

# IF YOU CAN MAKE IT HERE

## LOCAL ACTRESS TAKES A SECOND CHANCE ON THE THEATER

WORDS & PHOTOS  
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I didn't know what to expect when meeting Jennifer Ann Galvez. An abysmal reporter, I hadn't done my research and knew nothing about the seasoned actress who has appeared on stages and screens throughout her multi-decade career. But I didn't need to know those things - not yet. *What I needed was to see and see, I did.*

Jennifer Ann Galvez admits that there's hundreds of other women who look like her in New York City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Miami. "[These cities] have people," she explains. "But you go to Rochester and I'm unique. There aren't many people that do what I do in my age range."

The legitimacy of that statement cannot be verified, but what I can tell you is that Jennifer Ann Galvez does not act. She becomes.

## JENNIFER ANN GALVEZ DOES NOT ACT. SHE BECOMES.

Perched atop a stool in the simple black box MuCCC Theater with only a single spotlight brightening her features, Jennifer morphs from emotion to emotion effortlessly. One moment she's overjoyed and the next she's sobbing. Ravaged by lust seconds later, she doesn't miss a beat. She cycles through feelings and characters like a teenager flipping through a magazine. I never saw the seams of her performance.

Her resume is impressive. She began acting at twenty-one and has appeared on shows like *One Life to Live*, *All My Children*, *As the World Turns*, and *Law and Order*. But perhaps more impressive is the fact that she returned to the world of acting after the pandemic reminded her of her calling.

"It took me a bit to realize that people [were] dying," she exclaimed.

### "AM I READY TO SAY GOODBYE WITHOUT TRYING THIS ONE MORE TIME?"

Lucky for us, she wasn't ready.

Lucky for us, she spotted an ad for an audition.

"It must have been kismet or something," she continued. "The JCC was holding auditions for *Gloria: A Life*, which is the story of Gloria Steinem. And it's an ethnic, highly recommended female cast. I thought, 'I'm female. I'm ethnic.' I was thrilled when they called me back. It was an experience that reminded me why I love theater."

Jennifer's performance as Francesca in *Gloria: A Life* would not be the last role she played during her "second try" at acting. What followed were a cadre of women including the Filipino mother who's furious that her daughter got pregnant and the Filipino mother who's urging her daughter to become a nurse rather than a filmmaker. Sense a trend? So does Jennifer.

"I think representation matters," she says. "I think that me and my Asian actor friends from decades ago started this. And I feel like whenever I see a person of color, whatever nationality, I know we're moving closer





and closer to it not being weird and just being the thing. Why can't it look like that in the movies? It's getting there. It's starting. It's starting. It's so slow, though."

Perhaps unsatisfied with the roles available for people of color - especially Asian women of a certain age - Jennifer made the jump into producing last year. Her Rochester Fringe Festival production of Love Letters follows the friendship of two people throughout the tumultuous decades of their lives.

"It was one of my favorite plays when I read it years ago," Jennifer explains. "I cried at the end, and I was like, why can't two people of color have gone to boarding school and written letters? Somebody decided it was a white play at one time, right? So, what I did was I produced it."

Playing opposite a J Simmons - Black actor - Jennifer recalls that, by the end of the performance, she couldn't hold back the tears because the "emotion was so raw."

"After a while, I didn't see two actors of color. There were just two people falling in love, breaking each other's hearts, and going through the turmoil of life. And I thought: to me, this is worth more than any amount of money. I don't believe that only white people can be in love or break each other's hearts. It was only half a dozen performances, but that's a half a dozen more than would have happened if I didn't produce it."

**"AFTER A WHILE, I DIDN'T SEE TWO ACTORS OF COLOR. THERE WERE JUST TWO PEOPLE FALLING IN LOVE."**

She describes this second chance at pursuing her dream as her "resurgence." She left the business in her early thirties to get married, have a "real job." She did it all, but she knew there was more to be done. She knew that there was still a story left to tell.

"I've been waiting for decades, but now is the time. Now is the time to depart from being the background player to becoming the lead."

We're ready, Jennifer Ann Galvez. We're ready.