

A person wearing a denim jacket, a black cap, and sneakers is running away from the camera down a city street. The street is lined with buildings and trees. A white van is parked on the right side of the street. The text 'SCHOOL OF DRAMA' is overlaid in a white, brush-stroke font on the person's back.

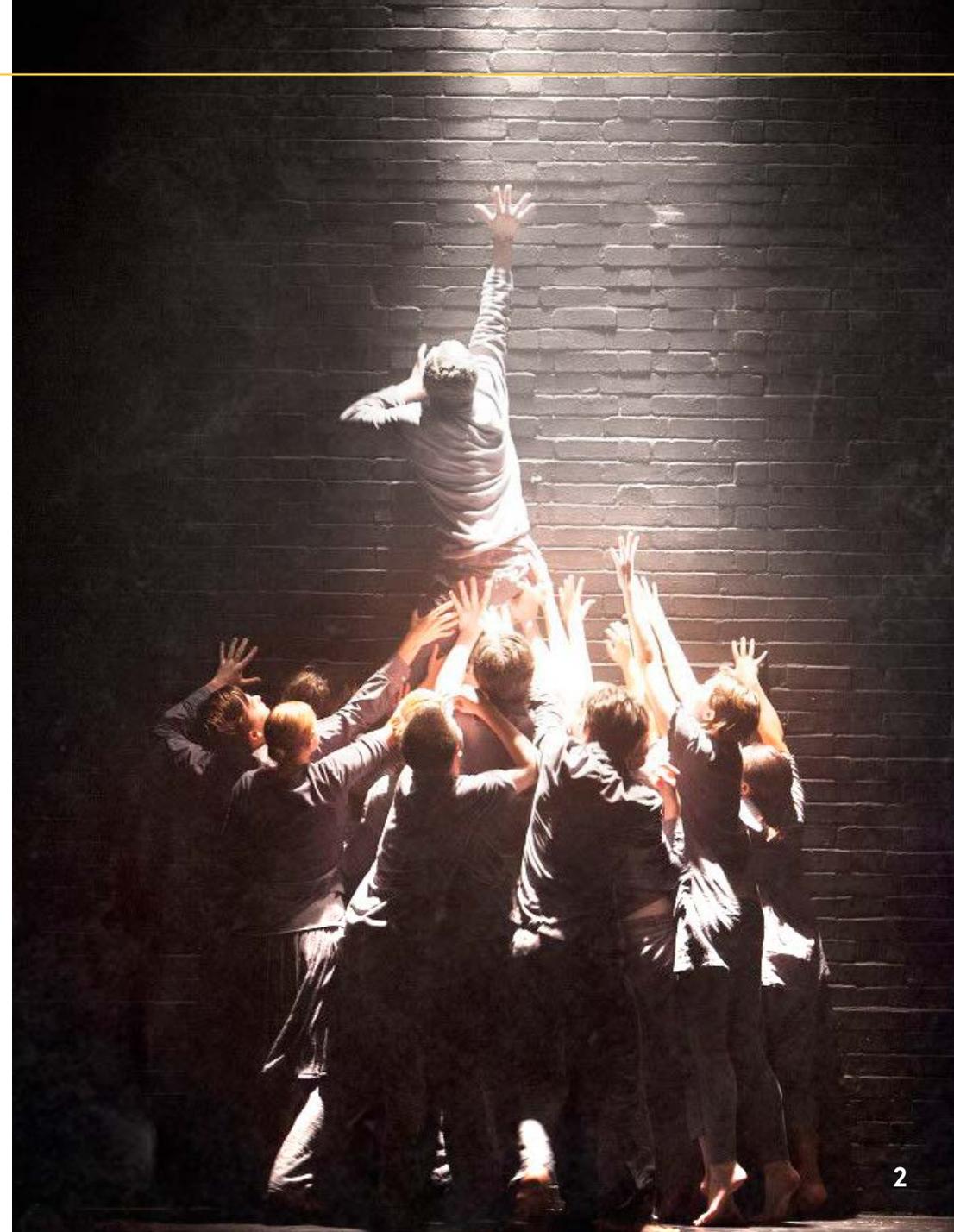
SCHOOL
OF
DRAMA

THE SHOW

The Michigan University School of the Arts has alumni performing in every Broadway show running. You compare that to college baseball teams sending players to the Majors, they're outperforming every division-one school in the nation. When it comes to musical theatre training, MI-Arts is top dog. Every student in the program has had to scratch and claw their way into that spot... and has to do the same to keep it.

That goes for professors too... Including Mark Toledo, the new acting teacher who has just been thrown into the lion's den. In addition to the cutthroat faculty, Mark must contend with students who arrive pre-packaged with self-esteem problems, body issues, addictions, budding sexuality, overbearing parents and oversized egos. At Michigan Arts, there is much more drama offstage than on.

