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First Stage's Virtual Season of Plays continues with comedic romp

SHE KILLS MONSTERS: VIRTUAL REALMS

-Featuring First Stage Theater Academy's Advanced Acting students-

Written by Qui Nguyen

Directed by Coltyn Robert Giltner

Milwaukee, WI – November 18, 2020 – First Stage continues its imaginative exploration of all things virtual with **SHE KILLS MONSTERS: VIRTUAL REALMS**, a comedic romp into the world of fantasy role-playing games. The play is written by acclaimed young playwright **Qui Nguyen**. Premiering at New York's Flea Theater in 2011, with productions following in Chicago, Boston and Washington, D.C., the play was the seventh most produced play at U.S. high schools during the 2018/19 school year, the first time the work was made available for educational, amateur and stock licensing. This year a new adaptation was released by Concord Theatricals intended for virtual audiences via video conferencing platforms such as Zoom.

SHE KILLS MONSTERS: VIRTUAL REALMS tells the story of high schooler Agnes Evans as she leaves her childhood home in Ohio following the death of her teenage sister, Tilly. When Agnes finds Tilly's *Dungeons & Dragons* notebook, however, she stumbles into a journey of discovery and action-packed adventure in the imaginary world that was Tilly's refuge. In this high-octane dramatic comedy laden with homicidal fairies, nasty ogres and '90s pop culture, Nguyen offers a heart-pounding homage to the geek and warrior within us all. Sponsored by the **Molitor Foundation**.

SHE KILLS MONSTERS: VIRTUAL REALMS streams **now – November 22, 2020**. Tickets are available for \$15, \$25 or \$40. Patrons are encouraged to choose the price point that best fits their family and budget. Ticket buyers will receive an access code to stream this performance through the streaming service Broadway On Demand. Tickets can be purchased online at www.firststage.org or by phone at **(414) 267-2961**. *Please note: this production contains some*

mature language and mild adult themes, and is suggested for audiences ages 13 and older.

New this year: **Family All-Access Pass Membership** includes streaming access to this and all other virtual productions this season and starts at \$200 per household. More information is available at: www.firststage.org/membership.

Playwright **Qui Nguyen** had this to say about his new virtual adaptation, “I’m super excited to make SHE KILLS MONSTERS available in this way. Not only is it a fun challenge to re-imagine the play as something that would exist online, I also think it’s a great opportunity to explore a new means of creating live performance. The immediate benefit to making an online edition of *She Kills Monsters* is it allows all the schools and theatres that planned on producing it this season to have a means to continue to do so.” He continued, “But even beyond that, the ‘Virtual Realms Edition’ also creates a more accessible version of the show to different communities of actors and performance groups that would not be able to perform the show otherwise. Now, regardless of physical or financial challenges, there’s a way for (almost) everyone to be able to embody these characters and inhabit this world. That’s what excites me the most – that it’s now available to even more people to do.”

Added First Stage Artistic Director **Jeff Frank**, “This remarkable production has struck a resonant chord with the young people of America, and we are thankful that the playwright has created this new version especially for digital rehearsal and delivery. It is packed with magic, wonder and power.”

BIOGRAPHIES

Qui Nguyen (Playwright) is a TV/Film writer and Co-Founder of the OBIE Award-winning Vampire Cowboys Theatre Company in NYC. He and his work is known for its innovative use of pop culture, stage violence, puppetry and multimedia, has been called “Culturally Savvy Comedy” by *The New York Times*, “Tour de Force Theatre” by *Time Out New York* and Infectious Fun by *Variety*. Plays include VIETGONE, POOR YELLA REDNECKS, REVENGE SONG, KRUNK FU BATTLE BATTLE, BEGETS, TRIAL BY WATER and the critically-acclaimed Vampire Cowboys production of SHE KILLS MONSTERS, SOUL SAMURAI, THE INEXPLICABLE REDEMPTION OF AGENT G, ALICE IN SLASHERLAND, FIGHT GIRL BATTLE WORLD and LIVING DEAD IN DENMARK. TV/Film credits include: *Dispatches from Elsewhere* (AMC); *The Society* (Netflix); *Incorporated* (SyFy); *Peg+CAT* (PBS) and Marvel Studios. He’s currently a screenwriter for Walt Disney Animation Studios.

