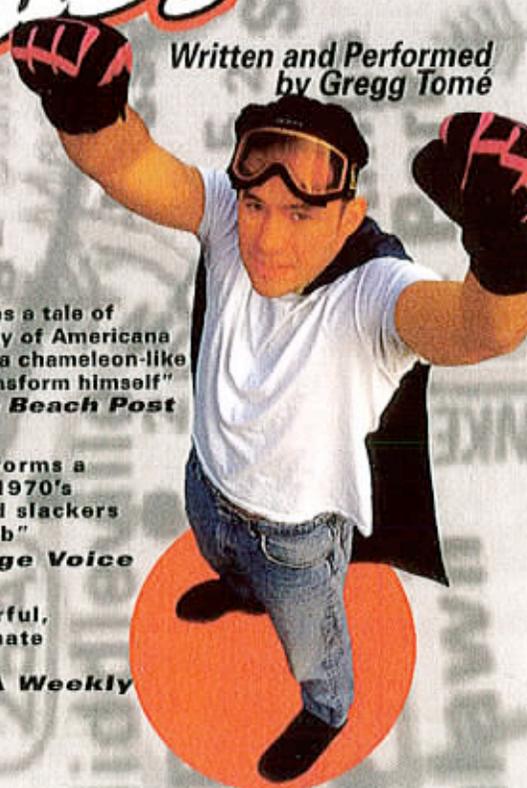


*Back To Babylon*  
Press Articles

the past is always present...

# Back to Babylon

Written and Performed  
by Gregg Tomé



★ "Tomé weaves a tale of the underbelly of Americana and displays a chameleon-like ability to transform himself"  
**Palm Beach Post**

★ "Tomé performs a coterie of 1970's stoners and slackers with aplomb"  
**Village Voice**

★ "Nine colorful, compassionate portraits."  
**LA Weekly**

## Best Bets

REASONS TO LEAVE THE HOUSE THIS WEEK

FRIDAY 06-SATURDAY 07:  
**BACK TO BABYLON**

Lake Worth-based playwright, director and performer Gregg Tomé portrays numerous characters in his one-man show *Back to Babylon*, which centers on a group of friends and an impending high-school reunion. A standout character is Billy B, a pothead who allows Tomé to deliver some of the best simulated bong-smoking ever witnessed onstage. The flash of his Bic lighter and the ethereal, babbling-brook-like sucking sound he makes is mesmerizing. "There's no water in the bong. That's just me making the noise," Tomé says proudly. Billy B delivers words of wisdom such as "Everything's cool" before the smoke even has time to clear his lungs. "You



Gregg Tomé

do have to be in good physical shape to get that all out," Tomé explains, adding that he based Billy B on a real person. "He came to see the show in New York, and it was like no time had gone by. He's got a backpack with both his bong and a 12-pack of beer, and during the performance, I start hearing the flip-tops popping and smelling pot. I completely lost my concentration."

Billy B will do that to you.

**Location:** The Cuillo Centre for the Arts, 201 Clematis St., West Palm Beach

**Time:** 8 p.m. Fridays, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays; through Feb. 24

**Cost:** \$15

**Contact:** 561/835-9226 or [Cuillocentre.com](http://Cuillocentre.com)

## New York International Fringe Festival Reviews

### **BABYLON, LONG ISLAND**

reviewed by Mark O'Toole

*Babylon, long island* is a 90-minute one-man, one-act show, written, directed and performed by Gregg Tomé in his first appearance in FringeNYC. Tomé is no newcomer to the theatre, however, having performed in various off-off Broadway productions and in Los Angeles. In fact, *Babylon, long island* was first performed at the Theatre at the Improv in Los Angeles.

Tomé's experience shows. *Babylon* may very well be the finest show in FringeNYC this year. *Babylon* is a nostalgic tale of Tomé's hometown of Babylon, Long Island during the summer of 1977, woven together in a series of witty monologues delivered by nine men whose lives are intertwined. Each character is a resident, indeed a fixture, of this small town; each is a philosopher and likes to talk. What do they talk about? Themselves—but there are motifs that traverse their speeches—they all share an appreciation for the cyclical nature of transition, life, history, the environment ... and Babylon's sewage system.

