

OVERHEARD

FOURTEEN COMMISSIONED MONOLOGUES WRITTEN
BY TNB2S+ ARTISTS FOR TNB2S+ ARTISTS

CO-CONCEIVED BY

L MORGAN LEE (she/her) AND GEORGE STRUS (they/them)

MONOLOGUES BY

A.A. BRENNER (they/he)

AZURE D. OSBORNE-LEE (he/they)

BIANCA LEIGH (she/her)

ELSE WENT (they/she)

ISAAC GÓMEZ (they/them)

KAELA MEI-SHING GARVIN (they/she)

LIQING XU (they/she)

MASHUQ MUSHTAQ DEEN (he/him)

SAM HAMASHIMA (they/them)

SHARIFA YASMIN (she/her)

SYLVAN OSWALD (he/him)

TRAVIS L. TATE (they/them)

UGBA

AND VICTOR I. CAZARES (they/them)

A DPS ACTING EDITION PUBLISHED BY

BROADWAY

L I C E N S I N G G R O U P

OVERHEARD: FOURTEEN COMMISSIONED MONOLOGUES WRITTEN BY TNB2S+ ARTISTS FOR TNB2S+ ARTISTS
Copyright © 2023, Broadway Licensing

All Rights Reserved

OVERHEARD: FOURTEEN COMMISSIONED MONOLOGUES WRITTEN BY TNB2S+ ARTISTS FOR TNB2S+ ARTISTS is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth), and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), or stored in any retrieval system in any way (electronic or mechanical) without written permission of the publisher.

The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United States, its territories, possessions and Canada for OVERHEARD: FOURTEEN COMMISSIONED MONOLOGUES WRITTEN BY TNB2S+ ARTISTS FOR TNB2S+ ARTISTS are controlled exclusively by Broadway Licensing, 440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. **No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance the written permission of Broadway Licensing and paying the requisite fee.**

All other rights, including without limitation motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to the Author(s) representative (see Appendix at the back of this volume).

NOTE ON BILLING

Anyone receiving permission to produce OVERHEARD: FOURTEEN COMMISSIONED MONOLOGUES WRITTEN BY TNB2S+ ARTISTS FOR TNB2S+ ARTISTS is required to give credit to the Author(s) as sole and exclusive Author(s) of the Play(s) on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play(s) and in all instances in which the title of the Play(s) appears, including printed or digital materials for advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play(s) and/or a production thereof. Please see your production license for font size and typeface requirements.

Be advised that there may be additional credits required in all programs and promotional material. Such language will be listed under the "Additional Billing" section of production licenses. It is the licensee's responsibility to ensure any and all required billing is included in the requisite places, per the terms of the license.

SPECIAL NOTE ON SONGS/RECORDINGS

Broadway Licensing neither holds the rights to nor grants permission to use any songs or recordings mentioned in the Play. Permission for performances of copyrighted songs, arrangements or recordings mentioned in this Play is not included in our license agreement. The permission of the copyright owner(s) must be obtained for any such use. For any songs and/or recordings mentioned in the Play, other songs, arrangements, or recordings may be substituted provided permission from the copyright owner(s) of such songs, arrangements or recordings is obtained; or songs, arrangements or recordings in the public domain may be substituted.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

The world premiere of *OVERHEARD: FOURTEEN COMMISSIONED MONOLOGUES WRITTEN BY TNB2S+ ARTISTS FOR TNB2S+ ARTISTS* was originally performed as the finale of the inaugural 2022 Breaking the Binary Theatre Festival on Sunday, October 16, 2022, at Theatre Row. The commissioning prompt was created by 2022 festival co-curators Dominique Rider and Josephine Kearns (she/her). It was directed by L Morgan Lee; the dramaturg was George Strus, and the assistant director/stage manager was Mika Kauffman (they/ze/he). Stage directions were read by Ayla Sullivan (they/he). The performers were as follows:

Arewà Basit (they/she)

Bianca Leigh (she/her)

Evie Schuckman (they/them)

L Morgan Lee (she/her)

yannick-robin eike mirko (they/he)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to Broadway Licensing, Kent Nicholson, Marc Ferré, Pearl Studios, Soho Rep, T. Eric Galloway, and WP Theater.

OVERHEARD was generously sponsored by GALVAN.

