

WITH LOVE AND a MAJOR ORGAN

By Julia Lederer

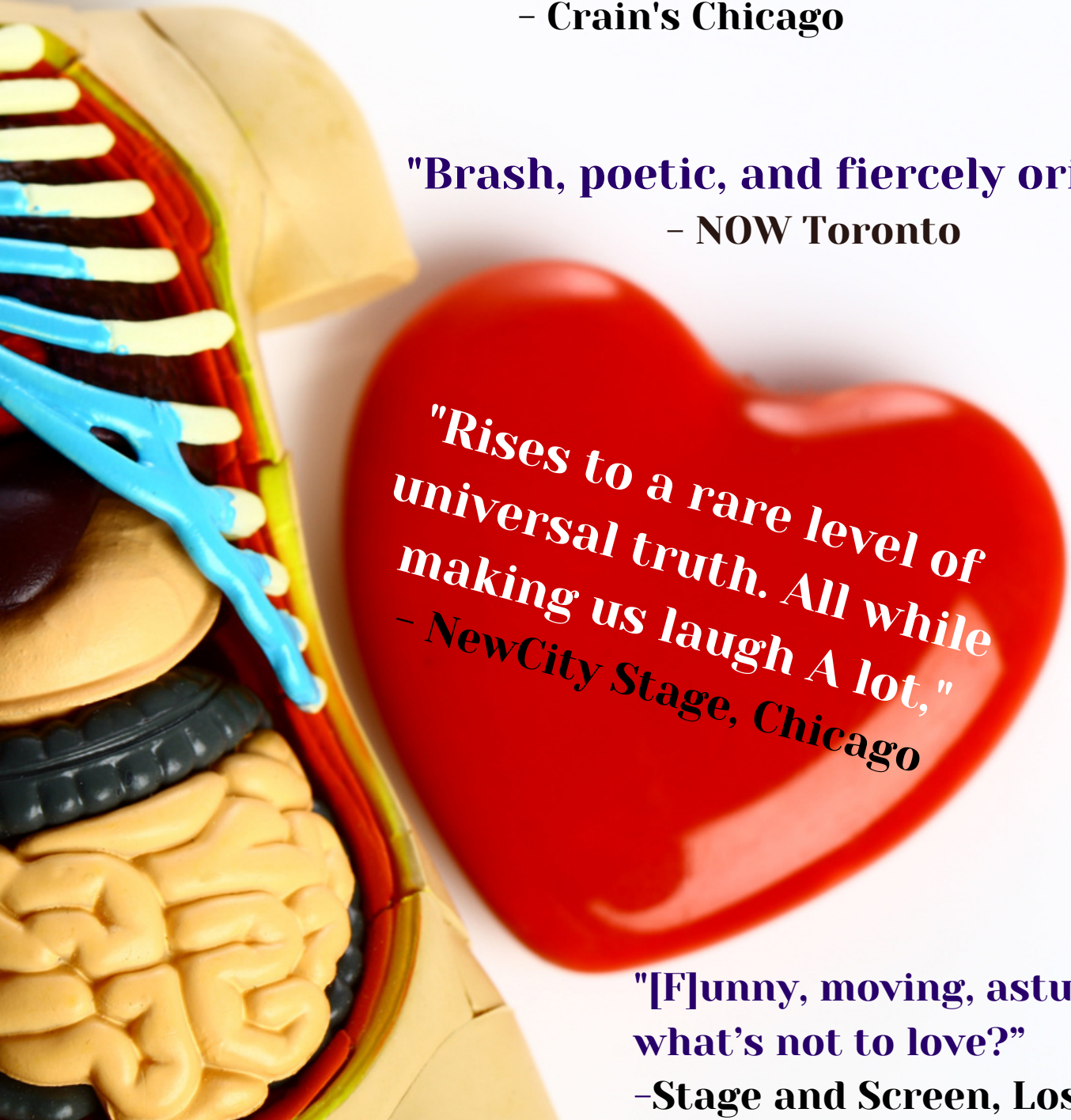
AN AUDIO DRAMEDY BASED ON THE HIT PLAY

"Lederer has a deliciously twisted way with words... and the end result is pure elation."

