

The Second Story Theatre

By Angelo Michael Masino

1) Let's start off with a flyer for my book **'Feeding Time at the Zoo'** which consists of three plays produced by Diana Gibson at **The Cast Theatre**, 804 N El Centro Ave. Hollywood. The book was published by Windsor Associates and sold at Samuel French Bookstore on Sunset Blvd.

2) Shortly after my run at The Cast Theatre I joined the **Hermosa Arts Foundation** where I met Maggie Moir who, along with sponsorship from **HAF**, produced my first play in Hermosa Beach called **'No Justice, No Peace'** It was part of the Edgefest Festival, where a number of theaters in Hollywood pool together and present new, original plays. **'No Justice, No Peace'** was the only play produced outside of Hollywood. It featured **Lamont Coleman**, a longtime associate and friend of Tyler Perry. It ran on the set of **'Late Nite Catechism'** a comedy produced by James Blackman's Redondo Civic Light Opera. The set was a classroom with pink walls. We had to drape black curtains around the whole room and assemble a portable stage (built by Brendan Moir) for each show. This all took place in room 8, facing out onto Pier Ave.

3) Next production was **'The Beast'** also sponsored by the HAF. At this point **'Late Nite Catechism'** had ended its run. Blackman cleared out, taking the light and sound system with him. The Foundation funded me five thousand dollars to build the first real **'2nd Story Theatre'**. The first thing I did was paint the whole room black. Then I went up to Hollywood to buy the stage lights and a sound system. I installed everything and we had a functional Theatre. The City of Hermosa Beach awarded me a **'Certificate of Recognition'** for my efforts.

4) The next production was **'The Treehouse'** again sponsored by the HAF. It was co-written by my eleven-year-old son Anthony and his friends. It honestly deals with divorce and the impact it has on the whole family, especially the children. Local recording artist Jon T. Howard wrote an original song for it titled **'Blood Brothers'**, which he performed live before every show. Hermosa Valley Middle School organized a field trip, during school hours, and all the fifth graders walked over to The Community Center to see it.

5) After this show the north wing of The Community Center was remodeled. The architect took my theater design and moved it across the hall to the south side of the building. (Please see the attached Community Resources Department memo). My play **'An Italian American Indian'** was chosen to be the first production for the grand re-opening.

5) **'An Italian American Indian'**, sponsored by the HAF, opened with a lot of expectations. The play received great reviews, and the show was packed with audiences every night. Standing ovations were common. It featured Joseph Runningfox, a well-known actor\artist in the

indigenous community. Because of the success of the play a lot of good publicity was cast upon The (new) 2nd Story Theatre.

6) 'War in Heaven' was the next big production. Once again, the HAF came to the rescue and sponsored the play despite its ridicule of institutional religion. It had a big cast and was very difficult to produce. It all worked out in the end receiving glowing reviews by both the critics and audiences.

7) 'Once Upon a Road Trip' is the last production I was involved in at The 2nd Story Theatre. Craig Greely of Family Theater Inc. produced it. He asked me if I could help first time playwright Casey Rohrer develop a play out of an idea Casey had. We worked on it together for over a year and finally finished a very funny and heartfelt one-act play. One that I am very proud of. The play ran at The 2nd Story Theatre and propelled Casey into the limelight of people with disabilities. A mini documentary was filmed about the making of the play. Casey went on to be quite a celebrity with numerous speaking engagements and appearances.

Angelo Masino

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Full of Great Scenes & Monologues for Auditions & Acting Classes

Feeding Time at the Zoo

Three plays by
Angelo Michael Masino



“With the Help of the Dragon”
“The Road Home”
“Reunion”

“B-Sides Captures New York Underbelly”

“Life’s festering underbelly is the subject of young playwright Angelo Masino. He writes with a hammer and chisel... in “With the Help of the Dragon” Masino’s Italian-American musclehead, who punches a bag makes Stanley in “A Streetcar named Desire” look like an Ivy League bowler. When Masino pummels his pregnant wife, the audience audibly gasps.. In “The Road Home” Masino is both bleak and passionate, probing racial barriers and sexual tensions in interracial relationships.”

Ray Loync
Los Angeles Times

“Ethnic Ethics”

Angelo Michael Masino’s B-Sides is a pair of ribald, rough and ready one acts comprised of “The Road Home” and “With the Help of the Dragon”.. Masino has an uncanny knack for writing furiously coarse dialogue that creates the bravado these characters use to protect themselves in a world where everyone is looking out for number one. Under Andrew DeAngelo’s sturdy direction, the remarkable talented cast members infuse their characters with a raw and rousing intensity that is admirable and memorable.”

