



JENNIFER BLAINE

Dirty Joke

Written and performed by **Jennifer Blaine**
Director **Vashti Dubois**
Set Design **Laureen Griffin**
Stage Manager **Kate Gibson**
Music provided by **Pat Robinson**

PROGRAM

There will be no intermission.



Friday, March 6 at 8 PM
Saturday, March 7 at 8:30 PM

Prince Theatre



PROGRAM NOTES

Dirty Joke centers on Ruth, an elderly Jewish woman with a penchant for off-color humor. Ruth sings, dances, tells jokes and makes light out of the dark moment in which she finds herself—struggling to hold onto her apartment. As Ruth convenes the first live “Superwoman Conference,” she is visited by 7 real-life changemakers who have made a significant impact on our world: Madeleine Albright, the first female U.S. Secretary of State and an advocate for democracy and human rights; Arianna Huffington, Chair, President and Editor-in-Chief of The Huffington Post Media Group and author of 14 books; Caroline Casey, blind Irish activist who rode 1,000 kilometers across India on an elephant to raise funds for Sightsavers; Kiran Bir Sethi, pioneering Indian educator who founded the Riverside School in Ahmedabad, focused on engaging young people and making cities more child-friendly; Majora Carter, founder of Sustainable South Bronx who coined the term “Green The Ghetto,” and the recipient of the MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship; Cindy Sheehan, American anti-war activist who protested outside of President George W. Bush’s Texas ranch after her son was killed during the Iraq War; and Wangari Maathai, Nobel Prize-winning Kenyan activist who, as founder of the Green Belt Movement, planted millions of trees with women’s groups.

Dirty Joke provides a forum for the artists to collaborate as actor, writer and director, as well as creates a space for them to engage around issues of race, class and gender. The rehearsal process incorporates the artists’ lives: motherhood; illness; pregnancy; children leaving home; children returning home; death of a spouse; and the start of yet another uncertain school year in Philadelphia. Ruth sees the issues we all see: the decision by grand juries in Ferguson, Missouri and Staten Island, NYC not to indict white police officers in the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner; opposition to same-sex marriage; news that STDs have gone up in nursing homes; the rape and murder of women and girls on college campuses and around the world; the release of Torture Reports; the dismantling of the Voting Rights Act; the whittling away of Roe vs. Wade; and the unprovoked attacks by women against girls, such as Elizabeth Lauten (Republican Communications Director) accusing President Obama’s daughters Malia, 16 and Sasha, 13 for “classless clothes and sullen attitude.” We could go on. Although many of these issues aren’t directly addressed in *Dirty Joke*, they are the backdrop for our artistic process and the inspiration and impetus for Ruth to host her Superwoman Conference.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Jennifer Blaine (Playwright/Actress) has been performing original one-woman shows for 20 years. Blaine specializes in comedy that delves into serious and socially relevant issues and provides audiences with the opportunity to unite in laughter. She has opened for George Carlin, performed with Chris Rock and shared the stage with Joe Piscopo. Blaine was featured on ABC’s “Philly After Midnight: Women Comedians.” She has produced solo shows in the first 10 Philadelphia Fringe Festivals, and works as a voiceover artist, lending her voice for *Teddy P. Brains* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, and is the resident theater artist and playwright at the “Showstoppers” program at The Kimmel Center. In addition to keeping a busy schedule as a solo performer and comedienne, Blaine is the founder of the 5,000 Women Festival which showcases the creativity of women artists in all media.

Vashti Dubois (Director) is thrilled to team up for a fourth collaboration with fellow Brooklyn native and Wesleyan alum artist-in-crime Jennifer Blaine. Dubois produced the critically acclaimed Philadelphia multidisciplinary art event *EvictionProof PeepShow Home*. She co-produced and directed *The Clearing* in the Celebrate Brooklyn Performance Festival with Brooklyn Artist and Tea Party Music founder Ian Friday. Dubois co-founded the Mumbo

Jumbo Theatre Company in New York City, championing female artists of color such as playwrights Lynn Nottage and Adrienne Kennedy and actresses Lisa Gay Hamilton and Hazel Goodman. In Philadelphia Dubois directed and dramaturged the one-woman show *My Name is Sam Johnson*. Dubois and Blaine have also collaborated on: *EvictionProof PeepShow Home, Out of Control, 5000 Women* and *5,000 Women Talking*. She is the founder of Ft. Mom Consulting and is currently spearheading the launch of The Colored Girls Museum.

Laureen Griffin (Set Design) is thrilled to return to work on *Dirty Joke*. Two years ago she premiered as a set designer, working alongside Jennifer Blaine and Vashti Dubois, brainstorming and designing the set and props for the 2013 Fringe Festival performance. She draws from her experience as a multi-disciplinary artist and designer, especially *The Gender Portraiture Project* which portrays personal interpretations of female identity. Currently she is designing gardens while her artwork takes a back seat.

Kate Gibson (Stage Manager) recently graduated Temple University with a double major in Theater and Early Childhood Education. This is her first job in a professional production.

Pat Robinson (Musical Accompaniment) performs with Steve Pullara, the band Medea, records with guitar virtuoso Tim Farrell, bass wiz Michael Manring and Philly jazz legend Larry McKenna. Patrick composes for films, shows, and contributed soundtrack music to the 2011 Grammy®-nominated album *Good Enough to Eat*. In 2012, Patrick received a Grammy® Award and a Parents' Choice Gold award as a producer on *All About Bullies...Big and Small*, for which 100% of the proceeds go to PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org.