



TESS ROWAN

WRITING, DIRECTING, PRODUCTION, AND DESIGN PORTFOLIO

OVERVIEW

ABOUT

Tess Rowan (She/Her) is a 19-year-old performer, composer, published playwright, director, and musician from the Washington, D.C. Area.

She is a student New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, studying Drama and Musical Theater at the New Studio on Broadway. Her work has been seen at venues such as the Kennedy Center, National Theater DC, and The O'Neill.

D.C. - Book/Music/Lyrics/Morse Code: Static: Noise of a New Musical (Capital Fringe Festival - Best Music & Best Ensemble Winner, '18-present). Playwright/Director/Music/Live Musician: Your Carving Footprint (Saxon Stage After Hours, '21-'22).

Tess wrote the book, music, and lyrics for her original morse code musical, Static. Tess directed, produced, and performed in the sold-out world premiere of Static at the Capital Fringe Festival, where Static won Best Musical. Static was featured in Thornhill Theatre Space's New Musical November and recently had a workshop at Flying V Theatre.

Tess was the Captain and Founder of Saxon Stage After Hours, a playwriting, directing, and student-run production group and the Lead Cappies Critic Langley Critic Team for high school theater awards critics in the D.C. Area. Tess is a member of the Dramatists Guild. www.tessrowan.com



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STATIC: NOISE OF A NEW MUSICAL

Writer (Book/Music/Lyrics)
Director
Producer
Performer
Musician (Guitar/Morse Code)
Orchestrator
Set Designer
Props Designer
Marketing

ABOUT

Static is an original morse code musical about a teen girl trying to find her dad who's lost in the woods on the Appalachian Trail. The McAfee family has lived in the Pennsylvania forest ever since their father went missing while hiking. Now, daughter Maine teams up with local teen Charlie on a detective mission to find her father, yet, the truth may silence waves of sound. Static is an original adventure musical with a radio blend of musical theater, rock, folk, and immersive morse code clues.



PRODUCTION BACKGROUND

Social Media & Digital Theater - 2019 to 2022

Tess began writing Static in eighth grade at 14 years old. In 2020, she joined @staticmusical on social media and shared her original music publicly for the first time and creating two viral #staticsingers and #staticsingersreprise musical theater TikTok contests.

Additionally, Tess performed Static in multiple international virtual charity concerts, such as Save the Arts and Lockdown Live, and began fundraising for Static as well.

Static was featured in Thornhill Theatre Space's New Musical November showcase. "Whatta World" (2021) and "Tell Me How" (2022) from Static: Noise of a New Musical are available at Tess Rowan on all streaming platforms.

World Premiere - Summer 2022

At 17, Tess directed the sold out world premiere of Static at the 17th annual Capital Fringe Festival in Washington, DC in July 2022. Static won the Best Musical and Best Ensemble Awards at Capital Fringe. Fun fact: this was the first performance of a musical in history to use morse code as a method of dramatic storytelling.

Workshop - 2023

Tess spent a year further developing Static with Flying V Theatre, which culminated in a public workshop of Static in August 2023.

AWARDS

WTOP Top Kid Award ('20)

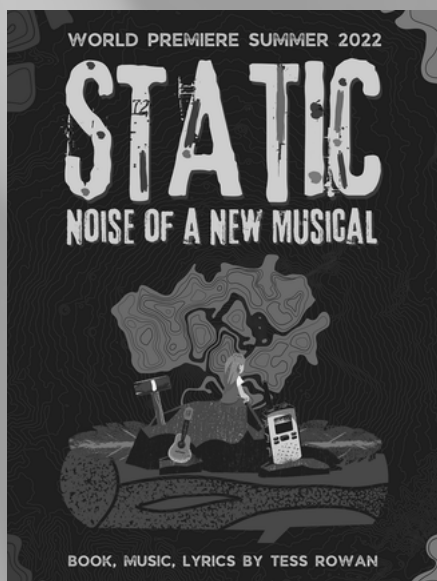
Thornhill Theatre Space New Musical November ('21)

