# **Blood Type: RAGU Press Pack**

# Bon Vivant Enterprises presents



Written & Performed by Frank Ingrasciotta

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Off-Broadway Production Originally Produced by Flying Machine Productions

Publicity & Public Relations for Off-Broadway Production: David J. Gersten & Associates Photo Credits: Carol Rosegg

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#### FRANK INGRASCIOTTA'S



A Coming-of-Age Universal Story of Family, Identity, Understanding and Forgiveness!
United Solo Award Winner - Best Comic Actor & Comedic Script!



"A GARRULOUS & ENLIGHTENING PRODUCTION WITH A LASTING, REWARDING FLAVOR."

The New York Times

"CLEVER & STYLISH. A FAST-PACED 90 MINUTES. INGRASCIOTTA IS A CONFIDENT & APPEALING PRESENCE."

The New York Daily News

"FRANK IS AN INGRATIATING PERFORMER
WITH SUFFICIENT WIT TO MAKE THE SHOW
TRULY UNIVERSAL."
The New York Post

"TRANSCENDING STEREOTYPES, INGRASCIOTTA IS A MASTER OF COMEDIC AND DRAMATIC BALANCE." Show Business Weekly





Blood Type: Ragu is a wonderfully funny and genuinely moving coming-of-age one-man play exploring the first-generation American's delicate dance between culture & identity! Award winning Actor/Playwright Frank Ingrasciotta gives a tour-de-force performance portraying more than 20 characters who live, love & laugh in this fast-paced journey that is not just a comedy, not just a drama. It's family – and we all have one! This acclaimed & honored Off-Broadway production recently delighted audiences at the Actors' Playhouse in NYC, Capital Repertory Theatre (Albany, NY), Shea's PAC (Buffalo, NY). 14<sup>th</sup> Street Playhouse (Atlanta, GA), Dante Hall Theatre (Atlantic City, NJ), George St. Playhouse (New Brunswick, NJ), Seven Angels Theatre (Waterbury, CT), and numerous Performing Arts Centers throughout the USA. It also played to sold out houses at the Belmont Theatre (NYC), where it became the longest running show in the theatre's ten-year history.

**BOOKING CONTACT: BON VIVANT ENTERPRISES – 917-742-5819** 

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Blood Type: RAGU

It's not Drama... it's Family!

WEBSITE: www.bloodtyperagu.com
Join our FACEBOOK FAN PAGE:
http://on.fb.me/14Z6ZPx
Follow us on TWITTER:
http://bit.ly/1bR2lCp

# The New York Times

THEATER REVIEW | 'BLOOD TYPE: RAGU'

# Mapping a Family's Domestic Battleground

By ANDY WEBSTER - Published: March 9, 2009

You won't find "Sopranos"-style macho posturing in Frank Ingrasciotta's one-man show, "Blood Type: Ragu" (nothing gangster related, really), now at the Actors' Playhouse. But as someone once said of "The Godfather," you can certainly smell the spaghetti.

A mostly humorous autobiographical narrative peppered with portraits of colorful Sicilian relatives and Brooklyn personalities, "Blood Type: Ragu" is, among other things, an effective depiction of the breakdown of the marriage between Mr. Ingrasciotta's working-class immigrant parents. But it has a larger mission, one maybe not surprising, yet pleasing and for some perhaps enlightening.

The dramatic impact of the play, directed by Ted Sod, takes a while to develop. At times Mr. Ingrasciotta's garrulous, ingratiating patter — about the annoying tics of his often hysterical mother and stoic, overworked father — almost eclipses the play's serious side. (Infrequent dramatic moments that break the prevailing rat-a-tat comic rhythms come up fast but pass just as quickly.) But Mr. Ingrasciotta, a veteran performer and director who teaches acting at the State University of New York College at Purchase, has been shaping and polishing this piece for 11 years and definitely has a point to make about family.

The heart of "Blood Type: Ragu" is the domestic histrionics that colored his upbringing: his parents' battles, his unmarried sister's efforts to move out, his struggles to escape his mother's asphyxiating attentions. (Joshua Higgason's unobtrusive scrim projections — an interior, a highway, a Sicilian street scene — offer a calming counterpoint.)

