

A **NEW** SUPERHERO PLAY BY EMILIO RODRIGUEZ

AN UNLIKELY HERO



JANUARY 17-26

A/MFA Arkansas Museum
of Fine Arts

A JOINT COMMISSION, DEVELOPMENT, AND ROLLING WORLD PREMIERE BY METRO THEATRE COMPANY, ST LOUIS, MO, TRIKE THEATRE, BENTONVILLE, AR, AND ARKANSAS MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, LITTLE ROCK, AR, AS PART OF WITH GREAT POWER: THE TYA BIPOC SUPERHERO PROJECT.

AN UNLIKELY HERO IS SUPPORTED BY THE REBSAMEN FUND

CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAMS ARE SUPPORTED BY THE SHUBERT FOUNDATION AND THE ALICE L. WALTON FOUNDATION

ABOUT THE SHOW

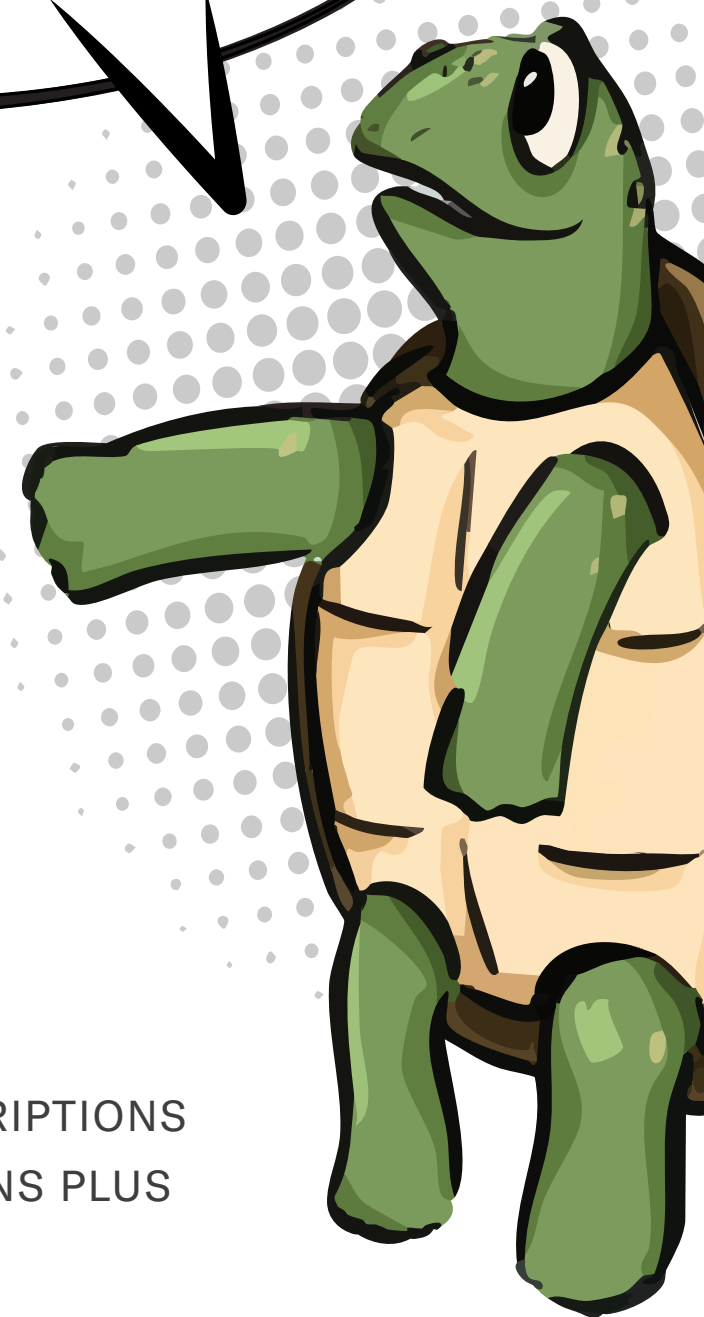
Jordan is a regular kid trying to find their way at Haven High, the hero school where superpowers are unlocked. Will a love of comic books finally set Jordan on the path to self-discovery? Surrounded by a school full of superheroes in the making, will Jordan find a way to fit in?

