



TOP DRAWER

STORIES OF DYSFUNCTION
AND REDEMPTION FROM PARK
AVENUE TO HAVANA

A ninety-minute solo show with music
written by Adelaide Mestre
with Doug Oberhamer at the piano

Directed by Coco Cohn

“Reconciling the many facets of her life is at the heart of Top Drawer...She’s the kind of person who thinks, “Well, who wants to hear this story?” Lots of people it turns out!”

- **Miami Herald**

“It is one of the more fascinating events in Manhattan.”

- **Liz Smith, The New York Social Diary**

“Top Drawer is sincere, sad and yet triumphant.... watching Mestre discover her value and her calling as a performer is inspiring to any artist who has struggled with both the professional and personal ups and downs implicit in the artist’s life.”

- **NYTheatre.com**

“Mestre has a naturally winning stage presence, casually dazzling ... When she lets loose with a song you can see and hear the real artistry.”

- **TheHappiestMedium.com**

“Top Drawer, Mestre’s one-woman show, is taking New York City by storm. An autobiographic tale of self-discovery, this leading lady will make you laugh and break your heart.”

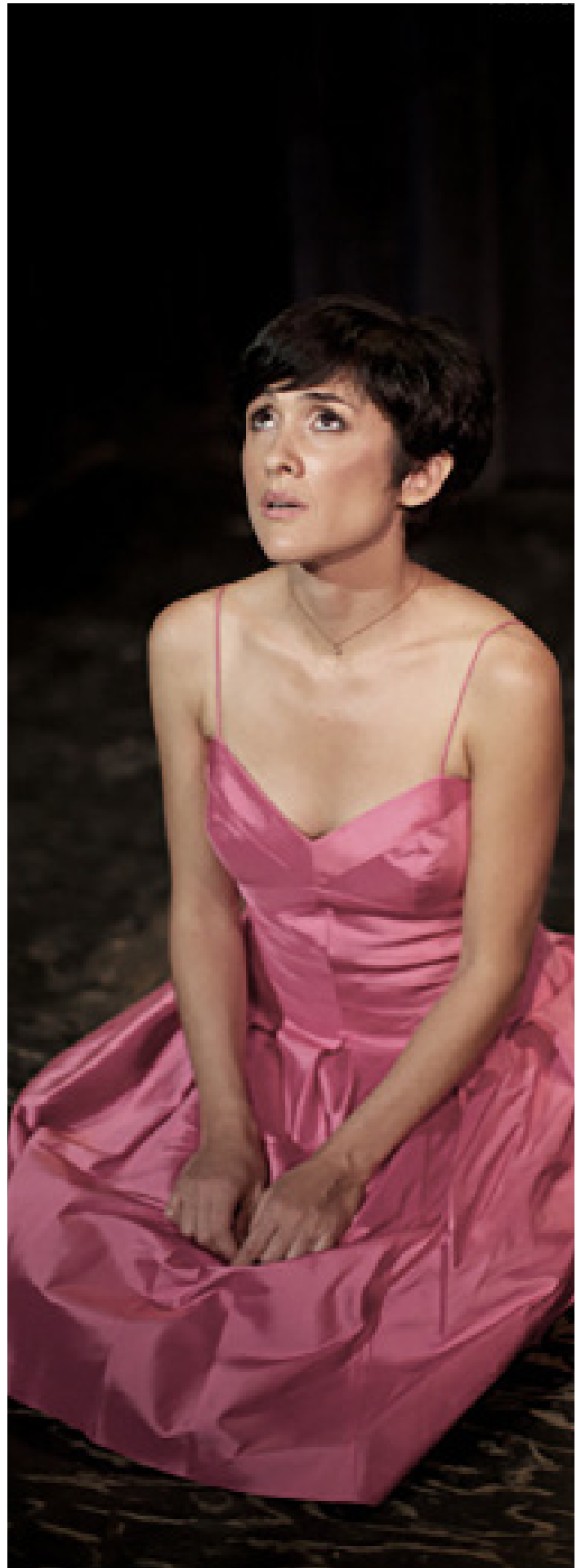
- **BettyConfidential**

ABOUT THE SHOW:

