

In The Margin Podcast Transcript

Episode 1: Let's Talk About Accessibility w/Jenna Bainbridge

Host(s): Whitney and Francis

Guest(s): Jenna Bainbridge

Francis: Today we have a special guest, Jenna Bainbridge. Jenna is an actor, singer, and a disability rights advocate. Most recently she can be seen at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, performing the roles of Richard the Third, and Joan of Arc in Bring Down the House. Jenna sustained a spinal cord injury as a small child and now walks with a limp. She always had a passion for performing and began working with Phamily Theater Company at the age of 14. Phamily, is a professional theatre company in Denver, Colorado that hires actors with disabilities. Working there taught Jenna the importance of diversity on stage and inclusion of people with disabilities in mainstream theatre and film. Since then she has been able to cross the country breaking down barriers performing such roles as Cinderella, and Into the Woods. Hermia in A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Penny in Hairspray.

Whitney: Welcome to In the Margin podcast. This is one of your co-hosts Whitney Reed, and my pronouns are they/them/theirs and we are so grateful to have you listening today. How are you doing Francis?

Francis: **slight chuckle** Heh, uh doing good. And I'm your other co-host, also pronouns they/them/theirs. Thank you for listening everyone, and today we have a guest and umm her name is Jenna. Hello Jenna.

Jenna: Hi! Thanks for having me today.

Whitney: Awesome. Also, where are you located Jenna?

Jenna: I am currently in Ashland, Oregon. Uh, waiting out this quarantine. I was working with Oregon Shakespeare Festival, when uh - when all the notices came down that we would have to close. Umm and yeah. I'm gonna wait out here as long as I can.

Whitney: What's in Ashland, Oregon? Let's just break that down. For those of you that haven't heard of it. *[Francis and Jenna chuckle in the background]* What is Ashland? Where is that? *[Whitney and Jenna share a laugh]* Why is there an Oregon Shakespeare Festival in a city that many of us have never heard of?

Jenna: Yeah, it's such a fascinating little pocket of -- Ashland, Oregon is like right on the California border and we are like three hours - four hours from the nearest major metropolitan area, but we have this massive Shakespeare festival. It is the oldest Shakespeare festival in the country, um, this was the 85th season and uh, every year there is a massive rep theatre festival that this year was 11 shows or suppose to be 11 shows, um, playing from March until October. Uh and it's just a fun little pocket of the arts in the middle of Southern Oregon.

Francis: So, how did you end up at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival? What's your journey to there?

Jenna: I had a super strange journey to Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Um, I -- so, I am, uh, an actor and singer. I was based in Denver Colorado before this and um, I worked with a theatre company out in Denver called Phamaly. And uh, at Phamaly's inception, that stood for the Physically Handicapped Actors Musical Artists League. Um, over the years, uh they've dropped the acronym and are just Phamaly Theatre Company now, but they are still a professional theatre company that hires entirely actors with disabilities and uh- I was working there for a couple years when Joy Dixon, the casting director for Oregon Shakespeare Festival happened to be in Denver and um, reached out to a few different casting directors and artistic directors in town and said, you know she was looking for um, actors-- this was for the 2018 season I think. Um, and yeah, was just reaching out to people and seeing if anyone knew of actors with you know a little bit more diversity, a little bit uh-- you know something bit-- OSF was really pushing for at the time, and um, she happened to be directed towards Phamaly and uh, had an audition and um, ended up working for the school visit program for a few years for uh, OSF before um, in 2019, uh, when OSF was doing Hairspray, an actor dropped out super last minute, and I

happened to be on campus rehearsing for the school tour program, and um, ended up getting an audition and booked Hairspray for the following year.

Whitney: So, okay. OSF is a huge organization, you are working there, you are living there for the time being. What are you doing in your me-- like in the other times? Like, what are you doing in your-in your leisure time?

Jenna: Uh, well I mean like right now is nothing, but leisure time.

