

PRODUCED BY TRUPENNY PROJECTS



SALTY

by AJ Clauss

June 12-15, 18-22 at The Voxel

Tickets at voxel.org

a note from the playwright

I wrote this play to see what would happen if I stopped pretending I was okay. Back then, I was learning that penguins mate for life and I was wondering if I might be too queer to survive monogamy, or the apocalypse.

Honestly I didn't mean to write about penguins, or zookeepers, or the slow drip of extinction. I thought I was writing about love. And then loss. And then I realized maybe they're the same thing, just measured with different rituals.

Rituals that make me ask time and time again:

What does survival look like when no one else is watching?

Not the kind I post about. Not the kind that could earn me applause. But the quiet kind. The kind where we molt in the dark and pray our feathers come back. The kind where we sing to an ex who abandoned us. The kind where we choose to love, with our scabs of rage, anyway.

Sometimes survival isn't a whole huge thing. It's a flicker. A feather. A coupon you forgot to use. But there's something holy in the trying. Don't you think? In showing up-- broken for sure, but still beautiful-- in the middle of what feels impossible.

This production with Truepenny, the Voxel & the entire company has reminded me that survival is also the performance we offer our four billion year old mother... night after night.

I hope this play reminds you of something soft that you almost forgot.
Or something wild that you haven't let loose in a long time.

Let's see what survives?

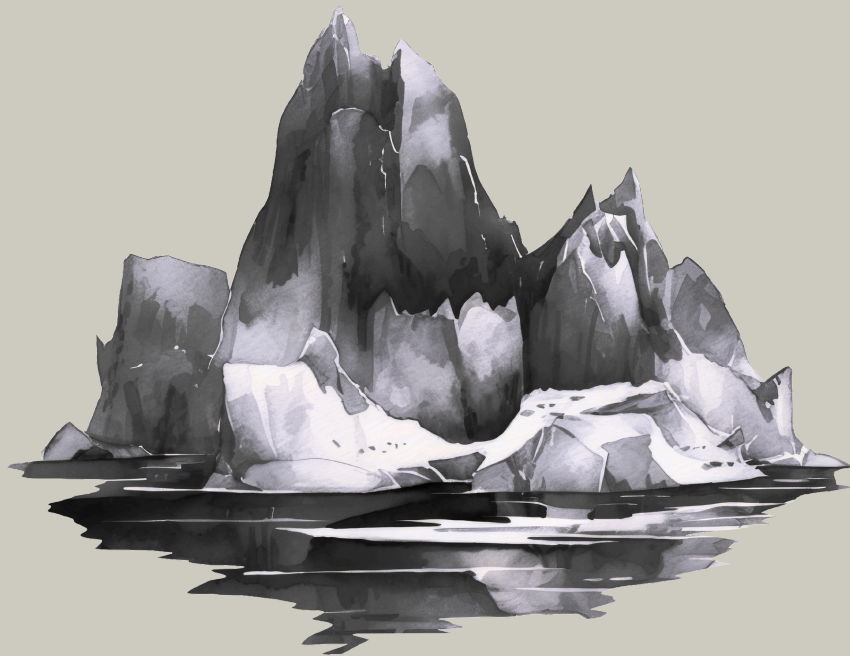
In reverence & in rot,

AJ Clauss

cast

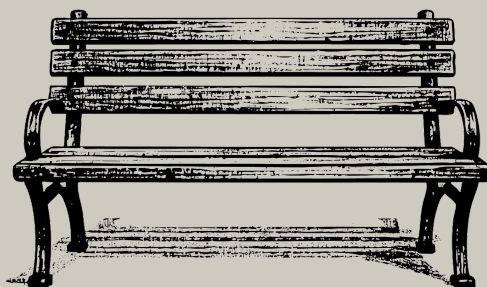
bowie / zach	Griffin DeLisle
silver / tour guide	David Brasington
fauna / winnie	Vicky Graham
snickers / steph	Caitlin Weaver
flora / desiree	Sydney Marks
edward / mason	Will Murphy
fox	Nigel Semaj
understudy*	Iffy Alachebe
understudy*	Alex Reeves
understudy*	Mady Sims

