

Theater for the New City's Dream Up Festival Presents
"The Blind Truth: A Musical Journey"
A Musical Journey Through the Darkened Life of Vinny St. Marten

WHERE AND WHEN:

August 29 at 6:30 PM, August 30 at 9:00 PM, September 1 at 6:30 PM, September 3 at 8:00 PM, September 6 at 6:30 PM.

Cabaret Theater, Theater for the New City, 155 First Ave. (at East 10th Street)

Presented by Theater for the New City (Crystal Field, Artistic Director) as part of the Dream Up Festival 2016.

Ticket Price: \$15.00

Box office: (212) 254-1109, www.dreamupfestival.org

Runs for 1:50 Mins. Reviewers are invited

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"The Blind Truth: A Musical Journey" is an autobiographical musical play from blind musician Vinny St. Marten, following his tumultuous life. Starting from St. Marten's childhood, this show chronicles both the positives and negatives of a life without sight. Original music will be performed by St. Marten and his partner Elysa Sunshine, incorporating elements of rock, jazz, and folk. Music and book are written by Vinny St. Marten, Elysa Sunshine and Frederick Stroppel. Stroppel will also direct.

St. Marten takes an ambiguous attitude towards his blindness, referring to it as a "gift," as it challenged him both physically and spiritually throughout his life. Starting with his family history, St. Marten composes the autobiography of his life and how his blindness ultimately proved to be formative. From a troubled and abusive childhood in a large family to a budding yet fragile career in the recording industry, St. Marten walks with a tune in his heart. By utilizing stark humor inter-cut with moving personal anecdotes, the play challenges the audience to think differently about disabilities.

The saving power of music is a prominent theme throughout the show. The importance of music as an inspirational and escapist outlet for St. Marten during his childhood establishes the tone of the music. Drenched in a rock-and-roll soundtrack, the score recalls artists of the 1950s and 60s while maintaining contemporary sensibility with elements of jazz and folk.

The show will be performed by Vinny St. Marten and Elysa Sunshine. Frederick (Fred) Stroppel will direct. Original music will be performed live by Vinny St. Marten and Elysa Sunshine.

Vinny St. Marten was born the sixteenth child to an Italian-American family in Glen Cove, New York. He was born with glaucoma in both eyes, and lost his sight when he was eight after a failed corneal implant that made headlines nationwide. Music became an integral part of St. Marten's life, and evolved from a hobby to pass long afternoons drenched in darkness to a fruitful career in the New York recording industry. St. Marten has recently created his musical autobiography, "The Blind Truth," and hopes to share his incredible story with the world. <http://vinnystmarten.com/>

Elysa Sunshine is an accomplished vocalist, musician, recording artist, and the musical soul-mate of Vinny St. Marten. Based largely in the New York area, Sunshine has performed at Carnegie Hall and Shea Stadium, and served as a musical director for Off-Broadway plays, the most notable of which was "A Jew Grows in Brooklyn." As a performer, she has been featured by popular record labels such as RCA, Columbia, Atlantic Records, and Koch International. She met Vinny St. Marten in 1973, when

she joined his band.

The show will be directed by Frederick Stroppel, who also assisted in writing the book. Stroppel has written for television and theater for over twenty years, writing for HBO, Nickelodeon, and PBS. Stroppel created and directed the popular web series "Suburban Legends," and has written several plays with successful Off-Broadway runs, such as "Fortune's Fools" and "The Manhattan Woods." Stroppel is a member of the Dramatists Guild and the Writer's Guild of America East.
<http://www.frederickstroppel.com/>

The seventh annual Dream Up Festival (www.dreamupfestival.org) is dedicated to new works. Presented by Theater for the New City, the Festival will run from August 28 to September 18, 2016 and will feature a variety of original dramas, comedies, musicals, adaptations and experimental plays. The Festival is traditionally a celebration of the arts in a time when cultural and arts funding is in sharp decline due to a number of social and market forces. Now an East Village tradition, it challenges the audience to reflect on the innovative and imaginative ways that they interact with the theater.

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