Whitney: Okay.

Jenna: **Slight chuckle** For better or for worse. Um, but I currently- so my husband also works for the Shakespeare Festival, um, he's the self-safety health and wellness manager, um, which is quite the job to have during a pandemic. Um, so, a lot of my time is currently spent, you know, trying to keep our lives as calm as possible and um, you know, stay in touch with our family. I do a lot of crochet and things like that um, but, most of my time for work right now, I teach voice lessons full-time, via Zoom, and Skype, and Facetime and whatever my students have available to them. Um, and yeah, I do a lot of work talking to theatre companies and doing play readings and really trying to educate, uh, about disability and disability involvement in theatre.

Whitney: Also, and I think one question that we usually ask is, you know, how did you get into theatre? But I think one question that's really going to be important especially because this is In the Margin podcast is talking with people that have different experiences within the theatre, right? And so -

Jenna: Yeah

Whitney: How did you become a consultant that consults theatres around disability? And how did that-how did you connect that to theatre? How did theatre and consulting come together?

Jenna: Yeah, it's kind of a strange thing because when I started out in theatre, I had no idea that I was going to become an advocate of any kind. I think like so many of us, you find a thing that you're passionate for or passionate about and you realize that there are entire groups of people that are not allowed to experience that in the same way, um, and that passion then

drives you to say we need to be more inclusive, we need to change the way that this, um, that this area is... is! *[slightly chuckles]* how it exists. Um, and so, I, I started in theatre um, as a little kid, I had broken my spine, when I was 16 months old, um, so I don't really remember a life before disability, but I'm now partially paralyzed from the waist down and I walk with a very pronounced limp, and uh, as I got older I loved, loved, loved sports as a kid- um, but as I got older and sports became more competitive, I stopped being allowed to participate. Um, coaches didn't want me on a team, and my parents, wonderful, wonderful humans that they are, um, you now really wanted me to find other extracurricular activities that were more-- that were a safer space for me. Um, and so they introduced me to choir and theatre and I knew from the moment that I entered those rooms, that this was where I wanted to be for the rest of my life. And uh, when I was a teenager then, I..I started working with Phamaly Theatre Company, which is the company that I mentioned before in Denver, and they are in it of themselves. They are like a Civil Rights, Disability Rights advocacy group within a theatre company. Um, and I was 13-14 when I started working there, and I just got the bug and itch of not only is theatre super important to my life, but also like making sure that there is a place for people with disabilities, um, and so I worked there for a really long time, I still work there whenever I can and um, after being there for a few years, I started to look at how else can I get this message out into the world, um, and I started doing beauty pageants of all things, it was kind of the weirdest place I could find, but um, I started doing the Miss Colorado program um, which is within the Miss America world. And um, one of the things that I really liked about it was that they never really had a ton of people with disabilities in it, and I got to go in there and just raise hell *[lets out a chuckle]* essentially um, and because for so long that program had been completely separated from disability, because the Miss America program has a Miss Wheelchair program, and it is literally called Miss Wheelchair Colorado.

Whitney: Wow!

Jenna: Yeah, [sighs] Horrible, horrible, horrible title, horrible program, um, and there was a section within the pageant where they would pair up um, young adults with uh, learning disabilities and developed mental disabilities with one of the pageant--pageant girls and you would walk across the stage with them, and that was it. And I got so, so upset because it was just tokenism and it was very un-inclusive, we didn't do any mentorship or working with each other or letting these girls be part of the program at all, it was just, you know, tokenism. And um, so by being apart of that program then, I only did it for that one year, but they no longer have that as part of the program um, Miss Wheelchair Colorado does still exist, um, but, it was a fascinating platform because I was able to learn so much about how...um, how disability is perceived within different worlds, not just theatre, but also how we're perceived in, you know kind of more...I don't know how to describe pageants, they're just kind of a crazy weird place.