*Understudies never substitute for the listed performers unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the appearance.



production team

playwright	AJ Clauss
director & producer	Tessara Morgan Farley
movement director	Nigel Semaj
intimacy choreographer	Shaquan Pearson
fight choreographer	Gerrad Alex Taylor
producer & co-world designer	Luke Farley
co-world designer	Emerson Balthis
scenic builder	Tyler Brust
costume & make up designer	Liz Dunlap
ast. costume designer & costume technician	Madeline Baynard
sound composer & designer	Mark Navarro
lighting designer	Eric Nightengale
stage manager	NJ Saroff
ast. stage manager	Morgan Decker
run crew & electrician	Malaak McDonald
run crew & light board op	Megan Eich



special thank you to...

4MyCiTy, Sea Grant, Climate Chesapeake Action Network, Sheridan Costa and
Alchemy of Art, Studio5 Baltimore, Rye of Baltimore, Bardstown Bourbon
Company, Everyman, Luke Farley Studio, Gabe Amadi-Emina, Kat Navarro, Oli
Turner, Jess Rassp, Sarah Leiva, Sydney Marks, Alex Reeves, Vicky Graham,
University of Maryland Baltimore County, CCBC, Maryland State Arts Council,
Alec Sparks and Chris Ashworth at The Voxel, Tedd and Tracy Morgan, Ryan
Orr, Kiirstn Page, Sean DiGiorgio, Michael Vacek, and Truepenny Key
Collaborators (Mark Navarro, Liz Dunlap, David Brasington).

Finally thank you to Bowie and Misty!



biographies



Ifechukwu “Iffy” Alachebe (**BOWIE / ZACH, SILVER / TOUR GUIDE, EDWARD / MASON UNDERSTUDY**) is an actor from Lagos, Nigeria, currently residing in the DMV area. This is their second production post undergrad, some of their previous roles include: **PSYCHIATRIST** in *Baby with the Bathwater*, **GOD** in *Slime*, **DR. SEWARD** in *Dracula: A Feminist Revenge Fantasy*, **SHELDON FORRESTER** in *Trouble in Mind*, **ACTOR C** in *The Crown Up* and more. Iffy is thankful to the Truepenny team for entrusting them with understudying multiple roles and thankful to The Voxel for the space to bring this production to life.



Jaeden Arrington (LIGHTING TECHNICIAN) [he/him] This is Jaeden’s first time working in The Voxel, and he couldn’t be more thrilled to be working alongside such a talented and welcoming team. Outside of theater, Jaeden works on lighting design for live events and dance performances. This fall, Jaeden will be attending Carnegie Mellon University to study in their graduate lighting program, further developing his craft. Jaeden would like to thank all live theatre attendees for their continued support.



Emerson Balthis (CO-WORLD BUILDER) [he/him] is a theatre artist from Columbia, Maryland, and a graduate of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, where he studied Theatre Design and Production. Currently, he works as a carpenter and scenic artist at Toby’s Dinner Theatre in Columbia, MD, and as a freelance scenic and props designer. His past work includes co-scenic design for *Slime* at UMBC, blood and gore design for *Crocodile Fever* at The Strand, and scenic artist and carpenter for *The Music Man* at Toby’s. Emerson wants to thank his family and friends for their constant help and support.



