



THE PERFORMERS

BY DAVID WEST READ



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*With thanks to my collaborator and friend, Evan Cabnet —
the hardest-working man in the business.*

THE PERFORMERS was produced on Broadway at the Longacre Theatre, opening on November 14, 2012. It was directed by Evan Cabnet; the scenic design was by Anna Louizos; the costume design was by Jessica Wegener-Shay; the lighting design was by Jeff Croiter; the sound design was by Nevin Steinberg; the projection design was by Richard DiBella; the hair and wig design were by Charles G. LaPointe; the prosthetics and make-up design were by Adam Bailey; the production stage manager was Charles M. Turner, III; and the stage manager was Matt Schreiber. The cast was as follows:

MANDREW Cheyenne Jackson
LEE Daniel Breaker
PEEPS Ari Graynor
SARA Alicia Silverstone
CHUCK Henry Winkler
SUNDOWN Jenni Barber

THE PERFORMERS

MANDREW — A male porn star in his late twenties.

LEE — Mandrew's friend, a journalist, late twenties.

PEEPS — Mandrew's wife, another porn star, mid-twenties.

SARA — Lee's fiancée, a high-school teacher, late twenties.

CHUCK — An aging male porn star, fifties to sixties.

SUNDOWN — Another female porn star, mid-twenties.

TIME

The present.

PLACE

A hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada.

THE PERFORMERS

Scene 1

A hotel room in Las Vegas. Late afternoon.

Mandrew (late 20s) stalks around the room in costume — a brown caveman-style wrap, tied at the shoulder. He's in good shape, comfortable with his body, and he's getting ready for a party.

Lee (late 20s), more conservatively dressed, sits with his notepad and pen in hand.

MANDREW. What is a porn star? Good question. That's the first good question you've asked all day.

LEE. I didn't actually ask that question —

MANDREW. A porn star is someone who excites you sexually but not emotionally. Ipso facto, I'm not a porn star, I am a love star, I make *love*.

LEE. Does anyone call you a love star?

MANDREW. No, nobody *calls* me that, obviously. They call me Mandrew. That's my name, so ...

LEE. It is *now*. I'm still getting used to it.

MANDREW. Just because something excites you — write this down — just because something excites you ... doesn't mean it's porn. I used to jack off to *Where's Waldo* books. There, I said it.

LEE. You used to masturbate to *Where's Waldo* books?

MANDREW. Constantly. I used to get so hard, just looking for Waldo in all those crowded places ... never knowing when he was gonna pop up ... it's the thrill of the chase, man! As soon as I'd find that fucker I'd whip it out and BOOM! Cum all over his striped little cap.

LEE. Okay. Well that's fascinating, but I can't really print that, so ...
MANDREW. Oh, I'm sorry, that's not appropriate for the *New York Times*?

LEE. It's the *New York Post*.

MANDREW. Whatever. I feel like I'm in the dark over here, and meanwhile *you're* the one who hasn't done your research — writing an article for the *New York* whatever and you haven't even watched my film.

LEE. The article's not focusing on the films. It's about you, and what it's like to be a performer.

MANDREW. What are you calling it?

LEE. Doesn't matter what I'm calling it ...

MANDREW. Come on, what's the title?

LEE. "P-star Makes It Big."

MANDREW. (*Beat.*) That's really good.

LEE. Thank you.

MANDREW. You know what's *not* a good title? *Planet of the Tits*. Fingers, the director ...

LEE. The director's name is "Fingers"?

MANDREW. Yeah, I mean his real name is Charles Fingerbang, but everyone calls him "Fingers."

LEE. Let me just write that down ...

MANDREW. The guy's a genius, you should check out his shit, if the *New York Times* is interested in seeing some art for a change —

LEE. *New York Post* —

MANDREW. His titles are shit, but he's basically like the Martin Scorsese of porn.

LEE. Right, so what kind of direction does he give you?

MANDREW. Well, so this scene that I'm nominated for, I'm goin' down on this chick — you know Sundown LeMay? She's got an ass that goes boom boom boom, all the way around.

LEE. I've seen her work.

MANDREW. Yeah, so I'm going down on her and she's lovin' it, obviously, and this other chick's just watching, so as an actor I'm thinking in my head like maybe she's my cousin Amanda or something.

LEE. What?

MANDREW. No, you know what I mean. Like it's forbidden, as a backstory.

LEE. That's kind of weird.

MANDREW. It's not weird. It's weird for you.

LEE. It's weird for anyone.

MANDREW. Whatever, so then this other guy comes in. Here, you come in, pretend you're the other guy.

LEE. Okay, I just — ? (*Lee gets up and pretends to reenter.*)

MANDREW. Yeah, you come in and you're wearing a full space suit, but it's got a zipper in the back and you can zip the whole thing right off like a onesie.

LEE. Why am I wearing a space suit?

MANDREW. Uh, because we're in space?

LEE. Of course we are.

MANDREW. It's *Planet of the Tits*. The chicks are aliens, we're space dudes —

LEE. I thought what you're wearing was from the movie? You said you were wearing that to promote *Planet of the Tits* —

MANDREW. Yeah, there's more than one costume in the movie, Lee. It's basically a regular Hollywood, big-budget blockbuster movie that goes a little bit further with the sex.

LEE. Right, and how long did it take to shoot?

MANDREW. Six days with stunts. Now let's go, you come in, you rip off your space suit, and you start going down on the other chick —

LEE. Your cousin Amanda.

MANDREW. Not my cousin, the forbidden one, you start goin' down on her while I'm goin' down on the other one ... (*Lee gets into his "going down" position, which looks kind of like he's looking under a car. Mandrew laughs.*) ... and then all of a sudden we start fucking them, at the same time.

