

If We
Were
Birds

BY ERIN SHIELDS

DIRECTED BY **JAY WHITEHEAD**



Director's Note

If *We Were Birds* marks my second intimate encounter with the words of acclaimed Canadian Playwright Erin Shields, having previously directed her sumptuous and elegant play *Montparnasse*. Her style, her unflinching honesty, the poetry of her language, along with her choice of themes draws me in and has me imagining theatrical worlds simply by reading the evocative text on the pages of her plays. *If We Were Birds* has long been on my director's bucket list for its inclusion of many strong, vulnerable, and powerful female characters, its openness to interpretation, and for its authentic yet theatrical treatment of important issues. In the published version of the script, Shields includes a Note on The Chorus wherein she instructs the viewer that the members of our play's chorus "were inspired by testimonials of women survivors from the following conflicts: Nanking (1937), Berlin (1945), Bangladesh (1971), Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-1995), and Rwanda (1994)" because of the ways sexualized violence against women was weaponized by the aggressors in such despicable ways during those wars.

I recently learned, in fact, how women continue to be victimized in the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, for example, using the very same weapon. Is this play, therefore, challenging to witness? Assuredly it is. But if the artist's job is to hold up a mirror to society, then the job of each of us is to open our eyes and see what is reflected back. Though at times this play is staged in abstract ways, the themes it depicts through its story are not abstract. They have happened, they are happening, and will happen again until we come to our senses as a species. It is my hope that the arcs of these great female characters which you will witness tonight brought to life by these brave and bold student actors will enlighten you, provoke you, and activate you.

Now is not the time to look away.

- Jay Whitehead

Creative Team



Jay Whitehead (He/They) Director, Choreographer

Whitehead is the current JEA Crake Fellow in Drama and currently teaches Queer Performance in the department. He is the creator or co-creator of shows including UNSEX'd, Tab & Landon, 333 and Castrati - An Electro Drag Opera. Whitehead was the co-creator and original artistic director of Theatre Outré for which he appeared in and/or directed productions including Montparnasse, A Streetcar Named Desire, The Curing Room, The Confession of Jeffrey Dahmer, How to Leave, Late Company, Like Orpheus and My Funny Valentine.

Erica Duncan (She/They)

Set Designer*

For MFT: An Inspector Calls, Problem Child, Drowning Girls, Ubu, Never Swim Alone. Erica is a 4th year Fine Arts student. She is excited to share her design debut with everybody, through this amazing show. When not working on MFT productions you can find her working on various art projects or playing DnD with friends. Many thanks to her friends and family who always encouraged and supported her love for theatre and design.



Danica Jollimore (She/Her) Costume Designer*

For MFT: Sweeney Todd, UBU '24, Albertine in Five Times, Victor '25. Danica is a fourth year music and drama student at MTA, with a passion for work both on and offstage. She is the current costumes and props technician, and is proud to present her first costume design for If We Were Birds! When she is not in the costume shop, you can find her trying to rope her friends into singing through her new favourite musical.

*Indicates 4011 Project

Creative Team



Ian McFarlane (He/They)

Lighting Designer

For MFT - Victor '25, Albertine in Five Times, Never Swim Alone, The Juliet Project, Ubu '24, The Drowning Girls, The Dark. Ian is the Resident Designer at the Motyer-Fancy Theatre and a lecturer for the Drama and Screen Studies program. He enjoys carpentry, poetry, jazz music and going for long walks in the woods with his dog, Odin.

Ethen Neil (He/Him)

Sound Designer

Ethen is a second year Drama Major. This is his second show creating sound design in the MFT. His love for music and acting allows him to create an engaging, emotionally relevant, and thoughtful sound design that he's excited to share with everyone. He would like to thank Jay for giving him this opportunity and acknowledge all the hard work the rest of the creative team and actors have done to create an amazing show!



Maya Noëlle

Assistant Choreographer

Maya is a fourth year Drama student. MFT credits: The Wolves (#2), 7 Stories (Lillian/Rachel/Jennifer/Three), The Drowning Girls (Margaret), The Yellow Wallpaper (Jane), The Juliet Project (Lady Capulet), The Dark (Puppeteer). In her spare time, Maya is a drag performer under the name of Benny Dreadful, and co-host of The Witching Hour on CHMA 106.9FM. Maya is honoured to have been involved in If We Were Birds for her last show at Mount Allison University!



Creative Team



Jacob Farrell (He/Him)

Dramaturg

For MFT: *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, *An Inspector Calls*, *Précipice*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Never Swim Alone*. Jacob is a fourth-year BA student completing a double major in Classics and Commerce with a minor in Drama and Certificate in Theatre Arts. He also works as the MFT's Marketing Technician, a Campus Ambassador, and Co-Editor-in-Chief of *The Argosy*. As a student researcher of classical tragedy, he was honoured to be asked to assist in the historical advising of this production.