The most vivid characters in Mr. Ingrasciotta's gallery are the women, all rendered with strokes so thick that the comedy can border on drag humor, though there are virtually no costume changes. (The men, by contrast, are for the most part gruff and muted.) But the misogyny common in drag is largely absent; Mr. Ingrasciotta's compassion grows increasingly evident.

Eventually he even finds a measure of sympathy for his father, a patriarch whose demands for absolute deference from Mr. Ingrasciotta's mother cost him his marriage.

It is that kind of understanding — and forgiveness — that gives "Blood Type: Ragu" its lasting, rewarding flavor.

The play continues at the Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Avenue South, Greenwich Village; (212) 868-4444; bloodtyperagu.com



#### **BIO**

**Frank Ingrasciotta** – is the writer/performer of the Off-Broadway critically-acclaimed one-man play *Blood Type: RAGU*. Frank's New York stage credits include the original Off-Broadway production of Godspell at the Promenade Theatre, Valley of the Dolls, Three Postcards, Dinner at 8, Edgar Degas in The Girl in the Blue Armchair, and the Pharaoh in Joseph & the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat at Lincoln Center. TV credits include: recurring roles on The Guiding Light, One Life to Live, ABC Afterschool Special and The Equalizer. Directing credits include: Three years as writer/producer for the NY Cable Follies, a live musical satire of the year's events in the cable industry, performing to TV network CEOs and executives. Regionally and in NYC, he has directed numerous cabarets, corporate shows and stage productions. Among them: Neil Berg's musical The Life & Times of Fiona Gander, 12 Angry Men, Brighton Beach Memoirs, Noises Off, You Can't Take It With You, Chicago, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, Miss Saigon, and The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee. For the NYC Fire Department, he directed and choreographed firefighters in a benefit production of Guys & Dolls receiving media coverage and raising over \$20,000 for the NY Burn Center. Frank is also featured in the independent movie, Figs for Italo directed by Bob Celli, and presently touring national and international film festivals. As an arts educator, he is an advocate in utilizing the arts as a teaching tool across the school curriculum. He conducts creative writing & acting workshops for adults and youth and serves on the faculty teaching acting at SUNY Purchase. He is a graduate of the Meisner acting technique at William Esper Studios, and earned a Theatre Arts-in-Education degree from SUNY Empire State College. Frank was invited to perform Blood Type: RAGU at the New York State Capital for Gov. Andrew Cuomo and the State Legislators receiving honors on the House Floor. Last year the show received top honors at the United Solo Award for Best Comic Actor and Best Comedic Script He is also the recipient of the Arts Award by the Westchester Arts Council for his outstanding achievement as a performing artist and educator for the County. Contact Frank at www.bloodtyperagu.com, Twitter: @bloodtyperagu, Facebook Fan Page: http://on.fb.me/14Z6ZPx

## Hear what Audience Members, Blogs and Message Boards Say about Blood Type: RAGU

This is my 2nd time seeing your show. I have seen one person shows before, but yours is fabulous. I am the daughter of Irish immigrants & could still strongly identify. Your play was funny & struck a chord in me that all children of Immigrants could identify with. Betty

I loved your show. I'm 18 years old & saw so much of my grandmother in your mother, it was eerie sometimes. I could just hear her saying the Jewish equivalents of so many things your mother said. Morgan

Your play is awesome & hysterical! We laughed so hard that our eyes were tearing. We totally identified with every little thing you recounted! Your method of comedy & storytelling is purely right on! I'm coming back to see it again!

Anthony

The beauty of "Blood Type: RAGU" lies in its universality, you don't have to be Italian to enjoy, understand & feel what you are saying here. Thank you SO MUCH for a wonderful time... even the tears were good. Loretta

I'm not Italian, but I was for 85 minutes! Audience Member at the Capital Repertory Theatre in Albany

Fantastic one man show! I'm Russian Jewish, but let me tell you, there's not much difference between us & the Italian immigrants. We love food & making people feel guilty, just with different accents. Frank bounces skillfully between poignant & hilarious, capturing all those moments of family life that usually remain tucked behind closed doors. You thought no one could understand you, your crazy mother, your insane father, and your laconic siblings? Frank does, & he captures them with such honesty that you might wince a bit between your tears, be they from laughter, longing, or any other number of emotions that will come swirling up as he recollects his life, from childhood to marriage. Life, love, tears & family cross all nationalities. Go see Blood Type: RAGU... trust me, you'll understand. Irene - Audience comment from Yelp.com

THE CHAMPION, THURSDAY, MAY 1-7, 2008 Page 5B

# Frank Ingrasciotta brings his biographical one-man show South



Actor, playwright and director Frank Ingrasciotta is currently appearing at the 14th Street Playhouse in the one-man play Blood Type: Ragu. It's a series of sketches pulled loosely together in the sometimesfunny, sometimes-moving story of life in first-generation Italian-American family. He paused between performances to talk with The Champion about his experiences writing and performing in what he calls "not drama, just family."

