

delicacy of a puffin heart
By Stefani Kuo
The Spring 2024 Dramat Ex

Who?

Producer: Olivia O'Connor
Directors: Alastair Rao & Alicia Shen
Stage Manager: Thomas Kannam
Preferred Contact Email: ex2@yaledramat.org

What?

Synopsis of show: *delicacy of a puffin heart* tells the intertwined stories of Meryl and Ana Sofia, a lesbian couple living in 1990s San Francisco, and their daughter Robyn and her roommate Hadley living in the same apartment two decades later. The play explores Asian American womanhood, grief, and female friendship.

When?

Date of First Rehearsal: Nov 6
Current Tech Week Dates: Feb 11-17, 2024
Performance Dates: Feb 15-17, 2024
Overall Dates (First Rehearsal to Last Performance): Nov 6 - Feb 17

Time Commitment

Weekly Estimated Time Commitments (in Hours): 8-10 in the fall; 12-14 in the spring
**see the Character Description section below for a breakdown of time commitments for each role!*

Content Warnings

Content warnings for this show include: coarse language; depictions of physical intimacy, mental illness (bipolar II disorder), illness (cancer), and intimate partner violence; discussion of sexual content, sexual violence, death, sexual harrassment, and self-harm.

There is a scene in which two characters share a kiss. There is a scene where a character describes an incidence of sexual assault. There is a scene where a character describes experiences of nonconsensual sex. There is a scene where two characters engage in a physical struggle, and one of the characters charges at the other with a knife.

Audition Expectations

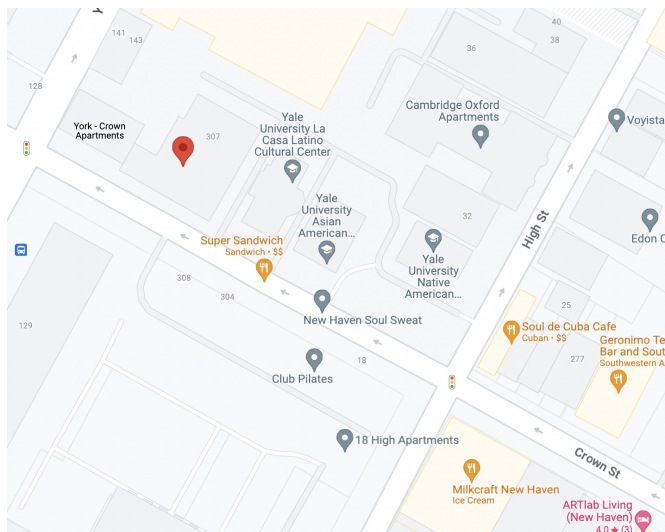
Auditionees should expect to prepare any 1-2 minute monologue in the style of the show. Two suggested audition monologues are provided on the YCA page—please feel free to use these!

You do not have to have your monologue memorized beforehand; however, we encourage you to familiarize yourself with it. We ask that any monologue you choose be printed or otherwise provided by yourself if needed (you are absolutely free to use a digital copy on a phone or iPad!).

Audition Location(s)

You can sign up for auditions through the YCA page. Auditions will be held at the following times:

- Oct 27: 3-5:30 and 6-7:45pm; Crown Down (305 Crown Street)
- Oct 30: 5:45-11pm; Crown Down (305 Crown Street)



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More About the Show

With each scene named after a question in the [New York Times' 36 Questions to Fall in Love](#), *delicacy of a puffin heart* jumps between the intertwined stories of Meryl and Ana Sofia and their daughter Robyn and her roommate Hadley.

In a small San Francisco apartment in the 1990s, Meryl and Ana Sofia, a lesbian couple, attempt to conceive a child through in-vitro fertilization while navigating Meryl's bipolar II disorder. In the same apartment two decades later, their daughter, Robyn, and her roommate Hadley are forced to navigate their friendship through Robyn's cancer.

In the struggle to take control of their lives, relationships, and illnesses, four women unravel the complexity of their Asian, Bulgarian, and outsider-to-American identities and experience the potential loss of female friendship and sense of self: What does it mean to love someone honestly even when they are incapable of being honest with themselves?

Content Warning: *The show includes depictions of violence and intimacy which will be developed in partnership between the actors involved, directors, and a professional fight/intimacy coordinator. The safety and wellbeing of all involved in such work is and always will be the priority of this production.*

Meet the Team!

