



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hell in a Handbag Productions Announces 2016 Season:

Chicago Premiere!

THE DIVINE SISTER

By Charles Busch, Directed by Shade Murray

Back by Popular Demand!

BETTE, LIVE AT THE CONTINENTAL BATHS

A Musical Tribute Starring Caitlin Jackson

Directed by Christopher Pazdernik

World Premiere!

SCOOBY, DON'T

By David Cerda, Directed by Derek Van Barham

World Premiere!

THE RIP NELSON HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR

By David Cerda, Directed by Steve Love

Season Subscriptions Now On Sale!

CHICAGO (February 15, 2016) – **Hell in a Handbag Productions** is pleased to announce its **2016 Season**, and this year no holy cow is too sacred. What could be better than kicking off summer with the Chicago premiere of **THE DIVINE SISTER**, the hilarious comic homage to almost every Hollywood nun story imaginable by the divine high priestess of camp **Charles Busch**? How about staging it in an *actual church*? Directed by **Shade Murray** (*Pilgrim's Progress*), the play will be performed at the lovely **Ebenezer Lutheran Church** in Chicago's Andersonville neighborhood.

Halloween has always been a favorite time of year for Handbag audiences and we always give our audiences what they want – parody so dead-on it's frightening! The world premiere comedy **SCOOBY DON'T** follows the adventures of four adults – Scaggy, Fredd, Velva and Daffy – who wear the same clothes everyday while driving around in a van with their mentally impaired talking dog, 'solving mysteries.' Join Handbag this fall as Artistic Director **David Cerda** and director **Derek Van Barham** lampoon a cartoon classic, being performed at **Mary's Attic** above Hamburger Mary's.

No Christmas would be complete without a Handbag holiday show and keeping in the tradition of keeping it fresh, Handbag is premiering a new holiday show with an old friend. **THE RIP NELSON HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR** stars **Ed Jones** as Rip Nelson, the embittered television has-been with a razor sharp timing and a monkey on his back. Tune the channel to "1982" for this world premiere by **David Cerda**, directed by **Steve Love** at **Mary's Attic**.

Due to popular demand, Handbag is also bringing back the frothy summer musical smash, **BETTE, LIVE AT THE CONTINENTAL BATHS**, with **Caitlin Jackson** recreating Bette Midler's historic bathhouse concert in New York City. Directed by **Christopher Pazdernik**, Bette takes Boystown by storm at **Stage 773**.

Subscriptions for **Hell in Handbag's 2016 Season** are currently available at www.handbagproductions.org.

Hell in a Handbag Productions' 2016 line-up includes:

June 4 - July 10, 2016

THE DIVINE SISTER– *Chicago Premiere!*

By **Charles Busch**, Directed by **Shade Murray**

Featuring ensemble members **David Cerda** and **Ed Jones**

at **Ebenezer Lutheran Church**, 1650 W. Foster Ave., Chicago

Hell in a Handbag's season opener is a comic homage to nearly every nun movie to come out of Hollywood. Lifting from films like *The Song of Bernadette*, *The Bells of St. Mary's*, *The Singing Nun* and *Agnes of God*, **THE DIVINE SISTER** tells the story of St. Veronica's indomitable Mother Superior (**David Cerda**) who is determined to build a new school for her Pittsburgh convent. Along the way, she has to deal with a young postulant who is experiencing "visions," sexual hysteria among her nuns, a sensitive schoolboy in need of mentoring, a mysterious nun visiting from the Mother House in Berlin and a former suitor intent on luring her away from her vows. Funny, clever and even a little sweet, **THE DIVINE SISTER** springs from the mind of **Charles Busch**, creator of the camp the classics *Die, Mommie, Die!*, *Psycho Beach Party* and *Vampire Lesbians of Sodom*.

August 12 – September 10, 2016 – Nine Performances Only!

BETTE, LIVE AT THE CONTINENTAL BATHS

Featuring **Caitlin Jackson** as Bette Midler

Directed by **Christopher Pazdernik**, Music Direction by **Jeremy Ramey**

at **Stage 773**, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.

Handbag Diva and ensemble member **Caitlin Jackson** returns to pay tribute to the Divine Miss M's legendary cabaret act at the equally legendary Continental Bathhouse in New York City. This musical cabaret will feature fabulous songs, live music, hot men in strategically placed towels.

September 29 – November 4, 2016

SCOOBY DON'T – World Premiere!

By **David Cerda** Directed by **Derek Van Barham**

Featuring ensemble member **Ed Jones**

at **Mary's Attic**, 5400 N. Clark St., Chicago

When Velva's aunt needs help, the gang comes to the rescue! Velva never mentions that her aunt is multi-platinum recording artist and Oscar winner, Cher (ensemble member **Ed Jones**). Cher is also joined by Chaz Bono and Kris and Caitlyn Jenner for a whacky mixed-up adventure you won't forget – no matter how hard you try! **SCOOBY DON'T** is not only a parody of the classic *Scooby Doo* cartoon but also explores social and gender political correctness and inner and outer identity and appearances. The big mystery here is if Scooby and the gang can navigate social moors in this modern world.

November 20 – December 30, 2016

THE RIP NELSON HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR

By **David Cerda**, Directed by **Steve Love**

Featuring ensemble member **Ed Jones**

at **Mary's Attic**, 5400 N. Clark St., Chicago

Hell in a Handbag's favorite bitter has-been comic genius returns! Audiences fell in love with Rip Nelson in our 2010 hit *The Rip Nelson Halloween Spooktacular* – now he's back and ready to deck your halls in **THE RIP NELSON HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR**. It's 1982 and a newly sober Rip (ensemble member **Ed Jones**) manages to land another TV special after the death of his arch-rival, Paul Lynde. Rip is determined to get his career back on track but can he handle the stress of a network television special *and* stay sober? Luckily he's got help from a cavalcade of the hottest stars of 1982! Rip pulls every trick in the book to breathe some life in the dying variety series format and save his career but soon questions if his career is worth saving.

Hell in a Handbag is dedicated to the preservation, exploration, and celebration of works ingrained in the realm of popular culture via theatrical productions through parody, music and homage. Handbag is a 501(c)(3) Not for Profit Corporation.

###