*Stevie and the Real World* Dramaturg’s Note (Draft 1/18/24)

*This is the not-so-true story of nine college students picked to go to a lake house and have their weekend filmed, to find out what happens when people stop being polite and start turning into puppets…*

Inspired in part by MTV’s once-groundbreaking show *The Real World* and written specifically for the eight actors in our third-year MFA cohort, Iraisa Ann Reilly’s play raises questions about self-actualization, entertainment, memory, perception, technological change, and dairy farming as the characters journey through space and time trying to open a portal to another dimension. Having variously left Boston, Paris, Los Angeles, and Kalamazoo to travel “up north,” they jog their memories in an effort to recapture their 2008 undergraduate experience sixteen years later.

During the first act, the characters try to remember what they did in 2008 that transported them to a different world. Their memories share some core elements, but the disparities highlight the importance of perception as each character remembers feeling left out or hurt, or in some cases making a particular connection. While Fran remembers Promise rejecting their familial relationship as siblings, Promise remembers being overshadowed and scolded by Fran. Andre recalls making a decision to befriend Athena because she respects him enough to try to communicate with him. Peter and Sebastian express mutual enmity due to their competing romantic interest in Shelby. Shelby’s memory focuses on her efforts to make Athena feel welcome, despite Athena’s perception that everyone ignored her. Fred offers a more detached point of view, framing himself as a director exploring film noir style.

Stevie, the ninth member of the group, is almost entirely left out of these memories. In the intervening years, others have become quite successful as an internationally renowned wedding planner, a filmmaker and television producer, two Michigan-based on-air television personalities, and two feuding ice cream entrepreneurs. Viewing Stevie as a loose end that threatens their ambition, they return to the lake hoping to make amends or further conceal their past. Stevie turns the tables, sending the others on a quest that requires reflecting on their bad behavior toward one another and to seek reconciliation, or at least resolution.

Final Draft:

**DRAMATURG’S NOTE**

*This is the not-so-true story of nine college students…picked to go to a lake house together… and have their weekend filmed… to find out what happens when people stop being polite…and start turning into puppets…*

Inspired in part by MTV’s once-groundbreaking show *The Real World* and written specifically for the eight actors in our third-year MFA cohort, Iraisa Ann Reilly’s play raises questions about self-actualization, entertainment, memory and perception, technological change, and dairy farming as the characters journey through space and time trying to re-open a portal to another dimension. Having variously left Boston, Paris, Los Angeles, and Kalamazoo to travel “up north” to a Michigan vacation home, they jog their memories in an effort to recapture their undergraduate experience from sixteen years later.

During the first act, the characters try to remember what they did in 2008 that transported them to a different world. Their memories share some core elements, but the disparities highlight the importance of perception as each character remembers feeling left out or hurt, or in some cases making a particular connection. Peter and Sebastian express mutual enmity due to their competing romantic interest in Shelby. While Fran remembers Promise rejecting their familial relationship as siblings, Promise remembers being overshadowed and scolded by Fran. Andre recalls feeling like an outsider, but making a decision to befriend Athena because she respects him enough to try to communicate with him and learn his name. Shelby’s memory focuses on her own efforts to make Athena feel welcome, despite Athena’s perception that everyone ignored her. Fred offers a more detached point of view, framing himself as a director exploring film noir style in contrast to the documentary style envisioned by Peter.

Stevie, the ninth member of the group, is almost entirely left out of these memories. In the intervening years, others have become quite successful as an internationally renowned wedding planner, a filmmaker and television producer, two Michigan-based on-air television personalities, and two feuding ice cream entrepreneurs. Viewing Stevie as a loose end that threatens their ambitions, they return to the lake hoping to make amends or further conceal their past. Stevie revels in disrupting their comfortable lives, sending the others on a quest to reflect on beginnings and betrayals in their relationships with one another. As their perceptions change, all must seek reconciliation, or at least resolution.