Maddie Baynard (ASSISTANT COSTUME DESIGNER / TECHNICIAN) [she/her] is a Baltimore-based theatre artist and fabricator. Experimenting in many different artistic paths during her time at Chesapeake College and Towson University has shaped how she approaches design with each project. She is drawn to highly collaborative and process-oriented work, and partial to recycling and up-cycling materials. Her favorite projects usually include puppetry design, props and world-building, or costume design. Recent design credits include *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* and *A Bright New Boise* at CCBC, *Lyra and the Ferocious Beast* with Truepenny Projects, *From an Aerial View* by Air Dance Bernasconi, *Pirates and Dolphins!* at Chesapeake College, and *A Monster Calls* at Towson University.

biographies



David Brasington (SILVER/TOUR GUIDE) is a multidisciplinary artist and theatre-maker producing and performing in Baltimore City. David has performed with various companies in the area, including Stillpointe Theatre Initiative, Iron Crow Theatre Company, Pumpkin Theatre, The Acme Corporation, Interrobang Productions, and Submersive Productions. Brasington received his BFA in Acting from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), is a co-producer and co-founder of Interrobang Productions, a proud member of the Submersive Productions Collective, and a Truepenny Projects Key Collaborator. David both constructed and operated puppets for Truepenny's 2022 production of *Squidsbury* and walked tall on stage as ATLAS in Truepenny's 2023 production of *Lyra and the Ferocious Beast*.



AJ Clauss (PLAYWRIGHT) is a writer & performer from the borderlands of Kentuckiana, currently earning an MFA in Writing for Film & Television at Columbia University. A recent EST/Youngblood fellow and Alfred P. Sloan grantee, AJ's work spans theater, fiction, and screenwriting, often exploring queer illness, family hauntings, and the absurd rituals we use to survive. Plays have been developed with Playwrights Horizons, Ensemble Studio Theatre, among others. AJ is currently finishing his debut novel *Numbskull* and developing multiple projects for stage and screen.



Morgan Decker (ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER) [she/her] is a Junior Theatre Design and Production major from Carroll County, MD. This is her first professional production and first time as an Assistant Stage Manager. Her previous stage management work at UMBC includes *shOUT: The Queer Theatre Project*, *Slime*, and *Stupid F*cking Bird*. Her work on *Slime* by Bryony Lavery, got her a Merit of Excellence Award from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. Outside of UMBC, she is the choreographer for Constellations Theatre Company. She would like to thank all of her friends and her boyfriend Michael for their constant love, support, and admiration.



Griffin DeLisle (BOWIE/ZACH) [He/They] is a Baltimore based Theatre Artist & Technician. They previously appeared in *I Know These Roads* (Truepenny Projects); *Immortal: Collection of Plays*, *The Monroe Doctrine* (Balt. Theatre Project); *Codeswitch* (Sisters Freehold); Young Playwrights Festival (Baltimore CenterStage); *Here We Are* (Interrobang). Production credits include: Showrunner: *Katalepsis* and *The Boundary* (Submersive Productions); Associate Director: *Alight*, *Sweet Hearted* (The Strand); Dramaturg: *Recipes for Community* (Towson University, MFA); Stage Manager: *Romeo & Juliet* (CSC), *Technical Difficulties II* (Flying V Fights). Griffin is a Collective Member of Submersive Productions, and holds a BFA in Acting from Towson University.

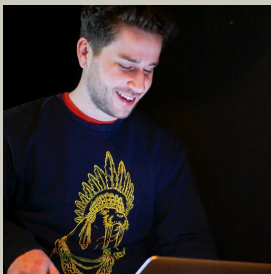
biographies



Liz Dunlap (COSTUME DESIGNER) is a multi-disciplinary artist from Baltimore, Maryland. In 2015, she graduated from Notre Dame of Maryland University with a BA in English Literature. Coming from a poetry background, she has always had an interest in fashion since she was young and she believes that clothing and adornment is yet another language that we learn in self expression and actualization. Artists and designers whose work inspires her includes but is not limited to Eiko Ishioka, Larry Legaspi, Hussein Chalayan, Oskar Schlemmer, Thierry Mugler, Edith Head, and Yoshitaka Amano. Her past costume design work includes Truepenny Project's 2023 production of *Lyra and the Ferocious Beast*, Vagabond Players' 2024 production of *How I Learned to Drive*, and The Strand Theater's 2024 production of *Crocodile Fever*. Outside of her artistry, she has worked with multiple arts-advocacy organizations based around Baltimore and currently works for an arts nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives and education of Maryland youth through arts-infused programming.



