

Ep: 11 – Enjoy Gavino: “Show Them Chicago”

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Featuring: Enjoy Gavino and Caroline Neff, with Cliff Chamberlain, Audrey Francis and Michelle Medvin.

Enjoy Gavino:

I am a kind of person who cannot sit on my frustration and anger for very long.

Audrey Francis:

From Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago, Illinois—

Enjoy Gavino:

We could just show them what we can do. Let's just do that, because this is irritating. Let's stop talking.

Audrey Francis:

This is *Half Hour*.

Cliff Chamberlain:

Hello, friends. We are back again. Episode 11 of *Half Hour*.

Audrey Francis:

What?

Caroline Neff:

What?

Cliff Chamberlain:

My name is Cliff Chamberlin. I'm joined by two amazing people.

Audrey Francis:

This is Audrey Francis.

Caroline Neff:

And this is Caroline Neff.

Cliff Chamberlain:

And Caroline. I'm not sure how she found the time to sit down and talk with you because she seems to be one of the busiest and most productive artists, and activists, and people in Chicago, but: Enjoy Gavino sat down and found time to talk to you and talk to us. And it was fantastic.

Caroline Neff:

I feel so lucky. I really was. I was listening to the conversation a couple of days ago. And as she was talking about all the things that she does, it really struck me that she kind of is, in a much less annoying way, the Ryan Seacrest of Chicago theatre. [*Laughter*] She hosts things; she produces things; she acts in

things. She's just—she's kind of all over. And everybody really loves her. And I feel really lucky that she found the time to sit down and talk with us.

Cliff Chamberlain:

I've been lucky to be in lots of different rooms with her. Never in a production, but because she gives us so many chances to work with her, whether it be *Barrel of Monkeys*, or the *Erik and Jessie and Everyone You Know Show*, or she's worked with my other theatre company The House before and she's just sort of everywhere. So, you have a good chance of being inspired by her and she's always the most (and she even said this, I think in the interview) annoyingly optimistic for other people. Right? Just like you really get that from her. It's so much fun to be around her.

Audrey Francis:

I think there's something about Emjoy that makes her so special. And after hearing this conversation with you two, Caroline, I was able to really pinpoint what it is for me. And it's very rare when—to see someone or to know someone who says, “Hey, there's a problem. And this is what's missing. And this is what's needed.” And then they do the thing.

Cliff Chamberlain:

Hmm.

Audrey Francis:

And she just does that. And I think so many times we're surrounded by people who just identify the problem—and even go as far as to identify what the solution could be, but maybe don't put the solution on their own backs to fix it. And that is what she does time and time again. And can I just say one thing about that show that Caroline and Emjoy and I got to do together? There was a day onstage in *You Got Older* where I—something happened with Caroline and I, and we were breaking we were not able to get it together onstage.

Caroline Neff:

At all.

Audrey Francis:

And we could not stop laughing. Yeah. And it was supposed to be a very devastating scene—

Cliff Chamberlain:

During the show?

Audrey Francis:

During the show. Oh yeah.

Caroline Neff:

Oh yeah.

Cliff Chamberlain:

Okay.

Audrey Francis:

And I looked at Emjoy, and Emjoy looked at Caroline and I with this beautiful combination of like, “I love that you're having fun and I will not stoop to your level.”

Caroline Neff:

And got us right back on track.

Audrey Francis:

And got us right back on track. *[Laughter]*

Cliff Chamberlain:

Well, I'm going to get us on track and get this interview started. Because everyone needs to hear what she has to say because she's that type of person. So, let's hear the interview.

Stage Manager:

Welcome back, everyone. This is your half hour call. Please sign in if you've not already done so. This is half hour. The house is about to open. Half hour, please.

Caroline Neff:

You moved to Chicago from Seattle, right?

Emjoy Gavino:

That's correct. Yeah.

Caroline Neff:

And was that—did you go to school in Seattle?

Emjoy Gavino:

I did. I did everything in Seattle until I was about 22. So, I didn't leave Seattle at all, except for like, family vacations. Yeah.