This rolling world premiere production is part of “With Great Power: The TYA BIPOC Superhero Project,” an unprecedented national partnership involving 23 playwrights and 27 theaters for young audiences dedicated to creating a new generation of plays about heroes for young people.

RUNNING TIME: 60 MINUTES RECOMMENDED AGE: 5 AND UP

AUDIO DESCRIPTION FOR SATURDAY, JANUARY 25 AT 10:30 AM PROVIDED BY CREATIVE DESCRIPTIONS
ASL INTERPRETATION FOR SATURDAY, JANUARY 25 AT 2:00 PM PROVIDED BY COMMUNICATIONS PLUS

IN A WORLD OF
HEROES AND VILLAINS
FINDING YOUR WAY IS
TRICKIER THAN IT SEEMS



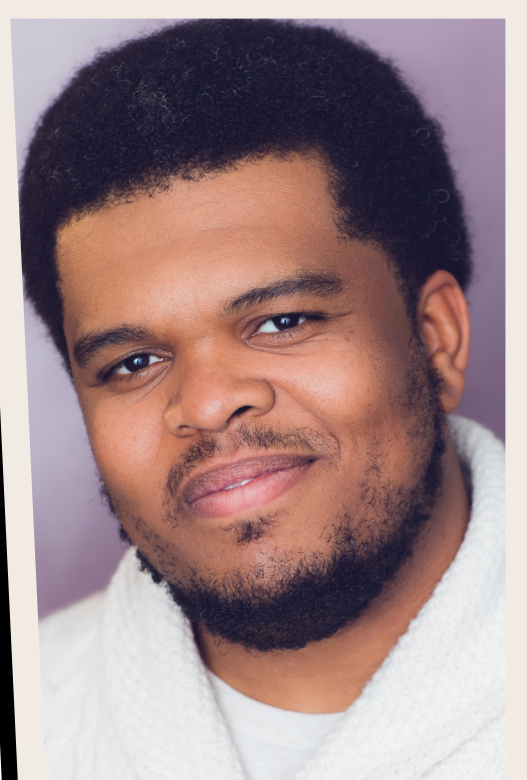
ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT: EMILIO RODRIGUEZ



Emilio Rodriguez is a playwright, director, and theatre artist whose works have been produced in cities across the U.S. and internationally, including Miami, Seattle, Houston, Ann Arbor, and Puerto Vallarta. He is the recipient of several honors, including the inaugural Culture Source Creators of Culture award, the Catalyst for Change Grant from Surdna and NALAC, and the Kresge Artist in Detroit award for playwriting. Emilio founded programs such as the Our Voices Theatre Project, the Once Upon a Rhyme Series, and the All the Web's A Stage Monologue Competition. He also teaches playwriting and acting at the University of Michigan and the Michigan Actors Studio.
IG: @emiliowritesplays

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR: FERGIE PHILIPPE

Fergie Philippe has appeared on Broadway in *Hamilton* as Hercules Mulligan and James Madison, and in *Camelot* as Sir Sagramore. Off-Broadway, he played Bob/Willis in Jason Robert Brown's *The Connector*. His television credits include *The Good Fight*, *Law and Order: SVU*, and *The Gilded Age*, as well as the film *Space Cadet*. As a director, Fergie has led productions across the country, including *Death of a Driver* and the world premiere of *Poor People*. A skilled puppeteer, he has contributed to projects such as *Aanika's Elephants*, *Jupiter's Journey to Earth*, *Rescue Rue*, and Disney's *The Little Mermaid*. Fergie extends his gratitude to Rose, his family, and AMFA for this opportunity. "I love you 3000."