Megan Eich (LIGHT BOARD OP / RUN CREW) is a technician and stage manager based in the Baltimore/DC area. She recently graduated from Messiah University with a degree in Business Administration and Theatre, emphasizing directing and technical design. Megan is excited to work on her first project with Truepenny Projects. She hopes audiences fall in love with the whimsy and warmth of *Salty* as she has!



Originally from New Jersey, **Luke Farley (PRODUCER/WORLD DESIGNER)** has been a Baltimore based artist since 2017. In 2019, he graduated with an MFA in Painting from the LeRoy E. Hoffberger School at MICA. Mainly working in painting, his work has been shown around the United States for the past decade. Farley is a founder of the interdisciplinary arts organization, Truepenny Projects. As a curator and designer, his productions include the world building for *Lyra and the Ferocious Beast* and curation in *Mark and Signal* at Zo Gallery, among others.

biographies



Vicky Graham (FAUNA/WINNIE) is an actor born and raised in Baltimore, MD. She got her BFA in Acting from UMBC and is grateful to work with Truepenny Projects again! Vicky has performed in *I Will Eat You Alive* by Katie Hileman at The Voxel and *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder at Baltimore Center Stage. She also recently directed a staged reading of *Selkie* by Betse Lyons at Red Emma's. Next is *Voyages: Chapter 7* at the National Aquarium with Submersive Productions! @vgrahamm on IG.



Sydney Marks (FLORA/DESIREE) is thrilled to be making her debut with Truepenny! Previous Baltimore credits include: *How I Learned to Drive* (LIL BIT), *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)* (HERSELF), and *12 Angry Jurors* (JUROR #7). Other favorite theatre credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (PUCK), *Romeo and Juliet* (JULIET), *The Tempest* (STEPHANO), *The Cherry Orchard* (LYUBA), and *Avenue Q* (LUCY THE SLUT). She would like to thank her family and the council for their love and support.



Malaak McDonald (ELECTRICIAN/RUN CREW) is a sophomore pursuing dual degrees in Theatre Design & Production and Environmental Science & Geography at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. At UMBC Malaak has been the Stage Manager for *in the darkest forest* and Spotlight Operator for *Stupid F*cking Bird*, and recent roles elsewhere include Stage Manager for *Sweeney Todd* (Ovation Theatre), Assistant Lighting Designer for *Alice By Heart* (Wildwood Summer Theatre), and Lighting Designer and Assistant Stage Manager for *Legally Blonde* (UMBC Musical Theatre Club).



Originally from Minnesota, **Tessara Morgan Farley (PRODUCER/DIRECTOR)** is a freelance theater artist in Baltimore. She enjoys creating fantastical new work in small spaces with local artists on a tight budget. She has directed, produced, stage managed and designed throughout the Midwest including Cedar Rapids, Minneapolis, and Milwaukee. Since moving to Baltimore in 2017, she has worked with Acme Corp., Single Carrot, Chesapeake Shakespeare Company, Silver Spring Stage, BROS, Submersive Productions, Vagabond Players, The Strand and more. She is also a Co-Founder of Truepenny Projects. During the day, Tessara is the Director of Production at The Voxel. tessaralaynemorgan.com.

biographies



Will Murphy (EDWARD/MASON) [he/they] is an actor, improviser, and intimacy choreographer based in Philadelphia and Baltimore. They are happy to be back onstage after performing in *Crocodile Fever* in 2024 with The Strand. You can see Will improvising at ComedySportz and SideQuest Theater in Philadelphia and working as an intimacy choreographer and consultant in the DMV area (Spotlighters Theatre, Greenbelt Arts Center, Playset Theatre). He would like to thank his friends, partner, and family for their support. He is the luckiest penguin to be working with this group.



