

listening to something that sounds like it’s recorded in a blender, then you’re going to be less inclined to listen to the full hour of it. So we thought that [hiring Magic City Media] was an investment in ourselves and our project.” The first episodes were recorded at Main Street Players in Miami Lakes. “It was a whole load in, load out. It was a production, essentially,” Therese says.

**South Florida Born and Raised**

Season one focused specifically on South Florida, where each of the hosts is from. Erin and Lorena met in high school in Miami and have known each other for over a decade.

“We did drama together,” Erin says. “Lorena did sports in the beginning but then she did drama and we were in a show together, *Beauty and the Beast*.” When they were cast as the lead roles in their high school production of *The Odd Couple*, the friendship as well as love for theatre blossomed. “We were like, that’s it, this is it,” Erin says upon deciding to commit to theatre. The two eventually graduated from New World School of the Arts/University of Florida with their degrees and then headed north. Erin and Lorena were living together in Chicago, studying together at iO improv and even worked at the same museum. But with the shutdowns they decided to move back to South Florida in the



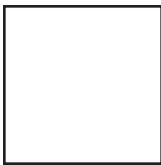
**Top:** Erin Wilbanks, Therese Callison and Lorena Estevez sitting on chairs in Wynwood. **Bottom:** Therese, Erin and Lorena encourage shameless self-expression..

summer of 2020. “We got up to level three. Erin went to her class, I had my class on that Friday and they told us in the middle of the week, ‘Oh by the way, we’re closing on Monday.’ And then I went on Friday and they were like, ‘By the way, we’ll be closed for two weeks.’” Lorena says of the uncertainty they faced before deciding to return to Miami in June 2020. In May 2020, Therese graduated from Barry University with the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Acting. Fortunately, the summer before she had completed an internship that taught her a lot about production. “It was an all encompassing, what-makes-theatre-happen internship,” she says. “I don’t know if I can give credit to just [Margaret M. Ledford, Artistic Director], but City Theatre does a great job of giving young artists in South Florida an opportunity to learn exactly how professional theatre works. You go in as an acting intern and you get to be part of the ensemble at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, which is such an honor, but you also get to learn about everything behind the scenes in the design process.” That same summer Therese met Lorena when they were both in a show at Main Street Players. Therese also encourages shameless submissions. “Let us know if you want to promote something exciting, or that you think will serve the community, or something that you’re proud of, absolutely!”

PHOTO: AMY MAHON

# SunshineArts

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Joey Lamia shares his experiences.  
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Local artist wants people to think outside of the box when choosing a daily look. **Page 7**

# SunshineArts

News about  
creative people in  
South Florida  
Issue 2  
June 2021

## Meet the Sin Pena Podcast Hosts

Three Miami women promote local artists on a new theatre and arts podcast.

Amy Mahon

The story of the Sin Pena Podcast, hosted by friends Lorena Estevez, Therese Callison, and Erin Wilbanks, is straightforward: “We thought about how many people in our own lives, in this South Florida theatre community and beyond have shamelessly created something for themselves or have ventured into something totally new. So we brought these people onto the podcast that started off as actors and directors but ventured into singer/songwriting, producing or have made their own film,” Therese



The hosts of Sin Pena Podcast (R to L):Therese, Lorena and Erin.

says. *Sin pena*, a popular Spanish phrase that means “shameless,” is an apt title for the show. Lorena explains, “In Spanish we say *muchas cosas buenas* because that’s what we want to share, all of the other great things that other people are doing.” Each week the trio interviews one artist in South Florida who is creating shamelessly. Erin says that they encourage guests to tell their story on their podcast about why they create. “We ask them, what inspired you, why are you doing this? It’s inspiring to know why.” Therese says that they also use social media to boost local artists, companies and creative endeavors. “We’re doing a spotlight every week of a small business and an artist that is creating and also

living ‘sin pena.’” Lorena adds.

**Working With Magic City Media**

When they started out they quickly realized how much work must go into producing a quality podcast, which eventually led them to hiring Magic City Media, a South Florida-based audio/video production company. “We bought these USB microphones on Amazon,” Therese said. “The reviews looked good but we tried them and they...” Her voice trailed off as she struggled to find the right words but Lorena jumped right in. “But those microphones didn’t even sound different and I wish they did!”

