

Plantation Residents Will Perform Alongside Superstars in a Broadway Style Show Celebrating Broward's 100th Anniversary

BY JILL SHARPE

A Broadway recording artist, a Grammy-winning superstar and many very talented performers from throughout Broward County, including some from Plantation, will share the stage in "the show of the century" called "WE" on Saturday, October 3rd in the Au-Rene Theatre at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts. Broadway Director and Cirque Dreams Founder Neil Goldberg auditioned more than 2000 Broward County hopefuls for the coveted 100 roles in his highly anticipated Broadway-style show which will be the pinnacle of Broward's year-long celebration, Broward 100-Celebrating the Art of Community.

On June 26th at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts, the curtain rose and revealed members of the cast for the first time to the media, community leaders, elected officials and sponsors. The cast of "WE" consists of Broadway and recording artist Linda Eder, multiple Grammy-award winning entertainer Jon Secada and other celebrity talent still to be announced, performing along with 100 brilliantly talented South Florida musicians, dancers, poets, choirs, athletes and variety acts ranging in age from 9-70+.

When Goldberg first signed on to produce the show, he decided to reach out and see what talent existed and let that talent dictate what a Broadway-style celebratory show would look like to represent 100 years of Broward County.

"What evolved was a show that starts in present time and progresses back through the years with the artists representing the different ages in a performer's life and their pieces representing highlights and landmarks in Broward County from where we are today to where we were 100 years ago," said Goldberg. "The audience will see what our beaches looked like, our restaurants and our nightlife."

"The variety of artistry and the sheer talent I had at my disposal, actually made writing this show relatively simple," said Goldberg. "The audience will enjoy every style of performance that they can imagine from tango to hip hop to rap."

Goldberg recently announced that after the performance of "WE" the audience will vote for their favorite local performer who will win a \$10,000 cash prize sponsored by the Neil Goldberg Dream Foundation. Additionally, the Foundation will award each of the five runners up with \$1000 cash prizes.

Plantation residents Craig Strang, a singer, and Ben Bagby, a dancer, singer and music producer, are thrilled to be part of the cast and love working with theatrical impresario Neil Goldberg whose unique, imaginative, spectacle style shows are legendary.

"It really is an honor to be a part of something this extraordinary that pulls the community together in an artistic form where all ages, demographics, ethnicities and variety of artists are represented," said Strang. "Goldberg's message of acceptance in this show is very beautiful and very powerful."

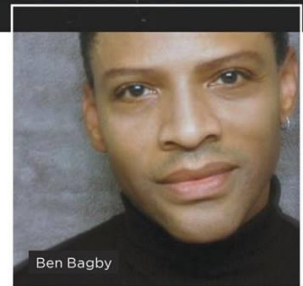
Strang, who owns a computer consulting business by day, said his true passion is music. He has been featured in leading roles in touring productions of *I Am Music*, *Dance Explosion*, *Hairspray*, *Hot Latin Rhythms*, *A Musical Tribute to Dirty Dancing* and *West Side Story*. When he's not on the big stage, Strang can be found in a variety of settings. A true virtuoso as a singer/songwriter, Strang wrote and produced several songs for the off-Broadway children's musical *TUSK*. He released his debut CD *SERENDIPITY* in 2000; a compilation of the expression of his deeply original songs and arrangements.

Strang's partner on stage and in life is Ben Bagby. Bagby wrote the arrangement that serves as the opening number for the production of "WE". He was in the Original Broadway Cast of *My One & Only* and in the First National Tour of *Dreamgirls*. He is also a featured dancer in the *Blues Brothers Movie* and in the Movie *Eddie* starring Whoopi Goldberg. He has performed on cruiseships for Royal Caribbean and Carnival, and in local productions of *AIDA*, *Chicago*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Hairspray*, *The Life*, *Smokey Joe's Cafe*, and *West Side Story*. He has recorded for several Indie record labels and is an acting, dance and voice coach when he's not performing. He has also written, directed and choreographed an autobiographical show called "It's A Musical Life".

"WE" is presented by Broward 100 as part of their grand finale, Duende. Ticket prices range from \$25 - \$85, not including service or handling charges, and are available through Ticketmaster, online at BrowardCenter.org, in person at Broward Center's AutoNation Box Office or by calling 954-462-0222.



Craig Strang



Ben Bagby

