

< 1 of 2 >

PERFORMING ARTS

OCTOBER 03, 2016 8:44 AM

Richard Nixon returns to the 21st century — on public access TV

BY CHRISTINE DOLEN
ArtburstMiami.com

The devolution of discourse in the current presidential race is obvious to anyone with a TV or internet access. Maybe you see the political back-and-forth between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton as the down-and-dirty rhetoric of two fighters approaching their title bout. Maybe you want to hide under the bed until this singularly incendiary race is over.

But if you're worried that the candidate you despise would lead the country to hell in a handbasket, there's this: At least neither is Richard Nixon.

Miami's Mad Cat Theatre Company has concocted a trippy comic contemplation of what an uncensored, 21st century version of the late president might be like in "Why Not? With Richard Nixon."

Written by artistic director Paul Tei and company members Jessica Farr and Theo Reyna, this world-premiere piece running in the SandBox at Miami Theater Center through Sunday was developed from a workshop version presented on Miami Beach in April.

The show features Noah Levine as the 37th president, Cliff Burgess as Nixon's pal Bebe Rebozo *and* as U.S. Senator (and ex-presidential candidate) Marco Rubio, and Farr as former presidential daughter Tricia Nixon-Cox *and* aspiring president Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Staged by Tei, "Why Not?" imagines that Tricky Dick is somehow among the living, hosting a late-night public access TV show from his home in Key Biscayne. Gleefully anachronistic — and why not, if the star is a dead president? — the play establishes from the get-go that we'll be spending time with the foul-mouthed Nixon of the secret White House tapes, not the guy who brought the Vietnam War to an end and reestablished diplomatic relations between the United States and China.

This Nixon, speaking from a bathroom just offstage, advises his daughter that he's "clogged up like the Golden Glades interchange." During his TV show, he plays games (à la Jimmy Fallon) with Rebozo, Rubio and Clinton, but Nixon has a tough time going for more than a few sentences without saying something vulgar, racist or sexist. There are musical interludes, too, including "Let's Dance," "Sundown" and "Something Stupid."

Plenty of the lines and/or the spin the actors put on them are funny; for example, Trump is described as having doused himself in Mountain Dew and fallen asleep in a toaster. But other bits aren't as inspired, such as when Rubio emerges in a beekeeper's helmet and gloves, carrying a fly swatter, to talk about Zika, then turns to his old friend the water bottle for comfort. Clinton is portrayed as no-nonsense, quick and smart, but then the authors make a statement about her ambitious love of the spotlight by having her pleasure herself with a microphone. Yuck.

Levine is a skilled and wildly uninhibited actor-singer whose Nixon comes off as a cross between the ex-prez and the late TV variety host Ed Sullivan. Burgess is a charmer (and drinker) as Rebozo, a boyish cliché generator as Rubio and, near the end, an equally interesting Nixon doppelganger. Farr plays Nixon-Cox as a sort of Barbie Doll-Stepford Wife, Clinton as a tough customer. And briefly, she becomes Nixon doppelganger No. 2.

“Why Not? With Richard Nixon” is amusing (largely), crass and nutty. But unlike the current race for the White House — also crass and nutty — “Why Not?” will make you laugh instead of weep.

ArtburstMiami.com is a nonprofit source of theater, dance, music and performing arts news.

IF YOU GO

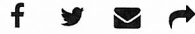
What: ‘Why Not?’ by Jessica Farr, Theo Reyna and Paul Tei.

Where: Mad Cat production in the SandBox at Miami Theater Center, 9816 NE Second Ave., Miami Shores.

When: 8 p.m. Thursday-Sunday, through Oct. 9.

Cost: \$30 (students and seniors \$15, Friday-Saturday excluded).

Information: 305-751-9550 or www.madcattheatre.org.



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SoBe Comedy Fest: Mad Cat finds humor in the life of a tortured fashion muse.

On the surface, British fashion muse Isabella Blow did not lead a very comical life. A fashion editor of the glossy magazine *Tatler* and the discoverer of acclaimed designer Alexander McQueen and milliner Philip Treacy, Blow — AKA “Issi” — was disowned by her parents and suffered from nearly lifelong clinical depression worsened by infertility, electroshock therapy, and an ovarian cancer diagnosis. She attempted suicide six times — not limited to sleeping pills, horse tranquilizers, car crashes, and drowning — before succeeding the seventh time by ingesting weed killer.

So a script about Blow’s life, which reached its painful end in 2007, doesn’t seem appropriate for a laugh riot such as the South Beach Comedy Festival. But Jessica Farr’s worldpremiere play *Charming Acts of Misery* will kick off the festival Wednesday, April 17, as the Mad Cat Theatre Company’s annual SoBe Comedy Fest production. According to director Paul Tei, the humor will transcend the pain.

“There’s a lot of natural comedy in certain aspects of her life,” he says. “There is something funny about wanting to kill yourself and not getting it right six times; there’s a natural comedic vein there. When her sister discovered her on the final suicide attempt, Issi’s concern was that she hadn’t drunk enough weed killer. When she broke her ankles on the second suicide attempt, she was devastated because she couldn’t wear high heels anymore. Before she went to kill herself [and succeeded], she said, ‘I’m going shopping.’ In all of those things, for me, there’s comedy there. And for the British, especially from a theatrical standpoint, there’s an ability to walk that fine line between tragedy and comedy that I think we’re hopefully finding in this piece.”

Farr, who started out with a “fashion crush” on Blow, is quick to point out Samuel Beckett’s famous quote from his play *Endgame*: “Nothing is funnier than unhappiness.”

“She had such a great sense of humor herself,” says Farr, a Mad Cat company member who, like Tei, has relocated to Los Angeles. “I’m not laughing at her, but I think she would have looked back at a lot of events in her life in her ghoulish fashion as some kind of sick joke that was just great and wonderful and such a surprising act of juxtaposition. I feel like she was the Edith Piaf of the fashion world; she was a train wreck, but remembered in a lovely way.”

Farr and Tei concocted the idea for *Charming Acts of Misery* in a brainstorming session involving Google and Wikipedia. But Farr took over the sole writing duty, conceptualizing the play — which runs about 40 minutes — as a fever-dream flashback of Blow’s life that runs through her head after she has taken the weed killer. (A longer version of *Charming Acts of Misery* is expected to enjoy a full run at Mad Cat this summer.)

The microbudget performances will take place at Backstage @ the Fillmore, a limited rehearsal space with no lighting grid. There will be virtually no props, and even the costumes will be minimalist.

Blow was known for showcasing Treacy’s elaborate hats, which elevated headwear to something like installation art, making her a major influence on Lady Gaga. (Bryan Ferry was a close friend too.) But during this production, Erin Joy Schmidt, who will play Blow, will wear just one headpiece, to be created by Mad Cat designer Karelle Levy.