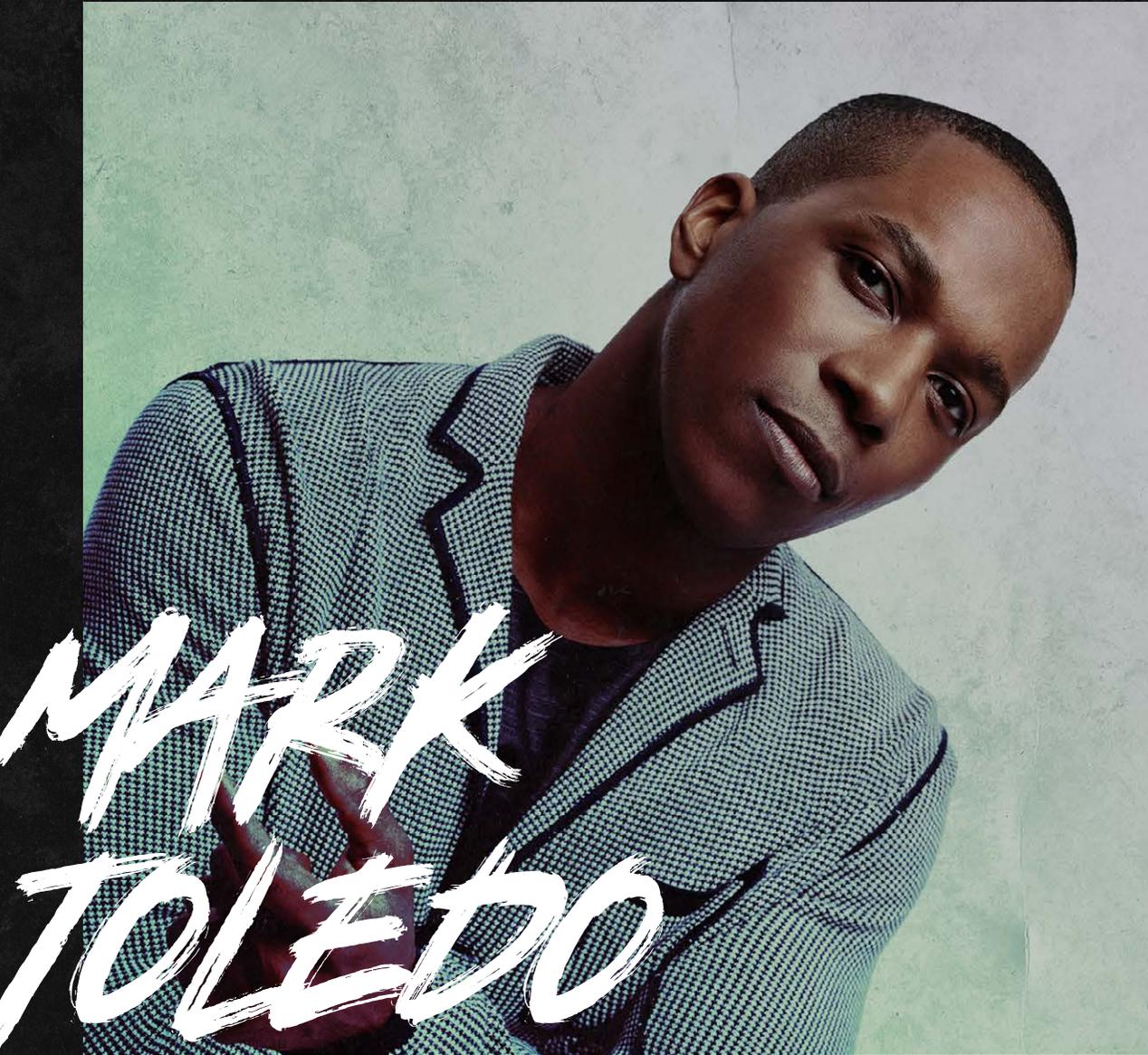
School of Drama is a one-hour grounded dramedy with show-stopping musical numbers in every episode. Besides that, the show has enormous crossover potential - with story lines carried through social media, guest artists recording original music, and the creation of new musicals with hot writers headed for the real Broadway stage, starring our MI-Arts "graduates."



THE SCHOOL

More than a school, MI-Arts is a way of life. It requires blood, sweat, tears... your soul. This isn't just another college experience. Everyone is here for precisely the same reason: to become the best in the world.

The training is intense. It means grueling days in class and long nights in rehearsal - not to mention the never-ending onslaught of criticism from professors about the students' acting, their singing, their dancing. The school's prestige creates an ego-driven ecosystem that thrives on competition and preys on the insecurities of students and faculty alike. Because in order to be the best... you must be better than someone else.



A brilliant and passionate theatre director, Mark might be able to get his career off the ground... if not for every door in New York City being slammed in his face. On the other hand, his wife Julia's success as a Broadway performer constantly reminds him of his inadequacy.

