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## SHINE 2020 IS MOST EXCITING YET!

Songs and awards and proposals, oh my!

Written by Chappell Upper

Photography by Steve Raeford, Sherri Raeford, and Chris Veneris



The cast of the third annual Shine: An Evening of Variety Celebrating Love, as well as a member or two of the larger Shared Radiance family, posed for a photo pre-show. (Back row, standing, left to right) Robin Gentile, Jenni Pirkey, David Merritt Jr., Linda Veneris, Joey Upper, Dan Manross, Tori Galloway, Taylor Neese, Sheryl Renee Chase, Eppie Jo Miller, Drew Poplin, Sarah Wilson, Bruce Kirchoff, Liam Yates, Chris Veneris, (front row, kneeling, left to right) Kristian Torres, Zoe Zielny, Chappell Upper, Maggie Swaim, Sherri Raeford, Emily Huneycutt, Elanor Huneycutt (standing in front of her mom), and Niko Veneris got ready for Valentine's Day with this special show. The only cast member not pictured here is Steve Raeford, who took the photo.

Performers, technicians, patrons, friends, and family came together in the spirit of Valentine's Day for our third annual Shine: An Evening of Variety Celebrating Love. Two performances were held on February 7th and 8th. The February 7th performance was held at Studio 609 and the February 8th performance was held at the Upstage Cabaret at Triad Stage. Both shows began at 7:30 pm.

The evening kicked off with the two bantering hosts, Joey Upper and David Merritt Jr, introducing a wonderful, original skit featuring Dan Manross as Cupid (pictured to the right at the Studio 609 performance). He concluded the moment with Shakespeare's Sonnet 116 but was involuntarily brought back throughout the performance out of his fellow actors' love for him and his costume. One instance was Jenni Pirkey's surprise rendition of Hit Me With Your Best Shot during intermission. Mrs. Pirkey flitted around the audience as Psyche while



Mr. Manross' Cupid shot toy arrows at her. The show came to a close with the whole ensemble singing the Beatles' *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* led by the earnest soloist, Sarah Wilson, and the heartfelt guitarist, Drew Poplin (pictured to the left at the Upstage Cabaret performance).



In addition to the excitement that accompanies any production, the February 8th performance of *Shine* brought about some extra special moments. Before the night got underway, North Carolina Theatre Conference (NCTC) board member, Justin Nichols, presented artistic director Sherri Raeford with the 2019 Constance Welsh Theatre for Youth Award. Read more about the award in the article below entitled **NCTC Award Honors Work with Youth**. Later in the evening,

Shared Radiance sweethearts, Eppie Jo Miller and Kristian Torres, took to the stage for the second to last act to sing a bilingual cover of Jason Mraz and Colbie Caillat's *Lucky*. The end of the song took a sweet turn when Kristian surprised Eppie by getting down on one knee. Read more about the proposal and the happy couple's plans for the future in the article below entitled **Sharing the Love: Company's Third Couple Gets Engaged**.

Overall this year's *Shine* was a huge success! We would like to thank all of our audience members and everyone involved in this. We couldn't have done it without you!



## NCTC AWARD HONORS WORK WITH YOUTH

Written by Sherri Raeford

Photography by Steve Raeford

*"Shared Radiance was awarded the 2019 Constance Welsh Theatre for Youth Award, which was presented this weekend at their variety event SHINE by NCTC board member Justin Nichols. We're so happy to have them as part of our NC theatre family."*

*North Carolina Theatre Conference  
February 11th [Facebook Post](#)*

The Constance Welsh Theatre for Youth Award is a statewide award from the North Carolina Theatre Conference and I am very proud of our many Shared Radiance theatre artists, actors, and practitioners, plus all of you who support our Outreach and Educational goals. Your gifts of time, financial support, talents and your vision inspire us to reach out to youth across North Carolina. Teachers, Schools, Individual Donors, and Arts Councils across the state allow us to have a



broader scope and bring workshops and *ShakesCollage* to schools in an equitable, inclusive, and meaningful way.

Our youth education also incorporates young actors in our mainstage shows and opportunities beyond the classroom. We also have taught at the State Thespian Festival for the past several years and hosted Guilford County Theatre teachers this year for their opening staff development. I am very proud of everyone involved with our youth education. It is a component that we nurture and value.



