

http://www.theintell.com/life-style/local-feature/comic-brad-zimmerman-gets-a-second-chance-with-one-man/article_d6c26bd5-798a-55d7-b7c4-2da97370a135.html

The Intelligencer

March 22, 2017

Comic Brad Zimmerman gets a second chance with one-man show at Bucks County Playhouse



Feldscher Horwitz Public Relations
Brad Zimmerman

By Liz Johnson

Unemployed comedian Brad Zimmerman was 58 years old when his therapist suggested it might be time to go back to waiting tables.

“I was broke. I had nothing. I couldn’t afford to go out,” said Zimmerman. He did have an idea, though. One he’d been working on for seven years. One that had interest of a theater producer.

“In 2005 I had been working in comedy, opening for George Carlin and Joan Rivers,” said Zimmerman, now 63. “Somebody said to me, ‘if you ever want to do a one-person show, I’ll produce it.’ I thought, what do I have to lose?”

It took seven years to hone the material, the last few months of which he spent down and out. But when "My Son the Waiter: A Jewish Tragedy" was finished, a "manager saw six minutes of the show on tape. He said 'this belongs in the theater.' "

The manager booked him for six shows in Coral Springs, Florida. It proved so popular, the show ran for several months and the touring rights were purchased by another set of producers.

Today, Zimmerman doesn't worry about money or work. He continues to perform the one-man comedy, which opens Thursday at the Bucks County Playhouse in New Hope.

While the show has a few Jewish jokes, it mainly centers on his life experience. "It's about how I respond to the world," he said.

A sizable amount of the performance is about waiting on tables, but it also includes the poignancy of finding success after his father's death, "prior to him seeing me do anything but struggle," and there are tales about his Jewish mother that any mother will understand.

"Once you learn failure is essential to the process and making adjustments, you understand what growth is about," said Zimmerman, who's working on a sequel called "My Rise to the Middle," which he hopes to premiere in April.

A student athlete, Zimmerman loved the spotlight of performance but never thought about becoming a professional sportsman. Instead, he moved to New York City and got a job waiting tables. In the 1990s, he studied acting and comedy. By 2000, he was making a living as a comedian, although at times he struggled — which is the subject matter of his next play.

"It chronicles the war stories of going out to the world as a comic and illuminates what failure is all about. It's brutal. But I stayed the course and got the gratification of being a late bloomer," said Zimmerman.

"I found what gives me enormous purpose, which is better late than never," he said. It helps that he's funny, but his story is also real which "resonates with everybody," he said. "As Oscar Wilde said, 'Be yourself. Everyone else is taken,' " he said.

Want to know more?

"My Son the Waiter: A Jewish Tragedy" runs Thursday through April 9 at the Bucks County Playhouse, 70 S. Main St., New Hope. Information: www.bcptheater.org or call the box office at 215-862-2121