



**NOTHING CAN
TAKE YOU**

based on true events

**FROM
THE HAND of GOD**

**a play by Jen Tullock
& Frank Winters**

directed by Jared Mezzocchi

SYNOPSIS



When a popular essayist known for her searing takedowns of modern Christianity releases a book detailing her upbringing as a gay kid in the evangelical south, she is confronted by the subject of one of her stories: the woman she fell in love with on a Christian mission trip to Poland eighteen years previous, who claims the stories are false.

WRITERS' STATEMENT



Vonnegut warned, ***We are what we pretend to be, so we must be very careful what we pretend to be.*** But Frances had thought that she was finished with pretending.

She had, after all, made it to the end of the play. She escaped the trauma of her closeted childhood in a southern Evangelical megachurch, finding comfort and community in the same progressive, coastal, elite literary circles that would celebrate her breakout memoir detailing her heartbreaking, hilarious, and fundamentally contemporary queer coming-of-age narrative.

But her story doesn't end there. What comes next is complicated, messy, nuanced, and challenging — and it is in that liminal space which this play seeks to explore.

For Jen (co-writer and performer) this story is deeply personal (and largely autobiographical), as she herself has lived the experience of finding memory blurred with the narratives which she needed in order to survive — only to later find them wanting for the authenticity that somehow slipped through the cracks.

And so just as Frances must return home and face the realities of the people she left behind, so do we as authors seek to interrogate the tropes of the Canonized Queer Heroine and find the fractured and un-hashtagable truths — that people are capable of both true horror and profound kindness and that we over-simplify our oppressors at our own peril.

We believe the LGBTQIA+ community deserves storytelling that goes beyond the binary of tragedy and triumph — by finding humanity not only in the stories we tell, but in the ones we've forgotten. (Or at least, the ones we pretend to.)

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Nothing Can Take You From the Hand of God is a duet between our actor and the design. By design I do not mean aesthetic, but rather an extension of the inner self. In this self-vs.-self journey, the design personifies our heroine as she confronts grief, shame, guilt. This is our *Krapp's Last Tape*; a tête-a-tête between our hero and her edited memories; how she struggles to maintain control by curating her past in real time. Rather than a one-person, pull-a-scarf-out-of-a-trunk-to-become-a-character performance, this is a multi-character play that journeys through the mind's eye of our hero in search of a new truth.

Because of this distinction, the vision of our production is one of multimedia. Much like a musician with a loop station, generating all of the tracks in a layered and virtuosic process, *Nothing Can Take You From the Hand of God* uses one actor to construct live performances through live cameras with immediate playback systems. Actor Jen Tullock can generate characters and, at once, perform with her mediated digital self in real-time. This process isn't to "solve" the problem of the one-woman-show, but to leverage and visualize how fractured we become when we don't tend to the skeletons within our own closets.

Each camera we use functions as a part of Frances' self, splintered. We see Frances, in her psychological editing studio, conjuring and curating who she needs in order to answer to what she wants. However, media-as-character might have their own super objective too, begging us to answer the question: What if our past cannot be reckoned with, fixed, or edited until the narrative can allow us to truly live in the present? What if, in order to actually find self liberation, we must first foster organic dialogue between all versions of our self — past and present — and the memories each version has created?

As director, I see this as a scene study between our actor and the technology-as-character; one that builds conflict, tension, and pace in tandem. To direct and design this is not a bifurcated process for me, but instead a singular journey and expression.

I see this as an opportunity to build a story in a unique and profound way, inviting a new kind of audience into our theatrical spaces.

POTENTIAL FINANCIAL PARTNERS

A number of people from both the Film & TV and Theatre worlds have expressed interest in partnering with us as producers, and we intend to use a workshop performance as an invited presentation for them.

Actress Busy Philipps, a friend of the project since its conception, has been acting as de facto producer on the front end, engaging industry folks and putting together an invite list that includes:

Lin Manuel Miranda
Michelle Williams
Tommy Kail
Tina Fey

Other colleagues and friends invited include:

Ben Stiller
Paula Vogel
Judith Light
Tony Marion

From our combined communities, we feel confident that we can find financial partners excited to work in tandem with Playwrights Horizons to form a team of people creatively invested in the project and its promising future.



