



For Immediate Release

August 22 – September 22, 2019

Bridge Street Theatre presents
The World Premiere of

BETTER

by Michelle Carter

with Montana Lampert Hoover*, Carla Lewis*, Brian Linden*, Lori Evans, and Eric Fleising

Directed by Sara Lampert Hoover

Sets and Lighting by John Sowle

Costumes by Michelle Rogers

Original Score by Rodney Alan Greenblat

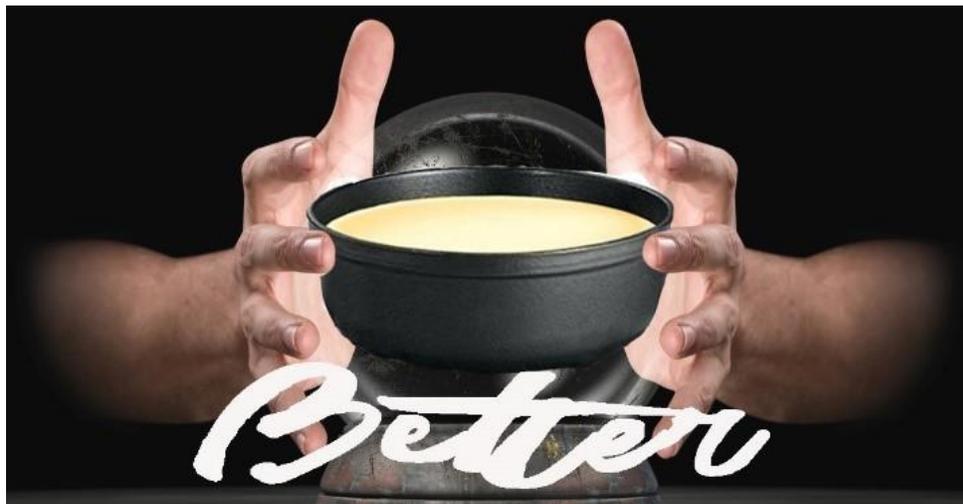
Sound by Carmen Borgia

Production Stage Manager: Joshua Martin

September 12 - 22, 2019

Bridge Street Theatre Mainstage

44 West Bridge Street, Catskill, NY



Bridge Street Theatre presents the world premiere of Michelle Carter's BETTER

Catskill's Bridge Street Theatre Presents the World Premiere of Michelle Carter's BETTER September 12 – 22

A shooting. A séance. Fondue. In the tradition of Kieron Barry's THE OFFICIAL ADVENTURES OF KIERON AND JADE, Bridge Street presents the world premiere of yet another brand-new comedy – this one by Michelle Carter, whose HOW TO PRAY was a big audience favorite during BST's 2017 Season. In Carter's new play BETTER, coming to BST for eight performances only September 12-22, 20-year-old Emily's life is turned upside down when her mother commits a shockingly violent act. She leaves school, takes a job at a fondue restaurant, consults a medium, and, like the good student she's always been, searches for answers. How will she be able to endure her pain? What might she be capable of? Does she deserve happiness? And will things ever get better?

This quirky comedy on serious subjects will be directed by Sara Lampert Hoover (BST's "Frankie & Johnny in the Clair de Lune"), and features actors Montana Lampert Hoover as Emily, Brian Linden as Emily's dad Ben, Lori Evans as Medium Molly (a down-to-earth clairvoyant), Carla Lewis-Ruig as Luisa (Emily's co-worker at The Melting Pot Fondue Restaurant), and Eric Fleising as Emily's boyfriend Michael. The production will also feature an original musical score composed by Catskill's Rodney Alan Greenblat! Sets and lighting will be designed by Bridge Street Artistic Director John Sowle, with costumes by Michelle Carter, and sound by Carmen Borgia. Production Stage Manager is Joshua Martin. Production costs for this world premiere have been underwritten in part by a generous gift from Rachel Lampert.

"Michelle Carter's plays remind me so much of those unconventional, off-beat streaming comedy series so many of us binge on," says Bridge Street Theatre Artistic Director John Sowle. "She takes on serious subjects (the aftermath of a school shooting, in this case) and deals with them in such a light-handed, humanizing way that it utterly disarms audiences, helps them let their guards down, and opens their hearts. You never see the violence that drives this play onstage – you merely witness the affect it has on the family the perpetrator leaves behind. And what a privilege to have Michelle here during the rehearsal process and for the first few public performances! We'll even be holding an onstage Q&A session with her following our 'Pay What You Will' performance on Thursday September 12. Folks who saw Michelle's 'How To Pray' at our theatre back in 2017 will need no encouragement to visit her world again."