Clifford Galle
Los Angeles Reader

“Feeding Time at the Zoo”

“There are 143 f words in “Reunion” at the Cast Theatre. Only kidding. But that’s close to the mark. The setting is an Italian-American bar in Queens, and the raw language takes on a syncopated rhythm that’s curiously intoxicating... “Reunion” is so redolent of barroom squalor with an East Coast accent that the production begins to assume the trappings of urban folklore.”

Ray Loync
Los Angeles Times

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Easy Reader

EL SEGUNDO • HERMOSA BEACH / MANHATTAN BEACH • REDONDO BEACH HOMETOWN NEWS

EASY WEEK

ENTERTAINMENT AND DINING IN THE SOUTH BAY

No Justice, No Peace



Photographer Michael Justice photographed in front of "No Justice, No Peace" graffiti during the 1992 Rodney King Riots. The photo appeared in the May 7, 1992 Easy Reader.

by Kevin Cody

Hermosa Beach playwright Angel Masino has assembled a ship of fools in a South Central LA gas station, where a racially and culturally disparate crew of social underdogs seek refuge from the 1992 Rodney King riots.

The premise could easily have resulted in tedious stereotyping. But the blistering writing and a veteran cast make the action inside as incendiary as the action outside. The language is disturbingly raw, particularly for a production underwritten by the Hermosa Arts Foundation. But it's the rawness that makes the play credible for younger members of the audience and, if nothing else, makes older audience members reflect not only on their latent racism, but on their cultural blinders.

Doc, the gas station owner (Lamont Coleman), is the neighborhood philosopher who, in the hands of a lesser actor or more

timid writer would be familiar and boring. But Doc has a dark side that has an all too human way of emerging at inappropriate times.

Local audiences will find it easiest to identify with Sharon (Kristen Hagen), the white cheerleader/coke whore from Palos Verdes. Her role may be the play's most challenging simply because our own kind are never as interesting as others. Sharon finds redemption at the end of the play, but it's small consolation knowing that her good intentions, in all likelihood, will fall victim once again to her emotional addictions.

Her boyfriend Tony (Chazz Mangusta) is an east coast Italian whose tough guy act proves to be real, much to the surprise of the two homeboys who stumble into Doc's station after one of them is shot in the leg.

The painkiller Clancy (Kevyn Richmond) takes for his leg wound frees him to spit out all the racist and sexist bigotry that he ingested during a childhood in the ghetto. Author Masino isn't afraid to portray black ghetto kids as depraved predators. And Richmond doesn't hesitate to behave as offensively as his thoughts.

His buddy Randall (William Stephens) doesn't have the excuse of drugs to justify his view that burning down this white

city makes more sense than Desert Storm, as he goes out on a looting mission. The audience may well find itself reluctantly agreeing with him.

The most sympathetic character is Mike (Michael Yama), whose reward for working hard is having his customers burn his store down and his daughter Kim resent him. Kim (Jae Toyota) and Anita (Francesca Galeas) are outcasts, even in the ghetto. They introduce a level of complexity that saves the play from being a simple, black versus white conflict.

The dead-on dialogue and dead-on acting make the lack of plot inconsequential until the end. Ends are problematic for plot-less stories, and this one's no exception. Here's an easy alternative ending. Kill Doc.

Theatergoers, whose adolescent kids think a night at the theater is like a night at the symphony, should take their kids to see *No Justice, No Peace*. If the language seems offensive, keep in mind that the play's most disturbing language is a song by Sublime that's currently a top 40 hit.

No Justice, No Peace is being performed on Wednesdays and Thursdays at 8 p.m. through November 14. The Pier Avenue 2nd Story Theater is located at 710 Pier Ave., Hermosa Beach. Tickets are \$12. For more information call 376-1297. ER



Doc (Lamont Coleman) tells young hood Clancy (Kevyn Richmond) why he shouldn't loot.

Easy Week

ENTERTAINMENT AND DINING IN THE SOUTH BAY

THEATER review

The Beast

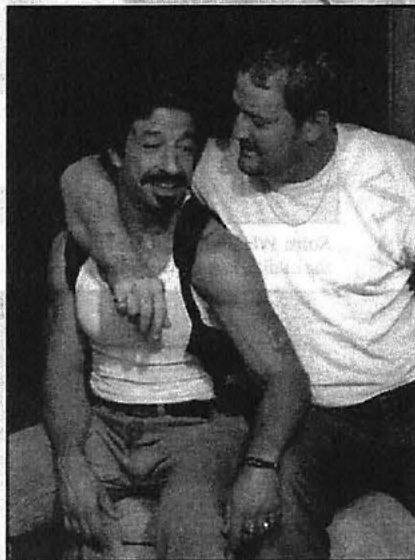
by Andrea Ruse

Combine the basic human matters of the need for love, the fear of death, the desire to escape one's past and the discovery of one's morality, and you have drawn the skeletal framework of *The Beast's* ghostly, probing, and at times poignant tale of four people trying to escape a ruthless gangster and their own haunting demons, both literally and figuratively.

