

Far From The Tree Productions presents

The **Pink** Unicorn

by Elise Forier Edie

July 18-29, 2023

Pacific Theatre



Director's Notes

I'll be honest. When Shel first brought this play to me with the intent of us producing it, I was skeptical. There was no doubt in my mind that this script was smart, captivating, and incredible hilarious. Trisha Lee's growth through repeated mistakes and fuck ups is not often something you see so blatantly put to words. Plus, some of the direct colorations to mine and Shel's own upbringing made this play feel eerily like someone was looking in on us while we were growing up. However, my mind was flooded with questions and problems that would be presented if we decided to do this show. Is THIS the story we need to tell or are we just drawn to the similarities of our own childhood? Does the growth that Trisha shows balance the prejudices she is guilty of? And how on earth do we frame this story with a non-binary body? Truthfully the hesitations were endless for a while. However, through collaborating with Shel, we soon came up with the idea of viewing Tisha Lee's tale through Jo's eyes as they relive their own story, but from a different perspective. New questions started to come to me. What are Jo's memories of each of these moments? How do Jo and Trisha's stories differ and how are they the same? What is the realistic and metaphorical reason for Jo to revisit this time in their life? Early in the process I was reminded of something one of my professors at school told me. Imagine your mind is like an attic filled with boxes of memories. Some good. Some bad. Some you want to revisit over and over. Some are painful and you cannot open just yet. It is okay to put a box away for a little while, as long as you know it is still there and you might need to look in it sometime. I've always loved this idea of memories living in a cozy attic. So, that's what we did. Let's tell this story of Jo opening up their boxes of memories and playing around in them for a little while. Let's show a collage of toys, images, books, giant tapestries of a pink unicorn. Let's remember those moments in our lives, both good and bad, and see where they have carried our bodies too. I could go on and on about the mess that is politics, the church, and the LGBTQIA community. There is legislation being passed constantly that is horrifying, and I think we all know that the Church and the LGBTQIA community have had some rocky roads, and I am sure will have plenty more. Most people I have spoken to who grew up in church and have since distanced themselves all say the same thing. It is not the teachings of Jesus that pushed them away. It was the judgement and hate shown to them and others by the church. But, it is my hope through stories like Jo and Trisha's that we might start to see that yes, diversity is hard. It is easier to hate than to love. It is easy to judge those who are different for us for fear of saying something wrong. But with mistakes, no matter how wild or big they are, can come change. So maybe we need to be a little more like Trisha. A little more willing to make mistakes in hopes of change. Because as Trisha says, "if we do, we might get somewhere good."

-Director, Joelle Wyminga

Performer's Notes

This play was first brought to my attention years ago when I was wrapping up my apprenticeship at Pacific Theatre and looking for possible next projects. Ron Reid, PT's artistic director at the time, gave me a copy saying he hadn't read it yet but thought I might be interested as it was about a non-binary teenage at their relationship with their mother. A cursory glance told me that this play was not intended to be performed by said teen character, and I thought, well that's that. But I couldn't put it down.

It has long been one of my great shames as a theatre artist that I...HATE reading plays. I truly do. Sitting still and reading through something that was meant to be spoken, seen and heard is an exercise in torture for my ADHD brain, so when I said I couldn't stop reading *The Pink Unicorn*, I mean I was well and truly hooked. Ever since then I have had it in the back of my mind as something I needed to find a way to not just produce, but to perform. And it wasn't until I was emerging from my post-pandemic reverie that it thought...Hold on...Theatre is all about playing pretend. Who says we can't use our imagination a little bit? Isn't that the entire idea *Far From The Tree* was based on?

So then all I needed to do was convince Joelle!

I love this story. Not only because it is funny and relatable and endearing, but because it's messy. It is easy for us, here in Vancouver, to get quite comfortable in the privilege of our often more accepting cultural climate. It is easy to see the world as split between the allies and the bigots. It's easy to see others' mistakes and leap to judgement. But I think that true allyship, true progress, requires the courage to risk failure, because without failure there is no learning. I myself grew up in a more conservative context and learned to see queerness as sinful. I had to go through my own process of deconstructing my assumptions, my biases, and my faith in order to accept others. Only then was I able to see the queer child I had kept buried within myself all those years. But I made mistakes along the way. And I am so grateful for those who were willing to guide me.

Many things about this show hit close to home from the politics within the church, to small town drama, to erasure within educational institutions (I see you TWU..) and righteous anger is a natural reaction. But to me, the takeaway is love. That is our North Star. Our *Pink Unicorn*. It is what we fight for, but it is also what we must reach for, even in the dark, even when it's scary, even when we or others mess up.

