

grave robbers and murderers, who would falsify documents for the victim and sell them to a groom. All of that is true, and none of it is in this version of the play. There is an old draft buried deep in my files that incorporated all of that stuff, but it turned into something I was no longer interested in pursuing. The final version of the story does deal with ghost marriage, just not in such a complicated and accurate way. I was more interested in the mythical, fantastical elements of the ritual, and the “what ifs” that kept me daydreaming for years. There are always dozens of versions of every play I write, and I try my best to choose the one that speaks to me the most.

**KB:** I love about you (and all artists) this ability to respond to circumstances, to respect the primary pulse of a piece without cutting it off from its next becoming. That takes courage and it takes humility. And in the case of *White Rooster*, you've not only served as playwright/co-composer – you are making your debut as a director. What's that been like and do you think you'll want to do it again?

**MCY:** Thanks. The great Dan Smith (who plays Hao and Ba) told me the other day, “You edit your work like somebody else wrote it.” I took that as a huge compliment. Writers need to be ruthless with their work. If something doesn't serve the story you cut it. As for making my directorial debut, I couldn't be more excited. I am always looking for new mediums to create with, and directing is the biggest, boldest medium I could imagine.

**KB:** I think the same balance you strike as a playwright between advocating for your first instincts while remaining absolutely open to the observations of your collaborators has served you (and all of us) incredibly well as a director. And the design of this piece. Matthew, I've been bubbling over with enthusiasm for the built world of this play ever since our 2024 Artistic Development Intensive. Chart us the course you took from there all the way up to the collaboration with this amazing design team.

**MCY:** The big reason I love the Artistic Development Intensive, is creators are given the time and space to collaborate with no restrictions. I definitely carried that spirit of open creativity into the rehearsal process for this production. Anyone in the room can pitch an idea, and if it's the best one it will win. I wanted this to be an ensemble piece. Really exposed, raw, handmade, and scrappy. The design team and cast really understood that mission, and they have all been so generous with their creativity.

**KB:** Agreed. Every last individual on the creative team is a hero. And we've got a cast with a wealth of skill as well. We get to watch them all make the gears turn all night long. Share with us your impressions of working with this group and what you connect with in a performer.

**MCY:** Every single person in this room is so dang talented. It is incredible to watch each of the designers take some jumbled word salad I offer up to try and explain how I want the scene to feel, lighting, scenic, sound or acting, and they just make it real, and then they add things that speak to them, that I never could have imagined in my life. It's magic.

**KB:** Jivin wid it, MCY. This is now your 2nd world premiere at Lookingglass, Matthew. What has your time creating with this company meant thus far and what might you have in store?

**MCY:** I feel so honored to have premiered two original works at Lookingglass, and to not only write a play, but to be trusted to direct it as well is a dream come true. The faith this company has put in me over the years is honestly insane. As for what is in store, I've learned a lot about what is possible in the Lookingglass space, and there are a few new ideas I've been tinkering with that I hope to kick into gear very soon.

**KB:** Very cool. We'll be there when we get there. But for now let's be here and take seats. It's about to get all delicious in the Joan and Paul. Thanks for your time, Matthew, and for your work

**MCY:** Thanks KB!

**KB:**



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