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‘Kind Ambition,’ a reflection on life, career

Posted January 5, 2024



Jon Goldstein will premiere his latest musical creation, ‘Kind Ambition,’ on Jan. 10.

‘KIND AMBITION’

Date: Jan. 10

Time: 2 p.m.

Location: 232 Main Street, Port Washington.

Tickets: Admission is free, but must be reserved at landmarkonmainstreet.org

By **Roksana Amid**

Renowned songwriter and producer Jon Goldstein is set to premiere his latest musical creation, “Kind Ambition,” at the Jeanne Rimsky Theater at Landmark on Main Street in Port Washington on Jan. 10. Goldstein, of Glen Cove, will take the audience on a personal journey by sharing his true story filled with triumphs, challenges, calamities, and the acceptance of life’s tragedies.

Goldstein loved the performing arts from a young age, leading him to become president of the North Shore High School Masquers Club in his senior year. After graduation he attended Vassar College with a passion for music and art but opted to study psychology due to doubts about making a living in the arts. After his first son was born, Goldstein shifted towards graphic and web design, eventually teaching at Farmingdale State College.

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Just as Goldstein was about to give up on the arts, he wrote music with his sister, a playwright, on a children’s show about the Statue of Liberty, which gained unexpected success after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. This led to the creation of educational shows about Martin Luther King Jr. and Native Americans.

Balancing a full-time job, family, and creative pursuits, Goldstein later returned to music, performing at local hot spots and produced the show “Journey from Johannesburg,” by Toby Tobias, which addresses themes of segregation, anti-Semitism, and the pursuit of harmony across different nations, which has played at the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County, as well as colleges, libraries, community centers, and houses of worship across the tri-state area. The show embarked on its first U.S. tour in September of 2018, and has since been performed in Canada, England, and Tobias’ native homeland of South Africa.

A turning point emerged when Goldstein’s friend, Ben Diamond, initiated a bi-weekly Zoom songwriting group called “21 in 21” in 2021 to help a community of artists come together during the coronavirus pandemic lockdowns to overcome a creative slump.



“I had written some really what I would call boring songs,” Goldstein said. “I literally had a song called ‘What is there to do,’ because there was nothing to do. I had gotten to a point where I’d made this decision that I was probably done writing songs.”

The challenge was to compose 21 songs during the year, each based on a prompt provided by Diamond. To Goldstein’s surprise, he ended up writing 24 songs, a feat surpassing any previous year.

The structured prompts and deadlines forced Goldstein to break creative barriers. It led to what he considers his best work. The feedback from fellow songwriters consistently highlighted the theatrical quality of his compositions, sparking an unexpected realization — Goldstein had created a show.

One moment Goldstein credits to creating his one-man show is an injury that forced him to learn the art of asking for help. Goldstein tore his left quadricep while walking on a stone step at his home while reflecting on lyrics he wrote for his Zoom class about someone he was angry with. The moments between agony and remembering the lyrics marked a significant shift in his mindset, he said. He realized he avoided confrontation for most of his life by hiding behind sarcastic lyrics instead of openly expressing his needs, ultimately influencing the trajectory of his life and creative pursuits. While Goldstein acknowledges his life story might not have the globe-trotting drama of Tobias’s journey, he humorously quips that his show could be titled “Journey from Jericho Turnpike.” The musical encapsulates his personal growth, the challenges faced, and the humor found in life’s highs and lows.

“Kind Ambition” promises to be a heartfelt journey, blending Goldstein’s signature humor with introspection, and inviting audiences to join him in celebrating the transformative power of storytelling and creative pursuits. The musical’s debut on Jan 10 is anticipated to be a communal experience, inviting the audience to connect with Jon Goldstein’s personal narrative and find resonance in their own journeys.