

INTERROBANG

THEATRE PROJECT

presents
the Midwest premiere of

utility

By
Emily Schwend
Directed by
Georgette Verdin

New York City premiere production presented by The Amoralists
UTILITY is produced by special arrangement with THE GERSH AGENCY
- 41 Madison Avenue, 33rd Floor, New York, NY 10010 -

LIGHTING DESIGN

Michelle E. Benda

DIALECT COACH

Lindsay Bartlett

PROPERTIES DESIGN

Adam Borchers

SCENIC DESIGN

Kerry Chipman

MARKETING DIRECTOR

Nancy Payne

STAGE MANAGER

Jamie Kreppein

COSTUME DESIGN

Melissa Perkins

SOUND DESIGN

Erik Siegling

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Bryan Zoleta

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Richie Vavrina

PRESS RELATIONS

David Rosenberg



5779 N. Ridge Ave.
Chicago, IL 60660

Utility is the final production of Interrobang's 9th season: IDENTITY/CRISIS

Notes from Director, Georgette Verdin

RARE

UTILITY is a rare gem. I spend a lot of time reading plays and it isn't often such a piece comes along: beautifully-minimal, female-centric and oozing with the type of truth that is, quite frankly, painful at times. Actress Michelle Williams described writer and film director Kelly Reichardt's work as "38 things buried under the semblance of nothing," and I feel the same is true of Schwend's script. You'll see there's not much to hide behind here—palpable histories, desires and disappointments bubbling just beneath the surface are what make this play exquisite.

RELEVANT

Having an ordinary woman at the center of a play sadly still feels like an act of rebellion. There is nothing extraordinary about Amber's life, which is precisely why it's worth celebrating.

From a more birdseye view perspective, it's important to remember that in large swaths of our country, whether it be small towns desimated by dying industries or inner cities, the concept of identity is frustratingly wrapped up in the fight for basic survival needs. If we really want to shift the needle and get our country headed in a direction that feels inclusive, we'll have to reach out to the marginalized in all corners, across all cultures, and employ radical empathy.

RAW

This piece feels very personal to me. Not least of all because I grew up in Louisiana in circumstances not unlike the ones presented. And most of all because Amber reminds me so much of my own mother at that time. Only looking back now as an adult can I recognize all that she was up against—the considerations she juggled, the sacrifices she made and the inner strength she possessed that allowed her to keep it all moving forward. I'm grateful to Emily for writing a reality that isn't often depicted on stage, or at least not with such tenderness and humanity. Maybe this play will make **you** feel seen as it has me. And, to my mom: I see you.

TIME - Present
PLACE - East Texas

THERE WILL BE NO INTERMISSION

Cast

Amber Brynne Barnard
Jim Kevin D'Ambrosio
Laura Barbara Figgins
Chris Patrick TJ Kelly



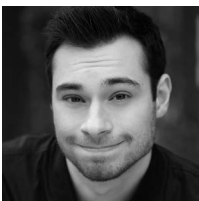
BRYNNE BARNARD (Amber), a proud ITP ensemble member, is thrilled to be playing Amber in the Season 9 production of *UTILITY*. This will be Brynne's second principal role with Interrobang, following her performance as Marion in Caryl Churchill's *OWNERS*. She is also elated to have worked for the last 8 years as an actress, assistant director, event coordinator, and text coach with the amazing group of artists at the Chicago Shakespeare Project. She sends so many thanks to Georgette and the rest of the ITP crew for this opportunity, and just as many thanks to her handsome partner in crime (Tom) and her incredible mentors, friends, and family for their unwavering support and line-running sessions.



KEVIN D'AMBROSIO (Jim) is excited for this opportunity with Interrobang Theatre Project. He recently appeared in the staged radio play of *MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET* (The Artistic Home). Other credits include: *AN OAK TREE!* (Red Theater); Chicago Voices Project (Tellin' Tales Theatre in association with the Lyric Opera of Chicago); *A TOUCH OF THE POET* (The Artistic Home); *THREE SISTERS* (Piven Theatre). As a storyteller, Kevin is a winner of The Moth StorySLAM. As a teacher, he created a personal narrative storytelling lab for detainees in Cook County Jail. At Piven Theatre, he helped establish a theatre games program for adults with developmental disabilities. He is a graduate of The ACADEMY at Black Box Acting. Follow him over social media: @kdaspeaker