CONTENTS

HOT LADIES by A.A. Brenner	7
ORLA by Bianca Leigh	15
I BROUGHT THE RICE OR HONOR TO US ALL by Sam Hamashima	19
MOTHER MARY, SINNER MARY by Isaac Gómez	25
THE TROUBLE by Azure D. Osborne-Lee	31
NEW SKIN by travis l. tate	35
HEATWAVE by Sylvan Oswald	43
LOST AND GAINED by Liqing Xu	47
PIAZZA PIZZA MINERVA by Victor I. Cazares	51
YOU KNOW THAT FEELING by Kaela Mei-Shing Garvin	55
A MOMENT WITH BLONDE BY FRANK OCEAN by UGBA	61
HOW TO BECOME A GHOST —A GUIDE by Else Went	69
PICK ME GIRL by Sharifa Yasmin	75
THE IMPENETRABLE DARKNESS OF THE FEARFUL HUMAN HEART by Mashuq Mushtaq Deen	81

HOT LADIES

BY A.A. BRENNER

CAST

CHRIS, a trans guy in a wheelchair, midtwenties to early thirties

NOTES ON SETTING

The play takes place before the steps of a bar's outdoor patio.

And, yes—those steps are *completely* inaccessible to a mobility device.

NOTES ON CASTING

Please cast a transmasculine Disabled person as Chris—preferably someone who also uses a mobility device (or has experience with one), ideally someone with a physical Disability.

There's no need to cast actors to enter and exit the patio around Chris, but you may if you'd like to. All that's important is that the person he has chosen to talk to is real to him.

NOTES ON THE TEXT

The monologue should run three to four minutes.

The speech is sharp; like, Mel Brooks-meets-Amy Sherman-Palladino sharp. It should feel as though Chris is talking to someone else, although we never hear them.

A dash (—) at the end of a line of dialogue implies a quick cutoff.

Beats and pauses are indicated by spacing between lines.

HOT LADIES

Lights up on a space that's just off the stage.

You know the type—a space that's almost in the playing space, but isn't—

Like the front steps.

Or that aisle right between the apron and the audience.

Whatever it is, it's wheelchair accessible.

And, for the first time all evening, we notice Chris, midtwenties to early thirties, a trans guy in a wheelchair, sitting in it.

He's sitting right before the steps that lead to a bar's outdoor patio.

Of course, these steps are completely, entirely inaccessible.

Contemporary upbeat pop music softly emanates from the bar in the background.

Chaotic chatter.

Women laughing.

Chris watches as people exit and enter the patio.

Then, someone joins him by the steps.

Are they waiting to enter?

Exit?

Out for a smoke?

Chris isn't sure, but he watches them.

They're on their phone. Scrolling. Scrolling.

Chris clears his throat and begins—

CHRIS. Hey—

The person doesn't notice.

Hey—

The person still doesn't notice.

HEY, YOU!

The person looks up.

Sorry—

I don't mean to bother you, but also, kind of?—I also kind of *do* mean to bother you?—Because if you're going up there, to the patio, or if you're going back up there?—then I'm just wondering if you might happen to see my friends?

They're like, tall—

like, really tall—

and one of them, she has, like, this brown hair—

or, well, it's actually kind of blonde? Like,

it's like, dyed this gradient—that kind of makes it look like cold brew after you put the milk in it—

ANYWAY, that's the first one, and the other—well, she's a normal brunette—which she thinks makes her unremarkable, but the thing is, she's actually really pretty...

Only, she doesn't think so, which means it all kind of averages out to a soft "meh"—

Because, contrary to your popular coming-of-age film trope, insecurity is *not* what makes you beautiful—like, actually, it just makes you risk averse and hard.

And I would know.

Not about being—or even *feeling*—unremarkable—because, my god, if there's one thing about me, it's that, wherever I go, I am one hundred percent fully against-my-will remarkable:

I mean about feeling risk averse and hard.

And—just to get it out of the way, I actually *can* walk—and, yes, I *technically* could make it up those stairs—just like you *technically* could rock climb while wearing mittens—but it'd be pretty difficult, wouldn't it?

So I'd rather just wait here.

Only—

my friends went up there to “just say a quick hey,” but now that was, like, twenty minutes ago?

And yeah, someone *technically* could carry me in, but would you really want two drunk guys or an overextended, underpaid bouncer lugging you and your \$3,000 chair up all of those steps just so you can watch your hot tall friends flirt while everyone else just...leaves you alone?

And not “leaves you alone” in a good way—like, they literally will not notice you, because no woman notices a man under six feet tall—especially not a five foot whatever transmasc in a wheelchair—not even when they’re queer, which means they’re cool, ostensibly, with dating a transmasc, ostensibly—but only if you’re that hot transmasc on *The Politician* or Elliot Page.

Which isn’t to say I don’t get women.

Because, don’t get me wrong—I get women all the time.

Sorry—ugh—that gives me like, ugh—

What I mean, is that hot ladies love me.

