



For Immediate Release

April 11 – May 27, 2018

Bridge Street Theatre presents

LENI

by Sarah Greenman

with Roxanne Fay & Olivia Howell

Directed & Designed by John Sowle

May 17 – 27, 2018

Bridge Street Theatre Mainstage

44 West Bridge Street, Catskill, NY



Bridge Street's "Leni" Delves Into the Life of Controversial Filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl

What happens to artists when they allow themselves – knowingly or unknowingly – to become cogs in a propaganda machine? This and other fascinating and complex moral and ethical issues are explored in the second production in Bridge Street Theatre's five-play 2018 Subscription Series – Sarah Greenman's "Leni".

Using the life of Hitler's chosen filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl as a springboard, this searing examination of narcissism, denial, and artistic responsibility will be presented on the theatre's intimate Mainstage Thursdays through Sundays from May 17th-27th, 2018.

In a limbo resembling a semi-abandoned soundstage, Helene (the aged Leni Riefenstahl) hovers in a dream somewhere between life and death. There, she encounters Leni (her youthful self) and is forced to confront the moral implications of the works she created and the ways in which those works helped to empower a fascist regime. Was she complicit or merely an artist attempting to create the finest films of which she was capable, blinding herself to their implications and to the evils of the party that engineered their creation? Together, the two Lenis (who are really one) attempt to create one final film that will justify both their work and their life. To what extent are we responsible for decisions we make as younger people without the knowledge of hindsight? And to what extent does the world have the right to pass judgement on us for those decisions? "Leni" asks these questions in a stimulating, entertaining, and thought-provoking fashion, certain to inspire hours of discussion and debate.

As with another morally-conflicted film auteur, D.W. Griffith ("Birth of a Nation"), Riefenstahl's genius as a filmmaker has rarely been questioned, even by critics who despise the ideology to which she lent it. Pauline Kael, film critic for The New Yorker, called "Triumph of the Will" and "Olympia" the two greatest films ever directed by a woman. Her contribution to the art form is undeniable, as are the technical innovations she introduced. Yet equally notable is her contribution to 'greasing the wheels' for the ascension of the Nazi Party. She is definitely a character against whom outright 'black or white' judgement is not easy and Sarah Greenman's play portrays her 'warts and all', letting audiences to draw their own conclusions.

"Leni" will be presented Thursdays-Saturdays at 7:30pm and Sundays at 2:00pm, from May 17-27 on the Bridge Street Theatre Mainstage, located at 44 West Bridge Street in the Village of Catskill, NY. The Thursday May 17 preview and the Sunday May 20 matinee are both "Pay-What-You-Will" performances. Advance tickets are available for \$22 at Leni.BrownPaperTickets.com or by calling 800-838-3006. Tickets can also be purchased at the door prior to each performance (on a space available basis) for \$25. Students age 21 and under are always \$10. For more 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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Bridge Street Theatre Mainstage

44 West Bridge Street, Catskill, NY

Thursday May 17 @ 7:30pm ("Pay What You Will" preview)

Friday May 18 @ 7:30pm (Opening Night)

Saturday May 19 @ 7:30pm

Sunday May 20 @ 2:00pm ("Pay What You Will" performance)

Thursday May 24 @ 7:30pm
Friday May 25 @ 7:30pm
Saturday May 26 @ 7:30pm
Sunday May 27 @ 2:00pm (Closing Performance)

Tickets:

Advance tickets available at <http://leni.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.

The Cast:



ROXANNE FAY* (*Helene*) is an actor, playwright, and Producing Artistic Director of Circle In The Water, LLC, and is thrilled to return to Bridge Street Theatre for *Leni*. She was last seen on stage at Jobsite Theater in Tampa, FL as Prospero in *The Tempest* and as Paige in Taylor Mac's *HIR*. Here at Bridge Street, she has played Beatrice in *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-In-The-Moon Marigolds*, as well as performing her own original works *My Unspeakable Confessions: Gala Dali Declines to Explain Herself*, *Upon This Rock: The Magdalene Speaks*, *Dream Child: The Trial of Alice in Wonderland*, and *Home Fires Burning*. Other roles have included Ruth in *Collected Stories*, Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Feste in *Twelfth Night*, Touchstone in *As You Like It*, Dr. Emma Brookner in *The Normal Heart*, Terry in *Side Man*, Fraulein Schneider in *Cabaret*, and Nurse Ratched in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*. As a playwright, Roxanne has been awarded the 2018 Artist-in-Residence by The Growlery in San Francisco, the 2017 Creative Pinellas Individual Artist Fellowship, and the 2016 Hawthornden Writers' Fellowship (artist in residence, Hawthornden Castle, Scotland). Her plays have been produced in Florida, in Chicago, at the United Solo Festival in NYC, and here in beautiful Catskill. Her latest play, *Fabrication*, was a commission for the Salvador Dali Museum in St. Petersburg, Florida, created to highlight the museum's exhibition on the work of surrealist fashion designer, Elsa Schiaparelli and premiered in November of 2017. www.roxannefay.com
www.circleinthewater.com



OLIVIA HOWELL (*Leni*). This is Olivia's Bridge Street Theatre debut, and she couldn't be more thrilled to be sharing the stage with

her friend Roxy and tackling the complex character of Leni. Past select credits include Sunny in *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*, Honey in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, and Gladys in *Skin of Our Teeth*. Olivia's recent film *Nothing Like the Sun* just won Best Feature at the LA Film Festival. She also does voice-over work with the popular children's series *Mother Goose Club*. Love to her family, the cast and crew, and her soon to be hubby, Greyson. Thanks for watching *Leni*. We must know our history to shape our future.

The Production Team:



SARAH GREENMAN (*Playwright*) is a playwright and painter. She is also the Creative Director for Statera Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to gender equity in the American Theatre. She resides in Eastern Oregon. Learn more at www.sarahgreenman.com.

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 *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*, *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*, and *Frankie & Johnny in the Clair de Lune*.

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.

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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