Coltyn Robert Giltner (Director) is the Director of Next Steps and a Resident Teaching Artist at First Stage, where he heads the Theater Academy’s Advanced Acting Program. Directing credits within the Academy include ALMOST, MAINE and DISNEY’S THE JUNGLE BOOK KIDS. Coltyn also directed the Wisconsin premiere production of WHEN SHE HAD WINGS as well as several devised projects at Zona Gale Young People’s Theatre, where he formerly served as Education Director. Select roles include: Sir Andrew Aguecheek in TWELFTH NIGHT (Salt Lake Shakespeare), Magnus in CLIMBING WITH TIGERS (Salt Lake Acting Company-World Premiere)

and The Wooer in THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN (University of Utah/Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Play On Series).

Jeff Frank (Artistic Director) is recognized as one of the top directors in the field with an expertise in developing new work for theater for young audiences, Jeff holds a BFA in Theater from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and an MFA in Child Drama from the University of Utah. Having served as First Stage's Education and Academy Director from 1996 – 2003 and as First Stage's Artistic Director since February 2003, Jeff remains committed to the power of theater to transform lives and is forever thankful to call First Stage home.

SHE KILLS MONSTERS: VIRTUAL REALMS features First Stage Young Performers **Josie Van Slyke** (Milwaukee) as Narrator/Vera; **Maya Thomure** (Whitefish Bay) as Tilly; **Maggie Stubbs** (Milwaukee) as Agnes; **Max Larson** (Milwaukee) as Chuck; **Charles Elliott** (Milwaukee) as Miles; **Olivia Vitrano** (Greendale) as Kaliopé/Kelly; **Isabella Schmitz** (Port Washington) as Lilith/Lilly; **Quinn Buzacky** (Whitefish Bay) as Orcus/Ronnie; **William Swoboda** (Milwaukee) as The Great Mage Steve; **Lucy Halpern** (Whitefish Bay) as Farrah The Faerie; **Phinlee Clarkin** (Milwaukee) as Evil Tina and **Lucy Kuhnen-Grooms** (Shorewood) as Evil Gabbi.

The Artistic Staff for SHE KILLS MONSTERS: VIRTUAL REALMS Includes: **Coltyn Robert Giltner** (Director); **Austin Winter** (Costume Coordinator); **Natalie Mayo** (Sound Coordinator); **Lauren Arzbaecher** (Digital Animation Coordinator); **Melissa L. Wanke**, Member of Actors' Equity Association, (Virtual Production Coordinator) and **Lindy Girman** (Virtual Production Intern).

For more information about any of the offerings for **Through Our Lens – A First Stage Virtual Performance Series** or about buying a Family All-Access Pass, please visit www.firststage.org or call **(414) 267-2961**. To see the schedule the 2020/21 Virtual Season of Plays, please visit: firststage.org/virtualseries2021.

FACT SHEET

About: SHE KILLS MONSTERS: VIRTUAL REALMS

Dates: Streaming now through November 22, 2020

Description: A comedic romp into the world of fantasy role-playing games, **SHE KILLS MONSTERS: VIRTUAL REALMS** is a high-octane dramatic comedy laden with homicidal fairies, nasty ogres and '90s pop culture – a heart pounding homage to the geek and warrior in us all. *Please note: this production contains some mature language and mild adult themes and is suggested for audiences 13 and older. Performance run time is one hour and 15 minutes.*

Tickets and information: Tickets are available for \$15, \$25 or \$40. Patrons are encouraged to choose the price point that best fits their family and budget. Ticket buyers will receive an access code to stream this performance through the streaming service Broadway On Demand. Tickets

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About First Stage

First Stage is one of the nation's leading theaters for young people and families. First Stage touches hearts, engages minds and transforms lives by creating extraordinary theater experiences through professional theater productions that inspire, enlighten and entertain. Its Theater Academy, the nation's largest high-impact theater training program for young people, fosters life skills through stage skills and serves nearly 2,000 students each year. As Wisconsin's leader in arts-integrated education in schools, First Stage's dynamic Theater in Education programs promote literacy, character building and experiential learning throughout the curriculum, serving over 20,000 students each year. First Stage was selected to participate in the Partners in Education program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (2012), and was the recipient of the *Milwaukee Business Journal's* Eureka Award, recognizing creativity and innovation in business, education and the arts for its Next Steps program for students on the autism spectrum (2013, 2015). First Stage is a member of TYA/USA, the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, the Wisconsin Alliance for Arts Education, Milwaukee Arts Partners and is a cornerstone member of the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF). www.firststage.org.