

The Creators of Four World Premiere Plays

NANCI CHRISTOPHER

HOW FAR WOULD YOU GO to achieve your dream? Writer/performer Nanci Christopher asks the question in the world premiere of her solo play, *...And Baby Makes Two, an adoption tale*. This real-life story concerns a single woman's experiences in the world of adoption as she tries to fulfill her deepest desire, motherhood.

With veteran actor/director Paul Linke at the helm, Christopher's tale is about making a dream become a reality. She says, "I was shocked to find myself in my late 30s with no prospect for a husband and my biological clock furiously ticking away. I set out to find the baby of my dreams, adopting my son Joshua from birth using a private adoption attorney. It was and continues to be the most joyous day of my life."

She knew she had to write about her journey, with its many peaks and valleys. "After years of trying to write an autobiographical solo show with no success I finally realized I had to narrow my focus and just tell the story most important to me, for the legacy it would be for my son and for those I might help to believe in their dream."

JESSIE MCCORMACK

JOLENE, A WAITRESS who idolizes Dolly Parton, her rival co-worker and their eccentric boss are all changed forever when a stranger's car breaks down in their sleepy southern town. The world premiere of Jessie McCormack's dramedy, *Journey to Dollywood*, leads Jolene on a trip of self-discovery.

"It's a play about courage," explains McCormack who plays Jolene. "Dolly Parton is a symbol of hope. She's the American dream personified, a person who struggled against all odds to get where she is today. Jolene's desire to travel to Dollywood is a metaphor for taking a leap of faith and going for what you want in life."

"I was charmed when I read it," says Atlantic Theatre Company member Rod McLachlan, who directs. "Jessie is a writer who can deliver surprising, yet fully motivated changes in tone." Parton liked the script so much she recorded a voiceover for the play and hopes to attend a

performance. In June, McCormack visited her at her recording studio in Nashville, Tennessee.

VELINA HASU HOUSTON

HOW DO WE AS HUMAN BEINGS find solace following a tragic act of violence that has changed the world and our lives forever? Inspired by the true story of the "Hiroshima Maidens," a group of women who had been disfigured by the nuclear blast in Japan, Velina Hasu Houston's world premiere, *Calling Aphrodite*, explores mankind's ability to heal and build a better world.

After visiting the Hiroshima Peace Park with her children, Houston searched for a way to write about the experience that would resonate in today's society. "The Peace Park is a very positive memorial," she says. "It left me reinvigorated and with a sense of hope for the future of our world."

Shashin Desai, who directs the premiere, says, "This is an important story of redemption and forgiveness that promotes

harmony and cross-cultural understanding. It humanizes the horrors of war and sends a strong and optimistic message to future generations."

CLINTON LEUPP

UNIVERSALLY ACKNOWLEDGED as a member of drag royalty, Miss Coco Peru has had four theatrical runs at the LA Gay & Lesbian Center in addition to such films as *trick* and TV shows as *Will & Grace*. In the latest endeavor, the world premiere of *Ugly Coco*, the creation of actor/writer Clinton Leupp, Miss Coco starts at her childhood and follows the trajectory of her life from boyhood to manhood to womanhood.

Leupp, who was nominated for an Ovation Award for his 2003 production of *Miss Coco Peru is Undaunted*, is known for transcending simple camp values and entering the realm of true theatre on his path to gender-bending notoriety.

He has been praised for "single-handedly resurrecting the lost art of telling a story that takes the audience on a long, very amusing and emotionally cathartic journey," according to *CinemaStage Magazine*. Michael Schiralli directs the venture which is produced by Howard Hill and Jon Imparato. ■



...AND BABY MAKES TWO, an adoption tale

Opens Oct. 12; plays Fri.-Sat., 8 pm; Sun., 6 pm; through Nov. 18

Tickets: \$25
The Other Space at the Santa Monica Playhouse
1211 4th St., Santa Monica
323.960.7846 or
www.plays411.com/adoption

JOURNEY TO DOLLYWOOD

Opens Sept. 15; plays Thurs.-Sat., 8 pm; Sun., 3 pm; through Oct. 27

Tickets: \$20
Matrix Theatre
7657 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood
323.960.4418 or
www.plays411.com/dollywood

CALLING APHRODITE

Plays Thurs.-Sat., 8 pm; Sun., 2 pm; through Sept. 23

Tickets: \$32-\$42
International City Theatre
Long Beach Performing Arts Center
300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach
562.436.4610 or
www.ictlongbeach.org

UGLY COCO

Opens Oct. 5; plays Fri.-Sat., 8 pm; Sun., 7 pm; through Oct. 21

Tickets: \$25
The Renberg Theatre
L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center's Village at Ed Gould Plaza
1125 N. McCadden Pl., Hollywood
323.860.7300 or
www.lagaycenter.org/boxoffice