives Betty and Bill infinite chances to say the 'right' thing, the play presents a satire of the American rom-com through a comedic exploration of our need to control and perfect people, conversations, and perceptions. Does something magical happen when we give up on achieving perfection? Is *The Sound and the Fury* a good book? Is this chair taken?? Find out at *Sure Thing*!

DIRECTOR **MIRIAM SOSSIN**

STAGE  
MANAGER

**UNWOO HO**

SET  
DESIGN

**JINGYUAN  
CHEN (JESSIE)**

SOUND  
DESIGN

**MIRIAM  
SOSSIN**

ASSISTANT  
SET  
DESIGN

**ATHEN GO**

LIGHTING  
DESIGN

**MADELEINE  
KING**

COSTUME  
DESIGN

**VAL VERGARA**

CAST

**MIKA DENEIGE  
ALEX TOMA**

## SPECIAL THANKS

"Special thanks to Bañuta, Evan, Ariel and Adrien for making this show possible and for all the help and advice throughout the semester. Thanks to Jessie, Madeleine, and Val for beautifully creating what this show feels and looks like, and thank you to Mika, Alex and Woo for being the best team ever!"

**MIRIAM SOSSIN**



# SURE THING

BY DAVID IVES

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

**If any of us had** the power to live-edit the person in front of us, wouldn't we wait until they get to the 'right' answer? *Sure Thing* tells the story of Betty and Bill who meet in a café one night. The two strangers fall in love over the course of a conversation—though not on their first try. I was drawn to this play because I love a comedy and I love a love story. David Ives wrote the play about what he called "stairwell thoughts": reflections on what you should have said. The bell, an almost-third character in the play, is the mechanism for these magical re-dos. Initially, the bell is understood to give Betty and Bill the freedom of unlimited chances. As the play goes on, it is shown to be a device that forces them to 'retry' until they give what is deemed a socially 'correct' answer. Is the bell a restricting or playful presence? Both! The bell's shifting meaning parallels Betty's journey as she decides to let go of control.

**As Betty attempts to shape** Bill and their conversation to her liking, we see momentary progress, but ultimately an unsuccessful connection. When Betty loosens her grip and the bell loses some of its power, we see what happens when we meet people where they're at. In no way is the message of this play to lower your standards, especially for a man. Rather I want to encourage us to be curious about the person sitting across from us.

**We can all relate to** both Betty's want of control and to Bill's continuous falling short of her imaginary expectations. Their love story is not one to be taken seriously (it's not real), but it is something we can learn from. I hope this play serves as a time-capsule to a time when cafés were a place of social opportunity, and a spark of inspiration to bring that back! Yolo! Why not? Sure thing!

MIRIAM SOSSIN



# SURE THING

## CAST



### MIKA DENEIGE

(SHE/HER)

**Mika Deneige** is an actor, writer and director completing a double major in Theatre and International Relations. She is very happy that you've come to watch Betty and Bill navigate the world of romance, since you probably didn't have to. Very cool of you to turn up. Recent credits include *Dystopical* with Trinity Dublin University Players, *Tropical Depression* with Trinity College Dramatic Society, and *The Suppliant Women* with United Players Company.

Mika Deneige has never seen a Woody Allen movie, and currently does not have any plans to. ("I know they're 90s classics, but that dude's weird" - Mika)



### ALEX TOMA

(HE/HIM)

**Alex** is a fifth-year history student at U of T. He began acting in high school productions, and has performed on stage in both comedic and dramatic roles. Alex is passionate about the dramatic and cinematic arts, and he is excited to bring this production to life for the audience. He is very grateful to be part of the *Sure Thing* team and is delighted to be playing the role of Bill. He hopes you will all enjoy the show!



# SURE THING

## CREATIVE TEAM



### DIRECTOR

#### MIRIAM SOSSIN (SHE/HER)

Miriam is a fourth-year student majoring in Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies and double-minoring in History and Cinema Studies. This is her directorial debut! Passionate about creating theatre, Miriam acted throughout her childhood, and has been building her craft as a playwright and director at U of T. She loves comedy, and was very excited to work with an amazing cast and crew to try and make people laugh! She is extremely grateful for the guidance throughout this semester and for the enthusiasm and outstanding talent of her team. Miriam will not shut up about Montreal bagels, crocs, mint, and the colour blue. She hopes you enjoy the show!



### STAGE MANAGER

#### UNWOO HO (SHE/HER)

**Unwoo Ho** is a third year U of T student studying Cinema and Drama. In her free time, she enjoys rewatching specific episodes from *The Office* and rom-coms like *The Princess Bride*. During the autumn season, you may find her in the wild attempting to communicate with the local street cats known as raccoons, skunks or possums. As Stage Manager for *Sure Thing*, Unwoo feels extremely privileged to work with such amazing team!



# DESIGNERS

## SET DESIGN

### JINGYUAN (JESSIE) CHEN (SHE/HER)

#### MOST MASSIVE WOMAN WINS + SURE THING

She is **Jessie**! She's an undergraduate student, currently pursuing a double major in Drama and Mathematics. Driven by her deep enjoyment of the allure and vitality of live performances, she embarked on her journey in theatre and design. In the past year, she contributed as the design assistant for the mainstage show *Don't Cry When Constellations Beg to Burn*. Embracing the challenges and creativity that design offers, she looks forward to engaging in more productions in the future.