“When you have limitations put upon you from the get-go, you try to say, ‘OK, let’s try to maximize and at the same time be very economical,’ ” Tei says. “Part of that helps with the fantasy and the fluidity, to make it move and not be cluttered, because we don’t have a backstage area. The imagination of allowing the audience to fill it in and having the actors create what that is — it’s kind of like a dream.”

The fact that *Charming Acts of Misery* is a one-night-only production raises its own set of unique challenges. For the actors, the rehearsal process is no different from that of a five-week production, but this time they won’t have the luxury of fine-tuning their chemistry after a few shows in front of audiences.

“I think it raises the stakes for these two shows to get it as right as we possibly can get it,” says Gregg Weiner, who plays Alexander Mc-Queen and two other characters. “So it’s completely different from doing a run of a show, where you can grow it. It’s like put up or shut up and kill it for both shows, because that’s it.

“We’ll definitely fix things,” he adds. “There will be adjustments between shows. And yet I’ve had interesting experiences with the first performances ever in front of an audience. Like at Mosaic and GableStage, I’ve had crazy responses from audiences on that first preview and have never had them again. There’s something about that first time.”

Tei sees the entire production as a luxury — a really nice workshop at a reasonable price amid an infectiously funny atmosphere.

“I look at it as we’re fortunate to be the only theater company that gets to do the South Beach Comedy Festival,” he says. “And to rub elbows with some of these high-profile comedians is fun, to think we’re a part of that. I think because people go to a comedy festival anticipating laughter, they’re ready for it. Nobody goes to a comedy festival, unless they’re dragged, going, Oh, great.” They’re wanting to have a good time. They’re ready to laugh, so on some level it’s a little bit easier.”

See page 27 for a lineup of South Beach Comedy Festival events.

Email stage@miaminewtimes.com

Charming Acts of Misery

As part of the South Beach Comedy Festival. 7 and 9:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 17, at Backstage @ the Fillmore, 1700 Washington Ave., Miami Beach; 305-673-7300; fillmoremb.com. Visit southbeachcomedyfestival.com. Tickets cost \$25.

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MasterMind 2014 Honorable Mention: Jessica Farr

BY CAROLINA DEL BUSTO

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2014 AT 11 A.M.



Photos courtesy of Jessica Farr

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Miami New Times' Mastermind Awards honors the city's most inspiring creatives. This year, we received more than 100 submissions, which our staff narrowed to an elite group of 30. We'll be profiling those honorable mentions, and eventually the finalists, in the weeks to come. This year's three Mastermind Award winners will be announced February 27 at Artopia, our annual soiree celebrating Miami culture. For tickets and more information, visit the website.

Comedy is an art, and though we might celebrate those actors who excel in dramatic works, making people laugh ain't easy. And if you're a bombshell broad, forgedaboutit! But it's funny (and hot) ladies like Jessica Farr who show the world that women in comedy are a serious thing.

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If you haven't heard the name Jessica Farr yet, take note This funny girl has her sights set on taking over the comedy scene. Actor, playwright, and stand up comedian, Farr is a solid triple-threat, and as an alumni of New World School of the Arts and Fordham University, she currently calls the Mad Cat Theatre home.

Cultist: You're quite talented and well versed in the arts; from comedian to playwright, is there one mask you prefer to wear?

UPCOMING EVENTS

"Honor Thy Mother" With Joy and Laughter
Sat., May. 13, 8:00pm **TICKETS**

"Honor Thy Mother" Comedy Special
Sun., May. 14, 2:00pm **TICKETS**

Most Wanted by Peter Sagal

Jessica Farr. Thank you! I'm used to wearing several 'hats' at any given point, so I'm reluctant to choose one, but I would say that making people laugh is one of the highest glories of human existence. So yeah, comedy would be up there on the top my list.

Tell us about your latest play, "Nadie."

Sun., May. 14, 3:00pm

TICKETS

Nereida, Alexis Y Cristinito Están De Madr...

