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## **CAST SPOTLIGHT: NOAH FINCH AND JOEY GUYTON**

April 17, 2021 by Brigid O'Leary

FREDERICKSBURG, VA—It's opening day of "A Special Covid-19," a musical based on the pandemic of 2020, reflecting the challenges of our current times as lived by someone with a disability. The two-act musical completely written, directed, and performed by a cast and crew of people with disabilities has a cast of 10. It's the brainchild of Fredericksburg-native Noah Finch, 22, and features Joey Guyton as in the lead role.



“Together, we all came up with a way to make [tech week] easy on everybody.”

Noah Finch

Finch poured personal experience and innate talent into the project. Though “The Prologue” is his favorite song, he found that writing the music wasn’t quite as challenging as weaving it all together with a story.

“The hardest part was thinking of a plot,” he said, adding that looking back on it, it wasn’t as hard as it seemed at the time.

If writing and directing wasn’t enough, Finch also serves as the show narrator, providing details the audience needs but might not be able to witness on stage, such as the passage of time. He also gives a voice to Croakee’s feelings, before Guyton delivers his lines.

Taking the musical from an idea to the stage has been a learning experience for everyone.

“Rehearsals were great for the last three months, virtually and in-person, but tech week was more difficult,” Finch explained. “Together, we all came up with a way to make it easy on everybody.”

All in all, Finch is understandably proud and excited to bring the production to the stage tonight. The best thing about the whole experience, he says, is “writing the songs and seeing my story on the stage.”



I'm 5'10" with a 6'4" personality.

Leading a very capable cast of characters is nineteen-year-old Guyton, who describes himself—quite accurately—as “5’10” with a 6’4” personality.” A natural entertainer with a voice that carries well and penchant for making people laugh, Guyton commands the stage as Tim Croakee and brings real emotions to the range of feelings his character deals with throughout the story.

Though tech week, as Finch pointed out, had some challenges for the cast, Guyton has been excited to be part of the show. So much so, that at one rehearsal he floated an idea of his own for a future STEP VA production.

“I’m thinking we should do a sequel two years from now,” he said. “We can do it in 2024 and call it ‘COVID-19: Two Years Later.’”

Sponsored by STEP VA Inc, a local 501c nonprofit that “empowers people with special needs through artistic expression and sensory exploration,” the musical will hit the stage at Fredericksburg Christian School this Saturday, April 17 at 6:30 p.m., and again on April 18 at 2:30 p.m. Both shows have limited seating due to the ongoing pandemic. All tickets must be purchased in advance, as no tickets will be sold at the door. For those unable to attend in person, a livestream will be available for Saturday’s show. The livestream will be made available to online ticket holders on April 17<sup>th</sup>.

Tickets for both general admission, in-person seating and the live stream are available online at [stepva.org](http://stepva.org).

For more information, to donate, or to purchase tickets, please, visit [www.stepva.org](http://www.stepva.org).

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