Caroline Neff:

Wow, that's so interesting to me because I feel like you are such a person that is always be-bopping around. And I just—I feel like I never see you at like—

Emjoy Gavino:

Still?

Caroline Neff:

Rest. Yeah.

Emjoy Gavino:

I have—but that's the thing is like, as a human, I would rather just stay in one place. But like, I mean, as you know—you just follow the work and you follow whoever will have me. If it were up to me, I would just be snuggled with my dog on my couch and then have people come to me so I would never leave the one room, which—

Caroline Neff:
You're royalty—

Emjoy Gavino:
Yes.

Caroline Neff:
Is what you're saying.

Emjoy Gavino:
Exactly.

Caroline Neff:
You're royal blood.

Emjoy Gavino:
Yes.

Caroline Neff:
And therefore, you should be treated thus.

Emjoy Gavino:
You understand me. I'm so glad. Yes.

Caroline Neff:
I do. I do. I'm your humble servant. *[Laughter]* How did you find yourself in Chicago from Seattle?

Emjoy Gavino:
So weird. It's so weird because I actually thought I would never leave Seattle. I mean, the city itself is so incredible. You're by the ocean. You can take a \$2 ferry and see whales, you know, on your day off. And so much—so many of the Gavino clan (my family) is there. And when I was in college, the Seattle theatre scene was just incredible. And amazingly, it was kind of considered the “next Chicago” when I was going to school. And so even then—even when I was in college, and I didn't actually think I could make a living in theater—I was looking at Chicago, like, “If I ever wanted to do theatre anywhere else other than Seattle, I'd want to go there, because it's just more of what I like here.” I didn't want to leave, but if I had to, I'd go to Chicago. And then I met a boy. And that boy asked me to marry him. And that was the same year that he also got a job in Chicago theatre. And so, we magically ended up in Chicago. Yeah.

Caroline Neff:
You wear more hats than I think anybody else that I know—both personally and professionally—and you somehow managed to juggle all those things and I definitely want to touch on all of them. Because you are an actor; you are an activist; you are a casting director; you're the Associate Artistic Director of the Gift Theatre. But you also founded and run the Chicago Inclusion Project. And I would love to just hear about the beginnings of that: how that thought crossed your mind, how it came to fruition. So, do you mind talking just a little bit about what the Chicago Inclusion Project is?

Emjoy Gavino:

Maybe I can start with how we started, which was: it was just going to be a simple reading. Before, like, even before I turned Equity, but when—especially when—I turned equity (which was a difficult decision to do in Chicago) as a young woman, and as a young woman of color, it was really difficult. I really didn't want to turn Equity. And I knew that when I did, the jobs would dry up, which it did. And when it dried up, I had moments where I was looking around and realizing that the only people who were hiring me were people who were probably just interested in my ethnicity. Not all the time, but a lot of the time. And even before I turned to Equity, actually, to be honest. And you know, other marginalized artists like myself—we would talk about this constantly, powerless, at the back of bars, in dressing rooms. Just muttering to ourselves like “There's nothing we can do this is just this is this is the way it is.” And “I'll just always be called in for the nurse. I'll always be called in for the terrorist. I'll always be called for this. I'll never get to work with you—unless it's in *Christmas Carol*,” you know. And just—frustrated and angry all the time. And I am a kind of person who cannot sit on my frustration and anger for very long. I have to funnel it into something. And so those conversations started to fester and fester and fester, and it kind of turned into “Well, we're tired of talking about it with each other. We don't really want to talk about it with artistic leaders,” a lot of the times. Because people were scared they wouldn't get work right? You know, and we could do those panel discussions, we could, you know, have a roundtable where we're like, “Well, how do we solve racism and how—” you know, and then pat ourselves on the back and walk away. Or we could just show them what we can do. And let's just do that because this is irritating. Let's stop talking. So I was friends with my—first teacher, then mentor, then friend, Michael Patrick Thornton. And I knew he had this theatre company called The Gift and I went to him and I said, “Hey, would The Gift put this reading on? I had this idea I was—I'm hoping you can be a part of it, but like, I want to just get every actor that I have a talent crush on and put them in a play together. All these people who have never worked together before. And they don't have to play stereotypes. They just get to play what they've always wanted to play; what they've always dreamed of playing, that they weren't ever able to because they weren't led into the room. And so, Mike, of course, is huge on this idea of inclusion and accessibility and was like, “That's a beautiful idea. I won't do it.” And I was like, “Oh, cool.” He's like, “I'll help you do it, but you should do it.” And I was like, “But you have a theatre company and I don't... okay.” So that's kind of where it started was: I'm a fan girl of so many Chicago theatre actors and I wanted to put them on stage together to play in an American classic.

