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# *My White Husband* has World-Premiere at Moving Arts Theatre



**(Los Angeles, CA) - Moving Arts Theatre Company** is thrilled to announce the world-premiere of Leviticus Jelks' debut play, *My White Husband*, opening May 18th in Los Angeles with previews on May 16th and 17th. Excitement turns to doubt — and modern reality blurs into retro fantasy — when young screenwriter, Omar, gets his pilot picked up by a Hollywood studio, only to find out that they want to cast a White actor in the role of his very real Black husband. This classic comedy - a la Lucille Ball - meets subversive drama - a la Jordan Peele - in a delicious and unique combination. *My White Husband* is directed by Melissa Coleman-Reed and runs through June 23rd at the Moving Arts Theatre.

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## **About the Show**

Omar, a young writer with a great script about his life with his husband, has been trying to get his show “Omar Loves Ricky” made for years. Ricardo, a successful lawyer who gave up his practice in Atlanta to support Omar’s dreams, is trying to stay supportive. But waiting for this particular dream to pan out is taking them both to the end of their patience. And their savings. Salvation comes with a call from Susan, VP of Programming at Phoenix Studios, who wants to make Omar’s show. She loves the script, wouldn’t change a thing. Well, one tiny thing. She wants to change Omar’s very real Black husband to a White husband, specifically to White actor Julian Fisher, an Emmy winning teen heart throb who 20 years later is in need of a comeback. Bouncing back and forth between reality and Omar’s black and white fantasy world, he has to decide how far he’s willing to go to make those fantasies real. My White Husband looks at classic sitcom tropes, what they cost us, and asks – can a Black, gay couple survive a White husband? Born in the MADLab at Moving Arts, Program Director Dana Schwartz says, “Levi wrote this wonderfully funny, subversive and occasionally heartbreaking play while in our 2023 writer cohort, and after the first read we knew it was something really special. These are beautifully flawed characters living authentic lives, even when they become characters from a 50’s sitcom. I love this story and am so thrilled Levi has the chance to share it with a wider audience.”

## **Who**

The creative team includes director **Melissa Coleman-Reed**, Lighting Design by **Justin Huen**, Costume Design by **Mylete Nora**, Sound Design by **Nayla Hull**. **Carly DW Bones** is the Intimacy Director. **Darin Anthony** and **Dana Schwartz** will produce for Moving Arts. The cast includes **Devere Rogers, Clifton Adams, Brian Kimmet** and **Amie Farrell**.

Playwright **Leviticus Jelks** was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia. He received a BA in English from Clayton State University, where he also studied theatre and playwriting. He went on to pursue further study of playwriting at The Horizon Theatre as a Playwriting Fellow and at The Alliance Theatre as a Literary Intern. Afterward, Leviticus was accepted into the MFA Dramatic Writing program at Carnegie Mellon School of Drama. In his graduate years, the awards he received were the Sloan Screenwriting Award for the *River Gods* and the Lorraine Hansberry Award for *A Is for Apron*. His play, *Day of Saturn*, was accepted for a staged reading at the Blank Theatre in Los Angeles, and as a recipient of the Play LA Humanitas Award and was featured in The Road Theatre Summer Reading Festival. Shortly after moving to Los Angeles, Leviticus joined the Los Angeles Playwrights' Union as an official member. His most recent commissioned play, *Calf*, was developed and produced with Out of Hand Theatre of Atlanta and premiered in the summer of 2022.

Director **Melissa Coleman-Reed** (she/her) is an international theatre maker: director, actor, producer, facilitator focused on the development of new works that foster activism and grow international collaborations. She is passionate about cultivating spaces for makers to meet, train, and create. Her practices include, Suzuki, Viewpoints, breathwork, movement, repetition, devising and ensemble work. Directing credits include: *The Lonely Few*, book by Rachel Bonds, music and lyrics by Zoe Sarnak, (Associate Director to Trip Cullman and Ellenore Scott, Geffen Playhouse), *Beneath The Bowtie*, by Katie Lindsay, Tova Katz and Alexandra Kalinowski (Associate Director, Geffen Writer’s Room), *Untitled Baby Play* by Nina Braddock (Associate Director, IAMA Theatre Company), *You Didn't Die* by John Lavelle (IAMA), *Intimate Apparel* by Lynn Nottage, *Men On Boats* by Jaclyn Backhaus, *Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters’ First One Hundred Years* (New Village Arts). Development / workshops: AMMO Theatre, CalArts; CalState:LA, Playwrights Arena, The Blank, The Road & The Inkwel Lab including: *Long Division* by Aja Houston, *Day of Saturn* by Leviticus Jelks and John Lavelle’s *Inhalation* (O’Neill National Playwrights Conference Finalist). Training: SITI Company, BGB Studios, Berg Studios, Vangelina Butoh, Steppenwolf West, and Butoh Master: Yoshito Ohno. Melissa is currently training to be an Intimacy Co-ordinator, is pursuing filmmaking and is teaching Scene Study for film directors at CalArts. She is on the Outside In producing team of *I Sell Windows* by Kacie Rogers, coming to OI this spring in LA and debuting this summer at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