BARBARA FIGGINS (Laura) is making her ITP debut. She is an ensemble member with Irish Theatre of Chicago where she most recently reprised her Jeff-nominated one-woman show *MY BRILLIANT DIVORCE ON 34TH STREET* at Notre Dame University. She has also been seen in *IN PIGEON HOUSE*, *THE SHADOW OF A GUNMAN*, *DANCING AT LUGHNASA*, *OUR FATHER*, *SCENES FROM THE BIG PICTURE*, *WAR* and *BOLD GIRLS*. Other credits: *White Lillie-Anne in BARBECUE* (Strawdog Theatre at Steppenwolf); *Ellie in SCAPEGOAT: OR WHY THE DEVIL ALWAYS LOVED US* (New Colony); *Pam in EXIT STRATEGY* (Jackalope Theatre); *Miss Tesman in HEDDA GABLER* (Writers Theatre); *THE AWAKE* (First Floor Theatre); *Polina in THE SEAGULL* (The Artistic Home); *THE HISTORY BOYS* (Timeline, Jeff Award Best Ensemble), *CHERRYWOOD* (Mary Arrchie).



PATRICK TJ KELLY (Chris) is thrilled to be making his Interrobang Theatre Project debut as Chris in their production of *UTILITY*. Patrick may have last been seen in *MASQUE MACABRE* (Strawdog Theater), *ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE* (Goodman), or *VR SORRY* (Rhino Fest) that he co-wrote and directed. Outside of acting Patrick is also a writer, educator, and a director for Lakeside Shakespeare's education program where he has been beyond grateful to spend his last three summers. Patrick is represented by Stewart Talent.



TY BONNEVILLE (u/s Amber) is very excited to be working with Interrobang for the first time. Ty is a graduate of Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, where she had been working with GreenStage and Seattle Musical Theatre among others. Ty is an actor, fight choreographer, playwright and aerialist. For information on upcoming work, visit TyBonneville.com.



DAVID STOBBE (u/s Chris, Jim), is a graduate from Columbia College, a co-founder of the Bittersweet Arts Co., and a master gardener. Recent credits include Rosencrantz in ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD at Metropolis Performing Arts Center, Reg in THE FULL MONTY at Theo Ubique, and Celeb-Jay in the premiere of FORSYTHIAN DWELLER'S CLUB, which performed in the Minneapolis Fringe Festival in summer 2018. This July, David will play Josh in the world premiere production of BURY ME with

Dandelion Theater, performing at Rivendell Theatre. Also around this time, his garden will be in full bloom. So call or message him for any herbs or vegetables. Love to his girlfriend aka his sack of potatoes.



JEAN MARIE KOON (u/s Laura) is very excited for this opportunity and grateful to Georgette for bringing her onboard. Last year at this time she was appearing as the suffragette leader Emmeline Pankhurst in THE GOOD FIGHT with Babes With Blades. She has also performed with Eclectic Full Contact Theatre, Idle Muse Theatre, Polarity Ensemble Theatre, Broken Nose Theatre, Pride Films and Plays, and Runcible Theatre. She has understudied for productions with Erasing The Distance, Piven Theatre Workshop,

Eclipse, The Gift, Theater Wit, Steep, and Jackalope theatres. Thanks to Rob for his loving support. In remembrance of Molly.

Creative Team



EMILY SCHWEND (Playwright) Schwend's plays include UTILITY (The Amoralists in New York City, Orange Tree Theatre in London, 2016 Yale Drama Series Award, 2017 IT Award for Outstanding Premiere Production of a Play), THE OTHER THING (Second Stage Theatre Uptown), TAKE ME BACK (Walkerspace), SOUTH OF SETTLING (Steppenwolf's Next Up Rep), and SPLINTERS (CUDC Source Festival). She was a 2016-2017 Radcliffe Institute Fellow at Harvard University and the inaugural 2014 Tow Foundation playwright-in-residence at Second Stage Theatre. Her work has

been developed at The New Group, Roundabout Theatre Company, ACT Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Partial Comfort Productions, Ars Nova, the Alliance Theatre, PlayPenn, and the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, among others, and she is a frequent contributor to Christine Jones's Theatre for One booth. She is the recipient of a Bogliasco Fellowship, a MacDowell Fellowship, the ACT New Play Award, the David Calicchio Emerging American Playwrights Prize, the Lecomte du Nouy Prize, and the Heideman Prize. Her work has been commissioned by the Studio Theatre in DC, the Ensemble Studio Theatre through the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and the Old Vic in London. She is a proud alumna of the playwriting programs at Juilliard and Tisch.