Special Thanks

J.E.A Crake Foundation

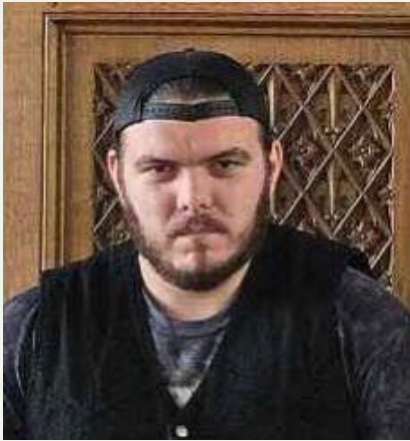
Paul Griffin

Sculpture Department

GaRRy Williams

Melody Composition

Cast



Ben Blue (He/Him)

King Pandion

Ben is playing King Pandion, yet another negative father figure role. But when others say “type cast”, Ben hears “consistent employment” and “uniquely challenging”! Ben is now a drama major whose fully focused on improving every part of his theatrical experience. This is his third MFT production, and he is just as excited for this opportunity as he was for his debut.

Amy Evans (She/Her)

The Young One

Amy is a first-year psychology student from Burin Bay Arm, Newfoundland . She has been involved with theatre since she was young whether that be sing or acting, she loves to perform! This is her second MFT performance and when not at the theatre she enjoys playing hockey.



Simon Foote (He/Him)

King Tereus

Simon will play King Tereus in MFT's production of If We Were Birds by Erin Shields. This is Simon's second show at the MFT, which he's really excited to perform. Simon is a first year Drama Studies major. If he is not reading lines or acting in the theatre, you can find Simon making movies, playing sports, or grilling up some delicious food to eat with his friends. Many thanks to: His Mom, his Dad, his friends, and his MFT buddies.

Cast



Alena Grandy (She/Her) The One With Dwindling Dignity

Alena is incredibly excited to be making her MFT debut with *If We Were Birds!* With a background in musical theatre Alena is so excited to be in her first play, and would like to thank everyone at the MFT for being so welcoming. She hopes you enjoy the show!

Marly MacEachern (She/Her) The Pregnant One

Marly is in her third year at MtA and this is her third show with the MFT! Marly is super proud to be a part of this show and is extremely excited to show you this show as it is extremely important to her. When not in the MFT you can find Marly at home watching *The Rookie* or painting! Marly would like to thank her Mom and Dad, her sisters Emma and Riley, her boyfriend Chad, her roommates and of course Brooke Mingo. Marly cannot wait to show you what she has been working on!



Cate McNair (She/They) The Bleeding One*

For MFT: *Never Swim Alone*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Dry Land*, *The Wolves*, *The Juliet Project*, *Ubu '24*. This is Cate's third time on stage for the MFT, and they are honoured to be working on this incredibly beautiful piece of Canadian theatre with this amazing team. She would like to thank her partner and family for their support.

*Indicates 4011 Project

Cast



Chloe Smith (She/Her)

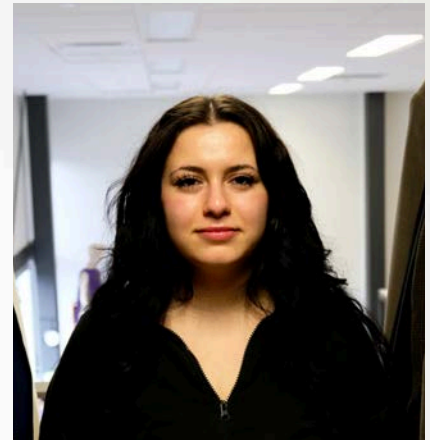
Procne

Chloe is a second year drama major with a double minor in English and Art History. Having only worked on musicals, Chloe is excited to debut in her first play as Procne. While this is her first play, Chloe has worked on several MFT productions both on and off stage as an ASM for *Albertine at Five Times* and as Johanna in *Sweeney Todd*. When not in the MFT you can find Chloe taking walks in Waterfowl or waiting in line at Jennings.

Laura Torriero (She/Her)

Philomela

Laura is a 3rd year Drama and Psychology student. She's beyond thrilled to be a part of a show that deals with themes that are crucial to talk about. She has been so thankful to bond with her castmates while working on *IWWB*. She is very thankful and proud to be a part of the drama department.



Kylie Vienneau (She/They)

The Pious One

Kylie Vienneau has been a lighting technician and lighting designer for several productions here at the Motyer-Fancy Theatre, including recent shows such as *Ubu '24* and *Never Swim Alone*. *If We Were Birds* is her acting debut on the MFT stage as *The Pious One*. She is also the MFT's Theatre Technician and enjoys photography!



Cast



Ella Boudreau (She/Her) Understudy

For MFT: Never Swim Alone. Ella is a third year BA student with a major in English and minor in Drama. When she's not at the MFT, you can find Ella as a member of the varsity women's volleyball team, Vice President of the MTA English Society, and a team representative for Mounties for Mental Health. She is thankful for the support of her family, friends, teammates, and coaches, who have encouraged her throughout this process.

Crew



Oliver VanBuskirk (He/Him) Stage Manager

For MFT: Sweeney Todd, Never Swim Alone. Oliver is a 2nd year Sociology student minoring in Drama studies. He's thrilled to be making his debut as a stage manager this year with such a powerful show and incredible cast. When not working on shows at the MFT, Oliver works as a residence assistant at Harper Hall and loves to spend time with his friends. He cannot wait for you all to see this incredible production!