Best Musical & Best Ensemble ('22 Capital Fringe Festival Audience Awards)

STATIC

TOPICS & THEMES

- Connection
- Family
- Nature
- Friendship
- Loss
- Isolation
- Idealism



PRESS

"Static is the first musical to utilize morse code as a method of dramatic storytelling. Think of an acoustic campfire singalong mixed with a true-crime podcast."
-BroadwayWorld

"Static is homegrown and self-taught."
-NBC4 Washington

"The best things to do in the D.C. area the week of July 7-13..." -Washington Post

"The fact that [Tess] wrote the book, the music, and the lyrics for the show and also directed and starred in it is nothing less than astounding." -DC Theatre Scene

INSPIRATION



RESEARCH

- Set in the woods and neighborhood of the famous Appalachian Trail town, Duncannon, PA - accurate trail mileages in script, real backpacking props used, set pieces include trail signs
- Morse code - exact rhythms and intricate codes embedded in songs, including a full language transcribed into music
- Ham radio knowledge - proper props such as CB radios and telegraph morse code keys acquired and artificially aged for the look of the production
- Broadcasts - The radio host character's broadcasts include weather alerts based off of historic Duncannon forecasts and missing person case updates drawing from true crime articles

STATIC

SCRIPT SAMPLES

Scene 2

(SPLIT STAGE), with the MCAFFEE CAMPSITE on the OSCAR FAMILY HOME on the other. At the CAMPSITE in the woods, there is a firepit with five tree stumps sitting around it, a clothesline, scattered pots and pans, and other odd items placed around the grassy area. There are five sets of everything—titanium sporks, ultralight plastic mugs, and water bladders—but only four stumps are set out to sit on. On the other side of the stage is the interior of the OSCAR FAMILY HOME, just a few miles away in the town of Duncannon, PA. There is a kitchen table with four seats, a small sitting area, and partially organized stacks of the children's homework and parents' paperwork.

At Rise: MAINE, HARPER, KATAHDIN, and GEORGIA enter and move throughout the MCAFFEE CAMPSITE, setting items such as a cake around the fire for today's birthday festivities. MAINE places her backpack on the ground.

(Song: "THE BIRTHDAY PARALLEL")

MAINE
IF I WENT DOWN INTO THE STREET,
I'D SHOUT FROM ROOFTOPS ON REPEAT THAT
SOMETHIN' SPECIAL'S OUTWARD BOUND.
THIS BIRTHDAY PARTY NEXT TO TOWN.

KATAHDIN
IF I WENT DOWN INTO THE STREET

HARPER
NOT FAR FROM ECHOES OF THE TREES,

GEORGIA
I'D FIND A PLACE TO FRESHEN UP,
A MIDCOURSE CORRECTION PICK-ME-UP!

(SAGE enters the MCAFFEE CAMPSITE.)

SAGE
KIDS, WE'VE KNOWN IT'S GETTING TOUGHER BY THE SUMMER.
KIDS, YOU'VE GROWN, LOOKIN' OLDER LIKE YOUR FATHER.

MCAFFEES
KIDS, WE'VE KNOWN FOUR BIRTHDAYS FOR AN ALMOST GONER.

OH, WHATTA WORLD, WHATTA WORLD,
WHEN YOU GO SOMEWHERE, THAT'S NEW BEGINNIN'S...

I have a question. Have you ever thought about what we'll do when we've brought Papa back?

SAGE
When Papa finds us, we'll figure out what our plans are. Whenever, whichever, together.

GEORGIA
I'd like it if we all went back to hiking. Together.

MAINE
When we get Papa back, we get back on the trail.
FROM DAWN UNTIL NIGHT,

GEORGIA
EACH DAY, IT'S CHANGIN' IN SPITE OF

MAINE & GEORGIA
THE WAY THESE YEARS WE'VE ALL GROWN UP WITH APPALACHIA PINES.