An old man called "Hi-Hello" likes to shout at schoolchildren from the porch of his nursing home and asks where you're going and where you've been. "Nanzo K'Manzo," a young man who cruises the town on a bicycle wearing a cape and goggles to convince everyone he's crazy, talks about breaking out of the "circle" called normality. The "Cesspool Man," a plumber steeped in the history of the town's sewage, tells us about little "circles" in the earth waiting for the return of the individual cesspool. "Furaha," "the only black kid in town" speaks from within the circle of the wrestling ring, where he has become the town's star athlete. "Donnie," who makes an unseen appearance in all of the other

vignettes, talks about little red "dots" connecting Babylon to the rest of the world.

There is no overstating that this story is complex and well written. Each character manages to tell us a little about the others so well that I was looking forward to seeing some of them long before they made their appearance. I'm still thinking about them. Likewise, one cannot overemphasize that the show is marvelously performed by Tomé and perfectly executed by his crew. Lights dim after each monologue, classic rock fades gently in, and Tomé peels off layers of clothing to make each transition to a new character. Without missing a beat, he picks up an innocuous-looking prop in a corner of the stage, the spotlight flashes back on, and he turns to the crowd with a startlingly different face, voice and personality. I could have sworn there were nine actors on the stage, not one. While the memory play is hardly original, this show has everything it needs to make its mark: a deeply inspired story, a remarkable performance and perfect timing.

SPORTS

# Newsday

NEW YORK CITY

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COVER STORY

B13

# Onstage and Uncensored

Part 2

## New York's Fringe Festival caters to the eclectic eccentric



Gregg Tome of "Babylon, Long Island"

### It's a Babylonian Homecoming

Actor Gregg Tome grew up in Babylon in the late '70s, but he got started working on his one-man show, "Babylon, Long Island" while living in Los Angeles in the early '90s.

"There were all these one-man or one-woman shows out there at the time," he said by phone from his home in West Palm Beach, Fla. "[Eric] Bogosian was doing one, Lily Tomlin was doing one. I started writing about high school."

"Babylon, Long Island" has its New York

premiere Wednesday at P.S. 122 in the East Village as part of the New York International Fringe Festival. The festival's broad collection of performances includes works by natives of Great Neck, Southampton, Merrick, Holbrook and Garden City.

"It was a crazy time," said Tome referring to his days on Long Island. "There were the boating accidents and the corruption surrounding the sewer construction." In the play, characters include the

son of a drug dealer, a Motorhead fanatic and a wrestler, all of which capture the "Boogie Nights" era in Babylon. Tome also extends the story to draw parallels to ancient Babylon. "I wanted to tell these stories," he said, "but I didn't just want to spoon-feed the audience nostalgia."

— Martin Johnson  
*"Babylon, Long Island" runs Wednesday through Aug. 25 at P.S. 122, No. 2 Downstairs, 150 First Ave. at Ninth Street.*

# LA WEEKLY

LA WEEKLY MARCH 27-APRIL 2, 1998

## NEW REVIEWS

**BABYLON, LONG ISLAND** Writer-performer Greg Tomé transforms his experiences growing up in a small New York suburb into a series of nine colorful and compassionate portraits. Many of these are confused young men: a brilliant high school student who'd rather bomb out on dope than go to college, a celebrated young wrestler bitter with secret homosexual cravings, an adolescent misfit who exorcises his loneliness by performing daredevil motorcycle stunts, a boasting swaggerer who cloaks his evident sexual insecurity in an obsession with flashy cars and fast driving. Although Tomé's efforts to draw meaningful parallels between the Babylon of yore and his hometown of the 1970s seem overblown, that hardly matters; far more germane is the tenderness and comic insight with which he addresses the men's foolish foibles and self-deceptions, and the tragedies they lead to. Tomé is a talented monologist and an intelligent writer, Theater at the Improv, 8165 Melrose Ave., W. Hlywd.; Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 7 p.m.; thru April 5. (213) 660-8587. (Deborah Klugman)

## CURTAIN CALLS

### DON'T MISS



**LONG ISLAND TALES:** Gregg Tome wrote and stars in *Back to Babylon*.

### 'Back to Babylon'

Performing on Saturday evenings only at the Cuillo Centre's cozy upstairs Cabaret Room is Lake Worth actor Gregg Tome in his reworked, one-man play *Back to Babylon*.