BST co-founder Steven Patterson concurs. "Not only is this a terrific new play, but the production has turned out to be a real family affair. We've got the great Sara Lampert Hoover, who helmed our production of Terrence McNally's 'Frankie & Johnny in the Clair de Lune' so brilliantly back in 2018, in the director's chair. When we saw her daughter Montana Lampert Hoover at the NY Fringe last year in 'The F#@%ing Wright Brothers' by David Zellnik (whose 'The Letters' we premiered earlier this year), we immediately knew she'd be ideal casting as Emily – and she is, she is. And, since we want to make sure we do this incredible new play justice, we've hired a larger than usual complement of Equity actors, and THAT was made possible by a welcome

donation, specifically for that purpose, from Sara's sister (and Montana's aunt) Rachel Lampert, who only recently retired after 20 years as the Artistic Director of the adventurous Kitchen Theatre in Ithaca, NY. Our audiences will also recognize Lori Evans from her performance here as Marjory/Mallory in 'The Moors'. The three remaining cast members will all be making their Bridge Street Theatre debuts, though we've known and loved Brian Linden's work since our San Francisco days. And to have Rodney Alan Greenblat creating an original score for us is simply the cherry on top of the sundae."

"Better" is recommended for audiences ages 13+ and plays Thursdays through Saturdays at 7:30pm and Sundays at 2:00pm from September 12 – 22, 2019 on the Bridge Street Theatre Mainstage, 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 better.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 evening September 12 and Sunday afternoon September 15 ("Pay What You Will" tickets are available only at the door one half hour prior to those performances. For more information, visit the theatre online at BridgeSt.org/better/. Don't pass up the chance to experience this eye- and heart-opening new comedy in its world premiere!

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.

Performance Calendar:

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September 12 - 22, 2019

Bridge Street Theatre Mainstage
44 West Bridge Street, Catskill, NY

Thursday September 12 @ 7:30pm ("Pay What You Will" preview, with a Q&A with the playwright immediately following the performance)

Friday September 13 @ 7:30pm (Opening Night, with reception to follow)

Saturday September 14 @ 7:30pm

Sunday September 15 @ 2:00pm ("Pay What You Will" performance)

Thursday September 19 @ 7:30pm

Friday September 20 @ 7:30pm

Saturday September 21 @ 7:30pm

Sunday September 22 @ 2:00pm (Closing performance)

Tickets:

Advance tickets available at <http://better.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 are available only on the day of performance and go on sale at the door one half hour before curtain time.

Bios:



MONTANA LAMPERT HOOVER* (*Emily*) is very excited to be making her Bridge Street Theatre debut. Montana is a New York based actor, singer, and puppeteer. Recent acting credits include: "In the Parlour" (American Slavery Project), "The F%#@#ing Wright Brothers" (NY Fringe), "Old Names for Wildflowers" (The Tank), "Double Falsehood" (Letter of Marque), "Revelations" (NYWinterFest), "She: A Choreoplay" (HERE Arts), "HVMLET" (SheNYC), "Hand To God" (Kitchen Theatre Company), "Out There!" (Bluelaces Theater Company), "Battle of Central Park" (The Tank). She is very proud to be lending her hands and her voice (while hiding behind a chair) to create the voice and movement of Teddy on Queer Kid Stuff! (Youtube) Also a proud Sarah Lawrence College graduate. Find Montana @mlamperthoover on Instagram and Twitter or on her website: www.montanalamperthoover.com



CARLA LEWIS* (*Luisa*) is classically-trained (Shakespeare & Company) and has performed in Shakespeare repertory, regional theatre, and off-Broadway equity showcases. Beloved roles include Duchess of Gloucester (“Richard II”), Calpurnia (“Julius Caesar”), Maggie (“Cat on a Hot Tin Roof”), Eleonora in Strindberg’s “Easter” and award-winning activist Sochua Mu in “SEVEN” - a documentary play recently performed at the United Nations. Favorites include gender-fluid opportunities, Northumberland (“Richard II”); and Grumio in “Taming of the Shrew”. Besides classical work, Carla’s passion is new play development and she has performed extensively in Hudson, NY and the Berkshires for HRC Showcase Theatre (“The Spanish Prayer Book”), Aglet Theatre Co (“Ghostwriter”), and spends spare time reading for new playwrights in Manhattan, New York State, California, and New England. Carla is absolutely thrilled to be playing Luisa Ortega in “Better” at Bridge Street and to be working with such an amazing artistic team. She is a proud member of Actors’ Equity Association and SAG-AFTRA.