Mark Navarro (SOUND COMPOSER & DESIGNER) is a sound artist and composer, he explores the confluence of cultural memory, identity, and healing through engrossing sonic experiences. He is a 2x Bakers Artist Finalist. His theatrical sound design demonstrates versatility across genres and emotional topographies. For Truepenny Projects *Lyra & The Ferocious Beast* (2023) at The Voxel, Navarro crafted an original score that supported Tatiana Nya Ford's science-fiction epic of a girl marooned on a planet with a nearly extinct alien species. At The Vagabond Players, his sound design for Paula Vogel's *How I Learned to Drive* (2024) enhanced the play's exploration of trauma and resilience during the setting of 1969 rural Maryland, while his work on Meghan Tyler's *Crocodile Fever* (2024) at The Strand Theatre created an atmospheric horror soundscape of a surreal 1989 Northern Ireland during The Troubles.



Eric Nightengale (LIGHTING DESIGNER) is a founding member of Concrete Temple Theatre, The Acme Corporation, and Anthropological Theatricals. He served as artistic director of 78th Street Theatre Lab from 1995 thru 2008. Recent credits include work with Theatre Breaking Through Barriers, PS21, Penguin Rep, The Brick, 59E59, Dixon Place, Minetta Lane, LaMama, The Acting Company, Symphony Space, Cherry Lane Theatre, St Clements, Ensemble Studio Theatre, The Barrow Group, HERE, Classic Stage Company, Victory Gardens Theatre, Bailiwick Repertory Theatre, Steppenwolf, Chicago Dramatists Workshop, and Second City. He currently serves as Production Manager for the Keen Company.



Shaquan Pearson (INTIMACY CHOREOGRAPHER) [he/they] Credits: Regional: *Public Obscenities* (Woolly Mammoth); *STEP MOM STEP MOM STEP MOM* (InterAct Theatre Company); *Much Ado About Nothing* (Chesapeake Shakespeare Company); *RENT* (Signature Theatre); *Seven Guitars* (Arena Stage). Education: B.F.A. from University of Maryland, Baltimore County

biographies



Alex Reeves (FOX, FAUNA/WINNIE UNDERSTUDY) is a local actor, playwright and teaching artist. She graduated from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County with a Bachelors of Fine Arts in Acting and Minors in Creative Writing and Anthropology. Some of her previous credits include: *The Snowy Day and Other Stories*, *The Princess and the Peas*, *Long Road to Freedom*, *Spring Awakening*, and *The Velveteen Rabbit*. She was nominated for a Helen Hayes Award for her work in 1st Stage Theatre's *Columbinus*. Alex is proud to be working with Truepenny and the incredible *Salty* ensemble!



Nichemat Judith Saroff (NJ) (STAGE MANAGER) [they/he] is a trans Jewish Baltimore artist and writer. They are excited to be working with Truepenny, they were set to work with Truepenny on a previous show (*Close Your Eyes and Sleep*) of AJ's in 2020 but circumstances had made that show not come to fruition. They previously worked on a play festival with Truepenny in 2021. They have also stage managed for several Baltimore theatres including Vagabond Players, Rapid Lemon, Fells Point Corner Theatre, Single Carrot, Acme, and Spotlighters. They studied theatre and education at CCBC and AADA. When they are not stage managing, they can be found writing plays or acting for the Baltimore Playwrights Brew, in the woods of Pearlstone teaching outdoor arts and science, or working helping special needs students as a paraeducator for Guilford Elementary. You can find their plays on New Play Exchange and their art and poetry on Instagram @n.j.saroff. This show has been such an incredible process so far and they are thankful for their friends and family support and positive energy. They dedicate their work to the memory of family and friends they've lost in the last few years.