GEORGETTE VERDIN (Director/Artistic Director) has been working with ITP since 2014. She is also a freelance director, theater and speech educator and arts integration specialist. She was the founding theater teacher at Polaris Charter Academy, an Expeditionary Learning School in West Humboldt Park, where she taught full-time for eight years. Recent directing credits include Jeff recommended productions of GRACE and RECENT TRAGIC EVENTS by Craig Wright, the 2013 Yale Drama Series winner, STILL by (cont.)

Jen Silverman and Jeff Recommended TIME STANDS STILL (AstonRep). Georgette has also recently been seen assistant directing with Lookingglass Theatre, Facility Theatre and Goodman Theatre. She will be associate director of Mat Smart's World Premiere, EDEN PRARIE, 1971 at Raven Theatre in 2020 alongside director Henry Wishcamper and is slotted to direct a US and world premiere with ITP for their 10th season. Georgette holds a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Performance from McNeese State University in Lake Charles, LA and a Master in Directing from the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. For my mom.

LINDSAY BARTLETT (Dialect Coach) is thrilled to be coaching with Interrobang Theatre once again having coached for previous shows like GRACE, FOXFINDER, OWNERS, PITCH-FORK DISNEY, and TERMINUS. She has been coaching throughout Chicagoland for over 11 years. Some of her productions have included NIGHT AT ALACHUA COUNTY (WildClaw Theatre), PRISCILLA: QUEEN OF THE DESERT (Pride Films & Plays), THE BOTTLE TREE (Stage Left), DANCING AT LUGHNASA (Wheaton College), A PERFECT GANESH (Eclipse Theatre), FOG ISLAND (Filament Theatre), and MISS MARX: OR THE INVOLUNTARY SIDE OF LIVING (Strawdog Theatre), HISTORY BOYS (TimeLine Theatre), among many others. For a complete look at her previous shows head to www.lindsaybartlett.com.

CLAIRE BAUMAN (Assistant Director) is thrilled to return to ITP as assistant director after understudying in RECENT TRAGIC EVENTS. Drawing from over 15 years of acting and dancing experience, Claire is a director and choreographer in Chicago. She has directed for Rhinofest, Broken Nose Collective, and Chicago Theatre Marathon as well as produced her own pieces and events, including Making (the) Movement, a dance arts festival supporting Chicago organizations dedicated to combating sexual violence. She is an Artistic Associate with Walkabout Theatre and has participated in DirectorsLabChicago and the Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation Observership Program. Claire graduated from Vassar College.

MICHELLE E. BENDA (Lighting Designer) is thrilled to be designing her second show with Interrobang Theatre Project! She previously designed I CALL MY BROTHERS earlier this year. Lighting design credits include EVERYBODY (Brown Paper Box Co.), HAMLET (The Gift Theatre), THE GENTLEMAN CALLER (Raven Theatre), COLLAGE OF A DYSTOPIAN MIDWEST, FRANKENSTEIN, (Bower Theatre Ensemble), FAILURE: A LOVE STORY (Illinois Theatre), and CABARET (No Stakes Theater Project). She has assisted lighting designers at Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, and TimeLine Theatre Company. Michelle holds an MFA in Lighting Design and Technology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

ADAM BORCHERS (Properties Designer) is a scenic designer and properties artisan from Dayton, Ohio. Utility is his first production with ITP and he is thrilled to be here. His recent scenic design credits include GYPSY, THE CHRISTMAS PARADE, PERICLES: PRINCE OF TYRE, THE ADDAMS FAMILY, and BUNKERVILLE: A POST-APOCALYPTIC MUSICAL. Recent properties work includes: CINDERELLA (Prokofiev), OKLAHOMA!, INTO THE WOODS, WEST SIDE STORY, and CAROUSEL.

