



For Immediate Release

April 1 – May 5, 2019

Bridge Street Theatre presents
The World Premiere of

The Letters

a new play by David Zellnik

with Shivantha Singer, Sara Parcesepe, Christopher Joel Onken, and Alexis Cofield

Directed and Designed by John Sowle

Costumes by Michelle Rogers

Sound by Carmen Borgia

Production Stage Manager: Joshua Martin

April 25 – May 5, 2019

Bridge Street Theatre Mainstage

44 West Bridge Street, Catskill, NY

For interviews and further information, contact John Sowle at 518-478-5982 (Cell)



A Haunting World Premiere Opens Bridge Street Theatre's 2019 Subscription Season

"What are you supposed to do with the people you love who you can't save?"

Catskill's intimate Bridge Street Theatre will inaugurate its 2019 Subscription Season with the world premiere of playwright David Zelnik's brilliant and deeply moving "The Letters". This haunting new play about unrequited love from the author of "Sharon/Herzl", "The F#@%ing Wright Brothers", and the musical "Yank!", is directed by John Sowle and features a magnificently diverse cast of four.

It's 2002. Henry and Rachel are language nerds - he studies dead languages, she studies living languages. And Rajiv is the artist who lives with them both in a squat in Berlin, enmeshed in a post-collegiate tangle of friendship, love, and sex. They're all 22, the world is full of possibility, and they want it all. Then suddenly it's NYC 12 years later and it's all coming apart. Henry is gone and Rajiv and Rachel's long engagement is fraying when a fourth character enters their lives. In the course of a single day (with flashbacks to the times they shared in Berlin), these achingly human characters wrestle with the past and try to chart a future for themselves in a language they have yet to create.

Featured in the cast (all making their Bridge Street Theatre debuts) are Shivantha Singer (Rajiv), Sara Parcesepe (Rachel), Christopher Joel Onken (Henry), and Alexis Cofield (Laura). The show is directed and designed by Bridge Street Theatre's Artistic and Managing Director John Sowle, with costumes by Michelle Rogers and sound designed by Carmen Borgia. Production Stage Manager is Joshua Martin. The play was developed with the support of New York Stage and Film, March 2018, and production of this world premiere has been underwritten in part by a generous gift from Nina Matis and Alan Gosule.

“We’re long-time fans of David’s work and I’ve previously directed a number of his one-acts,” says director John Sowle. “Bridge Street has developed a reputation for finding and producing exceptional new plays, and we’ve been drooling over this one for the past two years, ever since David sent us its first draft. We’re so privileged to be presenting its world premiere here in Catskill.”

“The Letters” is recommended for audiences ages 13+ and plays Thursdays through Saturdays at 7:30pm and Sundays at 2:00pm from April 25 – May 5, 2019 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, which spans Catskill Creek. Eight performances only. General Admission is \$25, Students 21 and under are only \$10. Discounted advance tickets are available at letters.brownpapertickets.com or by calling 800-838-3006. Tickets will also be sold at the door one half hour prior to each performance on a space available basis. “Pay What You Will” performances will be held on Thursday April 25 and Sunday April 28 (“Pay What You Will” tickets are available only at the door one half hour prior to those performances). And time is running out to subscribe to Bridge Street Theatre’s entire five-play 2019 Season and receive substantial discounts on many other BST events plus special offers from local businesses. To purchase your Season Pass, visit bst2019.brownpapertickets.com or call 800-838-3006, and for more information, visit the theatre online at BridgeSt.org.

Events at Bridge Street Theatre are supported 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 Cultural Fund administered in Greene County by the Greene County Council on the Arts.