But now she's pregnant and can't bring home the Broadway bacon like she used to. Terrified of fatherhood, failure and financial ruin, Mark hunts up a job at Michigan University.

Trouble is, he exaggerated – scratch that – lied about his experience to get it. You see, he hides a secret that could lose him his job and devastate his marriage: he can't stand musicals. It's not the music. He loves music – in a "former life" he was a fearless indie rap artist – It's the commercialized lack of authenticity that makes him die inside. Hoping to make a difference and validate his own lackluster career, he tries to teach his students to be dedicated, uncompromising artists.

But all they care about is getting on Broadway... like yesterday. Besides that, his colleagues compound his insecurities as they criticize his teaching and undermine his confidence at every turn. Plus, he can't seem to fill the shoes of his predecessor, who apparently walked on water. Add to that his seriously hormonal wife and their tenuous marriage... no wonder he's having an identity crisis.

Six months pregnant with their first baby, Julia is actually looking forward to a break from her bustling Broadway career... At least she was. Now that she's trapped in a cul-de-sac with nosy, republican neighbors and their banana bread recipes – her nearest metropolitan escape is Detroit, the city she considers the “big rotten apple of the Midwest” – she's dying inside.

The truth is, she and Mark have been having problems. She was counting on the change of scene and the new baby to resuscitate their relationship. But she can't seem to escape her past, especially when it shows up in the form of Mark's colleague Marco, a guy she did the national tour of *Wicked* with – scratch that – a guy she DID on the national tour of *Wicked*. She never

told Mark about the affair and lives in constant fear of it coming up in the faculty lounge! That, along with Mark's students – young, gorgeous hopefuls who make her feel like an old, bloated has-been – has Julia itching to move back to New York, back to Broadway... like now. But this time, not as the understudy, as the star!

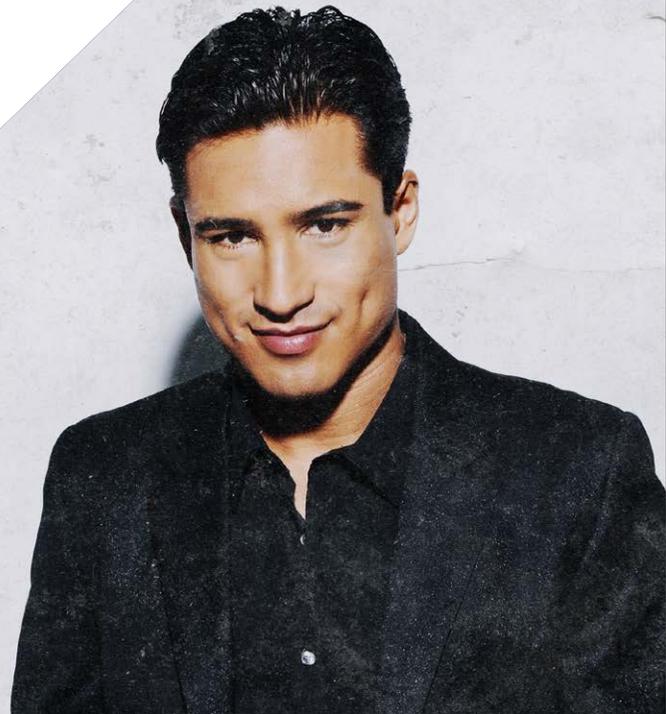


MARCO TANGO

A ridiculously handsome leading man, he has an illustrious string of Broadway credits behind him and never lets Mark forget it.

Nursing a massive inferiority complex, he routinely praises Mark to his face then stabs him in the back.

