



## BH INTERVIEW: CONSERVATIVE PLAYWRIGHT CALLS OUT FAR-LEFT THEATRICAL COMMUNITY

by CHRISTIAN TOTO 13 Nov 2012

Playwright David Marcus says modern theater is so liberal it's hard for artists to keep up the pretense of being nonconformist.

“Theater is incredibly left wing. Hollywood is The Cato Institute compared to theater. It's where Hollywood celebrities come to do even more liberal stuff,” Marcus tells Big Hollywood.

It's why Marcus successfully submitted a play to the new Republican Theater Festival, a Philadelphia-based event dedicated to giving conservative playwrights a voice. Marcus says festival founder Cara Blouin has tapped into something “very real” with the debut program, which runs through tomorrow at Plays & Players Theater in Philadelphia.

The festival is causing quite a stir within the theatrical community, according to Marcus, forcing liberal dramatists to confront some inconvenient truths about their storytelling. “They're in an echo chamber ... applauding each other, and that seems to be bothering them,” says Marcus, whose play, “501(c) Me,” which examines the modern use of tax exempt status.

Marcus' play expands on a concern he has about the current theatrical system.

“When young, really smart, talented companies form, the first question they ask isn't, 'how do we attract an audience?' It's, 'how do we get a grant?’” he says.

The result? He sees a dwindling art form struggling to stay relevant.

“Theater has been on a precipitous decline in terms of its influence on our culture,” he says.

Conservatives often argue against federal funding for the arts on the grounds that some offensive material may get tax dollars and such spending proves wasteful. Marcus argues a better rationale against it boils down whether it's ultimately “good for the art form you're trying to help.”

Marcus says he and his wife run a for-profit New York-based theater company, one based on a basic economic model, not handouts and grants.

“We scale down production costs and cover our expenses through selling tickets,” he says.