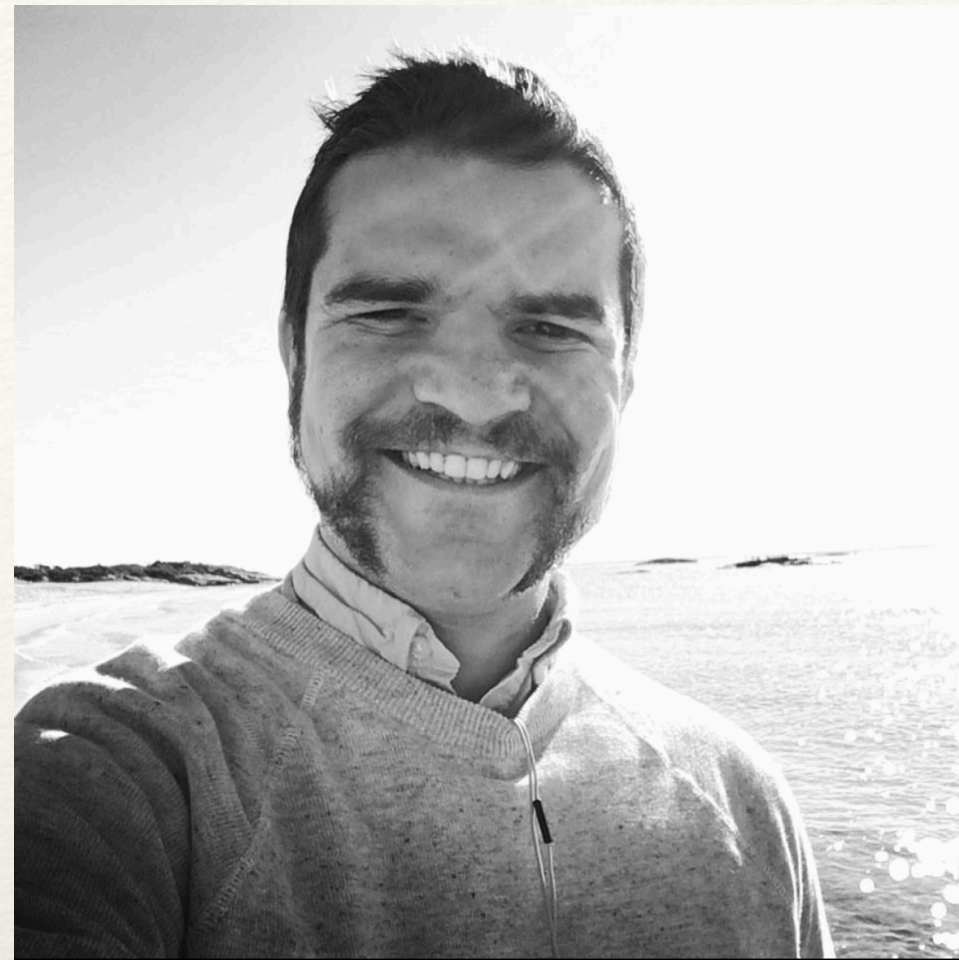
ARTIST BIOS



JEN TULLOCK (PERFORMER/CO-WRITER) is an actor and writer best known for her role as Devon in Apple TV's Emmy nominated series *Severance*. Along with the rest of the principle cast she was nominated for a 2022 SAG Award for Best Ensemble in a Drama. For her role as Anita in season two of HBO's *Perry Mason*, she is currently nominated for a Hollywood Critics Association award for Best Supporting Actress in a Cable or Network Drama. In 2019, Tullock co-wrote in starred in dramedy *Before You Know It*, which premiered in the U.S. Dramatic competition at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival and stars Tullock alongside Alec Baldwin, Judith Light, Mandy Patinkin, and co-writer Hannah Pearl Utt. Her short with Utt, *Partners*, premiered at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival and their feature was a participant in the 2017 Sundance Screenwriter Labs. Their series *Disengaged* helped launch Turner's streaming platform Super Deluxe.