Stories of Dysfunction and Redemption from Park Avenue to Havana is a poignant musical memoir that recounts a life of privilege and secrets. It is writer and performer Adelaide Mestre's autobiographical story of her journey to Cuba to seek out her deceased father's piano, left behind when her family fled in 1960. The show takes place in both the past and present, as the audience follows her on her quest to reclaim her family's heritage. In flashbacks, she chronicles her life growing up on Manhattan's Upper East Side with her mother, a thrice married, opera-singing socialite with impossible top-drawer standards, and her father, a gay, Cuban, manic-depressive concert pianist. In story and song, she shares about her parents' doomed love affair, her father's struggle with his homosexuality, and his eventual tragic suicide. On her journey, she learns of a famous speech her grandfather gave against Castro and recovers old recordings of her father playing the piano with an orchestra in Havana in 1954. With sentiment and humor she spins a tale of dysfunction and redemption and, ultimately, shares her discovery that art can be a kind of alchemy that transmutes loss and abandonment into freedom.

PRODUCTION HISTORY:

TOP DRAWER premiered at the New York International Fringe Festival in 2011, and has enjoyed multiple, return engagements at NYC's Stage 72. In 2013 it was presented, in sold out shows, at New York's Symphony Space by The Cuban Cultural Center of New York and in Miami by the Cuban Museum. Top Drawer was produced in Boston for friends of Caritas Cubana and then again in Miami where it played at The American Museum of The Cuban Diaspora. Most recently, Top Drawer was produced in Sag Harbor, New York at The Church.





ADELAIDE MESTRE

WRITER/PERFORMER

Adelaide Mestre is an award winning actress, singer, writer and solo show performer. In her work, she mines the autobiographical material of her childhood and family history, chronicling the trials and tribulations of growing up in an eccentric family among artists and other larger-than-life personalities. She has performed in numerous theatrical productions, musicals, cabarets, and films, including Woody Allen's *Husbands and Wives*. Adelaide has written and performed several solo shows including: *Dead Mosquito* at Emerging Artists Theatre's One Woman Standing Festival and *Out of Step* at Where Eagles Dare Theatre. Her ten-minute play, *It's My Amygdala* was produced at the Estrogenius Festival and the SoHo Playhouse. *Top Drawer* premiered in the 2011 New York International Fringe Festival and has since enjoyed multiple runs at New York's Triad Theatre and been produced in Miami, Boston, Tamps and most recently in Sarasota where she received the Bill Bowers Award of Excellence.



COCO COHN

DIRECTOR/COLLABORATOR

Coco Cohn is an NYU graduate with a background in musical theatre. She spent a decade+ in Los Angeles, directing and developing original musicals for her critically-acclaimed theatre company, *Neurotic Young Urbanites*. Coco built a successful private coaching business while in LA, working mostly with kids and young adults. She served as on-set coach for clients on shows such as *The Suite Life of Zack and Cody*, *iCarly*, and *Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide*. She is also the actor, Lauren Cohn!