Caroline Neff:

What was the play?

Emjoy Gavino:

It was *The Time of Your Life* by William Saroyan.

Caroline Neff:

Yeah, yeah.

Emjoy Gavino:

Which I know Steppenwolf did an incredible production with and, you know, we thought about a lot of different plays, but we knew we wanted a big ensemble show. And I loved it when I read it in college, and I reread it and I was like, “This is about the American dream.” Like there is there's probably not a better show to, to do this with. And there were very few ethnic specific—specificities, in the character breakdown, which was kind of going to be my point. Which is, you know, it says this person is a dreamer, this person is a dancer, this person is—whatever. And that could look and sound like so many different things. And you could actually do that with many, many classic contemporary works in the

canon. And I knew to pitch this idea to the Chicago theatre population, to the gatekeepers, it had to be excellent. And in order for it to be excellent, it had to have the range of talent that I knew we had in Chicago. I wanted Barbara Robertson, I wanted Alana Arenas. I wanted Mike Thornton. But I also wanted these non-union actors who I've worked with, who I've been in the room with, who were fearless, who have just so much talent, like spilling out of them, that they would infect everybody around them and I wanted them in it too. But to do that we needed to partner with Equity. Equity, I assumed, would be on board with this; would happily just help us out in every way. They looked at the cast list that we wanted to have, and they said, "Cool. So that'll be \$3,000 for one reading." For one night.

Caroline Neff:

For one night?

Emjoy Gavino:

For one night. And I think the reason was: A) we wanted to do it in a theater because the point was, we had to see all of these bodies on stage together. We also wanted to take donations so that we could do this again. And we also wanted to invite press. And I guess with those stipulations, those three things meant this is the contract that they could give us. And so, we did one of those crowd sourced fundraisers, and I was just like, "I don't—we're not going to be able to—we wanted to raise at least 5000 just for some cushion." And so, we just asked on Facebook and we said, "Look, we're just trying to change the stage picture in Chicago, because we're tired of feeling this way. We're tired of being separated from each other; we're tired of our audiences being separated. We're tired of people not being able to be in the same room together because of economic status or gender identity, or physical ability. This art form should allow for everyone to be in the same room." That was our point. And it was phenomenal because the people who were sending us money were people who could not—these people couldn't afford to give us that money. We were raising funds from actors who weren't in the place to give us what they were giving us, and audience members who weren't in the place to give us what they were giving us. But they wanted that stage picture changed, too. And when we realized that—when we saw all the money coming in, when we had to shift from the upstairs tiny theater at VG, because we doubled by 200%, and move to the downstairs space the day of the reading, we realized, "This is something that people are hungry for." And then when we realize that we're like, "Well, we have to actually keep going and we have to push this further." Because it can't just be a reading. It can't just be coming from us. It can't just be produced by actors. We realized after that moment that the next step was partnering with theatre companies and talking to artistic leaders and asking them "Hey, what's up? What are you going to do?" And then as, you know, as we showed them with our first reading, "Hey, look at what these actors can do," we would, with each theater company that we were working with, show them what our process was. And not in a didactic way. Because if they signed up with us, they knew what they were getting. They knew what our agenda was. But a lot of it was "I'm going to introduce you to some actors that you absolutely should know. Because they haven't been on your radar because you haven't been looking for them. But guess what they're here and they're actually perfect for this show." And, and we tried to work with theaters who were open to the idea. But also, we said, "Pick a show that you would put in your season next year." And we'd plant that little seedling in their head. And then we would help them program a reading that was as accessible as possible. Pay-what-you-can tickets, closed captioning. And with every reading, we learned more and more. And they learned more and more about what an inclusive theatrical experience could be. And so that's, that's really the origins of it. And then, from there, it's just kind of like, "Well, what else does our community need?" And then we would shift and pivot to the training programs and to meetings with artistic directors and to talks with college students. And, you know, it's ever evolving.