“Ultimately the sound quality is very important,” Therese says. “If you’re

*Continued on back page*

## Sun Spots

**Cinderella: A Fractured Fairytale**

Parents and guardians of kids who want to get out and enjoy live theater can enjoy the classic story of Cinderella mixed with elements of comedy, slapstick, music, acrobatics and magic.

Performances are held at the multiple locations including the Sandrell Rivers Theater, Muss Park (Miami Beach), Miami Beach Botanical Garden and Zoom. Presented by Fantasy Theatre Factory.

**Lasting Impressions**

Going on now at the Lynn Wolfson Stage inside the Ziff Ballet Opera House until June 16, 2021, this immersive mega art installation uses music and projections to bring 100 of the most famous masterpieces to

life using 3D/LED technology. Presented by Princeton Entertainment Group (PEG) and The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County. Tickets are available online and start at \$42.

### Summer Camps

Summer theatre camps are open and available all summer! Check out programs hosted by Area Stage Company (Miami), Broward Center for the Performing Arts, Barclay Performing Arts (Boca Raton), and Fantasy Theatre Factory (Miami).

### FATVillage ArtWalk

Discover galleries and artists in Fort Lauderdale on the last Saturday of every month for FatVillage Art District's ArtWalk from 6:00 to 10:00 PM. Parking is free in the Sears lot while metered parking is available at the at NW 4th Street and Andrews Avenue. Additional paid parking is available at NW 1st Avenue. Ridesharing is strongly encouraged. Masks are required. Free to the public.

### Mad Hatter's (Gin &) Tea Party

Discover galleries and artists iThis Alice In Wonderland-themed pop-up event just arrived in Miami and has been a hit! Many shows have sold out but there's still time to grab tickets for a few shows. During this immersive, 90-minute event you will be led down the rabbit hole by the Mad Hatter and can enjoy up to three cocktails. Guests to the tea party must be age 21 or older. Non-alcoholic options available for those who want to enjoy Wonderland without the gin. Tickets are available online. The event is located at the Miami Ironside and runs until July 18.

## SunshineArts

*News about creative people in South Florida*

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# Autism in Theatre and Film

## What artists don't understand about working with Autistic actors

By Joey Lamia

**H**ave you ever heard or know anyone that is an Autistic actor? Chances are you rarely met one in your lifetime. Why is that? Theatre and Film are not the healthiest arts for Autistics to get into. Directors and other actors are mostly neurotypicals and don't understand how to communicate with Autistics properly.

What is a neurotypical? Neurotypical means people who are neurologically typical or have no mental disabilities or diagnoses.

In all my acting experiences, it's always been uncomfortable getting feedback from directors because what they were saying wouldn't register with me. Growing up, I had to mask all my Autistic traits from everybody, so any feedback I would get would want me to "stim," what we do to calm ourselves down when we have a sensory overload and are on the verge of a meltdown.

When I would try to rehearse the scene again, directors would get frustrated because they're thinking I'm not doing what they want me to do. I would say I was uncomfortable doing something they wanted me to do, they didn't want to hear it. I've been yelled at, then treated with a smile afterwards, which is abusive and triggers past events from my childhood going through speech therapy and with teachers and family. Others Autistics I know have a tougher time navigating through the arts, so they would quit after the first rehearsal. The reality is there is no support system in place for Autistic actors. Directors are not trained to communicate with neurodivergent people, so they go to their usual ways of directing, which is equivalent to a 'one size fits all.' Other actors are not good with communicating, either. Autistic actors need to

have a connection with the people they're working with. It makes it more comforting. Performing in front of the hot lights is nerve-racking.

Having that support system from the talent and director goes a long way to get the most of the Autistic talent. Developing friendships is a bonus because they'll want to be there to perform. If you're in the film and/or theatre arts, read up on Autism from Autistics and what their daily lives are like. Maybe, just maybe, you'll start to learn something about the performer you're standing across from.

