

Dana Aber's

# Baggage at the Door

an original solo-musical unpacking the process one woman pursued  
to put aside her past traumas & love the present



*When falling in love triggers her latent PTSD,  
she might be **f\*ck\*d**.*

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## CONTACT

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## The Show

After three consecutive years of near-death-experiences, each occurring within the month of January, a bright-eyed survivor becomes the poster child for high-functioning PTSD:

hiding in plain sight.



Between the Stockholms syndrome, the mosquito bite, and the poisonous-fish-induced coma, the lady has become twitchy about freak accidents and rare illnesses. Between the monster who lived in her house and monsters that tried to kill her outside, the Girl might rather hide away in a tall tower or brace herself in a fortress.

However, falling in love the following January has blown to bits all her careful protective measures and barricades against vulnerability. If this tough chick can't connect, she may lose the love that helped her to get better. And so she must unpack her baggage at the door, as it seems;

when falling in love triggers her latent PTSD, she might be **f\*ck\*d**.





Incorporating video games, humor, and original songs by award-winning emerging composers, this quirky and candid 1-woman musical explores her attempts to break the PTSD trauma cycle and find courage to unpack her baggage and claim a better life.



**Hailed as a deeply moving with infectious original songs, 'Baggage at the Door' is a disarmingly charming look at healing from trauma.**

*Broadway World.com*



Richly textured with immersive sound and animated projections, **Baggage at the Door** takes the audience on an honest and heartening journey with the title character, illuminating the process one woman undertook to put her past traumas aside and love again.



**With candid charm and self-deprecating wit, creator Dana Aber flits from one area of her trauma to another, exposing the soft-belly of her fears and looking sideways at her barely-buried rage, all the while keeping the audience engaged with her sparkly tenured performance.**

**I. Shamas, NYC**





## About the Creator

[Dana Aber](#) has been seen in NYC Off-Broadway, at The Dixon Place, the NYFringe Festival, NYMF, Apollo Theatre, and FDCAC/Classical Theatre of Harlem. Theatrically, she's played across the country and across the seas. A strong advocate for the development of new musicals, she has been involved in countless presentations at New Dramatists, Below 54, NYMF, NYU's Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program, Dramatists Guild, Dixon Place, & Ars Nova.

Through her [Big Thunder Productions](#) company, Dana has created and helmed 8 concert-cabarets, most notably the bi-coastal #YesAllWomen *Raise Your Voice* concert joining artists within the movement for gender equality. She is a survivor and advocate, and is honored to be able to use her voice to share for those who cannot. [www.DanaAber.com](http://www.DanaAber.com)



## Creation Process

*"Baggage at the Door* is a personal story focused on the end of a 7- year cycle of PTSD destruction and reconstruction. The personal traumas that caused my post-traumatic stress are specific (and almost unbelievable), but the understanding of trauma and the recovery from it is universally human. Everybody has some ouchy skeletons in the closet, so to speak!

I built the show through collaborative process with multiple female artists to help me craft my synesthesia-colored descriptions of the (particularly prickly) PTSD- recovery process.

These independent but cohesive elements allowed me to weave together, through deep dramaturgical examination and sensitive direction by [Joe Langworth](#), a show that offers a whole landscape of trauma-processing: audio-trigger sounds, Stockholm syndrome encapsulated by the on-screen projections of the "Bad Piggies" the resilient determination of a person bracing to face the next challenge of recovery, and all the giggles that come along with it!" —**Dana Aber**

Songs for *Baggage at the Door* were created through collaboration with Ms. Aber, using her essays as source material and multiple meetings together to shape the works.

### Composer Collaborators

[James Ballard](#)  
[Christie Baugher](#)  
[Alanya Bridge](#)  
[Amy Burgess](#)  
[Sara Cooper](#)  
[Rachel Dean](#)  
[Thomas Jacobsen](#)  
[Nina Kauffman](#)  
[Teresa Lotz](#)  
[Martha Miller](#)  
[Joseph Trefler](#)



Contributing visual artists used digital and pencil sketch, animation, and collage techniques to create art for the show, through consultation with Ms. Aber.

### Visual Artist Collaborators

[Jamie Gaul](#)  
[Josh Haplea](#)  
[Chelsey Hill](#)  
[Nichola Latzgo](#)  
[Annie Moor](#)  
[Jacob Michael](#)  
[Dr. Natalie J. Russ](#)



## Development History

### July 2018

4 new songs presented as part of Duplex Theatre's In the Works concert, NYC

### August 2018

Workshop presentation at the Dixon Place Lounge, NYC

Andrew Morrissey as MD

### October 2018

Two workshop shows at The PIT Loft, NYC, 2<sup>nd</sup> show was sold to capacity.

Karl St. Lucy and Andrew Morrissey as MD, respectively.

### November 2018

Song featured in the [MusiColab](#) new musical theatre Salon, Philadelphia

### December 2018

One-night special presentation performance at the Dixon Place Mainstage, NYC

Andrew Morrissey as MD

### April 2019

Official Selection 2019 [The ONE Festival](#), by Teatro LATEA, NYC

Direction & Dramaturgy by Joe Langworth, Andrew Morrissey, MD



### June 2019

Invitation to perform at United Solo Festival, Theatre Row, NYC

### August 2019

Awarded Artist Residency at [Elsewhere Studios](#), Colorado

Workshop performance at [Blue Sage Center for the Arts](#), Paonia, CO

## Media



**[Link to Teaser-Trailer](#)**

**[Link to Promo Interview](#)**

**[Link to High Res photo gallery](#)**

**[Link to SoundCloud song demos](#)**

# Tech details for Dana Aber's ***Baggage at the Door***

## Set

An open stage, set with multiple pieces of luggage.

A projector screen or blank wall.

*This production utilizes screen projections to portray characters and set backdrop. Projections include videos of the Therapist, projections of the Trauma Monster, and different representations of the Bad Piggies.*

*A key to these projections is available as a PDF guide.*

## Props

A variety of suitcases and bags, which The Girl arranges into different set pieces.

*Within these assorted bags, she will discover and bring into play various props: stuffed animal figures, a jewelry box, a lipstick, a parcel of cheese.*

## Tech requirements

- Projector and screen
- Tech board with Q-Lab possibilities, version 3 or higher, video + sound
- Piano, with music light for accompanist\*  
[\*option for locally-hired musician must include advance rehearsal time]
- Wireless mic if house is larger than 100 seats
- Tech rehearsal with board opps, light and sound/projection
- At least 15 mins to set up and 15 mins to tear down

*In a perfect world:*

onstage time with tech opps to run sections of technical difficulty

videographer open to sharing the archival footage

photographer open to sharing the archival photos

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