MAKING THE PLAY

In the fall of 2021, Detroit-based playwright Jose Casas launched a national call for theatres catering to young audiences to join an unprecedented play commissioning project. AMFA's Children's Theatre department signed on immediately and began the multi-year project of developing *An Unlikely Hero*. AMFA was paired with two theatres in our region by the following fall, and together we selected Emilio Rodriguez as our playwright for the project. We held development workshops in Bentonville and St. Louis in 2023, where Emilio Rodriguez and the creative teams from the three theaters shaped draft after draft. By the spring of 2024, a final version was approved, and *An Unlikely Hero* was born.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE
NATIONAL SUPERHERO PLAY PROJECT

A SUPER SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR COLLABORATORS FROM METRO THEATRE COMPANY IN ST. LOUIS MO AND TRIKE THEATRE IN BENTONVILLE, AR, WITHOUT WHOM THIS PRODUCTION WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE. OUR THANKS GO TO JOSE CASAS, THE ORIGINATOR OF THE PLAY PROJECT, AND TO ALL THE UNLIKELY HEROES EVERYWHERE IN OUR COMMUNITY.

MEET THE MAKERS



CREATIVE TEAM

Director - Fergie Philippe
Scenic Design - Jayson M. Lawshee
Costume Design - Lou Bird
Lighting Design - Andrew Shelton

Sound Design - Lamar Harris
Puppet Design - Afsanah Aayani
Props Master - Allyson Sims
Stage Manager - Baleigh Almond

CAST



"JORDAN"

Adrian Hinojosa

"ALEX"

Quinn Gasaway

"ZION"

Tim Cooper

"DR. MARS"

Verda Davenport

"CHELLE"

LaDarius Lamar Jamerson

ENSEMBLE / UNDERSTUDY

Sarah Nichols

ENSEMBLE / UNDERSTUDY

Xander Udochi

PRODUCTION CREW

Artistic Producer - Chad Bradford
Technical Direction - Andrew Shelton
Production Manager - Liz McMath
Scenic Charge Artist - Baleigh Almond
Carpenter - Aaron Burnside

Costume Shop Manager - Anthony McBride
Audio Lead - Luke Mitchell
Sound Board Operator - Jessi Perren
Backstage Run Crew - Sarah Nichols and Xander Udochi

ADRIAN HINOJOSA (JORDAN)

Adrian Hinojosa is thrilled to return to AMFA! He was previously seen as Harsha in *Madeline's Christmas* and worked as crew and understudy for *Dragons Love Tacos*. Recently, Adrian has been active in Arkansas's short film industry and is excited about the upcoming debut of his latest projects. He holds a BA in Theatre with a Minor in Dance from Henderson State University in Arkadelphia. In his free time, Adrian enjoys teaching mime. "I am grateful for the opportunities in the Little Rock area. We must work diligently to keep our theater scene alive!"

QUINN GASAWAY (ALEX)

Quinn Gasaway is an actor, musician, and hand soap enthusiast born and raised in Little Rock. He made his film debut as a child in the Coen Brothers' *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*. After earning a BFA in Acting from Oklahoma City University, he spent time honing his craft in New York, Chicago, and nearly a decade in Los Angeles. Quinn grew up performing on this very stage and is delighted to return after appearing in last year's *Dragons Love Tacos*. He thanks his parents and his beautiful girlfriend, Cozy, for their unending love and support.

TIM COOPER (ZION)

Tim Cooper, a music teacher at St. Mark's Episcopal Day School, is also a freelance actor, music director, and voice teacher. He has been performing since the age of 13 and recently appeared in *Henry V* with Shake on the Lake in New York. At Murry's Dinner Playhouse, his roles have included Bob Wallace in *White Christmas*, Jack in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Paul in *Barefoot in the Park*, and Gaston in *Beauty and the Beast*. Tim is excited to perform in theater for young audiences for the first time and to make his AMFA debut. When not on stage, he enjoys gardening, hiking, backpacking, fishing, and wild foraging.

VERDA DAVENPORT (DR. MARS)

Verda Davenport is excited to return to the AMFA stage after making her directing debut with *Corduroy*. Her past AMFA performances include *The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show* (Puppeteer), *Charlotte's Web* (Charlotte), *Junie B. Jones* (Grace), and *The Snowy Day and Other Stories* by Ezra Jack Keats (Amy and Archie). You may also recognize Verda as Camp Counselor Carol in the AR PBS and AMFA collaboration *Blueberry's Clubhouse*.