Sun., May. 14, 5:00pm

TICKETS

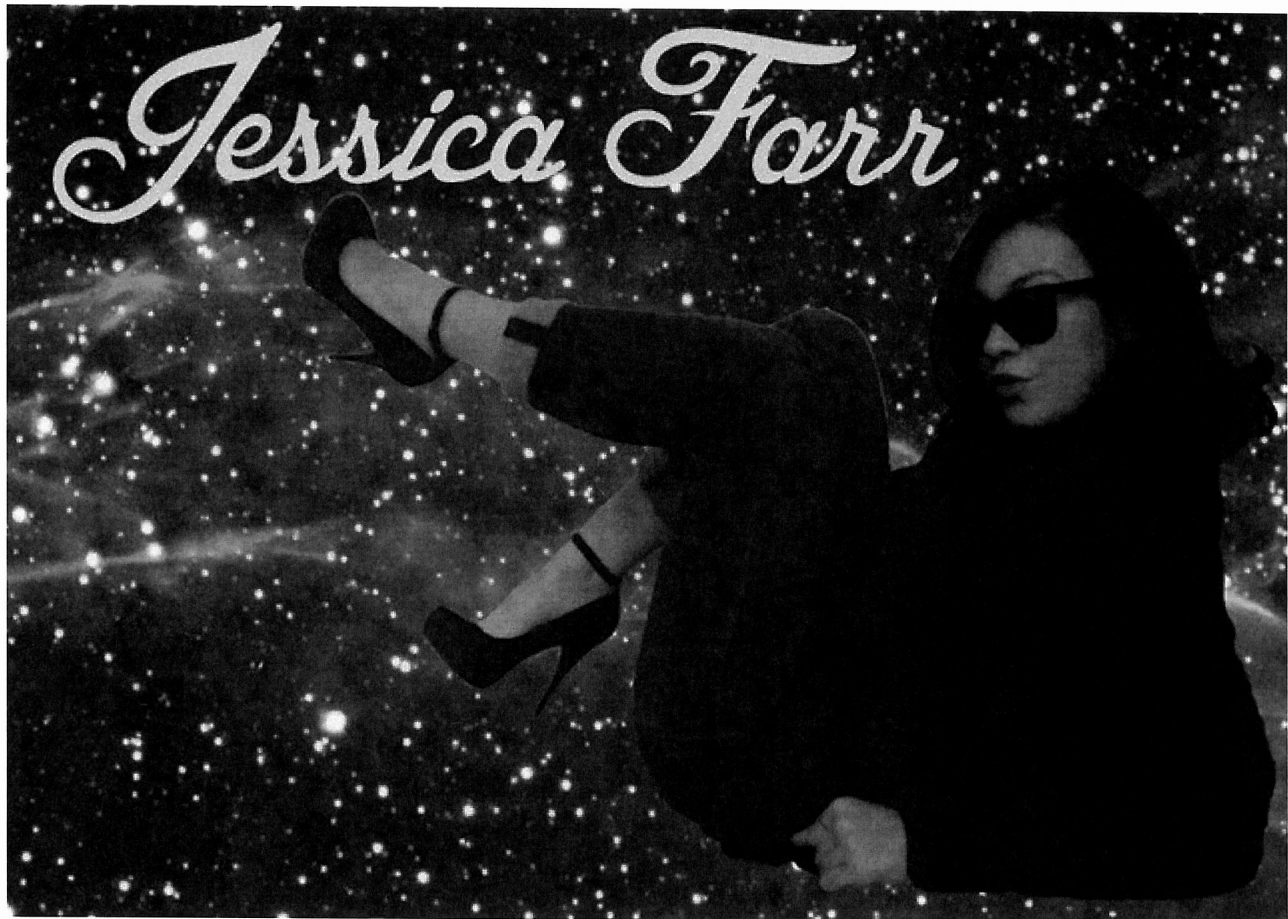
Israeli Dance Festival: Hope

Sun., May. 28, 7:00pm

TICKETS

I've had a few plays produced in Miami so far; "Charming Acts of Misery" at The South Beach Comedy Festival 2013, and "Blow Me" at Mad Cat last August, among others. "Nadie" is my latest. I wrote it the week I found out about Reefa. I needed to write something that reflected the mounting

tensions. I just woke up one day out of a nightmare and started typing. What came out of that was what became "Nadie."



What's it like being a part of the Mad Cat Theater company? Are you a mad-catter? (That was our Mad Hatter pun).

Every member of Mad Cat is an electrical conduit of creativity and energy. There's a chaotic balance to working with them that I have always connected with. And they're all hilarious, beautiful people. We've got a good crew. We go bowling together. 'Nuff said.

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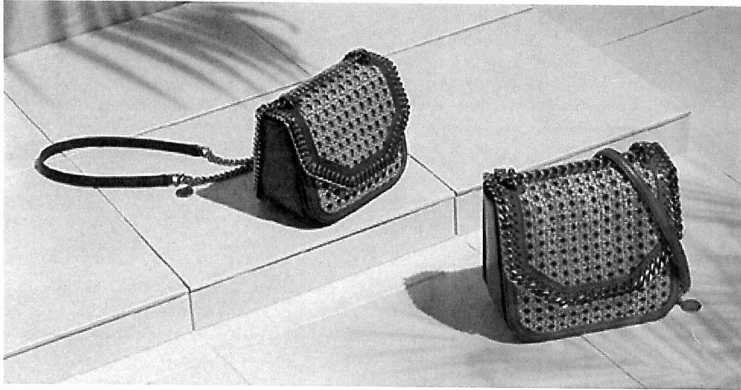
Can you share with us any jokes you might be working on for the South Beach Comedy Festival?

Well, that is top secret. I'm part of a writing team right now; myself, Theo Reyna and Paul Tei. The piece is irreverent and political, [it's titled "Gerald Ford Superfreak" and the blurb for the show is "Just one of the 77,038 stories about the most kick ass president no one voted for. This one's a doozy."]. I don't want to give away too much, but I'll give you a hint: there are more things named after Ronald Reagan in this country than any other historical or political figure. Are you laughing or crying? That may gauge your interest in the piece.

Shia LaBeouf once said, "Dying is easy. Comedy is hard." Thoughts?

I love that Shia LeBeouf wants to take credit for that. What a special guy. Comedy IS hard! I'll give him that; although, I have a strong belief that some people are just born with it. This is not to say it doesn't take craft, but not every idiot can just walk on to a stage and make people give a rat's ass. You're either funny or the red light flashes way earlier than it should have.

Wanna see more MasterMinds? At Artopia, presented by Miracle Mile and Downtown Coral Gables, you can check out work by 2014's ten MasterMind award finalists and watch as the three Mastermind Award winners are announced. And that's just the beginning. Artopia will also include live entertainment by Bottle & Bottega, CircX, and Flamenco Puro; local art by Tesoro Carolina, Trek 6, 8 Bit Lexicon, Hec One Love, Ivan Roque, and Jay Bellicchi; and DJ sets by Main Event Productions, Phaxas, Golden San, Skinny Hendrix, and DJ Supersede. Other sponsors include Rums of Puerto Rico (Official Rum sponsor), Car2Go, El Palacios de los Jugos, Beck's (official beer sponsor), and Vero Water (official water sponsor). Early bird tickets are available through Feb. 2. Visit the official Artopia website.



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ISABELLA BLOW

Isabella Blow: The Play

by SARAH KARMALI
20 Aug 2013



A PLAY based on the life of the late Isabella Blow has just opened in America. Entitled *Blow Me*, the production is the work of the Mad Cat Theatre Company in Miami.

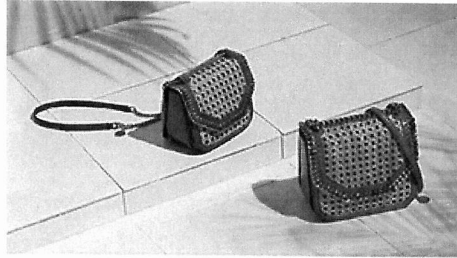
Written by Jessica Farr and directed by the company's founder, Paul Tei, the play stars Erin Joy Schmidt as Blow and focuses on the final moments of the stylist's life and her tragic suicide in 2007.



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Blow is known for having discovered some of fashion's leading names, including Alexander McQueen, Sophie Dahl and Stella Tennant. A fashion editor, consultant and muse, she was renowned for her bold, daring and extrovert style. A selection of pieces from her wardrobe will go on display at Somerset House in November.

Blow Me is showing at the Miami Theater Center until September 1.

ISABELLA BLOW

VOGUE DAILY

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Isabella Blow's Life Gets Adapted for Stage

Twenty-three-year-old playwright Jessica Farr's "Blow Me" runs through Sunday in her home city of Miami.

