

CONTACT:

Eric. C. Reda – Producer
(773) 520-7332
ecredadesign@yahoo.com

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**A GAY WEDDING, A SURROGATE MOTHER, AN INDIAN AMERICAN PRINCESS,
AN ANGRY MOB BOSS, TWO OVER BEARING MOTHERS,
AND ONE REALLY, REALLY
"UGLY BABY"
IN TWO WORLD-PREMIERE ONE-ACTS BY
CHICAGO PLAYWRIGHT PHILIP DAWKINS**

Chicago Vanguard, in association with Strawdog Theatre Company, is proud to present ***UGLY BABY: 564 Things To Do With A Peanut & Bedfellas***, two world-premiere one-acts by Chicago playwright Philip Dawkins. The ensemble cast is led by Chicago cabaret and stage favorite **Stephen Rader**, as well as the sexy and talented **Cynthia Castiglione**, **Nick Lewis**, and **Jaya Subramanian**.

Eric C. Reda directs ***UGLY BABY***, which opens to the public on Saturday, November 18, 2006, and runs 10:30pm Fridays and Saturdays through January 27, 2007 in Strawdog Theatre's Huguenot Hall, 3829 N Broadway. Press Opening is 10:30pm Friday, November 17. There will be no performances on December 22 or 23.

Originally workshopped as a one-act play during the 2005 Around the Coyote Winter Festival, ***UGLY BABY*** was invited back to perform in its full two-act version as part of the 2005 Around the Coyote Fall Festival. Now, the "BABY" is polished, pampered, and ready to run as an hour long hilarious pairing. Strawdog's newly opened late night performance space, Huguenot Hall, is an intimate exposed-brick cabaret equipped with a fully stocked bar for your viewing and drinking pleasure.

"I know funny," says Strawdog Artistic Director, Nic Dimond. "And this sh**'s funny! Come, drink, and be entertained!"

A gay wedding, a surrogate mother, an Indian American princess, an angry mob boss, two over bearing mothers, and one really, *really* ***UGLY BABY*** bring out the worst in all of us. This irreverent and politically incorrect comedy enjoys judging judges and the judgmental judges who judge them.

Act 1, ***564 Things To Do With A Peanut***: Have you ever seen an ugly baby? Think about it – a truly, ugly baby. Daniel and Ralph have ... and they are about to adopt it.

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Act 2, **Bedfellas**: Sammy and David are in love, engaged ... and in deep, deep sh*t with the mob.

Brief biographies on the cast and production team for **UGLY BABY** follow:

Cynthia Castiglione (Julia/Sammy) Cynthia is an accomplished actress and improviser as well as the Theatre Curator for Around the Coyote. A graduate of the Theatre School at DePaul, she has performed in many plays, most recently in *Laika's Coffin* with Collboraction. Other Chicago credits include roles at Next Theatre, Rogue, Uma, Redmoon, American Myth, Annoyance, and many others. Cynthia also teaches Theatre Arts through Redmoon and Around the Coyote.

Philip Dawkins (Playwright) Philip is a graduate of Loyola University, Chicago where his play, *Not Even the Children*, was produced as part of the 2001/2002 season (American College Theatre Festival Honorable Mention). Productions: *A Still Life in Color*, T.U.T.A. Company (2005); *The Man With A Shattered World*, Ethington Theatre, AZ (2004); *Giants, Jokers, and Jacks: A Beanstalk Blockbuster* [co-written with David Wo], Theatre Works, AZ (1997). As an Associate Artist of Chicago Dramatists, Philip teaches playwriting at multiple Chicago schools. Philip is a Fellow of the Hawthornden Castle International Retreat for Writers in Scotland. His short plays have been featured at Victory Gardens, Straw Dog, Collaboratction, and others. His plays have received readings and workshops at Chicago Dramatists, Seanachai, Around The Coyote, New Theatrical Collective, The Side Project, and The Metropolis Centre for the Performing Arts. He is currently writing the libretto for an opera with composer, Eric C. Reda.

