



THE BOOK OF MAGDALENE

by CARIDAD SVICH

Directed by AMELIA RICO

With
 MARIAM ALBISHAH Set DesignAFSANEH AAYANI
 ANDREA BORONELL Costume DesignVICTORIA NICOLETTE GIST
 PABLO BRACHO Lighting Design GREY STARBIRD
 MARIA SCHENCK Properties DesignRODNEY WALSWORTH
 JENNIFER WANG Sound DesignJANEL BADRINA
 Production Stage Manager MEGAN BROOKS

Initial Digital Premiere
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ARTIST STATEMENT ON THE BOOK OF MAGDALENE BY CARIDAD SVICH

It started with the idea of writing a book for the stage, or should I say, a “book” in the Biblical use of the word. In quar times but even before quar times, I have been thinking about the figure of Mary Magdalene. And this was before FKA Twigs’ album, although its presence in the world certainly stirred her up again for me.

I look through my notes from two years ago. The name “Magdalene” and after it, “possible play.” So, what’s it about, and what I am pondering in its making?

I am thinking about old times and new times smashed together and sinner-saints for a contemporary (post-contemporary) age? A play about a Magdalene called Len sometimes that is holding together a life made of bits of memory, hard work, sex work, and dreams of faith – and what in heck faith means in the modern age. A story about how we get through the night – in a larger sense but told in glimpses and snapshots – arrested by time, even as the play moves forward. A series of duets that escalate in urgency, and through the rubble of the future now finds a future. A “book” of a life at a particular moment in time wherein Magdalene encounters the people that make up her life, and maybe even encounters too strangers she never knew she’d ever meet outside of work. A story of secrets and care-giving and letting go. A story of deep friendships, yearning and a land without touch, and one too of forgotten stations of the everyday – otherwise known as “ordinary life.”

I am thinking too of a huge role for a female lead. So, on a practical level, even in a play with four to five other womxn, a big ol role at the center, where a fab actor can hold our attention. Just cos it’s cool when that happens, and it still doesn’t happen as often as it should.

This is a play too that lives temperamentally in a kind of neon-drenched night world where the neon is rubbed out and flickering and not as bright as it could be – like one of those old casino signs in Las Vegas in the famous junkyard of (capitalist) signs. It’s a world where Magdalene walks the outlier/outcast’s terrain and seeks the power of sacrament in the heroic every-day stuff of stuff between people: human relations rather than human capital.

Does Magdalene get an ending to her life or a new beginning? Do we start again or get a deep cut from the files of olden days and replay them again? Does it smell like power, love and desire or the sweat and labour of just getting up one more time on the path to grace? Or both? What’s the renaissance of the future now look like in the future? And who gets the bennies? Or does the same cycle of inequity carry on “as usual?” A quote that I have been thinking about from Simone Weil (philosopher, poet, mystic, socialist, activist, visionary) in relationship to this play: “Redemptive suffering is the shadow of the pure good we desire. A hurtful act is the transference to others of the degradation which we bear in ourselves. That is why we are inclined to commit such acts as a way of deliverance. All crime is a transference of the evil in him who acts to him who undergoes the result of the action.” Can we consider a world where such deliverance is not par for the course? Could Magdalene’s way hold an answer?

THE CAST

Len	Jennifer Wang
Ru/Reveler.....	Mariam Albishah
Elder	Maria Schenck
Suit	Pablo Bracho
Priest	Andrea Boronell

Time: weird time. In the future now. & nite. It's always nite. Until it's not.
Place: a smallish, semi-industrial city.

Performed without intermission.