THE FACULTY



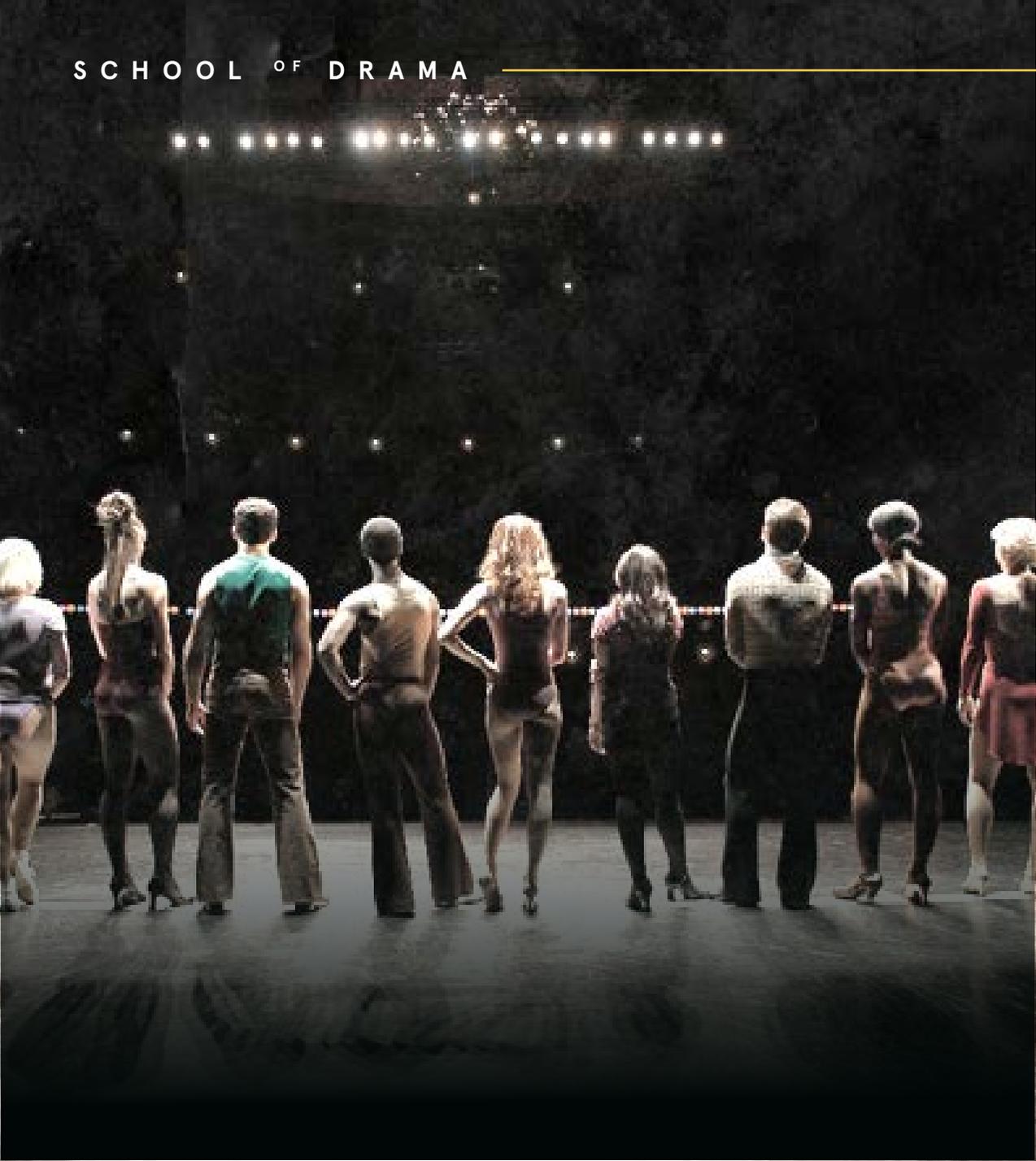
BOB LANDON

The fearless leader of Michigan Arts.

Surprisingly sports-oriented, he is obsessed with winning and constantly compares himself and his program to every other theatre school in the country.

He is overwhelmed by the constant influx of complaints, suggestions and demands from his high-maintenance staff and students. Coach, commander, captain of the ship, he puts MI-Arts before everything else.