KATAHDIN
FROM DUSK UNTIL DAWN,

HARPER
WE ARE THE BRAINS INSIDE BRAIN

SAGE
You all really would want to do this?
And finish the Appalachian Trail?

MCAFFEE SIBLINGS
WE KNOW THE GAME.
WE PLAY OUR SIMPLE LIFE.
YOUR SECRET'S SAFE AS MINE.

MCAFFEES
OH, WHATTA WORLD, WHATTA WORLD, WHATTA WORLD
WE SHARE THAT'S WORTH THE LIVIN'
OH, WHATTA WORLD, WHATTA WORLD,
WHEN YOU GO SOMEWHERE, THAT'S NEW BEGINNIN'S
COMIN' ROUND THE MOUNTAINS,
FLESH AND BLOOD RED AS SUNRISE,
THE WORLD'S EIGHTH WONDER FOUND IN
ANY SIGHT THAT MEETS YOUR BROWN EYES.

(Family in the woods "dance break." Dialogue continues.)

DESIGN SAMPLES

Morse Code in Music/Rhythms for Static: Noise of a New Musical

Tess Rowan

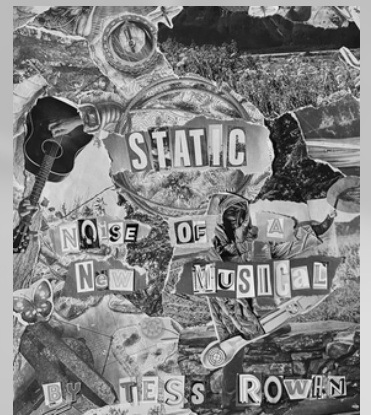
Letters
in 4/4:



Music



Props



Marketing

GO 24.5 - TRACK 1 - "Tune-In Tune-Up" and "Hello, Are You Out There?".mp3

Notes

Number	Q	Target	Pre Wait
24.5	TRACK 1 - "Tune-In Tune-Up" and "Hello, Are You Out There?".mp3		00:00:00
1.5	stop TRACK 1 - "Tune-In Tune-Up" and "Hello, Are You Out There?".mp3	24.5	
2.6	TRACK 2 Morse Code Clue #1- "S..."mp3		
2.5	stop TRACK 2 Morse Code Clue #1- "S..."mp3	2.6	
3	TRACK 3 "The Birthday Parallel".mp3		

Sound/Orchestrations

BuzzFeed

Quizzes TV & Movies Shopping Videos

BuzzFeed

What Character From Static The Musical Are You?

About the musical: Five years have passed since Maine's mother was lost in the woods

Marketing



Set

STATIC

PRODUCTION STILLS & REHEARSAL PHOTOS



GRAVEDIGGERS

Writer
Director
Producer
Casting
Marketing

ABOUT

Gravediggers is an original dark comedy play following six inhabitants of a run-down historic estate in rural Montana and the secrets they bury down deep in the ground.

On one side of the Boothe Estate lies a graveyard, garden, gift shop, and mansion, home to aging property owner, Boothe, and lonely gravedigger employee, Pete. On the other side stands a small church and clergy house, now a part-time chapel, run by Reverend Margot, and a funeral home, run by her sister-in-law, Audrey, and Audrey's teenage niece, Joyce.

When new groundskeeper Nellie arrives at the Boothe Estate, plants suddenly die, invasive insects take over, and a new romance rewrites tombstones, leaving secrets sprawled out across the overgrown lawn. The Boothe Estate's odd occupants and even odder staff members must learn to let their skeletons out of the closet in a story of love, destruction, and obsessions with death.



