

Andrew

Hello everyone. My name is Andrew Pond, artistic director of Eclectic Full Contact Theater, and welcome to this special edition of the Half Hour Audio Hour. If you like what you hear, be sure to like, follow and subscribe to our podcast and feel free to leave a review. Today we have a special interview with Christina Casano, director of Lost In Tea, discussing how she got into directing, her love of short podcasts,, and telling stories with paper dolls. Enjoy.

Andrew

So Christina I want to say thank you for being willing to come in and direct lost in tea on the half hour audio hour I really do appreciate it.

Christina

Um, yeah, thanks so much. It was so much fun.

Andrew

Excellent. So Tell me how did you get into directing.

Christina

Um, my journey ah to becoming a director is actually like a very long and arduous story. But um I I guess the the easy version. The short version of it is that um I sort of discovered. Theater in high school like many people. Um, but I was not like a musical theater kid. But I I went and saw this musical at the University Of Toledo and I was like blown away that theater was not rogers and hammerstein musicals. Um.

Andrew

Mm.

Christina

So I saw that boy the musical which like it's unhinged. It's like my my favorite style is unhinged I'll be honest,

Andrew

Definitely not Rogers and hammerstein. Um.

Christina

definitely not rogers and Hammerstein like I'd grown up watching like the sound of music and like Oklahoma um, and so seeing Bat boy I was just like the fuck is this. It was amazing and I thought it was wild and I just didn't realize that that was a way that you could tell stories and so I joined Drama club when I was in high school and I was really very interested in like how.

Andrew

Ah.

Christina

Do you put this all together like I've I've never really been super interested in acting like I've I've always enjoyed it I've always thought it was really fun. Um, but it's never been something that I'm like that is the way that I need to tell a story I've always been like a very big picture person and so um, I'd some forays into like stage management. And other design areas and I've I've been on stage before um but I I came back to directing every time just because I I do really think that it is the best way for me to tell stories. Um, so yeah.

Andrew

that's that's excellent you are now the second person in like the last week who has brought up bat boy the musical

Christina

Because it's an incredible musical.

Andrew

I feel that now I need to actually find a Performance of this somewhere and see it because it sounds insane and you know that's kind of right up my alley? Um, so so what drew you to this project.

Christina

Um, well I you know I've ah well you know I've worked I did an audio drama with eclectic. Um, of course you know, um, back in. Ah.

Andrew

Yes, yes I I know but but for for for the listening public.

Christina

But it was yes um I I was so excited to get to do an audio drama with you all about two years ago and it was really It was really fun to get to to try telling a story in that way. So I was I was excited about doing another one. Um, just because it's something that I find really interesting and really different as a director. Um, but I also um, reading this script I was really interested in this this character's way of finding...Kind of finding herself through the pandemic even though she sort of says that she's like a loner and she she doesn't really like she's not really good with people but she somehow finds her community in this time of isolation. Um, and so because I think a lot of other pandemic stuff...Um, a lot of pandemic art I'm not like a huge fan of, because it just it's like I lived it. I get it you know? but I felt like this was a very--you know it's like I don't you know there are lots of things that I'm like man I Really don't need another pandemic play.

Andrew

You're not looking forward to sourdough the musical?

Christina

No Oh God Um, no ah but what I But what I really liked about this was that it felt like it had a very opposite approach to isolation and a very different approach to um. Like what it means to be to think that you like being alone and to like truly being alone. Um and also like I think a lot of people sort of went through a huge transformative experience during the pandemic. Um, and it was really interesting to see that in a teenager who went through like this sort of horrible Traumatic childhood who is finding that like actually the world is really good through this global this horrible global event that happens. Um, so is something that I Actually really liked about it and was really interested in working with an actor on, Sort of finding what the what the flow of this story was going through sort of her going through the journey that she takes in this play.

Andrew

Excellent, awesome. And so as as you mentioned you had done a ah an audio drama for for us back in the early days of of the lockdown and and and this one this one much shorter.

Christina

Um, yeah, um.

Andrew

Um, so so what? what is it that you find most challenging about directing audio Drama versus directing for the stage.

Christina

Oh it's 100 % body language I found this? Um, it was so funny because the very first rehearsal we did with Tess um, who plays Leann we had the camera on and then the second one it didn't give us the option to have the camera and I was like oh god okay here we go. Um. Because it's so it's so different, not having facial expressions not having body language. Um, and there were things that like last night in rehearsal is telling Tess like typically I wouldn't tell an actor to do this? Um because on stage. It's a really weird thing to like like it's a like. Sighing on the line for example, like if you sigh after the line. It's not really the best use of your time on stage. Um, but if you use the line to drive that sort of non you know, um, but With audio It's like I don't get to see you and I don't get to see your actual physicality and so that is definitely one of the hardest things. Um, it was definitely a little bit easier with this because this was very short compared to um, compared to the other one ah because that was A lot of people and a lot of it was It was long and so it was like oh my gosh. How do I How do I like how do we build relationships without having that like either a physical connection or like a visual connection to each other. Um. So that is definitely the biggest challenge for me is like how do we communicate a lot of these things that normally we can do totally nonverbally on stage.

