

ADA AND THE ENGINE

The difference between zero and one is the whole world.

For Immediate Release | March 24, 2021



Next month, **The Studio Theatre™ Tierra del Sol** (806 San Marino Drive, The Villages, FL) will open its second production of its fifth season, *Ada and the Engine*, by Lauren Gunderson. The production will be staged at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center (1051 Main Street, The Villages, FL).

Set in the Victorian era among the houses of intellectual elites, we find Ada, a young female mathematician whose invention of binary code shapes our modern world today. *Ada and the Engine*, written by America's most produced living playwright, Lauren Gunderson, composes the story of Ada Byron Lovelace, poet Lord Byron's daughter. This lyrical play details the life of Ada as she struggles between the traditional demands of her mother and the pull of her mathematical ambition. Ada sees the creative potential in "The Engine" created by her mentor, the scholar Charles Babbage. As pressures mount and feelings grow, these two form a partnership that will change the course of the future. *Ada and the Engine* is a music-laced story of love and friendship. Jane Austen meets Steve Jobs in this poignant pre-tech romance heralding the computer age.



Portraying Ada Byron Lovelace is Orlando-based actress **Ashleigh Ann Gardner**. She holds a Master's Degree in Literary, Cultural & Textual Studies from the University of Central Florida with concentrations in Victorian and Gothic literature, psychoanalytic theory, and gender studies. In addition to acting, Gardner is also an accomplished playwright, composer, sound designer, and scenic artist. She's also a multi-instrumentalist who plays the mandolin, 6- and 12-string acoustic guitar, electric guitar, and ukulele.

In October 2019, her play *Qualia: a post nuclear play* was presented at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts and was the recipient of a \$5,000 playwriting grant from New Generation Theatrical. *Qualia* was later included in The Studio Theatre Tierra del Sol's virtual play-reading series in May of 2020.

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Ashleigh has appeared as Nora (*A Doll's House*), Alais (*The Lion in Winter*), Rosalind (*As You Like It*), and Penelope (*The Penelopiad*); she was also the music director and chorus leader for Jeremy Seghers's experimental outdoor theatre production of *The Bacchae* in September of 2020. Of her performance in *The Lion in Winter* (Orlando, CFCArts), Matt Palm of *The Orlando Sentinel* said, "Ashleigh Ann Gardner cleverly conveys both coolness and passion as the mistress." Ashleigh is looking forward to this current role most because, "Ada and Charles's chemistry is explosive, and it feels unnatural *not* to move, so I'm itching for blocking rehearsals to begin... I have ADHD, which allows me to understand Ada's nature more easily: her uniquely intense hyper focus, her varied endeavors outside of mathematical study (most of which she did not pursue in the same degree as math), her total lack of impulse control in conversations, especially when she's nervous or excited, and her intense desire to see a thing through to the end." After the run of *Ada and the Engine*, Gardner will be continuing her work with the Orlando Fringe Festival and audio mixing and sound designing CFCArts Theatre's audio drama production of Anton Chekhov's dramedy *The Seagull*.

The cast also includes: **Danielle Bouloy** (Lady Anabella Byron/Mary Somerville), **Donovan Oakleaf** (Charles Babbage), **Rakeem Lawrence** (Lord Lovelace/Byron), **Christina Coulter** (U/S Ada Byron Lovelace), **Alyson Johnson** (U/S Lady Byron/ Mary Somerville), and **Alec Speers** (U/S Charles Babbage).

The Theatre Management and Creative Teams are composed of Director **Nathaniel Niemi**, Music Director **Gary Powell**, Producer & Props Master **Jason Goedken**, Artistic Director & Dialect Coach **Whitney Morse**, Set Designer **Kenneth Constant**, Costume Designer **Monica Titus**, Lighting Designer **Lindsey Young**, Master Electrician **David Krupla**, Sound/AV Designer **Nick Erickson**, Production Manager **Danielle Paccione**, Assistant Production Manager **Leslie Munson**, Technical Director **Clayton Becker**, Stage Manager **Grace Zottig**, Assistant Stage Manager/Dramaturgy **Stephanie Horn**, Company Manager **Ryan Loeckel**, Automation/Carpentry **David Bost**, Audio Engineer/Carpentry **Luke Bezio**, The Sharon House Manager/Safety Officer **Heather Ard**, as well as Literary Manager **Rachel Whittington**, Carpentry **Tony Fairchild**, and Safety Officer **Chad Pavlovich**.

The Musical Team is composed of Conductor/Piano **Gary Powell** and Violin **Ryan Loeckel**.

- **What:** *Ada and the Engine*
- **Where:** The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center, 1051 Main Street, The Villages, FL
- **When:** April 6 – May 8, 2021
- **For tickets:** www.TheSharonStudio.com | (352) 751-7799
- **Price:** \$15 previews | \$35 performances
- **Sign Language Interpretation Show:** April 20, 2021

The Studio Theatre's Mission is to inspire the residents of Central Florida to examine relevant issues by elevating them through innovative and intimate storytelling. ***Think outside the box, inside the box.***

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