

night. As Brochu approached the age at which Mostel died he began to conceive of this piece, reading everything he could about the legend and talking to many of his friends. When he finally sat down to write the play he says it “poured out” of him like it was already inside him just waiting to be written. This show is Brochu’s “love letter to Zero Mostel and show business of times gone by.”

Playing to sold-out houses across the country, from Los Angeles and San Francisco to Houston, Southern Florida, Boston and Connecticut, *ZERO HOUR* has won many major awards including the Los Angeles Stage Alliance Ovation Award for Best Play in 2006, was named one of the Ten Best Plays of the Los Angeles Theatre Season in 2007 and one of the Ten Best Plays of the South Florida Theatre Season in 2008. Jim Brochu received the South Florida Carbonell Award for Best Actor in 2009 and was nominated by the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle for Best Solo Performance of 2006 for his performance. Brochu was also the Backstage West Garland Outstanding Playwright Award Winner in 2006.

Brochu is an actor, writer, director and playwright whose acting career has taken him to regional stages all over the United States, including the Washington Theatre Club, the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, two seasons at the Goodspeed Opera House and at the legendary Café DeJaVu in Los Angeles. While playing Teyve in *Fiddler on the Roof* at the Waldo Astoria Dinner Theatre in Kansas City, Missouri, he wrote his first play *Cookin' With Gus* which was immediately published by Samuel French and has since been performed all over the United States and has been translated into several languages for productions all over the world. A huge hit in Quebec, Canada, it was recently taped in French by HBO. For the theater, he has written the comedies *The Lucky O'Learys* with Kathleen Freeman, *Fat Chance* with Virginia Capers, *The Lady Of The House* with Rue McClanahan and the off-Broadway smash hit musical, *The Last Session*, which he co-wrote with Steve Schalchlin and also directed. After *The Last Session's* New York run, for which he received Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle nominations, the show was named by the *Los Angeles Times* as one of the ten best plays of the 1998-1999 Los Angeles season, garnering him the Oscar Wilde Award, the GLAAD Media Award and the Los Angeles Drama Critic's Circle Award. A close friend of Lucille Ball, he is the author of the unauthorized biography *Lucy in the Afternoon*.

Brochu reached out to Piper Laurie (born Rosetta Jacobs), his longtime friend, to direct this piece after she gave enlightening notes and insightful direction to him at the first reading of the play. This is her first foray into directing though she has an extensive background as an actress on stage and screen. Laurie is best known for her most famous role in Brian De Palma's 1976 film, *Carrie*, as the title character's fanatically religious mother Margaret White, for which she was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress. She also received another Academy Award Supporting Actress nomination in 1987 for *Children of a Lesser God* and starred as the devious Catherine Martell in David Lynch's television series “Twin Peaks.”

Luciana Stecconi, who most recently designed *The Year of Magical Thinking* and *Stoop Stories* at Studio Theatre, will bring her minimalist aesthetic to the scenic design of *ZERO HOUR*, with light design by Jason Arnold (Sandra Bernhard's *Without You I'm Nothing* and *Honey Brown Eyes* at Theater J), sound design by Chris Baine (*The Accident* at Theater J and *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* at Forum Theatre), and properties design by HannaH Crowell (Associate Scenic Designer for *The Rise and Fall of Annie Hall* and *Sholom Aleichem: Laughter Through Tears* at Theater J, *The Receptionist* at Studio Theatre).

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2009-2010 Season

ZERO HOUR

Written & performed by Jim Brochu
August 29–September 27

LOST IN YONKERS

By Neil Simon
October 21–November 29

MOMMY QUEEREST

Written & performed by Judy Gold
December 16–January 3

THE FOUR OF US

A new play by Itamar Moses
January 20–February 21

ANDY WARHOL: GOOD FOR THE JEWS?

A world premiere written &
performed by Josh Kornbluth
March 6–March 21

IN DARFUR

A new play by Winter Miller
March 31–April 18

MIKVEH

An English language premiere
by Hadar Galron
May 5–June 5

NEW JERUSALEM: THE INTERROGATION OF BARUCH DE SPINOZA

A new play by David Ives
June 26–July 25

Theater J

1529 16th Street NW
In the Aaron & Cecile
Goldman Theater
Washington DCJCC

Tickets: (800) 494-TIXS
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JIM BROCHU PRESENTS AN EXHILARATING PORTRAIT OF ZERO MOSTEL IN ZERO HOUR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
July 22, 2009

(Washington, DC) – To kick-off Theater J's 2009-2010 season full of resilient, iconoclastic truth-tellers who mince no words, Jim Brochu presents his one-man tour-de-force, *ZERO HOUR*, a penetrating study of the fantastically contrary and hilarious star, Zero Mostel—artist, activist and blacklisted actor. This brilliant portrayal that won “Best Play” honors from coast to coast is directed by stage and screen actress turned director Piper Laurie.

ZERO HOUR runs August 29–September 27, 2009 in the Aaron & Cecile Goldman Theater at the Washington DCJCC. Performances on Sunday, August 30 at 7:30 pm and Tuesday, September 1 at 7:30 pm are Pay-What-You-Can previews. Performances on Saturday, August 29 at 8:00 pm and Sunday, August 30 at 3:00 pm are \$30 previews. Press night is Wednesday, September 2 at 7:30 pm. On Thursday, September 17 at 7:30 pm the show will have open captioning for the hearing impaired. Tickets are available for \$30-\$55 at boxofficetickets.com or (800) 494-TIXS. Tickets for all patrons 35 and under are half-price for all performances!

The ebullient, mercurial star of stage and screen Zero Mostel (best known for his portrayal of comic characters such as Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Pseudolus in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, and Max Bialystock in *The Producers*) once said that the freedom of any society is directly proportional to the volume of its laughter. Summoned before the House Un-American Activities Committee in the 1950s, he not only refused to name names but, unlike many witnesses, goaded his interrogators instead of quavering before them. Jim Brochu shares the story of a man who, in the shadow of McCarthyism, had the courage to stand up and tell a joke. With an inquiring *New York Times* reporter at the door, Mostel is forced to confront his bitterness about being blacklisted. This timely study reintroduces audiences to a larger than life talent whose penchant for candor and moral outrage have been sorely missed. Brochu says that half a century ago, just as now, fear was a pervasive factor in society. “In the 50s the fear was internal—the blacklist and the crazy search for communists was taking a toll on people. The fear we live in today is more from without. One of the most relevant lessons in the play is that we must never let the government get too totalitarian or we’re at risk of losing our civil rights.”

Jim Brochu was destined to play Zero Mostel, not only because he had a relationship with Mostel and brings that deeply personal perspective, but because he is such a strong physical match for his subject. Even in high school the similarity was uncanny with friends referring to him as “the Zero Mostel of LaSalle, New Jersey,” according to Brochu. Like Mostel, Brochu is also a painter. In fact, Mostel told Brochu that he was “a painter who acts, not an actor who paints” and “only did comedy in order to be able to buy paint.” Brochu has also been painting as long as he’s been acting and he uses his talent to create an original painting, in character as Zero Mostel, on stage every