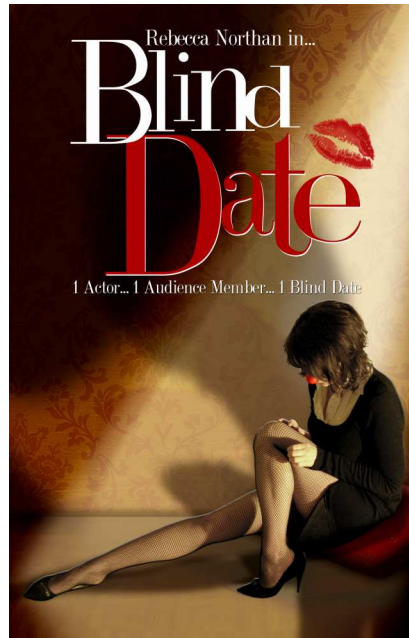


# worldstage

© Harbourfront centre



**Rebecca Northan**  
(Toronto)

***Blind Date***

**Brigantine Room  
235 Queens Quay West  
March 3-7, 8:00 p.m.  
\$25**

**Box office: 416-973-4000  
[www.harbourfrontcentre.com/worldstage](http://www.harbourfrontcentre.com/worldstage)**

For media inquiries: Cary Mignault | t + 416-973-4655  
[cmignault@harbourfrontcentre.com](mailto:cmignault@harbourfrontcentre.com)

## Table of Contents:

1. Production Notes and Overview .....	3
2. Biography .....	3
3. Performance History .....	4
4. Press Notes and Reviews .....	5

## Rebecca Northan – *Blind Date*

### Production Notes and Overview

1 actor. 1 audience member. 1 blind date.

*BLIND DATE* opens in a Parisian café somewhere along the banks of the Seine where Mimi sits and waits for a blind date. When he doesn't show up, Mimi turns to the audience, sure to find someone brave enough to answer Love's call. What follows is a lifetime of surprises...

A fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants fusion of clown, improvisation, theatre, and social experiment *BLIND DATE* is one of the most daring theatrical undertakings you are likely to see... Rebecca Northan, dubbed "*The sexiest and most lovable Parisian woman to ever wear a clown nose.*" - *The New West Magazine*, chooses an unsuspecting member of the audience to be her Blind Date...and then explores with them the ups and downs of love, heart break and everything in between!

No script. No safety-net. No escape.

The result: 90 minutes of nail-biting hilarity, voyeurism, and thrills!

*Blind Date* was originally performed as a 10 minute burlesque-clown piece at the Spiegeltent'n'tavern at Harbourfront Centre as part of Toronto's Luminato Festival (2007) and quickly became a crowd favorite.

Anyone lucky enough to have caught this hilarious turn during last summer's smash hit, The Spiegel Show, knows Northan's extended 90-minute cabaret performance is one "can't-miss" production. *Blind Date* is a thrilling, saucy, breath-taking, and heart-breaking ride... Not unlike the game of love itself.

### Biography

**Rebecca Northan** is a professional actor, director, improviser and independent theatre producer. She was born and raised in Calgary, Alberta.

As an actor, she has worked in theatres across Canada, including CanStage, Manitoba Theatre Centre, Theatre Calgary, Alberta Theatre Projects, Touchstone Theatre in Stratford, Eldritch Theatre, and Vertigo Theatre...

Rebecca also directs both existing works, and facilitates the creation of new works and artist driven projects. Selected credits: "This Is Cancer!" (Alberta Theatre Projects playRites 2007 (two Betty Mitchell Award Nominations)"The Canada Show" (Manitoba Theatre For Young People, Monster Theatre), "The MacBeth Show" (Monster Theatre), "The Burning Bush" (Soul-O Productions tour across Canada and New York), , Hectick Theatre - Regina, Pivot Festival - White Horse).

As an improviser, Rebecca trained with Keith Johnstone at the world famous Loose Moose Theatre Company in Calgary, where she is still a member. She has toured with

Toronto's Second City Touring company, appeared on the Second City Mainstage, and made several appearances at the Just For Laughs Festival in Montreal as part of The World Improv Games. Rebecca has also improvised all over the world, in England, Norway, USA, Germany, and for our Canadian Troops in Bosnia. Recently she has studied clown with Canada's infamous "Mump and Smoot", aka Mike Kennard and John Turner.

Since moving to Toronto in 2001 Rebecca has done a considerable amount of work in the film and television industry. She was a lead in CTV's "Alice, I Think", has been a guest host on CBC's "This Hour Has 22 Minutes", and appeared in the feature films "Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium" with Natalie Portman, and "The Rocker" with Raine Wilson. She will also be seen in the upcoming Showcase series, "The Foundation", directed by fellow Calgarian, Mike Dowse (director of FUBAR, It's All Gone Pete Tong).

Rebecca has been nominated for a Dora Mavor Moore Award for "Best Actress"(Eldritch Theatre's "Dear Boss"), a Gemini Award for the Comedy Network's "Joe Blow Show", a Betty Mitchell Award for "Best Production - This Is Cancer", and five Canadian Comedy Awards for "Best Female Improviser". She is also the recipient of Global Television's "Woman of Vision Award", and two Just For Laughs Comedy Awards.