Alastair - Director

Hi everyone! My name is Alastair (he/him) and I'm so excited to be directing this play with such a wonderful team! I'm a sophomore in Saybrook studying History, and I'm originally from the San Francisco Bay Area. Outside of theatre, you can find me at the AACCC, volunteering with Yale Dems, or trying a new coffee shop and pretending to study!

Alicia - Director

Hi! I'm Alicia (she/her) and I'm super excited to be co-directing this show :) I'm a Pierson sophomore from Hong Kong, majoring in Environmental Studies. Outside of theater, I am involved in The New Blue, the Environmental Education Collaborative (EECO), and the Asian American Collective of Theatermakers (AACT- woop woop! <3).

Olivia - Producer

Hello everyone!! I'm Olivia (she/her) and I am thrilled to be producing *puffin heart* with this incredible team! I am a senior double majoring in English and Theater Studies, originally from the Boston area. Outside of this show, I'm also co-president of AACT (Asian American Collective of Theatermakers) and, hopefully, WOMT (Working On My Theses). I cannot wait to meet you at auditions!

Thomas - Stage Manager

Hello wonderful people! I'm Thomas (they/them), a sophomore in Hopper and the stage manager for Puffin! I'm from a small town in Connecticut and am a prospective Theater and ER&M major. Outside of class I love my dog, 2000's rom coms, and chicken nuggets from the Ivy. I can't wait to create this show with yall!

Contacts

Producer: Olivia O'Connor (ex2@yaledramat.org)

Stage Manager: Thomas Kannam (exsm@yaledramat.org)

Directors: Alastair Rao (alastair.rao@yale.edu) and Alicia Shen (alicia.shen@yale.edu)

Dramat Executive Board Contacts

Vice President: Kali Jupiter (vp@yaledramat.org)

Policy Director: AJ Walker (policy@yaledramat.org)

Outreach Coordinator: Annabelle Hee (outreach@yaledramat.org)

General Production Timeline (tentative!)

Oct 26: Info Session

- This will take place from 8-9:30pm in the Dramat Green Room (located on the first floor of the Yale School of Drama building at 222 York St)

Oct 27 and 30: Auditions

- Oct 27: 3-5:30 and 6-7:45pm; Crown Down (305 Crown Street)
- Oct 30: 5:45-11pm; Crown Down (305 Crown Street)
- Self tapes due **Oct 30 at midnight**

Nov 3: Callbacks

- These will take place from 3-6:15pm. Location TBD.

Nov 5: Casting Day

- This will take place starting at noon via phone call

Nov 6: First Cast Read-Through

Nov 6-Feb 10: Rehearsals (no rehearsals during school breaks)

Feb 11: Load-in

Feb 11-14: Tech

Feb 15-17: Performances!!

Cast Expectations

Our team's top priority at all times is the safety and wellbeing of all actors and production team members. It is of utmost importance to us that this rehearsal and production process is fun and enriching rather than stressful! To that end, we hope to use actors' feedback on and previous experience with the tablework, improvisation, or études we incorporate into the rehearsal room; we want to give actors creative agency and equal ownership over the material we generate.

We expect 8-10 hours of rehearsal time total per week (which will likely be divided up among the actors), with some time dedicated outside of formal rehearsals to memorize lines, with the expectation that scenes are fully memorized after they have been done in the rehearsal room. The commitment will increase to around 12-14 hours per week in the Spring semester leading up to tech week and the performances. However, we will schedule around actors' availability and try our best to be mindful in scheduling rehearsals at normal times.

We ask that you **be mindful of your other time commitments**, and strongly recommend that you do not work on another production with performances in the early spring semester (January and February). Given the many breaks interrupting our production timeline (Thanksgiving and Winter break) it will be very important that all actors dedicate time to work on any material from rehearsals on their own time.

The stage manager will play an active role in acting as a liaison for actors to talk to if they feel that they're being harmed, unheard, or otherwise feel unable to communicate a problem to the directors. We also hope to facilitate an open line of communication between actors and the producer in case they want or need a second advocate outside of the rehearsal room.

Accessibility is one of AACT's foundational principles: it is our hope to serve as an access point through which new and less experienced Asian theatermakers can find a way into getting involved with Yale theater. To that end, we highly encourage first-time actors to audition! We are here to support you! We are also committed to accommodating any and all access needs—please feel free to email Olivia at ex2@yaledramat.org with any access needs or concerns.

Character Descriptions

Below is the list of characters along with their brief descriptions, relevant content warnings, and estimated time commitment.

ROBYN: Female. 23. The daughter of Meryl and Ana Sofia. This character identifies as half Chinese and half Bulgarian/White.