Caroline Neff:

Just hearing that origin story (some of which I knew a little bit about)—but it feels to me so much like you Emjoy, as a human being, is like, “Hey, there's a need, can it be met? How can I meet it?” And your ability to bring things forward like that. And so, I guess what I'm curious about is where do you see the future of Chicago Inclusion Project? And how would you say that its mission statement has shifted in the last few years?

Emjoy Gavino:

Oh, man. It's such a hard question, because, you know, like—it's not even a joke—we talk about all the time, how our goal of the Chicago Inclusion Project is for us not to have to exist. Do you know what I mean?

Caroline Neff:

It's like, yeah, it's like oncologists. We'd love to put ourselves out of business.

Emjoy Gavino:

Right, right. Ideally. We know that's not going to happen. We know that, like, the things that we're working towards, we're probably—oh, not to be a downer—but I'm not going to see a lot of what I want to see in my lifetime. Right? But what I want to work towards—and what has shifted in 2020 (I can speak definitely to this moment) is that we're realizing that—our complicity in white supremacy, right? We're complicit just because we're in theatre. And we live in America. So, we're born into this already, this system.

Caroline Neff:

Yeah.

Emjoy Gavino:

And the way Inclusion Project—I mean, let's be honest—the way Emjoy Gavino started working as an artist and as an advocate, was to try to bring people who didn't necessarily see to my level, what I wanted them to see. And just reach in and bring them up to this idea. And it was a lot of emotional labor. It was a lot of pieces of my heart that I desperately wanted to give, but it costs me so much. And it costs so many of us who do this kind of work so much, because it's so deeply personal. And I'm looking at that cost in 2020. In you know, now people are like having this “aha moment” of like, “Oh, you were hurting? Oh, my bad. Oh, let's figure out how to fix that.” Fine, cool. I was telling you that 10 years ago, fine. But instead of putting all of our energies and effort into bringing those people up to our level so that we can finally have that conversation and to push them into action, pivoting now, to caring for the marginalized artists that we've been trying to uplift. But putting more of our attention on them. And care for them. And “What do you need?” And yes, we will try to educate the people who need that education and provide resources if they need it. But we need to—it needs to be 50/50. And it wasn't before. And that goes for me as an individual person. Like, I can't give you my time and energy the way I was able to five years ago—the way I was able to two years ago. I can't. And I don't want to see people who look like me, or have gone through the hardships similar to me, to go—I don't want anyone to have to go through that anymore. And so, we have to start healing each other. And that work can happen alongside the strides that need to happen with the gatekeepers who really need to catch up to the conversation. We can help that, but not while costing us, ourselves.

Stage Manager:

Alright, everyone. Fifteen minutes. Fifteen minutes, please, to the top of the show. Fifteen minutes.

Caroline Neff:

Were you working on Chicago Inclusion Project before you started working as a casting director?

Emjoy Gavino:

It's so weird. I just realized: everything happened in 2015. Like, everything was building up to 2015, but I got named Gift Casting Director, officially, in 2015. We launched Inclusion Project in 2015. And I was also unofficially casting for Remy Bumppo in 2015. I just kind of got shoved into that. I was kind of like dabbling in it like a couple years before with like some consultations. And "Here's a list of minority actors since you've never met them before and blah, blah, blah." And then just started to get paid for it that year, which I think is no coincidence, but like, it all happened at once.