Specifically, “Hot” ones, and, specifically, “Ladies”—

And wait—when I say “Hot,” I say it in quotes, and when I say “Ladies,” I say that also in quotes—

Because there’s something about a “Hot Lady,” in quotes, specifically, that makes them quite possibly the most dangerous kind of person I could run into—and not for the reasons you’re thinking:

It’s because, just like me, a “Hot Lady”—in quotes—is not used to being seen.

Because they *aren’t*: they’re *looked at*.

And, because we live in a society where a person’s value is solely predicated on the desire of cis white men, being looked at and projected upon gives them—the “Hot Ladies”—value, yet leaves them feeling empty and alone—

Much in the same way that *my* being “looked at” but never seen—leaves *me* feeling empty and alone...

So when I recognize them—and when they see me really seeing them—

Well...

For a moment, none of this—
the bars, the parties, the obligatory and soul-sucking posing and posturing for recognition—none of it matters. For either of us.

Only, there's a problem.

Because when we really finally *see* each other, all those projections are stripped away—which means that, suddenly, we can't be *unseen*, and, since we can't be *unseen*, we're also suddenly held accountable. And me, I'm used to that; I've never been able to “pass,” to conform, so I've never known an alternative. But the “Hot Ladies”?

Well, suddenly, they have to think about their actions and who they even are outside of everything: just as themselves.

And that's scary.

So they go back. They return to being a blank canvas, a screen for society's desires, because although it leaves them feeling empty and alone, it's a hell of a lot easier than being forced to be one hundred percent against-your-will remarkably yourself—

And I can't blame them.

Actually—

When I was a kid, I used to play this computer game? This, like, NBA Live 2004 computer game, and I'd make my own player, and his name was Ryan Green—which is the straightest, cis-est, most *goyishe* name I could possibly think of—and he was six foot seven and had unbelievable muscles and a speed of ninety-nine and a build that rivaled Christopher Reeve before he—well, you know.

And he had a nice blonde wife, I imagined, who looked like Carrie Underwood, I imagined, and three kids and a blue Ford Explorer SUV just like the one my parents rented when we drove to South Carolina. And it had this—this sun roof—and I remember opening

it up and yelling like Tarzan with my dad out on the highway all the way to Myrtle Beach—

But anyway, I thought that *that*—the three kids, the bulging muscles, the Carrie Underwood wife, and a bright blue 2003 Ford Explorer—that was the pinnacle of *everything*.

Suddenly, he becomes acutely aware he's talked for way too long.

Shit, sorry—

I'm sorry, I appreciate you listening—I'm used to people talking, but not listening, not really—

And, you know; sometimes, that works for me.

Sometimes, that's just easier.

I guess, in some ways, I'm a "Hot Lady" too.

He takes a deep breath.

Reframes his thoughts.

Anyway—speaking of "Hot Ladies"—if you're going up there—would you keep an eye out for my friends? You know, the sorta blonde and the—

Yeah, yep—

Uh, if you see them...

let them know I'm tired of waiting.

*Chris takes one last long look at the patio—
and exits.*

End of Play

ORLA

BY BIANCA LEIGH

ORLA

Orla is sitting at a café table. She is wearing a simple, beautifully tailored dress and a large pair of Jackie O sunglasses. Her hair is blown straight and just reaches her collarbone. She takes a sip of Perrier from her wineglass and slides her sunglasses back on her head.

ORLA. Yesterday, a middle-aged plumber called me “ma’am.” I was appalled. I’m used to the NYU kids doing it. I mean they’re *twelve*. But this guy had already begun to gray. Gag.

I’m turning sixty next month. Hard to believe, I know. Sixty. Six. Oh. That sounds so *old* to me. It conjures images of white hair and a matronly bosom, sensible shoes and a pocketbook with little brass feet, filled with hard candies, Kleenex, and an emergency rain bonnet. I adored my grandmother, but I’m not ready to *become* her just yet. You see, I know how to be young, and “not so young,” and “barely young,” and “who do you think you’re kidding” young, but old? Brand-new experience. Doesn’t quite compute yet.

There’s so much I have to do! I’d better hurry up...

She takes a long, slow sip of Perrier.

There was a role in the breakdowns the other day. It said, “Dale: An executive. In her fifties, but wants to be twenty.” Now, that’s some bullshit. There’s not a person over forty who wants to be twenty again. Thirty-five? Yes. Forty? Sure. But twenty? No way. That shit was horrible.

When you are twenty, people don’t listen to you. You get to be forty, fifty, their ears perk up a bit. You have some life experience, got a few miles on you. Then, when you get a little older, they start ignoring you again. Now you’re *too* old. Your experiences too distant to be relevant. Someone said to me recently, “Oh, that’s right...I forgot you’re from the “Transsexual Generation.” WTF, as you kids say.