Incredibly well acted and stacked with sharp wit, the latest play from writer and director Angelo Michael Masino delves into the conflict that occurs when we find ourselves at odds not only with outside forces, but ultimately with ourselves. The play is set amidst both the supernatural and crime underworlds, evoking a darkness from which the characters must rise as they battle through individual and collaborative struggles.

We first meet Cathy, the saucy, no-nonsense Brooklyn wife of gangster top boss, Sonny. Brilliantly played by Gina Lange, Cathy is on the run with her best pal, Patty, following Sonny's discovery of her recent infidelity with his right-hand man, Joey. As Cathy and Patty contemplate their next move, the play flashes back to earlier scenes that expertly unfold the events leading up to the two women's present predicament.

Enter Digger (played by Masino), the mysterious and somewhat loony gravedigger whose solemn and dramatic opening monologue relates his relentless fear of being caught by death and thus sets an eerie mood from which the play proceeds. He is a moody and sinister "gangster wanna-be" who spends his evenings shoveling the earth and burying the bodies of the recently



Angelo Masino, left, and Scott McClain. Photo by David Buckland.

deceased in a Queens, New York cemetery, until he unwittingly becomes caught up in the gangster love triangle.

Soon Digger finds himself holding all the keys to how the story will end, as the fate of the two endangered women has somehow become his cross to bear. As he grapples with the task laid before him, he finds himself at odds with a much darker and fiercer enemy, "The Beast," who, with his army of the "undead," threatens to unleash fury upon Digger if he does not choose to take the right path.

In addition to Masino and Lange, the talented cast includes Scott McClain as Joey and Jessica Booker as Patty. Booker brings a loving and almost child-like air to Patty, while Lange's Cathy is more the headstrong, in-control type who is one to be reckoned with. Lange's expert Brooklyn accent combined with a perfected delivery of lines and mannerisms that fit a mobster wife to a T made this actress the highlight of the show.



Gina Lange, left, and Jessica Booker. Photo by David Buckland.

In portraying Joey, McClain maintains the abrupt manner of a gangster when necessary, but also shows a softer side that ultimately reminds us of that blissful feeling of being hopelessly in love. Masino's Digger is superbly unpredictable, one minute explosive, the next minute exuberant, and ultimately yielding and reflective. Perhaps it is the combination of all of these characteristics that will leave audience members doing a little self-examination of their own.

Aside from the somber nature of this play, Masino included just the right amount of comic relief in a story that deals with dark and often disturbing subject matter. It is important to note, however, that due to some strong language and adult content, this play is definitely meant for mature audiences only.

The Beast is onstage at the 2nd Story Theater of the Hermosa Beach Playhouse, 710 Pier Ave., Hermosa Beach, with performances at 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. Closes Oct. 14. Call (310) 318-2494. ER

April 12, 2007

Easy Reader

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Hermosa Beach Manhattan Beach Redondo Beach Hometown News

April 12, 2007

Easy Reader

Theater preview

"The Treehouse"

by Bondo Wyszpolski

We know what friends are, but what does true friendship mean? This is the question explored in "The Treehouse," opening tomorrow morning at the 2nd Story Theatre in Hermosa Beach and performed by fifth grade students from Hermosa Valley School.

"The first draft of 'The Treehouse' was written by my 11-year-old son, Anthony," says Angelo Masino. "We read it with some of his friends and found out it was in need of structure. I rewrote the play and we read it again; this time it needed one more scene."

While in New York for a week, Masino completed a final draft.

"This time we felt it was ready to go. We had to recast several times, but eventually ended up with a solid cast."

Actually two. "The first cast will do the first four shows and the second cast will do the final two. We did this to involve more kids."

"The Treehouse" is the third original play of Masino's to be sponsored by the Hermosa Arts Foundation, which funded the renovation of the 2nd Story Theatre, transforming it into a community "black box" theater. Masino's previous plays, "No Justice, No Peace," and "The Beast," were favorably received. "No Justice, No Peace" was moved to Hollywood; "The Beast" earned a glowing review in this paper by Andrea Ruse.

Masino, who also directs "The

Treehouse," was able to enlist the talents of recording artist Jon T. Howard, whose son Christopher is in the cast. "I asked him if he would write a song for the piece and he agreed," Masino says. "He will be performing ['Blood Brothers'] live before the shows. The song re-enforces the message of the play about true friendship."

