

Plan-B's 'The Weird Play' celebrates the vastness of love

BY JENIFER NII

I am an old person now, my body tells me. Often I wonder whether I have made good on the years it has given me. Then, inevitably, I question what might qualify as “making good.” A younger me would (did) list among life’s achievements, well, achievements of some sort. A fulfilling job done well. A healthy, shiny family tucked snugly into a paid-for home in an up-and-coming neighborhood. Making some kind of mark in the world that might distinguish me from the countless other beings trying to understand or justify our existence.

Now that I am old, though, I’ve come to believe that a life well-lived is one that is rooted less in stuff and situation and more in love — of, from, and for. I think I’m right about this, but I’ll be darned if I know — really know — what that means. *The Weird Play* is my attempt to suss out this whole “love” thing. The who, what, when, where, and why of it. Because it’s everywhere, in all our closest, most important places: our families, friendships, romances, our faith. We can even find it in the fleeting interactions we have with strangers — those “might be” relationships that promise so much.

Love is something that transcends. As much as our experiences feel like revelations to us alone, we are not alone. The



common, shared threads weave the fabric of love. Which is why I built *The Weird Play* the way I did, offering the most flexibility I could devise in its elements (the words, casting, stage settings, wardrobe, etc.) while pinpointing questions I think we all ask about the thing we long for most: love that is true and lasting, that fills the empty spaces.

In *The Weird Play*, the characters are named One, Two, and Three. There are no age or race specifications, and only the role of One is explicitly written for a woman. There are no “character descriptions” beyond what’s in the text. I did this because I’d hoped to allow for as much flexibility as possible, to see how different casts, comprised of various mixes of age, ethnicity, and gender might impact the experience of the play.

I was blessed to have three readings of the play before we locked the script, each

featuring different casts. The first comprised two men (one African American, one Caucasian) and a woman. The second featured three women (all Caucasian). The final cast is all female: Susanna Florence (One), Dee-Dee Darby-Duffin (Two), and April Fossen (Three). The age range among the three casts was late 20’s to late 40’s.

I built *The Weird Play* the way I did because I don’t believe that only blood, age, color, gender or faith bind love; and with very few exceptions (NO to pedophilia!), I’ve come to believe that we should celebrate the vastness. And, I wanted the play to reflect that, from the inside out — the whole weird, messy, glorious way. ☺

Jenifer Nii’s plays WALLACE (co-written with Debora Thredy), THE SCARLET LETTER, SUFFRAGE, RUFF!, and KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (music by Dave Evanoff) have premiered at Plan-B Theatre Company, where THE WEIRD PLAY premieres March 1-11 in a co-production with Sacker-son. Tickets and information at planbtheatre.org



GO WEST!

ON VIEW
THROUGH MARCH 11

Art of the American Frontier from the Buffalo Bill Center of the West

Presenting Sponsors:

The Hal R. and Naoma J. Tate Foundation ZIONS BANK.

Apsáalooke (Crow), Montana, *Jacket*, ca. 1885, tanned deer hide, pigment, cloth, otter fur, ribbon, glass beads, and dyed horse hair, 38.625 x 22 inches, Buffalo Bill Center of the West, Cody, Wyoming, USA, gift of Irving H. “Larry” Larom Collection, NA.202.592

UMFA
UTAH MUSEUM OF
FINE ARTS

MARCIA AND JOHN PRICE
MUSEUM BUILDING
umfa.utah.edu