

ASK YOUR
JEWISH
FAIRY
GODMOTHER



Dear Jewish Fairy
Godmother:

I am starting a very stringent food program. I'll spare you the medical details but assume they include long-term chronic debilitating conditions, mild obesity, and a sincere but wavering desire in the past to "get healthy" and kick the medical issues through nutrition. I have my doctor's sign-off to do a three-month experiment that I have been working my way into. The punch line on the NO foods are: no gluten (and little non-whole grain), no sugar, no dairy, no caffeine, no legumes. I'm not vegetarian but consume animal protein only modestly. I can still imbibe small amounts of alcohol, assuming my blood sugars are within certain limits. Here's the problem: Look at the calendar! I'm social and there's no "Just wait until January" in this experiment. In addition to Hanukkah, office, Xmas, New Year's and other December events, there are birthdays, parties, Valentine's, and regular weekend

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Jason Alexander directs musical at Mizner Park

BY MARVIN GLASSMAN
STAFF WRITER

Comic actor Jason Alexander, best known for playing "George" on the popular situation television comedy series "Seinfeld," directs the musical "When You're In Love The Whole World Is Jewish" running now through Jan. 11 at the Mizner Park Cultural Arts Center.

The musical was a commercial hit during its 2013 run in Los Angeles and is based on two records, a 1965 comedy album "You Don't Have To Be Jewish" and its 1966 sequel "When You're In Love The Whole World Is Jewish." The one-act 90 minute show features six ensemble actors performing 25 fast paced comedy sketches with the plot involving a young Jewish man wanting to marry his Catholic girlfriend and wishes to have a rabbi act as a guide for her to what her life will be as she is immersed in Jewish culture.

Sketches include portrayals of Jews and non-Jews interacting in business, travel, family and marriage with characters in many sketches to include a dominant, nagging Jewish mother.

Some of the musical highlights include the songs "Let's Eat," "Oy Vey" and "The Jewish American Princess Song," all written by Alexander for the show.



Jason Alexander directs the musical "When You're In Love The Whole World Is Jewish" running now through Jan. 11 at the Mizner Park Cultural Arts Center.

Submitted photo

Alexander recognizes some of the characters from his Jewish upbringing in New Jersey, but adds new twists to make the sketches more contemporary than the 1950s and 60s portrayal of Jews in the old albums.

"The musical has people that not only I, but everyone attending recognize as people they grew up with either in their families or as people they know in the Jewish community," said the 55-year-old Alexander.

"I added some new surprises, but the routines are based on famous Jewish jokes and situations. The audiences in Los Angeles kept coming back because of the nostalgia and I fully expect the South Florida audiences to come often for the shows."

Perhaps the nostalgic fare is ideal in South Florida, as the premise

and characters of "When You're In Love The Whole World Is Jewish" may look similar to another long running play "Old Jews Telling Jokes" that is also running now through January at Stage Door Theatre.

"There is a very large Jewish population in South Florida so there is robust support for both shows," said actress Rena Strober, who stars in "When You're In Love.."

"I play many characters, from the *shiksa* (non-Jewish) girlfriend, a *yenta* (busybody) and many other types of Jewish women. We all get plenty of laughs as the many sketches have characters that even look like many people in the audience."

Strober, from New York and in her 30s, has been on national tours of "Fiddler On The Roof" and starred off-Broadway in

the one man show "Spaghetti & Matzo Balls."

Born as Jay Green-span in Livingston, NJ, Alexander studied magic and was at first a professional musician on stage before turning into acting. His big break in show business came when he played George, the neurotic, obnoxious self-deprecating single man on "Seinfeld" from 1989-98.

With the popularity of "George," Alexander was in demand as a character actor as a character similar to "George," such as playing a neurotic man in the television series "Malcolm In The Middle," an inept womanizer in the film "Shallow Hal" and an insensitive lawyer in the film "Pretty Woman."

"It was a blessing to be 'George' because I was a perfect fit for any kind of role for a neurotic character to add to a comedy," said Alexan-

der.

Alexander went beyond "George" starring in lead roles in Broadway musicals and won the 1989 Tony Award for his work in the musical "Jerome Robbins Broadway." He is also artistic director of the Reprise Theatre in Los Angeles.

Unlike "George," Alexander has been married for the past 32 years to actress Daena Title and has two sons, Gabriel and Noah. He is proud of his Jewish roots, often talking about his many trips to Israel while speaking throughout the country for Jewish Federation.

"Being Jewish and caring about Israel is part of my DNA. I really owe a lot to my mother (Ruth), who is 95 and lives in Coconut Creek. She is my biggest cheerleader and she is better at selling tickets to this musical than anyone else," added Alexander.

Alexander will honor his mother next February starring in a fund raising show for her mother's congregation Kol Tikvah in Parkland.

"When You're In Love The Whole World is Jewish" is running now through Jan. 11 at the Mizner Park Cultural Arts Center, 201 Plaza Real in Boca Raton. For showtimes and tickets, call 561-910-7727 or go to www.worldisjewish-theplay.com