Francis: Right - Um, so, whe-when you're consulting with these theatre companies, how does it that conversation start, when they do have these - this kind of infrastructure already in place? How do you...like instead of calling them out, how do you call them in to make appropriate changes?

Jenna: My big thing is uh, always teaching people that is it okay to ask questions. Um, we've kind of been taught since we were little that disability is something that we should be ashamed of or something we should be scared of. Um, you know the most common thing I hear is like, *"Oh honey don't stare, or don't point. It's rude,"* you know if we really teach kids to observe and to learn and to educate then disability becomes part of their world. And so, when I go into theatre companies, a lot of times that is one of the first things we talk about is just ask the question. Um, if you don't feel comfortable asking, there is a place for you to write it down and ask it anonymously and that's usually one of the best ways to get the conversation started because sometimes you just don't know, like how to even approach the conversation of including disability. I get so many questions of *"Oh, well we weren't sure about hiring you, because we didn't know if you could take the stairs, and our building isn't ADA accessible"* and

you know it's a simple question, but it feels offensive to ask "*Are you able to take the stairs?*" when in reality, it's not offensive at all. So, that's one of the first things I really try to come and teach people - here's how to ask the questions and then just take a moment to imagine your life with a disability and wheelchair tours are one of my favorite ways to do that, is actually get a wheelchair and go through your house, go through your theater, go through your campus, and figure out what things are, and are not accessible so that you don't have to ask those questions. You already know. We have no way to get onto stage without, you know, going up and down stairs and really having people look through that -

Francis: The theatre space itself can be exclusionary to the audience members, not just the artists that are creating -

Jenna: Yeah, most theatres have made their audience spaces accessible at this point, which is awesome. Super, super - like that's fantastic. Um, the ADA guidelines require that we have accessible spaces for audiences, but we don't require the same for performers on stage. So, theatres, if they are bringing their theatre up to code, theoretically they're required to have wheelchair accessible seating, closed captioning. They're required to have audio description, but none of those same requirements are - are - it's not the same for the actors on the stage or the technicians behind the scenes or the directors, ect. Um, and it's because theatres are allowed to deny casting to anybody for any reason. There's never - there's not like a paper trail that says like, "*Oh we didn't hire this person because our theatre wasn't accessible. It's just we didn't hire this person.*" Which happens to you know, millions of performers every single day and it's a problem, but at least we're getting audiences better, and we are starting to have renovations done to theatres to make sure that there are elevators, and graphs, etc.

Whitney: What is it - when you go and audition right, and you know, as a - as an African-American woman who is darker skin, you know, it's clear that I am a black woman right? And so when I go into an audition, it's - it's there. It's - we are all understanding that - that same thing even though I'm coming in with a level of preparation. I might be coming in with a song or

monologue. What was the time that you were able to acknowledge that this casting director not only sees me and my talent, but they also are acknowledging my disability? And then once you realize that, how did you like, kind of transform your process of acknowledging that everyone wasn't going to be accepting or understand?

Jenna: Yeah, I mean I have so many positive experiences, and I also - I think we all have negative experiences. I really try to focus on the positive -

Whitney: Great - yeah.

Jenna: There's - there's of course been moments where I've walked in for auditions for like *Glass Menagerie*, which is about a young disabled woman and directors won't even look up and watch me, um, but for every audition, I've had like that, I've gone into spaces where - I think there is something really wonderful when a director sees you for who you are, and instead of seeing what makes you different as um, a hindrance, they go, *"Oh my god, I've never thought about the art in this way before!"* and this could add a whole new layer to it. Um, the first time that happened to me, I was 19 years old, and I was auditioning for the role of Cinderella at a dinner theatre in Colorado. And it was just such an empowering moment because these directors came to me and they said like *"We-"* they'd seen me perform in another show in Colorado, and they said, *"We really feel like your disability would be such a wonderful asset to the character of Cinderella because she is treated poorly by her family, and she is you know all of these things that we tend to think of with disabilities being negatives, but then she's able to you know have this incredible life and we want to tell that story. We want people with disabilities to be a part of this story in this creation,"* and I remember having a performance one night and a little girl with Cerebral Palsy came up to me after the show to take a picture, and her grandmother sent me a letter a few months later to the theater and told me that her granddaughter had always loved singing, but had never been able to audition for shows before because she was too embarrassed, and when she saw me in Cinderella, she looked at her grandmother and said *"I want to audition for a show,"* and had an audition the following week