The play is an interlocking series of character vignettes of vivid souls from the Long Island railroad transfer stop town, recalled from Tome's formative years in the 1970s. It takes a while, but eventually their genial, rambling monologues lead to a dark tragic boating accident that continues to haunt these guys.

Tome has a haunting quality as well, able to change personalities

with chameleon-like skill, allowing his show to work best as performance art.

As a writer, he makes some amusing parallels between the New York suburb and the biblical city that lent its name, and a nostalgic slide show should be particularly evocative to former Long Islanders.

**Where:** Cuillo Centre for the Arts Cabaret Room, 201 Clematis St., West Palm Beach.

**When:** Saturdays at 8 p.m., through June 18.

**Tickets:** \$15.

**Phone:** (561) 835-9226.

—Hap Erstein



Which stars shine the brightest?



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East  
Off-Off Broadway August 22, 2002

## Babylon, Long Island

Reviewed By Julius Novick

Gregg Tome, the writer-performer-director of "Babylon, Long Island," grew up in that suburban town. His show, says the program, "is loosely based on people Gregg knew and events that occurred during his teen years." In 90 minutes worth of monologues, Tome impersonates nine characters, six of them buddies at Babylon High School in

1977, the others local adults. The characters are not hip, not witty, not rich, not cultivated, not strivers, but they are sharply drawn: Billy-B, boy genius and dedicated stoner; Nanzo K'Manzo, who wants to be Evil Knievel; Vito, with his gift for refurbishing various kinds of vehicles, and his dangerous love of going very, very fast. The most interesting among them is Furaha, the creepy, slightly sadistic wrestling star, because he is the one with a secret.

### "Babylon, Long Island "

Theater:PS 122

Location:150 First Ave.,  
NYC

Phone:212-420-8877

Starts:August 14, 2002

Ends:August 25, 2002

They are presented simply, on a bare stage, backed by not-very-evocative slides of Babylon scenes, with just a few pieces of furniture scattered around, and simple, functional lighting. (No designers are credited; this is very much a one-man show.) Tome is not a virtuoso of self-transformation, but he keeps the characters distinct, aided by cleverly chosen, cleverly deployed hats, jackets, and shirts, over blue coveralls, over a genuine Babylon High School wrestling uniform.

