



For Immediate Release

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Interviews and hi-res photos available

FRINGEARTS FAVORITE JENNIFER BLAINE PREMIERES TWO NEW WORKS FOR 2021 FEST

August 25, 2021— Jennifer Blaine, Philadelphia’s acclaimed solo performer, comedienne, and playwright “whose comic genius is like Lily Tomlin and Tracey Ullman” (*Philadelphia Daily News*) will present 2 new *FringeArts* shows at Mister John’s Music in September. Ms. Blaine will return to her legacy as a solo performer with *Package Deal* (September 17th & 18th), and will host a cabaret *Invitation to Play* (September 11th) which features an array of singers performing songs from her new musical *Mannequin*. Jennifer Blaine has performed with the likes of Chris Rock, George Carlin, and has brought her smart, irreverent humor to premier venues and festivals nationwide. Jennifer’s shows are a balm for those craving some comedy, candor, and inspiration.

Jennifer is a Philadelphia FringeArts Festival favorite, creating original solo works for 16 previous festivals—including a sold-out run of both *Dirty Joke* (“comedy with a conscience”) in 2013, and *Vicissitudes of Travel* (2017), a collaboration with Barrymore award winning Philadelphia theater artist Karen Getz. Acknowledged as “brilliant,” (Chestnut Hill Local) *Vicissitudes* tracks a family’s journey through the brain surgery of their loved one and has toured to medical facilities and universities such as Jefferson University and Wesleyan University. With her well-received *Ridiculous* (2018) Jennifer recruited the audience to end the patriarchy once and for all.

“Fringe is a season in and of itself for me and I want to share my works in progress all at once. I began the musical *Mannequin* while in lockdown in 2020. It may seem bizarre to make a musical for 16 actors at a time like that, but I wanted to affirm that we would once again gather together and sing again. Hopefully that will happen live in September, but even if it’s virtual we will sing.

I performed in the first Philly Fringe, and now it will be the 25th. *Package Deal* is my latest solo show. Since the full production of the musical *Mannequin* won’t happen until 2022 or so, I

needed to channel all my energies to creating something fulfilling I can do right now. The solo show is an elegant model for me. I write, act and produce all by myself. With *Package Deal* I wrestled with what to write about and decided that the phenomena of leaving packages on the stoops in Philly was a great entry point for exploring the breakdown of systems, anonymity, and disposability that I feel as an artist and an aging woman. My modus operandi for any show I do is I want to make you laugh and give you something to reflect on too.

I don't know if I will be performing inside or outside. Depending on the Covid guidelines I may perform inside or outside, and intend to have a streaming option as well. I just enjoyed having the first cabaret rehearsal with Steven Crino (keyboardist) last week. It was the first time I have sung inside with someone outside my family for a year and a half. It was exhilarating. During the winter I engaged a local artist, musician and mega talent, Andrew Mullin, to create the accompaniment for my melodies. It gave me hope for spring. It's so rewarding to create opportunities for other performers.

For FringeArts we will just be getting a taste of the songs themselves, and how they are lifelines to give us hope and also much like a message in the bottle to a future selves about the pivotal year that was 2020. The impetus for my musical *Mannequin* came from a real life then when Meglio furs in South Philly was defaced with a swastika the night of the 2016 election. As a Jewish woman I have often studied issues around the Holocaust and Naziism. I've been rather terrified by the rise of white nationalism and intolerance of all kinds in our country. So I envisioned this imaginary place, Olive's fur store in South Philly, which the owner conceives of as a safe haven and a way to escape into a fantasy of safety and luxury. But when we pull back the curtain on both the people and mannequins that inhabit the shop, we learn that nothing is simple. We're confronted by all the nuances and conflicts that permeate our lives, and the musical gives the characters outlets to sing about it.

I wanted to start to build a listening on the process of making this musical, explore the issues of the play, and initiate some kind of public dialogue. The *Invitation to Play* cabaret is to invite people who want to be part of witnessing the development *Mannequin*, who long to dialogue about the issues. That's actually my hope for both shows. I always love to dialogue with the audience. It's a big part of how I develop my material. I love the FringeArts audience. I need them."

WHAT: Invitation to Play, Cabaret for the musical *Mannequin*

WHEN: September 11 at 7:30pm

WHAT: *Package Deal* - Solo Show

WHEN: September 17 at 7:30pm

September 18 at 7:30pm

WHERE: Mister John's, 904 S. 9th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147

TICKETS: \$20. For info and tickets, please visit www.jenniferblaine.com

SHOW DESCRIPTION PACKAGE DEAL:

Fringe Festival favorite Jennifer Blaine explores the fragility of our delivery system, the human body, and recounts being demoted as an aging womxn artist mother. Armed with her sense of humor, multitude of characters, can her storytelling transform your world?

SHOW DESCRIPTION INVITATION TO PLAY:

During the shutdown last year Jennifer Blaine began to write a musical, *Mannequin*. Even under enforced limitations, she discovered a new aspect of her creativity. We invite you to discover a new aspect of yours too. Join us for this interactive evening where together we'll playfully explore some of the *Mannequin* songs, the themes of the musical, and sing together so we can animate once again.