DOUG OBERHAMER

PIANIST/MUSICAL DIRECTOR



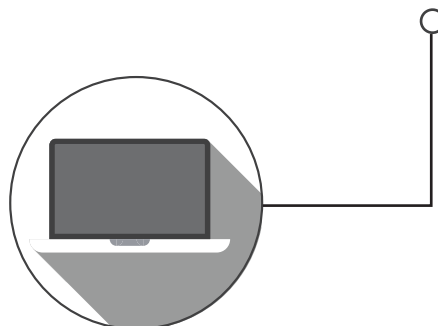
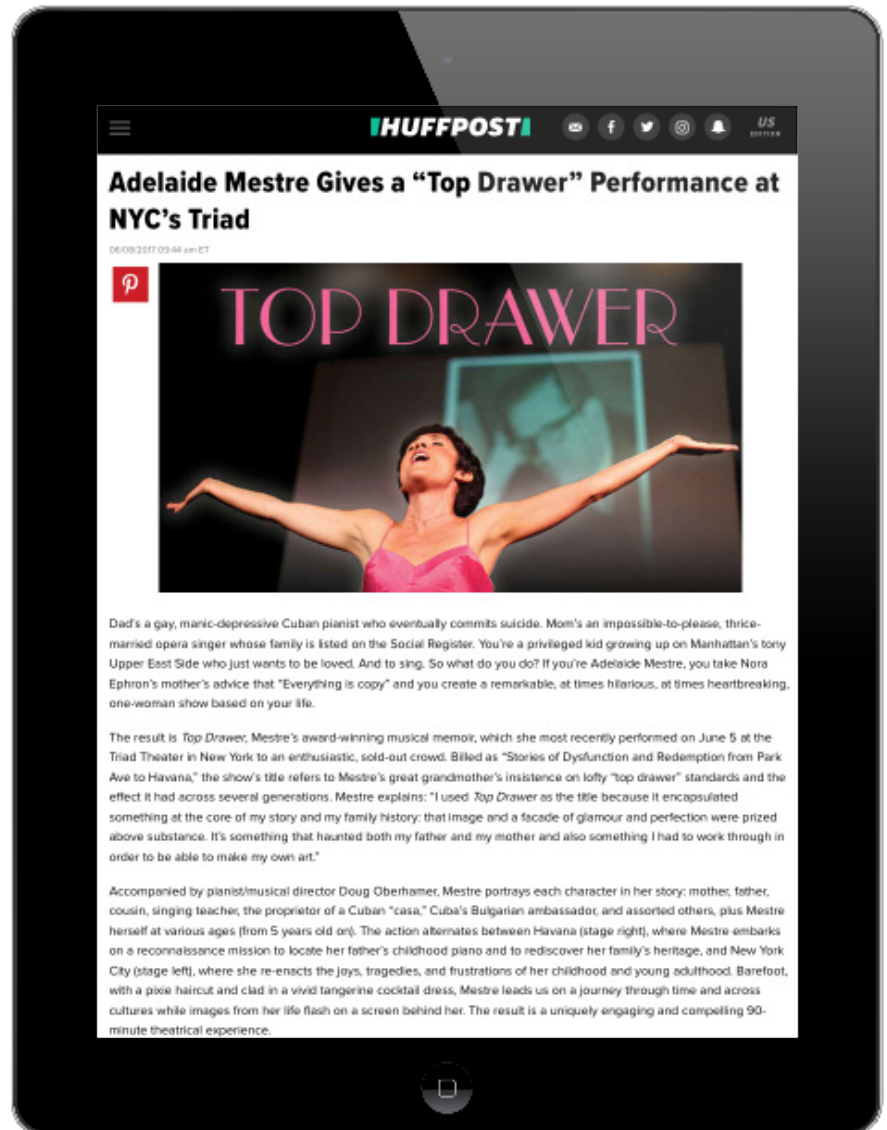
Doug Oberhamer has been involved in musical theater for over 25 years with Music Directing credits ranging from Broadway and Off Broadway to National and International Tours. He also works as a composer, arranger, orchestrator, music producer, and vocal coach in New York and abroad. Most recently, Doug was the Music Director, Conductor and Orchestrator for the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's Production of *Man of La Mancha*. He was also the Music Director, Composer and Arranger for *Reel to Real* for Broadway Asia/Warner Brothers in Beijing and the Edinburgh Festival. Other Music Directing Credits include: *Swing!* (Broadway, National Tour, Japanese Tour, Marriot Linconshire), *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (National Tour), *My Vaudeville Man* (The York Theatre, Arr./Orch.), *Wanda's World* (45th Street Theatre), *Flight of the Lawnchair Man* (37 Arts), *Crazy for You* (National Tour), *Frankenstein* (Casino Rama), *Nunsense* (Fallsview Casino), *Seeing Stars*, (The York Theatre), *Saturday Night Fever* (AMD - National Tour), Doug can also be found in the cabaret world as a Music Director, Arranger and Orchestrator. He has performed at Birdland, The Zipper, The Triad, Joe's Pub, Feinstein's, Don't Tell Mama's, and Rose's Turn with shows such as: *Steppin' Out*, *Little Death*, *Foreign Currency*, *Love Stories* and many others. He can be heard as the featured trumpet soloist on the Sony Classics Grammy nominated recording of *Swing!* (Original Broadway Cast recording) as well as MCA Records Vanessa Daou "Slow to Burn". He was nominated for a Jefferson Award for his work on *Swing!* in Chicago and won a Bistro Award for excellence in Musical Direction and Arranging/Orchestrating for *Little Death*.