LADARIUS LAMAR JAMERSON (CHELLE)

LaDarius Lamar Jamerson is proud to return to the AMFA stage in *An Unlikely Hero*. Earlier this year, LaDarius made his directing debut at AMFA with *Sparking Dialogue: Breaking the Box*. His recent performance credits include Curtis Taylor Jr. (*Dreamgirls*), Billy (*Chicago*), Tom Collins (*RENT*), Albert/Kevin (*Clybourne Park*), and Orlando (*As You Like It*). "I am so proud to work with this incredible cast and crew. Thank you for the chance to showcase my talents both on and off the stage. Enjoy the show, everyone!"

SARAH NICHOLS (ENSEMBLE / UNDERSTUDY)

Sarah Nichols is delighted to return to AMFA's Children's Theatre! She previously performed in *Wynken, Blynken, and Nod* and worked as crew and understudy for *Corduroy*. A graduate of ASU Jonesboro with a BFA in Theatre, Sarah has performed with Murry's Dinner Playhouse, AMFA, and Praeclara. One of her favorite roles was Fiona in *Shrek: The Musical*. Sarah also enjoys film work and recently appeared in the Arkansas PBS children's show *Mystery League*. Performing brings her so much joy, and she hopes your family enjoys the show!

XANDER UDOCHI (ENSEMBLE / UNDERSTUDY)

Xander Udochi is a Nigerian American actor specializing in theater and film as a fight choreographer and combatant with The Society of American Fight Directors. He trained at the University of Central Arkansas, where he earned his degree before collaborating with artists nationwide. Xander is excited to make his AMFA debut! His past credits include Ms. Medda's Stage Manager/Guard/Officer in *Newsies* (Wildwood), Dromio of Syracuse (Bard at the Bar), Sergeant Fogarty/Martin Harrison/Ensemble (Actors Theatre of Little Rock), Storyteller (Studio Theatre), and Tybalt/Friar Lawrence (Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre).

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

ARRIVE EARLY

Arriving 15-30 minutes early allows time to locate your tickets, buy concessions, make a final trip to the restroom, and find your seats.

TURN OFF ELECTRONICS

Lights and sounds from phones and other electronic devices are distracting to other patrons as well as the performers. Photography and videography is not allowed during the performance.

BE AISLE KIND

Say “pardon me” and “thank you” as you move through the aisle; tuck your belongings under our seat to remove tripping hazards; stand up, when possible, to let others move past you when finding their seats. Be sure to take all your belongings with you when you leave and throw away any rubbish on your way out.

PLAY YOUR PART

Watch and listen; laugh at funny bits; applaud at the spectacular. Be present and in the moment with the performers.

[CLICK HERE FOR A FUN VIDEO](#)

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

USE THESE DISCUSSION PROMPTS AFTER SEEING THE SHOW TO THINK CRITICALLY ABOUT THE THEMES FROM THE SHOW.

In the play you saw that Zion's fire power was cancelled out by Alex's ice power. **Think of two superpowers that can work together to help save the day. How does each help the other?**

