

THE MIDNIGHT COMPANY ANNOUNCES 2023 SEASON

The Midnight Company will follow its 2022 25th Anniversary Season with a lineup of five shows, including two world premiere cabaret/theatre productions.

The season will open with one of these cabaret/theatre shows, **JUST ONE LOOK**, starring Kelly Howe as Linda Ronstadt, running Wednesdays March 1, 8 and 15 at The Blue Strawberry. Ronstadt ruled the pop charts and filled stadiums in the 70's and 80's, and was the reigning Rock Goddess of the era. Her awareness of and work for social justice evolved due to her relationship with California Governor Jerry Brown, then running for President, as her music evolved into new genres like Gilbert And Sullivan on Broadway and The Great American Songbook with Nelson Riddle. But for Linda, it was always a search for the next great song. Kelly Howe will portray Linda and sing her sensational songs. In St. Louis, Howe has been seen in The Who's **TOMMY** (Stray Dog), **THE APHRA BEHN FESTIVAL** (SATE), **SWEAT** (The Black Rep) and **RODNEY'S WIFE** (Midnight). Joe Hanrahan, Midnight's Artistic Director, will write and direct the show and will appear as a veteran Rock journalist who finally gets to interview his unrequited love, Linda Ronstadt. Miranda Jagels Felix will Assistant Direct. She directed Kelly Howe for **THE APHRA BEHN FESTIVAL** (SATE), assistant directed and performed for **THE GOOD SHIP ST. LOUIS** (Upstream), performed in **HAG-SEED** (Prison Performing Arts) and will assistant direct **UNCLE VANYA** (The Actors Studio) in February.

The season continues at the Kranzberg Black Box, May 4-20, with **THE ABSOLUTE BRIGHTNESS OF LEONARD PELKEY** by Celeste Lecesne. Joe Hanrahan will portray several characters in the one-man show, primarily a detective in a small New Jersey blue collar fishing town. Leonard Pelkey, a flamboyant teenager, has gone missing. The investigation involves the many townsfolk who Leonard has positively impacted, as well as bullying classmates who threatened him. The New York Post called the show "intimate and affectionate...about the difference one person can make." The Los Angeles Times said it "shines with humanity" and the New York Times said the show "leaves you beaming with joy." KEATING will direct the show. She most recently directed **BRONTE SISTERS HOUSE PARTY**, directed/edited **CLASSIC MYSTERY GAME: Quarantine Edition** and directed **HOW TO BE A WOMAN** (all for SATE), **OR WHAT YOU WILL THE THIRD** (Poor Monsters) and **VENUS AND ADONIS** (St. Louis Shakespeare Festival). Inspired by his own short film, the playwright, Lecesne, formed The Trevor Project, the world's largest suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning) young people. Midnight will work to build awareness of The Trevor Project with the play and the press surrounding it.

Next, Midnight will present **THE YEARS** by Cindy Lou Johnson, July 13-29 at The Chapel. Joe Hanrahan will direct this delicate, penetrating play that takes two sets of young cousins through 15 years of love, marriage, divorce, death...and the mysteries and majesties of life. Hanrahan directed this play several years ago for the Orthwein Theatre Company. Reviewing for the Post-Dispatch at the time, Gerry Kowarsky said "THE YEARS is an exceptional work. Many plays deal with the pains of family relationships, but few have as much insight, pathos and humor as THE YEARS does in its current production." (In that Orthwein production the cast included Lavonne Byers - appearing in Midnight's upcoming **THE LION IN WINTER** - and Jon Hamm). Hanrahan directed Midnight's 2022 shows **RODNEY'S WIFE** and **ST. LOUIS WOMAN**, and for others he's directed **CUDDLES** (SATE), **NO CHILD** and **THE BROWNSVILLE RAID** (The Black Rep) and **THE FLICK** (R-S).

Midnight returns to The Blue Strawberry, Wednesdays July 26, August 2 and 9, with YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU, a very personal tribute to Judy Garland, written/directed by Hanrahan, starring Jennelle Gilreath Owens. Singing Garland's classic songs, Owens will celebrate Garland's incredible music and legendary career, and will relate her own artistic journey, citing the inspiration and musical lessons she learned from Garland, the triple-threat performer who virtually defined the movie musical genre. Owens has been seen recently in CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF (Kirkwood Theatre Guild) and THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT TIME (Hawthorne Players) and upcoming she'll be in UNCLE VANYA (Actors Studio) and INTO THE WOODS (Stray Dog). Hanrahan said "Jim Dolan of The Blue Strawberry and I have discussed incorporating a theatrical element into classic cabaret, and with this and the Linda Ronstadt show, we're aiming to create that." Dolan said "Blue Strawberry is excited to be working with Joe Hanrahan and Midnight to present these shows. As a longtime fan of Joe and Midnight's work, we are honored to be a part of these productions."

And the Midnight season will conclude with THE LION IN WINTER by James Goldman, directed by Tom Kopp, playing October 5-21 at the .ZACK. The play, a massive Broadway hit, followed by a film starring Katherine Hepburn and Peter O'Toole, is set at Christmas, 1183, in a castle in Chinon, France, as King Henry II attempts to manipulate his wife - Eleanor of Aquitaine, long imprisoned by her husband but let out for this historic holiday - his three sons, all striving for the throne or at least more power - his mistress, striving to be Henry's bride - and the young King of France - into giving him the legacy he craves. The New York Times called it "a work of intelligence, astringent wit, and much theatrical skill," while the Los Angeles Times described its "marvelously articulate language, with humor that bristles and burns." Lavonne Byers will portray Eleanor of Aquitaine. Byers' numerous stage appearances include CABARET and SWEENEY TODD (Stray Dog), GOLDA'S BALCONY (New Jewish Theatre) and THE NIGHT OF THE IGUANA (Tennessee Williams Festival). Joe Hanrahan will play Henry II. Directing credits from Tom Kopp include EVERY BRILLIANT THING (R-S), EQUIVOCATION, GREAT FALLS and MEMORY OF WATER (West End Players) and TITUS ANDRONICUS and JULIUS CAESAR (St. Louis Shakespeare.)

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Pics by Todd Davis. Kelly Howe in JUST ONE LOOK. Summer Baer and Hannah Geisz in THE YEARS. Jennelle Gilreath Owens in YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU.