



Leigh Silverman and Madeleine George Team Up for *Hurricane Diane*

BY OLIVIA CLEMENT
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The new work, which addresses climate change, will debut at Two River Theater.



Leigh Silverman (Monica Simoes)

New Jersey's Two River Theater is set to stage *Hurricane Diane*, a new, commissioned play by Pulitzer Prize finalist Madeleine George (*The (curious case of the) Watson Intelligence*) that addresses climate change. The world-premiere production will be directed by **Leigh Silverman** (*Sweet Charity*).

Leigh Silverman and Madeleine George
Performances will begin January 14 and continue through February 12. The show will officially open January 27.

In *Hurricane Diane*, George turns the Greek god Dionysus into Diane, a lesbian permaculture gardener from Vermont. Becca Blackwell stars in the title role, alongside Mia Barron, Nikiya Mathis, Danielle Skraastad, and Kate Wetherhead.

The production features choreography by Sonya Tayeh and original music by The Bengsons.

Here's how Two River Theater bills the new play: "[Diane's] 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 (Barron), Renee (Mathis), Pam (Skraastad) and Beth (Wetherhead)? 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."

"Red Bank is a coastal community, and climate change is as much an issue on the Jersey Shore as anywhere," says George in a press statement. "I was eager to write a play that both rolls out a welcome mat in front of the theater, inviting people in and making jokes that specifically enfranchise them, and also offers people the chance to interrogate their own feelings about these climatic shifts that are happening whether we're ready for them or not."

The creative team for *Hurricane Diane* includes music director Matthew Dean Marsh, scenic designer Rachel Hauck, costume designer Kaye Voyce, lighting designer Jen Schriever, and sound designer Bray Poor. The stage manager is Melanie J. Lisby. Tickets are available from (732) 345-1400 or by visiting tworivertheater.org.