The cast of David Zellnik’s THE LETTERS (from left: Christopher Joel Onken, Alexis Cofield, Sara Parcesepe, and Shivantha Singer

Performance Calendar:

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The World Premiere of

The Letters

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with Shivantha Singer, Sara Parcesepe, Christopher Joel Onken, and Alexis Cofield

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April 25 – May 5, 2019

Bridge Street Theatre Mainstage

44 West Bridge Street, Catskill, NY

Thursday Apr 25 @ 7:30pm (“Pay What You Will” preview)

Friday Apr 26 @ 7:30pm (Opening Night)

Saturday Apr 27 @ 7:30pm

Sunday Apr 28 @ 2:00pm (“Pay What You Will” performance)

Thursday May 2 @ 7:30pm

Friday May 3 @ 7:30pm

Saturday May 4 @ 7:30pm

Sunday May 5 @ 2:00pm (Closing performance)

Tickets:

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

General Admission \$22, \$10 for students ages 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:



ALEXIS COFIELD (*Laura*) holds a BFA in Theatre and a minor in music from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts (Dec. 2018). While at Tisch she trained at the Atlantic Acting School, The Classical Studio and the International Theatre Workshop in Amsterdam. She was previously a member of the LORDES ensemble for Katherine Wilkinson's Columbia University MFA Directing Thesis. Most recently, she made her New York Theatre Debut in a sold out run of "Food for the Gods" at La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club.



CHRISTOPHER JOEL ONKEN* (*Henry*) is thrilled to make his Bridge Street debut and first adventure to Catskills for this production. Regional credits include "The Elephant Man", "In The Next Room", "Eurydice", "The 39 Steps" (Warehouse Theatre), "Baskerville" (Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center), "The Explorer's Club" (Lone Tree Arts Center), "The Underpants", "Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike" (LEAN Ensemble), "Silent Sky" (BlueBarn Theatre), "Julius Caesar" (Nashville Shakespeare Festival), "Troilus and Cressida", "Henry VI Parts 2 and 3", "Cymbeline" (Colorado Shakespeare Festival), "To Kill a Mockingbird", "The Merry Wives of Windsor", "Les Miserables" (Orlando Shakespeare Theater), "The Mystery of Irma Vep", and "The Rocky Horror Show" (Mountain Rep Theatre). He was also involved in the regional premieres of "Red", "Clybourne Park", "Grace", "The Lyons", "4000 Miles" (Playhouse on the Square), and "Northside Hollow" (Urbanite Theatre). California born, Carolina bred, a Clemson University graduate, and currently residing in New York. He is also proud member of Actor's Equity.



SARA PARCESEPE (*Rachel*) is a tv, film, and theater actress based in New York City. She is thrilled to be working with Bridge Street Theatre for the first time. Theatre credits: “Glamour” (John Patrick Stanley World Premiere), “Circle Mirror Transformation” (Players Guild), “Henry IV, Part I” (Hudson Warehouse), “The Laramie Project” (La Mama Theatre) and “Treffpunkt” (Strawberry Festival – Nominee Best Actress). Television/Film Credits: “Scorned: Love Kills” (ID Network), “Microchip Bride”, “Parent Teacher Conference”, “Hearts the Cross Borders”, “Pain and Suffering”. www.saraparsepe.com



SHIVANTHA SINGER (*Rajiv*) is an actor and singer/songwriter originally from the little island of Sri Lanka. Growing up a child of the world, he worked on film, stage and TV in the UK, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong and Australia before moving to New York, where he studied at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. His films have won several awards including: Best Supporting Actor (“Last Game”) at the Asians On Film Festival in 2012, Best US Fiction (“Out of My Hand”) at the LA Film Festival in 2015, Best Picture (“My Little Nut”) at the 48-Hour Winter Film Festival in 2015, Best Student Film (“Entropic”) at the Winter Film Awards in 2017, Outstanding Narrative Feature (“Meme”) at The Art of Brooklyn Film Festival in 2018. “A Lothario’s Lament” premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 2014, and he worked with Golden Globe winner/Academy Award nominee Mira Nair, on a reading of “Monsoon Wedding”. In 2012, he was selected to make his Off-Broadway debut in Tom Stoppard’s “Indian Ink” at the Roundabout Theatre and the same year, was selected for the ABC Variety Showcase in NY – only 12 out of 7500 applicants were chosen. He released “Words From Not Long Ago” in 2014, and recorded “Clarity” in 2017 with Kyle Cassel and Walter Parks (Richie Havens) at Kaleidoscope Studios. The album was mastered at G&J Audio (Norah Jones, John Coltrane, Sex Pistols, Aretha Franklin). His song ‘Fallen into You’ reached number #5 on The Most Requested Songs for the Year in Sri Lanka in 2005. www.shivantha.com

