

BACKSTAGE

April 22, 2010

**MY TRIP DOWN THE
PINK CARPET**
at the Midtown Theater

Though he's a small guy—he says he stands just 4 feet 11 inches—Leslie Jordan is a hysterical spitfire in “My Trip Down the Pink Carpet.” This solo show, part autobiography and part Hollywood tell-all, from the actor perhaps best known for playing the acerbic Beverley Leslie on TV’s “Will & Grace,” could be a wearisome exercise in self-promotion and -absorption. But thanks to Jordan’s gift for spinning a story and his effervescent presence, it charms thoroughly.

**CRITIC'S
PICK**

Make no mistake: The piece, carefully shepherded by director David Galligan, is peppered with stories that begin with “And then I...,” as Jordan relates highs and lows of his career. But whether he’s describing an ill-fated sitcom with Robert Urich or recounting a perplexing anecdote he once heard from Faye Dunaway, Jordan has the ability to find the meat of a moment and, with the twinkle of an eye or a self-deprecating aside, transform it into comic gold.

These qualities extend to his childhood reminiscences, which range from crushes he had in school to his first trip to a gay bar in his native Tennessee. (His portrayal of the two drag queens who force him into the club is particularly choice.) Combined, his stories provide a pungent portrait of life at a time when gay men were more marginalized than they are today.

Societal pressures from the 1960s through the mid-1980s led to Jordan’s simultaneous fascination with and repulsion for openly gay celebrities he saw on TV and himself. These dichotomous emotions drove his alcoholism and drug abuse. A stint in rehab forced him to confront this inwardly focused homophobia. Ultimately, Jordan’s triumph over his self-destructive self-loathing has, unsurprisingly, allowed him to emerge as something of a comedic colossus on screen and in this hugely satisfying show.

Presented by Bruce Robert Harris, Jack W. Batman, Dennis Grimaldi, Lily Tomlin, Jane Wagner, Jean McFaddin/Susan Falk, Daniel Wallace, and D. Michael Dvorchak/Jim McLaughlin

at the Midtown Theater, 163 W. 46th St., NYC.
April 19–July 3. Wed.–Sat., 9 p.m.; Sun., 6 p.m.
(212) 352-3101, (866) 811-4111,
www.theatermania.com, or www.mytripdown
thepinkcarpet.com.

Reviewed by Andy Propst