

Middletown, an uplifting and heartfelt new play opens at The Public Theatre!

After being closed due to COVID-19 for over 18 months, The Public Theatre reopens its doors with the uplifting and heartfelt new play *Middletown*, playing Oct 15 - 24. A wonderful combination of comedy and drama, *Middletown* celebrates life through the eyes of two couples who've been friends for 33 years. Starting with their children's first day of kindergarten, and continuing through shared dinners, vacations, heartbreaks and celebrations, these engaging couples reminisce and re-live the highs, lows and in-betweens of their shared experiences.

"*Middletown* is the perfect play for this moment in time", says director Janet Mitchko, "and a delightful antidote to the feeling of isolation that so many people have experienced during COVID-19. This play celebrates the connections we have with our friends and spouses and reminds us how the relationships we have with each other make the good times better and the hard times easier. Friends are the family we choose", says Mitchko, "and this is the perfect play to see with your friends."

The Public Theatre will be the first regional theatre to produce *Middletown*, which until now has been touring the country with former television stars in the roles. "When we first read this play we knew it would be the perfect fit for our audience", says Mitchko, "and we are grateful to be the first theatre to get the rights to produce it".

"We are also grateful to have assembled a fabulous group of actors, mostly Broadway veterans, who will bring this powerful story to life", says Mitchko. "*Middletown* was originally scheduled to appear in our 2019-20 season, and we're happy to have managed to hang onto our cast and finally share this funny, moving and uplifting production with our audience".



Craig Bockhorn, Joyce Cohen, Allison Briner Dardenne, Douglas Rees

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Taking place in Middletown, New Jersey, the couple of **Peg and Tom** will be played by **Joyce Cohen** and **Craig Bockhorn**. Joyce last appeared at The Public Theatre in *The Midvale High School 50th Reunion*, and *Humble Boy* and just finished shooting a Lifetime movie for the Christmas season. Aside from her extensive experience in regional theatres and on Broadway, you might recognize her from the television movie *High School Musical*. Craig has appeared on Broadway in *On Golden Pond*, *The Lonesome West* and *Prelude to a Kiss* as well as in The NY Public Theatre's Shakespeare in the Park production of *The Seagull*. The couple of **Dotty and Don** will be played by **Allison Briner Dardenne** and **Douglas Rees**. Alison appeared on Broadway in both *Bright Star* and *Mamma Mia!* as well as in several National Tours including *Follies*, *Titanic* and *Les Miserables*. Douglas previously appeared at The Public Theatre in *Under the Skin*. His extensive experience also includes roles in multiple Off-Broadway productions, regional theatres as well on *30 Rock* and *FBI*.

The set for *Middletown* will be designed by Amber Callahan, lights by Michael Reidy, costumes by Debra Susi and sound by John Morrison.

NEW THIS SEASON, The Public Theatre will also be offering tickets to a Video-On-Demand option to a performance of *Middletown* recorded in front of a live audience that you can watch from home beginning on Oct 19th.

The Public Theatre has taken its decision to resume live performances very seriously. The safety of everyone is our top priority, and we have recently upgraded our HVAC system with MERV filters for improved air-handling throughout the theatre that MEETS OR EXCEEDS ALL CDC GUIDELINES for air circulation and filtration. For everyone's protection we are REQUIRING: Proof of Vaccination OR a negative COVID-19 test within 48 hours of performance and masks must be worn while in the building.

Middletown is playing at The Public Theatre, Lewiston/Auburn's Professional Theatre, Oct 15- 24. Thurs-Sat at 7:30pm, Sun at 2pm with a Sat matinee on Oct 23 at 3pm. Tickets: \$25 Adults, \$22 groups. Tickets as well as Video on Demand tickets can be purchased online at thepublictheatre.org or by calling 782-3200. The Theatre is located at 31 Maple St. Lewiston.