

CHURCH & STATE to End Off Broadway Engagement at New World Stages



Producer Charlotte Cohn with SCS Innovations LLC, Franklin Theatrical Group, Neil Gooding Productions, Ralph Meranto/JCC CenterStage, Brierpatch Productions, Karen Cohen/Jack Hayflick, Bonnie E. Lautenberg, in association with NewYorkRep, announced today that *Church & State*, the critically acclaimed play by Jason Odell Williams, a "BEST PLAY" nominee from the Off Broadway Alliance, will play its final performance Sunday, June 4 at 7:30 p.m.

Directed by Markus Potter (*Stalking the Bogeyman*), *Church & State* is currently running at New World Stages (340 W. 50th Street - between 8th & 9th Avenues). At the time of closing, *Church & State* will have played 29 previews and 81 regular performances.

"I'm so proud of the entire *Church & State* team and what we accomplished here, especially our partnerships with Sandy Hook Promise and other charitable organizations," says Producer Charlotte Cohn. "The people we reached and the lives this play has touched are immeasurable and we look forward to a long and prosperous life in the regions, as well as at school and universities across the country."

Playwright Jason Odell Williams says, "It's always sad to say goodbye to a play, whether it's 10 performances or over 100 as we had here Off-Broadway. But I'm so grateful to everyone who helped bring this play to New York. Now I'm looking forward to bringing this play to every state in America -- red, blue, and purple!"

Church & State is a fast-paced, seriously funny take on faith, politics, and "The Twitter." Three days before his bid for re-election in North Carolina, a Republican U.S. Senator makes an off-the-cuff comment to a blogger that calls into question his belief in God. The Senator's devoutly Christian wife and liberal Jewish campaign manager try desperately to contain the damage with mixed results. This brutally honest and surprisingly funny new play sheds light on how religion, guns, and social media influence our politics and our politicians.

(No politicians were harmed in the making of this play.)

The creative team includes David Goldstein (scenic design), Burke Brown (lighting design), Dianne K. Graebner (costume design), and Erik T. Lawson (sound design). Roumel Reaux is Production Stage Manager.

The current cast includes Rob Nagle ("Castle," "Mad Men"), Nadia Bowers (*The Farnsworth Invention*, "Orange is the New Black"), Christa Scott-Reed (*The Pitman Painters*, *Relativity*) and Jonathan Louis Dent (*The Broken Record*, *Romeo and Juliet*). Beginning May 26, Megan Sikora (*Holiday Inn*, "Chuck") replaces Ms. Bowers, and on May 29 Andy Talen (*The Blue Man Group*, *The Tempest*) replaces Mr. Dent.

Originally developed with Artistic director Ralph Meranto and JCC CenterStage, *Church & State* was produced as a National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere at JCC CenterStage in Rochester and The Skylight Theatre in Los Angeles where it recently received three Ovation Award nominations including Best Playwriting for an Original Play, Best Production (Intimate Theatre), and Best Lead Actor in a Play. The Los Angeles Times praised it as "gripping entertainment," and "simply superb," while The Huffington Post called it "powerful, humorous and highly contemporary" and named it one of the Top Ten L.A. Theatre Productions of 2016.