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**Amie Farrell** (She/Her) As an actor and director, Amie's vast career has spanned from one end of the United States to the other. Acting credits include roles in Oscar nominated films *Mank* with David Fincher and Clint Eastwood's *American Sniper*. On television, Amie has been seen in guest star and recurring roles on *This Is Us*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Criminal Minds*, *iCarly* and *Raven's Home*. Theater is Amie's first love. She holds a BFA from The Theatre School at DePaul University and has played on some of the country's most prestigious stages, including The Geffen, Pasadena Playhouse, Playwrights Horizons, Milwaukee Repertory, Missouri Repertory, ICT, Rubicon Theater, Sierra Repertory, LA Shakespeare Festival, Fort Worth Shakespeare and more. Amie's favorite roles on stage include Olivia in *Twelfth Night*, Jacqueline in *Don't Dress For Dinner*, and Cinderella in *Into The Woods*. Amie's theater directing credits include *Disgraced* with Interact Theater Pulitzer Prize Winner Series, *Trojan Women*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Hamlet*, and she has expanded her talents to the podcast realm, with original productions for *Meet Cute* and *Theater aLIVE*. Amie, with her husband and fellow actor Leonard Roberts, co founded VARIANT ARTISTS, a production company committed to centralizing voices that expand the story telling experience. Amie's most inspired work in development is her child, Ev.

**Brian Kimmett** is thrilled to make his Moving Arts debut alongside an incredibly talented and inspiring cast. Originally from Michigan, Brian honed his craft studying theater at DePaul University in Chicago before landing in Los Angeles. His diverse theater credits include captivating performances at the Los Angeles Theater Center in *Romeo & Juliet*, the Bootleg Theater with *L'Enfant Terrible* and DeFacto Theater Co., and The Actors Gang in productions such as *1984*, *Our Town*, and *Love's Labours Lost*. In addition to his stage work, Brian has made notable appearances on screen, with credits including *Flags of Our Fathers*, *Chicago Fire*, and *Feud*. He's also lent his voice to beloved animated shows like *Bunnicula* and *Trolls*, as well as immersive gaming experiences such as *God of War Ragnarök* and *The Last of Us Part II*.

**Clifton J. Adams**, (Fae/They) or "Cliffies" for short is excited to be gracing the Moving Arts Theater stage for the first time. Multi-disciplinary artist (actor, writer, director, producer) originally from Houston, TX. A graduate from Florida Atlantic University with a M.F.A in acting. Other credits include: *The Other Two*/HBO Max; *Asking for a Friend* (Edelweiss Production); *The Book of Will* (ANW), *A Christmas Carol* (ANW), *King Lear* (Studio One Theater); *In DARFUR* (Landing Theater). Their short film, *Sunflower Nicky*, is currently in the festival market with an upcoming showing at the New Filmmaker's Los Angeles Film Festival in June.

**Devere Rogers** is an actor, playwright, screenwriter, producer, and director. Born and raised in Atlanta, GA and a graduate of NYU Tisch School of the Arts. As an actor, he has performed in plays, musicals, and workshops on Broadway, Off- Broadway, and regionally and has also had roles on such TV shows like *Abbott Elementary*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Crazy Ex- Girlfriend*, and *Will & Grace*. He starred in the NBC pilot *Friends-In-Law*, is recurring on Hulu's *Sherman's Showcase*, and co-starred in the action comedy *My Spy* with Dave Bautista and Ken Jeong and indie comedy *Tankhouse* with Christopher Lloyd and Richard Kind. As a writer, he wrote the critically acclaimed short film *Ying & Yang* as well as having an Off-Broadway workshop production of his play *Excuse Me Ladies and Gentlemen*. He has developed a TV show with FX Networks and is currently working with Kronicle Media on an original feature film. He recently filmed a pilot with HBO Max starring Patti Lupone, appeared in HBO Max's *Southside* and AppleTV's *Puppy Place*, starred in the Broadway play *Chicken & Biscuits* originating the role of Kenny, and also co- starred in the movie *Honk For Jesus, Save Your Soul* starring Regina Hall and Sterling K Brown. He just wrapped filming on *My Spy 2* in South Africa and Rome.

### **About the Company**

Under the artistic leadership of **Darin Anthony**, the award winning theater company Moving Arts is committed to creating, producing and promoting adventurous theatrical new work by diverse Los Angeles artists for diverse audiences. Since its founding in 1992, Moving Arts has continuously

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produced new plays in a variety of venues across Los Angeles, ranging from traditional theatres such as [Inside] the Ford in Hollywood and the Los Angeles Theatre Center, downtown to nontraditional spaces such as LACMA, the Natural History Museum and the parking lot across from Disney Hall, showing remarkable versatility and commitment to the craft of theatre. Many of the new plays they have created have gone on to be produced across the country. For more information visit [www.MovingArts.org](http://www.MovingArts.org)

### **About MADlab**

The mission of Moving Arts's MADlab is to foster new and producible scripts by creating a unique environment of support and collaboration with professional Los Angeles playwrights, dramaturges, directors, and actors. Moving Arts is paving the way for MADlab to become the most well respected and highly competitive new play development program in Los Angeles. MADlab is a unique 9-month program that focuses on the development of new LA plays from the idea up.

### **What**

The world-premiere of *My White Husband* by Leviticus Jelks. Directed by Melissa Coleman-Reed.

### **Where**

Moving Arts Theatre - 319 Casitas Ave Los Angeles, CA 90039

### **When**

*My White Husband* will preview May 16th and 17th and run from May 18th through June 23rd. Fridays, Saturdays and Mondays at 8pm. Sundays at 3pm.

### **Tickets**

Fridays/Saturdays/Sundays: \$30

Mondays: \$20

Previews: Starting at \$10

Visit <https://movingarts.org/project/my-white-husband> to reserve tickets.

### **Parking**

FREE in parking lot P2 – 3191 Casitas Ave, south of Minneapolis St.

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