Special thanks to University of Houston School of Theatre and Dance.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Puppeteer.....	Afsaneh Aayani
Costume Design Assistant	Donna Schmidt
Production Assistants.....	Amanda Adwers, Jacob Sanchez
Projection Engineer.....	Alexander Schumann
Scenic Charge.....	Lauren Davis
Scene Crew.....	Lauren Ayala, Mark B. Robbins, Jacob C. Sanchez
Wardrobe Assistant.....	Amanda Adwers
Video Production.....	Ricornel Productions

WHO'S WHO

Caridad Svich (Playwright) Caridad Svich received a 2012 OBIE Award for Lifetime Achievement in the theatre, a 2012 Edgerton Foundation New Play Award and NNP rolling world premiere for *Guapa*, and the 2011 American Theatre Critics Association Primus Prize for her play *The House of the Spirits*, based Isabel Allende's novel. She has won the National Latino Playwriting Award (sponsored by Arizona Theatre Company) twice, including in the year 2013 for her play *Spark*. She has been short-listed for the PEN Award in Drama four times, including in the year 2012 for her play *Magnificent Waste*. Her works in English and Spanish have been seen at venues across the US and abroad, among them Arena Stage's Kogod Cradle Series, Denver Center Theatre, 59E59, The Women's Project, Woodshed Collective @ McCarren Park Pool, Repertorio Espanol, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Lighthouse Poole UK, Teatro Mori (Chile), Artheater-Cologne (Germany), Ilkhom Theater (Uzbekistan), Teatro Espresso (Costa Rica), Welsh Fargo Stage (Wales), Homotopia Festival UK, SummerWorks festival in Toronto, and Edinburgh Fringe Festival/UK.

Key works in her repertoire include *12 Ophelias*, *Iphigenia* *Crash Land Falls on the Neon*

Shell That Was Once Her Heart, *The Booth Variations*, *Alchemy of Desire/Dead-Man's Blues*, *Any Place But Here*, *Archipelago*, *The Way of Water* and *JARMAN (all this maddening beauty)*. She has also adapted for the stage novels by Mario Vargas Llosa, Julia Alvarez and Jose Leon Sanchez, and has radically reconfigured works from Wedekind, Euripides, Sophocles, and Shakespeare. Her plays have been directed by Annie Castledine, Maria Irene Fornes, Lisa Peterson, Neel Keller, William Carden, Nick Philippou, Annie Dorsen, Katie Pearl, Stephen Wrentmore, Daniella Topol and Jose Zayas, among many others.

As founder of theatre alliance & press NoPassport (www.nopassport.org) her work has intersected with communities of multiple diversities with works responding to the Deepwater Horizon disaster in the US Gulf region, veterans and their families, survivors of trauma and those committed to artistic expression of precarity, advocacy for US Latin@ writing voices, and engagement with representations of the "fragile shores" in our lives. She is co-organizer and curator of After Orlando theatre action in response to the 2016 Pulse nightclub shooting with Missing Bolts Productions at DR2 Theatre in New York City, Finborough Theatre in London, Chaskis

WHO'S WHO

Theatre in London in association with Theatre Royal Stratford East and The Vaults and over sixty venues across the US; and Climate Change Theatre Action with The Arctic Cycle and Theatre Without Borders. She has also published over twenty titles with NoPassport Press by authors as diverse as Todd London, John Jesurun, David Greenspan, Carson Kreitzer, Rinde Eckert, Lenora Champagne and Octavio Solis.

Her works are published by TCG, Smith & Kraus, Playscripts, Broadway Play Publishing and more. Three collections of her works for live performance are published as follows: *JARMAN (all this maddening beauty) and other plays* (Intellect UK, 2016); *Instructions for Breathing and other plays* (Seagull Books UK, 2014); *Blasted Heavens* (Eyecorner Press, Denmark, 2012). She has edited several books on theatre including *Audience Revolution: Dispatches from the Field* (TCG, 2016), *Innovation in Five Acts* (TCG, 2015), *Out of Silence: Censorship in Theatre & Performance* and *Trans-Global Readings: Crossing Theatrical Boundaries and Theatre in Crisis?* (the latter two for Manchester University Press, UK). She is currently editing a book on playwriting for Methuen UK. She serves as associate editor at Taylor & Francis' *Contemporary Theatre Review*, where she also edits their Backpages section.