BRIAN LINDEN* (*Ben*) is happy to make his Bridge Street Theatre debut. Based in New York City, he recently appeared there in “Othello[s]” at The Shakespeare Forum, in Liliana Porter’s “THEM” at The Kitchen, and as the Father in “Six Characters in Search of an Author” as part of Raison d’Être: An Evening of Pirandello with J Jewell Productions. He has collaborated with the artist Pablo Helguera at BAM Next Wave Festival, the Guggenheim Museum, and Mildred Lane. Regionally, he has performed at Shakespeare festivals in Nebraska, Pennsylvania, San Francisco, and Idaho. He is a member of Burning Coal Theatre Company in Raleigh, North Carolina, where his work includes Tom Stoppard’s “Darkside” based on Pink Floyd’s The Dark Side of the Moon, “The Love Song of J. Robert Oppenheimer”, and David Edgar’s “Iron Curtain Trilogy” at the Cockpit Theatre in London. On TV, he has appeared on “Law & Order: SVU” and “Conan” at the Apollo Theater. Thanks to his friends John and Steven, love to his companion VRS, and in memory of CBX.



LORI EVANS (*Medium Molly*) also appeared this season as Marjory/Mallory in the Bridge Street Theatre production of “The Moors”. She spends most of her time working with Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, MA, where she has appeared in “Love’s Labor’s Lost” (Holofernes), “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” (Egeus, Titania), “Emperor of the Moon” (Doctor), and “Private Eyes” (Frank), and where she also teaches and tours “Shakespeare and the Language that Shaped a World” in their nationally acclaimed education program, and directs in the Fall Festival of Shakespeare, Riotous Youth and in numerous residencies. Regionally: “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” (Colonial Theatre of RI), “The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears” (Book-It Repertory); “Iris” (Majestic Theater); “Romeo & Juliet” (Hubbard Hall); “Almost Maine” (Gold from Straw Theatre), “Into the Woods” (Mount Baker Theatre), “The Kiss” (The Writer’s Voice 10 Minute Play Festival, NYC winner of Best Play in 2018), and working with wonderful Berkshire companies like Aglet and WAM.



ERIC FLEISING (*Michael*) is a young actor originally from Montreal, Canada. He is a recent graduate from NYU’s Tisch Drama program, where he obtained a BFA in Theatre. During his time at NYU, Eric attended the Atlantic Acting School, Stonestreet Studios, and completed his last semester abroad in London studying at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA). He appears as Wayne Henley in the independent horror film “The Killer Clown Meets the Candy Man” and in Onur Tukul’s upcoming film “Your Dying Eyes”. His most notable stage work was as Edmund in “King Lear” and Henry VI in “Dickheads”, an amalgamation of “Henry VI parts II and III” and “Richard III”, performed at RADA. Eric is incredibly excited and honored to be playing the role of Michael in the world premiere of “Better”, and hopes you will enjoy the piece as much as he does.

SARA LAMPERT HOOVER (*Director*) Previously at BST: “Frankie & Johnny in the Clair de Lune”. American Slavery Project: “Throw Pitchfork”. Kitchen Theatre Co: “Bright

Half Life”, “Throw Pitchfork”, “Peter and the Starcatcher”, “Dancing Lessons”, “Black Pearl Sings!”, “Neat”, “The Tricky Part”, “Souvenir” – 2008 SALT Award ‘Best Summer Production’, “The Clean House”, “Yellowman”, “Precious Nonsense”, “The Syringa Tree”, “A Servant of Two Masters”, “Crumbs from the Table of Joy”, “Pretty Fire”, and “Molly Sweeney”. Vermont Stage Co: “Three Days of Rain”, “Doubt”, and “I Am My Own Wife”. Other production credits: “Falsettos”, “Sweeney Todd”, “Proof”, “4 by Beckett”, “Side Man”, “The Insect Comedy”, “The Gnadiges Fraulein”. Assistant directing credits: “Sight Unseen” (Manhattan Theatre Club, Daniel Sullivan, Director) and “The Dybbuk” (Syracuse Stage, Barbara Damashek, Director). Member: SDC

* Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

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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