Adelaide Mestre Gives a “Top Drawer” Performance at NYC’s Triad

06/08/2017 09:44 am ET

“Mestre has a bright, crystalline singing voice and she ably switches between musical styles, from popular to operatic, depending on which character she embodies. She is also a versatile actress, equally convincing as an exuberant 5-year-old talking about her mother’s opera coach, a 9-year-old mortified by her father’s public reenactment of a number from A Chorus Line on, and an adult passionately searching for clues about her family’s past.”

HUFFPOST



Adelaide Mestre: Pieces of a Family Puzzle

First presented at the New York International Fringe Festival in 2011

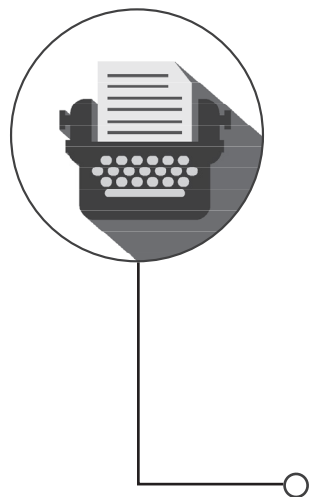
By Mark Segal | July 21, 2016 - 1:56pm

"Top Drawer: Stories of Dysfunction and Redemption From Park Avenue to Havana," a one-woman show written and performed by Adelaide Mestre that combines music and storytelling, will be performed at Guild Hall in East Hampton on Tuesday evening at 7.

First presented at the New York International Fringe Festival in 2011, the musical memoir draws on Ms. Mestre's life growing up on Manhattan's Upper East Side amid both privilege and tragedy, and her journey as an adult to Cuba to find the Steinway grand piano her father left behind when the family fled in 1960.



Adelaide Mestre has been spending summers in a cottage in the woods of Barnes Landing for 10 years. Mark Segal



THE EAST HAMPTON STAR SHINES FOR ALL

Her father was a concert pianist and a closeted homosexual whose well-to-do Cuban family didn't support his dreams. Nevertheless, his grandfather gave him the Steinway when he was a little boy. Ms. Mestre's mother was a socialite whose marriage to her father fell apart when he came out, but whose love for him endured while he struggled with his sexuality and after his suicide.

"My parents might not have been the easiest," Ms. Mestre said during a recent visit to the house in Barnes Landing she shares with her husband and 2 1/2-year-old daughter. "But there's so much rich material. All my plays have been autobiographical, but this is the one where I really got to the heart of it. I couldn't move forward in my life without going back and putting all the pieces together and telling the story."

Over the course of several years during which "Top Drawer" was performed at a number of New York City venues, Ms. Mestre kept her mother away from it as long as she could. "I was completely terrified to have her see it. I had friends who had gone to workshop readings, and she sent spies out to see how she was portrayed. She got the word that she was probably going to be able to tolerate it. I didn't know if I could actually survive a performance with her in the audience."

Ms. Mestre's mother eventually saw the show a number of times before her death last year. "For me it was sort of like a coming out to my mother about my truth, about how all this stuff landed on me and how I processed it and took it all in. And now I was performing it onstage in front of people."

While she was critical and judgmental with impossibly high standards, her mother emerges as "kind of the hero" because of her love for her husband. An emotional high point of the play is when Ms. Mestre portrays her mother singing a beautiful song recalling her love for him. "I think ultimately she liked the play. And I think it was actually healing for us, as I grew up in a family where we didn't talk about things a lot."

During the play, Ms. Mestre shifts between herself and other characters, among them her mother, a Cuban singing teacher who helped bring her out of her depression after her father died, and the Bulgarian ambassador to Cuba, whose residence had been her father's home. While relatives who lived in Argentina had visited and photographed the piano, when Ms. Mestre finally got to Cuba the Steinway had disappeared.