You see, I've lived the fantasy. My dreams came true. How many people can say that, really? That's why the haters come for us. Because we dared, and they didn't—or couldn't. I wanted to be beautiful. And I was. I wanted to dazzle. And I did. Shallow end of the pool, I know, but there you have it.

Once, I wore a beautiful, deep forest green velvet gown to a charity event. Sumptuous, with a sort of bateau neckline that draped down from my shoulders across my décolleté. No embellishment. As I passed, the back of the gown; well, there *was* no back to the gown, it was open all the way down to...just a whisper above being vulgar.

Conversations stopped, forks remained suspended, as I glided by, my beautiful naked back, elegantly curved, shoulder blades like tiny angels wings. They truly gagged. And then, they applauded, applauded for the beauty in full flower. Now *that* was an entrance.

Why was beauty so important back then? Well, it justified our existence. "Oh, of *course* you changed your sex...just *look* at you! You're gorgeous! You *had* to become a woman." You see?

And, of course, the men liked it, too. Oh, so many flawless men—where did they all go? Scarsdale, probably. Such passion! Always, there were promises. Always, they were broken. In my arms, they meant what they said. But later, in the cold light of day...I can't blame them. They had so much to lose. Bitter? A bit. But I learned the hard truths quickly and kept it moving. I survived.

Getting old was never part of the fantasy. Aging is real. As rain. And it's not going to be easy. I have defied gravity, chromosomes, and socialization, as well as hatred and ignorance, to become the amazing woman you see before you. In many ways, I *willed* this. But there's no defying time. You can get a few steps ahead of her, but she'll catch up, eventually. "Welcome to your golden years, madame. Next stop: death!" Oh, death is there, too, waiting in the wings. Aging is death's warm-up act. He's always been there, a speck on the horizon. Now he's much closer. I can make out the folds of his shroud. I'm not so much afraid of dying. I'm afraid of leaving. I like it here. But, don't worry. I'm not going anywhere anytime soon. I have far too much to do. Right after I finish my Perrier...

End of Play

**I BROUGHT THE RICE
OR HONOR TO US ALL**

BY SAM HAMASHIMA

I BROUGHT THE RICE OR HONOR TO US ALL

“[]” can either be said audibly or implied.

LEAH. You know I rarely go to Dinner Parties, Potlucks, *Functions*. No, no. The last Dinner Party I went to was—John?
—John, what was the last Dinner Party we—? [He can't hear me.]
—John! —Oh, I'll ask him later. Anyway—The last Function I went to was some time before you know *the whole thing*. Was that just a few years ago? Gosh I can't believe there really *is* life out there. Sorry, I'm being chatty. Chatt-tee. (I don't go out much.)

I brought the rice. It was hard to make. harder than you'd think actually. (?)

,I mean, people are usually like *what's hard about microwavable rice?*

WRONG. This is Sushi Rice! I'm using a Zojirushi 9,000 [M*th*rF*ck*r].

It's a whole [f*cking] process: the washing. *Oh the washing.* The washing.

How long do you think that takes?: eighteen minutes.

eighteen minutes to wash the rice. and it's like. do I have time—
eighteen minutes—.

to spare(?????). that's basically *twenty* minutes which is basically *thirty* minutes. with this inflation? in this economy? [*ugh* im so happy we own our house though.]

the recession is tough, yea—

I've seen, *recipes*, actually say you can wash the rice in like two minutes flat.

[that's ridiculous,] they are lying to themselves and to their blog's audience.

Every grain of rice is not the same. They're different in size, shape.

May have more of that starch dust on them that you have to wash off. Like gross. Who doesn't wash their rice?

[I'm not gonna say it.]

One time this neighbor, at the last Dinner Party, you know, (before the Aliens)—John!

John! When was that?, My neighbor *Brittany** told me she never washes her rice.

You don't wash your rice?

You have a bidet but you don't wash your rice?

The bag won't tell you to wash it. I feel like it's a marketing tactic like they want it to be seen as "ready to cook." *Don't listen to the bag. Do not trust the bag. No one listens to the bag.*

You have to wash the rice.

And while you're washing the rice it's like, hey there. How are you doing, huh? Have you done some self-care recently? Are you doing

alright? Are you making your Ancestors proud, huh?