TOPICS & THEMES

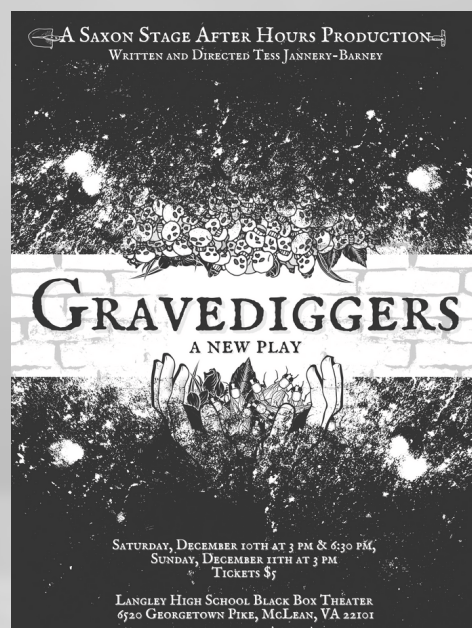
- Death
- Loss and Coping
- Responsibility
- Isolation

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Staged Reading - November 2022

A short excerpt of Gravediggers was originally performed in November 2022 at Closing Time, a night of staged script readings written and performed by the students of Saxon Stage After Hours. Tess wrote and directed Gravediggers, in addition to casting and producing the Closing Time program, and coordinated post-show audience feedback for production development.

After Hours is a playwriting, directing, and student productions group at Langley High School, founded and run by Tess.

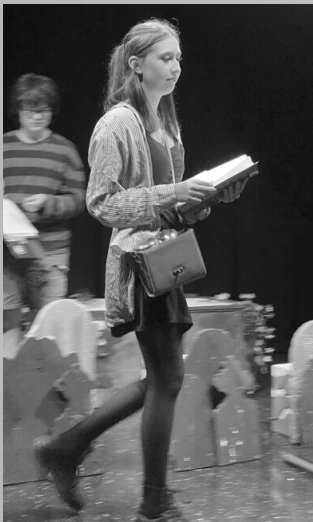


Workshop - December 2022

The full, two-act script of Gravediggers was performed in a bare-bones workshop-style setting with Saxon Stage After Hours.

GRAVEDIGGERS

PRODUCTION STILLS & REHEARSAL PHOTOS



YOUR CARVING FOOTPRINT

ABOUT

Writer
Director
Producer
Casting
Marketing
Composer
Musician
Donation Coordinator

Your Carving Footprint is an immersive one-act conservationist comedy about acting out against the inevitable. Teenage couple, Bobbi and Simon, have one hour left at their hideout until Bobbi's parents' construction company tears down Zone B of the South Valley Parkland Forest. Before sunrise dawns, Bobbi and Simon must discover if it's best to sit and wait for fate to take over, or try and control the uncontrollable. This interactive play of petition signing, tree stabbing, and paper airplane projectiles brought a natural disaster to the Saxon Stage Black Box.

Your Carving Footprint is a sustainable production, using 100% recycled materials onstage and creating zero waste during performances.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Performance - February 2022

Tess turned a school black box into an intimate in-the-round forest junkyard for the first-ever in-person production of Saxon Stage After Hours. On the way into the theater, audiences could pass by a donation booth, benefitting the Northern Virginia Conservationist Trust, as well as Sandy Hook Promise, relating to the themes of one-acts, Your Carving Footprint, and 26 Pebbles. All materials, from tree stumps onstage to marketing posters made from old books, to tickets handed out to audience members, were recycled and sustainable.

Virtual Earth Day Performance - April. 2022

Tess also put together an Earth Day ticketless live stream event, encouraging support and optional donations for the Virginia Chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