Rebecca teaches improvisation privately and is a regular guest instructor for **OISE** (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education) at the University of Toronto. Rebecca was recently invited back to the University of Calgary as a guest instructor in the Department of Drama.

## **Recent Selected Performance History**

### **Film:**

2008 - The Rocker

2007 - Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium

### **Television:**

2008 - "The Foundation", Showcase, series lead

2007 - "This Hour Has 22 Minutes", CBC, guest host

2006 – "Alice, I Think", CTV, series lead

2003 – "The Joe Blow Show" The Comedy Network, ensemble, (Gemini Nominee)

### **Theatre:**

2008 - The Dream in High Park, CanStage  
- Robin Hood, Alberta Theatre Projects

2007 - The Spiegel Show, Harbourfront Centre  
- An Inconvenient Musical, Toronto Fringe

2005 - Second City Mainstage

### **Awards:**

recipient of two "Just For Laughs" awards

recipient of "Global Television's Woman of Vision Award"

### **Nominated:**

Dora Mavor Moore Award, Gemini Award, Betty Mitchell Award, five time Canadian Comedy award nominee

## Press Notes and Reviews

### ***Blind Date:***

- “In its potential risk, *Blind Date* is important theatre, and Northan creates a magic that instantly blows apart the fourth wall and lets us safely experiment with her and what life could be like with Mimi—the sexiest and most lovable Parisian woman to ever wear a clown nose.”  
- *The New West Magazine*

### **Review: *Blind Date***

**Written & Performed by Rebecca Northan**

*Loose Moose Theatre [Calgary] through January 17, 2009*

### **Calgary Herald, *On the Scene* - Review by Stephen Hunt**

#### **★★★★★/Five stars out of five**

For all its artifice, nothing works quite so well onstage as telling the truth. Audiences have a built-in BS detector, and nothing works better up there than just copping to the rap. We'd far rather forgive than be deceived, or patronized, or condescended to, or lectured, or intellectually bullied.

The truth is well-served in Rebecca Northan's wildly funny *Blind Date*, which--alas--ended its brief return engagement Saturday night at the Loose Moose Theatre with a 90 minute classic of a comedy that was one part Tina Fey, one part Bridget Jones, and never less than totally engaging.

If that's not unnerving enough for all you would-be rom-com screenwriters, Northan made the whole show up on the fly.

The basic premise of *Blind Date* is that Northan plays Mimi, a French ... woman waiting (and waiting, and waiting) at a cafe for her blind date to appear. When it becomes apparent that she's been stood up, she goes into the crowd and chooses a guy (she pre-screens them in the lobby prior to the show) to be her blind date for the night.

Saturday night's lucky guy was Jamie, a thirtysomething investment counsellor, who started the night thinking he was going to watch a comedy, and ended it standing onstage in his underwear, basking in waves of love from a Loose Moose full house of 200 people.

The show starts with an actual date in real-time. There is red wine, chocolate and soothing bistro music. Of course, there is also one stressed-out audience member, who finds himself plunged into a co-starring role he never auditioned for--which, when you think of it, sort of mirrors what a lot of first dates are like.

There's also a time-out box, sort of like a boxer's corner, where the participants repair to clarify the rules of engagement, gather their heads, or simply talk something out before they return to the ring, err, the cafe, to continue their evening together (if only life had time out boxes, too.)

While it all starts out fresh and fun and new and sexy and flirty, at a certain point in the evening, Northan has the audience vote on whether they want to see how the rest of the date plays out, or else flash forward to a point in the couple's relationship much farther up the road--five years--where things are a lot less fresh, not new, trying to be sexy but sort of hopelessly flailing about--but still, thanks to the game performers, very funny to watch.

Somehow, Northan manages, in an improvised comedy, to capture both the high anxiety of the first date and the whole arc of a relationship, in a single 100 minute performance. If *Blind Date* were a Hollywood script, every A-list actress in town would be panting to play Mimi.

Northan, who has relocated to Toronto and has been doing a lot of film and television of late, is another in a line of wonderfully funny, talented redheads. That line starts with Lucille Ball, continues with Debra Messing (Grace in *Will & Grace*), and continues with Northan, who has the comic agility of the best of the Saturday Night Live legends, and manages to blend it in with a remarkable talent for emotional honesty, and pretty spot-on therapy.

And Jamie, whoever he is, wasn't half-bad either. He might consider giving himself some investment counselling, and take up comedy.

(*Blind Date* is part of the World Stage Festival, which takes place in Toronto in March, 2009)

### **Play Review: *Blind Date***

***'Blind Date' a must-see performance***  
**By LOUIS B. HOBSON - Sun Media**

CALGARY - For performer Rebecca Northan, *Blind Date* is the theatrical equivalent of walking a tightrope.

Northan plays Mimi, a woman waiting at a Parisian cafe for her blind date.

When the man fails to appear, which he invariably does, Northan chooses a substitute from the audience to be her date for the next 90 minutes.

The trick is for Northan to coax an entertaining performance from a non-actor.

