

# NO STRINGS THEATRE



## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

**No Strings Theatre** is pleased to announce a virtual Audition call, for an exciting opportunity to showcase mental health and address the stigma surrounding mental illness with the development of Colleen Taffe's "**Piece of Mind**".

Written by Mental Health and Addiction Specialist, Actor and Playwright, Colleen Taffe, the play development will be overseen by various industry professionals including Script Dramaturg, **Nicole Brooks** and Music Dramaturg/Music Director **Mark Cassius**.

We are seeking actors, preferably emerging artists aged 19 – 35. Singing capability and ability to learn music quickly is an asset. Persons from all racial backgrounds are encouraged to submit.

The workshop period will run from **May 29<sup>th</sup> – June 5<sup>th</sup>** with the purpose of developing the play further and adding musical elements, with a table read performance on **Sunday June 5<sup>th</sup>**. Participants will be required to be available 5-6 hours/day (flexible) during the rehearsal period. **This is a NON-UNION commitment. The cast will receive a \$100 honorarium at the end of the project.**

Interested applicants are asked to submit self-tape with a short contemporary monologue and one song ( 32 bars, preferably contemporary) and. Successful applicants will be contacted to arrange an In-Person call-back during the week of May 2<sup>nd</sup> – May 7<sup>th</sup>.

Submissions, with a resume in PDF format, should be forwarded to [auditions@nostringstheatre.com](mailto:auditions@nostringstheatre.com) no later than 5:00 p.m. on **Sunday May 1, 2022**.

Casting notes and creative team bios are below.

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For more questions and information, please contact [auditions@nostringstheatre.com](mailto:auditions@nostringstheatre.com)

## NO STRINGS THEATRE'S MISSION

No Strings Theatre is committed to utilizing our resources on the development of and opportunities for New Generation Artists, marginalized communities, untold Canadian stories, and mental health awareness.

## PIECE OF MIND

Piece of Mind is a thought-provoking performance brilliantly written and directed by playwright and Mental Health and Addiction Specialist Colleen Taffe. It inspires audiences to be challenged by the unforeseen world of mental illness and its damaging effects of stigma, quite tangible in the black community. The play follows the life of Joshua Williams, a young black man who is living the quintessential life as a wonderful family man. He is newly engaged to the love of his life and is well on his way to the top of his profession. Joshua is a man of great faith. But his faith is tested when a devastating tragedy transpired as his once "normal" life causes him to question his own reality. In Joshua's desperate attempt to hang on to fragments of truth, he slowly begins to lose pieces of his own mind. This production taps into man's aptitude for resilience and determination while demonstrating the courage and faith to survive and overcome the traumas of one's life. Piece of Mind invites audiences to be inspired and engaged in a journey of hope & healing, recovery, and PEACE of mind.

## ROLES

**Casting – please disregard the age categories and gender suggestions for the time being**

### **GRACE Ellis**

Joshua's fiancé who is in her 20's. She is loving, caring and smart. She is struggling with Joshua's erratic behaviour and challenging advice from family and friends. She is looking for answers and knows the clock is ticking with marriage approaching.

### **CHRIS Hutton**

Joshua's psychiatrist who, having lost a sibling to suicide, has a lot of empathy and compassion for the young man who reminds him of his brother. (40-60 years old)

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## **DRE Michaels**

Long-time supportive friend of Joshua and Caleb who becomes suspicious of Joshua and his erratic behaviour and tries his best to support him. (late 20's early 30's)\*

## **CAREN Williams**

A vibrant educated woman in her late 40's\* who is mother to Joshua and Caleb. She has struggled with alcohol and drugs, both related to a long history of trauma. She has a hard time connecting with her sons each for different reasons, and she feels unworthy of her husband's affection.

## **JACKSON Williams**

Caren's gentle and devoted husband in his late 40's\*. He is the biological father of Joshua and stepfather of Caleb. He is determined to see his wife happy and his children successful. He loves his sons deeply, yet Caleb wants nothing to do with him, and Joshua is hiding something from him.

## **JOSHUA Williams**

The youngest son of Caren and Jackson in his 20's\*. The protagonist is a strong, intelligent, faithful man, who is recently engaged to Grace. Although he appears to have it all together, he is struggling with mental health issues he has tried to hide for a long time. He works hard to balance it all, but his mind is betraying him. Joshua feels the weight of the world on his shoulder. On one side is the negative, racist stereotype that society holds of him and on the other side the pressures of living up to his family, fiancé, and his own image.

