

# A CHAT WITH THE PLAYWRIGHT, MICKLE MAHER

Dramaturgs Trisha Mahoney and Mariah Schultz talk with *Michael Jordan in Lilliput's* playwright, Mickle Maher, about newly discovered countries, historians, and short basketball players.

## In your plays, you often draw from classical works. How do you integrate these works into the world that you are creating?

Almost without exception the works that I end up throwing into a piece are 1) works that I read when I was younger, and loved as only a young person can, and 2) works I feel no compunction about making fun of or egregiously misinterpreting, because a) I love them, and you always make fun of and misinterpret what (or who) you love, and b) all their authors are dead and can take it.

I steal the parts that are helpful to my story and leave out the parts that aren't.

## Why were you intrigued by the story of *Gulliver's Travels*?

Like most of my plays that fool around with some already existing text (which is pretty much all of them), I didn't choose *Gulliver's* until well into the process. So it's not so much me being intrigued by it, but it being a good fit for what I was already on.

Before *Gulliver's Travels* I was looking at *The King and I* and *Nixon in China* as possible works to spin into a plot about an American basketball player playing in a foreign land, both of them being stories about a down-on-their-luck outsider (Anna, Nixon) going to an "exotic" country and discovering some success there among the natives. I think I ended up in Lilliput because, you know, those Lilliputians being so short and wanting to play basketball is such a stupid joke.

## Which writers do you find yourself drawn to?

Usually ones who use way too many words to get to the point. Virginia Woolf, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Basho, etc.

## How do you feel this play contrasts with your previous works?

That's a hard question, because it makes me think about my plays like a critic or – even worse – a historian, so blech. I would just paraphrase Robert Altman and say "It's all one play, man." That's all I've been writing, one long play.

## What is your favorite line from *Michael Jordan in Lilliput*?

"Brigadoon didn't know what hit them."

~Trisha Mahoney, BFA3, Dramaturgy/Criticism  
& Mariah Schultz, BFA3, Dramaturgy/Criticism