By [Rebecca Kleinman](#) on August 30, 2013
issue [08/30/2013](#) [Download PDF](#)

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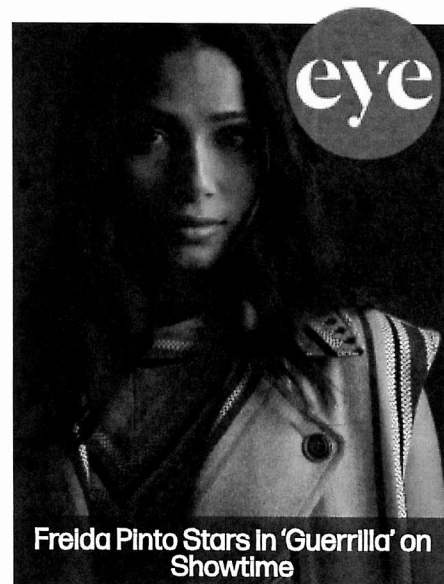


Miami seems like the last place that a play about the troubled British fashion editor Isabella Blow would come to light. Yet Jessica Farr, a 23-year-old native of the city more known for clubbing than culture, has taken on the subject in her new work, "Blow Me." Mad Cat Theatre Co., which the playwright and actor joined at the age of 16, produced the nearly sold-out show starring Erin Joy Schmidt, which ends its brief run on Sunday at

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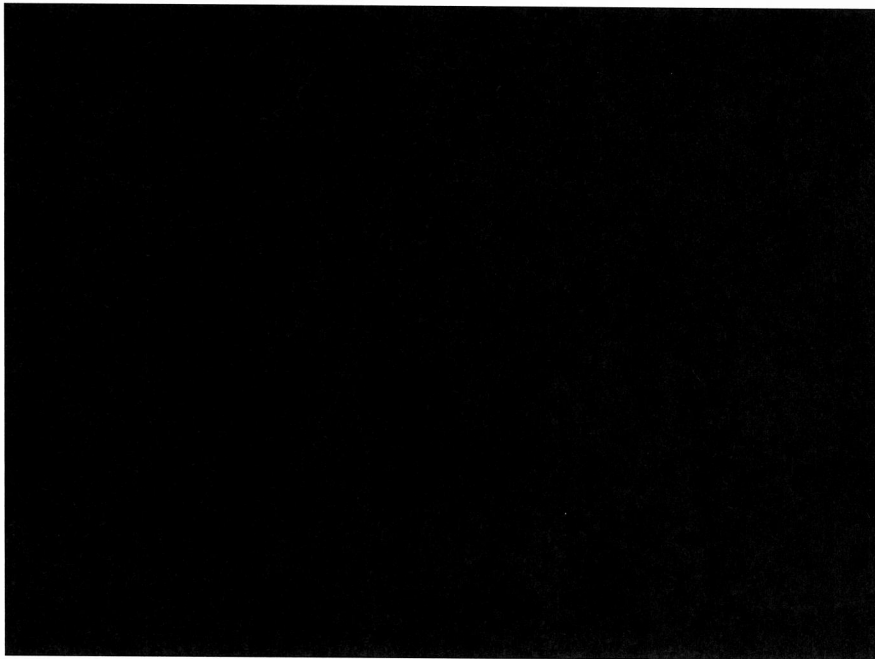
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the SandBox at Miami Theater Center. English and Scottish troupes have already expressed interest in staging it, a request that should escalate when Somerset House exhibits "Isabella Blow: Fashion Galore!" in London in November.

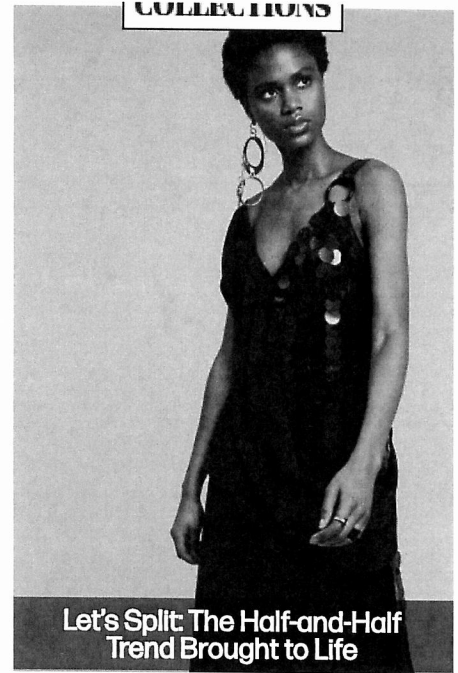
Farr discovered Blow through friends in the fashion industry while she studied at Fordham University in New York, as well as the Costume Institute's Alexander McQueen blockbuster show. Blow's cameo in "The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou" really made her fall for the odd bird of paradise, outrageous headwear and all.



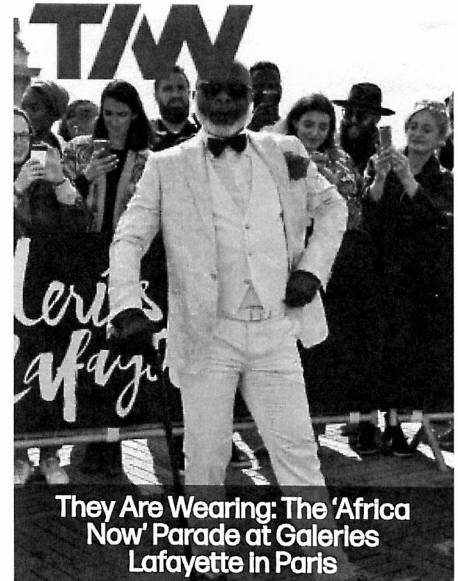
This story first appeared in the August 30, 2013 issue of WWD. [Subscribe Today.](#)

"I had to know more about her life with its endless anecdotes and ups and downs," said Farr, who devoured biographies and coffee-table books such as "Blow by Blow" and "Isabella Blow: A Life in Fashion," among others. "There was too much great material to fit into an hour and 20 minutes, so sadly, some

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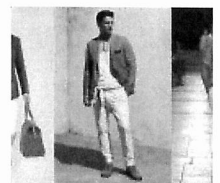
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nuggets like when she worked in a scone shop or when she fancied herself a bullfighter didn't make it into the script."

The play is set in the 24 hours leading up to Blow's death in 2007, as she lies in a hospital following her seventh, ultimately successful, suicide attempt. While she drifts in and out of consciousness after drinking weed killer, factual flashbacks mingle with delusions in a fast-paced, wickedly biting black comedy whose panoply of characters come and go as quickly as fashion trends. The production is anchored by the perfectly cast Schmidt, who's onstage the entire two acts. Layered with voice-overs and music, the barrage of stimulation evokes the era of smart TV translated for theater.

"I didn't want it to be just a laugh fest. It was important to celebrate her as an artist who was overlooked and never quite found her footing familiarly or professionally," Farr said.

The spotlight shines on Blow's protégés — Alexander McQueen, Philip Treacy and Sophie Dahl as a clueless newbie experiencing her first modeling session with Mario Testino. Like an episode of "This Is Your Life," other guests include Blow's husband, Detmar, and the distant, judgmental mother who abandoned her, amongst a rogue's gallery of other fashion insiders.

