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Filmmaker to Present Series of Plays on Rosa Parks and Other Major Civil Rights Figures

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'Year of the Diamond' is made up of seven plays and 12 dance sequences, portraying influential men and women throughout history

LOS ANGELES, Calif. – French filmmaker Jerome Dolbert is a risk taker. Having left a successful career in television in his native France to make films and produce plays in the U.S., Dolbert isn't new to taking risks for his craft.

So when he began his new theater project, "Year of the Diamond," he knew it would be a challenge just to get his colleagues involved, let alone getting it produced. That's because it's not just a play. It's a production made up of seven plays and dozens of actors with a total of 12 dance sequences to illustrate the lives of Rosa Parks, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and some of the most influential men and women throughout history.

"It may seem crazy to some people to have a project like this. But it's really about creating something meaningful for everyone to enjoy," he said.

Although casting is still pending, Dolbert says he plans to present the production in April at a yet to be determined theater.

"We're still working on getting a theater, but a lot of the work is already done with our team of people behind the scenes," he said.

Although much of the production and storylines are still under wraps, Dolbert says the stories will deal with major historical figures such as Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, Harriet Tubman and many others.

The production aims to use local talent from Compton and surrounding communities in Los Angeles to encourage and nurture the creativity and aspirations of the performers in the area. Each show will include original musical dance and video interpretations that would coincide with the stage dialogue.

"We want to provide inner city youths with an alternative to gangs through the performing arts," Dolbert said.

Born and raised in Paris, France, Dolbert began making 8 mm films at age 10 with his own scripts and dialogue. After studying business at EDC Business School in Paris where he received his Master's Degree, he went on to study acting and directing at Cours Florent in Paris for two years.

"I knew I needed to learn business if I was going to make a career out of producing and directing," Dolbert explained.

Dolbert has over 15 years experience in the entertainment industry. His zeal would quickly land him at TF1, one of the largest European private TV channels, with its 26 cable channels and an average market share of 28 percent of all viewers. Over the next 11 years, Dolbert worked as a director and producer on multiple television projects as well as business-related projects in Turkey in order to set up TV programs based on the TF1 model.

"These different projects were very interesting and very rewarding. I gained a lot of experience and TV production and directing," he recalled.

"In my first year, we set up a channel called Euro Shopping, a 24-hour/7-days-a-week home shopping network televised via cable, satellite and terrestrial channels that was highly successful. I wrote and directed hundreds of hours of TV commercials which helped me discover my passion for directing and writing."

His background has been recognized by the top studios such as TF1 Group, M6 Group (or Canal Plus) and by many production companies. Throughout his career, Dolbert has had the honor of working on hugely successful projects. But as his career flourished, Dolbert felt a need to return to his true love, filmmaking and writing. But to do this, he realized he would need to come to Hollywood and leave a successful career in television in France.

After arriving in the U.S. Dolbert joined the UCLA film directing program, which he completed in two years and soon wrote, produced and directed the short film "The Others," about two co-workers who meet to introduce their respective husbands at a dinner party that quickly turns into a nightmare. The Hollywood newcomer was pleasantly surprised when his 13-minute film received the Award of Merit at the Los Angeles Cinema Festival of Hollywood this past October.

Today, Dolbert is busy not only with his theater project, but also with his documentary "The Prison Industry in the U.S. – 2014," which tells the story about how prisoners in federal prisons earn just 23 cents an hour to manufacture various high-tech components for Patriot Advanced Capability 3 missiles and other military

weapons for the benefit of the government.

Dolbert is also set to direct and produce a feature film scheduled to begin production next year in Louisiana. Details of the project are still pending. But for the former Parisian, working on multiple projects is exactly what he had hoped for.

"I love to work and I love to be around very creative and imaginative people," he said. "This is what Hollywood is all about."

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