Caroline Neff:

Where like, where do you find your inspiration for casting? Like when you're when you're sitting down with a script? Where does your brain begin from? Like, does it begin with a conversation with the director? Do you come in with some sort of like strong ideas? Is it—I don't know, how does that work?

Emjoy Gavino:

Oh, gosh. Yeah. Well, but you know, that there's like, a 5 million possibilities, right? And so, I'll read the script. But usually I'll have a conversation with the director first, just so that I don't go completely bonkers. Because really, unless it says "This person has to be this age, and this gender, and has to be able to do a cartwheel and has—" like, which, they rarely have that specific thing. So, it usually starts with a conversation with the director. Just because I also want to get an idea of the world they're trying to build. I've also been lucky because I've worked on a lot of new work. So also, I want to talk to the playwright and get in their brain. And then sometimes, and I'm sure you do this too, I still don't stay within their boxes. You know what I mean? I was just like, "Cool. You think you want this actor, because you've only known that actor, but have you met so-and-so?" And also, I think you and I and a few other wonderful casting directors in Chicago have this other gift of having been in ensembles with some of these actors. So, we know not only the integrity of what they bring to rehearsal room, but also the things that directors haven't seen them do, we know they can do. And so, I try to give as many—if there's not a lot of time—a limited amount of options, but as many options as I can possibly give per that casting breakdown. Like "If it says this, could it also mean this, this and this? Like what are your givens?" And then from there, I just try to show them Chicago as much as I possibly can. And, and even then, I always have the "Oh, I could have called in so and so you *know* that moment." But—

Caroline Neff:

Yeah, if only we could cast every play 10 times over.

Emjoy Gavino:

And I can a lot of the time!

Caroline Neff:

Right. And I still feel like, "Oh, man, we're not quite—we're not getting everybody in here that we wish we could have."

Emjoy Gavino:

Yeah, yeah.

Caroline Neff:

Now, I definitely want to talk to you about your acting career because it is one of the most versatile and interesting resumes, because you do new plays, classical plays, musicals. I don't know that there's a genre of theater that you have not, or could not, do. You were in the musical *Working*.

Emjoy Gavino:

Oh, gosh, yeah.

Caroline Neff:

With so many incredible actors, which is a musical adaptation of a Studs Terkel, oral history, right? So, then you did *Iphigenia at Aulis* and you've done a number of the Greek classical plays down at The Court. And then, you know, you and I have gotten to work on contemporary plays like *You Got Older* by Clare Barron and *4000 Miles* by Amy Herzog. But then you're also such a sort of brilliant shepherd of new work as an actor. I don't know how you look at a Greek text, and then how you look at *You Got Older*, and you're like, "I feel confident in both of these." Because I look at both of those and am like "I should hire a coach."

Emjoy Gavino:

You are assuming that I'm confident at anything ever, which I'm not. I'm not. So, I approach both of those things with extreme anxiety, but the same anxiety actually. And you know, a lot of the Greek texts that we were working with was highly contemporary—contemporized by, you know, the adaptation. But you know: I am heart-led. Like that is—that's kind of the through line with all of my stuff. And I think, you know, back when I thought I was going to do musicals—and I'll be honest, the only reason that I sing at all and I do musicals at all is because I thought that was the only way Asians could get on stage when I was younger. Which it looked like it was. And so—or *Joy Luck Club*, which I was in. But, you know, I learned—I taught myself how to sing because Lea Salonga sang, and that was the only Asian I knew who did—who was on stage. And so, I learned how to incorrectly belt, and I got myself into musicals. And I did that out of desperation and necessity. But I think—and you've done musicals, or musical type things, I've seen you do it—but there is something that lends itself to things like classical text or things like heightened language, that—they all help each other out, right? That if you if you're lucky enough to have a smart dramaturg and director you can, you can be heart-led. And if you trust the text, the rhythms are there. And the musical stuff just kind of help with that, as kind of a muscle memory.

Stage Manager:

Attention everyone: this is your five-minute call. Five minutes, please. Five minutes to the top of the show. Five minutes.