Voz y arte de Adelaide Mestre, para todo Tampa

PRESENTACIÓN GRATUITA. Inteligente y vivaz, la cantante hace un repaso de su vida con 'Top Drawer'

[TAMPA]
Por Juan Carlos Chávez
CENTRO Tampa

Adelaide Mestre encontró en la escritura, los recuerdos familiares, sus raíces cubanas y el canto, los ingredientes necesarios para escudriñar en su pasado y su razón de ser. El resultado fue 'Top Drawer', crónica de vida que transita al ritmo de una expresión musical con identidad propia.

Mestre ofrecerá este espectáculo gratuito el jueves, 31 de marzo, a las 6 p.m., en el Music Concert Hall (4202 E Fowler Avenue), de la Universidad del



Historia de vida. Las raíces familiares y los recuerdos de juventud tienen un lugar especial en Mestre. Fotos: Cortesía

Sur de la Florida (USF). La presentación estará enmarcada en las actividades celebratorias por el décimo tercer aniversario del Annual Diversity Summit, de USF.

"Estoy realmente muy emocionada de presentar mi show por primera vez en Tampa", dijo Mestre, desde Nueva York, en una entrevista telefónica con CENTRO Tampa. "Será un viaje emocional sobre mi familia y mis recuerdos".

Escritora, cantante y actriz, Mestre empezó con apenas 14 años. Desde entonces ha participado en piezas de teatro, musicales, películas como 'Husbands and Wives', de Woody Allen, y unipersonales de puño y letra, como 'Dead Mosquito' y 'Out of Step'.

Inteligente y vivaz, Mestre recorre su pasado desde la refinada zona este del Alto Manhattan hasta las calles históricas y carcomidas por el tiempo en La Habana.

"Es una historia que beata del corazón", dijo Mestre. "Cuando tuve la oportunidad de ir a Cuba pude ver todo ese pasado donde creció mi padre y



Ingenio. La imponente voz y calidad artística de Mestre se dejan sentir en cada uno de sus presentaciones. Foto: Cortesía

encontrar el piano que lo llevó hacia la música".

La radiografía vivencial de Mestre nos transporta a repasar el perfil de su madre, cantante de ópera y miembro de la alta sociedad, quien se enamoró del padre de Mestre en los círculos universitarios de Yale cuando ninguno de los dos se lo esperaba.

Luis Enrique, padre de Mestre, fue un pianista cubano y artista de corazón, quien salió de la isla con el triunfo de la revolución de Fidel Castro, hace más de cinco décadas. Luis Enrique era homosexual y se quitó la vida cuando su hija era todavía una adolescente.

"Quizá la experiencia más vivida que tengo con mi padre es al lado de un piano, y mi madre, cantando", recordó Mestre. "La música siempre estuvo en casa".

En el viaje a Cuba, rea-

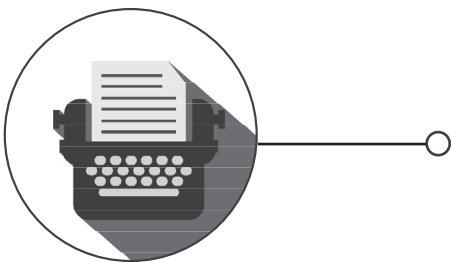
lizado en el 2009, Mestre encontró el piano que solía tocar su padre en sus años de juventud. El hallazgo fue un pasaporte en el tiempo que la llevó a sentir el alma artística de la familia y, a su vez, descubrir un abanico de raíces y tradiciones: desde Santiago de Cuba hasta la memoria y legado del abuelo paterno, Abel Mestre, anticastro, empresario y fundador de la famosa estación de radio CMQ.

Y a pesar de que los padres de Mestre se divorciaron cuando ella era una niña, los momentos de una vida trazada por el quehacer artístico y el destino salpican su memoria, como en 'Top Drawer'.