Time Commitment: Very High Commitment (~8-10 hours a week)

***Content Warning:** *This role includes the depiction of illness (cancer), suggested self-harm, and verbal description of violence and blood. If necessary, these scenes will be developed between the actor, fight/intimacy coordinator, and directors. These moments are outlined as followed:*

- *On pages 4-5, Robyn describes a recurring dream where she is stabbed by shards of glass and bleeds*
- *On pages 62-65, it is suggested that Robyn may be harming herself after bruises are found on her back*

HADLEY: Female. 23. Catholic. Robyn's roommate. A medical school student. This character identifies as Korean.

Time Commitment: High Commitment (~8 hours a week)

MERYL: Female. 38. Buddhist. Robyn's mother and the wife of Ana Sofia. This character identifies as Chinese.

This character has some dialogue and a monologue spoken in Mandarin.

Time Commitment: Very High Commitment (~8-10 hours a week)

***Content Warning:** *This role includes depictions of physical intimacy, intimate partner violence, and mental illness (bipolar II disorder), as well as verbal description of sexual assault. Scenes with intimacy and violence will be developed between the actor, fight/intimacy coordinator, and directors. These moments are outlined as followed:*

- *On page 26, Meryl describes an experience of workplace sexual assault*
- *Stage directions on page 32 state, "Ana Sofia kisses Meryl"*
- *Stage directions on page 52 state, "Meryl charges at the door and Ana Sofia with a knife"*
- *On page 54, stage directions indicate that Ana Sofia and Meryl engage in a physical struggle as Ana Sofia tries to grab Meryl and Meryl pushes her away*

ANA SOFIA (1994): Female. 33. Robyn's mother and the wife of Meryl. This character identifies as Bulgarian/White.

Time Commitment: High Commitment (~8 hours a week)

***Content Warning:** *This role includes the depiction of physical intimacy and intimate partner violence which will be developed between the actor, fight/intimacy coordinator, and directors.*

These moments are outlined as followed:

- *Stage directions on page 32 state, "Ana Sofia kisses Meryl"*
- *Stage directions on page 52 state, "Meryl charges at the door and Ana Sofia with a knife"*
- *On page 54, stage directions indicate that Ana Sofia and Meryl engage in a physical struggle as Ana Sofia tries to grab Meryl and Meryl pushes her away*

PAULA (2016): Female. 24. Catholic. Hadley's friend. A medical school student. This character identifies as non-white.

Time Commitment: High Commitment (~6-8 hours a week)

***Content Warning:** *This role includes depictions of sexual content, as well as verbal description of sexual violence. Scenes with intimacy will be developed between the actor, fight/intimacy coordinator, and directors. These moments are outlined as followed:*

- *Stage directions on page 71 state, "Paula is clearly having sex"*
- *On page 79, Paula describes her experiences of nonconsensual sex with her partner*

Auditions

Sign up for a 10-minute audition slot on our [YCA page](#). Please plan to arrive 5-10 minutes before your slot, and fill out our audition form [here](#) before your slot so we can get to know you a bit! We will also have paper copies if needed.

Who will be in the audition room?

The directors, stage manager, and producer (Alastair, Alicia, Thomas, Olivia) will be in the audition room with you. Additionally, a member of the Dramat Executive board (VP, Outreach Coordinator, or Policy Director) will be present. Their role is to serve as a friendly face and to make sure that the process is fun, safe, equitable, and accessible for everyone involved!

You will be asked to perform a 1-2 minute monologue in the style of the show. Two suggested audition monologues are provided on the YCA page– feel free to use these. You do not have to have your monologue memorized beforehand; however, we encourage you to familiarize yourself with it. We will provide printed copies of the two suggested monologues, but any monologue you choose yourself must be printed/provided by yourself.

Video/remote submissions:

Self-tapes are welcome as an alternative to the in-person audition for those who may feel uncomfortable with the in-person audition format due to COVID-19, or are otherwise unable to attend.

If you would like to send in a self-tape, please submit a recording of yourself reading your monologue. **The deadline for video submissions is midnight on Monday, October 30th.** Please fill out our [audition form](#) and email your self tape to ex2@yaledramat.org.

Callbacks

Callbacks will take place on November 3rd from 3-6:15pm. Location TBD. We will let you know if we need to see you at one of these callbacks by November 1st at the latest, and you will be provided character specific material to prepare.

Callbacks may consist of solo or partner scene work. While you are encouraged to get familiar with the audition material, you do not need to be off-book. The callback materials will be printed out and provided during your audition.

Casting call will take place on November 5 beginning at 12pm.