Caroline Neff:

Now, you've listened to the podcast.

Emjoy Gavino:

Oh, yes.

Caroline Neff:

So, I would love to ask you, as we do with all of our guests: what does your half hour look like?

Emjoy Gavino:

Yeah. I mean, my actor half hour, will depend on the show, and the role, and what it needs. But, as you know, I usually make myself a Spotify playlist. Usually titled *What's on Kathy's iPad* or iShuffle or whatever. And just kind of like music that will get me in the mood of my character or to the starting emotional point of that character. And also, because I'm socially awkward, it will also prevent me from having to have small talk with people that I don't always want to small talk. And that—it'll also depend on if I don't have that much pressure on myself in the show, I'll be a Chatty Cathy sometimes. But usually earbuds in my ears blasting, let's be honest, Brandi Carlile.

Caroline Neff:

Are you ready for a lightning round?

Emjoy Gavino:

Oh yeah.

Caroline Neff:

Okay. What is your favorite Steppenwolf production you've ever seen?

Emjoy Gavino:

Shoot. Oh. Can I say two? I'll say—the first one that came to my head—you were there. I did School at Steppenwolf the year that *August Osage* was going on tour to Australia. And Amy Morton was one of my Meisner teachers. And they invited our class and then some special guests like yourself to come watch their rehearsal at Yondorf. And so, there was no set, no costumes. It was just the actors saying the text like, you know, a few feet away from us. And I just couldn't. I didn't know what to do with myself. I couldn't believe that was my teacher. I couldn't believe that all the things that I've been learning for the past 10 weeks was, like, happening in front of me, like 10 million times over. And I knew how lucky I was to be in that room. That moment was just has everything.

Caroline Neff:

Agreed, agreed.

Emjoy Gavino:

But then also, *Brothers Size* was also when I first ugly snotted in public. So, that's that.

Caroline Neff:

What is the toughest experience you've had as an actor?

Emjoy Gavino:

Working at the Broadway Playhouse. That was the show that turned me Equity. It was the only commercial run I've ever done. And it was hard in every single sense that it could be hard.

Caroline Neff:

What is your most prized piece of play memorabilia?

Emjoy Gavino:

So, it wasn't technically in the play, but you know that I inherited a couple of deer from the marketing campaign of *You Got Older*. And we named them Sparkle and Heart. And they are in my apartment. And they are always watching. And I love them so much.

Caroline Neff:

What is your favorite moment of any live theatrical experience whether you're performing or not?

Emjoy Gavino:

Oh, God. That's such a good hard question. I did you see *Hit the Wall*?

Caroline Neff:

Yeah. A few times.

Emjoy Gavino:

The riot scene. I've seen it in every iteration, I saw it at The Garage. I saw it at Theater on the Lake. I saw it in New York. I saw when it went back to Wit and I saw it—the anniversary last year when they did it at the 1700. And every single time they get to that riot scene, and my heart stops and I can't breathe, and I'm so happy that I do theatre and that I know those beautiful people that worked on that piece and that moment. But like it's everything—that riot scene is everything that theatre should be. I loved it so much.

Caroline Neff:

That is an incredible play. What job didn't you get that broke your heart?

Emjoy Gavino:

I auditioned for *Into the Woods*, back when I thought I could do musicals, in Seattle. And I was cast as Cinderella. I am an alto. I am a comic alto and I want it to be Little Red and I could kill that role today, even though I'm way too old for it. I know how that role should go. They cast me as Cinderella, which was very nice. It's a very nice role. I'm not a soprano. The reviews dragged me, and I was like "Of course I'm bad; I'm not a soprano!" So, like, yeah, that one still stings. Still a little bitter about that.

Caroline Neff:

What—this is such a good question for you Emjoy—what is the last song you listened to?

Emjoy Gavino:

Oh. Oh, have you listened to Bethany Thomas's new album?

Caroline Neff:

Not yet.

Emjoy Gavino:

Oh my gosh, Caroline. Do it tonight.