Is "The Treehouse" just for kids? When asked, Masino replies that "The play deals with issues for audiences of all ages."

Tomorrow's 10 a.m. curtain is a special performance, organized by the teachers and the mothers of the actors for the latter's classmates. Additional performances of "The Treehouse" are scheduled for Saturday as well as Friday, April 20, and Saturday, April 21, at 7 p.m. Tickets \$10 adults; \$5 children (tomorrow's matinee is \$5 adults; \$2 children). All shows take place in the 2nd Story Theatre, 710 Pier Ave., at PCH in Hermosa Beach. (310) 374-9767. *ER*



The cast and creators of 'The Treehouse' are (top, from left) author/director Angelo Masino, Sara Lensing, Ariana Gevov, singer/songwriter Jon T. Howard; (bottom row) Christopher Beattie, Anthony Masino, Jack Taggart and Jason Rochlin.

Memo

To: Stephen Burrell, City Manager
From: Lisa Lynn, Community Resources Director
Date: 10\10\2008
Re: Community Center North Wing Remodel (CIP 07-649)

The Parks Commission approved architectural plans (attached) for the North Wing Community Center remodel at its October 7, 2008 meeting. The Staff report (attached) included verbiage to explain purpose for relocating the small theatre. "Remodel plans incorporate relocation of the 2nd Storey Theatre to increase seating capacity and provide separate ingress/egress for theatre patrons, alleviating hallway congestion."

Councilman Keegan pulled the item from the Consent Calendar at the October 28, 2008 Council meeting due to his concerns regarding the relocation of the theatre. Rick Koenig, Hermosa Arts Foundation (HAF) President expressed similar concerns prior to the October 7th commission meeting. He met with staff, including Ken Ramey, Public Works Engineer, to review the plans. Upon learning that seating capacity would be increased, he stated his full agreement with the relocation.

Detailed explanation for relocation is as follows:

Existing Location: North Side, room 7, centered between room 9, the 'playroom' and room 5, the dance room (children's' program classrooms). Entrance and Exit into/from main hallway.

Planned Relocation: Southside, Room 8, with one shared wall with room 4, adult meeting room. Entrance and Exit into/from main hallway with alternate egress to courtyard.

1. Existing Problem: Second Storey Theatre Productions, dating back to Late Night Catechism, have been continuously problematic to Community Center operations. Most notable issue of concern is hallway congestion. Theatre patrons crowd the hallway when entering, exiting, and loitering during intermission, which impedes thoroughfare for parents and children getting to/from recreation classes. Further much of the content/language of Angelo's productions is not compatible with neighboring (shared walls) youth programs.