Tell me about your background. I see from your biography that you have been an actor. It this your first writing and directing project?

No, I have directed a number of projects. I haven't written anything of this kind before—a full length play—but I've written a lot of sketch comedy.

#### Is the story line factual or is some of it exaggerated or invented?

It's factual; however, parts have been enhanced for dramatic effect. For example, four aunts have been incorporated into one aunt and some things have been moved in time. Also, some incidents actually happened in my wife's family. I'd say that the stories are about 20 percent my wife's and the other 80 percent are mine.

#### How long did you work on it?

This has been near and dear to my heart for about seven years. It wasn't until the '90s that I experienced getting the picture of my dad as a child from my uncle—the incident kind of tied things together. I didn't just want it to be funny, I wanted it to be funny with meaning. I wanted it to come from a grounded place. You know we often find humor in the most challenging events of our lives.

New York has a fairly large Italian-American population. That's less true of Atlanta. Do you think the play will be as well understood here?

This is my first time trying it

out in the South. But I was going for a universal story—a story about family. Many children have been though some of the situations that I dramatized such as how does a child negotiate between parents who aren't getting along? I just wrote it to tell a story that has an ethnic backdrop, but the charm of universal appeal like My Big Fat Greek Wedding. I talked to a student after the performance who is first-generation Chinese-American, and she said she totally understood what I was doing.

#### What does your family think of it?

My family has been very supportive. My sister took a little time to get acclimated to the idea, but she's fine with it now. My mother thinks it's great. She understands that even though I have a little fun with the way I portray the family, I'm really paying honor to them.

# Is this your first theater venture outside New York?

I've performed in New Jersey and Connecticut. I'm very excited to bring this to the South for the first time

#### When did you first perform this?

Actually, it goes back to 2000. I put it down a few times, but I kept going back to it, making changes each time. At one point it was a two-act play. It's nice to have the opportunity to look at what's working and what needs tweaking and allow it to evolve.

#### Are the performances now all identical?

Close to it, but not identical. I'm very improvisational. I might try something off the top of my head with one of the characters that's a little different from what I had done before. That's one advantage of being a solo performer. When you perform alone on stage, the other character is the audience and you play off them a little.

# Have you done a one-man show before?

No. This is my first time doing something like this.

# What's it like having to carry the entire show on you own?

It takes a lot of stamina and a lot of energy. You certainly don't want to go out partying while you're doing something like this. Not every performer can do this type of performance. Staying on stage for 90 minutes and being not just one character but 20 characters takes a special kind of art. It takes energy and focus, but it's probably been the most rewarding experience of my career.



# Blood Type: Ragu takes an intimate look at life in a first generation Italian-American family

by Kathy Mitchell

Not every Sicilian immigrant is part of an organized crime family; some just come from families and neighborhoods filled with colorful, interesting characters. Actor, director, playwright Frank Ingrasciotta has turned his first-generation Italian-American family into a fast-paced entertaining one-man show, Blood Type: RAGU, that's now playing at the 14th Street Playhouse

Blood Type: RAGU, that's now playing at the 14th Street Playhouse.

As he juggles more than 20 characters—men, women, children, elderly people, some with deep accents, some with no accents—he never loses his footing. He takes the audience along on the wild ride that at moments is hysterically funny and at others poignant and gripping. There's not a dull moment in the entire 90-minute show as Ingrasciotta introduces the audience not only to family members in America, but also to some still living in Italy.

Ingrasciotta has fun with Sicilian stereotypes from the consumption of copious amounts of pasta to the mafia. At one point a character threatens, "I'll get my people to take care

of this" to which another responds, "You're not the godfather, you don't

have 'people'!