In the case of Darrin, her choice on Thursday night at the Loose Moose Theatre, it initially took some major coaxing and cajoling, but once she put him at ease, Darrin proved quite a witty sparring partner.

He might have started out looking like a deer caught in the headlights, but Darrin eventually managed to play puppet master several times dictating what Northan had to

do.

Northan got Darrin to ask her to dance, massage her feet, engage in some harmless necking and even to deliver the baby they presumably conceived during a blackout to represent their five-year marriage.

The genius in Northan's performance is she makes everything seem so casual and effortless when she is actually manoeuvring through a mine field.

My first experience with Blind Date proved to be so much fun, I can hardly wait to catch it again to see what new hoops Northan will be forced to jump through.

It plays today and next Friday and Saturday at 10:30 p.m. and Thursday at 8 p.m.

### **Gauntlet – University of Calgary Undergraduate Student's Weekly**

#### ***Improvising a lifetime with a stranger***

#### ***U of C alumna returns to town with a unique show***

**Written by Ryan Pike**

**Published March 13, 2008**

In the quest for companionship, occasionally people resort to drastic measures. One of the most commonly-used ways of looking for love is the blind date. University of Calgary alumna Rebecca Northan has returned to her roots at Loose Moose Theatre to present a show dedicated to the pleasantries and pratfalls of courtship with Blind Date.

Originally performed at the Spiegeltent'tavern at Toronto's Luminato Festival, Blind Date featured Northan selecting gentlemen from the audience and improvising a date based on their interactions. Northan recalls that she came up with the idea for the show on the fly.

"My friend Tina Rasmussen, who's also a U of C grad, runs the performing arts division of Harbourfront Centre [where the Spiegeltent is located] so she booked me in there and said, 'come up with something'," says Northan. "I went and watched the show and thought, 'there are pretty girls taking their clothes off and circus performers and singers. It kind feels like a sexy circus environment, but there are no clowns. So maybe I'll do a sexy clown with some burlesque thrown in there'."

The initial version of Blind Date was only 10 minutes long and, due to its location in the cabaret-like Spiegeltent, Northan was able to inject a certain amount of sauciness into the proceedings. As such, a typical installment featured complete strangers being fed chocolates by her, slow dancing with her or perhaps escalating into more physicality.

"Night after night, total strangers would come out of the audience and make out with me and let me take their shirts off and they would hump me on a table while 400 people screamed, applauded, whistled and went crazy," she remembers. "I thought, 'This is really weird. I can't believe people are agreeing to this.' It was really fun and became the one of the highlight acts of the tent. Then I got to wondering if I could go longer, if I could spread out all the burlesque, naughty stuff and put in some life stuff as well."

The expansion of Blind Date from a 10-minute show spanning a single evening to a 75-minute experience spanning a lifetime is obviously a large undertaking. Northan aims to take events of her own life and an audience member's to make the show different every night.

"My thought was, everyone's been on a blind date so we all know how to act on a blind date," she says. "Everybody's met your significant other's parents for the first time or you've moved in for the first time or you've had your first fight as a couple. Can I bring somebody up on stage and get them to play with me. Can I access their personal script?"

Despite the on-the-fly nature of Blind Date, the circus act does operate with a small net. In this case, Northan has a set of guidelines she maintains to ensure that everyone has fun.

"I have two rules, maybe three," says Northan. "[They're] kind of like the rules for being a good date: make sure they're having a good time, don't humiliate them and be willing to adapt to what they say or do."

The nature of Blind Date may raise a few eyebrows, but there's one person that doesn't seem bothered by Northan going on dates every night--her husband. Northan's beau, also an actor, was originally the centrepiece of the second part of the original Blind Date as a blind man intended to be her original date that didn't show up.

"He was in on it from the beginning and then we decided it doesn't really need the second half because in a way, it's kind of a repeat," she notes. "So we cut the second half and he went on and did his own thing and I kept doing Blind Date. I don't know if I've ever asked him how he felt about it. He's never said anything and he knows I'm doing a long version of it now. It's work. I have a very, very weird job."

Since relocating from Calgary to Toronto seven years ago, Northan has been busy--appearing on This Hour is 22 Minutes, the CTV series Alice, I Think and films like Mr. Margorium's Wonder Emporium, in addition to a few plays. She credits her diverse skillset with allowing her to stay busy.

"I'm very lucky in that I've never, knock on wood, had a regular job," she says. "I've always worked in the arts. Part of what helps me get through, though, is that my umbrella of the arts is really big and wide. If I'm teaching improv, I am working at my craft. If I'm teaching a corporate workshop or writing a script for a corporate client, I'm still scriptwriting, which is still taking what I know and applying it to someone else's world. I'm just charging way more money for it."

Following Blind Date, Northan heads to Montreal to film four episodes of a new series for Showcase called The Selkirk Foundation, directed by NUTV alumnus Mike Dowse. In the meantime, she's looking forward to returning to her improv roots at Loose Moose and the challenge of Blind Date.

"It could be absolutely amazing and it could be a total car accident," admits Northan. "But people kind of like that as humans. We like the huge, nasty failures just as much as we like the successes."