“*ShakesCollage*,” our 45-minute touring school show, is one of the biggest ways we reach out to youth. The show has seen several actors come and go over its six years. (Far left) Justin Nicols presents Sherri Raeford with the Constance Welsh Theatre for Youth Award at Shine. (Top left) Stephanie Nusbaum and Jason Loverde rehearse a scene from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in 2016. (Bottom left) Chauncey Miller engages students in a performance in 2014. (Center) Sha-Reh Reese wields a sword as Katherina from *Taming of the Shrew* in 2019. (Top left) Tori Galloway and Jalila Bowie perform a scene from *Hamlet* in 2016. (Bottom left) Chappell Upper, Jenni Pirkey, David Merritt Jr, Joey Upper, and Sherri Raeford pose for a team photo after the award presentation. (Far right) Jasmine Fuchs rehearses *Pyramus and Thisby* in early 2020.

*“Each year, the NCTC Board of Directors presents the NCTC Awards to companies, schools and individuals who are active NCTC members and have exhibited leadership roles in their community, as well as artistic, professional or educational excellence.”*

*North Carolina Theatre Conference*

[NCTC Website](#)



## “SISTERS OF MINE: HEAR THE VOICES”

### DEBUTS TRAILER

Written by Chappell Upper

Photography by Steve Raeford



The cast poses in costumes rented from Triad Stage. (Back row, standing, left to right) Sherri Raeford as Barbara Bynum Henderson, Ruan Walker as Dr. Mabel Ping-Hua Lee, Jenni Pirkey as Helen Morris Lewis, Jalila A. Bowie as Sojourner Truth, Sheryl Renee Chase as Rosa Finocchietti Levis, Robin Gentile as Raven Lewis, Chappell Upper as Susan B. Anthony, (front row, sitting, left to right) Patsy Hawkins as Naomi Locklear, and Lennie Singer as Gertrude Weil hold hands to form a connection.

The Sisters of Mine cast has been busy while quarantined at home! Produced by Shared Radiance Performing Arts Company in collaboration with the American Association of University Women (AAUW), *Sisters of Mine: Hear the Voices* celebrates “women involved in the passage of the 19th amendment, including women and issues that were often pushed aside in history,” according to caption for the trailer. The one-act play is composed of vignettes that take a look into the lives and work of the featured historic women who include but are not limited to, Sojourner Truth, Rosa Finocchietti Levis, and Gertrude Weil. The cast is featured in costume in the picture above. The trailer debuted on May twenty-seventh.

The play was written, researched, and composed by the members of the ensemble. The trailer was directed by Sherri Raeford and conceptualized and edited by Ruan Walker. Ms. Walker joined the *Sisters of Mine* cast earlier this year when she stepped into the role of Dr. Mabel Ping-Hua Lee. She has served as a wonderful, intelligent addition to the cast and writing ensemble.

*Sisters of Mine: Hear the Voices* was scheduled to premiere in Asheville at the AAUW’s state conference this past March but was canceled due to complications from COVID-19. Before the shelter-at-home order took place, several other performances were scheduled around the state closer to the one-hundredth anniversary of the ratification of the nineteenth amendment in August. The best methods, time, and place for moving forward are currently being considered with the utmost care. Follow the SRPAC Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube pages for updates on this project. For the moment, Shared Radiance is proud to present the preview of this wonderful work. Please enjoy this taste of what this show will offer. You can watch it [here](#).





## MEET OUR PLAYERS: SHA-REH REESE

This student turned teacher discusses her work and the issues close to her heart.