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the union for professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

Production Team:



DAVID ZELNIK (*Playwright*) is the author of numerous plays and musicals seen in New York and beyond. His work with composer Joe Zellnik includes “Yank!” (Off Broadway, 7 Drama Desk nominations; 2017 productions London West End and Rio de Janeiro, 2018 Chicago, and 2019 Brisbane, Australia), “City of Dreams”, “Flight”, and the upcoming “Ruth and the Panda”. David’s plays include: “The Udmurts” (Winner: Equity Library Theatre competition, semi-finalist O’Neill; World Premiere, Defunkt Theatre Co, PDX); “Serendib” (The Hippodrome; Off-Broadway EST); and “Ariel Sharon Stands at the Temple Mount and Dreams of Theodor Herzl” (performed in workshops productions at Theatre J, Culture Project through Epic Theatre, and Chautauqua Theatre). With playwright Ismail Khalidi, he has created www.breakthewallproject.org, a multi-artist project that works to change the discourse around Israel/Palestine. Most recently, his play with songs “The F#@%king Wright Brothers” was part of FringeNYC in October 2018 and his episodic podcast musical “Loveville High” was released in Winter/Spring 2019. Both had music composed by Eric Svejcar. www.davidzellnik.net

JOHN SOWLE (*Director/Designer*) is Artistic and Managing Director of Bridge Street Theatre, which opened its doors to the public in April of 2014. In 1986, he co-founded a theatrical production company called Kaliyuga Arts with his partner Steven Patterson and received multiple awards for his directing and design work on their Los Angeles, San Francisco, NYC, and Hudson, NY productions. He has directed and designed BST’s productions of “Casse Noisette” (world premiere), “There Is a Happiness That Morning Is”, “Leni”, “Redwood Curtain”, “How to Pray”, “The Official Adventures of Kieron and Jade” (world premiere), “Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus”, “Holiday Memories”, “The Epic of Gilgamesh” (world premiere), “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”, “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.

MICHELLE ROGERS (*Costumes*) began costuming plays while in college and continued working on high school productions throughout her teaching career. She’s designed costumes for “Marat/Sade”, “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”, “Oliver!”, and “Pride and Prejudice”, among others. Now retired from education, Michelle is delighted to be working with Bridge Street Theatre. She has been the costume designer for “The Tavern”, “Frankenstein”, “The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds”, “How to Pray”, “Redwood Curtain”, “Frankie & Johnny in the Clair de Lune”, “Leni”, and “Driving Miss Daisy”.

CARMEN BORGIA (*Sound*) is a musician and sound designer. He has designed and mixed films for PBS, HBO, IFC, and many film festivals. He has also released two CDs of his own work, “North” and “The Red Circle Line”. In 2009 his musical “South” premiered at Dixon Place in New York City and had a concert reading at Bridge Street Theatre in 2017. He operates out of studios in Catskill and The Bronx, doing sound-for-picture work and music recording. He can be found at Magpie Bookshop on Saturday afternoons at his Ukulele Camp, where anyone can learn to uke.

JOSHUA MARTIN (*Stage Manager*) is a first-year Production Stage Manager for Bridge Street Theatre. He has an education background and started his career teaching and coaching out in Southern California. After getting involved in theatre from an acting standpoint (he currently studies with Lora Lee Ecobelli), he discovered an interest in the production side of things, which led to gigs as an Assistant Stage Manager for Bridge Street Theatre’s presentations of “Driving Miss Daisy” and “Casse Noisette”. Joshua is excited for this opportunity to work with Bridge Street Theatre and is looking forward to the entire 2019 season.

Further Information:

To contact Bridge Street Theatre directly, email contact@bridgest.org or call their offices at 518-943-3894. For more information on Bridge Street Theatre visit BridgeSt.org.

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