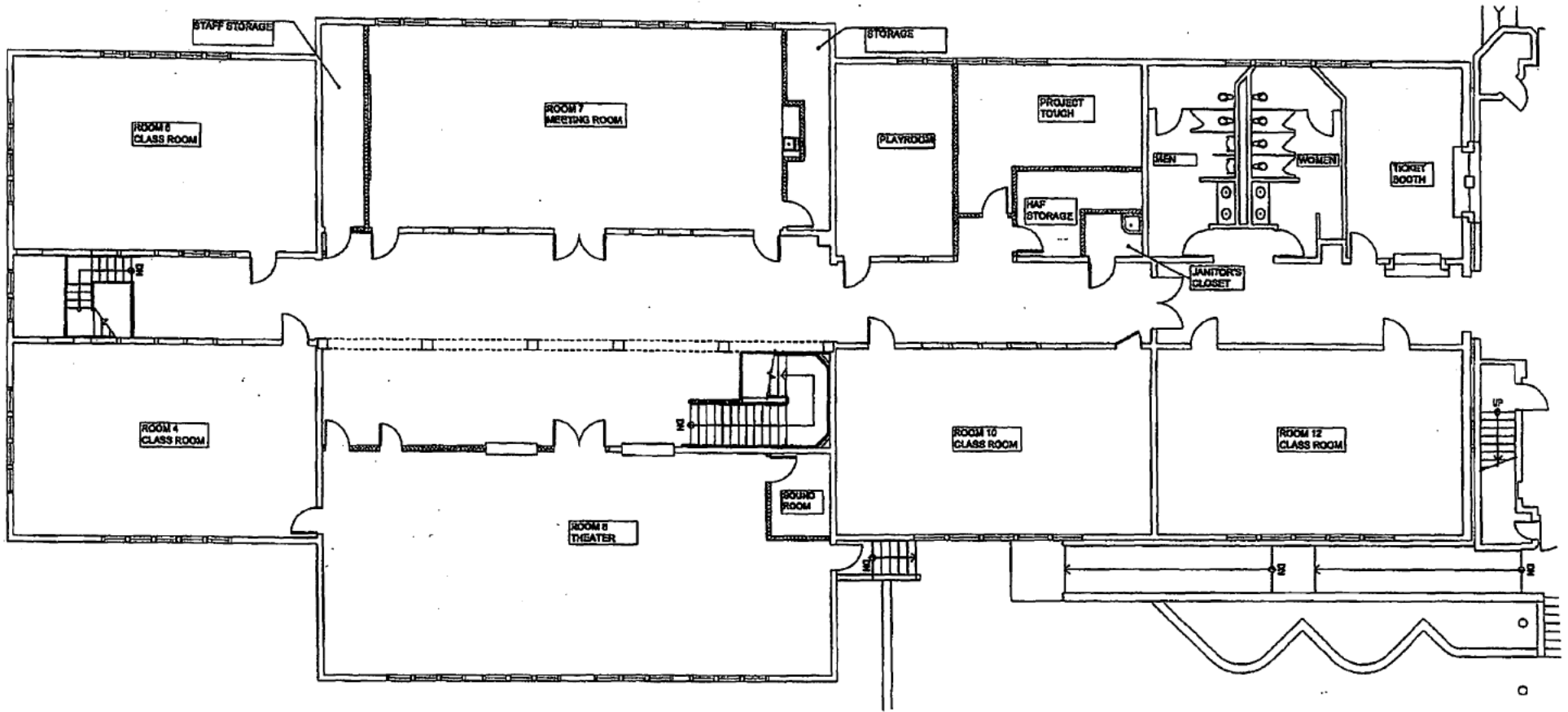
Relocation Fix: Theatre patrons may use alternate entrance/exit to courtyard, avoiding main hallway and/or utilizing both courtyard and main hallway to more quickly disperse crowds. Additionally, actors and stage crew can enter backstage via courtyard without having to interact with audience. Total doors: one set of double doors off main hallway along with separate single door entry; one single-door entry off of courtyard. There are no shared walls with youth recreation classes. Room 4 is booked for meetings only.

2. Existing Problem: 'Cramped quarters.'

Relocation Fix: Moving the theatre to the south side will increase the square footage of the theatre; hence, allow for more seating. It also provides for the opportunity to demolish and relocate the janitor's closet to be adjacent to the restrooms; it also provides for the opportunity to demolish the walls of unused office space, relocating Project Touch to the north side while accommodating storage for HAF. This will 'open-up' the landing at the top of the stairwell, which will create an aesthetically pleasing 'grand entrance' to the theatre with updated display case. The added space will also create a corridor to backstage with its own single-door entry (see diagram).

Room 7, Second Storey Theatre, will be converted into one large classroom with a moveable dividing wall to provide the opportunity to operate as two smaller classrooms when needed. All rooms along the north side will be designed to accommodate youth programs, providing for better flow and continuity.

Community Center Remodel



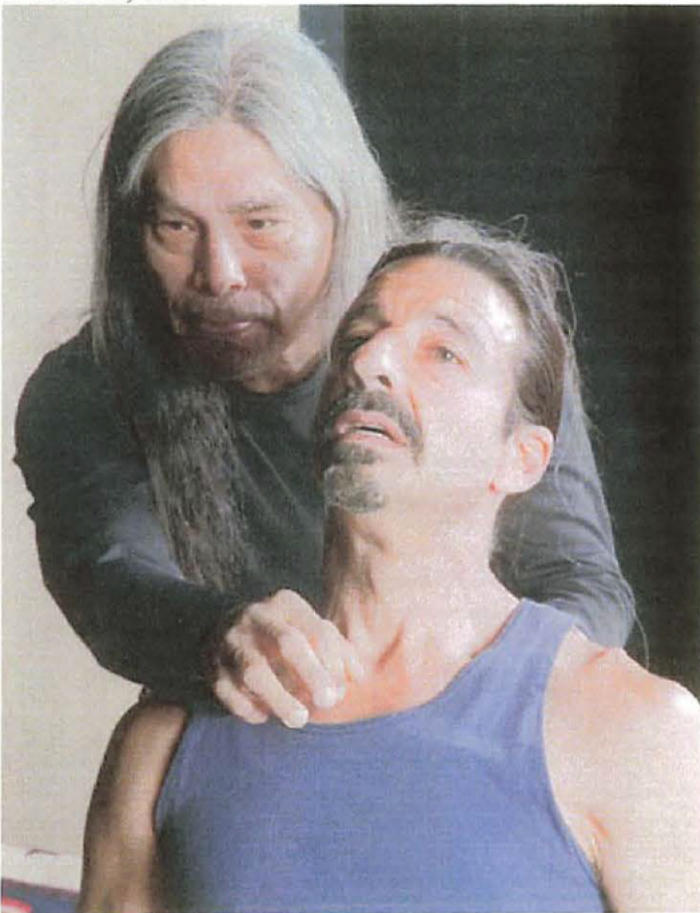
2 SECOND FLOOR REMODEL PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"