Written by Chappell Upper

Photography by Sha-Reh Reese

*"I love you with  
so much of my  
heart that none  
is left to protest"*

- Beatrice  
Much Ado  
About Nothing  
Act IV, Scene I  
Sha-Reh's  
favorite Shakespeare  
quote



Saying "goodbye" or even "until later" is never easy, but meaning can be found in transitions that enable those moving on to grow and come full circle. Such is the case with Sha-Reh Reese (pictured above), who took a step back from the *ShakesCollage* cast earlier this year to teach theatre at Southern Guilford High School where she once learned theatre from Sherri Raeford herself. After graduating from Southern Guilford, Sha-Reh went on to earn her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

It was only natural that Sherri and Sha-Reh found each other again working through Shared Radiance. In addition to *ShakesCollage*, Sha-Reh also played Juliet in last spring's moonshine production of *Romeo & Juliet*. I had the pleasure of getting to know her over the few years she toured schools teaching kids about Shakespeare. It may have taken a little while for Sha-Reh to open up, but it was well worth it once she did. Ms. Reese revealed herself to be fun, thoughtful, and down-to-earth, whether she liked it or not. I had the chance to pick her mind on a few things over text recently. The conversation is below. Who knows? Maybe we'll see Sha-Reh again in a Zoom reading or live play when the time is right.

**What's your favorite color?**

"My favorite color is pastel pink."

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**If you were an animal, what would you be?**

“I would be a cat because I like to be around people sometimes but other times I keep to myself.”

**What’s your Shared Radiance story?**

“I had Sherri as a high school theater teacher and after graduation, we kept in touch over Facebook. She asked me if I would like to join her touring show *ShakesCollage* in 2017 after I graduated from UNCG. I did two years of the touring show and created great friendships with the cast! I also auditioned and starred in *Romeo & Juliet* with the Shared Radiance company.”

**You recently followed Sherri’s footsteps and started teaching theatre at Southern Guilford this past year, and what a year to start. What has that been like for you?**

“This past spring semester was my first time teaching and it has been a wild ride! I asked Sherri for her guidance and for any resources she still had from her days as an educator. There was a lot of trial and error as a beginning teacher with lesson plans and classroom management. I wasn’t sure where to start with educating my students. With the pandemic, it’s been tough to teach because I leaned heavily on participation in my classroom, and with online learning, I had to really think and challenge myself to find ways to keep my students engaged.”

**Can you tell us about something you’re passionate about besides theatre?**

“I am truly passionate about African American history in the United States, how it has shaped the country today, and how we can fight for equality.”

**Name one thing you want for your future.**

“I want to love what I do so it doesn’t feel like going into work.”

**What’s something you’ve done that made you feel proud?**

“I took a leap of faith and became a high school teacher!”

**Anything else you’d like our readers to know?**

“Find what you’re passionate about and pursue it in any way that you can.”



## WE MISS YOU!

Written by Sherri Raeford and Chappell Upper

We are monitoring the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) in our community and working to make safe and reasonable decisions within our programming. We look forward to sharing (our shows) with you at a later date. As most of our venues are off-site, we are monitoring each venue's guidelines, rules, and safety recommendations. We are also closely following guidelines and recommendations, federally as well as state-wide. It is important that we make responsible decisions for the wellbeing of all.

We are happy to say that Davidson County Arts Council has asked our ShakesCollage actors to share videos of monologues and scenes from the school show to share with students while we are in social distancing mode. They are working with us to complete our grant work through various creative means. We are happy that people are so supportive of the arts and artists.