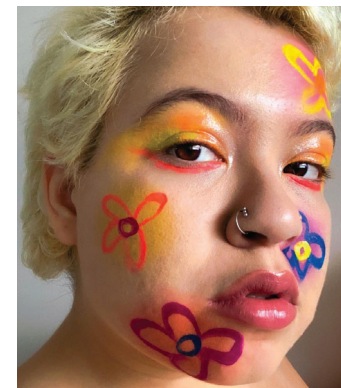


Joey Lamia is a 30-year old Autism Self-Advocate fighting for Autism rights

## Makeup Artistry

**O**live Lopez is a makeup artist, licensed cosmetologist and founder of Oliveskies Beauty, through which she shares her fun, colorful designs. Olive's interest in makeup began around age 15 or 16 when she also had a budding interest in photography. Inspired by 90s grunge look, she would set up avant-garde photoshoots in her room and style her makeup for them. "I've been doing crazy make up since then. Since the start. And so eventually I realized, about three years ago, what am I waiting on? This is what I love. I want to make this a profession." After getting her license she started marketing herself through her tutorials. Soon Olive started booking all sorts of productions ranging from music videos to print

work. The more networking and working she did, the more her name began circulating, specifically because of her unique style. "First, I am an artist, a creative. I've been making art and using that as my way of getting things out since I was really young. Then it kind of evolved into me doing it on my face," starts "Discomfort is where you start making moves, you know?" Her Instagram page is mainly where she posts her designs as well as hosts a weekly IG live called wEiRdO Wednesday where she tries new makeup designs in conversation with other makeup artists and creatives. Olive believes that each person has their own level of adventurousness they're willing to go to when applying makeup.



Olive Lopez is a Broward-based makeup artist who initially was interested in photography.

"I'm definitely always pushing people to step out of the box even if it's just something really, really simple that is in everyone else's box but for you it's getting a little crazy. I love that because that's where the fun happens." She encourages people to even take small steps out of their comfort zone. "I know it's easy to say that coming for me, but I think that if you incorporate something a little different than you normally do in your eyeshadow or even a colorful mascara, whatever, that little element of fun can be something that people will be super wow-ed by. It doesn't take a lot." You can watch her videos and see her designs on Instagram @OliveSkiesBeauty.

PHOTO: OLIVESKIES BEAUTY/OLIVE LOPEZ

## Brand Development



JAEM Media has a passion for helping Latin American brands enter the U.S. market.

**W**hen Jorge A. Escobar Mata was chosen to study abroad for a month in East Asia in high school, he didn't know that he would return with a new passion for photography. "I was able to study for a month in Taiwan and I liked taking pictures of all these things I was seeing that I wanted to show my friends." He started taking photos on his iPhone 4 and GoPro but things changed for him when he received a DSLR camera that he asked for Christmas. Upon graduating from high school he moved from Miami to Gainesville to attend the University of Florida, where he continued taking pictures for brands, sororities, and events but didn't pursue photography as a major. Instead, he double majored in International

Studies with a focus in Latin America, and Spanish. After school he combined his design and photography skills with the knowledge he gained in undergrad. He began working as a marketing manager for a mortgage lender. "Then I branched out and I did some logo and branding designing for a couple of my friends' companies," he says. Born in El Salvador, he has his eye on international markets. "My goal is to help bring Latin American businesses into American markets A lot of times they struggle doing that because the way media is presented there is very different than here, from video creation to how they name things to their social media." Jorge says that a lot of companies still don't have a strong social media presence, which

is vital for a brand's success. That presence must also be meaningful and methodical. For example, he says, "Color schemes are so important visually, aesthetically, and it attracts clients when they don't see just a series of random posts, but rather one cohesive theme that that shows who the brand is. The colors, the fonts, and prioritizing your graphic design are important." His next bit of advice is to use targeted ads. "You can put so much money into an ad that you can just set up, but targeting the right audience, having the right content, having the right copy, and all the small details that go into it, are what make a campaign succeed." You can find Jorge on Instagram @jaem.media.