– Crain's Chicago

"Brash, poetic, and fiercely original."

– NOW Toronto

An anatomical model of a human torso, showing internal organs like the liver, stomach, and intestines. A large, glossy red heart is placed next to the model. The heart has a quote written on it in white, italicized text.

"Rises to a rare level of universal truth. All while making us laugh A lot,"
– NewCity Stage, Chicago

"[F]unny, moving, astute... what's not to love?"

–Stage and Screen, Los Angeles

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -- Please add to all event listings:
**INTERNATIONALLY-ACCLAIMED PLAY, *WITH LOVE AND A MAJOR ORGAN*, RETURNS
TO CANADA TO LAUNCH THE PRIMETIME FESTIVAL WITH TOP-NOTCH TEAM**

A uniquely resonant comedy about emotion, connection, and the act of truly giving your heart away. Literally. Poetic and full of imagination, this internationally acclaimed play is perfectly suited to audio.

WITH LOVE AND A MAJOR ORGAN was the breakout hit at the 2012 Toronto Fringe. NOW Magazine called it, "[B]rash, poetic, and fiercely original". Since, it has been produced and praised all over the United States and in Europe. Playwright Julia Lederer further developed the script in Los Angeles, at the Theatre @ Boston Court, as part of their 2017 Polly Warfield Award-winning season. After hit productions in LA, Chicago, Boise, Alaska, Paris, etc. this script has yet to be produced in Canada. Until now, as it returns to launch the new PRIMETIME FESTIVAL at Toronto Fringe, where it began almost a decade ago. Right now, this witty, beautiful, and ultimately hopeful piece is a needed reminder of the value of love and human connection, as we step cautiously back into our world feeling more disconnected than ever before.

This audio version was produced in September 2020, with the support of a Canada Council for the Arts, by a team of artists who were all supposed to be elsewhere: performing on Broadway, at Stratford, on tour. Circumstance (or COVID) is the reason this outstanding group was available to come together. With protocols, in a time when they had been told they had to stop creating, they created this piece.

Featuring **Michela Cannon** (Broadway's *Harry Potter*), **Kaleb Alexander** (Shaw Festival 2021), **Jennifer Villaverde** (*Hana's Suitcase*: Dora Winner), and **Fiona Reid** (Broadway's *Harry Potter*, Order of Canada), with sound design by Pauline McGibbon Award-winner **Deanna H. Choi** and original music by **Matt Barber**, written and directed by the uniquely talented **Julia Lederer**, this audio drama adaptation is a wonderful way to bring WITH LOVE AND A MAJOR ORGAN home, in its fully realised form. This is a celebrated Canadian play that has never been in Canada. Now it will be accessible across the country.

QuestionMark-Exclamation Theatre

in association with **The Toronto Fringe Fringe Festival** presents...

WITH LOVE AND A MAJOR ORGAN: AN AUDIO PLAY

Written, Directed, and Produced by Julia Lederer

Starring Michela Cannon, Kaleb Alexander, Jennifer Villaverde, and Fiona Reid

Recorded by Evan Desjardins

Sound Design and Edit by Deanna H. Choi

Original Compositions by Matt Barber

Produced by Clara Altimas

Live Listening Party on **November 3rd**, then streaming **November 4th - 28th, 2021** online at:
<https://fringetoronto.com/primetime/show/love-and-major-organ-audio-play>

Tickets can be purchased from fringetoronto.com

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THE AUDIO DRAMA

A new audio version premiering **November 3rd** at the **Primetime Festival** and the first time the full version of the acclaimed play has been performed by Canadian artists.



Michela Cannon | Kaleb Alexander | Fiona Reid | Jenn Villaverde



Deanna H. Choi
Sound Designer

Matt Barber
Composer

Evan Desjardins
Recordist

Clara Altimas
Producer

AUDIO TRAILER

Created in 2020 with a group of artists who were scheduled to be working in other places -- then everything was canceled. We were able to come together and make this play when it was hard to make anything at all.



