

Players' Theatre Presents

Hand To God

by Robert Askins

Nov 26-29



PLAYERS' THEATRE EXECUTIVE TEAM 2024/25

ON BEHALF OF...



KRYSTIE NGUYEN.....EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DANICA FRISS WILSON.....PRODUCTION
MANAGER
CLAIRE TEES.....PUBLICITY DIRECTOR
MARU COLLINS.....TECH DIRECTOR
NORA WANG.....TECH DIRECTOR
HARRIET FAUGHT.....FRONT OF HOUSE
AND FINANCE DIRECTOR
SOLENE CHEVALLIER.....EVENT DIRECTOR
SIYA PANDIT.....MDF CO-ORDINATOR
SAM SHEAHAN.....ART DIRECTOR

...WE ARE HAPPY TO SAY:

WELCOME TO PLAYERS'

Players' theatre is a non-profit theatre company that aims to bring affordable and accessible performances to members of the community. Founded in 1921, we are Montreal's oldest English-speaking black box theatre, and remain one of the city's only English theatre groups.

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WELCOME TO... HAND TO GOD



Top (left to right): Claire Tees, Alexis Mezzarobba, Roberta Du, Cassius Brook Dempsey, Henry Kemeny-Wodlinger.
Bottom (left to right): Raphaëlle Béhar, Elias Luz, Nia Blankson.



**WE
HOPE
YOU
ENJOY
THE
SHOW!**

HAND TO GOD

DIRECTOR'S NOTE



When I first read *Hand to God*, I thought, “What kind of person writes this?” By the second read, I was asking, “What kind of person directs this?” Turns out, it’s someone like me—I love the chaos, the humour, and the deeply inappropriate. It’s everything I could have hoped for in a directorial debut.

This play fearlessly dives into the messy, uncomfortable parts of being human—grief, shame, rage, and that deep-down urge to just break things—all while sneaking in jokes that make you laugh out loud before wondering if you should. *Hand to God* doesn’t offer easy answers, but it does invite us to laugh at the absurdity of it all.

When Alexis first showed me this play, we looked at each other and said, “This is it.” What I didn’t realize then was what it took to be a director. As an actor, I used to think, “What do directors even do?” Now I know: it’s pouring yourself into every moment, every laugh, and every uncomfortable truth to create something meaningful. This story is special, and bringing it to life has been nothing short of extraordinary.

What made this experience unforgettable wasn’t just the play—it was the people. The feeling of “This is it” we had with our play is the exact same way we felt with every single member of our cast and crew. It’s something rare: a group of people with a shared willingness to get weird, and be as passionate and unhinged as this story demands. Together, we’ve built something and become a little family—albeit the kind of family you’d expect to find in a dark comedy about a misbehaving puppet.

To my co-director and best friend, Alexis: thank you for seeing this vision with me and for making this process as fun as it was ridiculous. To Cassius, Cal, Elias, Henry, Nia, Raph, and Dana: your talent, dedication to late-night rehearsals, and ability to focus through the laughter has made *Hand to God* come alive. I couldn’t have done it without you.

To the audience, thank you for being here. I hope this show makes you laugh, squirm, and maybe even reflect on your own lives along the way. This is a story I’ll carry with me, and I’m so proud to share it with you.

Roberta Du

HAND TO GOD

DIRECTOR'S NOTE



When I was looking for a play, I became discouraged when none of them fit my vision quite right. So, in a moment of despair, I searched up “best plays ever” and this show is nothing short of that. The dichotomy of tragedy and comedy reminds me of the battles in my own mind. I often feel alone in my deep emotions and tend to use humour to push them away, but connecting with Hand to God has healed something in me. Storytelling is the only way I feel like I can truly translate my emotions to the physical world. I felt the euphoria of understanding someone’s truth while reading and crafting this show. You’re probably going to watch this and think I’m a lunatic for saying all that, but it’s true. This incredibly inappropriate and twisted play touched my heart.

My mind can be simultaneously liberating and suffocating at times, but actualizing my imagination into reality is the happiness I seek daily. Every rehearsal has reminded me of the special bond theatre catalyses by giving me a space to let my guard down for once. It is a freeing experience to release your weird and not only be matched, but most of the time topped by someone else.