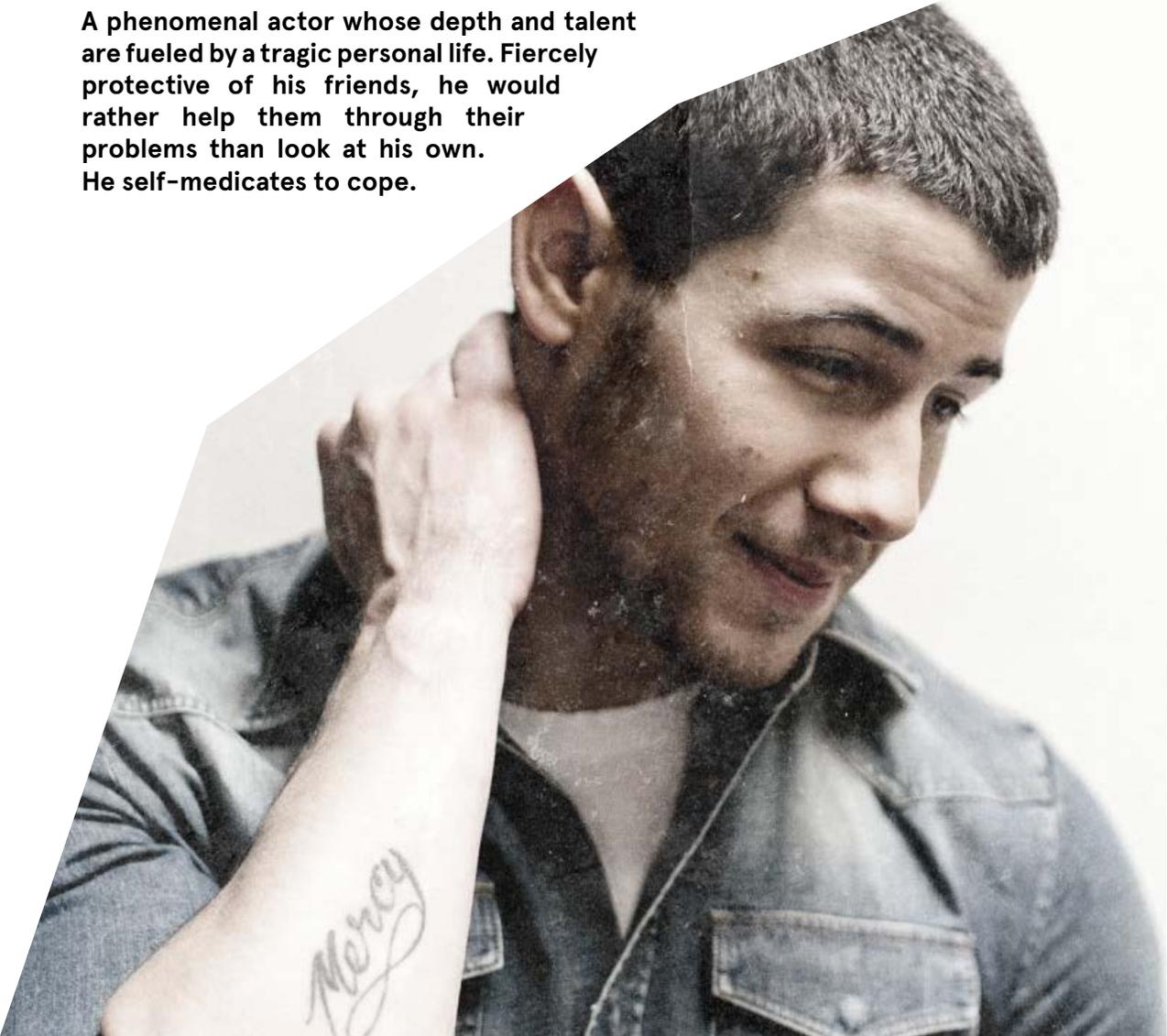
THE STUDENTS

Every student who comes to MI-Arts was the star of their high-school theatre program. But in a sea of stars, how can anyone stand out?

Performers that felt special back home are now suddenly very average. And though the training environment seems harsh, the students welcome the rigor because each one of them knows the odds are stacked against them. Michigan Arts is preparing them for a career with a 90% unemployment rate, where even successful actors often live below the poverty line. If they can't survive the crucible of MI-Arts, there's no way they can handle the demands of life on Broadway.

THANE

A phenomenal actor whose depth and talent are fueled by a tragic personal life. Fiercely protective of his friends, he would rather help them through their problems than look at his own. He self-medicates to cope.



ASTRID

A quiet rebel who doesn't believe in her own talent. Her insecurities keep her classmates at arm's length. Despite her cool exterior, she is a closet romantic and remains desperately in love with her high-school boyfriend. If you're looking for someone to trust with a secret, she's the one to go to.



THE STUDENTS



OLIVIA

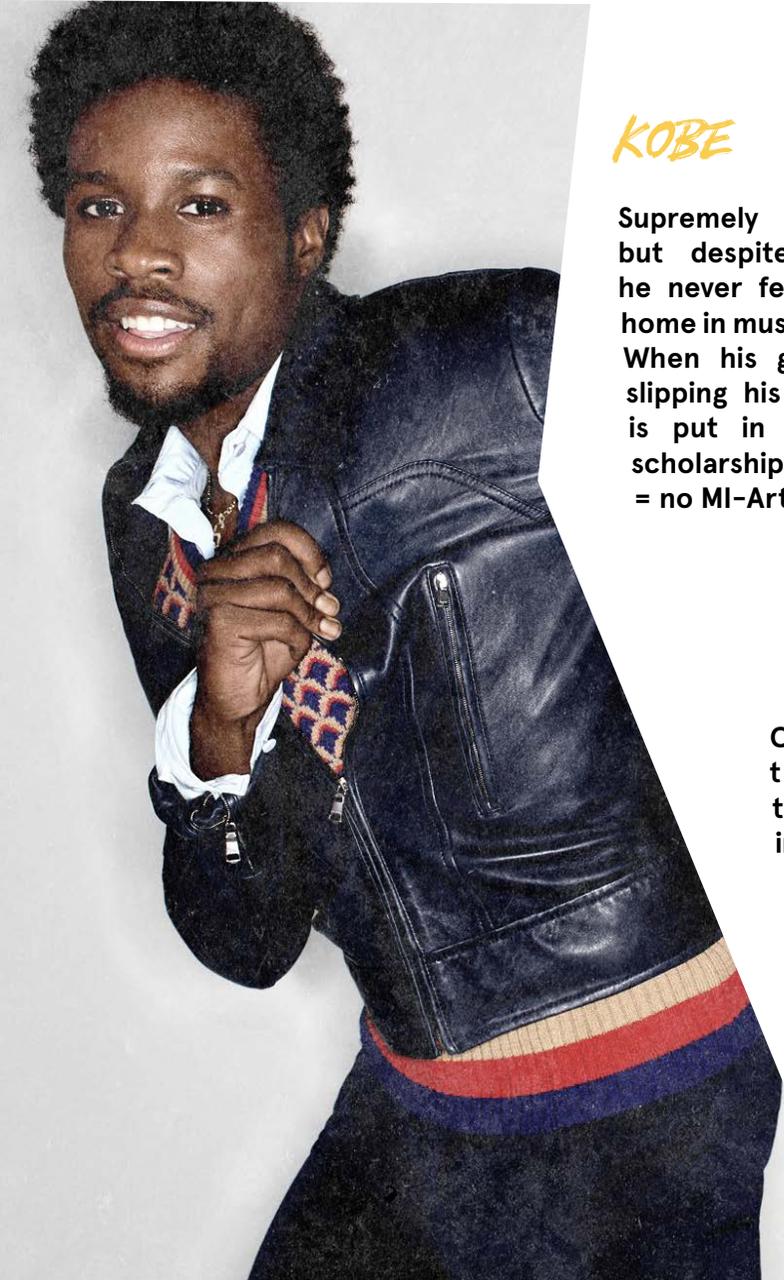
Singer, actor, bombshell. She is the self-appointed queen bee of the musical theatre program. Believes she's destined for stardom and can't stand sharing the spotlight with anyone. Will do whatever it takes to succeed. Struggles with bulimia.