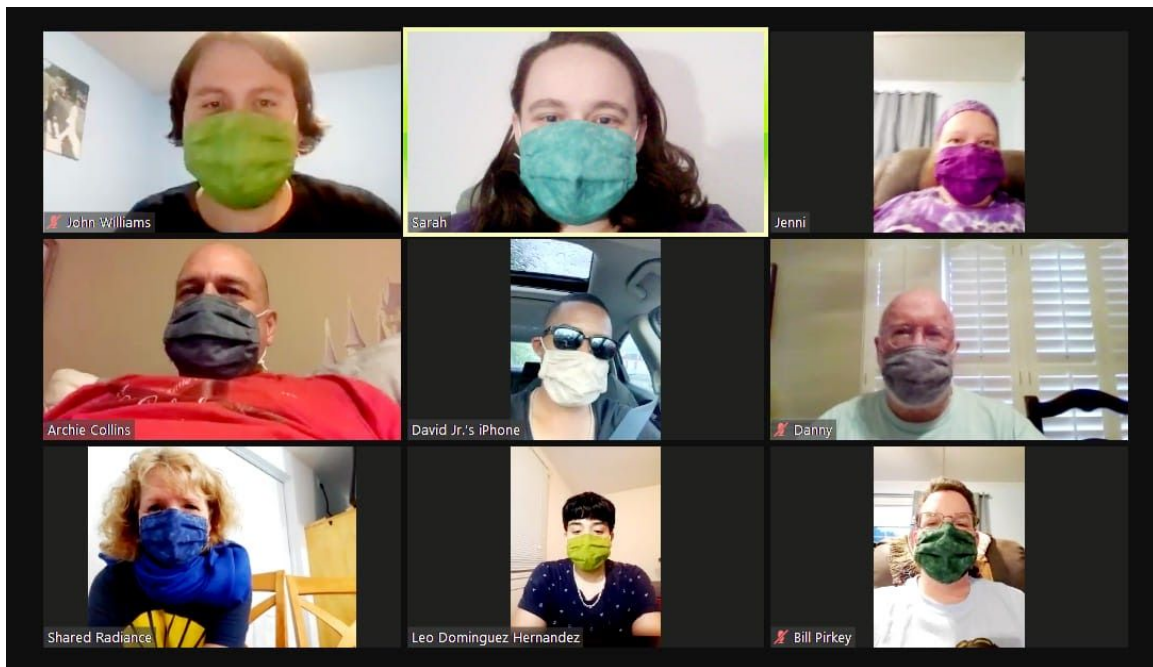
In the meantime, check out the *Sharing Our Venues* series on the Shared Radiance YouTube page. These videos provide tours of some of the parks, gardens, libraries, and other spaces used for our mainstage shows. Watch the tour of Paul J. Ciener Botanical Garden [here](#) or the tour of Hagan-Stone Park [here](#). On April twenty-third, Shakespeare's 456th birthday, the Greensboro Public Library shared a Zoom filmed rendition of the "[5 Minute Romeo & Juliet](#)" from *ShakesCollage* as well as "[Pyramus and Thisby](#)." The filmed reading of *The Tempest*, which will be followed by an in-person production when we can meet again, premiered via Facebook Watch on June 16th but can still be viewed on YouTube. Read more about the play in the article below entitled **Reflecting on the Storm**. Sherri Raeford gave a wonderful radio interview on WHUP 104.7's [Lights Up](#), which is a show "all about live theatre in and around the Hillsborough area" hosted by Wayne Leonard.

There's still more to come! Auditions are currently being held for a Zoom production of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* directed by Shared Radiance veteran Chauncey Miller. Check out the promotion for this show in the **Coming Soon** section below. An anonymous Shared Radiance supporter has stepped up and made several beautiful masks being offered through the Shared Radiance Facebook page as part of an ongoing project. Sherri Raeford has been helping by bedazzling the masks. Read more about in the article below titled **From Theatre to Mask Making**. Keep an eye out for more news on these and other exciting projects

#COVIDcantstopGOOD







*The anonymous mask maker has already made several masks for people in the Shared Radiance family. In this photo taken by Sherri Raeford, (top row, left to right) John Williams, Sarah Wilson, Jenni Pirkey, (middle row, left to right) Archie Collins, David Merritt Jr., Dan Manross, (bottom row, left to right) Sherri Raeford, Leo Dominguez Hernandez, and Bill Pirkey show off their masks.*

## BEDAZZLED RADIANCE

*From Theatre to Mask Making*

Written by Sherri Raeford

Photography by Various Shared Radiance Patrons

Beautiful filtered masks are being made lovingly by a Shared Radiance patron with Rhinestone Radiance added by Sherri Raeford! They are very well made with a quality filter. Masks will be posted on the Shared Radiance Facebook page with an identifying number and will go to the first person who contacts with a donation of your choice to Shared Radiance!

To claim a mask, send a private message with the number you want and make a donation of your choice to Shared Radiance. If you are the first to private message, donor info will be sent to you and the mask will be delivered to your address!

We love sharing photos and comments from our fabulous mask patrons and family. Check out a few examples below!