She sustains a parallel career as a theatrical translator, chiefly of the dramatic work of Federico Garcia Lorca as well as works by Calderon de la Barca, Lope de Vega, Julio Cortazar, Victor Rascon Banda, Antonio Buero Vallejo and contemporary works from Mexico, Cuba and Spain. She is alumna playwright of New Dramatists. She has received fellowships from Harvard/Radcliffe, NEA/TCG, PEW Charitable Trust, and California Arts Council. She holds an MFA in Theatre-Playwriting from UCSD, and she also trained for four consecutive years with Maria Irene Fornes in INTAR's legendary HPRL Lab. She teaches creative writing and playwriting at Rutgers University-New Brunswick and Primary Stages' Einhorn School of Performing Arts. She has taught playwriting at Bard, Barnard, Bennington, Denison, Ohio State,

ScriptWorks, UCSD, and Yale School of Drama. www.caridadsvich.com.

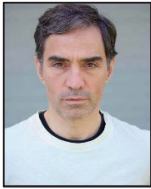
Amelia Rico (Director) Main Street Theater: *Never Ending Story*, *Sherlock Holmes and the Baker Street Irregulars*; (Actor) *Winnie the Pooh*; Country Playhouse (Director) *Don't Drink the Water*; Earnest Holley Memorial Theater (Director) *Clara's Play*; Theatre Collide (Actor) *Skriker*, *A Work in Granite*; TV & Film: Blumhouse: (Actor) *Madres*; Paramount Television: (Actor) *Yellowstone*; Netflix: (Actor) *Rich Kids* (DTLA Best Ensemble 2018); Ricornel Productions: (Director) *Something Like Sunshine* (ISA Best Web Series 2020, ISA Best Web Series Director 2020), *Angel of Mercy* (Global Shorts Winner 2017), (Writer/Director) *Taroki* (Houston Latino Film Festival Official Selection 2018), (Writer) *Vilomah* (Austin Indie Fest Director's Choice 2019, Xerb.TV), *ZomBFFs* (DTLA Screenplay Finalist 2020). BA at the University of Houston (Acting/Directing, Film Studies Minor). www.ameliarico.com



Mariam Albishah (Ru/Reveler) Main Street Theater: Debut.



Andrea Boronell (Priest) Main Street Theater: *Men On Boats*; Ensemble Theatre: *The Nacirema Society*, *Satchel Paige And The Kansas City Swing*, *Christmas With Great Aunt*; Queensbury Theatre: *Big River*; Houston Family Arts Center: *Crowns*; Lone Star College: *Doubt*; Sacramento Theatre Company: *A Christmas Carol*, *Little Shop of Horrors*; Music Circus, Sacramento, CA: *Hello Dolly*; Celebration Arts, Sacramento, CA: *Jar The Floor*; (Director) *The Old Settler*. Education: B.A., California State University Sacramento, Drama/ Theatre; M.A., Texas Southern University, Communication. www.AndreaB.org



Pablo Bracho (Suit) Main Street Theater: *Lady in the Dark*, *Macbeth*, (Director) *Life is a Dream*, (Asst. Director) *House of the Spirits*; Alley Theater: *Our Lady of 121st Street*, *¡Cantinflas!*, *Hamlet*; Stages: *Blood*

Wedding, HSF: *Macbeth*; HGO: *Salsipuedes*; elsewhere: *Death and the Maiden*, *Assassins*; *The Rink*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman – The Musical*; In Mexico: *The Seagull*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Wit*, *Happy*, *Paradise of Invention*; Film and TV: *El Chema*, *Sin Tu Mirada*, *Falco*, *El Cesar*, *Machete Kills*, *Through the Valley*, *Light from the Darkroom*, *Dallas*, *Revolution*, *Quemar las Navas*, *J'OK-EL*.



Maria Schenck (Elder) Main Street Theater: Debut; Owen Theater: *Chicago*; Crichton Theater: *Young Frankenstein*, *Glitz*; Playhouse1960: *Sister Act*; TV & Film: *5th Ward*, *Toll Road*, *Cold Turkey*, *The Home*

Coming, *Ghost That Never Was*. Graduated Cum Laude with a bachelor's degree in Psychology.



