

**N\*VA NIGHTSKY THEATER**

PRESENTS

THE  
GULF

*By Audrey Cefaly*

*Directed By Elyse R. Smith*

Falls Church Presbyterian Church - Memorial Hall

225 E Broad St., Falls Church, VA 22046

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

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I love my vices—sleeping in, endless scrolling on social media, wine, and chocolate. Vices feel good. We try moderation, but it's easier to feed our vices rather than distance ourselves from them. What happens when your vice is a person?

When I first read *The Gulf*, I was caught and thrown into this boat with these characters. Their circular conversations, frustrating outbursts, and tense silences felt all too familiar. I could see my own struggles mirrored in theirs. I understand why they can't stop, but from my 10,000-foot perspective, I'm desperate for them to find a resolution. I adore these complex women Audrey Cefaly has put in front of us. I've been a Betty—chatty, self-absorbed, afraid of loneliness. I also see myself in Kendra—introspective, handy, and impulsive. I love fighting a fish as I'm reeling it in AND tossing it back in to go home to its family.

Our partners, whether good or bad for us, leave a profound mark on our lives. They create a "neural in fingerprint" in our brains. Dopamine, the reward system's green light, and oxytocin, the love hormone, form incredible bonds that keep us in our relationships. These bonds are the shifty little villains or diligent heroes in our love stories, shaping our experiences and emotions.

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

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The divide between Kendra and Betty keeps them from having a positive relationship. Their gulf is vast and deep, yet here they are, on this boat, side by side, loud and silent, love and her potent little neural fingerprints binding them together.

Kendra says, "And I knew – it felt so good, I wanted to run from it – but I knew I'd never be able to." Did she have a premonition this relationship was going to be painful? Or was her first impulse when she saw Betty and felt instantly attracted to her, to deny herself happiness? Both? Both.

I am deeply grateful to Nova Nightsky for entrusting me with the direction of this multifaceted slice of theatre. Working with this superb cast, crew, and designers has been a joy. The collaborative process has genuinely brought out the best in all of us, resulting in a show that we can all be proud of. The last piece I directed (many tides ago) was Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses*, and we couldn't have actual water there, either.

Just be mindful of the emotional splash zone.

**-ELYSE R. SMITH**

***“That was it for me. That night. I knew I’d  
never love nobody like you.”  
-Betty***

*Performed with permission from Concord Theatricals*

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## SETTING

TIME: PRESENT DAY. LATE AFTERNOON

PLACE: A FISHING BOAT. ALABAMA DELTA

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## FEATURING

**KENDRA**

**HANNAH RUTH  
BLACKWELL\***

**BETTY**

**SARAH BACZEWSKI\***



*\* 2025 NOVA Nightsky Theater Company Member*



# TECH & CREATIVE TEAM

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**DIRECTOR**

Elyse R. Smith

**STAGE MANAGER**

Fosse Thornton

**ASSISTANT STAGE  
MANAGER**

Chamberlaine Beard

**SOUND DESIGN**

Nate Eagle, Elyse R. Smith,  
Adam Ressa

**LIGHTING DESIGN**

Adam Ressa

**SET DESIGN &  
DECOR**

Steph Blackwell

**SET CONSTRUCTION**

Steph Blackwell,  
Hannah Ruth Blackwell,  
Jaclyn Robertson,  
Adam Ressa,  
Elyse R. Smith  
Nate Eagle



PROPS

Elyse R. Smith, Adam Ressa,  
& Sarah Baczewski

INTIMACY  
CHOREOGRAPHY

Jaclyn Robertson

COSTUMES

Steph Blackwell

PHOTOGRAPHY

Jaclyn Robertson,  
Nate Eagle, Adam Ressa

LOGO DESIGN

Adam Ressa

PUBLICITY & GRAPHICS

Adam Ressa  
Jaclyn Robertson

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

Jaclyn Robertson  
Pilar Bruyere

**READ CAST AND CREW BIOS ON**  
**ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

# NOVA NIGHTSKY LEADERSHIP

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Producing  
Director  
**JACLYN ROBERTSON**

Design & Technical  
Director  
**ADAM RESSA**

Administrative  
Director  
**SARAH BACZEWSKI**



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## Special Thanks to:

SUSAN LOYD, PASTOR YENA HWANG, AND THE ENTIRE  
FALLS CHURCH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FAMILY

THE NOVA NIGHTSKY THEATER KIDS  
OLIVIA, EMMALINE, & LEVI

OUR FRIENDS, FAMILIES, AND PETS