I am eternally grateful for the wonderful team of theatre lovers that made this show possible. Thank you to Nia for her strong knees, to Cal for their perfect screams, to Raph for accepting my repetitive notes, to Henry for kicking chairs harder and harder whenever I asked, and to Elias for his puppet mastery. Thank you to Cassius for always having a fully charged laptop, to Dana for their dedication, and to the entire tech crew for putting up with my unhealthy perfectionism. You guys make the magic of theatre a reality. But most of all, I want to thank Roberta for taking on this massive project with me. There is no one else I’d rather share this core memory with. Live theatre isn’t possible without a recipient, so I also want to thank you for being here. Thank you for giving me the space to reignite my burning passion and to have such a fulfilling project when I didn’t even know I needed it.

All of this to say, this show is pretty good. But if you asked me on a deeper level, this show has breathed life back into my lungs. I hope you laugh. Hard. We need more of that. I hope you try to understand the complex emotions of these characters. Everyone deserves some grace. But most of all, I hope you feel the heart and soul that has poured into this production. We’ve done the work. Now all you have to do is sit back, relax, and enjoy the show. So do that. Stop reading this and talk to the person next to you. But not when the show starts. Know theatre etiquette. Gosh. Do I have to do everything around here?

Alexis

MEET THE CAST!



CLAIRE TEES

AS MARGERY



Claire Tees (she/they) is in her fifth year studying History with a minor in Cultural Studies. Since their breakout role as a Knife in *Beauty and the Beast*, she and the stage have been inseparable. She found a home away from home at Players' Theatre in their second year and have had a blast as Annette Raleigh in *'God of Carnage,'* Wren in *'We Support You'* (MDF 2023), Mrs Prentice in *'What the Butler Saw.'*

Her most recent appearance was in the English Department's 2023 production of *'An Enemy of the People'* as Dr Teresa Stockmann. Cal is elated to be performing with such a spectacular cast and directing team, and she invites you to enjoy the show!

ELIAS LUZ

AS JASON/TYRONE

Elias (he/him) is a U0 student with a major yet to be determined! He is more grateful than can be put into words for the awesome team of people he has the insane privilege of working with. He wants to thank Alexis and Roberta for having the best taste in plays and for being the funniest and coolest directors ever. He also wants to thank Cassius for being organised as hell, and finally the ENTIRE cast for making him laugh at times when he probably shouldn't be!!! Thank you for coming to see *Hand to God*, and hopefully you laugh even more than he did during rehearsals!



MEET THE CAST!



NIA BLANKSON AS TIMOTHY



Nia (she/her) is a 4 1/2th year student from London and NYC studying classical piano, music theory, and music technology. This is her second time doing theatre – the first being her role as an immature and emotionally avoidant clown in 2024 MDF play Big Top Down. Her casting streak has prompted lots of deep introspection... She would like to shout out Cassius and Dana, and thank Alexis and Roberta for their fantastic and hilarious directing (as

well as their concern for her knees). She is ecstatic to have worked with an extremely talented and funny cast who kept making her laugh during rehearsals – and hopes you laugh just as much tonight!

RAPHAËLLE BÉHAR AS JESSICA

Raph (she/her) is a U2 student in English Literature and Political Science and theatre newbie. She extends heartfelt thanks to her talented castmates and directors for showing her a silly goofy time (and TCBY? soon?). Special shoutout to Alexis and Roberta for finding the perfect balance between fun and focus by enforcing safe puppet sex practices. She cannot wait to present the show to a captive audience! No take backsies!



MEET THE CAST!



HENRY KEMENY-WODLINGER

AS PASTOR GREG



Henry (he/him) is a U2 Liberal arts student and is getting suspicious that he is only getting cast in mature roles this year... is somebody trying to tell him something? He last appeared at Players as director of *The Road to Hell* in 2023, and in *What the Butler Saw* in 2022. He hopes you don't get scarred by what you see tonight!



Dana Prather (they/she) is a theatre artist from Treaty 7 Territory (Calgary) and a U4 student in Psychology and English: Drama & Theatre. A proud-wearer-of-many hats in the theatre world, they have been involved with numerous productions both onstage and off as a performer, director, playwright, producer, and intimacy director.

Select intimacy direction credits include *Pindorama* (MBC Productions), *Coping Mechanisms* (Players' Theatre), and *The Effect* (Tuesday Night Cafe Theatre). Dana would like to thank Roberta and Alexis for their support and enthusiasm and Cal and Nia for making the awkward stuff look easy.



DANA PRATHER
INTIMACY COORDINATOR

MEET THE CREW!