## **CALEB Williams**

Joshua's older stepbrother. The antagonist of the story, he abuses alcohol to deal with rejection and life's disappointments. He has a complex loving and envious relationship with his Joshua. Caleb takes pleasure in taunting his brother and using him as a scapegoat for his struggles. Caleb blames his mother and stepfather for the lack of relationship with his biological father. He would like nothing better than to see Joshua's perfect world fall apart like his. (late 20's early 30's)\*

**\*Casting – please disregard the age categories and gender suggestions for the time being**

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## CREATIVE TEAM

### COLLEEN TAFFE

#### Playright

Writer. Playwright. Director. Producer.

A promoter of therapeutic theatre, Colleen Taffe is a uniter, healer, crafter of words, and community whisperer graced with deep experience across mental health and addiction services, professional support training, creative and theatrical production, church leadership, and community service.

Colleen's infectious blend of joy, pragmatism, empathy, and fire imbues her work with powerful connection and personal resonance captivating diverse audiences. Her work blends the power of entertainment, therapy, and education providing unique, engaging pathways into the recovery and wellness we desire, but often avoid. Colleen breaks the seal on subtle personal, professional, and cultural taboos that limit healing and joy, opening abundant avenues for participants and audiences to connect with wellness and peace of mind. Part chameleon, part storyteller, part lioness, Colleen Taffe shepherds organizations and individuals to a greater sense of connectedness, commonality, stability, and belonging.

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## **NICOLE BROOKS**

### **Script Dramaturg**

Nicole Brooks, a multifaceted artist, has devoted over 20 years producing innovative content that illuminates the peoples of the African Diaspora. Her extensive accomplishments include: filmmaker, director, performer, singer, playwright, composer, curator, teacher, healer and 'art-ivist'.

Brooks established a reputable career with hundreds of hours of content in film & television as a producer, director, writer and story editor, having her work broadcasted on Canadian platforms such as CBC, OMNI, Bravo!Fact, VisionTV, and TVOne, and at festival screenings around the world. In 2012, Brooks added playwright to her list of talents. Her debut theatrical work, *Obeah Opera* - which she wrote, composed and performed in - has been staged in various incarnations at festivals, workshop productions, and commissioned presentations in Toronto between 2009 and 2019. Supported by several municipal, provincial and federal arts grants, including the prestigious Canada 150 Grant and the National Creation Grant, *Obeah Opera* has garnered multiple DORA nominations, including Outstanding New Musical/Opera, Outstanding Choreography, and Outstanding Feature Performance. *Obeah Opera*'s most recent commissions include the Pan Am/Parapan Games in 2015 and the Luminato Festival in Toronto in 2019. *Obeah Opera*'s roster of accolades continued as an official Festival Selection of the 2020 National Alliance of Musical Theatre's Festival of New Musicals in New York. Within that same year, Brooks was also selected as one of the participants of Noteworthy - a program spearheaded by Musical Stage and Prime Mover . In 2021, Brooks is proud to be a nominee of the prestigious Johanna Metcalf Performing Arts Prize and is more than and is more than elated to be an artist in residence with Canadian Stage for the next two years with the support of the OAC and CCA working on her new large scale musical work entitled *The Sweetest Sounds*.

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## **MARK CASSIUS**

### **Music Dramaturg/Mentoring Music Director**

Mark Cassius made his Broadway debut in the revival of *Shenandoah* in 1989. He was an original cast member in the World Premier of *Ragtime* (1996) in Toronto. *Ragtime* took him to Broadway for a 2nd time in 1998. The 3rd time's a charm and he was on Broadway again in the revival of *Jesus Christ Superstar* in 2012. That production came out of his 2nd season at The Stratford Festival of Canada in 2011.

In his first season, 2007, his performance as “Mr. Magix” in *My One and Only* won him critical acclaim. Mark Cassius was a cast member of many of Canada’s Mega-Musicals in the 1990s, such as *Cats*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (with Donny Osmond), *Miss Saigon*, and *Showboat*. Regionally, he enjoys performing in shows for D2 Entertainment - *Hollywood Sings*, *A Starbright Christmas*. And always feels at home in front of Drayton Entertainment audiences, - *Damn Yankees*, *The Little mermaid*, *Sweet Charity*, *Dance Legends*. One of the few times doing theatre in Toronto in the past decade, he received a Broadway World, “Best Actor” nomination, for his role in *The Musical of Musicals (The Musical)*. From 1997 – 2005, he was a member of world-renowned acapella group, *The Nylons*, touring with them extensively. He has been a Kiwanis Musical Festival adjudicator, is a wildly sought after vocal coach, has taught at the Randolph College for the Performing Arts and continues to mentor and support young performers. Presently completing a Masters in Music Composition at York University, Mark is passionately invested in and dedicated to the creation and survival of Art.

Follow him on Facebook and Instagram @TheMarkCassius