

### **Mary-Kate Olsen is in Love Dramaturgy Note**

Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen were the ‘It Girls’ of the late 1990s and early 2000s. In the years following their rise to fame on *Full House* in 1987 at only nine months old, sharing the role of Michelle Tanner, they appeared in countless movies and TV shows, rapidly becoming fashion icons and female role models for a generation of women. The twins have also faced scandal, invasions of privacy, and sexualization as a result of their stardom. Diet culture and rigid beauty standards were rampant during the height of their fame, and unfortunately persist today.

Playwright Mallery Avidon uses Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen to create a kind of pop-culture vocabulary in *Mary-Kate Olsen is in Love*, where they transform into surreal, larger-than-life manifestations of tabloid magazine misogyny and targeted TV marketing. They are pillars of feminine perfection; sexy but innocent, smart but carefree, successful but fun. The fictionalized Olsen Twins are infuriatingly seductive representations of all any woman could ever hope or want to be.

The significance of the Olsen Twins may be less familiar to our primarily Generation Z audience, but one theme that firmly connects Gen Z with our Millennial counterparts is the disillusionment of growing up and realizing that not everything always turns out how you would like it to, even if you do everything right. You can get into the best colleges, get the best grades, get a job, and get married, and still find yourself like the show’s protagonist, Grace: wondering what the point was. *Mary-Kate Olsen is in Love* is a play full of brilliant women: high-achieving, talented, intelligent and... lost. Avidon poses many questions about desire, self-actualization, gender roles, and American exceptionalism, but refrains from selling her audience a one-size-fits-all cure. At an institution of high-achievers gazing into a future of unknowns, perhaps it is more important to feel seen than solved.

—Levi Chaplin-Loebell, Dramaturg