ROBERTA DU CO - DIRECTOR

Roberta Du (she/her) is a U3 Computer Science and Geography student, thrilled (and mildly terrified) to make her directorial debut with *Hand to God*. After gracing the Players' Theatre stage in groundbreaking roles like "youngest daughter" and "high school friend no one remembered," she's moved on to directing—wrangling both puppets and actors. After many nights of bringing chaos and questionable behaviour to life, Roberta is grateful to her incredible cast for their talent, dedication, and willingness to embrace the ridiculousness. She's excited for an evening where absurdity, and hopefully a few laughs, reign supreme. So sit back, enjoy, and remember: anything learned tonight is best left unpracticed in real life.

MEET THE CREW!



ALEXIS MEZZAROBBA CO - DIRECTOR

Alexis (she/her) is a U3 Anatomy and Cell Biology student. Although riddled with stage fright, she couldn't resist the connection she has with live performance. She is so grateful to have had this opportunity to work with such an amazing team of talented people in the black box theatre once again. Players' Theatre has given her the space to further explore her love of the arts through writing 'We Support You' for the 2023 McGill Drama Festival, acting most recently in 'Punch Up' as Brenda, and now directing alongside her best friend. She can't believe how lucky she is to have a welcoming space to indulge her theatre craving with such a lovely cast and crew to accompany her. Alexis is thrilled to have you here tonight and hopes you enjoy Players' Theatre's production of Hand to God!

MEET THE CREW!



CASSIUS BROOK DEMPSEY STAGE MANAGER

Cassius (he/him) is a U1 student majoring in World Islamic Studies and minoring in Music Technology. After a brief hiatus he is making his triumphant return to theatre. He last appeared in the ensemble of a production of *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown* but has now retreated behind the curtain to stage manage *Hand To God*. He wants to thank Roberta and Alexis for their fearless leadership, the awesome and hilarious cast, his computer for never dying, Sabrina Carpenter, sherry and the music library, and he refuses to comment on Tanner Buchanan. He hopes you love the show as much as he does.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



**THANK YOU TO EVERYONE INVOLVED IN THE
PRODUCTION OF HAND TO GOD!**

Light Operators:

Qiner Tan

Nora Wang

Maru Collins

Run Crew:

Lisa Dai

Tianzi Han

Sound Operator:

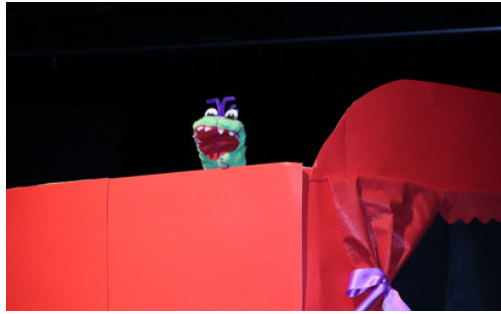
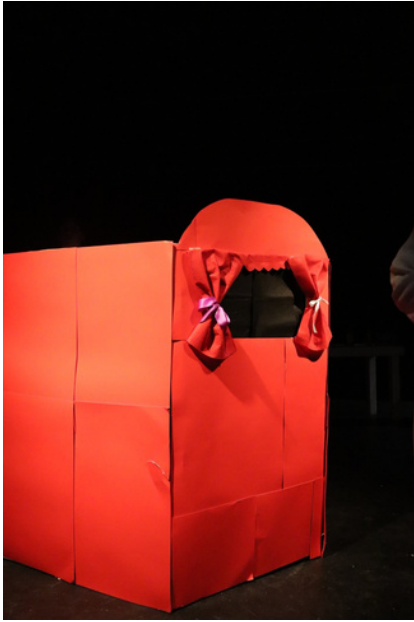
Galadriel Bond

Danica Friss Wilson

Krystie Nguyen

Sam Sheahan

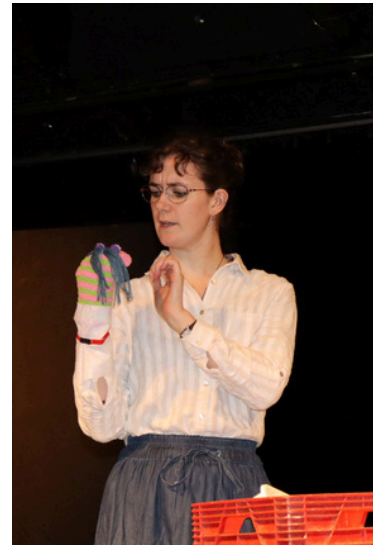
BEHIND THE SCENES



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DON'T MISS OUT...



SCAN ME



TO SEE OUR UPCOMING SHOWS!