KERRY CHIPMAN (Scenic Designer) is a freelance scenic designer and the Assistant Professor of Scenic Design at Ball State University. Chicago designs: THE GOAT, OR WHO IS SYLVIA? with Interrobang, NO HOME FOR BEES with Collaboration Studios. New York designs (selected): THAT WHICH ISN'T and STRAYS at the Brick Theatre, CONEY at the New Ohio Theater, TIME IS THE MERCY OF ETERNITY at West End Theater, DEPARTURES and THE MOST WONDERFUL LOVE at Access Theater. Regional: Clarence Brown Theatre, Knoxville: THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR, LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, FLYIN' WEST, SPEECH AND DEBATE, and THE STORY OF OPAL; Children's Theatre of Charlotte: THE BORROWERS and PINKALICIOUS: THE MUSICAL. In addition to scenery, she also designs and creates masks for regional dance and theatre productions. She would like to thank Georgette and Interrobang Theatre Project for this wonderful opportunity. www.kerryleechipmandesign.com

BLAKE CORDELL (Master Electrician) This is Blake's second time working with Interrobang Theatre Project as master electrician. He has also worked as master electrician at theaters such as Adventure Stage Chicago, Pride, and Haven and has been an electrician with numerous others. He graduated from Kansas State University with a B.A. in theatre and a B.A. in music back in 2017 and has since been working freelance in Chicago. To find out more both about Blake's electrical work and Blake's audio work, visit blakecordell.com

JAMIE KREPPEIN (Stage Manager) is a multi-faceted theatre artist originally from Gurnee, Illinois. A recent graduate from Illinois Wesleyan University in Theatre Arts and English-Writing, Jamie is a director, stage manager, educator, and scenic artist. She is thrilled to be working on her first show with Interrobang Theatre Project. She recently served as Props Designer for THE RUSE OF MEDUSA at Facility Theatre, where she also started her Chicago theatre career as the ASM for PHOEBE IN WINTER. Jamie recently completed the Artistic/Education internship at Writers Theatre while being the Youth Performer Coordinator on the Polar Express Train Ride. Currently, you can find her doing props and scenic work at Chicago Children's Theatre, Steep Theatre Co., Warren Theatre, and more. Mostly, she's just trying to be 23 and a functional human being, so let her know if you have any tips.

MELISSA PERKINS (Costume Designer) is a freelance costume designer based in Chicago from Dallas, Texas. She is delighted to work with the good people of Interrobang once again for UTILITY. Previously at ITP she has designed THE GOAT: OR, WHO IS SYLVIA?, FOXFINDER, and worked as an assistant costume designer on STILL. When not designing, she frequently works as a design assistant at theaters such as Lookingglass Theatre Company, Writers Theatre, and the Waa-Mu Show at Northwestern University. You can see more examples of her work, designs and full resume at perkinscostumedesign.com.

ERIK SIEGLING (Sound Designer) is pleased to be sound designing his third show with Interrobang. He previously composed and designed for ITP's productions of GRACE and THE GOAT: OR, WHO IS SYLVIA?. He designed for The Comrads' production of WARRIOR CLASS, as well as several shows at Oakton Community College. He has also designed for Seattle Shakespeare Company. An accomplished actor as well, Erik has guest starred on the TV show Z NATION, has performed in theatres across the country, and has a B.A. degree in Theatre from Principia College.

MAX SPITZ (House Manager) is a proud member of the Northwestern Class of 2016, where he graduated with a B.A. in Theatre having dipped his feet in acting, directing, and set design. Since graduating he has been a part of 2nd Story as Communications Coordinator, as well as a producer and director. He is so grateful for the family they've created. He's so very excited to be a part of the ITP team as well!

RICHIE VAVRINA (Production Manager) is a production manager, scenic, and lighting designer. This is his third production with ITP, having worked as a lighting designer on both GRACE and THE GOAT, OR WHO IS SYLVIA? in 2017. His work has been seen in productions by Firebrand Theatre, Elgin Community College, Circle Theatre Company, among countless others. He works as a draftsman and render artist by day.

BRYAN ZOLETA (Technical Director) is a designer/fabricator by trade and has worked on projects ranging from museum exhibits, storefront displays and installations, to prop work for TV and film.

? denotes ensemble member

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Ensemble Members

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Shawn Galligan • Sarah Gise • Noël Huntzinger (artistic assoc.)
Christopher Aaron Knarr • Joe Lino • Matthew Nerber • Claire Yearman • Zoë Verdin

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Special Thanks

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