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ART OF THE STATE

BY MARK EARNEST



Christopher Daniels plans to write and perform six one-person shows in the next few years, including the first, *I'm Spiritual* and *All I Have to Show for it is This Award*.
PHOTO/MARK EARNEST

Spiritual speech

Christopher Daniels

Christopher Daniels was voted Reno's top minister/spiritual advisor by, well, the readers of this publication. So what did he do at the awards show? He gave an acceptance speech—for 90 minutes or so. Or at least that's the premise of *I'm Spiritual* and *All I Have to Show for it is This Award*, a one-person show from Daniels that's returning to Good Luck Macbeth Theatre Co. for one more night after a successful weekend premiere in March. The show is the opening volley of a six-show series that he plans to complete and stage in the next few years.

Daniels is also the executive director of GLM, and from his work there to being a yoga teacher to being an ordained minister with the Alchemist Movement, there is always room to bring spirituality into his work.

The award-winner's speech in *I'm Spiritual* is more than just one guy standing at a podium, though. There are different characters who shine a light on both the beauty and absurdity of spirituality. One character, a Midwesterner named Merriweather Maelstrom, talks about how stories from the Bible can read like an episode of *Game of Thrones*. (Hint: it has a lot to do with Elijah.)

Daniels said the central theme of the show is to search for the meaning of spirituality in the 21st century.

"In my circle, a lot of people are waking up and looking for something deeper and more meaningful," he said. "They all have a hodge-podge of different traditions and faiths, so I wanted to write a show on how spirituality is

beautiful but also kind of ridiculous, because it is so serious and has this heavy feeling to it, but in some ways it can be so funny."

Daniels' first work on stage was close to two decades ago as Miss Ginger Devine, a drag queen persona that he first crafted while going to school in Madison, Wisconsin.

"As a drag queen, you learn most things about being on stage," he said, "anything from crowd control, if you are working at a bar at 1 o'clock in the morning, to stage presence to MC'ing to characterization."

Once Daniels moved to Reno in 2009, he dove into theater head-first. He moved here to help manage the Utility Players improvisation group and then eventually went on to act in plays and musicals with other companies. One turning point was the chance to resurrect Miss Ginger Devine in a self-written, one-woman show in 2014 at GLM.

"I like to say that I'm a professional storyteller," he said. "That's what I tell people that I do, because I love sharing stories, and I love language and the words that playwrights use, because they are very intentionally chosen to really create an experience for the audience."

I'm Spiritual is one of Daniels' six shows based on the book *The Hero Within* by Carol S. Pearson, in which Pearson details the six archetypes by which people live: the innocent, the orphan, the martyr, the wanderer, the warrior and the magician. *I'm Spiritual* is based on the orphan. As for the rest of the series, Daniels has two more plays written, and he wants to write another three next year.

I'm Spiritual and *All I Have to Show for it is This Award* returns to Good Luck Macbeth Theatre Co., 124 W. Taylor St., at 7:30 p.m. on May 23. Learn more at goodluckmacbeth.org.