



Man & Wife

by **Emma Goldman-Sherman**

Directed by **Ann Marie Pollard**

Cast:

Ron: Rafael Untalan
Missy: Lauren Durban
Stage Directions: Harper Allen



Man & Wife is presented by special arrangement with the playwright.

Synopsis:

In *MAN & WIFE*, Ron & Missy Merriweather start out as mannequins on their own wedding cake. They struggle through 25 years of BiPartisan Marriage navigating climate changes, health care crises including abortion, and especially their children's gender dysphoria while they constantly craft their images on social media. And yet they are desperately seeking their own authentic selves. *MAN & WIFE* is an Epic Comedy that tries to reunite the country and help us all feel much more human.

About the Playwright:

Emma Goldman-Sherman (she/they) is an autistic, trans/enbee, queer, Jewish, anti-zionist, feminist playwright living in New York City. Their work has been finalisted at BAPF, Unicorn (x3), Risk is This at Cutting Ball (x3), Campfire, Bechdel, Waterworks and Henley Rose. Counting in Sha'ab is available as a podcast on PlayingonAir.org and Abraham's Daughters is available as a podcast at TheParsnipShip.com. They are working on a collaboration with Experimental Bitch Presents called Tanya's Lit Clit among other projects.

Produced on 4 continents, their work has been seen at Golden Thread, WP Theatre, New Georges, UNESCO's City of Literature Festival in Dunedin (NZ), EST/LA, Dixon Place, The Philadelphia Women's Theatre Festival, The New Ohio, Manhattan Theatre Source, All Out Arts at CSV, Circle Rep Lab, Guild Hall, New Circle Theatre Co, The Bernie Wohl Center, The Chain, The Wild Project, Capital Fringe, Alumnae Theatre Toronto, Short + Sweet Gold Coast and Sydney (AU), Seoul, Sasebo, Renegade N.O.W. Festival, The Loft at Marble Collegiate Church, Astoria First Presbyterian's Brown Tree Theatre, Union Theological Seminary, The Museum of Jewish Heritage, Yiddishe Folksbiene Theatre, Greenbriar Valley Theatre, Canal Cafe Theatre (London), Camilla's, The Culture Project, and others. Emma is published by Brooklyn Publishers, Next Stage Press, Smith & Kraus and Applause.

They earned an MFA from University of Iowa where they received the Norman Felton Fellowship and won the Richard Maibaum Award for plays addressing social justice for *Antigone's Sister* and received a Jane Chambers Award for *Perfect Women*. Residencies at Millay Colony for the Arts, Ragdale and twice at WordBridge where they returned a third year as a dramaturg. Emma has taught and been a dramaturg at the Great Plains Theatre Conference (2015, 2016). Emma was the Resident Dramaturg at 29th Street Playwrights Collective where they ran the Write Now Workshop from 2015 - 2021. Emma teaches for the Dramatists Guild Institute and created and runs www.BraveSpace.online. Member: Honor Roll!, LPTW, LMDA and the Dramatists Guild.



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Dramaturgical Notes:

Marriage is a journey. The epigraph of this play is a rather apt quote by Groucho Marx; “Politics doesn’t make strange bedfellows – marriage does.” It’s clever; as is the starting point for Emma Goldman-Sherman’s play – the top of a wedding cake. Here the stereotypical bride and groom share a moment of deep love without understanding the magnitude of their commitment or comprehending the complexity of their journey together. We begin full of hope, unconcerned about the road ahead. But, too quickly, the rough patches heat up and the allegory of *Man & Wife* starts to resemble something larger and more tenuous. Is this the story of a marriage or that of a country?



Salon Reading Series

Man & Wife begins as a stereotypical romantic relationship. The play takes us through a marriage from the top of the cake through the empty nest, exploring a distillation of Missy and Ron’s life through theatrical snippets – the reading of coded Christmas letters and insightful inner monologue. It’s a rather clever theatrical device used by Goldman-Sherman to show the journey of this relatable couple as they negotiate and travel through a life together. (That they both work in the airline industry is a fitting and apt metaphor for both the distance they travel together and the growing distance between Missy and Ron as they encounter the hardships and headwinds of discovering each other as strange bedfellows). But our bride and groom do not stay stereotypical for long. As the play flashes through the years and layers both familiar and unfamiliar difficulties on the couple, Ron and Missy become specific, and their relationship becomes a viable character. Their discoveries and contradictions begin to reveal the cracks where humanity shines through. Ron and Missy become relatable, distinct, and visible.

Aligning with our season theme, *Man & Wife* introduces a literal decision for both Ron and Missy– should I stay, or should I go. It is easy to see why either one of them might choose to go, but they both choose to stay in a relationship that is both heartbreaking and admirable. And, this short essay is far too brief to introduce the complexities of the decisions that face Missy and Ron in their marriage. Their relationship and their love is tested in uncomfortable ways. Goldman-Sherman is known for packing her plays with an unabashed spotlight on controversy. But their open and humane approach to their characters ensures that we digest the controversy within the human-ness of the character, and deepen our understanding.

Director Anne Bogart embraces stereotypes as something an actor must burn through to find the truth in performance. What Ms. Bogart defines for the actor, Emma Goldman-Sherman elucidates in their text. We watch as Missy and Ron burn through the two figures on top of the cake into a real, relatable couple who persevere despite doubt, and embrace without understanding. Goldman-Sherman succeeds in bringing both depth and lightness to this exploration (or is it an indictment) of marriage. Home is not always a place of sanctuary and peace, but despite the contradictions, it is a place of love.

While our readings are free to the public, we appreciate goodwill donations in support of Angels Theatre Company and the 2023-24 Salon Reading Series.

Thank you for your contribution!



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Special Thanks to Turbine Flats and Eastmont Living for hosting the Salon Reading Series; thanks to the Angels Theatre Company Board of Directors, Ann Marie Pollard, Emma Goldman-Sherman, and the cast of *Man & Wife* for their work.



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Thank you for supporting ATC and the 2023-24 Salon Reading Series!
See you next time, for our 23-24 Finale! Sunday, May 5, 2024, at 2:00 PM and Thursday May 9, 2024 at 6:30 PM for *1000 Miles* by Vanessa Garcia!