Brenna Sangster (She/Her)

Assistant Stage Manager

MFT Debut. Brenna is a 2nd year Environmental Science student who is excited to be part of her first MFT show. When not working at MFT, she can be found on the Harper Hall exec as the Secretary-Treasurer, out for a walk in Waterfowl park, and of course, studying!



Keira Powell

Assistant Stage Manager

Keira is a third-year student double majoring in Drama and English. This is Keira's second time being involved in an MFT production, and first time working as an assistant stage manager. Keira is very excited for the opportunity to be involved in *If We Were Birds* and would like to congratulate the entire cast and crew for their hard work.

Crew

Will Davis (He/They)

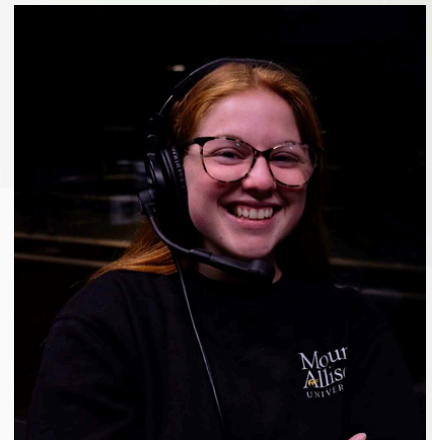
Lighting Operator

Will is a 3rd year Fine Arts student. He is grateful to be able to work on such a powerful and impactful show. When he isn't trying to be involved in every production possible, Will can be found in the printmaking studio or elsewhere in the Purdy Crawford.

Kayla Trites (She/Her)

Sound Operator

Kayla Trites is in her third year at MtA, thriving in a double major in English and Drama! You may recognize her from her debut role in the "The Juliet Project," but... with glasses? Kayla has been involved primarily, at the MFT, as a stage manager (Problem Child, The Drowning Girls, and Albertine in Five Times). She is excited to be back in the booth, and cannot wait to support Oliver (so proud)! Kayla is very thankful to share this experience with her best friend Laura.



Kaden Bridgewater

Properties

If We Were Birds is Kaden's MFT debut. Kaden is a 1st Psychology and Sociology student. He was very excited to work on If We Were Birds for his first show. When not working at MFT you can find him in the student lounge or swimming at the athletics center. HE would like to thank Ian, Andrew, and Jay for giving him the opportunity to work on this play.

Crew



Set Build and Seating Installation

Skylar Cote, Erica Duncan, Simon Foote, Danica Jollimore, Cate McNair, Brenna Sangster, Laura Torriero, Violet Troop, Kylie Vienneau

Lighting

Ben Blue, Kaden Bridgewater, Judi Cane, Will Davis, Nate Lesser, Brenna Sangster, Violet Troop, Kylie Vienneau

Costumes

Rowan Brosha, Judi Cane, Trinity Coates, Skylar Cote, Danica Jollimore, Rachael Liddell Paige Morin

Scenic Painting

Kaden Bridgewater, Erica Duncan, Simon Foote, Danica Jollimore, Jocelyne Sirois, Meredith Sy, Kayla Trites

MOTYER-FANCY THEATRE

SARAH FANNING | Director of Drama & Screen Studies

VALMAI GOGGIN | Instructor in Applied Theatre

ANDREW KERR | Production Manager

IAN MCFARLANE | Resident Designer

ALEX FANCY | Professor Emeritus

JAY WHITEHEAD | Crake Drama Fellow

STEPHANIE DOTTO | McCain Postdoctoral Fellow

PAUL GRIFFIN | Lecturer

Student Technicians

DAWSON CORMIER | Carpentry & Paint

JACOB FARRELL | Marketing & Publicity

DANICA JOLLIMORE | Costume & Props

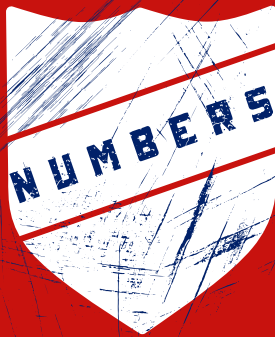
HENNA MATHARU | Screen Intern

CATE MCNAIR | Front of House

KYLIE VIENNEAU | Theatre

Next at the MFT

MFT
MOTYER - FANCY THEATRE



BY KIERON BARRY



BY JAY WHITEHEAD & KATHY ZABORSKY



A SEASON OF RESISTANCE & RESILIENCE



BY IAN MCFARLANE



BY JEAN-PAUL SARTRE, ALEX FANCY,
& TINTAMARRE

Follow Us!

INSTAGRAM: @DRAMAMTA

FACEBOOK: MOUNT ALLISON DRAMA STUDIES



**POST ABOUT OUR SHOW! USE THE
#BIRDSMFT, AND TAG US @DRAMAMTA**

NOTE: PRE-SHOW PHOTOGRAPHY ALLOWED, BUT NOT DURING THE PERFORMANCE

MountAllison
Drama & Screen Studies