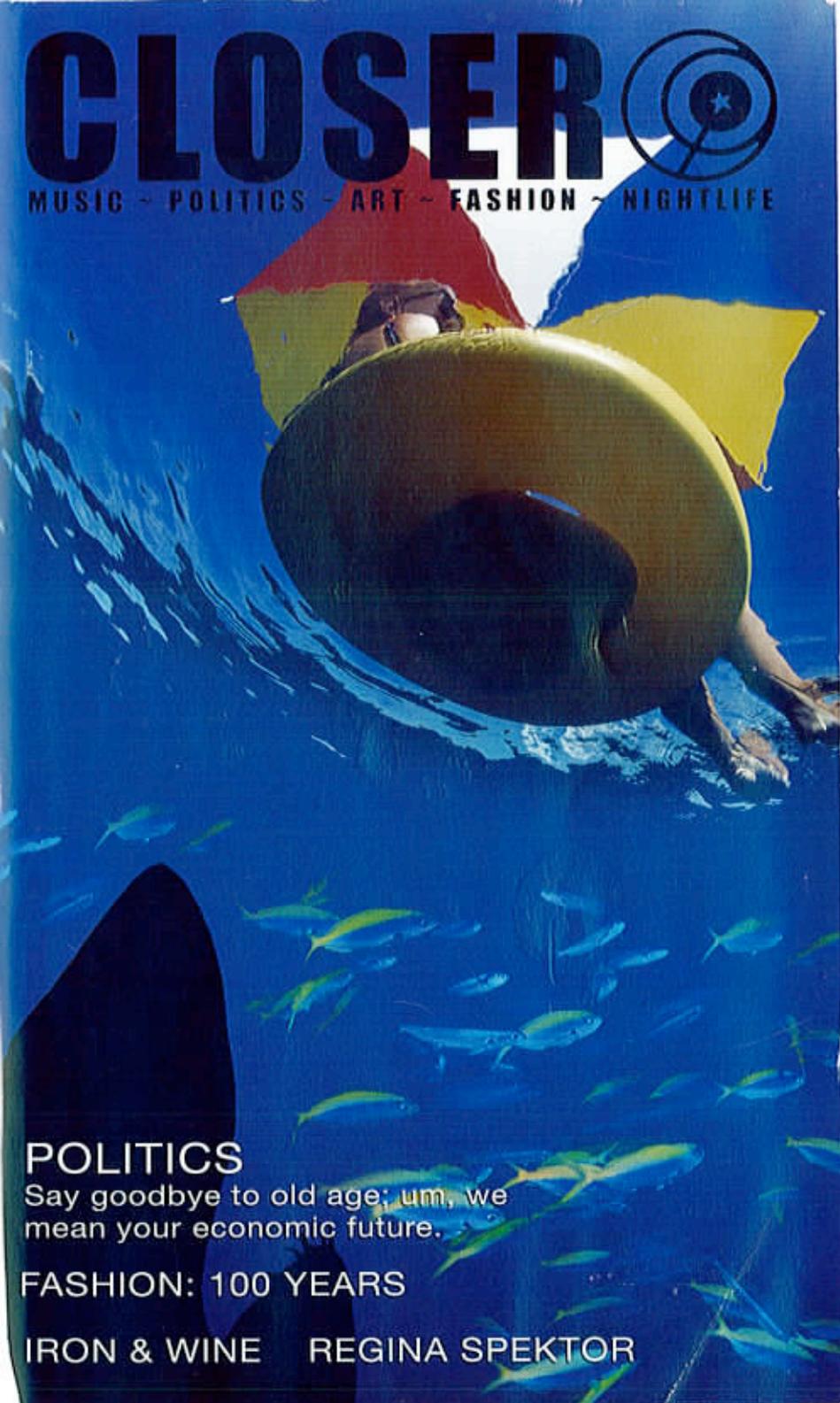
Tome is an engaging performer with plenty of energy, and he has no axe to grind. His attitude toward his town is neither satiric nor nostalgic, but rueful. His show can hold the attention, even of non-Long Islanders, for the vividness of its characters and their modest, unmistakable authenticity.

Gregg Tome clearly knows where he came from.

# CLOSER



MUSIC ~ POLITICS ~ ART ~ FASHION ~ NIGHTLIFE



## POLITICS

Say goodbye to old age; um, we mean your economic future.

FASHION: 100 YEARS

IRON & WINE REGINA SPEKTOR



## Saturday Nights

### Back To Babylon

A one man play which explores the Halcyon days (High School) of a young man in Babylon, Long Island New York and the various characters which populated them. The play is written, directed and acted by Greg Tome. The real attraction of the show isn't so much the story as it is Tome's acting, which is extraordinary. It's not only his inflection and tone that changes with each character but his physical transformation is astonishing as well. The show was originally slated to end on the 18th of June but thanks to every show selling out has been extended into July and who knows when. Tome's wife Kara, a collaborator in everything including Showtel and various other local art happenings, says "...we'll keep doing it until we stop selling tickets." An amazing performance and a great story as well, just in case you had any doubts about this mans genius.

#### What One Man and 8 Characters

**When** Every Saturday for God Knows How Long  
**Where** The Cullio 200 Block of Clematis WPB  
**How Much** \$15 - Call 561.835.9226

BROWARD-PALM BEACH

# NEW TIMES

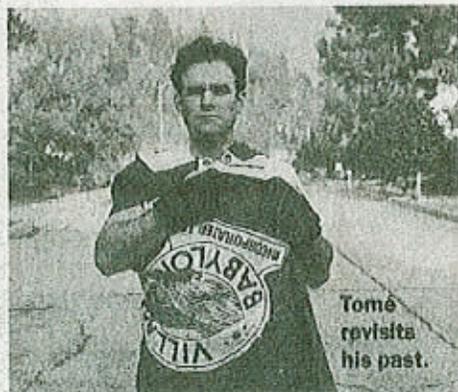
## New York Babylon

### Those 1970s sure were strange

Woody Allen has Manhattan. Neil Simon has Yonkers. But for local playwright Gregg Tomé, there's only one town in the State of New York he needs to keep ap-

prised of, and that's his hometown of Babylon, Long Island. The town is special to him for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the loads of praise lavished upon the play it inspired him to write — ***Back to Babylon***. Set in the 1970s, the one-man play — acted out by Tomé himself — weaves together the stories of nine disparate but fully acquainted townspeople.

