

# Pussy Riot Play, Steven Dietz's ON CLOVER ROAD and More Set for Contemporary American Theater Festival's 2015 Season



The Contemporary American Theater Festival at Shepherd University has announced its newest quintet of plays to be presented this summer in rotating repertory. Ed Herendeen, the founder and producing director of the Theater Festival, has selected from the sea of scripts, five new plays from five celebrated playwrights: Johnna Adams, [Sheila Callaghan](#), [Steven Dietz](#), Barbara Hammond, and [Michael Weller](#).

With over 100 performances and exciting ancillary programming such as lectures, talk-backs, late night salons, and an all new 'Apprentice Showcase' - the weeks between July 5th and August 2nd provide a wide array of opportunities for audiences to

"thinktheater." The season will feature four world premieres and is bound to be exciting as this summer marks the Festival's 25th. Starting with opening night celebrations on July 10th and 11th, the season will host a handful of special events geared toward looking back at the Festival's successful history and looking forward to its ambitious future.

In reference to CATF's upcoming season and its significance, Herendeen says, "The Contemporary American Theater Festival is a work in progress. We are constantly changing and growing, refining our process and clarifying our vision. This season we celebrate 25 years of producing and developing new American theater - but this season is not about looking back. This season is about reigniting our ideals, values, goals, and mission. This season is about finding new ways to make our audiences laugh, dream, shiver, weep, and think...theater."

Matinee and evening performances are held Wednesday - Sunday throughout the Festival. Single ticket prices for the 2015 repertory: \$32-\$61. Discounted four- and five-show subscription packages (Rep Passes) also available, ranging from \$100-\$250. Additional ticket savings are available for military personnel (as part of the Blue Star Theater Program), students, seniors, patrons 30 & under, and West Virginia residents. Performance tickets can be purchased through the Theater Festival Box Office, which is open off-season Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., by calling 800-999-CATF (2283), or 24-hours a day online by visiting [www.catf.org/boxoffice](http://www.catf.org/boxoffice).

## THE 2015 PLAYS & PLAYWRIGHTS:

### **WORLD BUILDERS**

A Love Story by Johnna Adams ? WORLD PREMIERE

Directed by Nicole A. Watson ?Sponsored by Katha Kissman

Max and Whitney live in their own, imaginary worlds. They are both patients in a clinical trial experimenting with a new drug - a treatment that will cure them of their schizophrenic dreams and flights of fancy - that will make them functioning members of society. As the pills take effect their fantasies fade. And amidst their struggles to preserve their illusions they fall in love. Max and Whitney must choose between a love that is real and the worlds that they have built.

Johnna Adams is the 2011 Princess Grace Award winner and a finalist for the 2012 [Susan Smith Blackburn Prize](#). She returns to CATF after receiving a Steinberg/ATCA citation for the 2012 production of *Gidion's Knot*. Ms. Adams is a 2012 graduate of the Hunter College Playwriting MFA program, led by [Tina Howe](#). Her other works include *Sans Merci* and *Skinless*, which was developed at the 2012 MFA Playwrights' Workshop at the Kennedy Center.

### **EVERYTHING YOU TOUCH**

A Dark Comedy by [Sheila Callaghan](#)

Directed by [May Adrales](#)? Sponsored by Patricia Rissler and James Rogers

Victor is a ruthless 1970s fashion designer and a devotee of the "beauty-is-pain" aesthetic. Esme, his glamorous lover and muse, is pushed aside when an ordinary Midwestern woman, Louella, inspires Victor to make his artistry more accessible. A generation later, Jess, a self-loathing woman, wrestles her own family demons to find her way through the world of fashion that won't give her a second look. Flashing back and forth in time, *Everything You Touch* is a fierce, lushly written dark comedy that exposes the struggle to find an identity that is more than skin deep.

[Sheila Callaghan](#) is a [New Dramatists](#) fellow whose work has been produced and developed with Playwright's Horizons, [South Coast Repertory](#), Clubbed Thumb, The LARK, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Woolly Mammoth, and Rattlestick Playwright's Theatre, among others. In 2010, she was named one of *Variety* magazine's "10 Screenwriters to Watch." She is a recipient of the Princess Grace Award, the [Susan Smith Blackburn Award](#), the prestigious Whiting Award, and is a member of the Obie award winning playwrights' collective 13P.

