

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

Luminance Data

August 2024- Present

Software Engineer, Consultant

Remote

- **Indigo Impact Initiative** (*ed-tech platform*)
 - **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.
- **Cross Purpose** (*workforce development nonprofit*)
 - **Redesigned the participant-facing web platform** to align with Cross Purpose's external brand identity—establishing a cohesive design language, color system, and custom AI-generated graphics across 7 pages where none previously existed
 - **Rebuilt the participant dashboard** with simplified navigation and clearer information hierarchy, reducing visual complexity and improving wayfinding for program participants
 - **Designed and implemented journey progress UI** (phase tracker, completion rings, step cards) to make program milestones legible and motivating

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.

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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