## ASSISTANT SET DESIGN

### ATHEN GO

#### THE MOST MASSIVE WOMAN WINS + SURE THING

**Athen** is a third-year architecture student with a minor in Visual Studies and English. They have a wide variety of interests, but they all lead back to the same place. Whether through works or art or designing the built environment, they aim to tell a story that resonates.





# DESIGNERS

## MADELEINE KING (SHE/HER) LIGHTING DESIGN

### THE MOST MASSIVE WOMAN WINS + SURE THING

**Madeleine King** is a University of Toronto National Scholar in her fourth year of majoring in Drama with minors in French and Education Studies. Madeleine is pursuing various aspects of theatre, including design, directing and playwriting. She works part-time as a theatre technician specializing in lighting and sound at the John Elliott Theatre, which inspired her to pursue lighting design with

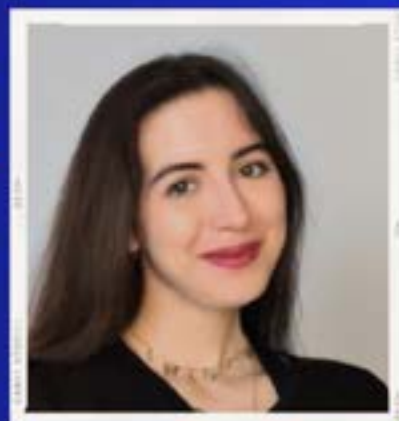
the CDTPS. Madeleine is delighted to be designing for *Sure Thing* and *The Most Massive Woman Wins* alongside her classmates. Madeleine is currently directing the musical *Young Frankenstein* with Victoria College Dramatic Society. In recent years, she has been involved in campus theatre as co-director of *Something Rotten* with the Toronto Metropolitan Theatre Company and president of the Trinity College Dramatic Society. She has been involved in theatre for most of her life, writing and directing several one act plays, one of which won awards at the National Theatre School Drama Festival in 2019. Madeleine debuted as a lighting designer in the 2021 Directors' Showcase for *Fetch* and *Silence*. She's excited to be working on this year's showcase!



## ABBEY KOWALSKI (SHE/HER) LIGHTING DESIGN

### THE SOUND OF A VOICE

**Abbey** is very grateful for the opportunity to design lighting for the Directors' Showcase production of *The Sound of a Voice*. She is a second-year student at the University of Toronto, double majoring in Theatre and Psychology. She is currently working in lighting, set and props positions around campus. She wants to thank the cast, crew and friends for always supporting her, and for making this production come together. She hopes you enjoy the show!





# DESIGNERS

**EVAN MORITZ** (HE/HIM)

**SOUND DESIGN**

**THE SOUND OF A VOICE + THE MOST MASSIVE WOMAN WINS**

**Evan Moritz** is an PhD student at the CDTPS who recently received his MA in theatre and performance at the University at Buffalo, SUNY. He is interested in the outer limits of science-fiction and fact with research focused on performance in Martian settlements of the near future. This work explores the relationship between colonization of planetary bodies, historic settler epistemes, the loss of liveness in the communication gaps between planets, global catastrophe on Earth and off, and more broadly, the sad or depressing aspects of the future.



**LIZ SO** (SHE/HER)

**COSTUME DESIGN**

**THE MOST MASSIVE WOMAN WINS**

**SET + PROPS DESIGN**

**THE SOUND OF A VOICE**

**Liz** is currently pursuing a Drama degree at the University of Toronto with a great interest in performance design and production. This project is her debut solo design work amongst her assistant designer credits at U of T. She is a Chinese Canadian Toronto local, born and raised in the city. She has studied technical theatre since her high school days at Rosedale Heights School of the Arts (RHSA), where she gained experience in stage management, directing and producing. Liz also had the wonderful opportunity to present her own design work at this past summer's 15th Prague Quadrennial with other CDTPS students.



**VAL VERGARA** (THEY/THEM)

**COSTUME + MAKE-UP DESIGN**

**THE SOUND OF A VOICE + SURE THING**

**Val** is a queer and Latino costume designer studying Drama and Cinema Studies. Their work has ranged from UC Follies' *The Baltimore Waltz* and SMC Troubadours' *The Chorus Girl* to *otihêw* by Shakespeare In Action. You will see their work soon in this year's Directors' Showcase and TCDS' *Grease*. They can usually be found staring at fabrics or crafts supplies.





**WE WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE THIS LAND ON WHICH THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO OPERATES. FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS IT HAS BEEN THE TRADITIONAL LAND OF THE HURON-WENDAT, THE SENECA, AND THE MISSISSAUGAS OF THE CREDIT. TODAY, THIS MEETING PLACE IS STILL THE HOME TO MANY INDIGENOUS PEOPLE FROM ACROSS TURTLE ISLAND AND WE ARE GRATEFUL TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK ON THIS LAND.**



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