ARTS REVIEW: 'AN ITALIAN AMERICAN INDIAN'

Gripping Stage Production Captivates Native American Experience, Modern Personal Struggle



By: [Parimal M. Rohit](#)
March 21, 2011



(2nd Story Theater, Hermosa Beach, California) Do not call a Sicilian an Italian, for he may confuse himself to be a Native American not by way of India.

A production full of intentional misnomers, Angelo Masino's *An Italian American Indian* made its world premiere at the 2nd Story Theater inside the Hermosa Beach Community Center on March 18th. Running on Fridays and Saturdays through April 9th, *An Italian American Indian* is less about misnomers and more about misplaced identity. Evoking the proverbially cliché catch-phrase "Be careful what you wish for," *An Italian American Indian* permeates into one man's struggle to find meaning in life.

That man is Marco (Masino, writer-director), a divorced man with a nonexistent writing career who is over the hill and living in a quaint Hermosa Beach home with three teenaged children. All he has in his life is a best friend, a loving girlfriend, a desire to do his children good, and a knack for finding ways to screw it all up.

All in all, Marco's life is dysfunctional. His kids (Jodi Jacobs, Jacob Parisse, Jonathan D'Acunto) not only incessantly argue and bicker with him and each other, but they have a constant need to use their home's only toilet at the same time. Marco's best friend (Tim Davis), while loyal, is a degenerate stoner, which does not help Marco get over his addiction to recreational drugs. Meanwhile, Marco managed to find a loving girlfriend (Laree Sobrito), but she struggles to guide her love to the right path.

None of Marco's tangible connections are any match for the battle in his mind--a psychological clash led by the spirit of Geronimo (Joseph Runningfox), the last great Apache warrior who serves as the visual representative of that proverbially cliché catch-phrase "Be careful what you wish for."

As he attempts to get a grip on his life, and everyone associated with it, the question is whether Marco's world will take a turn for the worst before it shows signs of getting better. Even worse, who is dictating Marco's downward spiral? His over-loving girlfriend? Perhaps the stoner-loving best friend? What about his toilet-loving children? Or maybe it is none of the above, and Marco himself is the cause for his downfall, what with his imagination-loving head allowing Geronimo to take over his mental state and very being.

Through it all, Marco questions his sense of purpose and plays on one piece of Native American numerology: the law of fours. Early in the play, as Marco decides to write his next stage production on Geronimo himself, he unwittingly repeats aloud how he wishes he were dead, opening the door for the spirit of the Apache leader to enter the writer's head and dictate the course of his life.

By play's end, the intimate audience at the 2nd Story Theater is taken on a journey that is bigger than Marco's life and sheds light on the true meaning of what matters most in life, as told through a broader commentary of the Native American's struggle to survive amidst an expanding American empire.

A well-written play with witty dialogue, captivating peaks, balanced valleys, and intelligent humor, *An Italian American Indian* offers broad perspectives on a variety of aspects of life, whether it be politics, religion, drugs, socio-economic status, even profanity.

Among some of the memorable lines in the production are: “That Bush family must be from Hell,” and “This guy is rich and powerful, he doesn’t care about the right thing.” Just the same, when Marco asks his three children to join him at the popular Catholic endeavor of Mass, Michael responds with “What’s a Catholic?” momentarily followed by Maria’s “No one knows!” and Angelo’s immediate quip, “I’d rather go to an A.A. meeting!”

Such careful witticisms were balanced with intense dialogue between Marco and the figment of his imagination in Geronimo, including a powerful back-and-forth between both men comparing battle wounds relevant to their respective time periods, a mock battle of sorts, with each man trying to one-up each other, as to diminish the depth and severity of each wound to a quantifiable number and a scientific measure of who is better than the other.

It is through this chemistry between Masino and Runningfox that the stage production carries its substantive weight, as the story (and fireworks) that develops between these two characters is so compelling and strong, it is impossible to not become emotionally invested into how the spirit of Geronimo ultimately affects the outcome of Marco’s life.

