



For Immediate Release:
October 8 – November 18

Bridge Street Theatre presents
A World Premiere!

CASSE NOISETTE (A Fairy Ballet)

by Michael Whistler

with Nancy Oarneire Graham, Jason Guy*, Jason Kellerman*, Bradley Levine,
and Serena Vesper

Directed and Designed by John Sowle

Costumes by Jennifer Anderson

Production Stage Managers: Julia Rothwax and Frank Dianda

November 8-18, 2018

Bridge Street Theatre Mainstage

44 West Bridge Street, Catskill, NY



A Spectacular World Premiere Closes Out the 2018 Season at Bridge

Street Theatre

Catskill's intimate Bridge Street Theatre will close out its 2018 Subscription Season with a major coup: the world premiere of Philadelphia-based playwright Michael Whistler's brilliant, funny, and touching "Casse Noisette" (The Nutcracker). The play, described by its author as being about "a very quiet man and some very loud music", masterfully interweaves the life of Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky with that of a deeply-closeted modern-day American high school teacher obsessed with Tchaikovsky's music. Sugar Plum Fairies and phone sex workers collide, and five actors play eleven different roles in two completely different time periods, in this tale about discovering the strength to be true to one's self, whatever the cost.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky is a musical titan in 19th-Century Russia: hugely popular, incredibly charismatic, deeply emotional, mercurial, explosive. Tortured by his homosexuality, he finds release only in composing and in his love for the son of his invalid sister. Joe Jessup is a quiet, unassuming, and very private high school Earth Sciences teacher in suburban Washington state, a man who has long since resigned himself to not getting exactly what he might wish for out of life. For years, his only emotional outlet has been his love for the music of Tchaikovsky and, more recently, his furtive calls to a gay sex chatline – but merely to listen to the young man on the other end of the phone, never to speak himself. Actor Jason Guy, whom audiences may remember from his tour-de-force performance in Bridge Street's 2017 world premiere of Kieron Barry's "The Official Adventures of Kieron and Jade", portrays both these characters as their worlds intertwine and each struggles to find some sort of fulfillment in his life.

The cast also includes Nancy Oarneire Graham as Nancy Klein (a high school co-worker of Joe's) and Antonietta Dell'Era (the original Sugar Plum Fairy in Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker"), Jason Kellerman as Marc Maynes (a coach at the high school where Joe teaches), Modeste Ilyich Tchaikovsky (the composer's brother), and the Consort of the Sugar Plum Fairy, Serena Vesper as the Sugar Plum Fairy and Sasha Ilyinova Davidov (Tchaikovsky's invalid sister), and Bradley Levine as Blaine (a young runaway working for a gay phone sex chatline) and Vladimir "Bob" Lvovitch Davidov (Sasha's son and Tchaikovsky's nephew). Production of this world premiere has been underwritten in part by a generous gift from Duke Dang. The show is directed and designed by Bridge Street Theatre's Artistic and Managing Director John Sowle, with costumes by Jennifer Anderson (BST's "The Revenge of the Space Pandas"). Production Stage Managers are Julia Rothwax and Frank Dianda.

"We previously collaborated with playwright Michael Whistler on his one-act play 'Quimper' over at Stageworks/Hudson a few years back and we're over the moon that he's permitting us to present this magnificent work in its first full production anywhere," says Steven Patterson, Bridge Street Theatre Associate Artist. "New plays are our artistic life's blood here at BST and this one is amazingly

accessible – like a mash-up of Masterpiece Theatre and William Inge. We love the parallel stories it tells and the wonderfully theatrical way their clashing realities reflect and amplify one another. And, of course, the entire play is steeped in Tchaikovsky’s glorious music. It should be the perfect lead in to the holiday season for our audiences.”