Like many a reminiscent coming-of-age tale, *Back to Babylon* begins with a guy mulling over his ten-year high school reunion. Donny, the first character, opens the story by recounting the people and events that defined his teenage years. Soon, we



Tomé revisita his past.

hear from eight other Babylonians, as Tomé transforms from ponderous 20-something to wild and confused teenager to, finally, a slightly daft senior citizen. It's tragic (the silly daredevil), it's comic (the barmy old guy), and it's something any small-town person can relate to (just look at your neighbors). *Back to Babylon* opens Friday at the Cuillo Centre for the Arts (201 Clematis St., West Palm Beach). The show takes place at 8 p.m. every Friday and at 2 and 8 p.m. every Saturday through February 25. Tickets cost \$15. Call 561-835-9226.

FRIDAY 1/6



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## On the Fringe of the 21st Century

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Posted by L.P. Streitfeld on September 09, 19102 at 12:13:49:

### The Transformative Symbol

The symbolic peeling off clothing layers by Gregg Tome as he passed through a succession of characters residing in his hometown of Babylon, Long Island effectively encapsulated the theme of his one man show – the underlying connection between individuals sharing a common experience. Intelligent writing utilized the incorporation of everyday objects (cesspools, cars, bikes and boats) as symbols linking personality to a fate tightly locking nine engaging characters into a tragic narrative revolving around the very name of the village. The ingenious use of the water tower as a modern representation of the ancient tower of Babel pulled this performance piece together as a multi-layered narrative incorporating opposing viewpoints, yet transcending the particular time and place in which the story is set.

# Evocative 'Babylon' returns to stir buried memories

In December 2001, Lake Worth's Gregg Tome brought his one-man



Gregg Tome

show, *Babylon, L.I.*, recollections of growing up in that suburban New York town in the late 1970s and

the effects of a tragic boating accident on a close circle of friends, to Theatre West in Wellington.

But chances are you did not see it back then, because few theatergoers found Theatre West's playing space in an industrial park behind the Mall at Wellington Green. As Tome recalls, "Although I appreciated the opportunity to work there, of course, I would say it wasn't the ideal place to do a show. But it was a good springboard for me, I guess."

The play went next to the New York International Fringe Festival in the summer of 2002 and now — with a title change to *Back to Babylon* — it returns to this area for four consecutive Saturday evenings, beginning May 28, in the upstairs Cabaret Room at the Cuillo Centre in West Palm Beach.

As Tome says of the substantially revised script, "It's tighter now, because the changes I'm incorporating give it a clear beginning, a middle and an end. I've added two scenes, with one of the characters introducing the play who never did before. Then, through a flashback, we go back through his memory and he relives moments with his friends. At the end, it comes full circle as I perform a new scene between the four guys, which I'm so excited by. To me it feels like a whole new play."

Thus, the new title. "I think this title reflects bot-

**BACK TO BABYLON** — Cuillo Centre for the Arts, 201 Clematis St., West Palm Beach, from Saturday to June 18. Tickets: \$15. Call (561) 835-9226.

their past to deal with things like loss, great memories, bad memories," says Tome. "Now the play really centers on the guys, though the stuff about ancient Babylon" and its parallels with its Long Island namesake is in the play.

Is the play finished now? "Who knows? I think it's pretty close," he says with a laugh. "I think the audience is going to get to go on more of a journey this time, to start thinking about things that happened to them in their past. And on top of all that, they're going to have a great time."

# Local actor's one-man play recalls life on Long Island

By LADY HEREFORD  
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Actor and writer Gregg Tomé has performed onstage in New York and Los Angeles and has appeared on the small and big screens.

Not bad for a kid who grew up in Babylon, N.Y.