Actors play up to six roles each, a challenge to costume designer Karelle Levy on top of the spartan budget of \$1,500. Luckily, the Miami-based knitwear designer was in London when she got the gig and loaded up on pieces like leather and sequined jackets from Brick Lane boutiques. For Blow, who wields an electronic cigarette like a protective magic wand against the kiss-kiss crowd throughout the performance, she fashioned a hat, another signature Blow shield, of multicolored feathers to wear with a fur coat found at Goodwill, not exactly an easy feat in Miami, and one of Levy's own creations, a black and gold Lurex maxidress.

"It's a lot like 'Sex and the City,' where clothes and accessories play a supporting role," said Levy, whose favorite costume capped with a pom-pommed face mask is inspired by Leigh Bowery's outré looks. "Some actors layer three costumes, so Velcro definitely became my all-purpose duct tape."

The play culminates in a blowout, no pun intended, between the

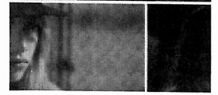
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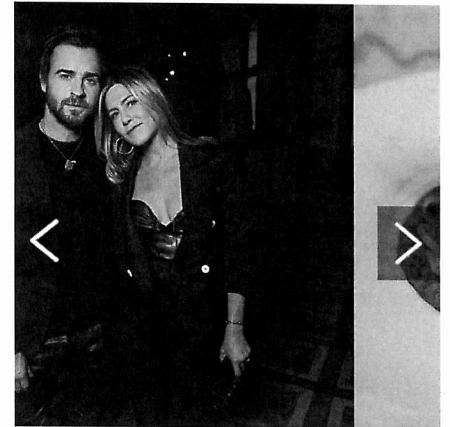
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Blows.

“She lived in a self-created circus that didn’t have public and private boundaries, but it was an art form nonetheless,” said Farr, who ends the performance with Blow’s lines “Who am I without the spectacle? Nothing. Who really lives without it?”

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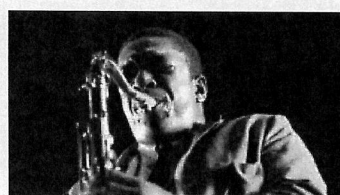
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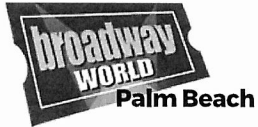
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Mad Cat Theatre Company Brings EARTHQUAKE to South Beach Comedy Festival Today

by BWW News Desk (author/BWW-News-Desk) Apr. 8, 2015

Mad Cat Theatre Company returns to the South Beach Comedy Festival with a new play

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Mad Cat Theatre Company Brings EARTHQUAKE to South Beach Comedy Festival Today



"Earthquake" written and directed by company member Jessica Farr (/people/Jessica-Farr/). In an attempt to crawl out of obscurity and find himself relevant once again, Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Trevor Winston writes a new "hard hitting, important play" bent on changing the lives of its audience members. But as the play passes through the producer's fingers, the rehearsal process, and the egos of those presenting the work onstage, Trevor discovers he

is creating "sensationalist disaster porn disguised as altruism." With his eyes set on a successful Broadway opening that doesn't completely overlook his original intentions, Trevor finds himself compromising his work for all the wrong reasons. What happens in the eleventh hour when all of his choices hang in the balance and fate grasps him in its hands? Earthquake may just shake up Broadway after all.

Mad Cat first took part in the festival in 2010 with the reincarnated story of St. Patrick, "Shepherd's Pie" by Ivonne Azurdia and Paul Tei. In 2011 they inaugurated the Gleason Room Backstage at the SBCF with "The Preservation Society" by Paul Tei. Yes, leave it to Mad Cat to turn a wake into a comedy. The troupe returned in 2013 with an eccentric cast that brought fashion icon Isabella Blow back to life in "Charming Acts of Misery", which later developed into the internationally buzzed about "Blow Me" by Jessica Farr (/people/Jessica-Farr/). In 2014, the company presented the doozy "Gerald Ford Superfreak" by Jessica Farr (/people/Jessica-Farr/), Theo Reyna and Paul Tei. So whether it's how snakes were really driven out of Ireland, figuring how to get a coffin into a comedy festival, helping an ex-president get his freak on, or finding humor in existential plight, Mad Cat is sure to make you laugh, think, and laugh some more, and is thrilled to be back at the 10th Annual South Beach Comedy Festival with its irreverent sense of humor.

Featuring Antonio Amadeo (/people/Antonio-Amadeo/)† as Trevor Winston, Noah Levine (company member) as Pete Doherty, (/people/Bonnie-Sherman/)Bonnie Sherman (/people/Bonnie-Sherman/)† as The Secretary and Erica Medley, Andres Maldonado as Mario Fuentes, Carey Hart (company member) as Mercedes Rundle, Caiti Wiggins as Arizona Cumin, Michael Gioia (/people/Michael-Gioia/) as Jack Hall (/people/Jack-Hall/)† and The Homeless Guy and Amanda Corbin† as PSM and the actual stage manager for the show.

† Member Actors' Equity Association.

Sound Design by Matt Corey (/people/Matt-Corey/) and Costume Design by Karelle Levy (company members).

We wish to express gratitude to the Performers' Union: Actors' Equity Association through Theatre Authority, Inc. for their cooperation in permitting the union Artists to appear on this program. All proceeds benefit Mad Cat Theater Company, Inc.

DETAILS:

ONE NIGHT ONLY BENEFIT PERFORMANCE - WEDNESDAY APRIL 8, 2015 - 8:30 PM

THE GLEASON ROOM BACKSTAGE @ The Fillmore Miami Beach at the Jackie Gleason (/people/Jackie-Gleason/) Theater

1700 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, FL 33139

Tickets and info at www.madcattheatre.org (http://www.madcattheatre.org).

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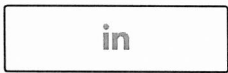


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Her dream to become an actress leads to recognition as playwright

By: Richard Yager | September 20, 2013


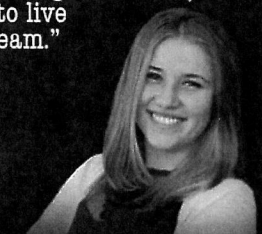


Jessica Farr

Jessica Farr's decision to commute from Kendall to the New World School of the Arts came about with her inner desire to become an actress. Now she has become internationally known as a playwright.

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“Everything just happened to fall together when I began combining a desire for acting with play directing,” she explained recently during an interview from Los Angeles.

That is where her artistic talent as a writer suddenly caused headlines in the world of the theater, following production of a play she wrote about the internationally famous fashion icon, Isabella Blow, whose suicide created the dramatic elements for Farr’s play, set in the 24 hours leading to Blow’s seventh suicide attempt.

The fashion leader’s death infused with Farr’s dramatic touches for a Miami stage production quickly caused headlines and praise from publications that count heavily in the worlds of couture and the stage.

