



BWW Interview: Mia Barron in HURRICANE DIANE at TRT



by Marina Kennedy, Jan. 17, 2017

Two River Theater (TRT) now has onstage a production of Hurricane Diane that will be performed through February 12th. The show is a commissioned world premiere written by Madeleine George and directed by Leigh Silverman. The production features choreography by Sonya Tayeh and original music by The Bengsons.

In Hurricane Diane, Madeleine George turns the Greek god Dionysus into Diane, a lesbian separatist permaculture gardener from Vermont whose mission is restoring the Earth to its natural state-and gathering acolytes. Where better to begin than a tidy suburban cul-de-sac in Red Bank, New Jersey, populated by four women: Sandy, Renee, Pam, and Beth. As Diane Changes their yards into a wild wonderland of paw-paw trees and chokeberry bushes, she sets

out to draw the women into her ultimate plan: to stage a bacchanal in her forest garden, and usher in a new era of Dionysian worship in the dying days of the American empire, as the planet warms and the oceans rise.

Broadwayworld.com interviewed Mia Barron who plays Sandy about her career and Hurricane Diane.

Barron's stage work includes New York premieres of Bruce Norris's *The Pain and the Itch* (Playwrights Horizons) and *Domesticated* (Lincoln Center), Tom Stoppard's *The Coast of Utopia* (Lincoln Center), Beau Willimon's *Spirit Control* (Manhattan Theatre Club), Jonathan Marc Sherman's *Knickerbocker* (Public), Moira Buffini's *Dying for It* (Atlantic Theater), Sam Hunter's *A Great Wilderness* (Williamstown), as well as the recent Off-Broadway production of Sarah DeLappe's *The Wolves* (Playwrights Realm). Regional work includes Geffen, Mark Taper, New York Stage and Film, Guthrie, Long Wharf, Huntington, Westport Playhouse, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Old Globe, among others. Recent TV includes a recurring role on NCIS, Comedy Central's *Review*, HBO's *The Devil You Know*, *Newsroom*, *Elementary*, *Glee*, *Blue Bloods*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Medium*, *Numb3rs*, *Bones*, *Modern Family*, *Children's Hospital*, *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, as well as the voice of Molotov on *The Venture Brothers* (Cartoon Network). Film work includes *I Smile Back*, *The F Word*, *27 Dresses*, *Amnesiac*, *411*, *Righteous Kill* and *Half Empty/Half Full*. Mia last worked with Leigh Silverman (and Danielle Skraastad as well) on the Off-Broadway production of *Big Times*, which she co-wrote and performed. Barron has an MFA from the Graduate Acting program at NYU.

When did you first realize your penchant for the performing arts?

I've been passionately devoted to theatre-making from the time I was little. After I took my first classes at the Boston Children's Theatre in second or third grade, I felt, in an embarrassingly self-serious way, that I knew what my work would be for the rest of my life. And, of course, life is longer and more winding than I imagined at the time, but I have always craved the rigor, collaboration and creativity of a rehearsal room.

Tell us a little about your training at Tisch and how it prepared you for your career.

Definitely the most important part of my preparation for a life in the theatre was my time at the Graduate Acting program at NYU. Zelda Fichandler, who died last year, was running it, with deep passion and belief in the intimate work that can happen when people train as an ensemble. I think about Zelda, and the main acting teacher Ron Van Lieu, all the time. They encouraged their students to work with discipline and playfulness, and a sense of the possibility of transformation. I've been out of school for many years, but many of their lessons are still sinking in. When I was in school, I was very concerned with being a "good student", which sometimes prevented me from working in a free way. Now, I have a child, and it is often hard to make things come together logistically and financially to do a play, so when I do get in the rehearsal room, I'm just so eager and ready to play, and focused on how to best bring the heart of the play forward in a truthful and expressive way.

What have been some of your most memorable or favorite roles?

Well, in free associative order....Being part of *Coast of Utopia* was one of those seminal, rare experiences. Being in Bruce Norris's *The Pain and the Itch*. Being in grad school and being way too young to play Bessie Berger in *Awake and Sing* and Arkadina in *The Seagull*, but having the thrill of doing it anyway. Ann in *Balm in Gilead*. Vaudevillian orphan Nellie in *Big Times*, which was the show I co-wrote with my friends. Uncannily enough, Danielle Skraastad, one of the

other writers of that show is in Hurricane Diane, and Leigh Silverman, who directed our show many years ago, is, of course, the director of Hurricane Diane, so, for me, it's a joyous reunion.

What would you like NJ area audiences to know about Hurricane Diane?

This is a play commissioned by Two River and is actually a play set in this area of New Jersey, so the play is connecting directly to the audiences here in a way that is exciting and hoped for. Madeline has written this strange, beautiful beast; a play that that is wildly funny, with an undercurrent of real sadness and fear. She is a true, real-deal artist, and I'm lucky to be in the room with her and Leigh, trying to puzzle out the best way to bring her impulses to life.

We'd love to know a little about your experience working at TRT.

The people who work at and run Two River Theatre are the nicest, most ethical, attentive, group of people on the eastern seaboard.

Can you share with our readers some of your plans for the future?

Well, one of the most exciting things that I know I have coming up is a show that will be directed by my partner, Lars Jan. It is stage version of Joan Didion's classic essay The White Album and we're just beginning our collaboration now, but we'll be doing it in New York in the fall of 2018, Also, I'm very interested in being an alert citizen in the midst of these dark times, and in trying to raise my child, and have a pierogi occasionally.

Hurricane Diane will be performed at Two River Theater in Red Bank through February 12th. For more information and ticketing, visit <http://www.tworivertheater.org/>.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Mia Barron