The biographical play is not all laughs, however. The family is a troubled one in which the parents don't get along and the father leaves to go live with another woman. It deals with death, family discord and other unhappy subjects.

The play was well received in New York, which has a large Italian-American population. Still, comments among audience members leaving the premiere performance indicate that it's likely to be popular in the South, too. While the play is about Italian-Americans, those of many backgrounds are likely to see themselves, their families and their neighborhoods in the multifaceted story.

story.

The show runs Fridays-Sundays, through May 11. Friday and Saturday shows are at 9 p.m.; Sunday shows are at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$15 - \$22.50. The 14th Street Playhouse is located at 173 14th Street, Atlanta. For more information, visit www.14thStPlayhouse.org or call (404) 733-4750.



# Review: "Blood Type: Ragu"

By Machelle Tran, Akure Imes and Sage Nenyue VOX Staff

Down three flights of stairs into the belly of the 14th Street Playhouse in Midtown, a man in his mid-forties of average build, with an olive complexion and a warming smile stood centered in front of the audience. And from the first two minutes of the one-man, one-act show "Blood Type: Ragu," we found ourselves bewitched by the director, playwright and actor, Frank Ingrasciotta. Plus, we were laughing our heads off.

"Blood Type: Ragu" is the story of an Italian-American growing up in Brooklyn who tries to come to terms with the two cultures that he was born into: his Sicilian heritage and American lifestyle. The story is 100% believable because it's based on Ingrasciotta's life. It's as if he was confiding in you himself with a unique blend of Ital-glish and jokes that could only be gotten if you were there.

What blew us away was Ingrasciotta's ability to not only play himself but to interchange between over 20 different characters. These are not just extras or flat characters with the stage time of 10 seconds, as most people would expect with so many roles. Each one was acted out fluently and there was a balance in their quality. We got the sense that we actually knew each person, as if we were watching his life play out as it happened in real time. And we couldn't help but hold our laughter-filled sides when the mother and father spit insults at each other with little Italian phrases thrown in.



Courtesy of 360 Media

The **clever dialogue** and **well-written scenes** in "Blood Type: Ragu" entice all ages although the show is geared toward a more mature audience. It's entertaining non-fiction that stands out because it's **relatable** and real. It only requires the audience to hang on for the ride through the hilarious, the beautiful, the touching, the melancholy and the authenticity. We praise Frank Ingrasciotta for allowing us a peek into his life. He recently sat down with VOX to bring readers behind the scenes.

**VOX:** If you could describe "Blood Type: Ragu" in one sentence, what would it be? **Ingrasciotta:** It's a heartfelt story about embracing heritage and making peace with your past.

VOX: How do some of the characters relate to you?

**Ingrasciotta:** All of the characters relate to me because it's all based on experience. I relate to my parents the most and I really lived in their shoes when I wrote "Blood Type: Ragu."

VOX: How did you get into acting?

**Ingrasciotta:** I always had these stories. I wanted my stories to be rooted in something real [heritage]. "Ragu" was inspired by a photo of my dad.

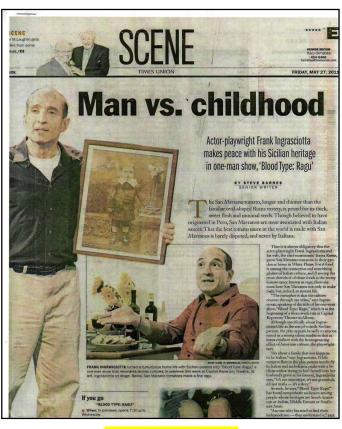
VOX: You said that you liked to work with students, how come?

**Ingrasciotta:** I love to do it. I can connect with kids. They're inspirational to me. I like to think I have an affinity for it.

VOX: What can teens do to become successful actors?

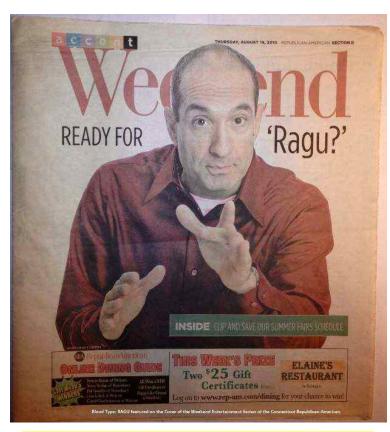
**Ingrasciotta:** Discipline, passion and commitment. They also need to listen. Young people are so quick to talk when they ought to be listening.