Tomé, who was born in Manhattan and lived in the South Bronx before moving to Babylon, turned his memories of Long Island into a one-man show, *Back to Babylon*. The show runs through Saturday at the Cuillo Centre in West Palm Beach.

In the show, Tomé, 43, plays several characters who are affected by a tragic incident in the waterfront town. "It's all based on real events and people," said Tomé, who lives in Lake Worth.

He began writing *Back to Babylon* eight years ago. He has performed it at the New York International Fringe Festival, and in 2002 he took it to the cutting-edge Manhattan theater Performance Space 122.

"I was so lucky to be asked to do it there," said Tomé. "It was like a dream come true."

This is the second time Tomé has performed the show at the Cuillo and the third time he's done it locally. In 2001, it was called *Babylon L.L.*, and he performed it at Wellington's Theatre West.

Tomé first started acting while attending Sullivan County Community College in New York. Appearing in a school production of *Guys and Dolls* made Tomé reconsider his dreams of playing baseball.

He later studied film and theater at Hunter College, but his main interest at the time was film production. "I still wasn't totally committed to being an actor," he said.

That changed after he took acting classes. He also began to get small roles, including an appearance in the soap opera *One Life to Live*.

After doing a string of off-Broadway shows and independent films, Tomé and several students from his acting class started their



own theater company. The group performed the play *Rage* by Stephen King in New York and Los Angeles.

During the 1990s, Tomé appeared in the film *The Fan* starring Robert De Niro and an episode of the television series *Lois & Clark*. Afterward, he decided to concentrate on writing. *Back to Babylon* was his first effort.

He said his next play will be based on the late Herb Goodman, a Lake Worth resident who was known as "The Shark Man" and is credited with catching hundreds of sharks off South Florida's coast before the practice was banned.

He also is involved, along with

his wife Kara, in developing a space for contemporary visual and performance artists in Palm Beach County. Tentatively titled Artsite Projects, it is expected to open in West Palm Beach within a few months.

Tomé, who also works in real estate, initially was drawn to Lake Worth because his parents moved there. Then he fell in love with the area. "This reminds me of my town of Babylon," he said.

**What are your hobbies?**

"Writing. I play lots of sports, basketball and softball. Reading."

**What do you do when you want to get away from it all?**

"I take my son out to do family activities," Tomé said of 7-year-old Sloan. He and his wife are expecting their second child in July.

**What is your favorite play?**

*The Dreamer Examines His Pillow* by John Patrick Shanley.

**What is your most memorable moment?**

"Meeting my future wife on a street corner on the Lower East Side of New York."

**For what would you like to be remembered?**

"A great father, an artist whose work examined the human condition and a great guy to hang out with."

© lady\_hereford@pbpost.com



## 'BABYLON' TALES

*One-man  
drama set  
in 1970s*

By **JAN SJOSTROM**  
*Daily News Arts Editor*

Gregg Tome has been going *Back to Babylon* for years now. He started working in 1997 on his one-man show about a circle of teenage pals from his hometown of Babylon, Long Island. He's performed the show three times in Los Angeles, once at TheatreWest in Wellington, and, most recently, three years ago at the New York In-



Gregg Tome performs as 'Cesspool Man,' one of several characters in 'Back to Babylon,' opening Saturday.

ternational Fringe Festival.

Then he put the show on hold. "It got great reviews at the Fringe Festival, but I felt there was something missing," the 43-year-old Lake Worth-based the-

ater artist said. "I didn't want to do it again until I figured that out."

He's found the missing elements, he said, and is putting them to

*Please see BABYLON,  
Page A7*

From Page A1

the test starting at 8 p.m. Saturday at the Cuillo Centre for the Arts' second-floor cabaret. He'll repeat the show on the following three Saturdays.

The show is based on his recollections of the effect two tragic boating accidents had on himself and his buddies when he was a teenager in the mid-1970s.

"It was an amazing time," he said. "We had boats. We'd go to the beach in the summer." But then, there were the accidents, which Tome still cannot get out of his mind.

Tome plays nine characters, many of them decided eccentrics. The most important is Donny, the narrator. Donny sets the story in motion on the eve of his 10-year high school reunion, when he hears a song in a bar that reminds him of his old friends. Unlike Tome, Donny has never left Babylon.