Isabella Blow: The Play that was staged by Miami’s Mad Cat Theater Company through Sept. 1 was headlined on an Internet edition of the British Vogue magazine with the comment: “A play based on the life of the late Isabella Blow has just opened in America entitled Blow Me... written by Jessica Farr and directed by the company’s founder, Paul Tei, the play stars Erin Joy Schmidt as Blow and focuses on the final moments of the stylist’s life and her tragic suicide in 2007.”

Then Women’s Wear Daily, “bible” of the fashion industry, followed with a piece for its international readership, written by Rebecca Kleinman, that began: “Miami seems like the last place that a play about the troubled British fashion editor Isabella Blow would come to light. Yet Jessica Farr, a 23-year-old native of the city more known for clubbing than culture, has taken on the subject in her new work, Blow Me.

“Mad Cat Theater Company, which the playwright and actor joined at the age of 16, produced the nearly sold-out show starring Erin Joy Schmidt which ends its brief run Sunday (Sept. 1) at the SandBox at Miami Theater Center” located in Miami Shores.

Farr’s playwriting about Blow also has made headlines in The Telegraph and The Daily Mail in London, Vogue UK,



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Fashionista NYC, Style Arabia, and other trendy publications in China and Poland, as well as Ocean Drive, the slick Miami Beach magazine that reports SoBe trends in fashion and design.

As interpreted by Farr, Blow's life through anecdotes creating headline buzz in both theater and fashion worlds is a rare double knockout to introduce the fast-budding Kendall comedienne and actress who still has her sights set on a stage career in addition to playwriting.

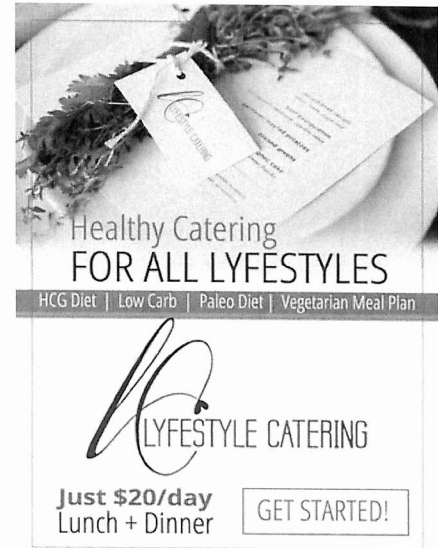
"It's all very exciting," Farr said prior to returning to Kendall and what doubtless will be a big hug from mom, Laura Phillips, whose writing talents provide public information for Miami-Dade Parks Department and have surely helped to inspire her daughter's writing career.

"It began when I first appeared in a high school play," Farr said, referring to the time she commuted to the New World School at Miami-Dade College's downtown campus where she wound up winning performance awards and as a playwright at local and state levels through Florida State Thespians. After receiving her degree at Fordham, she traveled abroad to Russia to learn at the Moscow Art Theater School (MXAT).

She credits the Mad Cat Theater group and five-time Carbonell Award-winning Miami playwright Michael McKeever with inspiring her play writing that includes The Hamlet Dog and Pony Show, Call Me Catwoman, and Carmen in Three Acts. She currently has a new one-person show "in the works."

A distinguished member of the Mad Cat Theater group, she will be part of the Naked Stage's 24-Hour Theater Project in Miami, scheduled to open in October. She also plans to direct still another new but as yet unannounced Miami show in December.

"Jessica is one of the most driven and focused and talented young actors I've ever had a chance to work with," said James Randolph, a New World School assistant



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professor whose teaching career with theatrical arts covers more than 20 years.

“I saw her work on stage, write plays, organize performances and prove to be a student leader. Her success doesn't surprise me,” he added. “I know her achievements will continue.”



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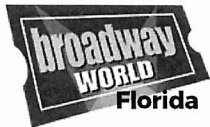
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City Theatre's Shorts Cuts Educational Tour Concludes

by [BWW News Desk \(/author/BWW-News-Desk\)](#) Mar. 23, 2016

City Theatre packed up its shorts and hit the road for the SHORTS CUTS educational tour that brought engaging and fun programming to thousands of students in Miami-Dade

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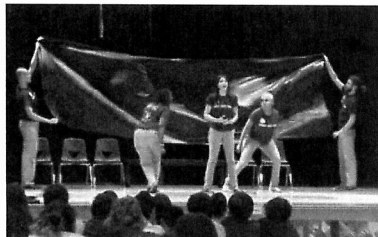


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City Theatre's Shorts Cuts Educational Tour Concludes - Broadway World



County from January through March 2016.

Directed by Jessica Farr (/people/Jessica-Farr/), SHORTS CUTS is an entertaining outreach program comprised of age and theme-appropriate short plays. This anti-bullying and self-respect program brought thematic short drama into Miami-Dade County public schools and provided students with live theatre performances, post-show discussions with the

cast and crew, and the opportunity to learn about careers in the arts.

"I am honored to have worked with the City Theatre creative team on the SHORTS CUTS 2016 tour," said Farr. "The exciting content composed of works with South Florida roots engaged the students from diverse perspectives and on many nuanced levels."

City Theatre commissioned four women playwrights with South Florida roots to write original plays for its middle school SHORTS CUTS 2016 tour. These four award-winning playwrights captured Miami's diverse experiences and cultures to reflect, impact, entertain and teach the young audiences on the tour.

The SHORT CUTS play line-up included:

The Aftershock by France-Luce Benson

Two misunderstood young girls, one Haitian and the other African-American, are lumped together by prejudice and ignorance, and believe they could not be more different. Left behind at recess to sort things out, they find common ground and a timid and unlikely friendship built on empathy and kindness.

No New Friends by Jessica Farr (/people/Jessica-Farr/)

Amidst middle school peer pressure and the desire to be liked, a friendship is split when staying true to oneself means sacrificing popularity. The two former friends are then forced to decide which is more important, and what it means to be your authentic self.

Ten or Something Years From Now by Lauren Feldman

Little H has just frighteningly bullied Percy when the two are visited by their older, future selves. The older selves reveal that this youthful mistake has left a permanent mark on both adults. When erasing the past seems impossible, present and future selves endeavor to forgive and move forward.

FREE-K by Vanessa Garcia (/people/Vanessa-Garcia/)

Delfina is not like her classmates-to them, she seems entirely other-a fish out of water. A bilingual, Cuban immigrant with a powerful message, Delfina lets insults roll off her back like water, and through her unique and resonant story, challenges the very notion of what it means to be "other."

The SHORT CUTS cast included Chasity Hart, Andres Maldonado, Diana Garle, Inez Barlatier and Dominic Smith (/people/Dominic-Smith/).

For information on next year's tour, contact Melody Fakhourie at melody@citytheatre.com or call 305-755.9401 ext. 12. For more information on City Theatre, visit www.citytheatre.com.