This play is my act of love for the Jo I kept buried within me for so long, and to all those would be allies who are afraid it's too late.

-Performer, Shel Wyminga

Creative Team

Shel Wyminga (They/She)
Jo/Trisha Lee, Producer



Shel Wyminga was born purple from asphyxia and couldn't cry for the first several moments of their life. Thankfully, they soon managed to catch their breath and haven't shut up since. They eventually embraced the inevitable and completed their BFA in Acting through the School of the Arts, Media, and Culture at TWU where they studied Visual Art alongside their theatrical pursuits. Recent acting credits include Jo March in Little Women: A Workshop (Far From the Tree), Edgar in King Lear (Promethean), Peter Pan in Neverland Night Circus (Geekenders), Jane in (/hello,wold); (MindStorm Radio), Jo March in Little Women: an audio play (Far From The Tree), Marta Reddy in Cariboo Magi (Far From The Tree), and Henry and The Dauphin in Henry V (Stone's Throw).

Love is love, trans women are women, trans men are men and my God loves ALL their kids.

Joelle Wyminga (She/Her)
Director, Producer



Joelle is a multidisciplinary theatre artist working in Vancouver primarily as a director, actor, producer, and costume designer. Armed with comfortable shoes and an impressive jean jacket collection, Joelle tells stories that examine the complexities of humanity in all its forms and delve deep into what makes people inherently human while exploring "theatre magic" and testing the limitations of the audience's imagination. A history and literature buff, Joelle particularly likes to tell stories surrounding historical events through innovative reimagining, while opening the floor up for all to discuss our triumphs and downfalls of our past.

Previous credits include; Little Women: A Workshop- Script Adaptor and Director, Cariboo Magi- Director and Costume Designer (FFTT), Julie- Assistant Director (Untold Wants and Alma Matters), (/hello, world)- Harriet (MindStorm Radio), King Lear- Edmund (Promethean Theatre), Little Women: An Audio Play- Amy March, Script Adaptor, and Producer (FFTT),The Comedy of Errors- Adriana, and The Cover of Life-Tood (TWU), Peter and the Starcatcher- Costume Designer (Storybook), Tuck Everlasting- Costume Designer (Arts Umbrella), and Kill The Ripper- Costume Designer (Geekenders/Affair of Honor).

Diyalla Malijian (She/Her) Stage Manager



Diyalla is her name and passion is her game. Completed a BA in Psychology at SFU and is looking into a minor in Greek history after studying abroad in Greece. She is loving her new job as a Daycare Program Supervisor. In the future she hopes to work with youth and make a difference as well as balancing out time for exploring the world and stage managing. During her spare time, Diyalla can be found in her room, slaying dragons on her PS3. Don't worry they are bad demonic dragons.

Tyler Dumoulin (He/Him) Sound Designer and Composer



Tyler Dumoulin is a composer, musician, and sound designer. Specializing in contemporary and devised theatre, recent works include composition for Little Women: A Workshop with Far From the Tree, original music and sound design "The Wolves Are Coming For You" directed by Larisse Campbell, sound design for "Happy Days" written by Samuel Beckett and directed by Sarah Rose, and music direction for "Cariboo Magi" with Far From The Tree Productions. Tyler is also a podcast producer with sound design and music credits including an adaptation of "Little Women" with Far From The Tree Productions, "H.E.R.E." written and directed by William Tippery, as well as upcoming projects with Wunderdog Theatre and Mindstorm Radio. Tyler can also be seen on stage as the synth guy with the live drum'n'bass act GRDN.

Christian Ching (He/Him/They/Them) Lighting Designer



Christian Ching is an emerging producer, lighting designer, scenographer, and technical director with a love for design and biology. He is a graduate of Simon Fraser University (2021) with a double degree in Theatre Production and Design and in the Biological Sciences. Originally from the Philippines, he is currently based in the unceded Coast Salish territories of the x̱məθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl̓íl̓wətał (Tsleil-Waututh) nations (also known as Vancouver). His practice aims to revolve around collaboration and the consideration of ecological aspects of design. In his free time, he likes to run RPGs, draw, and make music.

This production is partnered with Rainbow Refugees, a Vancouver based organization that promotes safe, equitable migration and communities of belonging for people fleeing persecution based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or HIV status. All proceeds from The Pink Unicorn's June 18th preview performance will go to Rainbow Refugees, and representatives will be present after the show to share more about their incredible work. For more information, visit www.rainbowrefugee.com



Special Thanks

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