Nick Lewis (Ralph/David) Nick Lewis appeared in the first workshop production of **Ugly Baby**. Most recently he was seen in *Marathon '33* at Strawdog Theatre. Recent credits include WBEZ's *Stories on Stage: Family Edition* at the MCA, understudying *The Retreat From Moscow* at Northlight Theatre, and *The Talisman Ring* with Lifeline Theatre. In February he can be seen in *Thief River* at The Side Project.

Stephen Rader (Danial/Sophe/Gina) is a three-time After Dark Award winner - Outstanding Cabaret Performer Award for his cabaret *Mama's Boy*, Outstanding Performance for Pegasus Players' *Side by Side by Sondheim*, and Outstanding Direction for *Corpus Christi* at Bailiwick Repertory. Other Chicago acting credits include Richard in TimeLine Theatre's *The Lion in Winter*, Soldier in Chicago Shakespeare's *Sunday in the Park with George*, and Henry in Visions and Voice's *Arrangement for Two Violas*. For Porchlight Music Theatre, he has played Gordo in *A New Brain*, Whizzer in *Falsettos*, Charley in *Merrily We Roll Along*, and most recently Michael in William Finn's *Elegies*. His cabaret show *Dolly Would!: The music of Dolly Parton* was recognized as Best Cabaret Show of 2003. Mr. Rader made his Goodman Theatre debut in Adam Guettel's Tony Award winning new musical *The Light in the Piazza*, and is currently performing his cabaret show, *Middler on the Roof*, at Daveport's Piano bar.

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Eric C. Reda (Director) Directing credits include: *Turn of the Screw* adapted by Jeffrey Hatcher - Midsummer Macon, Macon GA; *Prized Possessions* by Jennifer Connell [World Premiere] - Around the Coyote Festival; *Lost Sheep* by Joseph Fedorko [World Premiere] and *CAPITALIZATION* by Mark Novak [World Premiere] - Stage Left Theatre; *The Impresario* by Mozart - Kerr Cultural Center, Scottsdale AZ; *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* by Ravel - Arizona State University Lyric Opera Theatre, Tempe, AZ. Eric's play *Equinox* was seen in a workshop at the Bailiwick Theatre and as a reading at the American Theatre Company and was turned into a feature film produced by Chicago's New Theatrical Collective. Eric studied music composition at Arizona State University and is currently in the final stage of composing the opera-oratorio *Reagan's Children*.

Jaya Subramanian (Sepna/Uncle Bobo) was part of the original workshop production of ***UGLY BABY*** at Around the Coyote in February 2005. She is a graduate of the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. Jaya is a Founding Member of the Jeff Award winning Rasaka Theatre Company. She has also worked with other theatre companies such as Hell in a Handbag, Northlight, GIA, Chicago Scriptworks, Steep, and Silk Road Theatre.

The ***UGLY BABY*** production team includes illustrator Jaime Reda, technical director Matt Retzlaff, and dramaturge Joseph E. Tracz.

Tickets to ***UGLY BABY*** are \$10. Reservations are available by calling (773) 401-3764 or via email at UglyBaby@4ringcircus.net. For more information, please visit www.whatanuglybaby.com.

Chicago Vanguard is a Chicago area artistic collective dedicated to exploring the relationship between words, music, performance, and design.

Strawdog Theatre Company is located at 3829 N. Broadway on the very tip of Chicago's own Boystown neighborhood. From fresh takes on the classics and kitchen-sink dramas to inventive world premieres, Strawdog is committed to presenting great stories. They tell these stories to provoke the important questions and excite the imagination of their audiences. And they use their amazing, intimate space to fully immerse people into the unique worlds that they create for each one of their productions.

Founded in 1988, the Strawdog ensemble has consistently produced shows built on authentic human connections, and their brand new late fifty-seat, late night space, Hugen Hall, is perfect for offering their audiences a quintessential Chicago storefront theatre experience. More information on Strawdog Theatre Company is available at www.strawdog.org.

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