### **ON CLOVER ROAD**

A Thriller by [Steven Dietz](#) ? WORLD PREMIERE

Directed by Ed Herendeen

Sponsored by Mina Goodrich and Lawrence Dean & Lisa and Paul Welsh

At an abandoned motel on a desolate American road, a distraught mother WAITS. Having hired an experienced but cruel private investigator, she believes she will be reunited with her runaway daughter. What happens instead-in this smart, harrowing, edge-of-your-seat thriller-is something that will shock her to the core. How far can you push the bonds of family? And how far will you go to bring them back?

[Steven Dietz](#) returns to CATF, which produced Yankee Tavern in 2009 and The Nina Variations in 1996. Mr. Dietz was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize for Last of the Boys and received the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays Award for Fiction. International productions have been seen across the globe, including Japan, where he received the Yomiuri Shimbun Award for his adaptation of Shusaku Endo's novel Silence. He is currently a professor of playwriting at the University of Texas at Austin.

## **WE ARE PUSSY RIOT**

A New Play Commission by Barbara Hammond | WORLD PREMIERE

Directed by Tea Alagi?? Commissioned and Sponsored by Jenny Ewing Allen

In February 2012, five young women walked into the Church of Christ the Savior in the center of Moscow and offered up a punk prayer to the Mother of God-"Virgin Mary, Chase Putin Away!" The young activists, who call themselves Pussy Riot, played and shouted for exactly 48 seconds before being dragged out of the church by security guards and sent home. That night they uploaded a video of their performance to YouTube, and within hours became enemies of both Church and State. The girls were arrested, tried, and sent to labor camps for hooliganism and inciting religious hatred. But unlike dissidents from Soviet times, the Western media machine took hold of the story and turned Pussy Riot into the greatest piece of performance art in Russian history. This is their story.

Hammond is a [New Dramatists](#) resident playwright and is currently under commission from both the [Royal Court Theatre](#) and the Contemporary American Theatre Festival. In the past few years, she has been a Seven Devils Theatre Conference playwright, a Yale Playwrights Festival mentor, an [Edward Albee](#) Foundation Fellow, a [Tyrone Guthrie](#) Centre resident and received the Helen Merrill Distinguished Playwright Award. Playlist: WE ARE PUSSY RIOT; Visible from Four States; The Eva Trilogy: Eva the Chaste, Enter the Roar and No Coast Road; Beyond the Pale; Summerland; Norman and Beatrice; Paper Tigers and a collection of three one-acts entitled New York in June. Clips, photos and reviews at [www.barbarahammond.com](http://www.barbarahammond.com).

# THE FULL CATASTROPHE

A Comedy by [Michael Weller](#) ? Based on the novel by David Carkeet ? WORLD PREMIERE

Directed by Ed Herendeen

Sponsored by Lynn and Dolores Shirley & Mina Goodrich and Lawrence Dean

Dr. Jeremy Cook has a problem. While he is a linguist (of moderate renown), he is also unemployed, broke, and haunted by the words of an old friend who says that basically, 'his timing sucks majorly.' In desperation, Cook accepts an offer from the enigmatic Roy Pillow to serve as part of a research experiment, living with a married couple as their relationship counsellor. However, Cook's lack of: a) experience b) understanding of love c) history of successful relationships d) common sense and e) instinct - guides this couple from a dysfunctional marriage toward the hilarious "full catastrophe."

[Michael Weller](#) is best known for his plays Moonchildren, Loose Ends, and Spoils of War. He also wrote the book for the musical Dr. Zhivago which recently opened on Broadway. He is the recipient of an Academy Award nomination, the N.A.A.C.P. Outstanding Contribution Award, the Critics Outer Circle Award, the Rockefeller Foundation Grant, as well as the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays Award. He serves as Supervising Mentor of The Mentor Project at [Cherry Lane Theatre](#). He returns to CATF after the 2009 production of Fifty Words which also played at the [MCC Theater](#) starring [Elizabeth Marvel](#) and [Norbert Leo Butz](#).