*"When you have to protect yourself in public, these beautiful, comfortable masks let you do so with sparkle and style. Why be boring when you can Share Radiance?"*

*- Sheryl Renee Chase  
Pictured on the left*



*"I can't wait to wear it to work!"*

*- Stephanie Nusbaum  
Pictured on the right*



## PLANS FOR GROWTH

### *A Statement on Racial Inequality and Fighting for Justice*

Written by Sherri Raeford, Jenni Pirkey, and Chappell Upper

Shared Radiance recognizes the inequities and systemic racism facing black people in our society. The Shared Radiance family and our mission are directly opposed to any form of discrimination, hatred, oppression, and racism. We will actively join in the battle for justice and equality through casting, programming, education, productions, and finding other avenues for growth. We would not be who we are without embracing and valuing diversity.



## REFLECTING ON THE STORM

A Bit from the Director on *The Tempest*

Writing and Photography by Sherri Raeford



*The Cast of The Tempest: A Zoom Experience smile for the camera at their first rehearsal. (Top row, left to right) Michael Mickiewicz, Steve Raeford, Sherri Raeford, Sean McCracken, (the second row, left to right) Chappell Upper, Liam Yates, Joey Upper, (the third row, left to right) Stephanie Nusbaum, David Kleshinski, Tori Galloway, Michael Burke, (bottom row, left to right) Jenni Pirkey, Emily Huneycutt, and Chris Veneris all helped bring this Shakespeare classic to life.*

I was excited to have the opportunity to direct a ZOOM version of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* that premiered on June 6 on Facebook Live. This was my fourth time directing this show for various groups including Shared Radiance. Initially, it would have been our fall show, but the live production is on hold until 2021.

The zoom version was edited by Bill Pirkey, who also arranged the well-attended Facebook watch party.

It was wonderful to see so many faces who had worked with Shared Radiance in the past along with some new faces.

*The Tempest* is one of my favorites and each time I direct it I find more layers. I was fortunate to be in a one-act version directed by the phenomenal Jo Howarth at Globe Education in London in 2005 through Shakespeare Lives, and I have loved it ever since.

I love and embrace the theme that forgiveness is nobler than revenge. I also find it compelling that in many ways it seems to be a final goodbye from Shakespeare, giving his magic away at the end and asking to be freed.

My favorite quote comes from the *Tempest* and always rings so true.

*"We are such stuff as dreams are made on...."*

- Prospero  
*The Tempest*  
Act IV, Scene I





## SHARING THE LOVE: COMPANY'S THIRD COUPLE GETS ENGAGED

Congratulations to Eppie and Kristian!

Written by Chappell Upper

Photography by Steve Raeford and Eppie Jo Miller

Edited for Length



In the early days of Shared Radiance, Emily Huneycutt, then Emily Crowder, met her future husband, Will, when he came to see her play Gonzalo in *The Tempest*. In 2016, Tori Galloway introduced me to a special man at the read-through for the company's second production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with a simple instruction: "You should marry Joey." This year, the tradition of finding love in Shakespeare is being carried on through Eppie Jo Miller and Kristian Torres, who have been together for almost six years. They helped make this year's *Shine* extra special with a romantic proposal (pictured by Steve Raeford in the top right corner). However, their journey together, and their journey with the company, began several years ago. I sat down for a phone call with them to get the whole story. It is important to note they giggled the whole way through.

### "How did you two meet?"

*Eppie:* "We met in eighth grade towards the end of the year, so in 2010. We just kinda, you know, and it wasn't anything spectacular. We just actually met and knew each other's names."

*Kristian:* "Mmhm. We knew that we were each a friend of a friend of a friend."

*Eppie:* "Yeah, I didn't really know him that well at all, but we became friends in ninth grade, the following year when we did *Midsummer Night's Dream* with Sherri."

### **You've both been involved in various Shared Radiance projects, but you met Sherri a long time before that, right?**

*Eppie:* "I've known Sherri since I was doing shows with her when I was a little kid. I would do Tiny Tim in *A Christmas Carol* or Little Boy in *Midsummer*. Then we got into high school and Sherri was our drama teacher. We were able to do shows together, so we've been doing shows with Sherri since 2011."

*Kristian:* "We were co-presidents of our drama club at school. That was Sherri's last thing before she left Southern Guilford. We kind of had to assimilate the new drama

teacher to the ways of Southern Guilford. In that aspect, we blended the old with the new. I met Sherri in ninth grade. I didn't know her as young as Eppie did, but I definitely - she offered a lot of great teaching and a great space. It made me want to come back and it made me fall in love with acting."

