

This Year, Jesus Has Two Mommies

BY SKY DEMURO-MILLER

What do you get when you mix a horny virgin, a lesbian carpenter, and a diva God with an Afro?

Jesus Christ.

And when Jesus has two mommies, it's a whole new Christmas story.

In her latest "rock opera" *Jesus Has Two Mommies*, Faith Soloway gives the Immaculate Conception a new attitude. This full-length production opened November 30th at the Somerville Theater in Somerville, MA, and is a hilarious compilation of live music and acting woven together with pre-recorded film footage. The participants include some of Boston's rising stars in folk, bluegrass, and gritty roots-rock circles, as well as established actors.

After achieving success in Chicago and Hollywood, Soloway's intention was to leave the theater world. She moved to Boston to focus on her music career, but found herself performing "rock operas" after her music sets at Club Passim in Cambridge. As these short skits evolved, she "increasingly had much more fun" and began to focus her attention on writing and directing again, blending musical theater and comedy.

Jesus has Two Mommies begins with a film clip of Faith, played by herself, and her pregnant girlfriend Cathy (Christine Cannavo) driving to the local Mystic Mall rather than to their commitment ceremony. Faith is drawn there by some force, by ... Jesus.

An acclaimed local musician, Sean Staples has played Jesus since Soloway's Club Passim days. "I definitely do not consider myself an actor," Sean said, "but part of the reason that I continue doing [the shows] is because I appreciate Faith's talent so much and feel like that appreciation is reciprocated." In an interview with Faith, she said she did not just direct the actors and musicians, "I leaned on them pretty heavily - I depend on them." Soloway wrote a basic script only a week before the show opened, letting everyone add their opinions and talent to the characters. While working with musicians resulted in a great show, their touring schedules led to time constrictions.

Time constrictions or not, the plot unfolds in a collage of perfectly amateur acting and catchy live music. The dilemma of the story becomes evident when Faith, doubting her ability to be a good second mommy, leaves Cathy stranded at their wedding ceremony, which is delivered by a Rabbi prone to haikus played by Jabe Beyer, another local singer/songwriter. Faith needs some spiritual intervention to quell her fears and restore her faith.

Luckily, the holy trinity is up for the challenge. The trio consisted of God ("Your Holy Foxy Momma" played by Merle Perkins in white bellbottoms, a fur-lined belly shirt, and an impressive Afro), Jesus, and the angel Gay-briel (Seth Bodie). Blessing Faith with a Psalm Pilot, they present the real story of Jesus' birth and life. It all started at "the hottest lesbian spot in all of Nazareth - The Burning Bush." Among the patrons of this bar are a local carpenter named Josephina (Catie Curtis), and the newcomer Mary (Jennifer Kimball), a glowing virgin whose sweet façade denies her burning libido. The couple ignites immediately.

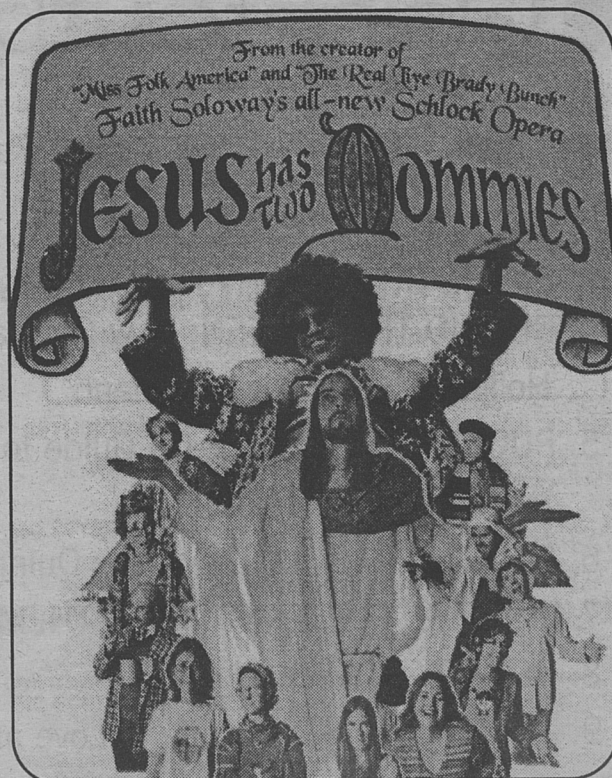
Back in 2001 AD, Faith's guilt is exacerbated by her homophobic Jewish mother (Margie Zohn), who goes off on a musical tirade, singing, "You are fucked when you fuck with Freud." Though I was breathless with guffaws, Soloway's message about issues faced by same-sex parents was obvious; despite advances in GLBTetc rights, the "mom and dad" theory is still status quo. "I love the fact that the shows push people's buttons," said Staples, "but I feel like that is never the sole intent of the writing - ultimately the shows end up edgy and funny but address real issues in a direct way." Soloway aims to "have fun with raunchiness" but also wants her plays to be positive experiences for everyone, even people whose ideals may not be as liberal as hers.

While the second act flirts with absurdity at times, with Faith misinterpreting the Psalm Pilot's message as a call to preach anti-sperm slander dressed as a giant egg and donning the name Ovia, the show is saved by talent and wit. Mary Chapin Carpenter even makes a cameo appearance in a video of the hottest new act in the desert, Mary Chapin Magdalene, singing "No More Bethlehem Booty Call."

When the cast took their bows, I was left feeling as though I had spent time with friends. Faith called her real-life partner on stage who flashed her pregnant belly to the audience. Even if the cast's faces were not familiar, the feeling of respect and camaraderie was not missed.

As for future work, Soloway is taking a "wait and see" attitude. "A show like this is like a baby," she said, "and I don't want it to compete with my baby." Her fantasy is to make *Jesus Has Two Mommies* better, a "serious exploration, rather than geared just towards the folk scene." My advice? Keep your eyes and ears open for news of Faith Soloway - her shows are not to be missed.

Sky DeMuro-Miller is a former Vermonter living in Boston. A self-proclaimed fag hag, she's turned on by leftist cowboys, impish smiles, and men in skirts.



Check out www.faithsoloway.com for more information.





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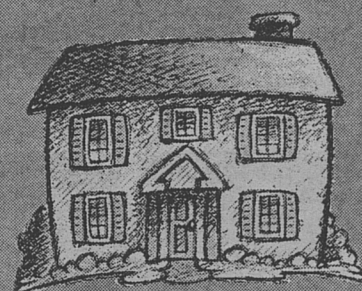
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