Michael Whistler’s “Casse Noisette (A Fairy Ballet)” is recommended for audiences ages 16 and older. It plays Thursdays through Saturdays at 7:30 and Sundays at 2:00 from November 8-18, 2018 at Bridge Street Theatre, located at 44 West Bridge Street, in Catskill, NY, just a block and a half west of Main Street across the Uncle Sam bridge spanning Catskill Creek. Eight performances only. General Admission is \$25, Students 21 and under are \$10. Discounted advance tickets are available at casse.brownpapertickets.com or by calling 800-838-3006. Tickets will also be sold at the door one half hour prior to each performance subject to availability. “Pay What You Will” performances will be held on Thursday November 8 and Sunday November 11 (“Pay What You Will” tickets are available only at the door one half hour prior to those performances). For further information, visit the theatre online at BridgeSt.org.

Events and performances in Bridge Street Theatre’s 2018 Season are made possible in part by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature and by Public Funds from the Greene County Legislature through the Greene County Cultural Fund, administered in Greene County by the Greene County Council on the Arts.

Performance Calendar:

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November 8-18, 2018

Bridge Street Theatre Mainstage

44 West Bridge Street, Catskill, NY

Thursday Nov 8 @ 7:30pm (“Pay What You Will” preview)

Friday Nov 9 @ 7:30pm (Opening Night)

Saturday Nov 10 @ 7:30pm

Sunday Nov 11 @ 2:00pm (“Pay What You Will” performance)

Thursday Nov 15 @ 7:30pm

Friday Nov 16 @ 7:30pm

Saturday Nov 17 @ 7:30pm
Sunday Nov 18 @ 2:00pm (Closing performance)

Tickets:

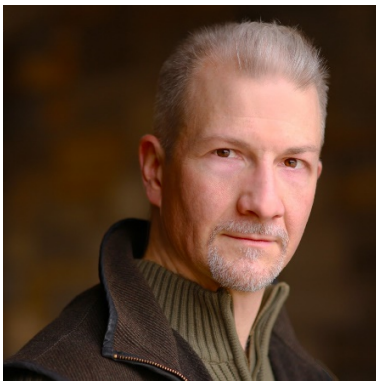
Advance tickets available at <http://casse.brownpapertickets.com> or by calling 800-838-3006.

General Admission \$22, \$10 for students age 21 and under

Tickets can also be purchased at the door prior to each performance (on a space available basis) for \$25, \$10 for Students ages 21 & under.

“Pay What You Will” tickets available only on the day of performance and go on sale at the door one half hour before curtain time.

The Cast:



JASON GUY (*Joe/Tchaikovsky*) survived Bridge Street Theater’s *The Official Adventures of Kieron and Jade* – barely – and yet has returned for more. He has suffered terribly in over 70 professional productions from Shakespeare to tap dancing – sometimes both at once. He was poisoned (as Hamlet) and beaten (Malvolio) with the National Shakespeare Co.; betrayed (Brutus) and beheaded (Buckingham) at the American Shakespeare Center’s Blackfriars Playhouse; and flogged, twice, (as both Dromios) by the Hamptons Shakespeare Festival. Seeking solace in living playwrights, Mr Guy lost his faith in *Doubt* (Greenbrier), lost a finger in *The 39 Steps* (Arkansas Rep), and was vomited on in *God of Carnage* (Cape May Stage). Fearing it was all his scene partners’ fault, Jason performed every role in Cortland Rep’s *I Am My Own Wife*: sadly, it was the loneliest thing he’s ever done. Turning to musicals in hopes of lighter fare, he was fired daily (*42nd Street*), punched repeatedly (*West Side Story*), and soaked nightly (Don Lockwood in *Singin’ in the Rain*). Most recently he was lied to by the Barnstormers – as *The Producers*’s Franz Liebkind, author of “Springtime for Hitler”. Jason was born in Michigan, grew up in Maine, and lives in New York City; but this litany of maltreatment has crossed four continents, fifteen countries, and all 50 States.



