In Arabia we'd all be kings

UM School of Music
Dept. of Theatre and Drama
October 7 - 17, 2004
Trueblood Theatre
The University of Michigan School of Music
Department of Theatre and Drama
presents

in arabia
we'd all be kings

Written by Stephen Adly Guirgis

Director  John Neville-Andrews
Scenic Designer  Gary Decker
Costume Designer  Jennifer Nweke
Lighting Designer  Janine L. Woods
Vocal Coach  Annette Masson
Stage Manager  Joe Schlenke

Setting:
Hell’s Kitchen, New York City, late 1990s

In Arabia We’d All Be Kings will be performed without an intermission.

Special thanks to Valerie Atkin, Russell Pitts, and Wells Street Consultants.
Additional thanks to Dave Curtis at Pub 13 and Linda French at Sidetrack.

In Arabia We'd All Be Kings is produced by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service.

Latecomers will be seated at a suitable break or scene change. As a courtesy to others, please set pagers to silent mode. Cellular phones and electronic watch alarms should be turned off so they will not interrupt the performance. Photography and videotaping are not permitted due to copyright restrictions. Flash photography endangers performers by causing momentary blindness.
cast of characters

Lenny ................................................................. Kevin Kuczek
Skank ............................................................. Matthew Smith
Sammy ............................................................ Daniel Strauss
Miss Reyes/Woman ............................. Kirsten Mara Benjamin
Sal/Holy Roller/Man 2 ........................... Adam H. Caplan
Chickie ............................................................ Rachel Chapman
Demaris ......................................................... Jen Freidel
Vic/Carroll/Man 4 ................................. De’Lon Grant
Rakim/Man 1 ................................................ Justin Patrick Holmes
Daisy .......................................................... Elizabeth Hoyt
Greer/Man 3 ............................................. Edmund Alyn Jones
Charlie .................................................. J. Theo Klose
Jake ........................................................ James Wolk

The performers in this production are composed of undergraduate students in the School of Music. The designers are composed of faculty and undergraduate students in the Department of Theatre and Drama. Scenery, costumes, properties, sound, and lighting were realized by the students and staff of University Productions, the producing unit of the School of Music.

about the playwright

Stephen Adly Guirgis (Playwright) is the author of Jesus Hopped the A Train which, having completed its critically praised off-Broadway run, won the Fringe First Award at the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland. The play has been produced at Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago as well as in London, Finland, Washington, DC, and Minneapolis. Guirgis is also the author of In Arabia We’d All Be Kings which was named one of the Ten Best Plays of 1999 by Time Out Magazine. Guirgis developed and directed Sistah Supreme starring Liza Colon-Zayas. He developed and directed Marco Grecol’s Cable Ace Award winning Behind the Counter with Mussolini. He is a long time member of LAByrinth Theater Company as well as the MCC Playwrights Coalition. He continues to appear as an actor on stage, in film and on television. A former Violence Prevention Specialist in NYC area prisons and schools, he wrote for the CBS series Big Apple and is currently writing on UC: Undercover on NBC. His latest play Our Lady of 121st Street premiered in the summer of 2002.
If the characters in this play were transported intact to Arabia, they’d each suffer one or more of the following punishments: stoning, mutilation, hanging and beheading, for the world they inhabit is at the bottom of the social underworld, the streetcorners, the crack joints, the dead end bars, cold park benches, prisons, places where they perpetually walk a razor thin boundary between random, meaningless life and random, meaningless death. Their world is devoid of any discernible moral order as we think we know it, as we think we have. In Arabia We’d All Be Kings is a series of rambling revelations, a kind of "reality theater," shocking with raw, repulsive images and behavior that we can also witness in, among other places, Jerry Springer’s tv world. But author Guirgis is not content to merely let us glimpse this splattering of life, to show us how these people live; he wants us to see the world as they see it, as they experience it, but not through conventional psychological character development, plotted action and a dramatic arc, but, rather, through their daily struggles to exist, to survive in a larger world that they barely understand, to insist on some sense of personal dignity and worth however small, to dream of a better life for themselves, to nurture those naive dreams with drugs, alcohol and crippled love. Guirgis guides us through a living museum of helpless, wretched souls, but he doesn’t explain to us what we’re seeing; he merely draws our attention to the images and moves on. His racial, ethnic and gender perjoratives are plentiful and universally bestowed, for he lets the characters express themselves in the naked, harsh vernacular of their underworld. What little change that occurs in this theatrical spectacle (for it is not a "play" in the traditional sense) is change from forces external to the underworld. The characters merely respond to the changes which the forces randomly impose. Guirgis has given us a torturous portrait of postmodern hunter/gatherers in the urban wilderness of New York City. But no matter how brutally the game of "life" batters this assortment of characters, they have the will, the energy, the hope to keep playing the game.

— OyamO, Professor of Theatre, UM

**about the cast**

**Kirsten Mara Benjamin** (Miss Reyes/Woman) junior, BFA Performance, Detroit, MI  
**Adam H. Caplan** (Sal/Holy Roller/Man 2) junior, BFA Performance, Idyllwild, CA  
**Rachel Chapman** (Chickie) senior, BTA Theatre/BFA Art, Sylvan Lake, MI  
**Jen Freidel** (Demaris) senior, BFA Performance, Dallas, TX
about the cast