Jennifer Wang (Len) Main Street Theater: Debut; Silicon Valley Shakespeare: *The White Snake*; Harvard Radcliffe Dramatic Club: *Under Construction*. Education: B.A., Harvard College. iamjwang.com

Afsaneh Aayani (Set Design) Main Street Theater: Debut; Catastrophic Theatre: (Set Designer) *The Drama Squad*, (Assistant Set Designer) *Fefu and Her Friends*; Rec Room: (Assistant Set Designer) *Pass Over*, *The Children*; Classical Theatre: *Lysistrata*; A.D. Players: *Unplugged*, *David The Best Slinger of The Best*; University of Houston: (Set Designer) *Haroun and The Sea of Stories*, *The Fairytale Lives of Russian Girls*, *Dear Charlotte*, *Last Night of Ballyhoo*, *Luchadora*, (Costume Designer) *Three Sisters*; Landing Theatre: *Rapture Blister Burn*, *Caught*, *Oleanna*; HGO.co: *The Pastry Prince*, *The Puffed Up Prima Donna*; Rogue Production: *Two Mile Hollow*, *Pulsate*; Actor's Equity Festival: *The Effect*. www.afsanehaayani.com

Janel J. Badrina (Sound Design) Main Street Theater: over 10 seasons including *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley*, *The Weir*, *Buyer and Cellar*; *Enemies*, *Native Gardens*, *Into The Woods*, *Close Up Space*, *Dog Act*, *Heidi Chronicles*, *Driftwood*, *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*; Town Center Theater: *Julius Caesar*, *Merry Christmas*, *George Bailey*, *Night & Her Stars*. Over 15 seasons as stage manager.

Victoria Nicolette Gist (Costume Design) Main Street Theater: (Costume Design) *The Hard Problem*, (Assistant Costume Design) *Relatively Speaking*. Rec Room Arts: (Costume Design) *Pass Over*, *The Children*. Thunderclap Productions: (Costume Design) *From White Plains*. The Alley Theatre: (Costumes) *Enlightened* - workshop, *Survivors*, *An Alamo Play* - workshop. University of Houston: (Costume Design) *The Nest*, *The Fairytale Lives of Russian Girls*, *Dear Charlotte*, *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Topdog/Underdog*, (Scenic Design) *Three Sisters*. 4th Wall Theatre: (Assistant Costume Design) *Pride & Prejudice*. Baylor University Theatre: (Costume Design) *The Learned Ladies*. Film credits include *In Paradise* and *Take the Gun and Count to Three* (short). M.F.A., University of Houston (2020). Victoria Nicolette Gist is a recipient of a Willa Kim Costume Design Scholarship, funded by The Estate of Willa Kim and administered by Theatre Communications Group. www.victorianicolette.com

Grey Starbird (Lighting Design) Main Street Theater: *Ramona Quimby*, *Tales of a 4th Grade Nothing*. Mildred's Umbrella: *Samuel Beckett's Ladies Night*, *Hunchback of Seville*, *The Moors*, *Dark Matter*, *Well*, *Feathers and Teeth*, *In A Word*, *A Heroine Free Summer*, *The Johns*, *Dry Land*, *The Maids*, *Dollface*, *Becky's New Car*, *The Drowning Girls*, *Cloud Tectonics*, *Red Death*, *Pollywog*, *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress*, *Cassandra*, *Rome*, *Foxfinder*, *Large Animal Games*. Houston Ballet (Assistant Technical Director): *Giselle*, *Locally Grown*. *World Renowned*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *the Nutcracker* (2019). Queensbury Theater (Assistant Technical Director): *Sideshow*, *For Tonight*, *Breaking Out of Sunset Place*, *Elf the Musical*, *Violet The Musical*. Rec Room Arts (Lighting Designer/Technical Director): *Sender*, *Dead Rock Star Sing-A-Long* (2018). San Antonio Ballet (Lighting Design): *Peter Pan*, *Don*

Quixote, *The Nutcracker* (2016). The Classic Theatre San Antonio (Lighting Design): *Arms and the Man*. University of Houston (Lighting Design): *The Beaux Stratagem*, *Our Country's Good*, *The Snow Queen*, *As You Like It*, *Paradise Hotel*, *Serious Money*, *The Trial of Ebenezer Scrooge*, *The Cripple of Inishmaan*. Education: M.F.A., University of Houston; B.A., Trinity University.