## **What Shared Radiance projects have you guys been apart of?**

Eppie: "We were in the very first *Midsummer Night's Dream* . . ."

Kristian: ". . . in 2014."

Eppie: "Yeah!"

Kristian: "It was the summer of 2014. We did *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Shared Radiance and then we did *Shakespeare's Lovers*, which has now become *Shine*. That was a collection of Shakespeare's love sonnets and scenes."

Eppie: "We did the first *Tempest* too."

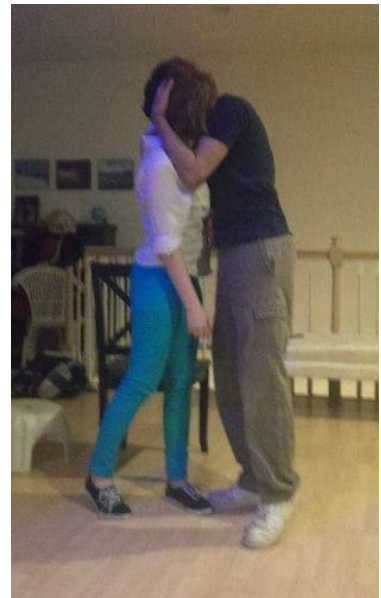
## **Let me make sure I've got this timeline right: you were in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* before you two were together, huh?**

Eppie: "Oh, yeah! It was 2013. It was before we were together. It's actually how we became really, really, really good friends because he was in High Point and needed a ride home from rehearsal. My mom and I would take him pretty much every day. We got really, really close through Shared Radiance."

Kristian: "Little fun fact about the old Shared Radiance shows - even though we weren't dating yet, our first kiss came during *Shakespeare's Lovers* when Sherri cast us as Romeo & Juliet. We did the balcony scene. We tried to do a fake kiss and it just did not work at all. In order to do the scene well, we did real kissing on stage. That was the first time we kissed and we weren't even dating yet."

Eppie: "We have a picture of it too!"

Photo by Steve Raeford →



## **If that was your first kiss and you were doing shows together before you were dating, was there any flirtation going on behind the scenes?**

Eppie: "No!"

Kristian: "From our perspective, we swear up and down that there was none, but if you were to ask Sherri or Steve or our parents or our friends or anyone who knew us from around that time, they probably would say they could've seen this coming before we did."

Eppie: "Everybody knew we were dating before we knew we were dating. There was probably a lot of flirtation, but -"

Kristian: " - It was unknown to us."

Eppie: "We just thought we were friends, and that was all that it was. Then all of a sudden we were dating and we realized we were dating."

## **Moving on to the proposal, could you describe your Shine act for us?**

Kristian: "This past February when we did *Shine* we did a duet. It was Jason Mraz and Colbie Caillat's *Lucky*, but we did a different version of it which incorporated both Spanish and English to represent the different nationalities that are in our relationship itself. Coming from a Mexican household myself and Eppie coming from a white household - I mean, it felt representative. It was also a song that spoke to us lyrically. We felt that we had a really good friend - you know other people, they have best friends - and then all of a sudden one day we realized -"

Eppie: " - I was in love with my best friend."

Kristian: "Holy - I'm actually pretty lucky."

Eppie: "I think that idea of 'I don't know how I got to this point, but I'm just lucky that I did and that I am here' is very representative of our relationship because we started out as friends. It's my favorite part about our relationship is that he is my best friend. That idea of being lucky really connected with us."

## **Kristian, how long had you been planning the proposal beforehand?**

Kristian: "Well, there's a short and a long answer. The short answer is I planned it the night before."

Eppie: "He told me he had to go get his keys, but he ran in and asked Sherri if he could do it. I was just outside talking to everybody, so he had me completely fooled."

Kristian: "The long answer is I had actually tried a couple of times in the past, and it just - the moment never worked out perfectly. So it kind of felt like maybe we



weren't at that point yet, maybe, but about two months before that - around the time we agreed to do Shine - we took a vacation to Florida. I had the ring. We were on the beach. We were in St. Augustine."

Eppie: "We took a horse-drawn carriage ride."

Kristian: "I left the ring in her dad's car."

