



**PRESS CONTACT:**

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**Stepping Stone Theater & The Annoyance Presents**

## **STARVING THE HEART**

**Directed by Jonald Jude Reyes**

**July 15 - September 9, 2022 at The Annoyance Theatre**

**CHICAGO** (July 8, 2022) - In this Co-Production of veteran Chicago comedy institution, **The Annoyance Theatre**, and new, up & coming comedy organization, **Stepping Stone Theater**, comes the world premiere of **STARVING THE HEART**, written by the performing cast and directed by **Jonald Jude Reyes**. This dramedy narrative with elements of improvisation will play **July 15 - September 9, 2022** at Mainstage of **The Annoyance Theatre** at 851 W. Belmont in Chicago. Tickets are currently available at [www.theannoyance.com](http://www.theannoyance.com) or by calling (773) 697-9693. PREVIEW performance is Friday, July 15 at 8pm. The press opening is Friday, July 22 at 8pm.

**STARVING THE HEART** features **Elim Almedom, Andrew Baldwin, Timmy Barron, Kimberly IHEME, Ali Khan, Jonathan Lee-Rey, Edgar Nevarez, Huy Nguyen and Tawny Safieddine.**

**STARVING THE HEART** follows the multiple narratives of people navigating through the balance of satisfying personal needs, family wants, and social norms. Following such storylines as Larry giving advice to his girlfriend's high school kid ; Michelle finding it difficult to curse in the office ; Bo being a proud gun-carrying American, or Derrick getting pulled over for violating his "Black Card", each path is met with an overlooking figure that judges us. With elements of improvisation, we find out what's in Danny's Employee Handbook ; what it's like to ride a bus in the Southside of Chicago ; and Kareem being interrogated by the TSA. In this very first stage production by Stepping Stone Theater, **STARVING THE HEART** truly exemplifies what diversity looks like in the United States of America.

The production team for **STARVING THE HEART** includes Julia Morales (Stepping Stone Theater Artistic Director), Joe McDaniel (Annoyance Theatre Producing Manager), and Sam McNerland (projection designer & stage manager).

## **PRODUCTION DETAILS:**

Title: **STARVING THE HEART**

Director: **Jonald Jude Reyes**

Written & Performed by: **Elim Almedom, Andrew Baldwin, Timmy Barron, Kimberly Iheme, Ali Khan, Jonathan Lee-Rey, Edgar Nevarez, Huy Nguyen and Tawny Safieddine.**

Location: The Annoyance Theatre, 851 W. Belmont, Chicago

Dates: Preview: Friday, July 15 at 8pm

Press performance: Friday, July 22 at 8pm

Regular run: Every Friday, July 22 - September 9, 2022 at 8pm

Please note: Proof of vaccination is required upon entrance of theatre & bar

Tickets: Preview: \$10

Regular run: \$15 - \$20

Tickets are currently available at [www.theannoyance.com](http://www.theannoyance.com) or by calling (773) 698-9693

## **CREATIVE BIOGRAPHIES**

**Elim Almedom** (Writer, Performer) is a performer and writer. She moved to Chicago in 2018, started taking improv classes at iO and has been performing ever since. In 2021, she completed the Bob Curry Fellowship at Second City and currently, she can be found performing around town at Annoyance, LSI and more! Follow her on Instagram @eleemonline if you want.

**Andrew Baldwin** (he/him) (Writer, Performer) is a musician, comedian, and writer from the alright state of Wisconsin. Since moving to Chicago, he has trained at the Second City Conservatory and The Annoyance. In addition to performing improv and sketch throughout Chicago, he is an ensemble member of Shamilton and Baby Wants Candy. On occasion, he still plays percussion to feel like he isn't wasting his music degrees. Feel free to find him on twitter/instagram: @andrew\_on\_drums or [www.andrewbaldwinpercussion.com](http://www.andrewbaldwinpercussion.com).

**Timmy Barron** (Writer, Performer) is no stranger to The Annoyance stages, Timmy has performed in many shows there including his solo show "Kid In Church", Comedy Central Showcase, and currently in "Starving The Heart." Timmy has performed with Second City aboard NCL The Star & Gem, was a writer & BAR TENDER in "Bye Bye Liver", has been seen on screen in "Chicago Fire", multiple commercials and indie films. Timmy is an acting coach and content creator making videos sharing what he knows about the business of acting and the industry that surrounds it. @timmyhartbarron

**Kim Iheme** (Writer, Performer) is a Chicago comedian from Minnesota. A diOveristy grad. A teacher at The Annoyance Theater . A Bob Curry Fellow. A true Taurus. Follow her @kimchasingberly

**Ali Khan** (he/him) (Writer, Performer) is an alum of Western Washington University, where he studied Creative Writing and was an ensemble member of the 2011 CIT improv champions, Dead Parrots Society. Around Chicago, Ali does Stand-Up, Sketch, performs with @BurntToastImprov, and films for @thescenecomedyvlog. He's trained at The Annoyance and is also graduate of The Second City Conservatory. Ali is thrilled to be performing in Stepping Stone's first stage production. Instagram: @khantheclown