The SHORT CUTS educational school tour was made possible with the support of the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners, and the following

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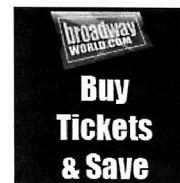
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NEW PLAY BLOW ME REIMAGINES ISABELLA BLOW'S FINAL HOURS

Just over six years after her tragic passing, the life--and death--of fashion icon Isabella Blow are the subject of a play currently making its premiere at Miami's Mad Cat Theatre.

TYLER MCCALL • AUG 19, 2013

Just over six years after her tragic passing, the life--and death--of fashion icon Isabella Blow are the subject of a new play premiering this month at [Miami's Mad Cat Theatre](#).

Blow Me, written by Miami-native Jessica Farr, follows the British fashion editor on the eve of her final suicide attempt as she remembers the events of her life. Blow, who was famously [credited with discovering designer Alexander McQueen](#), attempted suicide six times before succeeding on her seventh attempt. The play follows Blow's life events out of sequence and includes appearances by her friends and loved ones.

"It takes place in the last moments of her life where these characters from her life come back to her and she gets to rifle through it and figure out what it all means," playwright Farr says. "It focuses on her shortcomings as well as celebrating who she is."

Farr admits she's a longtime fan of the legendary editor. "Me and my best friend Mark would read about her, and dress like her, and find out where she was going to show up and when," she says. "I wanted to delve into her brain and try to illuminate some stories from her lifetime--there's more a focus on the fashion world than anything."

And since Blow had so many friends in the industry, several of them make an appearance: Mario Testino, Alexander McQueen, Sophie Dahl, Philip Treacy, and a character inspired by Andre Leon Talley each have small roles. "There was a version of the play that Anna Wintour was in, but it didn't make it to this [final] version because of casting issues," Farr adds. "I wanted Karl Lagerfeld and Manolo Blahnik, but they didn't make the final cut [because of budget]."

Farr, who calls *Blow Me* a "dark comedy," has already received criticism from audience members who feel she doesn't sufficiently explain Blow's motivation for suicide. Farr calls that criticism "unfair," adding, "It's not my place to answer why she killed herself."

"It was a challenge writing someone who comes from such entitlement and who has fallen so greatly, because a lot of people have a hard time relating," she continued. "You're writing about someone who lived, who existed, who died not too long ago. So I wanted to keep the family in mind, and the industry in mind, but still raise questions."

Since this is a play about a fashion icon who regularly wore outrageous headpieces by Philip Treacy with couture garments, the costumes are just as important as the actors. Costume designer Karelle Levy put together the wardrobe, a combination of thrifted items and handiwork. Levy, who has her own fashion line, was excited to work on the production. "It was so fascinating because she was a major icon, and my fiance is in London so I've been traveling back and forth anyhow," she told me. "It was kind of like kismet."

Levy spent her time traveling back and forth from London, where she visited Philip Treacy's shop for research and took a summer course at McQueen's old haunt, Central Saint Martins.

Farr isn't the first to be inspired by Blow's life; in 2010, the play *Blow by Blow* had a limited run at New York's Midtown International Theatre Festival. It was also previously reported that there was an Isabella Blow biopic in the works, produced to be produced by John Galliano, though nothing has been heard of the project in a while.

Blow Me is currently in production at Mad Cat Theatre through September 1; Farr has hopes to bring the production to Edinburgh and New York.

April, 2015 – Earthquake, a new Comedy

By **admin** - March 18, 2015

Mad Cat Theatre Company at the Tenth Annual South Beach Comedy Festival

EARTHQUAKE

A NEW COMEDY

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY JESSICA FARR

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR PAUL TEI

ONE NIGHT ONLY BENEFIT PERFORMANCE – WEDNESDAY APRIL 8, 2015 – 8:30 PM

THE GLEASON ROOM BACKSTAGE @ The Fillmore Miami Beach at the Jackie Gleason Theater

1700 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, FL33139

MIAMI BEACH, FL –

Mad Cat Theatre Company returns to the South Beach Comedy Festival with a new play “Earthquake” written and directed by company member Jessica Farr. In an attempt to crawl out of obscurity and find himself relevant once again, Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Trevor Winston writes a new “hard hitting, important play” bent on changing the lives of its audience members. But as the play passes through the producer’s fingers, the rehearsal process, and the egos of those presenting the work onstage, Trevor discovers he is creating “sensationalist disaster porn disguised as altruism.” With his eyes set on a successful Broadway opening that doesn’t completely overlook his original intentions, Trevor finds himself compromising his work for all the wrong reasons. What happens in the eleventh hour when all of his choices hang in the balance and fate grasps him in its hands? Earthquake may just shake up Broadway after all.

Mad Cat first took part in the festival in 2010 with the reincarnated story of St. Patrick, “Shepherd’s Pie” by Ivonne Azurdia and Paul Tei. In 2011 they inaugurated the Gleason Room Backstage at the SBCF with “The Preservation Society” by Paul Tei. Yes, leave it to Mad Cat to turn a wake into a comedy. The troupe returned in 2013 with an eccentric cast that brought fashion icon Isabella Blow back to life in “Charming Acts of Misery”, which later developed into

the internationally buzzed about “Blow Me” by Jessica Farr. In 2014, the company presented the doozy “Gerald Ford Superfreak” by Jessica Farr, Theo Reyna and Paul Tei. So whether it’s how snakes were really driven out of Ireland, figuring how to get a coffin into a comedy festival, helping an ex-president get his freak on, or finding humor in existential plight, Mad Cat is sure to make you laugh, think, and laugh some more, and is thrilled to be back at the 10th Annual South Beach Comedy Festival with its irreverent sense of humor.

Featuring Antonio Amadeo† as Trevor Winston, Noah Levine (company member) as Pete Doherty, Bonnie Sherman† (company member) as The Secretary and Erica Medley, Andres Maldonado as Mario Fuentes, Carey Hart (company member) as Mercedes Rundle, Caiti Wiggins as Arizona Cumin, Michael Gioia as Jack Halloway and The Homeless Guy and Amanda Corbin† as PSM and the actual stage manager for the show.

† Member Actors’ Equity Association.

Sound Design by Matt Corey and Costume Design by Karelle Levy (company members).

We wish to express gratitude to the Performers’ Union: Actors’ Equity Association through Theatre Authority, Inc. for their cooperation in permitting the union Artists to appear on this program. All proceeds benefit Mad Cat Theater Company, Inc.

