

Shelbey Casalena

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I am a resourceful Software Engineer with a nontraditional path—from opera performance to content creation to full-stack development. Most recently I built an interactive results experience for an ed-tech platform, owning architecture decisions, visual design, and a custom recommendation engine. I bring persistence, creativity, and a growing fluency with AI-assisted workflows to every project.

- Next.js
- Python
- Heroku
- ORMs (e.g. Sequelize)
- Claude
- React
- Flask
- AWS
- Midjourney
- Codex
- Express
- Django
- Google API
- Photoshop
- Gemini

Indigo Impact Initiative

September 2025 - present

Software Engineer

Remote

A platform helping individuals discover their strengths and work styles, while giving educators and employers shared language to guide them.

- **Built the results experience** in Next.js/React/TypeScript—designed and shipped 9 interactive pages (including PDF export and public sharing), driving architecture, visual design, and interaction decisions.
- **Built a college-major recommendation engine** with custom scoring logic across multiple weighted attributes, using memoization and precomputed transforms to keep filtering/sorting instantaneous.
- **Developed a multi-model AI workflow** (Claude, Codex, Gemini for code; Midjourney, ChatGPT, Canva for visuals), learning each tool's strengths and cost tradeoffs to accelerate iteration while steering outputs toward modular, maintainable code.
- **Redesigned navigation and added gamified progress systems** (goal trackers that evolve visually, progress rings, completion dashboards) to reduce drop-off and clarify site structure.
- **Transformed dense PDF content into interactive web layouts** with clear hierarchy, responsive behavior, and shareable outputs.

GoToThese.com

June 2024 - Sept 2025

Self-directed project. Software Engineer

San Francisco

A website allowing users to collect places they have been and privately review for friends and family.

- **Created the site using Python (Django Rest Framework), React, and Heroku**, improving scalability over an earlier Flask + Render build from early 2024.
- **Integrated Google Places API** and Maps Platform to access the user's current location, provide autocomplete search, and to show a map that smoothly reacts to place additions.
- **Reduced API call costs** by writing functionality to cache Google Place images on AWS S3 (as permitted by Google's policy).
- **Wrote CSS for a responsive interface** that works well on screens of all sizes.
- **Implemented password reset email** using Twilio SendGrid.

ShrimpOnALeaf.com

Jan 2021- Aug 2023

Sole Proprietor. Software Engineer, Content Creator

San Francisco

Educational science website for plant and aquarium hobbyists with 37K+ unique visitors.

- **Developed an affiliate link website** using HTML, CSS and JavaScript in support of a social brand I had built, and worked with aquarium brands to promote their products through shrimponaleaf.com and social media.
- **Earned 37K+ unique visitors and earned commissions** on affiliate link bounties through the Amazon Affiliate Program and other brand partnerships.
- **Amassed 300k followers** (40K+ on Instagram, 270K+ on TikTok) and over 11 Million likes.
- **Generated over 2 million views for brand partners** on TikTok & Instagram.
- **Harnessed viral moments to promote the website** including a back-and-forth collaboration with Science Educator Hank Green.

Consulting

Apr 2020 - Aug 2024

- **Mucho Mate**, Software Development
 - Provided a nuanced technical implementation for a logo to load fast and animate smoothly on hover using an optimized PNG sprite, CSS, and JavaScript.
- **Nue.io & Hiip SF**, Content Strategy and Production
 - Produced video, graphics, and marketing content; supported social strategy.

Roller Rabbit

Jul 2019 - Mar 2020

Digital Content Manager

New York

- **Grew the company's social following by 40%** while leading social media content strategy and content management through celebrity gifting, brand partnerships, Instagram story takeovers, contests, posting customer-submitted content.
- **Trained and managed a Marketing Coordinator and an intern** for content collection and community management.

Opera Career

Jul 2013 - Mar 2019

Singer & Teaching Artist

San Francisco & New York

- Performed lead and supporting roles with companies including Long Island Opera Company, American Opera Projects, and Oakland Opera Theatre.
- Mentored students across 30+ Bay Area schools as a teaching artist with SF Opera Guild.

App Academy

Graduated Summer 2024

Software Engineering Full Time Immersive Graduate

One of only five students (from my cohort of 50) to complete the program without failing or repeating a section. After the program I continued my studies and projects for the subsequent 9 months (extending to various technologies not covered) before beginning applications in March 2025.

San Francisco Conservatory of Music

Graduated 2013

Bachelors of Vocal Performance