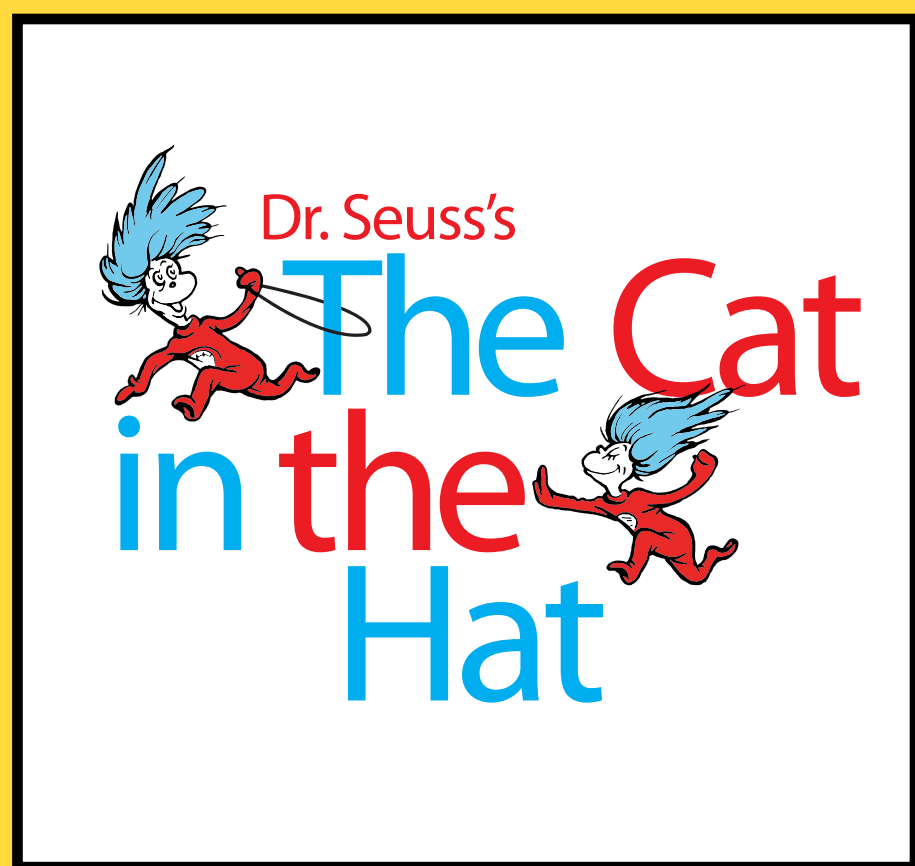
In the play Jordan was trying to find out if he belonged at Haven High or Broken Plains. **What does it mean to belong? What groups (teams, clubs, schools, or even your family) do you belong to? How do you know you belong to those different groups?**

The students at Haven High are learning to be the heroes of their own stories. **What is a hero to you? What does it mean to be the hero of your own story?**



WE ARE
SUPER EXCITED
 TO SEE YOU AGAIN SOON!

IF YOU ENJOYED ***AN UNLIKELY HERO***,
 YOU WILL LOVE...



THE CAT IN THE HAT
 March 15-29
 ON SALE NOW

Age: 5 and up

GET YOUR TICKETS

ADDITIONAL READING

Continue the adventure – check out these superhero stories at your local library.



***EVEN SUPERHEROES
 MAKE MISTAKES***

BY SHELLY BECKER



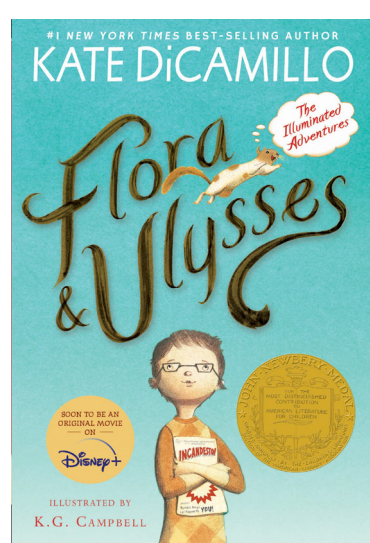
***MIA MAYHEM IS A
 SUPERHERO!***

BY KARA WEST



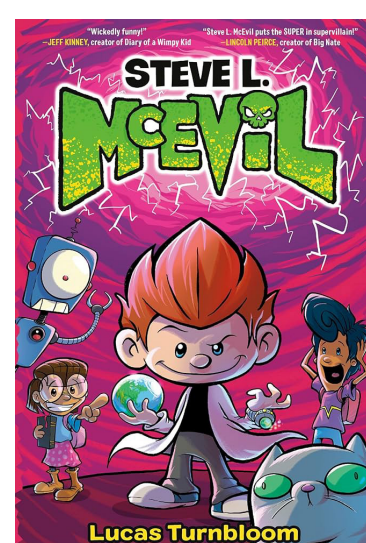
***FUTURE HERO: RACE
 TO FIRE MOUNTAIN***

BY REMI BLACKWOOD



***FLORA & ULYSSES:
 THE ILLUMINATED ADVENTURES***

BY KATE DICAMILLO



***STEVE L.
 MCEVIL***

BY LUCAS TURNBLOOM