ETHAN

A straight-laced Mormon boy who refuses to swear, even if it is in the script, and won't accept the role of the Emcee in Cabaret because it requires cross-dressing. He is tortured by his burgeoning attraction to the male population in the program.



THE STUDENTS



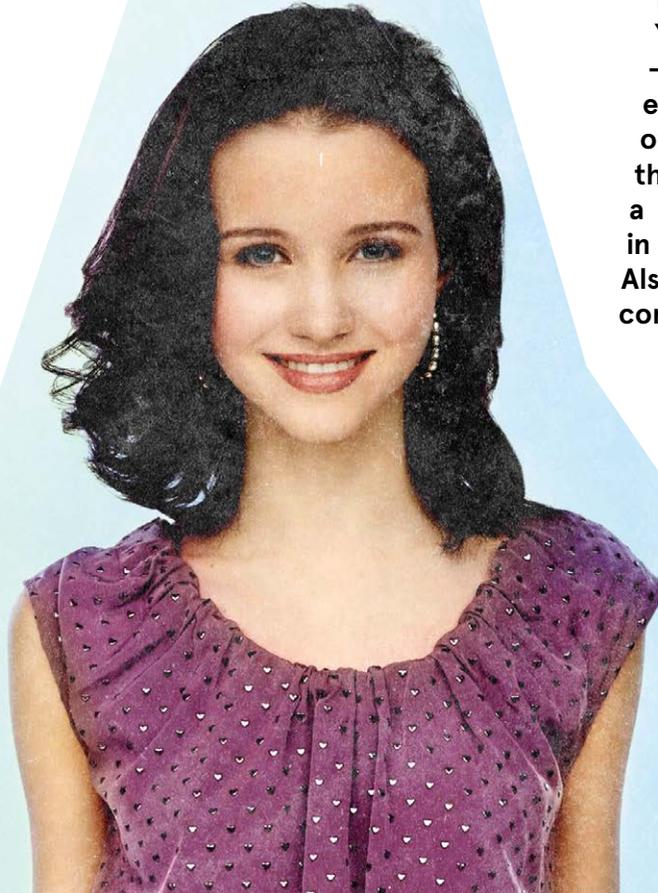
KOBE

Supremely talented, but despite his gifts, he never feels quite at home in musical theatre. When his grades start slipping his scholarship is put in danger. No scholarship = no tuition = no MI-Arts.

ISABELLA

Over-eager goody two-shoes, trained within an inch of her life.

THE STUDENTS



JACK

Pronounced "Jaques" - A walking encyclopedia of musical theatre. Not a shy bone in his body. Also a gifted composer.



THE SHOW BETWEEN SHOWS

School of Drama's setting and characters make it uniquely equipped to engage audiences on a level untapped by any dramedy to date via the integration of social media. Because the cast of characters is comprised largely of millennials, their interior lives are almost inseparable from their online personas - online personas that we make accessible to the viewing public.

In the week leading up to the premiere of each episode, supplemental material (shot concurrently with the production of the show) will drop on a variety of social media platforms - Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc. This drip content - featuring the characters as they navigate classes, auditions, social pressures - will fuel audience engagement. Though viewing the content will never be

crucial to understanding the plot of the actual broadcast, followers will gain insight into their favorite characters' motivations and become more entrenched in their personal lives. Social media will also give them an avenue to delve deeper into the inner workings of one of the most important characters in the series: the school itself.



THE PILOT
THOSE
WHO CAN'T
TEACH...