Her work as a writer has been featured at NY Stage & Film Festival, Funny or Die, Huffington Post Queer Voices, and in the writers' room for Funny of Die original *The Coop*, in which she also starred. She is the former co-host and writer of Heritage Radio's food and wine show *The Morning After* and the writer of *You Shall Inherit the Earth!*, a stand-up special premiering in 2024. She is a Sundance Feature Film Program Committee mentor and former Sundance screenwriting fellow.

Select theater: 59E59 St, Joe's Pub, multiple Chicago productions, Rob Ashford's Tangier concert performance of *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris* opposite Aaron Tveit and Amber Grey. Featured TV/Film: *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *The L Word*, *Bless This Mess*, *Casual*, Cameron Crow's *Roadies*, Netflix original film *6 Balloons*, and Apple original film *Spirited* alongside Ryan Reynolds and Will Ferrell. She next stars in independent feature *Fan Girl* opposite Daren Criss and Busy Philips.



FRANK WINTERS (CO-WRITER) is a writer, director, and actor based out of New York. His plays have been workshopped and produced Off-Broadway, Off-Off Broadway, at Theatre Row, The Wild Project, The Flea, 59E59 Theaters, the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center, as part of the Red Bull Theatre Company's 2023 Short New Play Festival, to say nothing of attics and basements, colleges and high schools, parks and train stations across the country. He was recipient of the Clifford Odets New Play Commission and the first-ever new play commission from Marquette University. Selections from his work have been featured in multiple editions of Lawrence Harbison's *The Best Women's Stage Monologues*. His play, *To Distraction*, was one of the Top Ten Bestselling Plays at the 2023 United Solo Theatre Festival. He was a founding member of The Strangemen Theatre Company. He has served as a guest educator or adjunct professor at New York University, Manhattanville College, Catawba College, and Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Purchase College. His work has been published by Broadway Play Publishing. He received a BFA in Acting from the Conservatory of Theatre Arts at SUNY Purchase.



JARED MEZZOCCHI (DIRECTOR/DESIGNER) is a two-time OBIE Award-winning theater artist, working as a director, multimedia designer, playwright, and actor. Mezzocchi's work has appeared at notable theaters nationwide, including The Kennedy Center, Geffen Playhouse, Arena Stage, Woolly Mammoth (company member), Manhattan Theater Club, Vineyard Theater, En Garde Arts, HERE Arts, Portland Centerstage, Cleveland Playhouse, South Coast Rep, GEVA Theatre, and many more. In 2016, he received his first OBIE, Lucille Lortel and Henry Hewes Award for his work in Qui Nguyen's "Vietgone" at the Manhattan Theatre Club. In 2020, the New York Times spotlighted his multimedia innovations alongside the pandemic work of four other theater artists, including Andrew Lloyd Webber and Paula Vogel. His directorial work on Sarah Gancher's live-digital production "Russian Troll Farm" was also celebrated as a New York Times critic pick, praised for being one of the first digitally native successes for virtual theater, and earned Mezzocchi his second OBIE award. Currently, Mezzocchi is directing SANDRA, by David Cale, at Theaterworks Hartford and is an artist-in-residence at Vineyard Theater, where he is co-creating, with playwright Sarah Gancher, an immersive performance set in two simultaneous locations in Redhook Brooklyn: a barge on the waterfront and the NYC famous Sunny's Bar.

Mezzocchi is a two-time Macdowell Artist Fellow, a 2012 Princess Grace Award winner, and is an Associate Professor at The University of Maryland, where he created the curriculum for the multimedia track within the MFA Design program. Mezzocchi has a BA in theater and film from Fairfield University, and an MFA in performance and Interactive Media Arts from Brooklyn College. He grew up in New Hampshire, and returns every summer to serve as Producing Artistic Director of Andy's Summer Playhouse, an innovative children's theater producing original work by professional artists from across the country.

PREVIOUS DESIGNS BY JARED





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