About the playwright and director:

JESSICA FARR is a playwright, actress and comedian from Miami. She is a proud member of Mad Cat Theatre Company and Actors’ Equity Association. She is an alumni of Fordham University (B.A. Lincoln Center) and has studied at Moscow Art Theatre (MXAT). She has performed in two continents and is responsible for such works as EARTHQUAKE: or how natural disasters can make you instantly rich (South Beach Comedy Festival 2015), Hey Girl (City Theatre Swamp Series), Clay The Moment (Girls Club Fort Lauderdale), Blow Me (Mad Cat), Charming Acts of Misery (Mad Cat/South Beach Comedy Festival 2013), Gerald Ford Superfreak (co-written with Paul Tei and Theo Reyna, Mad Cat/South Beach Comedy Festival 2014) and The Hamlet Dog and Pony Show (co-written with Paul Tei, Mad Cat). She has performed standup at The Comedy Store in LA, The LA Improv, Ha Ha Comedy Club and Flappers in Burbank. Her short play NADIE was a finalist in City Theatre’s National Playwriting Competition. She currently lives in Little Haiti.

"EARTHQUAKE" is made possible by the South Beach Comedy Festival, The Fillmore Miami Beach at the Jackie Gleason Theatre, LiveNation, Barry University, Theatre Authority and with the support the City of Miami Beach, Cultural Affairs Program, Cultural Arts Council and the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and the Board of County Commissioners.

Tickets are on sale now! General Admission Tickets \$30 plus applicable service fees and VIP \$60 plus applicable service fees. VIP tickets include premium table seating and a Mad Cat Shot Glass & Button.

Tickets may be purchased online at . Tickets may also be purchased at The Fillmore box office located at 1700 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach. Telephone number 305-673-7300. For all festival information and tickets visit . The festival runs from April 8th to 11th, 2015 featuring Hannibal Buress, Bill Burr, Mark Normand, Patton Oswalt, and Michael Yo with more shows to be announced soon!

Calendar Listing:

Mad Cat Theatre at the SouthBeach Comedy Festival

EARTHQUAKE

A new play shakes up Broadway. One casualty at a time.

Written and Directed by Jessica Farr

Artistic Director Paul Tei

One Night Only Benefit Performance

Wednesday April 8, 2014 at 8:30 pm (bar opens 7:45 pm)

The Gleason Room Backstage @ The Fillmore Miami Beach at the Jackie Gleason Theater

1700 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach

Tickets and info at or

Tickets may also be purchased at The Fillmore box office located at 1700 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach. For all festival and ticket information visit .

ABOUT THE SOUTH BEACH COMEDY FESTIVAL:

The South Beach Comedy Festival is one of the premiere entertainment events in the country. Now in its 10th Year, SBCF is a comedy extravaganza taking place in the iconic Fillmore Miami Beach at the Jackie Gleason Theatre. SBCF features an extensive variety of acts from the top performers in the world to up and coming and new, emerging stars. There is literally something for everyone! Live Nation, the world’s largest live performance promoter, acts as the producing partner of the festival. Treat yourself to a laugh a minute experience at the South Beach Comedy Festival!

For more information go to: or .

Or go to SBCF Social Networking sites:

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Prices, artists, dates, times, and programs are subject to change without notice.

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Mad Cat Theatre to Present WHY NOT? WITH RICHARD NIXON This Fall

by BWW News Desk (/author/BWW-News-Desk) Aug. 25, 2016

Just in time for the presidential election this November, Why Not? With Richard Nixon is an absurd political satire ready to bring the laughs. This world-premiere comedy follows a

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late night public access television show hosted by Richard Nixon out of his house on Key Biscayne. With the help of his best friend, Bebe Rebozo, and his daughter, Tricia Nixon, the trio put on a colorful variety show that spirals into a series of musical outbursts and heated interrogations that history couldn't have made up on its own.

Guests on the show include Hillary Clinton (/people/Hillary-Clinton/) and Marco Rubio, actors Cliff Burgess (/people/Cliff-Burgess/) and Jessica Farr (/people/Jessica-Farr/) depict various roles, with Noah Levine starring as the one and only, Richard Nixon.

Playwrights Farr, Reyna and Tei first banded together to create the hit show Gerald Ford Superfreak! at Comedy Central's South Beach Comedy Festival in 2014. The Nixon character became so popular, they decided to write a spin off of Superfreak, and ended up penning Why Not. Why Not? went on to receive a popular workshop at the Jackie Gleason (/people/Jackie-Gleason/) Theatre Backstage at The Fillmore on Miami Beach as part of Mad Cat and More! Comedy Week.

Not originally scheduled in Mad Cat's Season, Why Not? was seen by MTC's Artistic Director Stephanie Ansin who then went on to insist Mad Cat put the show on again in a full production at MTC's SandBox.

See this not-to-be-missed show during its limited two week run: September 29th-October 9th.

IF YOU GO:

MAD CAT THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

WHY NOT? WITH RICHARD NIXON

by Jessica Farr (/people/Jessica-Farr/), Theo Reyna, & Paul Tei (/people/Paul-Tei/)

Directed by Paul Tei (/people/Paul-Tei/)*

Starring Cliff Burgess (/people/Cliff-Burgess/), Jessica Farr (/people/Jessica-Farr/)*, and Noah Levine*

Costume design by Leslye Menshouse*

Lighting design by Melissa Santiago*

Sound design by Matt Corey (/people/Matt-Corey/)

Set design by Paul Tei (/people/Paul-Tei/)*

* denotes Mad Cat Company members

Performances run September 29th - October 9th 2016, playing Thursdays- Sundays at 8:00 pm at MTC SandBox, 9816 NE 2nd Ave, Miami Shores FL 33138.

Tickets on sale NOW. Students, seniors and industry tickets (Thursday and Sunday ONLY) \$15; Adults \$30. Tickets may be purchased online at www.madcattheatre.org (http://www.madcattheatre.org), www.mtcmiami.org (http://www.mtcmiami.org), or by MTC box office phone number: 305-751-9550.

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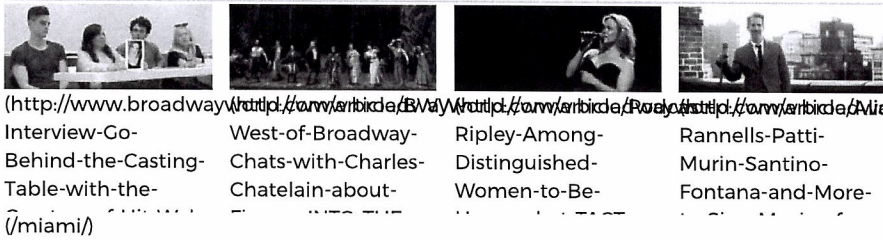


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Pictured: Cliff Burgess (/people/Cliff-Burgess/), Noah Levine and Jessica Farr (/people/Jessica-Farr/). Photo by Paul Tei (/people/Paul-Tei/).

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