and was about to be in her school's production of I think it was Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. She was going to be in, um, but it was just such an empowering moment for me of knowing like, great when I own my disability, and I own myself in my space, there are directors out there who are going to see it as an exciting thing, and not an hindrance. And those are the directors we want to be working with anyway! Like we want to be with people who are as excited to work with us, as we are to work with them, and when we own ourselves, and own our space, there are so many people out there who have never felt empowered to do that and by just having one single person that they've seen, that they can connect to and feel represented by, suddenly they are empowered to go and take on the world themselves, and I think that's something that like I will take with me until my dying day. This is - this is why we keep going through those bad auditions because for every one of those there are 10 people out there who are going to be empowered by the one time you do get cast

Whitney: Right, right. And we even see like Tony Award winners right, that have disabilities and breaking barriers, and new barriers -

Jenna: Yeah -

Whitney: Like how does that make you feel? Like do you kind of have that experience that - that young girl had while watching you? Like, oh shoot! The ceiling has definitely been raised for me and for people like myself?

Jenna: Absolutely! Yeah, when I first saw Ali Stroker at the Tony Awards performing for Spring Awakening I lost my damn mind. I was so excited. It was the first time that we had ever had a wheelchair on stage at the Tony Awards. So then the flash forward five years, and she's winning her Tony Award and all I could think was, yes, we have finally changed the world. Like finally people with disabilities are going to be accepted into mainstream theater and it was just - it was such a cool moment. It's an empowering moment, and then of course like I read the next day that they did not build a ramp for Ali Stroker to get onto the stage. She had to wait backstage while her category was called because there was no way for her to get from the audience to the

stage. And so I had this like oh my gosh, I'm so happy she won, also why on earth did we not make sure that this theater was accessible for her to win? So it's this interesting - like I had these two torn halves of me, but like because she won, next year it's going to be an accessible stage like she - she unfortunately, she had to like go through the you know, kind of shitty situation. But in order to make sure that like in the future it will be better, and I'm so glad that she's been breaking down all those barriers because she's also just like, stupidly talented.

Francis: Do you think that's often the case is that it's just a lack of consideration right? It's not intentionally - like in bad spirits right? It's just *"Oh, we just didn't think about it."*

Jenna: Yeah, I certainly hope it's just ignorance or you know, yeah. Or not thinking about it or you know it I think unless you - for a lot of people they don't - they don't know someone who uses a wheelchair or they don't know somebody who might need those kinds of accommodation so you don't think of it as being needed, but I don't think there's any ill will. I really do think that a lot of times it's just ignorance or fear that prevents us from being as inclusive as possible, and those are two things that we can combat with education and you know visibility.

Whitney: So as you move forward, right as you are here, and you're in the pandemic, there aren't really any - you know theaters to consult, where do you - we're kind of prying into your personal business right now -

Jenna: Yeah

Whitney: Where do you see your career going? If you could like, you know have the three wishes and you can wish on that lamp. What would you wish for in this time?

Jenna: Just for like pandemic time?

Whitney: Just for like, pandemic and forward, like what are your - what are your wishes? If you could have three wishes, what would your wishes be for your industry, yourself within the industry, and where you see us moving in regards to art and theatrical representation?