Tome also portrays Donny's friends: Billy-B, a brilliant marijuana addict; Nanzo K'Manzo, who plans an Evel Knievel-style bicycle stunt to assert his individuality; Fura-ha, a gifted wrestler uncomfortable with his sexual identity; and Vito, who is obsessed with fast machines.

The adult characters — dubious figures Tome calls "mentors" — are: Old Man Hi-Hello, the crazy seer who predicts a doom akin to that which felled ancient Babylon; a pep-talking coach; Cesspool Man, who insists that the town's sewer system killed his father; and Manny, Fura-ha's father, a former Manhattanite who deals drugs.

**'The show has gotten better all across the board. It's a lot more cohesive and the characters are beefier.'**

**ZACHARIAH PHILLIPS**

Production coordinator,  
Cuillo Centre for the Arts

Most of the characters are composites of people Tome knew, except for the coach, whose speeches are taken almost verbatim from a real-life coach.

At one point, Tome plays four characters at once, in a phantasmagoric flashback. "This was the '70s," Tome said. Pop tunes from the mid-'70s, such as David Bowie's *Golden Years*, Stevie Wonder's *Higher Ground* and Thin Lizzy's *The Boys are Back in Town*, help set the scene.

Since the Fringe Festival, Tome has discovered a way to link the monologues into a story by using video montages. To make them, he teamed up with Kenneth "Kenny 5" Greenbaum, a Lake Worth-based filmmaker whose credits include filming Detroit bands, screenings at the Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami and leading a student film workshop at the Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art.

Greenbaum blended Tome's slides of Babylon into montages that represent fragments of Donny's memories. "I tried to pull everything out and give you an idea of what's going on in his head," the filmmaker said. The videos introduce the show, act as transitions between the monologues and back a climactic scene.

The artistic refinements were not the only challenge Tome faced in bringing his

other was finding a place to perform. Local theaters are reluctant to turn over their space to obscure artists, he said.

Fortunately, the Cuillo Centre's Zachariah Phillips operated the lights for a reading of the show Tome did five years ago at the theater. He liked what he saw. Phillips, the theater's production coordinator, said "the show has gotten better all across the board. It's a lot more cohesive and the characters are beefier."

The Cuillo's 50-seat cabaret is an underused resource, Phillips said. At about \$150 a day for rent and light and sound equipment, it's a bargain, he said. "It's a great place to workshop something."

Tome is looking forward to assessing the audience's reaction. "I believe this will be the final version," he said. If the new elements work well, he'll start looking for a theater on Long Island where he can really bring the show *Back to Babylon*, he said.

The show will be performed at 8 p.m. Saturday, June 4, June 11 and June 18 at the Cuillo Centre, 201 Clematis St., West Palm Beach. For tickets, call 835-9226.

- [jsjostron@pbdailynews.com](mailto:jsjostron@pbdailynews.com)

**ON STAGE**

# 'Babylon' looks at Long Island life

Playwright plays a gallery of different characters, creating the town and its denizens.

Just as television audiences break into applause when anyone mentions "Brooklyn," transplanted Long Islanders yearning for a show that evokes their northern home turf should



**Hap Erstein**  
Theater

check out Gregg Tome's one-man show, *Babylon, L.I.*, opening tonight at Theatre West in Wellington. Born in the South Bronx, Tome

moved with his family to Babylon when he was 8, and he has collected characters from the railroad stop town ever since. "I think this came about because I've always imitated people," he says. "I've always latched on to certain mannerisms and just went with that."

In the show he plays a gallery of different characters, creating the town and its colorful denizens in a tale of intrigue. "There's actually a plot, but not a typical one. I try and tell a story through these character-driven monologues, which is a huge challenge, actually."

It is not a portrait of the town that the Chamber of Commerce is likely to embrace. "I don't think so, nor will certain residents, I'm sure," says Tome. "But it's my perspective."

Even if the closest you've ever come to *Babylon, L.I.*, is reading about its biblical namesake, Tome insists his play will still interest you. "I think the play really has a universal theme," he says. "I believe that where you are now has to do with who you are, for better or for worse. Every time I do the show, somebody will come up to me and say, 'Oh, I know that guy,' or 'I know a mechanic like that.' And I go 'Where are you from?' 'Michigan.' I think that's the beauty of it."