Mark's first week at MI-Arts is a disaster. Between the impossible expectations of his boss, the relentless criticism of the faculty, and the unchecked entitlement of his students, who are already hell-bent on getting him fired... he's ready to throw in the towel. And let's not forget Julia's "hormonal hysteria" and the fact that he's been roped into directing the fall musical, Cabaret.

Meanwhile, young hormones rage as a sexually charged encounter with Jack sends Ethan on a quest to "straighten" himself out. Thane, on the other hand, honorably resists a drunken seduction attempt by Olivia, whose helicopter mom compounds her body issues with every phone call. And Astrid gets some news that has the potential to shatter her dreams.

Finally, when Julia discovers that her husband and her mistake-of-a-fling are now colleagues, she swears Marco to secrecy and desperately tries to convince Mark to follow her back to New York. And he's ready to go with her... until he makes a breakthrough in class with Kobe and falls in love with teaching.





With Julia already packing for New York, Mark confesses that he decided to sign his contract and wants to stay at Michigan Arts. Infuriated by his “single guy” decision, she storms out. But Mark has little time to patch things up before he must contend with the super-sized personalities of his choreographer and set designer in an encounter that is more like an ambush than a production meeting.

Though she is barely speaking to him, Mark convinces Julia to join him at Bob’s back-to-school party where everyone is expected to sing their faces off. Mark refuses to perform, but Julia steps up and blows everyone away. Her triumph is short lived, however. As Mark’s students shower her with praise they unknowingly stab her in the heart when they imply her career is over.

The next day Astrid cuts class to go to the OB/GYN but bails on her appointment when Julia recognizes her in the waiting room. The rest of the students pester Mark for a critique of their party performances. Obliging, he chastises them for their lack of imagination and vows to expand their artistic horizons. This leads to an impromptu, off-campus excursion to Liquid Lynx, the students’ favorite underground club in downtown Detroit. There they goad Mark into dropping some rhymes from his indie music days.

EPISODE TWO

OLD SCHOOL

EPISODE THREE
AUDITIONS

Julia feels more and more useless every day as she competes for Mark's very divided attention. At the same time, Mark is beginning to earn the students' trust, opening the door for a stunning in-class confession from the picture-perfect Isabella... that she once attempted suicide.

And while the rest of the students freak out about what to sing for the upcoming Cabaret auditions, Olivia takes another approach to getting cast by trying to seduce Mark. Astrid, on the other hand, can't focus at all because her long-distance boyfriend shows up for the weekend. And though things start well, he breaks up with her before she can find the courage to reveal her pregnancy.

Ultimately, after a whirlwind of kick-ass auditions, Julia shows up in a skimpy outfit to surprise Mark, but instead finds a heartbroken Astrid and coaxes her to open up about her pregnancy. And before the night is over Ethan finds Jack at the piano writing a love ballad about a secret crush. A tentative collaboration begins as Ethan offers to help with the lyrics.





It's down to two girls for the lead. Mark is a ball of stress, trying to choose between the bawdy, bold Olivia and the subtle but surprising Astrid. Equally heated is the competition for the Emcee – though Mark is disappointed with Kobe, who blew him away at the initial audition but struggles at the callbacks because he isn't able to memorize the material in time. His undiagnosed dyslexia makes reading from the page near impossible. Thane, however, delivers an inspired audition in spite of, and perhaps because of, a world-shattering crisis back home. Noticing his vulnerability, Olivia reaches out in a rare moment of compassion and ultimately finds herself in his bed.

Meanwhile, as Mark wrestles with casting choices, he comes upon a posting for a job at MI-Arts. Wait, no! It's a posting for HIS job at MI-Arts. Before he can process what this means, Marco shows up and inserts himself into the casting process, undermining Mark's confidence in his decisions. Marco also drops hints about how close he and Julia were on tour and praises her work as the understudy when she went on as Elphaba in *Wicked*. This throws Mark for a loop because Julia told him she never performed the role at all. Why would she lie about that?