Jenna: I mean, I really wish that like during this time theatres are taking advantage of the fact that there's no audiences or foot traffic that we need to be worried about. I really hope that

theaters are taking this time to consider how accessible their spaces are because a lot of the time, what we hear from theaters is like, oh we haven't done that construction because we'd have to - you know, close down for a few weeks. Well right now you're closed anyway, so why not take advantage of the time and make sure that you have accessible seating?

That you have an accessible entrance, that you've got, you know caption operators and doing the research into how do we make sure we provide these services? So that everybody can enjoy this space. That's definitely a hope I have for, like, during this time. When we come back, I fully believe that theatre is coming back. Theatre is going to make it through, because we're one of the only - theater is going to make it through this because we're one of the only industries that has consistently proven that we can get through pandemics. Like we've done it for centuries. So I really hope that when we get through to the other side, I hope that theaters have been taking this time to educate themselves, artistic directors, and casting directors and executive directors. I hope that they're taking this time to watch other art. There's so much great art out there, being made available to stream and I hope that they're watching it and realizing that there's space for everybody on these stages. And we can be a fully inclusive world because I think one of the best ways to realize our own shortcomings is to watch others and to learn from them. So, I hope that they're watching. You know, The Nationals put out a lot of great theatre every week and some of it is incredibly inclusive and some of it is not, and so I hope people are really looking for that. And then finally, I would hope that, when we come through, through the other side. That people are more open to learning about other people's experiences. Because there's so much great art out there, that is by, you know authors that are from communities that we haven't heard from. You know, people with disabilities, people from marginalized communities, people from lower incomes, or different, you know - all of these different backgrounds. I hope that we're going to actually produce their work and then let artists perform that work. Because I think it's so important that we tell our own stories. So, yeah if there's a playwright out there that is disabled, I hope that they're looking at their work and saying, "*Great, we're gonna produce this, and we're*

gonna find a disabled artist to tell this story. And we're gonna find a director with a disability to direct this," and I hope that's true for everything. For all work, that we're really finding the right people to produce these pieces. And I would just hope that we're taking the time right now to really research it and figure out how do we do that.

Francis: For the young artist who is trying to get connected. Is there a hub where they can do that?

Jenna: Within disability there is not a ton of community within theatre and it's been - that's been a huge problem for me. So, I would really say, like all young artists out there research theatre companies that you respect and get onto those message boards. A lot of them are, like I said, they're starting to stream work which is amazing and I think there's going to be more streaming as this lockdown continues and I think we're gonna have more and more available to us in our homes. I've - personally, I've been trying to stay in communication with theatres that I've worked with before. And a lot of them are having online classes, which I think is a great way to meet others. You know, young artists with disabilities. The National Disability Theatre is fantastic, and Phamly Theatre Company was the first of its kind in the country that cast entirely actors with disabilities. And both of them have ways to contact them through their website and get involved in their communities. So, I would recommend both of those and yeah, just watch as much art as you possibly can. Even if it's just like the Angelia Webber show that is streaming on YouTube. Like, stay involved in art right now. Learn from that art, and figure out what art you want to be telling. Because we are all at home right now, there are a lot of great opportunities to create your own artwork, and even just putting it on YouTube and sending it to some of these theatre companies or directors that you respect. Like, we're all at home right now, we got nothing, but time to watch people's art and I've had a number of my voice students sending me videos of them just singing, or doing monologues in their home and it's bringing me a lot of joy right now to see that we are still creating in this world.

Francis: How do you start a conversation with your students around disability? Do you include that in your voice lessons even if they themselves don't have a disability?