**Oh no!**

Kristian: "I tried to navigate us back to the car without betraying my intentions, and it didn't work out. We didn't make it back to the car. So I just kind of fell flat and I didn't ask her. I lost my wind when that messed up, but over the course of rehearsing our song for the show, I felt reaffirmed in my feelings that led me to make that decision in the first place. The first night we did the show, the moment felt so right. I knew it and I felt like a majority of the people in the room knew it and were almost expecting it to the point where when I got off the stage I had a couple of people say 'Oh, I thought you were going to propose.' I had this moment of clarity and I said 'I thought I was going to too.' So after the show, I asked Sherri if it would be okay if I proposed at the end of the show and she said 'That would be perfect.' I have no reason to believe otherwise. I didn't want to take away from the show, but I also wanted it to be a moment that Eppie would remember. I knew there were not going to be many scenarios in which I could catch her off-guard. I felt onstage was probably one of the safest bets."

Eppie: "Oh, I was caught off-guard alright."

**Kristian, fellow Shine performer, Sarah Wilson, noted during the rehearsal process you would ask Eppie to take a step forward at the end of your act. When you proposed, you used this moment to pull the ring out. Is that accurate?**

Kristian: "That was probably the biggest detail. I told Eppie the note at the end of the song was just too high for me and that she needed to take it. It would have to end with her being the main sound and I would just drop out. So she bought it. After rehearsing that way a couple of times, I said 'You know, it would be better since you're the last voice if you would step forward and take center stage so everyone sees you and I'm just kind of there staring at you. It would be cute.'"

Eppie: "And I went 'Oh, that's so cute!'"

Kristian: "And again, she fell for it. So, yeah, that just lined up perfectly. She was so focused on the performance that she didn't think otherwise."

**It sounds like you were surprised, Eppie?**

Eppie: “Oh, very much so. I was convinced that if he was going to do it - cause you know, we’ve been together for five years. At this point, I know it’s coming. I figured if he was going to do it, it would’ve been the night before at Sherri’s house. There was no way he was going to do it at Upstage Cabaret. It just didn’t feel like a thing that could actually happen. The entire time before the show, I was focused on doing everyone’s makeup. I wasn’t paying attention to him at all. I wasn’t paying attention to anything around me.”

Kristian: “What about when you noticed everyone . . . ?”

Eppie: “Oh, yeah! At one point during the performance, I noticed there were a lot of people watching (from backstage as well as the audience), so I thought - I knew something was happening, but I thought we were just cute, but it was much more. It was about to be really, really cute.”

**Kristian, was it hard for you to keep it a secret?**

Kristian: “I would say it would’ve been had she not been preoccupied with the makeup. I think the hardest part about keeping a secret was keeping the ring hidden because the box I had was actually quite bulky. It was a custom box that her mom helped me make. It was not like the normal ring boxes that you could fit in a pocket easily.”

Eppie: “It’s like the size of a fist.”

Kristian: “But I was able to fit in my pocket. I kept angling myself away from Eppie backstage the entire night.”

**Would you mind describing the ring box?**

Eppie: “Basically it was a wooden box in the shape of a heart. What my mom did was -”



Photos by Eppie Jo Miller

Kristian: “She wood stained it and wood burned the phrase on top of the box ‘mi corazon’ and on the inside, it said ‘es para ti’ which means ‘my heart is for you’ or ‘my heart is yours.’ She put a lot of effort into helping me have the perfect box.”

Eppie: “My mom made this box and stained it and everything and she made a little ring cushion in there.”

**I heard the engagement ring is a family ring. Is that true?**

Kristian: “Yes! Growing up, my family was up and down with financial troubles. Whenever we would reach a downtime my family would always sell from their jewelry first, which I think is pretty common. It got bad at one time to the point where there was only one ring left in my immediate family between my mom and my grandmother that was actually real. It was a real gold band. It had real gemstones. It was the only one left. I was going to my mother asking for advice. Would it be a big risk if I ask this girl to marry me or would it be a smart choice? She said ‘I thought it would be easier for you to make the decision if you didn’t have to worry about spending money on a ring.’ So she found this ring for me, she offered it to me, and she said: ‘It would be wonderful if she were apart of our family.’ It is definitely a family ring with a lot of sentiment.”