**Mandy's back in Boca . . .** On an airport layover on his way back to New York, Broadway-television-film-and-concert-star Mandy Patinkin called recently to talk about his concert Thursday evening at Florida Atlantic University's Auditorium.

It will be culled from three

**■ BABYLON, L.I.:** At Theatre West, 11320 Fortune Circle, Wellington. Tickets: \$15. Call: 791-1950.

albums, his most recent disc of novelty songs and selections aimed at youngsters (*Kidults*), an upcoming disc of Stephen Sondheim material and a disc of traditional Yiddish numbers, called *Mamaloshen (Mother Tongue)*.

When I suggest to him that South Florida audiences would love an entire evening of Yiddish song, he perks up. "I keep hearing that people around the country would be afraid of it. I think it would go over great in Boca, but they're afraid to book it," Patinkin says. "Put a little wish for it in your article. I would appreciate it." Done.



**Patinkin**

Patinkin has been away from live theater for awhile, but he says he is trying to put together a production of Henrik Ibsen's drama of community responsibility, *An Enemy of the People*. "I think it's a timely story to approach right now," he says.

Still, he says he is happiest doing his idiosyncratic concerts. "It's a completely free form, the reservoir is endless, the material is extraordinary. There's nothing that beats it."

He is a fan of lyrics, and chooses what he sings almost entirely on the words. "And those words are sometimes serious, emotional, meaningful, heavy, lesson-oriented, wish-oriented, and then sometimes they're just stupid and silly, about having a good time."

For tickets, call 297-3737.

Call me 'Shylock' . . . English classical actor Gareth Armstrong was preparing for a production of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* when he became fascinated by the role of the vindictive Jewish moneylender. The result is the one-man show *Shylock*, a deconstructed version of the play as seen by the only other Jewish guy in the play, the sympathetic Tubal, given a mere eight lines by Shakespeare. Armstrong's *Shylock*, which opens tonight at the Kravis Center's Rinker Playhouse where it continues

through Sunday, also traces the history of anti-Semitism through the history of the play.

These days, the depiction of the mercenary, villainous Shylock usually runs into concerns about political correctness. "Every production that you'll see of *The Merchant of Venice* will in some way take Shylock's side now," says Armstrong. "I think people today use the play and interpret it in such a way to make Shylock more sinned against than sinner. It gets twisted around to appease post-Holocaust sensibilities."

Those who were not paying attention in English class can relax. Armstrong assures us that "you don't actually need to know the play very well, because quite early on I manage to tell you the plot. I think if you've heard the name Shylock that's useful, but apart from that maybe you don't need to know any more."

Tickets are \$30, available by calling 832-7469.

**HAVE A SHOW FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

<p><b>The Coasters</b> Holiday Show Featuring Joey Dee and The Starlighters Thu. Dec. 20 • 8 &amp; 8:30pm</p>	<p><b>The Kingston Trio</b> Thu. Dec. 27 • 8 &amp; 8:30pm</p>
<p><b>Tie A Yellow Ribbon</b> <b>TONY ORLANDO</b> Wed. Jan. 7 • 8 &amp; 8:30pm</p>	<p><b>Lakota Sioux Dance Theatre</b> Sat. Jan. 13 • 7pm</p>
<p><b>Vienna Choir Boys</b> Thu. Jan. 17 • 8 &amp; 8:30pm</p>	<p><b>Caballoway Orchestra</b> Sat. Jan. 19 • 8 &amp; 8:30pm</p>
<p><b>Innovative Music &amp; Dance</b> <b>Ragamain</b> Mon. Feb. 4 • 8pm</p>	<p><b>The Pied Pipers</b> Thu. Feb. 14 • 8 &amp; 8:30pm</p>
<p><b>15 Years of Country Favorites</b> <b>THE OAK RIDGE BOYS</b> Thu. Mar. 5 • 8 &amp; 8:30pm</p>	<p><b>Janis Ian</b> Grammy Winner Thu. Mar. 21 • 8 &amp; 8:30pm</p>

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