

## ***Never Ever Land* tackles the legacy of a celebrity scandal**

***TU teams with writer/actor Rider Strong, acclaimed director Michael A. Shepperd and Oscar-winning producer Andrew Carlberg to offer a new perspective on one of the most notorious trials of all time, as well as our culture's obsession with celebrity.***

**LOS ANGELES** – Rider Strong knew celebrity, and the challenges, dangers and trauma that can come with it, at an early age. The accomplished actor, writer and director first gained fame as the star of *Boy Meets World* in the early 90s and he considers himself lucky to have survived his time in the spotlight, thanks mainly to a close and healthy family. Others, including some he's known, aren't so lucky.

"This play started as pure speculation," he said. "I wondered what it's like to be known as the victim in a ridiculously famous lawsuit, especially if most people think you lied. But once I started writing, I realized it was way more personal."

**Theatre Unleashed** is proud to present Strong's work, ***Never Ever Land***, making its world premiere at **studio/stage** from **Sept. 28-Oct. 27**.

In *Never Ever Land*, Tim Gable's family accused the world's most famous singer of sex crimes in 1993. With the settlement, they walked away millionaires. Now, Tim is ready to tell the public the truth...but does he even know what that is? This bold, fictional new work offers a unique and deeply personal take on one of the most shocking lawsuits of all time and its lasting affects for one family in particular. It also takes a hard look at our celebrity culture in general, from all sides of the looking glass.

"As soon as I started reading Rider's script, I couldn't put it down," said Theatre Unleashed Artistic Director Jenn Scuderi Crafts. "The characters are real and compelling and the subject matter is fascinating. I read a lot of plays, and I honestly don't make it through a lot of them, but this one had me worked from the first moment. This play offers a glimpse into a world that most people don't get to see. It's going to have a tremendous impact on audiences."

To bring Strong's important work to the stage, TU has put together an all-star team. The show is being produced by Andrew Carlberg, a prolific and decorated stage and screen producer who recently won an Academy Award for the short film *Skin*. The play is being directed by Michael A. Shepperd, artistic director of award-winning Celebration Theatre whose local and national theatre credits are almost as long as his list of awards. And the cast list of Andrew Carter, Wade F. Wilson, Josh Randall, Marie Françoise Theodore, Ashley Platz, Leif Gantvoort, Liam Finegan, Orlando Christian, Andrew Justus, Ann Hurd, Heather Lynn (u/s), Aaron Rodgers (u/s), Andrea Bennett (u/s) and Craig Jorzak (u/s) is a collection of talented artists from multiple local companies.

The show promises to be one of TU's biggest to date, and one full of surprises.

"I hope people who come expecting a glimpse behind the curtain of a tabloid story will walk away with something else entirely," Strong said. "Yes, this is the story of how one family was seduced by fame and greed, but it's also a much broader story of how our whole culture has undergone the same thing, with the rise of reality TV, social media, and our emphasis on spectacle over substance. I hope this play resonates on both levels."

## **Never Ever Land**

Written by Rider Strong

Directed by Michael A. Shepperd

Presented by Theatre Unleashed

Produced by Andrew Carlberg, Jenn Scuderi Crafts and Gregory Crafts

### **SYNOPSIS:**

Theatre Unleashed presents *Never Ever Land*, the world premiere play by former child star and accomplished writer and director Rider Strong. Young Tim Gable's family accused the world's most famous singer of sex crimes in 1993. With the settlement, they walked away millionaires. Now, Tim is ready to tell the public the truth...but does he even know what that is? Helmed by acclaimed director Michael A. Shepperd and produced by Oscar-winner Andrew Carlberg, this bold, fictional new work offers a unique and deeply personal take on one of the most shocking lawsuits of all time and its lasting affects for one family in particular. It also takes a hard look at our celebrity culture in general, from all sides of the looking glass.

### **DATES AND TIMES:**

Sept. 28-Oct. 27

Thursdays – 8 p.m.

Fridays – 8 p.m.

Saturdays – 8 p.m.

Sundays – 7 p.m.

### **LOCATION:**

studio/stage

520 N. Western Ave.

Los Angeles, CA 90004

### **TICKET PRICES:**

General Admission: \$35

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

[www.theatreunleashed.org](http://www.theatreunleashed.org)

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