



Honky Tonk Musical in Houston Showcases MSU Scene Design

NOVEMBER 9, 2020



A new musical opening in Houston, Texas, at [Stages Repertory Theatre](#) features scenic design by Michigan State University Professor of Scene Design [Kirk Domer](#) and Department of Theatre student Michael Gault (BFA Theatre Design '20). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, performances will be live-streamed Nov. 10-15, giving audiences in Michigan and around the world an opportunity to see what typically can only be seen by an in-person audience.

[Honky Tonk Laundry](#), written and created by Roger Bean, explores two characters coming together to look past a failing laundromat and cheating boyfriends in order to embrace their independence. This jukebox musical was slated to open at Stages Repertory Theatre in March but was postponed due to the pandemic.

As scene designer, Domer used funding from the College of Arts & Letters Undergraduate Research Initiative grant as well as an Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Travel grant from the Office of the Provost to bring Gault along as Assistant Scene Designer.



“Honky Tonk Laundry” scene design by Professor Kirk Domer

In residence for nine days during the tech/dress process, Gault served as a resident designer working alongside industry professionals at the brand-new Rochelle and Max Levitt Stage at [The Gordy](#). Gault explored narratives told for the stage that reflect the human condition and spark an emotional response in audiences.

“As a theatrical designer, I embraced the reoccurring themes to elevate the script, heightening the impact the production can have on viewers,” Gault said. “To accomplish this result, I performed extensive research on the subject material and its context through script analysis.”

As a theatrical designer, I embraced the reoccurring themes to elevate the script, heightening the impact the production can have on viewers. To accomplish this result, I performed extensive research on the subject material and its context through script analysis. Michael Gault, BFA Theatre Design '20

Designing for a musical to be performed live but viewed online presented unique challenges, and having Gault as an assistant was extremely valuable, says Domer.

“Michael helped to coordinate the requirements, restraints, and creative freedoms that weaved together into the final design of the show,” Domer said. “The final design communicated the story in a visual medium where the script alone cannot. Michael assisted in inventing a world where emotions and narrative combined to alter and enhance an audience member’s perspective on women and relationships.”

The *Honky Tonk Laundry* live-streamed performances can be viewed Nov. 10-13 at 8:30 p.m. EST and at 3 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. EST on Nov. 14-15. For tickets and more information, visit www.stageshouston.com.