Solid acting across the board, not only does the audience believe Marco to be a deadbeat dad struggling to do good, but we are also taken back a century through Runningfox’s positively stellar rendition of Geronimo. Just the same, when Jacobs, Parisse, and D’Acunto are on stage together as Marco’s collective offspring, they handily and convincingly portray the challenged lives of three siblings close in age while living in tight quarters in a broken home of sorts.

Meanwhile, Davis is comically charming as stoner-next-door Todd; Sobrito is equally as delightful as the loving girlfriend who always means well in Jaclyn.

Interspersing real-life events with an actual CNN news clip about the battle for Geronimo’s remains presented to the audience right after intermission, *An Italian American Indian* is ultimately a tale about one man’s journey to seek a better path for him and his family, and the spiritual guidance he encounters along the way.

In light of today’s economic struggles and families all across the United States laboring to make ends meet every day, *An Italian American Indian*, despite its misnomer, may not have all the answers but does attempt to provide the proper tonic and perspective of how to endure through the toughest of times.

Playing at 2nd Story Theater through April 9th, *An Italian American Indian* is produced by Angelvision Productions and The Hermosa Arts Foundation.

The 2nd Story Theater is located at 710 Pier Avenue in Hermosa Beach; ticket reservations may be made by phone at (310) 374-9767. Admission is \$15.

EASY READER NEWS 2\18\16

“The War in Heaven” premieres in Hermosa Beach [Theater Review]



Playwright and actor Angelo Masino is the Archangel Micheal in “The War in Heaven,” premiering Friday at the 2nd Story Theater in Hermosa Beach.
By Roger F. Repohl

The first attempt was a failure. Two millennia ago, a virgin gave birth to a Baby who was destined to save the world. Two millennia later, the world is in even worse shape: global war, random shootings, environmental peril, economic inequality, and most ironically, the crimes against humanity by institutional religion.

What’s the God of Love to do?

Try again.

That’s the premise of Angelo Michael Masino’s brilliant and challenging new play, “The War in Heaven,” premiering Friday at the Second Story Theatre in Hermosa Beach.

The play is both as serious, and not as serious, as the title suggests. Masino himself describes it as a “farce,” with plenty of ribald humor and many a table turned. But streaming through it is a sober consideration of the nature of good and evil and the redemptive power of love.

The scene throughout is an abandoned Catholic church in a dystopic America, plagued by food shortages and power blackouts. In the dark, a couple prognostic ally named Mary and Joseph make love among the ruins. Getting up, they light a lantern, revealing that Mary is Black. They discuss their plight: They want a child, but Mary is infertile. Joseph tells her that God will provide; Mary scoffs that she is an atheist. Basically, they're ordinary people, having some fun in an unusual venue while waiting for Joseph's dad Michael, who lives there, to arrive from his A.A. meeting. Little do they know what's in store for them when he does.

Along with Michael, who has a huge sword strapped to his back, comes a man whom he identifies as Jesus Christ; he is disheveled and plainly drunk. When the miserable "Messiah" stumbles out, Michael defends him. "He's been through a lot," he tells them, but "Jesus and me, we figured it out."

What they'd figured out was that to eliminate the horrendous evils in the physical world, a new war between the forces of good and evil must be waged in the spirit one — and Michael will go there to lead it, as he did of old.

This sensible couple think Dad's got the D.T.'s, but gradually he persuades them that he is none other than the Archangel Michael, who will forsake his bodily form for a rematch with his rival Lucifer, the Prince of Darkness.

That's when things get metaphysical. On to the stage come voluptuous Lilith, the demon of lust from Jewish mythology, tempting Michael to abandon his mission; the drunken Jesus, this time in the company of his Al-Anon girlfriend Mary M., bemoaning his failed message (given his results over the centuries, wouldn't you turn to drink too?); and Damien, the incarnate son of Lucifer, to deride Jesus and lure Michael to his side by rational argument. Michael resists them all, dons his sword, and ascends to meet his foe.

Through all this craziness, Mary and Joseph try to remain sensible, even when Jesus' drinking-buddy the Archangel Gabriel, in the form of a garrulous East Indian straight out of *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, appears and announces that Mary will bear the second Christ; after considering possible outcomes ("Will he be crucified?") and rejecting an abortion, she relents and agrees. As the celestial battle rages unseen, very good things and very bad things occur, depending on who's getting the upper hand above; and in the end, the winner is ... — well, you'll have to see the play and find out for yourself.

A clue, perhaps, may be found in the words of Lucifer to Michael during a truce in the battle: Goodness allows forgiveness, thus allowing evil to enter through the back door and spawn even greater evils: Nominally "good" people, the devil observes, "abuse each other under the name of God. Religions like the Roman Catholic Church and countries like America are mass murderers!" Because evil is "pure," he says — never polluted by good — it "always wins."