Julia Lederer
Writer, Director
Co-Producer





WITH LOVE AND A MAJOR ORGAN



[Hear the trailer](#)



CREATIVE TEAM

JULIA LEDERER: WRITER, DIRECTOR, PRODUCER

Julia is an internationally acclaimed writer from Toronto. Her plays have been produced all over North America and in Europe and her films have screened at major festivals including: the Toronto International Film Festival; Palm Springs Film Festival; MOTELX (Lisbon); Rouen Nordic Film Festival (France); POFF Black Nights (Estonia), with *Spooning* and *It's Nothing* streaming on the CBC's Gem. Julia worked on *Kim's Convenience* as part of CBC's emerging writers' room, and is currently in development on her own series, *Safe Space*, with Sharp House (UK). Her feature film, inspired by *With Love and a Major Organ*, received Regional Telefilm funding and goes into production in January. During COVID, she wrote two of BetterHelp's most popular commercial spots and recorded several audio pieces for theatres and podcasts in Canada, the U.S., and the U.K. www.julialederer.ca

FIONO REID: "MONA"

Fiona is a veteran of the Shaw and Stratford Festivals and has appeared in theatres across Canada, and in the US and Great Britain. Most recently she appeared in Broadway's *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* as Professor Dolores Umbridge. Selected theatre: *The Audience* (Mirvish); *The Children* (Centaur Theatre & Canadian Stage); *A Delicate Balance* (Stratford Festival); *August, Osage County*; *The Glass Menagerie* (Citadel Theatre); *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Neptune); *Sweeney Todd* (Canadian Stage). Film: *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, *The Time Traveller's Wife*. TV: *The King of Kensington*. Fiona has been awarded the Order of Canada and an Honourary Doctorate from Bishop's University. In 2008, she received the Barbara Hamilton Memorial Award, and in 2010 the ACTRA Award of Excellence. Other awards include: two Dora Mavor Moore Awards; a Sterling Award; and a Jessie Award. Upcoming: Professor McGonogall in Mirvish's *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*.

MICHELA CANNON: "SUBWAY RIDER/ANABEL"

Michela is about to make her Broadway Debut in *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*. Training: BFA Hons, Ryerson University. Theatre includes *You Will Remember Me* (Tarragon Theatre & Studio 180); *Far Away* (PreShow Playlist). Film includes *Door Mouse*, *North of Normal*, *The Truth About Christmas*, *La Manie de Mathilde*, *Tintype*, *Sixth*. Television includes "Frankie Drake Mysteries", "Murdoch Mysteries". Performance Capture includes *Far Cry 6*, *Watch Dogs: Legion*, *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate*, *Watch Dogs 2*. Voice includes *Assassin's Creed: Valhalla*, *Far Cry 5* and Julia Lederer's *Small Adjustments...* (Convergence Theatre). Website: michelacannon.com

KALEB ALEXANDER: "GEORGE"

Since being named one of NOW Toronto's artists to watch in 2013, Kaleb has been in numerous plays that have received awards and accolades. Selected credits: John in *Trouble in Mind*, Moses in *PassOver* (Obsidian Theatre)(TTCA award best ensemble) (Dora mavor moore award for audience choice); Laertes in *Hamlet*, Bertram in *All's Well That Ends Well*(Canadian Stage); *Adventures of a Black Girl in Search of God* (Centaur, NAC, Black Theatre Workshop); *Dirty Butterfly* (Bound 2 Create); *Delicacy* (Theatre Brouhaha). Film/TV: *Death She*

Wrote (CTV), *Cabin Connection* (Hallmark Channel), Principal on *Elle's Valley* (Bound 2 Create), appearances on various series such as *The Strain* (Syfy) and *12 Monkeys*(FX). Training: York University conservatory program.

JENNIFER VILLAVERDE: "NARRATOR"

Originally from Winnipeg, Jennifer is a 2nd generation Filipin*- Canadian actor, singer, arts educator, & emerging playwright. She's worked in theatres across Canada such as Soulepper, fu-GEN, YPT, RMTC, Rainbow Stage, MTYP, Citadel Theatre, Vertigo Theatre, Persephone Theatre, Geordie Theatre, and Seattle Children's Theatre in the U.S. She shares 2 Dora nominations for Outstanding Ensemble for HANA'S SUITCASE and Outstanding Musical for SEUSSICAL (YPT). In 2011, she performed in YPT's A YEAR WITH FROG & TOAD which received the Dora Award for Outstanding Musical. She played Dr. Hallie in Julia Lederer's U-R-U (Next Stage Festival).