Jenna: Oh absolutely! Mostly like, I'm very open about my disability. I think that it is a huge defying feature of who I am. It shaped so much of who I am and the way that the world perceives me and therefore the way that I move through the world, and so, it's going to be a part of any voice lesson that I teach. It's going to be a part of any show that I'm in, any character that I play. I will be defined in part by disability. Just as much as I'm defined by like any other physical characteristics that I have. So, when I'm teaching voice lessons, I really try to equate it to - like we all have different bodies. We all have different strengths and weaknesses and abilities and it's so it's not necessarily about disability. It's about our own inherent ability. So, within teaching it's a matter of really taking stock of your own body. And where do your strengths lie because if I'm teaching someone with you know paralysis, they're going to use different muscles to sing than somebody who's a marathon runner. I've got a student who has a partially collapsed lung like they're not going to use their breaths in the same way that someone else will. So, even if you don't have a disability, you still have different strengths, you still have different, you know abilities within yourself. I think that disability is a spectrum just as much as anything else and most people are somewhere on that spectrum. Whether it's you know, maybe they wear glasses like that's technically a disability. If you didn't have glasses, that assisted device, you wouldn't be fully able bodied. So, I just happen to be further on the disability spectrum than most people but we're all somewhere on there and we're all having to adapt to our own bodies and abilities. It's so important when teaching, and it's so important when creating. So, I really want all of my students, all of my peers, all of my coworkers, all of my castmates, and everyone to take stock of what is your own body and what is it capable of? And, then just own it.

Whitney: I love that. I love that, you know because - really because there's something that tells people if your body is somewhat different. Or left or right of norm, whatever the norm or Center

is, then there's some type of victimhood that you need to - you need to embrace, and I think what you're saying is the complete opposite. It's like, enjoy the fact that your body is different because everyone's body is different and how can you really celebrate that right? Like where did you - to me that's something - an attitude that's nurtured right? Like where - who nurtured that attitude of like gratitude for who I am and what I am? Was it your parents? Was it - I think I know you have an older sister. Who-who is nurtured that attitude for you?

Jenna: I mean for sure my family is so incredibly supportive and ever since I was a little kid, they always told me like whatever I wanted to do they would find a way to make it happen. So when I told them I wanted to play baseball they were like great we'll find a team that will be inclusive for you and we'll make sure that like if there isn't one that we will find one, like we will force them to be - my parents were always willing to fight for me. And my older sister is like absolutely my biggest cheerleader. I remember going to visit her in college and one of her friends was like, *"Oh you're Jenna. I've seen you sing a bunch."* It was like, that's weird. Like, how do you see me sing? She goes, *"Yeah, whenever your sister gets drunk at parties. She always pulls up your YouTube channel."* She's always just been like my biggest fan, my biggest like rock star supporter. Like, I love her to the ends of this earth and I think that she is like the coolest person on the planet. So the fact that she thinks I'm cool is just like - it's that ultimate validation and like growing up with that was just really, really wonderful. They always taught me that if I wanted to do something my body was good enough to do it, and that no one could tell me otherwise. And if someone did then I find another activity and proved them wrong. That was like always a big thing in our family was - if someone tells you you can't, then prove to them why you can and I was taught that from like very, very young age. And then I also I really credit a lot of - my - like, I really trust myself and trust my body and I really thank family for that. P-H-A-M-A-L-Y family, because working there - in middle school, especially, you know, everyone is so self-conscious of their body in middle school and being in a room my very first audition with Phamaly, the costume designer was there which is kind of a fun thing about Phamaly is that

sometimes you have like designers in the room from audition day, but Mallory Nelson she is an incredible display of disability rights advocate and credible costume designer and Mallory was like watching me walk around and she came up to me and my mom and she said, *"Oh my gosh, I love the way you move. It. Looks like you're dancing all the time,"* and my mom just burst into tears because she had always thought the way I move was beautiful and no one else had ever seen it, and so like walking into this room and having somebody immediately walk up to her and say like *"I completely agree the way your daughter walks is beautiful,"* and for me to hear that, like I had always just been made fun of the way I walked and suddenly at like 13 years old - 14 years old someone is telling me the way I walk is beautiful and like I latched on to that one person telling me that it's good because it was - I was at exactly the right age where I needed to hear that and like that just empowered me so much and then working with Phamaly for all those years after like I knew that, if I needed any kind of accommodation they were there for it because it wasn't a matter of my disability need an accommodation. It was that I as a human needed something to do a better job like, we all need that there are just moments. Where like I need this accommodation so I can do my job better whether that's like I need to work from home one day a week, or like I need the office to be like two degrees colder because like I sweat a lot right? We all need accommodations and feeling empowered to ask for them like changes everything.