Photo by Eppie Jo Miller



## **It sounds like family members on both sides are happy about the engagement?**

Eppie: “Oh, yes. I think both moms definitely love their future child-in-law.”

Kristian: “Both of our grandmothers shared the response of ‘It’s about time.’”

## **Looking forward to the future, how has wedding planning been going?**

Eppie: “I didn’t waste any time and I got right to it. So much to the point where Kristian needed me to just take two weeks off, and then I went back hard. He needed two weeks of no wedding talk, and I gave him those two weeks, but it has not been the same since those two weeks.”

Kristian: “I kept true to my word. I first thought there would be a grace period before we started planning, but instead the next day, she’s asking me questions. It got a little frustrating at first when it felt like that was all she wanted to talk about instead of doing anything else. I understood, but after the break, I promised her I would give her my undivided attention on anything wedding related, and thus far I think I’ve been doing my fair share of offering ideas.”

Eppie: “He’s been very good. We’re doing a lot of it together. You know, sometimes the bride takes over a very, very large role, but he’s very, very helpful and we’re having a lot of fun making little decisions together.”



**Eppie, I have often heard you describe your vision for you and Kristian's future together as a "Bob's Burger's" sort of lifestyle. Would you mind talking about that?**

*Eppie:* "Yes! So Kristian is in the restaurant business. I'm going into business management. So along the road, we've come to the decision as long as we can have enough money to have a few little rugrats - we want to have that kind of relationship where we go and do adventures and have fun together all the time. I guess that's where that comes from. I love acting, but there are certain things that get in the way of that. He wants to open a restaurant, and there are certain things that are going to get in the way of that, but at the end of the day as long as we're together having the fun adventures that we always have with a few little crazy rugrats, yeah, that's my goal for the future."

**If you were a Shakespearean couple, which one would you be?**

*Eppie:* "Beatrice and Benedick! Their banter and wit complement each other. Also, their intelligence and conversation drive their relationship dynamic."

**Thank you so much for chatting with me! Before we go, are there any last thoughts you'd like to share?**

*Kristian:* "My favorite part of our relationship is that we complement each other. A lot of the things I lack in she tends to exceed in."

*Eppie:* "The things I lack in, you exceed in."

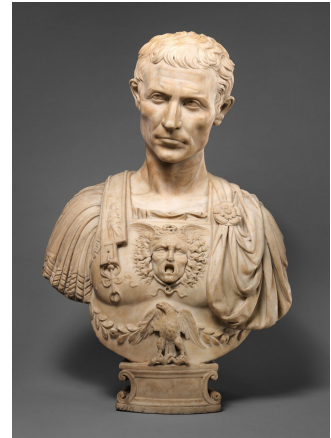
*Kristian:* "I'm introverted. She's extroverted. I'm very calculated. She's a little impulsive. We tend to complement each other."

*Eppie:* "We're a team. We do things together. We are two parts of a team."



## COMING SOON

### **Julius Caesar** A Zoom Production By William Shakespeare Directed by Chauncey Miller To Be Announced



### *Sisters of Mine*

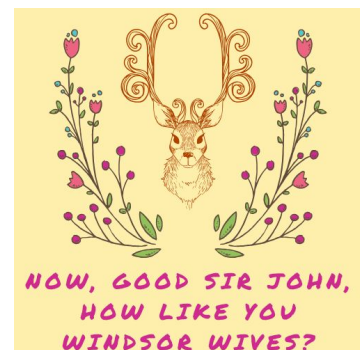
*Written by the Shared Radiance*

*Writing Ensemble*

*Directed by Sherri Raeford*

To Be Determined

### **THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR** BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE DIRECTED BY CHAPPELL UPPER To Be Determined





## Serial Killer's Daughter

**Written by Pat Riviere-Seel**

**Adapted for Ensemble by Sherri Raeford**

**Directed by Stephanie Nusbaum**

*Shared Radiance West*

*To Be Determined*

## THE TEMPEST BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE DIRECTED BY SHERRI RÆFORD

ZOOM: Now Available on YouTube, Edited by Bill Pirkey

IN-PERSON PRODUCTION: To Be Determined



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