Caroline Neff:

I think I will.

Emjoy Gavino:

There's I mean, there's so many good songs on there. But there's this one song. Do you ever have that song, when you're a teenager, where you play it and you know it's going to make you cry—

Caroline Neff:

Yes.

Enjoy Gavino:

And then you just like play it. I mean, *Surfacing*, Sarah McLachlan, like the whole album. Like yeah, that was me. But it has been replaced by a song called “The Waves” on Bethany Thomas's new album. And it's so beautiful, but also the lyrics are just so poignant and so right now that like, I'll just, I'll play it knowing that it'll make me cry, and just have the most wonderful catharsis. Which I had earlier this afternoon.

Caroline Neff:

Who is your favorite writer?

Enjoy Gavino:

You know, it changes depending on the week. Right now, Samantha Irby is giving me a lot of joy. I'm rereading *Meaty* because I've read all of her other books at this point. But. Samantha Irby, right now.

Caroline Neff:

What is your favorite place to unwind in Chicago.

Enjoy Gavino:

Well, in the before times, it was the olive oil and vinegar aisle of Mariano's, you know? But it's not so relaxing right now. So, I would say the gazebo in Welles Park, particularly if you happen to be there when a string quartet is playing or rehearsing, which I did twice. Twice they were there when I was there, and I was like, “This is so happy-making.” It was great.

Caroline Neff:

It's like when you accidentally catch the Holiday Train.

Enjoy Gavino:

Exactly. Exactly like that. *[Laughter]*

Caroline Neff:

What animal do you most identify with?

Enjoy Gavino:

[Laughter] Oh god, I even knew this was coming. Oh, okay. Have you ever Googled “animals dressed as other animals”?

Caroline Neff:

No.

Enjoy Gavino:

Okay. First of all: it's a very controversial thing because either you will love it, like I do, or you will be offended that I told you to Google it. But, you will feel one of those things. There is a picture somewhere on the internet, of a dachshund dressed as a lobster. So already a highly strung, awkward animal, dressed in something so wrong. And I think it's also a little too big for him. And I feel like I saw that picture and I was like, “I know how that kid feels. That is Enjoy in a nutshell.”

Caroline Neff:

All right, final question here. If you were a character in a play, what would your character's description be?

Emjoy Gavino:

I love this question. Okay, everybody's *ate, ate* in Tagalog, is older sister. So, everybody's *ate*. Annoyingly optimistic for everyone else, except for her. Double-jointed in all the wrong places. [Laughter]

Caroline Neff:

Should have played Little Red Riding Hood in—

Emjoy Gavino:

Should have Little Red Riding Hood in *Into the Woods!* Boom. [Laughter]

Stage Manager:

All right, everyone, this is your places call. Places, please, for the top of the show. Have a wonderful show tonight. Places, please. Places.

Caroline Neff:

That's it for this episode of Half Hour brought to you by Steppenwolf Theatre Company.

Audrey Francis:

Thanks for listening.

Cliff Chamberlain:

And thanks again to our guest this week: Emjoy Gavino.

Caroline Neff:

To learn more about the Chicago Inclusion Project, check out their website at thechicagoinclusionproject.org.

Audrey Francis:

Half Hour is produced by Patrick Zakem, mixed and edited by Matthew Chapman.

Cliff Chamberlain:

The theme music for *Half Hour* is by Rob Milburn and Michael Bodeen.

Caroline Neff:

Today's stage manager was Michelle Medvin.

Audrey Francis:

Special thanks to Erin Cook, Joel Moorman Kara Henry, Gin To—

Cliff Chamberlain:

And all the folks at Steppenwolf.

Caroline Neff:

Follow us on Twitter @Steppenwolfthtr, or on Facebook and Instagram.

Audrey Francis:

And you can always get in touch by emailing halfhour@steppenwolf.org. Till next time, this is Audrey Francis—

Cliff Chamberlain:

Cliff Chamberlain—

Caroline Neff:

And Caroline Neff. A lifetime to engage; half hour to places