Rodney Walsworth (Properties Design) Over 100 productions at Main Street Theater as actor, director, set designer, properties designer, sound designer including *Enemies* and *Wolf Hall / Bring Up the Bodies* (First American Productions); Stages: Resident Properties Master, 2 ½ seasons; other Houston acting work includes Ensemble Theatre, Theater LaB Houston, Talento Bilingüe de Houston, Stages; B&B Productions at Jump Start Theatre (San Antonio): *The Laramie Project* (Globe Award, Lead Actor – Drama). Resident Properties Master, Main Street Theater.

Megan Brooks (Production Stage Manager) Main Street Theater: *Elliot, a Soldier's Fugue*, (Assistant Stage Manager) *Junie B. Jones The Musical*, (Assistant Stage Manager/Production Assistant) *Daddy Long Legs*, (Production Assistant) *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley*, *The Hard Problem*, *Wolf Hall & Bring Up the Bodies*, *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* (2017&2018), *The Secretary*, *The Weir*; Houston Equity Festival: (Production Stage Manager) *Every Brilliant Thing*; Alley Theatre: (Production Assistant) *A Christmas Carol*, *All The Way*; Stages: (Assistant Stage Manager) *Mack and Mabel*; Ensemble Theatre: (Production Stage Manager) *Josephine Tonight*; Royal Family Productions: (Production Stage Manager) *Fireside*; Sam Houston State

University: (Stage Manager) *we are proud to present...*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Dying For It*, (Assistant Stage Manager) *Spring Awakening*, *HAIR*.

Rebecca Greene Udden (Executive Artistic Director) Main Street Theater: (Director) *The Hard Problem*, *The Book of Will*, *Hecuba* and *The Trojan Women*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *An Iliad* and *Twelfth Night* with Prague Shakespeare Company (MST collaborations), *Holes*, *Enemies*, *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies* (First American Productions), *Silent Sky*, *Peace in Our Time*, *Heartbreak House*, *The Real Thing* (1986 & 2013), *The Coast of Utopia*, *The Year of Magical Thinking*, *The Heidi Chronicles* (2010 & 1992), *Arcadia* (2010 & 1996), *The House of the Spirits* (English language premiere), *Caroline, or Change*, *An Empty Plate in the Café du Grand Boeuf*, *The Rice* (World Premiere), *Copenhagen*, *The Miser*, *Uncommon Women and Others*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream (NEA Tour)*, *A Little House Christmas*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *The Merchant of Venice (NEA Tour)*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *The Taming of the Shrew (NEA Tour)*, *Bridge to Terabithia*, *The Great Gilly Hopkins*, and many more; (Actor) *Private Lives* (2019), *Memory House*, *Richard III* (with Prague Shakespeare Company), *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*, *Third*, *The Busy World Is Hushed*, *Somebody's Sons*, *The Sisters Rosensweig*, *Hapgood*, *Hamlet*, and more; (Costume Design) numerous productions; Prague Shakespeare Company: (Director) *Twelfth Night*. Catastrophic Theatre: Advisory Board. Wordsmyth Theater Company: Advisory Board. Member of the American Leadership Forum Class XVI. 2012 Distinguished Alumni Award, Rice University. Founding Artistic Director, Main Street Theater.

Main Street Theater (MST) was founded in 1975 to provide stimulating opportunities for Houstonians of all ages to engage with the performing arts while providing meaningful and challenging professional work for Houston theater artists. MST is a fully professional theater with three programs: MainStage, Theater for Youth, and Education Department. Main Street Theater is a member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for not-for-profit theaters, of Theatre for Young Audiences/USA (formerly ASSITEJ), the world theatre network of theatre for children and young people, and a founding member of Arts Connect. Our MainStage operates under Actors' Equity Association Small Professional Theater contract. Main Street Theater is funded in part by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts.

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Danielle Docwra Theater for Youth Production Manager	Rodney Walsworth Properties Master
Shannon Emerick Director of Marketing & Communications	<i>Front of House</i> Seth Daniel Cunningham Lindsay Ehrhardt Lauren Evans Peggy Villarreal
Angela Harris-Cannizzo Theater for Youth School Shows Manager	