"Aunque suene difícil de entender es también el recuerdo de un matrimonio donde cada uno era muy diferente", dijo Mestre. ☘

12. ENTERTAINMENT

Zona Rosa



UNTANGLING family ties

BY CHRISTINE BLOOM
christine@herald.com

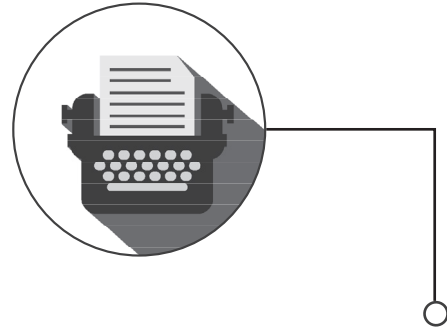
Adelaide Mestre had been a woman divided for much of her life.

Her heritage on her mother's side in the world of WASPs, Park Avenue and the Social Register; Department store magnate Marshall Field III and Metropolitan Opera co-founder Cornelius Bliss were her great-grandfathers.

Distinguished in its own right, her father's family was listed in the "gold book" of Cuban society. Her grandfather, Abel Mestre, and his brothers owned CMO.



The Miami Herald



THEATER

Life and Cuban roots merge in Mestre's 'Top Drawer'

• THEATER, FROM 1E

of her life is at the heart of *Top Drawer*, the play with music Mestre will perform Saturday and Sunday at Miami-Dade County Auditorium's OnStage Black Box Theatre.

Mestre, who lives in New York, is the first to tell you, in *Top Drawer* and in conversation, that she has had a pattern of not following her passions to fruition. She dropped out of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, had an off-again on-again career as an actress (including a small role in the Woody Allen movie *Husbands and Wives*) and never quite became the cabaret singer she intended to be. But *Top Drawer*, which she's working to turn into a memoir and maybe a movie, is different.

"I hadn't put the pieces of my life together. I knew them all separately ... but this was like looking back and seeing the patterns in my life," she says. "I never would have imagined the show would bring such healing. Writing it, working through it, facing it all — it became a tribute to my dad, a way to keep him alive. I created a piece of art that has transmuted my sense of loss."

Mestre's father, Luis Enrique Mestre, dreamed of

becoming a concert pianist but went to Harvard Business School to please his parents. He pursued performing until a teacher told him he'd never be one of the great pianists, then switched careers to become an art dealer. He was also a gay man whose "best friend" was his lover, a truth that came out (as Mestre himself did) when Adelaide was a child.

His relationship with Mestre's mother, Barbara Bliss Mestre, began through a shared love of music — her quashed dream was to become an opera singer — while Barbara was married to a State Department officer. When Mestre's parents wed, Luis wept, answering Barbara's question about why by saying, "Because I never thought I'd have this."

In collaborating on *Top Drawer* with director-actor Lauren "Coco" Cohn (Rosie) in the current Broadway production of *Mamma Mia!* and musical director Doug Oberhamer, Mestre found that elusive thing called closure.

"It was amazing to tell my dad's story. I grew up with the shame of having a gay dad in the '70s, when it wasn't OK. And then he committed suicide, which was another kind of shame," she says. "*Top Drawer* aired it all

out. ... People respond to different things — the story of a gay dad, the suicide, my parents' love story. I have a feeling of wholeness. This does feel like it completes something in my family."

Mestre had left performing and was studying to become a Gestalt therapist when *Top Drawer* drew her back to family and the arts. Oberhamer, who won't be playing the Miami shows because of a New York conflict, describes Mestre as a performer with "a lot of trepidation. She's the kind of person who thinks, 'Well, who wants to hear this story?'"

Lots of people, as it turns out.

Top Drawer moves back and forth in time as its nearly cinematic score leads Mestre in and out of song — everything from the bolero *Sin Ti* to the haunting *In a Very Unusual Way* from *Nine*, a show she saw with her mother just a few months after her father's death.

Oberhamer believes she communicates with audiences in a way that transcends traditional musical theater.

"I don't even think of her as singing in this," he says. "It's all such pure emotion." Cohn, who has been Mestre's pal since they met at NYU, says, "Her voice

has a lot of ache in it. You can't help but enjoy and respect someone who is willing to be that raw."

Top Drawer hits different audiences in different ways. Cohn says a non-Cuban New York crowd "relates to the stuff about the Upper East Side. Cubans see it and weep, but it has this universality."