Whitney: Well, you know, I'm really I'm always very interested in your story and I'm always very taken by your passion, but I also am really interested by your love story. So I would - I would love for you to share a little bit - you talk briefly about your husband, the safety and wellness manager at OSF, but if you could talk about like - how did you meet your husband was it in the theater? Because you all are both theater practitioners and like how have you been able to turn your husband into a disability rights activist? Because he definitely is. So, how did that happen? Break it down for us.

Jenna: Absolutely! My husband is my best friend on the whole planet and we are incredibly lucky that yeah, we both work in theater and like we love what we do and we support each other like fully through it. We met - oh my gosh - we met like 10 years ago now. I can't believe it's been that long. But he was the assisted stage manager on a show for Phamaly Theatre Company. And when we first met, we didn't really talk at all. It was just kind of your basic actor/sm relationship with like, nothing more than the occasional text or phone call that was like, *"Hey I'm stuck in traffic, I'll be there in 5"* and that was our relationship for like 4 years. It was very much like we knew each other, but I was a teenager at the time he was like, you know late teens, early 20s at the time and then we were working on *How to Succeed In Business Without Really Trying* and I finally told a cast member I was like, *"You know, I just think Paul is super cute. Like I've had this huge crush on him for like years and I've never gotten the guts to go talk to him"* and she of course immediately went straight to him and said *"Jenna thinks you're cute, you should ask her out."* and sure enough he asked me out that night and we went to go see a show in Denver. It was *Five-Course Love* at the corner Galleria Theatre in Denver, Colorado sweet little - sweet little show. Yeah, and we have been together ever since we have gotten really lucky that we've been able to work at a lot of the same companies. In an actor stage manager capacity never has it been on purpose. It's always been like that, we happened to get hired by the same company at the same time.

So, we worked at Colorado Shakespeare Festival together, we worked at Phamaly together for years, eventually Paul moved up in the ranks there and he became the.

Production Manager for Phamaly, and then when I got hired out here in Ashland, we decided to make a big move together. We've been married for about five years at that point and he moved out here without any prospect, didn't have a job, didn't know what was going to happen, but luckily the safety health and wellness position was available and he applied for it, but he's become an incredible advocate. Not just for disability, but like really in a lot of ways. He's become an incredible advocate. He is always reading and learning and trying to better himself in

every way possible. I just so appreciate that, like especially I mean, he's an able-bodied, white, cis, man. Like, he has all of the privilege in so many ways and he's so aware of that, and therefore, like he really feels that it is his responsibility to be an advocate for everybody else. Because he knows how privileged he has it in the world and that he can use that privilege for good. I like - I just - I love the hell of him - the hell out of him for that and for everything but - yeah, he's a really wonderful human and I feel very lucky to have him.

Francis: Would you say that when it comes to allies, that's what is all that's needed? Is just acknowledgement of the privilege and then utilizing that privilege as an advocate?

Jenna: Absolutely, I mean, I think that's a huge, huge part of it. And like I really feel like any time that we can acknowledge our privilege, no matter what that privilege is and know that like other people view us with privilege, like you can have so much power in that. Like and I know I use it myself sometimes as well because if I'm just seated no one knows that I have a disability and often times, like I am treated better because of that and it is - it is a tool that we can use as allies. That, like we have privilege and other people are going to listen to us because of our privilege and we can either just let the status quo remain the same or we can use our privilege to fight against it and make the world a better place. But like we have to have allies in order to really change anything.