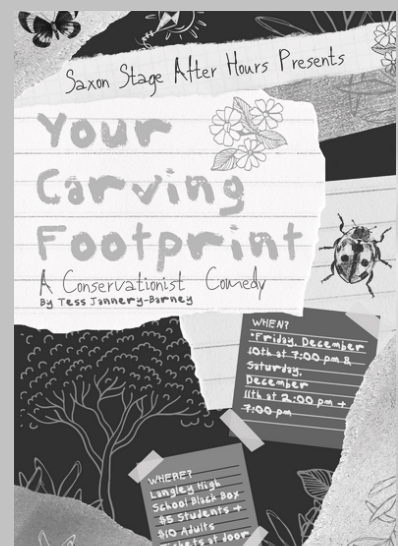
TOPICS & THEMES

- Performative Activism
- Love
- Nature
- Environmentalism
- Communication

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

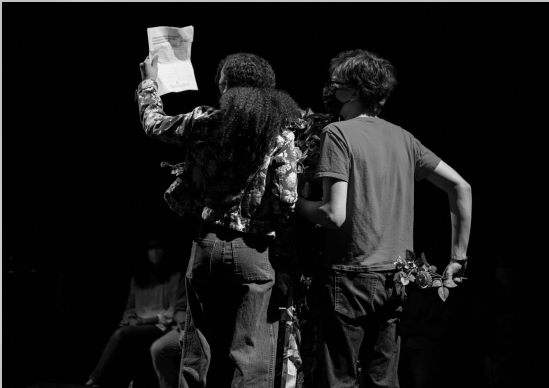
Featured in the NoVa Outside Student Environmental Action Showcase, along with a display of Tess's collection of original eco-friendly upcycled mosaic musical instruments. ('22.)

Virginia Thespian Festival
Playwriting Thespy Competition -
Excellent Rating ('23)



YOUR CARVING FOOTPRINT

PRODUCTION STILLS & REHEARSAL PHOTOS



YOUR CARVING FOOTPRINT

PRODUCTION STILLS & REHEARSAL PHOTOS



MR. STRANGER

Writer (Script Published)
Director

ABOUT

Newly single Leah and her confidant, Maggie imagine whimsical ideals and fatal destinies that could ensue with the unidentifiable teenage enigma, Mr. Stranger. An odd day in the park may lead to young love or a strange family Friday game night in this upbeat ten-minute comedy.



PRODUCTION HISTORY

Production - July 2019

Selected as a Winner of Dramafest ('19) and presented at Stagedoor Manor

Published and available for licensing through Smith & Kraus Publishers ('20) as a part of Stephen Sonheim's Young Playwrights Inc.

TOPICS & THEMES

- Romance
- Youth
- Friendship



PIE FROM THE PATTERSONS'

Writer (Script Published)
Director

ABOUT

After a fatal accident caused by teenage twins, Penelope and Sawyer Patterson, rush to their neighbor's door. But, Penelope and Sawyer struggle with saying "sorry," so, they must apologize in the only way they know how: with pie. It's all up to cat caregiver and cooking connoisseur, Mrs. Margery to decide whether or not the Patterson twins can be redeemed for their mistake.

TOPICS & THEMES

- Family
- Mistakes
- Pets
- Forgiveness

Eccentric characters, rolling dialogue, diverging alliances, and a kitchen-equipped bloodbath are baked into this offbeat one-act comedy.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Production - July 2020 (Zoom)

Selected as a Winner of Dramafest ('19) and presented virtually by Stagedoor Manor

Published and available for licensing through Smith & Kraus Publishers ('20) as a part of Stephen Sonheim's Young Playwrights Inc.



INSPIRATION



ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

BREAK MY BONES (2020)

Writer

Break My Bones is about finding balance, as Lily fights to craft the perfect eulogy to heal all wounds. Patrick, Andrew, and Lily surpass worlds on an exploratory journey to bring back life.

Break My Bones was selected by The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center for the 2020 Young Playwrights Festival.



THE SECOND DATE (2022)

Co-Director
Production Manager
Sound
Music
Editing



The Second Date is a romantic comedy short film about two teens, a failed performance troupe, and the stresses of young love. The Second Date wrapped filming in Spring 2022 and is currently in post-production. Produced by After Hours.

OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD (2023)

Producer
Live Film Crew

Occupational Hazard is a one-act office comedy. Tess produced the first stage production of Occupational Hazard at After Hours, and was head of filming the live performances.