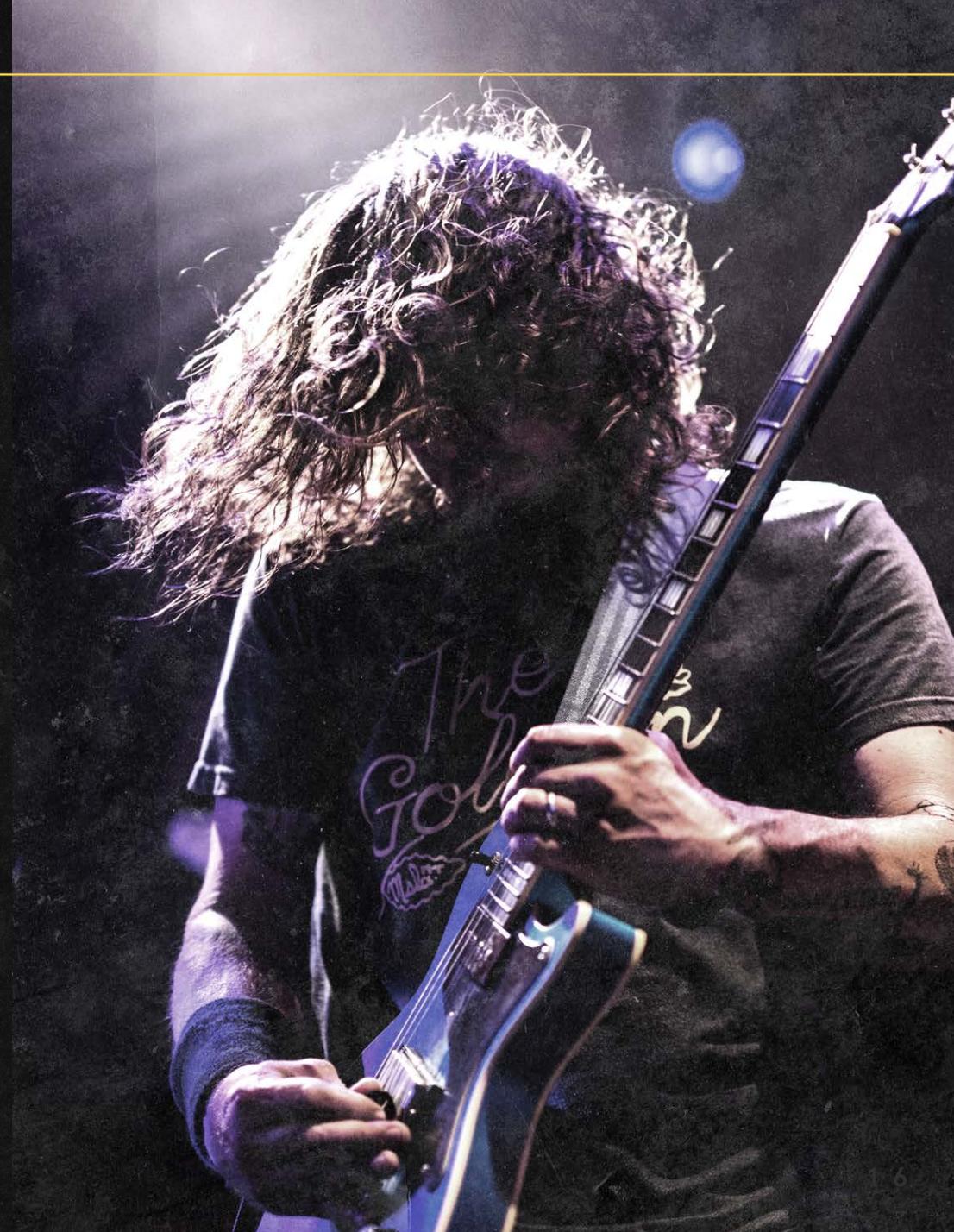
EPISODE FOUR CALLBACKS

EPISODE FIVE
ROCK STAR

Shockwaves ripple through MI-Arts as Mark's scandalous cast list goes up. Ignoring the drama, Mark assigns the Rock Star project where students must capture the essence of a major musical artist at a live performance in front of a celebrity judge.

At home Mark questions Julia about whether she ever went on for the lead on the Wicked tour. And though he accepts a somewhat flimsy explanation, he can't quite put the question to rest. At school Mark corners Bob and demands an explanation for the job posting. Bob informs him of his decision to make Mark's job into a tenure-track position, which sounds great except it requires a national search and will force Mark to reapply for the job he already has.

After grueling preparation on the students' part, Rock Star is a smashing success. But Mark can't bask in it long before he is confronted by a vicious social media rumor that he sexually harassed Olivia... and when she wouldn't put out, he gave the lead in Cabaret to Astrid.



SEASON ARC

- Mark eventually finds out about Julia's infidelity with Marco. It pushes their marriage to the brink.
- Thane and Olivia become the "it" couple at school. Their tempestuous relationship is threatened however by Thane's private addiction problem and his deepening friendship with Astrid, who plays opposite him in Cabaret and has entrusted him with her secret.
- We follow the intense rehearsal process for Cabaret, during which Astrid faces the same choice as her character, Sally Bowles: keep the baby or protect her career. Mark has to miss the triumphant opening night because Julia goes into labor two weeks early. Their marriage is tested even further by the presence of the new baby.
- When the cast of Cabaret is conspicuously excluded from the Marco-directed spring musical, they complain to Mark. He encourages them to produce the musical that Jack and Ethan - now in a secret but strained love affair - are writing. Mark dusts off his own music production skills and directs the unauthorized rock-musical himself in a site-specific spectacle at Liquid Lynx - performed as a live television event.
- The first season ends with a school shooting. Astrid is among the victims, and although she dies, her baby survives. Astrid's final request is that Mark and Julia care for her child.

