



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE • OCTOBER 19, 2026

A Filipino Debut, Reimagined

CIRCA Pintig brings a new queer Filipino American comedy to three Chicago venues, November 5–December 4

CHICAGO — CIRCA Pintig presents *Debut: Coming of Age in Filipino America*, a new one-act comedy by Nate Cozens, directed by RJ Silva. A Filipino drag queen approaching 30 throws himself a traditional debut party—and discovers that family love may prove more transformative than a perfect celebration. The production plays 11 performances at Filament Theatre, Bughouse Theater and the Rizal Center from November 5 through December 4, 2026.

Jomar, a 29-year-old drag performer at a crossroads, reclaims the debut—a Filipino celebration traditionally marking a young woman’s 18th birthday—as his own fresh start. His family rallies around his elaborate plans, but as the party venue falls through and the lechon never materializes, the celebration takes on another meaning. The result is an affectionate, flamboyant look at queer identity, generational expectations, family and belonging.

Playwright Nate Cozens drew on his experience of turning 30: “If anything, I felt like I was just getting started.” For director RJ Silva, Jomar’s story suggests that “at any age, we can always find ourselves and find our home.” Lead actor AJ Lingad describes telling queer Asian stories as central to his practice: “It has always been my mission as an artist to tell stories that represent the queer/asian community.”

The cast features AJ Lingad (Jomar), Stephanie Fongheiser (Ysabel), Ginger Leopoldo (Gloria), Larry Leopoldo (Regino), Nina Mae Vidal Howard (Lola Corazon), and Steven Cristi (Zack), with understudies Rich Adrian Lazatin, Mari Joy and Jill Raz. Stage manager: Alishiana Uyao. Production design: Noel Henry, Mikael Silan and Larry Leopoldo.

Performance information • All times Chicago local time

FILAMENT THEATRE • 4041 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60641

Thu Nov 5, 7:30 PM (press preview); Fri Nov 6, 7:30 PM (opening); Sat Nov 7, 2 & 7:30 PM; Sun Nov 8, 2 PM; Mon Nov 9, 7:30 PM (industry night).

BUGHOUSE THEATER • 1910 W. Irving Park Rd., Chicago, IL 60613

Thu Nov 12, 7:30 PM; Fri Nov 13, 7:30 PM; Sat Nov 14, 2 PM.

RIZAL CENTER • 1332 W. Irving Park Rd., Chicago, IL 60613

Thu Dec 3, 7:30 PM; Fri Dec 4, 7:30 PM (season gala; \$50 including dinner).

TICKETS & UPDATES: <https://www.circapintig.org/productions/debut/>

PRESS & INTERVIEWS: November 5 is the designated press preview. For press seats contact info@circapintig.org; reporters may also reply to Larry Leopoldo (larryleopoldo@gmail.com). Interviews with Nate Cozens, RJ Silva and AJ Lingad may be arranged through the production team. High-resolution publicity images and approved captions: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1SSbHl2OCUXh31zZJnmRblvEQC839Nlx9>

ABOUT CIRCA PINTIG: In its 35th season, CIRCA Pintig is a Chicago-based Filipino American theater and community arts company developing work rooted in Filipino and Filipino American stories. Learn more at circapintig.org.