The spectacular show "Blood Type: Ragu" delivers can only be experienced in person through May 11 at the 14th Street Playhouse, Atlanta. Shows start at 9 p.m. Tickets start at \$15.

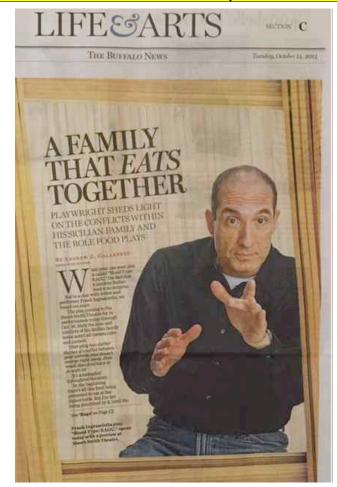


#### Albany Times Union





#### Weekend Entertainment Section - CT Republican-American



# Pair of one-man shows mine ethnic family life

Italian-American born in Brooklyn portrays more than 20 characters in rich tapestry.

By ADRIANNE M. MURCHISON amurchison@ajc.com

By ADRIANNE M. MURCHISON amurchison@sjc.com

Frank Ingrasciotta is not a gaty who gripes about family members. But he surely makes fun of them.

In his one-man show, "Blood Type: Ragu," the Brooklyn native opens the door to the two worlds he green to be a considered to the surely makes fun of them to the social and that of his social amborn parents and had the social amborn parents and had daily commentaries on the neighbors.

"In never knew any of my neighbors," real names," he says in the show, "because my mother had nicknammed everyone by their most outstanding feature or characteristic. [There was amonth through the crack of her door to shake off her dust nag. She was marked the Passionate Dead Woman... Her husband, he was tagged the Woolly Hunchback."

Before he penned the play, Ingrasciotta the youngest of three characterist had a rocky relationship and revealed few details about family life back, in Italy, But in 1995, the actor met relatives during his honeymoon trip to Sicily and gained a new understanding of his parents and heritage.

"I had this big external family. I walked the streets that my parents walked when they were kids," says the playwright, who now resides in White Plains, N.Y. "It turned to my wife and said, Tve got an ending to write about."

"Blood Type: Ragu" follows "Diary of a Madman." which ended earlier this month. "Waiting for My Growth Sput." a play written and performed by 13-year-old Atlantan Jason David, opened Thursday and runs through May 10.

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In "Growth Spurt," David tries to balance pop culture and the demands of his Irish Catholic and Jewish household.

All three shows were presented by Metropolis Port Theatre Company.

"There is some sort of logic," says Prodan Dinnov, founding artistic director of Metropolis. "We thought that Jason's show had a lot to do with Frank's. Both were oneman. Both had ethnic story lines."

Passionate theatergoers will turn out for a good story whether there's a large cast or a solo performer, he says.

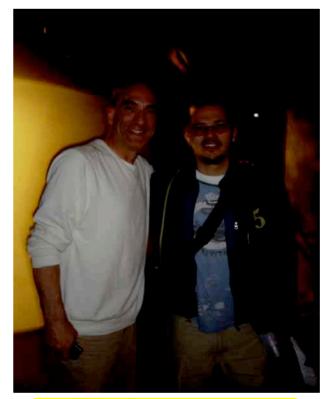


#### ONSTAGE

"Blood Type: Ragu" 9 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays. 4 p.m. Sundays. Through May 11. \$25-\$35.00

Shows by Metropolis Port Theatre, 14th Street Playhouse, 173 14th St. N.E., Midtown. 404-733-4750, 14th stplayhouse.org. Atlanta

## **Atlanta Journal Constitution**



John Leguizamo visits backstage Blood Type: RAGU

Broadway Marquee at the Actors' Playhouse



A Bronx Tale meets Blood Type: RAGU



Performing BTR for Gov. Andrew Cuomo at the NY State Capital



Academy Award Nominee Marsha Mason presents Frank with the United Solo Award for Best Comedic Performer

## PUBLICITY PHOTOS FROM CAPITAL REPERTORY THEATRE PRODUCTION OF BLOOD TYPE: RAGU











