

# Q Culture

## Another American: Asking & Telling nominated for Helen Hayes Award

by Steve Ralls  
Special to Q-Notes

NEW YORK — On March 20, the 2001 Helen Hayes Awards nominated *Another American: Asking & Telling* for outstanding nonresident production. Marc Wolf was also nominated for outstanding lead actor in a nonresident production for his performance. Winners will be announced May 7 at a Kennedy Center gala.

Wolf's performance in *Another American: Asking & Telling* has been lauded by the *New York Times* as "brilliant . . . a tour de force portrayal," by *USA Today* as "A Top Ten Play of 1999," and by the *Village Voice* as "a smart, provocative and chilling event." The play, which had extended runs in New York, Washington and San Francisco, is a one-man show featuring portrayals of men and women impacted by

"Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue, Don't Harass," and prior anti-gay policies. Distilled from 200 interviews of members of the military community, Wolf takes audiences on a national tour of the American military, sanctioned discrimination, and its human fall out.

"We congratulate Marc on the Helen Hayes Award nominations," said C. Dixon Osburn, SLDN's Executive Director. "*Another American* is a poignant reminder of how bigotry hurts unit cohesion and destroys lives. Wolf's nominations are well-deserved recognition of his artistic achievement."

Wolf's Helen Hayes nominations follow his Obie Award win and Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards nominations. Future performances are planned for Los Angeles and Chicago. ▼

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## between the covers

I want my mommy, daddies!

Endangered Species  
by Louis Bayard  
Alyson Publications  
April, 2001 \$13.95

LOS ANGELES, CA — Louis Bayard, the critically acclaimed author of the sleeper hit *Fool's Errand*, has recently completed a new novel, *Endangered Species*, which is being published in April by Alyson.

The Broome family is facing an uncertain future; however no one but youngest son Nick seems to notice. Driven by an inexplicable but driving certainty that they are on the brink of extinction, Nick vows to bring a child into the world by whatever means necessary. The problem? Nick is gay.

The brave new world of parenting is explored as never before in Louis Bayard's new novel, which is full of the dry wit, snaking plot turns, and vivid, well-rounded characters that earned raves and fans for his first novel, *Fool's Errand*. Nick's quest for a surrogate mother will draw him to schizophrenics, Hispanic immigrants, body-pierced teenagers, female escorts, a God-fearing phlebotomist, an itinerant matchmaker, and an unbalanced but irrepressible young woman named Nattie, who ultimately may provide what he is seeking in the way he least expected.

Alternately moving and very, very funny, Nick Broome's quest to leave a mark on the world drives straight to the heart of the evolving nature of love and family.

Bayard, a native of Washington, DC, talked about some of the questions raised by his book and the intersection between his writing and his life. He was joined by his partner of 13 years, Don Montuori.

Tell me about the genesis of *Endangered Species*.

B: My last book, *Fool's Errand*, ended with the hero, Patrick Beaton, finding his Mr. Right and settling down with him in this very happy Jane Austen-ish way. So I started thinking about what the next step would be for a couple like that, and, not surprisingly, the idea of kids presented itself. I wasn't really keen on doing a sequel to *Fool's Errand*, so I started wondering how the possibility of kids would present itself to a single gay man. What kinds of obstacles would he encounter? What sort of options would he be forced to pursue? And gradually this character, Nick Broome, and this whole reproductive odyssey began to take form.

You have a good time writing about things like sperm banks and surrogate mothers. What kind of research did you have to do?

B: I talked to some people including my brother, who's a physician. And like Nick, I did

a lot of research on the Internet. I stopped short of actually wading into that world myself. It seemed kind of ethically suspect to engage people at that level when you're just looking for material.

One of the more memorable characters in the book is Lyle Kibbee, who describes himself as a "surrogacy broker." Are there really people like that?

B: There are agencies, certainly, that hook up aspiring parents with surrogate moms. Whether there are people like Lyle, actually going off on their own, I can't say. But these days, with the Internet, that kind of thing would definitely be possible. Of course, the Internet also empowers people to forge these links on their own and eliminate the middleman, which I would have to think is Lyle's downfall.

What are some of the things *Endangered Species* has in common with your last book, *Fool's Errand*?

B: Well, they're both built around a quest theme. In *Fool's Errand*, it's the search for Mr. Right, the Scottish Prince. In *Endangered Species*, it's the search for an heir—some way of living on in the next generation. But, of course, I tend to see the differences more than the similarities. The first book, for instance, was written in this very controlled third-person style. *Endangered Species*, by contrast, has a more idiosyncratic first-person voice. And it's written in present tense because I think that gives you a better feeling for being plunged into somebody's mania.

Would you say *Endangered Species* is also darker than your first book?

B: Yeah, *Fool's Errand* was really conceived as a lark. I tried to keep it as fast and light as I could. This time around, I gave myself permission to insert more texture, more shadow without, I hope, losing the narrative momentum that the last book had. So although I think of it as an upbeat book, it doesn't necessarily tie everything up in a big bright bow, and not everyone winds up with what he wants.

It's probably safe to say that people reading this book will wonder if it's autobiographical.

B: It's a common assumption, and I resist it a little bit, because Nick Broome isn't me and so much of *Endangered Species* is just flat-out made up. But I'd be lying if I said the subject of children hasn't been on my mind for the last few years. Donald Windham once said that instead of telling writers "Write what you know," we should be telling them: "Write what you need to know." And that was certainly the case here. I knew having a kid was possible, but I really needed to know if it was something I wanted. In a way, I envied Nick, because he's ready to do it from the very start, and it's just a matter of making it happen.

So writing *Endangered Species* helped you get comfortable with the idea of adopting?

B: You know, I have to say it really just deepened the middle. So it was a long process of talking it with out Don, talking to a counselor, and then just lying there in the middle of the night, going: "Oh, my God, can I do this?"

M: And then one night, we're lying in bed, and he said, "Oh, all right, let's do it." And I said, "Okay."

B: He was drifting off to sleep at the time. So, by the time *Endangered Species* comes out, the two of you will have adopted your very own baby.

M: If everything goes according to plan, we'll have a little bundle from Vietnam.

B: Unless Cambodia re-opens.

Is it scary for a gay couple to take this step?

As a gay man, you do have this feeling of going against society's grain. I mean, we live six blocks from Congress, and last year there was legislation, actual legislation that would have made it illegal for us to adopt internationally. It didn't get through, thank God, but it was a kind of wake-up call. You realize that not everyone is going to approve of you, and you worry at least, I worry about what that means for your kid.

Are there any points where you and Nick Broome part company?

B: I don't particularly care about passing on my genes I could care less, really but Nick's obsessed with it, and I think a lot of people are, too. That's probably why people resist adoption, because they think, as long as they know the genetic components of their kid, there won't be any surprises. And of course, there are always surprises. Adoptive parents just know that going in. You take the leap and hope for the best. ▼

[Since this interview was conducted, Don and Louis did indeed return from Vietnam with their child, a boy, whom they named Seth.]

## Anton In Show Business

by Jane Martin

A Texas theatre company trying to mount a production of Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* runs into all kinds of mayhem in this hilarious satire.

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