DEANNA H. CHOI: SOUND DESIGNER

Deanna is the 2020 laureate of the Pauline McGibbon Award for Theatre Design. Her designs for plays and musicals have taken her across Canada. She has been nominated for the Louis Applebaum Composers Award and a Robert Merritt Award. Follow her @splitbrainsound

MATTHEW BARBER: COMPOSER

Matthew is a Toronto-based singer, songwriter, producer and theatre artist. He has released ten albums, toured extensively around the world, and has received two Juno nominations and four Canadian Folk Music Award nominations for his work. His original music for productions of *The Haunted Hillbilly* and *The Graduate* both garnered Montreal English Theatre Awards. *With Love and a Major Organ* marks his first foray into radio plays. Website: www.matthewbarber.com

CLARA ALTIMAS: PRODUCER

Clara is in development on her first feature *Benson* and serves as a senior writer and co producer on the half hour comedy, *Strays* (CBC). Additionally, Clara directed the digital series *Off Kilter* (CBC) and has written and directed a number of shorts that have received international festival recognition. Clara studied screenwriting with the UCLA Extension Program and completed a residency in the Writer's Lab at the Canadian Film Centre.

WITH LOVE AND A MAJOR ORGAN: THE PLAY

With Love and a Major Organ is originally a stage play. It premiered at the Toronto Fringe Festival in 2012, and was named Outstanding New Play & Outstanding Production (NOW Magazine), Patron's Pick, Best of the Fringe (Torontoist) and extended at the Toronto Arts Centre. Since, it has been performed all over the United States and translated into French. The original 60-minute version is [published by J.G. Shillingford Publishing](#). The play has received many accolades, including being part of The Theatre @ Boston Court's Polly Warfield Award-winning season and receiving a nomination for "Best Production" from the Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle.



Selected Press for WITH LOVE AND A MAJOR ORGAN (the stage play):

"Lederer has a deliciously twisted way with words... [With Love and a Major Organ] transposes the magical realism of Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Salvador Plascencia onto a 21st century romantic comedy... genuinely original... a dead sprint and the end result is pure elation."

- [Chicago Stage Standard](#)

"Explored with considerable charm... it's a fairy tale, but that's not meant to imply immaturity. On the contrary, Lederer's dialogue is laced with sophisticated poetry and wry insight into the isolation faced by a generation." - [The Los Angeles Times](#)

"A show that stands out above the others... just about perfect... rises to a rare level of universal truth, all while making us laugh. A lot." - [NewCity Stage \(Chicago\)](#)

"A brash, poetic and fiercely original voice that's equal parts pee-your-pants funny and get-out-that-Kleenex poignant." - [NOW Toronto](#)

"Theatre that lets go of realism and embraces the joys of language... wonderfully weird, piercingly poetic and unexpectedly moving... afterward you may feel, as I did, a deep need to talk to someone about the play. Isn't that what theater should do?" - [Crain's Chicago](#)

"*With Love and a Major Organ* strikes a difficult balance between specificity and universality. Lederer has managed to take themes as old as time and find a new, modern spin that exudes charm from start to finish." - [On Stage and Screen \(Los Angeles\)](#)

"Beautiful and original. Poetic and heartbreaking." - [Broadway World](#)

"An intricate dance of feeling and separation, empathy and distance, enthusiastic embracing of the world and deadened indifference to input.. What could be more important than seeing a play like *With Love and a Major Organ*, with its insistence that one's heart is central to everything?" - [Pasadena Star News](#)

"Whimsical, magical, and authentically real in its depiction of the vagaries of the human heart, *With Love And A Major Organ* will likely touch anyone's major organ provided it's neither paper nor stone. It definitely touched mine." - [Stage Scene LA](#)

"Delightfully absurd... endlessly quotable... poetic, playful, and wholly original... worth lining up hours to see." - [Torontoist](#)

"Julia Lederer is a writer with a delightfully original voice." - [The Toronto Star](#)