PHOTO: JAEM MEDIA

Your guide to what’s happening around South Florida this month



**Sunny Side Up Market**  
Shop over 85 South Florida vendors and artists and enjoy locally-sourced food and drinks at the farmers and artisan market right in the heart of Fort Lauderdale. Pet friendly. Parking is free in the Sears Lot. *MASS District. Free.*



**Stonewall Pride Parade & Street Festival**  
Wilton Manors Entertainment Group hopes to #SeeYouThere at Wilton Manors Stonewall Festival as well as the famous 8-hour street party at Wilton Manors’ award-winning nightclubs, museums and galleries. Parades begin at 3PM and 7PM. *Wilton Drive. \$5 payable online.*

SAT 12, 8:00AM–2:00AM

**ROCK NIGHT**

EMBERS DAWN-MAN OR MONKEY-VTF PROJECT

Man or Monkey

VTF PROJECT

EMBERS DAWN

SATURDAY, 12 JUNE

FREE ADMISSION | FREE PARKING | LIVE MUSIC

ShipWreckers

Doors open at 8:00 PM

**Embers Dawn Live**  
Check out the West Palm Beach female-fronted death metal band Embers Dawn along with other local bands Man or Monkey and WTF Project. *Shipwreckers Kava Bar. Free*

**SAT 19, 6:30**

**The Juneteenth Experience**  
This immersive, multidisciplinary performance celebrates Black arts, history and community. Presented by Hued Songs and Rhythm Foundation through the City of Miami Beach’s Arts in the Parks. *North Beach Bandshell. Free*

MON 21, 8:00 - 11:00PM

**CALLING ALL POETS, WRITERS, & LYRICISTS!**

**Poetry**

OPEN MIC NIGHT

THIRD MONDAY EVERY MONTH 8PM-11PM

**RETURNING MAY!**

**Poetry Night**  
Every third Monday of the month join Arts

Garage Delray Beach for Poetry Open Mic Night. In-person and virtual tickets sold online. *94 NE 2nd Ave, Delray Beach, FL 33444. \$5.*

MON 28, 7:00PM

south florida theatre league

**The South Florida Theatre League’s Annual Membership Meeting**  
Theatre professionals are welcome to learn about current and upcoming programs, and to share ideas on the future of the South Florida theatre community. *Zoom. Free.*



**Sunset Yoga**  
Join Julie Allen Healing Arts every Wednesday an hour before sunset at Shepherd’s Park in Stuart, FL for standup paddle board (SUP) yoga, or practice on land if you prefer that option. RSVP on Zeke’s website or call (772) 205-6920. *Zeke’s Surf & Paddle Boarding. First class is free!*



Corey Rose ‘21 is one of the founders of The Black Undergraduate Theatre Collective at FAU’s main campus in Boca Raton, FL

The Collective Graduates Founder

The Collective is the first and only student organization of its kind at FAU

Amy Mahon

This May one of the graduates from Florida Atlantic University’s Boca Raton campus leaves behind a legacy that is sure to be remembered by students for years to come. Corey Rose was one of the founders of the Black Undergraduate Theatre Collective, a student organization that started in early 2020 and was the first of its kind at the school. He says that the first three months were bursting with energy and that the group was proud to be among the many officially-recognized organizations with a table in the breezeway, holding meetings, and doing all of the things that a student organization does. In fact, they even began planning their season and

what shows they would produce. “But then the pandemic hit,” he says, and then their priorities changed. “When the call came to be activists and to do work, we were already comfortable enough with each other to do it, and so there was trust there.”

Corey speaks with admiration about other students in the Collective and their work bringing in anti-racist policy to FAU’s theatre department, and producing during the pandemic. “I like to say is a FAU is great with recruitment of Black students but terrible retention of Black students. Where that hit students in our department was that we saw students coming to the department not really being able to assimilate into the culture of the department, then kind of fizzing out, going to another major, going to another university, doing whatever they can do to still do theatre if they still like doing theatre.”

He says that unlike other on-campus organizations, The Collective is open to

first-year students, which is important for student retention. “I think what The Collective has done is help to create a formalized process through which people can get adjusted to life in college and in the department. I know that we had members who last semester who like joined and it was their first semester ever in college.” He says it’s important to connect students with a mentor early on who help them recognize their full potential.

Corey was accepted to Graduate School of Journalism at UCat Berkeley and will be starting there in the fall. He has some words of wisdom not just for college students but for everyone: “Just surround yourself with people who love you so that way you recognize when you aren’t being loved necessarily by the institution.” He urges others to find community, whether it’s online or through an affinity group, so that you have the support from others as well as a group that shares meaningful experiences together.●



**“We are certainly going to take germs and cleanliness more seriously. That is something that everyone is more cognizant of now.”**

Main Street Players is will be presenting new play *Wolf & Badger* from July 23 to August 29 as their first reopening show since February 2020.

