



James Seifert and Sherry Michaels
Photo by Charles Blondeau

Play "Daddy Issues" Shows How Not to Please Your Jewish Parents

» by Brian Fishbach

THE TAGLINE FOR THE PLAY "DADDY ISSUES" asks, "How far would a gay man go to please his Jewish parents?"

David Goldyn, who directed and produced the play, which he wrote under the pen name Marshall Goldberg, not only knows the answer, but he turned it into an entertaining stage show, now in its first West Coast run.

The play is semi-autobiographical: the main character, Donald Moskowitz, is a gay man in his 20s, working as an actor in New York City in the 1980s. His overbearing parents, Sid and Marion, and his grandmother are in complete denial of their son's sexual

orientation, on top of belittling of his acting aspirations. They seem to be only concerned with Donald finding a nice woman to make them grandchildren. They even dangle a doubling of his inheritance if he follows through with their wishes.

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So Donald hatches a plan to fool his parents into thinking that a decade prior, while

in college, Donald knocked up his then-girlfriend. When Donald informs his family of this fib, they insist on meeting their nonexistent estranged grandchild.

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While growing up in Orlando, Goldyn's parents would spring the "make us grandparents" topic on him all the time. Mocking his late father, Goldyn demonstrated, "you know, your mother and I would be so happy if you gave us a grandchild." And

came over at 10:00 am and I literally had an 11:00 am audition," Goldyn told the Journal. "I said, 'Please don't push any of my buttons. Please don't say anything that'll upset me.' And of course, they went into 'Your mother and I would be so happy...' Goldyn's demeanor turned into a mocking, resentful tone. His parents once again asked him to take an interest in the ladies so one day he can make them grandparents.

"Ruined my day, ruined my audition, because at that point, I didn't know how feelings go. I'm young. I didn't know how to do that. I'm better now. So that night at dinner, they pulled it again and I said, 'There's something I never told you. I had a son with the girl I dated in college, Mary Ellen.'"

Goldyn's ruse with his parents would last about 40 minutes before he let them down and confessed that he did not secretly father a child back in college.

That was just one time in which Goldyn fought back against his parents. But the questions came many times before and after that incident where he fooled them.

In fact, he didn't feel completely free to write about that situation until both of his parents had passed away.

"When I wrote this, I was very angry at my parents. Very angry. But now that I directed it five, going on six, times, I realized they came from a place of love and protection. And they were not all bad, but, you know, they were bad in the sense that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. So I've come to terms. They were Depression-Era children. They wanted simple things for me. They didn't want me to have

both parents and their offspring will have many takeaways after seeing "Daddy Issues." And Goldyn spelled the lessons out: "As a parent, to be a better parent and listen and see who your kid really is, not who you fantasize them to be," Goldyn said. "Look at your children and nourish what's there. Not what's not there. From a kid point of view, being true to yourself, knowing who you are and trying to stay true to that in spite of these voices all around you pulling you in many directions."

"Daddy Issues" will run through November 13th at The Dorie Theatre at The Complex, located at 6476 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles 90038. To purchase tickets and for more information, go to daddyissues-theplay.com. ■

“**The plot of "Daddy Issues" echoes a trick Goldyn played on his parents.**”

to struggle. I can go in the family business, I can have it, get married, have kids. They had a specific thing in mind. I have forgiven them over the course of writing it and directing it. In fact, I've actually played my father in one of the productions."

During the opening weekend, there were laughs every minute. The cantaloupe-colored walls of the set will remind you of a home you once lived in.

Donald's friends Levi (Josh Nadler) and Henrietta (Noa Lev-Ari) have strong chemistry, even as they both compete to play the role of Donald's long-lost ex-girlfriend in the scheme they hatch. Donald's mother Marion (Pamela Shaw) was the first role he casted for the west coast run. Goldyn said that she reminds him of his real mother in many ways.

At one point in the play, the characters find a 10-year old kid in New York to play the role of Donald's fictitious long-lost estranged son. The young actor, Solly Werner, nails the role. Even at age 9, he has such hysterical deadpan as his fictional Grandpa Sid (Jonathan Fishman) fawn and kvell over his existence. The kid's mother, played by Hannah Battersby, is a hilarious lush. Overall, the entire cast will have you wishing these characters would keep up their hijinks as a weekly sitcom.

Goldyn shared a review from his hometown Orlando Weekly that perfectly summarizes the play's broad reach: "Goldyn's snappy one-act is the rare show that would go over equally well in a gay nightclub and Miami retirement home."

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