Because I know we don't want to admit it, but I will. I think about that Disney *Mulan* shit sometimes. the floating ghost ancestors, [you've seen the movie.]

sometimes-like-especially when im washing rice. I can't look at my phone my hands are wet! There's like this meditative state about it too which makes it a perfect place to intergenerational trauma brood. I remember my dad washing the rice for dinner. And Grandma. And I'm sure her mom or dad and on and on and on. and like, in some way, every caregiver in my family has done this same thing. like something that unites us across time. fingers into water swishing rice.

[and] I think about what if they had the same expectations to uphold, the same battles to fight, the same "make the Ancestors proud" trope following them... Pshh...

[too deep for a dinner party's patio, I think...]

and then the rice is clear. Drain the water. And fill up the pot one more time.

* Or another Caucasian Derivative

You let the rice soak thirty minutes if you have the time. You press “on” on your Zojirushi 9,000 and the light goes on... And you wait... And you feel good: You made rice. You made something you can eat and you can share with others and it is just a perfect thing. And everyone at the Dinner Party is going to love it.

End of Play

**MOTHER MARY,
SINNER MARY**

BY ISAAC GÓMEZ

MOTHER MARY, SINNER MARY

A patio in the middle of the desert—a sandstorm blows fiercely.

Lights rise as Mother Mary struggles to open the patio door to escape the storm. She does this for a beat before giving up, turning around to face the audience. She wraps her shawl tightly around her waist as she peers into the dense desert landscape—she sees someone. A mirage of someone both past and present, but who feels realer than real.

Mother Mary has been trapped on this patio for thirty-eight thousand years.

MOTHER MARY. There you are.

I've been looking for you everywhere.

You comfortable?

Good. You look comfortable.

I'd get you a Coke but my door's stuck.

Yup. Haven't been able to get in.

Thirty-eight thousand years, mmmm.

Yeah, well...time flies when you're trapped in a storm, I guess.

Beat. A moment.

Her entire demeanor changes.

Oh, I don't wanna talk about that.

Because I can't.

I can barely say his name, what makes you think—

Beat. A moment.

Something changes within her.

I never wanted him, you know.
But it didn't matter what I wanted.
Still doesn't. Ask my guides, they—
They keep me here.
Waiting for me to tell them more stories about what happened.
Well, yeah...I have no more stories.

Beat. A moment.

How long do you think they plan on keeping me here?
Fuck, that's a long time.

Beat. A moment. Then—

I had a nightmare once.
Mhmm. I had a nightmare that a man I barely knew
but was arranged to marry
came into my chambers while I was sleeping
to leave something of his and take something of mine.
To do something to me that felt so violent and I didn't know why.
He held me as I cried and said "our little secret."
The next few days when my bleeding stopped
everyone got angry all of a sudden.
They got scared.
Not for me but for themselves.
I didn't know why my bleeding mattered so much to them.
Do people care this much when you bleed?
Huh.

Beat.

I told my mother about the nightmares of the man
She didn't say much
just not to worry about such things.
That she would take care of the monster at night.
I woke up the next morning to the sound of her screaming
"Amen, Amen! Hosanna in the Highest!"
Her commotion inspired by the conversation she and I had the
night before.
Where I told her about an Angel
Who visited me in my sleep

and told me I was carrying the son of God.

And that I were to be his mother.

I still didn't know what made Mother a mother
but I was so frightened of my nightmares and everyone seemed so
excited by this dream
especially my father
that I didn't know what to say
so I ran with it and shouted,
"Amen! Amen! Hosanna in the Highest!"

And then my stomach started to grow
and I realized this is what made Mother a mother.
I realized the dream was never a dream
but a nightmare that was never a nightmare
but reality.

And I never wanted anything less
than the child growing in my body
as a reminder of the intrusion
of the invasion I experienced
in my bedroom all those years ago.

And yes there were prophets,
and kings,
and a star
and gifts in a manger
and a dream.

A dream that someone
someday
would be the one to finally
make the world a better place.

Could that someone be the child growing inside of me?

Maybe. It was certainly easier to believe
over him being a daily reminder of the worst day of my life.
Sometimes fiction just hurts a little less,
Don't you think?

Yeah, me too.

Beat. A moment.

I know why you're here.
You don't have to tell me why.
So, let me say to you...
Or rather, let me ask you...
And I mean this when I ask you this...
Do you want to have this baby?
Because if you don't...that is okay.
And if you don't...there are options.
Options I can help you find if you want them.
But only if you want them.
So. What do you say?

Beat. A moment. Then—

End of Play

The play doesn't end here...

To purchase this play and thousands
of others, visit www.dramatists.com.

DPS

DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE

LEGENDARY HOME OF BOLD NEW VOICES,
TIMELESS CLASSICS,
AND OVER 80 TONY AWARDS AND PULITZER PRIZES

EST. 1936

www.broadwaylicensing.com