NANCY OARNEIRE GRAHAM (*Nancy/Dell'Era*). Nancy's recent stage work includes Voice Theatre's productions of *All My Sons* and *The Skin of Our Teeth* in Woodstock, NY, and *The Clean House* by Sarah Ruhl at Threshold Stage Company in Kittery, Maine. Other favorite roles, all presented or shot in the Hudson Valley, include Hesione Hushabye in *Heartbreak House*, Sara Rosensweig in *The Sisters Rosensweig*, and Thea in Peter Ferland's web series, *Pirate Birthday Party*. She curates and performs in Cocoon Theatre's "Soirée in the Parlor" series in Poughkeepsie, for which she recently performed a devised work-in-progress inspired by A. S. Byatt's short story, "The Thing in the Forest," in collaboration with Jim Granger and Bridge Street regular Molly Parker Myers. Her poems and short stories can be found by diligent searches of online journals, and in anthologies such as "In|Filtration: An Anthology of Innovative Poetry from the Hudson River Valley", edited by Sam Truitt and Anne Gorrick for Station Hill Press of Barrytown, NY. A company member of the newly formed Paramount Theater Group in Peekskill, Nancy lives in Kingston, NY.



JASON KELLERMAN (*Marc/Modeste/Consort*) is thrilled to be making his debut with Bridge Street. Previous theatrical credits include *Bad Jews* (Theater Wit), *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* (Theater 891), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Michigan Shakespeare Festival), *Tartuffe* (Michigan Shakespeare Festival), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (First Folio Theater), *MacBeth* (First Folio Theater), *Soon I Will Be Invincible* (LifeLine Theater), *Romeo and Juliet* (Teatro Vista), *Taming of the Shrew* (Muse of Fire Theater) and many others. Film credits: *Hunter*, *Snatchers*, *Shiva Baby* TV credits: *Betrayal*, *Master of None*. Bachelor's degree in Theater

Performance at Northwestern University. He'd like to thank his friends and family for their ever present support, and his Wife Alex for being the light of his life.



SERENA VESPER (*Sasha/Sugar Plum Fairy*). These roles are a fantasy come true. Her childhood revolved around dancing in Pacific Northwest Ballet's *Nutcracker* with such Sugar Plum Fairies as Cynthia Gregory and Patricia McBride. Since then, she's danced with Lyric Opera of Chicago, and acted all over the country. Favorite regional roles include Maria in San Diego's Old Globe Theatre *School for Scandal* (with Paxton Whitehead), Vera in Drury Lane Oakbrook (Chicago)'s *Ten Little Indians* (with Deanna Dunagan), Liliane/ Juliette in Zev Buffman's production of *Panic*, Barbara in Florida Studio Theatre's *Smoke and Mirrors*, Ruth in *Blithe Spirit* (Southwest Shakespeare Co.), and Pamela in *Fox on the Fairway* (Lake Dillon Theatre, CO). NYC roles include Maire in *Translations* (Irish Arts Center), and Tina in *Ampersand* (Riverside Stage Co., Off Broadway). Feature film roles: Maggie / *Happily After*, Juliette / *Getting Over*. Best Actress nomination from Midwest Independent Film Festival for *European Kid*.



BRADLEY LEVINE (*Blaine/Bob*) is thrilled to join this company and to be making his Bridge Street debut. He is based in NYC but is originally from the Hudson Valley. Recent theatre credits: *The Boy in the Church* (Regional tour; Theatre 54), *Down the Urinal Hole & Around the Corner* (Dixon Place; KC Fringe), *Camp Rolling Hills* (NYMF), *Gathering Sparks* (Exploriment Festival, Bangkok). He is the co-Founder of The Cult Next Door, an ensemble theatre company based in

NY. Training: Bachelors in Acting from Pace University; The William Esper Studio; The Grotowski Institute in Poland. He'd like to thank his family, friends, and teachers for their continual support.