# Spotlight on Main Street Players

The Miami Lakes theatre company continues to be a pillar in the community

Amy Mahon

I recently had an opportunity to head down to Miami Lakes, FL where I sat down with Danny Nieves, the Artistic Director for Main Street Players, formerly Miami-Dade’s longest-running community theatre that became a professional company in 2017. Danny has been a board member since then but only recently took over his new role as AD. He says that his success is based on following the

model that was created by his predecessor, Robert Coppel. “I watched Robert, who was the artistic director for 10+ years before I arrived, and sat in meetings with him for three years hearing his thought process, why he liked a play, what he liked about it and how he knew it would connect [with audiences]. And I was like, ‘OK, when it comes my turn I’m just going to continue what Robert was doing.’” Now after leading the theatre through a historic pandemic, Danny is excited for MSP’s reopening this summer with 2 original plays that were submitted through a new play competition that they run. The shows are *Wolf & Badger* by Michael John McGoldrick and *Shakespeare is a White Supremacist* by Andrew Watring.

## Going Dark in the Pandemic

In 2020, millions of artists lost their jobs when plays, corporate events, festivals and productions stopped, and some theatres closed permanently. Fortunately, MSP has a close partnership with their property manager, Graham Commercial, which owns and manages over 4 million square feet of property in Miami Lakes. “They were very supportive and they were there for us. Outside of that, it’s been more of like a personal struggle as a theatre artists to not have that creative outlet, but the theatre itself from a business perspective is going to be fine. We’ve been smart with our money. Dennis [Lyzniak, MSP’s Board Treasurer] is on point and frugal. He does not spend more than he needs. Because of

that, we did have a reserve to cover some of the more necessary operating expenses that could not be forgiven.”

He also attributes the financial success of the theatre to contributions made by private donors.

## Changes After COVID

Danny and the rest of the Main Street Players are excited to welcome audiences back in July but there will be noticeable changes, such as the new hand sanitizers that have been added to the lobby and the reduced capacity at first. Actors will be required to provide negative COVID tests in order to work. He says that the theatre wants to prevent any outbreaks during the run of any show, so they will continue to clean and make sensible decisions to protect their cast, crew and audiences. •

## From Community Theatre to Professional Company

Danny tells the history of the theatre with a lot of pride in where it has come from and where he hopes to lead it. “We’ve been in the space since 2003. The theatre turned professional in 2017. Before that it was known as The Community Theatre of Miami Lakes for many, many years and as we grew, especially as we got in [MSP’s current space], we eventually got to the point where we felt it was necessary for us to start paying actors and to take that next step forward to be able to attract and hire better talent to work here.”

He says that immediately the quality of the talent applying for tech positions and at auditions went up as more professional artists began to look at MSP as a potential employer rather than a volunteer-run company. “Honestly, I directed two shows here when it was a community theatre, and it’s always tough to try to convince a good actor to like, hey, come work here for free, you know? They always ask, ‘What’s the compensation?’ And I’m like, ‘Well, there is no compensation, you got to do it for the love!’ And, again, that works well with college kids or graduates right out of a university. Or even less-talented actors who do this for fun and they don’t make a living off of it or it’s not what they’re trained in, they just do it for fun. But once we started compensating, that definitely opened up the door to better talent to come in. Even just a few hundred dollars, psychologically, for the actor that’s huge. Getting that paycheck, no matter how small, at least they are getting paid for their work. That goes a long way. Throughout the years as we have grown we have also increased the pay scale so the actors are earning a little bit more now than they were when we first started. Definitely the class of talent that we’ve been able to attract and bring in has been far superior since we turned professional.”

Danny says that although musicals are expensive to produce and the space doesn’t have the best acoustics, the idea is not off the table. Musical require a much larger budget than plays in order to pay professional musicians as well as a musical director. Musical usually also require a choreographer, dance captain, etc. He says a musical that requires only a small band and a handful of actors in the cast would be ideal for MSP’s space, and in fact there is already a lot of pressure to produce one. “It’s been quite a few years since we’ve done a musical. It’s something that the board members have already been pushing me, like, hey, we want to see musicals again. A lot of patrons are like, hey what are you going do musical again? So we’ll circle back around to it.”