LEE. We just both start — ?

MANDREW. Yeah, like we just kind of slide up and in, like this ... (*Mandrew demonstrates and encourages Lee to follow. They mime throughout the rest of the scene.*)

LEE. Okay ...

MANDREW. Yeah, we're just fucking away, goin' thrust for thrust and then — and this is a Fingers idea — the two guys, we start making eye contact with each other.

LEE. Uh oh.

MANDREW. Yeah, and at first it's kind of like, "Yeah! Look what we're doin'! We're fuckin' these chicks in space, motherfucker!" And we start high-fiving ...

LEE. Like — ?

MANDREW. Like, yeah, just high-fiving as we're fucking the chicks. It's like, fuck-five, fuck-five, fuck-five ... (*Lee and Mandrew high-five each other as they go through the motions. Lee starts enjoying himself.*)

LEE. Okay, I think I got it!

MANDREW. But hold up, 'cause then it gets real serious.

LEE. Oh shit.

MANDREW. Yeah, like maybe we're not laughing about the fact that we're fucking these chicks anymore. Maybe we're just lockin' eyes, you know? Like in a real serious something's-taking-over-and-I-kind-of-want-to-see-where-it-goes kind of way. And the high-fives all of a sudden start getting slower. It's like fuck ... five ... say it with me now ...

LEE and MANDREW. Fuck ... *five* ... fuck ... *five* ... fuck ... *five* ...

MANDREW. And then they're not even real high-fives anymore, it's like our hands are just brushing against each other, and then we lock.

LEE. We lock?

MANDREW. We lock hands like this. (*Mandrew grabs Lee's hand and holds it up in the air.*) And we're still fucking ... (*More thrusts.*) ... but we're connected, see? It's like one hand now. It's like the sound of one hand fucking. That's what the title should be. 'Cause it's like one guy, one body, fucking two chicks at once. You understand?

LEE. Yeah, it's really —

MANDREW. It's really beautiful, is what it is. I get emotional just thinking about it, and I didn't even cry in that Disney movie about the old man and the balloons. That's how powerful it is. And that's why I'm taking home the award tonight. Because of *Fingers* and his beautiful film, which you haven't had the chance to see. (*Mandrew tears off his wrap, revealing his incredible body as he changes into a tiger-print jacket and leather pants.*)

LEE. I promise, I will watch it, Mandrew, I just —

MANDREW. I just thought you might want to see my award-winning performance.

LEE. What if you don't win?

MANDREW. Okay, well first of all that's a redundant question because I will win tonight —

LEE. It's not a redundant question —

MANDREW. *And secondly*, I don't think you appreciate the fact

that I'm inviting you not just as a reporter, but as a friend, to share in my success, when in fact I don't have friends.

LEE. You don't have friends?

MANDREW. Okay, no — don't print that. I have *friends*, I just don't want friends, because a) if I want to fuck someone I can just go to work, and b) if I want companionship I've got a dog.

LEE. And a wife.

MANDREW. And a wife, and c) I don't trust these dudes, you know? These dudes who want to be friends now. I mean, you and me, we've got history. We were on Yearbook Committee. That's a special bond. We can go years without seeing each other, but we know each other, you know? I mean look at us! (*Mandrew stops in front of Lee, his genitals uncomfortably close to Lee's face.*) We're like finishing each other's ...

LEE. Sentences — ?

MANDREW. Sentences, bam.

LEE. I don't think I *do* know everything about you. I don't know how you got into the business ...

MANDREW. All right, I'll tell you for real. When I first moved out west, I was delivering sandwiches in the San Fernando Valley. And I kept having to go to these small production companies, like RCG Adult Video, and I thought, wow, I love getting sandwiches for people, but wouldn't it be awesome if I could *not*? If I could *not* do that, and actually do something else? I've never — I don't know if I'm like ADD, or ADHD, or just retarded, but I've never been able to sit back and watch other people doing shit without wanting to get up and do it myself. So I answered an ad for an adult film, and boom boom boom, here I am.

LEE. Okay, when you answered the ad, what happened? Did you ... audition?

MANDREW. Obviously.

LEE. And what did that consist of? Did you ... have sex with someone?

MANDREW. Well, I didn't prepare a monologue. (*Lee laughs.*) Why is that funny? I could monologue your ass off right now.

LEE. No, I know ...

MANDREW. (*Channeling Mo'Nique from Precious.*) "You sit there and you judge me, and you write them notes on your notepad, because you think you know who I am ..."

LEE. What are you doing?

THE PERFORMERS

by David West Read

3M, 3W

THE PERFORMERS is a romantic comedy about two high-school friends — and the women in their lives — who reconnect at the Adult Film Awards in Las Vegas. When the night takes an unexpected turn and relationships are threatened, Chuck Wood, the hardest-working man in the business, steps in to lend a hand. Sex, romance and Barry Manilow intersect in this comedy about the ups and downs and ins and outs of love.

“THE PERFORMERS is like an early Neil Simon farce with an X-rated vocabulary.”

—The New York Times

“How has there never been a stage show about what happens at the Adult Film Awards? A send-up of porn stars and their pals, THE PERFORMERS is totally profane and exhaustingly funny.”

—Entertainment Weekly

“That THE PERFORMERS often delights us, silly as the show can be, is a testament to Read’s skillful way with a well-timed (if vulgar) remark — even when it seems mostly designed to shock the audience — and his gift for creating physical comedy.”

—TheaterMania.com

“The funny thing is that the show has a pure heart and a traditional feel-good message despite the waving of adult toys, simulated sex acts and language that would trigger a seizure in a network censor. Read has somehow found sweetness in porn.”

—Associated Press

Also by David West Read

THE DREAM OF THE BURNING BOY

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