

The Midnight Company will present the solo show THE ABSOLUTE BRIGHTNESS OF LEONARD PELKEY, by Celeste Lecesne. May 4-20 at The Kranzberg Black Box Theatre. Performances are Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm. Tickets (\$25 for Friday/Saturday and \$20 for Thursday) will go on sale April 10 at MetroTix.com. Alicen Moser directs.

Joe Hanrahan, Midnight's Artistic Director, portrays a detective and other characters in a small New Jersey town as he unravels the story of Leonard Pelkey, a tenaciously optimistic and flamboyant fourteen-year-old boy who goes missing. A luminous force of nature whose magic is only truly felt once he is gone, Leonard becomes an unexpected inspiration as the town's citizens question how they live, who they love, and what they leave behind.

Celeste (formerly James) Lecesne has written several books, including the novel ABSOLUTE BRIGHTNESS, which gave birth to the play, as well as the play and book, WORD OF MOUTH, which gave birth to the short film, TREVOR.

The New York Times said ABSOLUTE BRIGHTNESS "...leaves you beaming with joy...a superlative solo show...Mr. Lecesne is a writer of wit and great observational skills, who here unfolds a dark tale that shimmers with needling suspense you associate with best police procedurals...Perhaps most remarkably, he's the rare artist who doesn't shy away from sentimentality... you may find yourself choking back a tear or two."

The New York Post called the show "...moving...Lecesne delivers a message of acceptance without being preachy. Intimate and affectionate, ABSOLUTE BRIGHTNESS is about the difference one person can make-and perhaps, with any luck, one show."

And the Los Angeles Times said ABSOLUTE BRIGHTNESS "...shines with humanity...an affecting and entertaining testament to the beauty of a world in which difference is celebrated rather than denigrated."

Hanrahan has performed a number of solo shows, including several each by Eric Bogosian, Conor McPherson, Will Eno and Daniel Maclvor, as well as portraying Harry Truman in GIVE 'EM HELL HARRY and in his own script, the Theatre Circle nominated NOW PLAYING THIRD BASE FOR THE ST. LOUIS CARDINALS...BOND, JAMES BOND. His play about Linda Ronstadt, JUST ONE LOOK, continues with extended performances this April at The Blue Strawberry, and coming in 2023, he will direct THE YEARS in July, write/direct the Judy Garland show YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU at The Blue Strawberry in late July, coadapt and direct HUMANS OF ST. LOUIS from the book at The St. Louis Fringe in August, and perform in THE LION IN WINTER in October.

Director Alicen Moser is one of the artistic leaders of the theatre group, Poor Monsters, and she's performed as an actress for many St. Louis groups, including Midnight when she appeared as George Harrison in Hanrahan's Beatle play, THE EVEREST GAME, at the 2017 St. Louis Fringe Festival.

Linda Menard will stage manage, Tony Anselmo will design the lighting, and Kevin Bowman provides production support.

In 1995, Celeste Lecesne wrote the screenplay for the short film, TREVOR, which won the Academy Award for Best Live Action Short Film. Inspired by that film, in 1998 Lecesne co-founded and launched The Trevor Project, the first nationwide 24-hour crisis intervention lifeline for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth, including phone, in-person and additional online life-affirming resources. If someone you might know is feeling helpless or suicidal, trained crisis counselors are available 24/7 at 1-866-488-7386, or by texting 678678. More information is available at thetrevorproject.org.

The Midnight Company will be working to spread the awareness of The Trevor Project during the run of THE ABSOLUTE BRIGHTNESS OF LEONARD PELKEY.

Photos by Todd Davis. Joe Hanrahan as Detective Chuck DeSoto with evidence - a Rainbow Colored Platform Sneaker and Fairy Wings - concerning the case of the missing teenager Leonard Pelkey.)

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