

OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE Heads Off-Broadway Next Month

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The Children's Acting Academy presents *Out of My Comfort Zone*, a new rock musical by husband-and-wife team Ivy Vale (book, lyrics and music) and Rick Reil (music) about self-identity, gender, love, expectations, stereotypes, cyber-bullying, and friendship. Six performances will be staged at the Chernuchin Theatre at the American Theatre of Actors, 314 West 54th Street, New York, NY 10019 from February 5-8, 2015.

Middle school, New York City. Everyone's got a secret. Josh and Rachel have been best friends since second grade, but their relationship is about to change. The Viper has an online blog dedicated to exposing

people's innermost secrets and he's just found out the whopper of them all. Performed by a cast of 15 young teens, *Out of My Comfort Zone* is about self-identity, gender, love, expectations, stereotypes, cyber-bullying, and friendship. It's more uncomfortable to be something you're not than to be who you are. *Out of My Comfort Zone* pokes holes in school stereotypes and suggests that finding your comfort zone sometimes comes at a price.

"We were driven to write *Out of My Comfort Zone* as a way of making a strong statement against bullying, specifically bullying that targets any child or teen who may be perceived as gay or identify as LGBTQ," states Ivy Vale, writer and co-director. "There is a clear need for reality-based material for young teens who want to see shows that reflect their own lives and deliver characters they can relate to. The songs, influenced by everything from The Who's "Tommy" to '60's girl groups to The Beastie Boys, really resonate with our 12-14 year old cast."

Artistic Director Mimi Stuart and Ivy Vale direct two casts of 15, including 22 young performers (some double-cast), including Will Ehren, [Violet Vale](#), Savannah Leroy, Michael Flynn, Reuben Levine, Elliot Lipman, Kailie Strutin, Lily Santangelo, Zoey Mae Dillon-Levine, Ruby Karp, Wiley Kimelman, Kiara Coleman, Mikayla Rose, Irena Kogarova, Claire Stein, Ness Krell, Michael Ning, Jerrell Jones, Alana Deller, Kirah Murray, Jasmine Mateo, and Helena Milburn.

In addition to musical director Rick Reil on guitar, musicians include Bruce Brody (keyboards), who was a member of The [Patti Smith](#) Group, produced Ricki Lee Jones' Grammy-nominated album 'It's Like This,' composed the score for *Diner* and produced music for *Days of Thunder* and *Pulp Fiction*. He has performed with U2. Dennis Ambrose (bass) has worked with such esteemed producers as Steve Lillywhite, Ed Stasium, Scott Litt and Danny Bennett and recorded for the Geffen, A&M and Passport record labels. 17-year-old Isaac Pincus (drums) is a drummer prodigy who attends New York Lab School.

Out of My Comfort Zone plays for 6 performances from February 5-8, 2015. Performances are Thursday-Saturday at 7:30pm; Saturday at 3:30pm; and Sunday at 2pm and 6pm. Ticket are \$23 and can be purchased at [SmartTix.com](#). Friend us on [Facebook](#). Follow us on [Twitter](#).

Out of My Comfort Zone is presented by The Children's Acting Academy. Producers: Mimi Stuart and **Jason Grant** Shela; Directors: Mimi Stuart and Ivy Vale; Musical Director: Rick Reil; Choreographer: Nj Ambonisye; Lighting Designer: **David Comstock**; Set Designer and Construction: Josh Fischbein; Sound Engineer: Ed Johnson; Costume Designer: Jen Hebner; Publicist: Paul Siebold/Off Off PR.

Ivy Vale (Book, Lyrics, Music & Co-Director) is a writer, musician, artist and native New Yorker. Her plays have been selected and produced by GI60: The World's First International 60 Second Playwriting Festival, in New York and the UK. She is the primary singer/songwriter and founding member of The Wyld Olde Souls, a female-fronted psychedelic folk band, who have been nominated for multiple music awards by The Hollywood Music in Media Awards and The Indie Music Channel Awards, including a nomination for Best Album. The 2013 UK Songwriting Competition selected 'Maybe' (written by Vale) as a Semi-Finalist. Their song 'Give it to You' (written by Vale/Reil) is in the documentary 'Who Shot Rock & Roll: The Film' which premiered at The TriBeCa Film Festival. In addition, the song 'Anything' (written by Vale) was featured as the theme song for the UK play 'Marilyn' (about **Marilyn Monroe**, written by Chris Savery) which premiered in NYC at the Midtown International Theater Festival in 2013. The band's last album, *Ensoulement* (My Generation Productions), garnered numerous 5-star reviews nationally and internationally. Ivy grew up watching her father, **Michael Vale**, on Broadway, in movies and on TV, but he is best remembered as the lovable Fred the Baker in the long-running Dunkin' Donuts 'Time to Make the Donuts' commercials, which ran for over 15 years. She is a Founder and the Creative Director of My Generation Productions, a new company dedicated to creating and producing innovative work to raise awareness and mobilize social action through music, drama and comedy. Ivy completed training in the long-form, core improv program at The Upright Citizens Brigade. She graduated from The School of Visual Arts (BFA) and The High School of Music and Art (now LaGuardia).

Rick Reil (Music) is an accomplished singer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, producer and recording engineer. He is a member of The Grip Weeds, a popular psychedelic pop-rock band which has released 7 full-length CDs, toured the US and Europe, and garnered significant radio/internet airplay, including songs on Little Steven's Underground Garage and Sirius Satellite Radio. The Grip Weeds' song "What's in Your Mind" (written by Rick) was licensed by CBS Television to promote its critically acclaimed series *Criminal Minds*. A few years ago, Rick joined the reunited lineup of the legendary '60s group The Left Banke, best known for their classic pop hit 'Walk Away Renee' for their reunion tour. He is producer and founding member of the psychedelic folk rock group The Wyld Olde Souls. He is Co-Owner of House of Vibes recording studio in Highland Park, NJ, whose client list includes Mark Lindsay, The Smithereens, John Hawken (The Strawbs), **Graham Maby** (**Joe Jackson**, Marshall Crenshaw), and The Dough Boys. Rick also runs a satellite recording studio, The House of Rock Opera, in NYC. He is currently a Mentor to young students at Individual University where he teaches recording, guitar and drums. He is a Founder and the **Music Director** of My Generation Productions, a new company dedicated to creating and producing innovative work to raise awareness and mobilize social action through music, drama and comedy. Rick graduated from Seton Hall University School of Law.

Mimi Stuart (Co-Director & Co-Producer) is the artistic director of The Children's Acting Academy. She has acted professionally since age 15, performing Off-Broadway, in summer stock, and on television (*All My Children*, *Ghost Stories*). She has also appeared in nearly 20 films and has performed several voice-overs. Mimi received her BFA in Acting from York University in Toronto and her MFA in Acting from Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts in New Brunswick, NJ, studying under William Esper. She was the originator of The Children and Teen Musical Theatre, and Voice and Speech Program at HB Studio. Mimi began teaching and directing at The Children's Acting Academy (CAA) in 2000 and became sole owner in 2004. CAA students have gone on to study at the four major performing arts high schools in NYC, and appear and star on Broadway, TV, in commercials and major motion pictures.

Jason Grant Shela (Co-Producer) was born in London, England, and he received his theatrical training at The Sir **Michael Redgrave** Theatre. He earned a graduate degree in International Relations from New York University and was awarded the prestigious **Steven Spielberg** scholarship for international study at Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland. He is Founder/Creative Director of My Generation Productions, a new company dedicated to creating and producing innovative work to raise awareness and mobilize social action through music, drama and comedy. Jason has received 4 ASCAP awards for original music composition and has produced original music for Sirius, Fox TV & HBO.