DE’LON GRANT (Vic/Carroll) junior, BFA Performance, Duluth, MN
JUSTIN PATRICK HOLMES (Rakim/Man 1) senior, BFA Performance, Idyllwild, CA
ELIZABETH HOYT (Daisy) senior, BFA Performance, Manitowoc, WI
EDMUND ALYN JONES (Greer/Man 3) junior, BFA Performance, Detroit, MI
J. THEO KLOSE (Charlie) senior, BFA Performance, West Chester, PA
KEVIN KUCZEK (Lenny) junior, BFA Performance, Howell, MI
MATTHEW SMITH (Skank) junior, BFA Performance, Yorba Linda, CA
DANIEL STRAUSS (Sammy) sophomore, BFA Performance, Washington, DC
JAMES WOLK (Jake) sophomore, BFA Performance, Farmington Hills, MI

about the artists

GARY DECKER (Scenic Designer) has designed more than 100 productions. In Michigan, he has worked at the Gem, Attic, Birmingham, Boarshead, and Purple Rose Theatres. Recent designs include the national tours of The Sunshine Boys and Same Time, Next Year. His scenic design for Fully Committed at The Century Theatre earned the Detroit Free Press 2002 Theatre Design Excellence Award. He has designed interiors or lighting for commercial projects including: The Elwood Grill in Detroit, The Fashion Cafe in New York, and The Arndale Centre in Manchester, UK. He has been a member of the Theatre Department faculty since 1984.


JENNIFER NWEKE (Costume Designer) is a senior studying design and production in the Department of Theatre and Drama. UM: The Electra Project, Luck.

JOE SCHLENKE (Stage Manager) is a junior pursuing a BFA in design and production and a BA in anthropology. He intends to pursue a career in stage management and technical theatre. UM: Asst.stage manager: An Arthur Miller Celebration, Suor Angelica/Gianni Schicchi; Basement Arts: stage manager: Picasso at the Lapin Agile, Six Honest
about the artists


JANINE L. WOODS (Lighting Designer) is a senior design and production major in the Dept. of Theatre and Drama, and intends to pursue a career in theatre and film design. UM: An Arthur Miller Celebration, scenic and lighting designer; Good Night Desdemona (Goodmorning Juliet), scenic designer; Xerxes, assistant designer; Rude Mechanicals, The Fantasticks; MUSKET, Chicago. Other: Gangui Productions, Flight Into Memory; Marshall Civic Players, Godspell.

SCHOOL OF MUSIC
Dean ......................................................... Karen Wolff

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DRAMA
Chair .................................................. Erik Fredricksen
Administration ................................ Bonnie Kerscbuam, Becky Seauvageau

UNIVERSITY PRODUCTIONS
Director ................................................... Jeffrey Kuras
Administrative Associate ............. Fatima Abdullan
Office Assistant III ......................... Shelda Smith
Marketing & Comm. Director ...... Kerianne M. Tupac
Computer Administrator .......... Henry Reynolds
Facilities Manager .................... Shannon Rice
House Manager ......................... Dianne Widzinski
Graphic Design ................... Chris Purcell, CAP Designs
Banner Artist .................................. Janine Woods
Office Assistants .................. Erin Farrell, Justin Tanis

PRODUCTION STAFF
Production Manager .................. Amanda Mengden
Production Stage Manager ........ Nancy Uffner
Technical Director (Frieze) ............ Richard W. Lindsay, Jr.
Technical Director (Power) ............ Douglas Edwards
Assoc. Tech. Director (Power) ....... Donald C. Watkins
Carpenter .................................. Robert Michael
Scenic Artist .................................. Toni Y. Auletti
Properties Master ..................... Arthur Ridley
Properties Artisan ..................... Dan Tracy
Master Electrician ..................... Mark Allen Berg
Costume Shop Manager ............. Jan Evans
Assoc. Costume Shop Manager .... George Bacon
Draaper .................................. Virginia R. Luedke
Assoc. Draaper ......................... Lea Marzorino
Crafts Artisan/Stock Manager .... Elizabeth Gunderson
Sound Engineers .................. Rogert Arnett, Henry Reynolds
House Technicians ............... Ron Cypert, Mark Gordon,

Jim Haven, Barry LaRue
Office Assistants .................. Erin Farrell, LeDetra Lindsey, Jessica Lukasik

PRODUCTION CREW
Asst. Stage Managers .. Rachel Feldman, Seth Anderson
Asst. to the Director ................... Meredith Kitz
Scenery ........................................ James Haven, Adrienne Escamilla,
Ed Morris, Nick Riley, Joe Schlenke, Ronnie Smith,
Kathryn VanHorn, Barbara Vilece,
Joe Walls, Rebecca Whatley
Paint ........................................ Mikala Bierma, Cassidy Bloom,
Elyse Handelmen, Esther Neff, Sherri Novis,
Lena Sana, Colter Statt, Kathryn Van Horn
Props .............. Seth Anderson, Jenni Barber, Grant Bates,
Kyla Embrey, Felipe Gonzalez, Katherine Hire,
Matt Noellert, Michael Zahler, students of Theatre 250
Costumes .................... Laurie Kantner, Monica Prince,
Kay Stefanski, Katie Bolz, Adam Caplan,
Casey Goshen, De’Lon Grant, Hye-Yun Kim,
Chelsea Leinberger, Lorna McGee, Erin McGrath,
Alex Michaels, Taryn Muller, Esther Neff,
Sarah Showalter, Kendal Sparks, students of Theatre 250
Lighting .................... Ellen Katz‡, Anup Aurora,
Melanie Berg, Jamie Burke, Andy Fritsch,
Justin Hyatt, Frank Maiorana, Joe Ostrander,
Monika Patel, Mary Roeder, Josh Rouah, Joe Schlenke,
Kathryn Van Horn, students of Theatre 250

RUNNING CREW
Scenery & Props. .. Treasure Davidson, Elyse Hanselman
Light Board Operator .................. Michael Eisenberg
Sound ........................................ Wut Suthirachartkul
Makeup .................................. Adam Miller-Batteau
Wardrobe ................................... Andrew Chung,
Katie Shatocck, Alison Velasco
‡ Member IATSE local 395