Throughout the play, even at its most farcical, Masino employs many ancient texts, not only from the Bible but from apocryphal sources, including the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Mary Magdalen, and the Dead Sea Scrolls, deftly addressing the results of fallen human nature — racism, violence, addiction, greed — embedded in this work.

The cast perform their challenging, tragicomic roles uniformly well. Phyllis Wissa is splendid as the hard-headed, skeptical Mary, as is Michael Panarello as the brash, gun-toting Joseph (Panarello is a combat veteran and weapons instructor). The single-named Koushik is hilarious as the buffoonish Gabriel. William Goldman brings an ironic, fatherly authority to the character of Lucifer, and Dave Buzzotta is a sly and cynical Damien. It's hard to play a drunken Jesus spouting Scripture, but Austen Michael Rey pulls it off, though perhaps not quite drunkenly enough. Loree Sobrito is both tough and compassionate as the devoted Mary M., and Yasemin Isil plays Lilith with an intoxicating sultriness. Most admirable of all is the playwright and director himself, Angelo Michael Masino, who plays the archangel with a passion that must come from a longtime friendship with his namesake. Tellingly, God never appears.

For a very new take on a very old question, see *The War in Heaven*. But leave your scruples at home.

THE WAR IN HEAVEN will be performed Feb. 19, 20, 26, 27, March 4, 11, 18, and 19, all shows at 8 p.m., at the Second Story Theatre, 710 Pier Avenue, Hermosa Beach. Mature audiences only. Tickets, \$20. Call (310) 374-9767. For additional information, email angelvisionp@gmail.com.ER

October 27, 2016

Easy Reader

Vol. XLVII - No. 12

Hermosa Beach Manhattan Beach Redondo Beach Hometown News

[LOCAL NOTABLE]

For Casey Rohrer, the play's the thing

by Ryan McDonald

Casey Rohrer is a familiar sight to the civically inclined Hermosan; earlier this year, he helped dedicate the newly opened South Park. But this Saturday night, the community will have a chance to see him in a place they might not expect: starring in a play he wrote.

The Hermosa resident and high school freshman suffers from cerebral palsy, but he has not let it hold him back: Casey writes and communicates with an eye-tracking device called a Tobii. And over the past year he has put the Tobii through its paces, penning "Once Upon a Road Trip," which will show for one night only this Saturday, at the Hermosa Community Theater at 7 p.m.

Craig Greely, a Hermosa resident and the president and CEO of Family Theater Inc., which is putting on the show, said that the play grew out of his experience with Casey during a previous play. After seeing him in the audience at several previous Family Theater productions, Greely offered Casey the role of the Silent King in "Once Upon a Mattress." [Once the character was magically granted speech, Casey used his Tobii to deliver his lines with aplomb, Greely recalled.] Several months later, Greely received an email from Casey with the beginnings of what would become "Once Upon a Road Trip."

The story emerged out of experiences from Casey's life. On the one hand, he said he has been acting ever since he and his Tobii were "introduced" in the second grade, using it to play The Mirror in "Snow White and the Seven Dwarves." But on occasions where he is without it, such as when traveling, he can feel voiceless. So he combined the experiences of acting and travelling into a play.

"We were planning a trip to Yellowstone, so before we went, my tutor told me to write a play about it and perform it while we were there. We found an outdoor stage and did that during the trip with my grandparents. It was very fun!" Casey said.



Casey Rohrer, center, and fellow players Liam and Conner Foley rehearse for the production of "Once Upon a Road Trip," which Casey wrote. Photo courtesy Beth Rohrer

Casey e-mailed the script to Greely, who said he was blown away.

Eventually, Greely connected Casey with Angelo Michael Masino, a local playwright. Masino worked with Casey, and the two eventually turned his original idea into a fully formed, one-act play with a script of about 40 pages.

Casey's mother Beth Rohrer said that her son has long had an interest in playwriting, and has a knack for encapsulating people's personalities. Masino dedicated extensive time to the project, she said, and helped her son develop as a playwright.

"[Casey] learned so much from him about building out a story and helping it have a

guiding idea for the audience to understand," Rohrer said.

Masino continued working with Casey during the production process, serving as director while Casey helped cast the show, and made suggestions to the actors during rehearsals.

Casey's dramaturgical insights occasionally surprised the crew. During an early script reading, Casey interrupted Bill Goldman, a longtime actor performing the role of Slim.

"In middle of it, we hear Casey say, 'More Texas accent,'" Greely recalled. "He's giving Bill, this professional actor, advice to go deeper in the accent. And it worked." ER