Andrew

Right? right? So this is a this is a question that I like to ask people just because of how much I like this medium but also you know we saw a big uptick in audio drama offerings during the pandemic because of the lockdown and we couldn't do live performances and people couldn't go places and stuff like that. But now that's changed and live performances are back and things are pretty much running about... Probably as close back to normal as they could. What do you think the popularity of of audio drama is going to be. Do you think? do you think it's going to be something that sticks around or was it just a sort of like bridge to get us through.

Christina

Um, I think that I think that people will still be interested in it I have a lot of friends that are like podcast people generally. um, what's funny is that I have Adhd and so podcasts are like actually kind of not my thing I have a really hard time focusing on them and so um, you know what has been delightful about the the audio drama stuff that I've done with you all is that it's actually been really short like the episodes we did. Um. Previously. Were all pretty short episodes like we they were like what twenty thirty minutes and so it's actually like way easier for for me to engage with stuff that's that length but I know so many people that are like really interested in having ah podcasts or like audio dramas like while they're working out or while they're driving or while they're Commuting. stuff like that. Um, because there are still I think people are always looking for a variety of ways to engage. Um, and I think it's the same reason why like well live theater is I mean like we're in a moment of crisis and there are all these articles about it. Blah blah blah but like theater has Existed for over 5000 years like I doubt it's going to go anywhere in in the long term and like oral traditions have happened across so many different cultures like before there was written language. There were oral traditions. Um, and that was originally how stories were passed down. So like I think that there are a lot of different mediums and art forms that aren't really going anywhere. They might look different than they used to. But I don't think they're going anywhere.

Andrew

Awesome! Well I Certainly hope so because I I Really enjoy it and I I enjoy this--both this medium and this series that we've that we're doing. It's It's so much fun to be able to to see all these different Scripts from these different artists. Um every month. So I I Hope you're right? Um, So this of course brings us to the question of the interview which is ah what was your favorite childhood toy.

Christina

What a great question. Um part of me really wants to be like it was my barbies because the Barbie movie and how much I loved it and and all the things. Um, but I I was I feel like I was a kind of a strange child. My mom Would tell this story about the difference between my

sister and myself my sister's fifteen months older than me and we were essentially raised as twins but we had very different ways of doing things. My sister would dump out the toy basket. And have it all spread out around her and like play with all the toys I would take 1 thing out play with it and put it back and take another thing out and play with it and put it back? Um, so I feel like I always have like really weird habits around toys. Um, but something that i have Very vivid memories of in my childhood was that one year I got this little like... um it was like a little plastic like art desk it had like all the little art supplies in it like markers and color pencils and crayons and like little different like. I don't even remember it like little stencils and stuff. And so I just remember I went through this period of time where I made like paper doll towns that were just kind of ridiculous and like they were like little buildings and then the people weren't like regular people they were like heart-shaped people I don't know what I was going through I was like pretty young. Um, but I would line up like in my bedroom against all the furniture I would just line up this paper town and have all these different buildings and things and it was like a very big part big part of my like childhood I remember. and I just kept it all inside of this little desk. Um. But I was very I was very much a child that was like um you know.... I did like playing with dolls and like barbies and like Polly pockets and stuff because you've made all these stories around them. So I don't think it's Like truly a surprise that later in life I became a director, because I think I've always been like putting together these little stories just with weird little tiny heart-shaped paper dolls for a while. Yeah.

Andrew

Awesome and and and may I say very well done on bringing it all back around to bringing the last question all the way back around to the first question.

Christina
Heck yeah.

Andrew

That proves you're a storyteller you know how to you know how to tie it up,

Christina
Exactly.

Andrew

Well played! Well Christina I really do want to say? thank you for doing this and jumping back into the ah the pool of audio drama with us. It really was amazing and we really do appreciate it. Thank you So very much.

Christina

Um, yeah, thank you. It's been so much fun.

Andrew

Thanks for listening to this special episode of the Half Hour Audio Hour, and thank you for being our partner in highlighting the voices and stories of women BIPOC and LGBTQ+ artists. Tell your friends that for just \$5 a month or \$50 a year, they too can get access to exclusive behind the scenes interviews with casts and directors. And check out eclectic-theater.com for more info about all the projects E F C T has coming up. On behalf of myself and everyone here, thanks for listening.