Nigel Semaj (MOVEMENT DIRECTOR/FOX) [they/them] is a Baltimore-based director and movement director originally from Washington, D.C. They are thrilled to be returning to the stage in this production as the FOX. Nigel serves as an Assistant Professor of Performance and an Affiliate Assistant Professor of Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Their artistic and academic work centers inclusive and equitable theatrical spaces, often rooted in anti-racist pedagogies and restorative practices. As a movement director, Nigel's approach emphasizes the body as a primary tool for storytelling, drawing from training with Frantic Assembly, Pig Iron Theatre Company, and Tectonic Theater Project. Their work spans plays, operas, musicals, and devised work, with a focus on creating physically rich and emotionally resonant performances. Notable recent credits include *Fidelio* with Heartbeat Opera and their original works, such as *Call Me By Any Other Name...Just As Sweet* and *For Hylas*. Nigel would like to thank their partner, Liam, and their two hellhounds, Persephone and Orpheus, for their unwavering support, patience, and joy—without whom none of this would be possible.

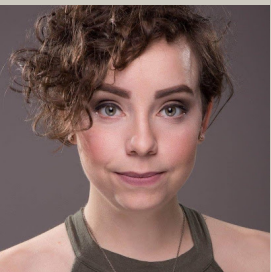
biographies



Madison (Mady) Sims (SNICKERS/STEPH, FLORA/DES Understudy) [they/them] Mady recently appeared in *In the Darkest Forest* at UMBC and portrayed Rennie in *Most Massive Woman Wins* with Manor Mill Playhouse. They are beyond excited to be working with Truepenny Projects alongside such a talented and inspiring creative team. They are deeply thankful for the unwavering support of their family, friends, cast-mates, and directors who continue to encourage them every step of the way.



Gerrad Alex Taylor (FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER) [he/him/his] is an award-winning director and multidisciplinary theatre artist based out of the Greater Baltimore region and an assistant professor in the Department of Theatre at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. His current creative work and research centers around creating space that preserves history and celebrates culture of the Global Majority. In 2021 he was named one of Baltimore's "40 Under 40" by the Washington Business Journal. In 2020, he founded Chesapeake Shakespeare's Black Classical Acting Ensemble (BCAE), an affinity space for black actors interested in training and exposure of the "classics" and what an expansion of the classical canon may look like today. In 2024, Gerrad joined colleague Lizzi Albert to take on the roles of Co-Artistic Directors of Perisphere Theater in Montgomery County, MD. He is a member of the Actors' Equity Association and an Advanced Actor Combatant with the Society of American Fight Directors. He has worked as a fight director with theatres and educational institutions across the country including the Chesapeake Shakespeare Company, Perisphere Theater, Arena Stage, Studio Theatre, North Carolina A&T, Davidson College, Common Thread Theatre Collective, and the Children's Theatre of Annapolis.



Caitlin Weaver (STEPH/SNICKERS) is thrilled to be joining the cast of *Salty* as her third production with Truepenny Projects. Credits include *Crocodile Fever* (Strand Theater), *Lyra and The Ferocious Beast* (Truepenny Projects), *Nevermore* (Stillpointe Theatre), *Variety Show the Musical Play* (AYWIT Collective), *Squidbury* (Truepenny Projects), *See Also* (Submersive Theatre), *Love and Information* (FPCT), *Lizzie* (Guerrilla Theatre Front), *Welcome to Shakesville* (BROS), *Urinetown* (Stillpointe Theatre), *Mesmeric Revelations of Edgar Allen Poe* (Submersive Theatre) and *Office Ladies* (Acme Corp.). Directing Credits include *SmALL WiNs* (AYTWIT Collective). She received her BFA in Acting from Towson University. She is a proud collective member of Submersive Productions and AYTWIT Collective and is happy to call Baltimore her home where she can support her community as a service coordinator for individuals with intellectual disabilities by day and a theater artist by night.