*Denotes membership in Actors' Equity Association, the union for professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

The Production Team:

MICHAEL WHISTLER (*Playwright*). Michael's plays include *The F*ggot Museum* (Theatre Off Jackson; Theatre Catalyst; Dixon Place); *phidias8* (InterAct Theatre; Phoenix Theatre); *Little Lamb* (InterAct Theatre; 20/20 Commission for New Plays; winner Virginia Brown Martin Award); "I'm Barbara Eden" (Stageworks/Hudson; Riverside Theatre Company); *Our Lady of Balenciaga* (Philadelphia Theatre Workshop); "Quimper" (Stageworks/Hudson). For the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, he was commissioned to create both *The Prescott Method* (also produced at Arcadia University, as well as Studio Tisch, NYU); and *Mickle Street*: both received their world premieres in the Walnut Street Theatre's Studio 3. *Casse Noisette* was developed through the support of Studio Tisch, NYU. He is currently an Assistant Professor at Montgomery County Community College near Philadelphia, where he has created two iterations of *Hidden Rivers*, theatrical evenings of oral histories of the College's students and community members. Many thanks to Steven and John for their unwavering support, and my love always to Jamie.

JOHN SOWLE (*Director/Designer*) is Artistic and Managing Director of Bridge Street Theatre. He founded Kaliyuga Arts in 1986 with his partner Steven Patterson and has received multiple awards for his directing and design work on their Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York productions. He has directed and designed BST's productions of *There Is a Happiness That Morning Is*, *Leni*, *Redwood Curtain*, *How to Pray*, *The Official Adventures of Kieron and Jade*, *Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus*, *Holiday Memories*, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Killing & The Love Death* (late plays of William Inge), and *Grinder's Stand* by Oakley Hall III, and designed their productions of *The Tavern*, *Souvenir*, *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*, and *Frankie & Johnny in the Clair de Lune*. John has an undergraduate degree in mathematics from M.I.T and a PhD in Dramatic Art from UC Berkeley.

JENNIFER ANDERSON (*Costumes*). Jennifer has designed and worked in theatre, film, television, opera, dance, couture fashion, the music industry and private clients from Los Angeles to Minneapolis to New York to Cairo, Egypt. Currently based in New York, Jennifer operates the Etheric Design Studio and Costume House. She received her MFA from the University of California, Irvine where she was trained to emulate the design style and elements of the "Golden Age of Hollywood". Recent projects include: *Ask For Jane*, *Soot & Spit: A Musical*, *It Came From Beyond*, and *Wicked, Frozen*.

JULIA ROTHWAX (*Stage Manager*), Julia was most recently Stage Manager for Bridge Street Theatre's production of *There Is a Happiness That Morning Is*. She has previously appeared as Mrs. Rudich in BST's production of David Mamet's *The Revenge of the Space Pandas* this past summer. During the previous summer, she performed as a refugee in Voice Theatre's production of *The Skin of Our Teeth* in Woodstock. She studies currently with the fabulous acting teachers, Seth Barrish and Lee Brock, at The Barrow Group in NYC. Stage Management is Julia's third "act" – her second being performing and her first as a political operative and campaign communications director for notable Democrats including Bill Clinton and Bill Bradley. Julia is also a Board Member of The Voice Theatre. She splits her time between Woodstock and Brooklyn, NY.

FRANK DIANDA (*Stage Manager*) has studied Meisner technique with Maggie Flannigan in NYC and as well broadcast journalism at the New School in Albany, NY. While singing, acting, and dancing are his passion, he started out working in film and television production as everything from a Grip to a Production Assistant. In his youth, Frank was also spent time on the radio as one of the youngest disc jockeys in New York. He continues to pursue work in all aspects of film, television, and theater. His most recent project was portraying a waiter on "The Real Housewives of New York".

To contact Bridge Street Theatre directly, email contact@bridgest.org or call their offices at 518-943-3894. For more information, visit the theatre's website at BridgeSt.org or call their offices at 518-943-3818.

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