What *Top Drawer* has done for Mestre, besides giving her a deeply personal piece that its creators hope will have an Off-Broadway run, is to restore a lost part of her life.

She would always say "I'm half Cuban" because it felt more exciting than the WASP side that dominated most of her growing up, and visited her father's side of the family in Miami as a kid. But it wasn't until she went to Cuba that she felt, "Oh. There are people like me."

Mestre's journey of change continues in unexpected ways. She recently wed businessman Eric Schwartz, and in January, just 40, she'll welcome her first child — a baby girl Mestre plans to name Lucia, in honor of her father.

"I hadn't had this idea of motherhood," Mestre says. "But the timing of the show, the conquering of my demons — it all feels synchronistic."

If you go

What: *Top Drawer* by Adelaide Mestre
Where: OnStage Black Box Theater at Miami-Dade County Auditorium, 2981 W. 134th St., Miami
When: 8 p.m., Saturday
Tickets: \$50, students and seniors \$25 (\$25/\$20 in advance), 305-528-5656, blackboxtheater.com



ADELAIDE MESTRE

LAURASHOESLUDER.COM



January 22, 2013

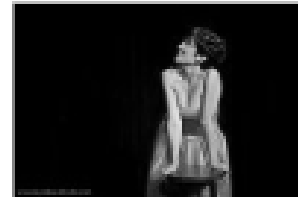
Adelaide Mestre: Top Drawer Interview

Tuesday, January 22, 2013 at 9:00AM



Adelaide Mestre is an actress, singer, writer, and solo show performer living in NYC. Adelaide began her career at The Public Theatre where at 14 she had her first job as an actress in a musical and worked with Joseph Papp. Since then she has performed in numerous theatrical productions, musicals, cabarets and films including Woody Allen's *Husbands and Wives*. Adelaide has written and performed several solo shows including: *Dead Mosquito* at Emerging Artists Theatre's One Woman Standing Festival and *Out of Step* at Where Eagles Dare Theatre. Her ten-minute play, *It's My Amygdala* was produced at the Estrogenius Festival and the SoHo Playhouse. Her musical memoir *Top Drawer* was first presented at the Midtown International Theatre Festival as a work in progress and most recently at the 2011 New York International Fringe.

Now, *Top Drawer* is coming to Theatre 72 (formally the Triad Theatre) in NYC from February 5-27. Directed by Coco Cohn (who's currently appearing in Broadway's *Mamma Mia* as "Rosie"), *Top Drawer* recounts Adelaide's journey from the gilded penthouses of Manhattan's Upper East Side to the old city streets of Havana, Cuba. On a mission to re-discover her colorful family's heritage, one that includes Marshall Field (founder of Marshall Field & Company Department Stores), Marshall Field III (founder of The Chicago Sun-Times), Cornelius Bliss (founder of the Metropolitan Opera) and Abel Mestre (CMQ Network, Cuba), Adelaide establishes her personal independence and takes the audience from dysfunction to redemption. With a gay, Cuban, concert-pianist father and a mother who was an exacting, strong-willed socialite and professional opera-singer, Adelaide's extraordinary life makes for a riveting theatrical experience.



Adelaide Mestre in "Top Drawer",
Photo Credit: Laura Boyd Studio



Top Drawer plays at Theatre 72 (158 W 72nd Street, 2nd Floor) on February 5, 13, 19, & 27 at 7pm. Tickets are \$15 + 2 drink minimum. [Click here to purchase tickets!](#)

For more on Adelaide be sure to visit <http://adelaidemestre.com> and follow her on Facebook, and Twitter!

chatter

BY JIM CLARKE

THANKS, YC

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES



After a long, hot day, the...
on Saturday. The first of...
of the night.

STAGE SET: Adelle...
Mason is bringing her...
stage set to the Upper...
West Side, with perform...
at 8 p.m. on Jan. 18 and 19.

The reason for the...
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of the Marshall...
Field Guide of Chicago...
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Chicago area — something...
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She is now the gifted...
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in Illinois. The focus of...
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with the use of professional...
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SOON ON THE STAGE:
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