

February

Valley Scene

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Onstage

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The Catholic Girl's Guide to Losing Your Virginity at the Falcon Theatre in Toluca Lake through March 6 - A LOL Romantic Comedy

By Debra Graff



Playwright/Star Annie Hendy bares her heart and soul in this semi-autobiographical comedy about finding love, at The Falcon Theatre, the cleanest, classiest, coziest, most comfortable theatre in the Valley, where every seat has a perfect view and every production has top notch talent. Skillfully directed by Gregg W. Brevoort, with Hendy's abounding energy and enthusiasm illuminating the stage, *The Catholic Girl's Guide to Losing Your Virginity*, will keep you engrossed and laughing out loud. Using poignant quotes we can all relate to, e.g. "He'll show up when you stop looking," Hendy takes us into her world of finding the right man to lose her virginity to. Will it be the brooding musician, nerdy virgin, suave French actor, sports jock, or pediatrician, all portrayed with remarkable versatility and charm by Cyrus Alexander, as the "Man." Do we have to kiss a lot of frogs before we find the prince? No spoiler alerts here. However, during one hilarious speed dating scene, Alexander plays a Christian virgin saving himself for marriage, a cowboy, a male cheerleader, and a British Casanova type, smoothly and suavely changing into each character within seconds, a feat he pulls off with incredible effectiveness. He also dazzles us as a priest and a nun.

There are many references to Cincinnati, where Hendy hails from, and where she began her acting career. She went from the Midwest to the Big Apple, New York City, to try and make it, but was struggling as an actor and needed an outlet for her angst. At one point, according to Hendy, "I was walking down the street, broke, and waiting on tables, when I heard a voice say 'write a play.'" And that's how the idea for *Catholic Girl's* commenced. Hendy loves writing and starring in her own creation. "When you write, it's essentially your baby," she told me, "and the challenge, especially as a woman, is how to eloquently express yourself. It's exciting to be on the set and bounce ideas off of other people, even if there's disagreement. It's all worth it for the collaboration process." Hendy's currently completing a comedy about three women who are the archetypal bachelorettes, hence, the title "George Clooney Manifesto." *Catholic Girl's* journey originated at The Hudson Guild Theatre in LA in '06, travelling to the Cincinnati Fringe Festival, where it was chosen as both the Audience and Critic's "Pick of the Fringe" and nominated for two Cincinnati Entertainment Awards. In '08 *Catholic Girl's* opened at the Pico Playhouse in LA for an extended 12-week run and sold out performances. It was most recently seen at the Ojai Arts Center where it won the California Presenter's 2010-2011 "New Works Tour" award.

Hendy's dream to be part of the LA Theatre Community has been fulfilled and she's honored to work at the Falcon Theatre, calling it, "beautiful, gorgeous, and intimate. It's very professional and they have a team of people that make the best product. I've always been a fan of Garry's (Director/Writer/Producer Garry Marshall who is founder /co owner of the Falcon, along with his

daughter Kathleen Marshall), so to be affiliated with him is amazing." Her next goal is taking her show to Chicago and New York and with tenacity like Hendy's, that will surely come to pass, and definitely warranted. Her advice to the novice writer/ actor: "Follow your heart, and march to the beat of your own drum. Don't let anyone tell you what you can or can't do." It's wise to take heed of Hendy's words, especially coming from someone who has so successfully stayed true to herself.

Hendy appreciates telling her story for LA audiences, describing them as "so much fun." She only has praise for her co-star, Alexander. "I've met a lot of actors and hands down, he's the most brilliant actor I know. He deserves a great career. He's always professional, a cool, calming presence, and helps to snap me back into the moment. He's adorable, a good friend, and I never want to do the show without him."

Falcon Theatre, 4252 Riverside Dr., Toluca Lake
Wed.-Sat., 8pm, Sun., 4pm.
Tickets (\$27-\$42)
(818) 955-8101
www.FalconTheatre.com

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