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A Big Bang

Milagro Theatre explores hope through transformation with **BOOMCRACKLEFLY**

BY ERIN ROOK

What do a lonely drag queen, a circus acrobat and a Cuban man constructing wings have in common? They all travel twisted, and ultimately converging, paths toward personal and global transformation in Charise Castro Smith's new play **BOOMCRACKLEFLY**, which has its world premiere Friday, March 25 at the Milagro Theatre.

BOOMCRACKLEFLY explores "how people get broken and put back together and broken and put back together in this cyclical way," Smith explains. "Even when we think it's the end of the line and there's no more hope, we're still able to transform into something else."

Full of magical realism and impossible characters, the play is 27-year-old Smith's second, and the first to be performed outside of Yale University, where she recently earned her master's in theater arts. Presented primarily in English, the play blends Spanish and English with references to such modern conveniences as Febreeze and Purell that place the story's poetic language squarely in the present.

Directed by Drammy Award-winner Olga Sanchez, **BOOMCRACKLEFLY** stars Emily Gleason (Lenin), Kylie Clarke Johnson (Lennon), Tyler Andrew Jones (Fulana de Tal), Stephen Lisk (The Phoenix), Randy Patterson (Ernest Hemingway), Angela Bolaños-Osorio (woman with wings), Anthony Green (man who wanted wings) and Ursula Loret de Mola (L'Abuela).

The heroine of the story is a twentysome-

thing drag queen called Fulana de Tal (Spanish for "that girl" or "so and so"). Fulana's journey toward a bizarre new world begins with her second-to-last customer of the night, a quiet john who cums photons and runs off with her pinky finger. Unfazed, Fulana continues to donate body parts to her revolutionary lover's cause—to remake the universe in her image.

Meanwhile, twin sisters performing in a Miami circus find their partnership threatened by the ghost of Ernest Hemingway, and a Cuban couple bickers about the viability of building wings to fly them to freedom.

For all their quirks, the characters are surprisingly relatable, says Jones, the 21-year-old actor playing Fulana.

"I actually see a lot of myself in Fulana. Once you strip [it] down—she's a drag queen and she's going

through all this stuff and she's losing body parts, she has an imaginary grandmother—she's a real person. And she's a lot like me," Jones says. He can relate to her monologues about dealing with loneliness, he adds, because his boyfriend lives in Las Vegas.

Still, there are ways in which Jones is nothing like the character he portrays. He insists that Fulana is a stronger person than he is, and then there's the whole drag queen bit.

"I am, out of all of my gay friends, the last one to play a drag queen. I'm not in real life. I've never wanted to be. But I've played two," he says.



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