Whitney: One thing that I love about you Jenna is that you can be - here on the show, we say we like to keep it deep and funky and so as we come to a close, I just want to make sure that if people don't know where to find more information about you, they can know where to find you online and they can also see your remix cover of Baby It's Cold Outside, which has now become Baby It's Covid Outside -

Jenna: Yes!

Whitney: So where can they find you online Jenna?

Jenna: My website is www.jennabainbridge.com. You can also find me on Instagram @BainbridgeJenna. Everything's my name just to make it as easy as possible. And yeah, I've

been - I've been making a lot of fun, silly videos during this quarantine with all my other theatre buddies, and we're all just having a good time creating some art right now. So yeah, if you need a good laugh my sister rewrote the lyrics to Baby It's Cold Outside to be about dating in the era of Corona and retitled it Baby It's Covid Outside which my wonderful friend Eddie Lopez recorded with me separately in our own homes, of course during the era of social distancing, but it's a great fun little - we had a good time filming at this for sure.

Whitney: And so - wait, okay, wait random quick quick. Just thought - if you could be in any show what show would you want to be in?

Jenna: Okay, so I have a lot of these. I am currently completely obsessed with Hades Town. I mean I've been obsessed with it since I was in high school when the concept album came out, but like I saw it on Broadway in December and like I am completely obsessed with it. I want to be absolutely anybody in it. I don't care, just put me in coach, I want in. So like absolutely Hades town. And then I've got a couple - just like a bucket list. Like I desperately want to do Little Shop of Horrors. Like it's one of my favorites. I want to play Audrey so bad. Because like I just - I love the music, I think it's just a fun little weird dark story and I love things like that and then - yeah, as far as like theatre, I really - I want to tackle the rest of these big Shakespeare rolls. I think it's time for every theater to accept the fact that we should only hire actors with disabilities to play Richard the Third. I think it's ridiculous that we still have people like putting pebbles in their shoe to play Richard the Third, that's just stupid and so yeah, I was lucky enough to get to do it for two performances here at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Bring Down the House, but I want to tackle the full Richard the third play. That's - that's one of my - hopefully within my career. I'll get to do that one.

Whitney: Yeah, and you mean two performances due to the shutdown of the pandemic.

Jenna: Yes, we had opened for - we had five days of performances before the pandemic closed down the theatre. So we got to do Bring Down the House twice. It was a two part show. Part 1 is Henry the 6th. Part 1 is in the beginning of part 2, and then Bring Down the House part 2 picks

up with Henry the 6th part 3, and yeah, we only got to do it twice but they were - it was a fun time while it lasted.

Whitney: Right and I just want to acknowledge that was - you got to do two shows out of a show that was supposed to last 10 months.

Jenna: Yes, we're supposed to do 120 performances and we got to do it twice. So yeah, well, I guess 4 times you count each part, but yes, not enough.

Whitney: Right - well, we just want to thank you so much for coming on today. You have lightened up our energy and our spirits just by you being completely you. Absolutely, so thank you so much for coming in and joining us on In the Margins Podcast and we definitely look forward to seeing you on stages near us, and on Broadway and on screens, absolutely and being an advocate in space. So thank you so much. And if you're interested in learning more about Jenna Bainbridge, where can they find you on Instagram again?

Jenna: @BainbridgeJenna. Bainbridge like the island, J-E-N-N-A

Whitney: Amazing.

Jenna: Yeah. Thank you. You so much for having me. It was so much fun.

Whitney: You are incredible, and we are so excited that you've been here.

Jenna: Thank you.

Whitney: So good at it. Amazing. Well have a great evening. Okay.

Jenna: Thank you, you as well. Chat with you all soon.

Francis: Thank you for listening to In the Margin Theatre Podcast. Please find us on Instagram @InTheMarginTheatre. Or visit our website at www.IntheMarginTheatre.org to connect with us, vibe with us, and celebrate with us. Thank you.