**Jonathan Lee-Rey** (Writer, Performer) is an actor, writer, and filmmaker from Yonkers, NY with a splash of the Bronx. Currently, he is based in Chicago where he is the Artistic Director of Stir Friday Night, a producer of the Chicago iteration of Kaleidoscope, and the Community Outreach Manager of Stepping Stone Theater. Formerly he was on the iO Harold team Velvet and a member of Generation LatinX. He also made shorts with the iO Network team Free Trial Run and the indie film studio Make it Up Media. He has trained at UCB, iO, Second City, The Magnet and is a graduate of The Harold Ramis Film School and Skidmore College.

**Edgar Nevarez** (Writer, Performer) is a writer, performer, film and theater artist currently based in Chicago. In his four years in Chicago Edgar has completed The Second City Conservatory program, produced many independent original sketch shows, performed at several theaters(including The Second City, The Revival, ComedySportz Chicago, and Laugh Out Loud Theater in Schaumburg), directed shows at the high school level, and has played with various improv teams including FLEX(which can be seen every Wednesday night at The Annoyance). Edgar graduated from NYU Tisch School of the Arts in 2016 where he studied Film/TV. For updates on the work he is producing to help pay off his massive amount of student debt follow @edgarinator on Instagram or Twitter.

**Huy Nguyen** (he/him) (Writer, Performer) is delighted to work with Stepping Stone Theater and their inaugural show with this production of Starving the Heart in partnership with The Annoyance Theatre. Originally from the Pacific Northwest, Huy studied drama at the University of Washington before making his home in Chicago where he is a company member of the renowned TUTA Theatre. Chicago theatre highlights include Hedda Gabler and Radio Culture (TUTA); The Virginian: A Horseman of the Plains (City Lit Theater); At The Vanishing Point (The Gift Theatre); Neighborhood 3: Requisition of Doom (Bower Theatre Ensemble); Whisper House (Black Button Eyes); and The Winter's Tale (Odd's Bodkins). He is also a proud member of SAG-AFTRA. TV/Film credits include Better Call Saul (AMC); Ordinary Joe and Chicago Med (NBC); and A Christmas Witness (ION). He trained at The Second City, iO, and The Annoyance Theatre and has shown work on each of their stages. Huy believes that art should be accessible to anyone with an open heart and free mind. He is represented by Lily's Talent. Follow him on Instagram: @huynguyen.official

**Jonald Jude Reyes** (he/him) (Director) is a writer, performer, and director from Chicago by way of Rutgers University in New Jersey. He has trained at The Second City, iO, Annoyance, Chicago Dramatists and the Neo-Futurists. As a director, Jonald was honored to be named Chicago Reader's "Best of Chicago" Best Stage Director in 2016. He was a member of the Directors Lab at Lincoln Center Theater (2017) and DirectorsLabChicago (2016). His recent directing credits include The Second City Touring Company; Stir Friday Night's We Are Asian. We Do Comedy. (Steppenwolf Theatre's LookOut Series); Hyde Ya Kids, Hyde Ya Park (The Revival); and the 30th anniversary of "Splatter Theater" (Annoyance). Jonald is on the Steering Committee for DirectorsLabChicago, an Associate Artistic Director at The Revival and is a founding member of Stepping Stone Theater. He is an Associate Member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society. More info at [jonaldjude.com](http://jonaldjude.com)

**Tawny Safieddine** (she/her) (Writer, Performer) is a writer, performer, and voiceover artist who hails from the state of California and currently does comedy around Chicagoland. She has performed sketch as well as long and short form improv at different theaters in the city, including The Revival, The Annoyance, and iO, among others. Some highlights are performing with the musical improv team, Uncanny, and her solo sketch show Becoming Shakira. She is a graduate of Northwestern University and the Second City Conservatory. Currently, she is a Bob Curry Fellow and is part of the ensemble at Laugh Out Loud Theater as well as a member of the Trident Network video team, Roll Models. You can hear her voice in The Test, which is live online now at <https://www.the-test-play.co.uk>.

### **About Stepping Stone Theater**

Stepping Stone Theater is a non-profit organization created to celebrate and amplify the creative voices of BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, persons of disabilities, women, and non-POC allies of all ages by providing affordable and accessible resources with a focus on community outreach and theatrical performance. Recently awarded Chicago Reader's Best of Chicago 2021, Best New Theater Company, Stepping Stone is a welcoming performance organization for the comedy community. Their goal is to offer a variety of comedy classes for all interested students. In the future, they hope to have their own performance space that will house a bar and coffee shop, giving artists a safe space while partnering with local Chicago businesses.

<https://www.steppingstonechicago.com/>