



For immediate release

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PHOTOS: INITIAL CAST HEADSHOTS

UGLY FACE THEATRE ANNOUNCES WORLD PREMIERE OF *OH, HONEY*

By Jeana Scotti

Directed by Carsen Joenk

Casting Includes Carmen Berkeley, Katherine Renee Cortez, Maia Karo, Jesse Pennington, Jamie Ragusa, and Mara Stephens

Performances Begin with a Preview Performance for Theatre and Service Industry Workers on Tuesday, September 17 and Run Through Saturday, September 28; Official Press Opening on Wednesday, 9/18

August 14, 2024 – Ugly Face Theatre (Jeana Scotti and Maia Karo, Co-artistic Directors, and Amelie Lyons, Associate Artistic Director) announced the world premiere of a new site-specific play, **OH, HONEY**, written by **Jeana Scotti** and directed by **Carsen Joenk**. Performances will begin at the Brooklyn restaurant, **Little Egg**, with a preview performance on Tuesday, September 17 and run through Saturday, September 28. The production officially opens on Wednesday, September 18.

Loosely based on the 2017 NY Times article about mothers of sons accused of sexual assault, playwright **Jeana Scotti** explores the relationship between server and guest as well as the manifestation of shame and guilt in her funny new play, **OH, HONEY**. Four women meet at a diner on the first Monday of every month to complain about Real Housewives, their dietary restrictions (there really need to be more gluten free options), their server (where are their drinks??), and their college sons' campus sexual assault allegations. **Carsen Joenk** directs this world premiere play about the instinct to protect our loved ones even when that can mean hurting others.

"Having worked in the restaurant industry for many years, the way servers are seen and treated has always fascinated me and most often a diner has no idea what a restaurant worker's identity or life is like outside of that role. I'm excited to explore this with an audience of diners in an actual restaurant space for **OH, HONEY**," shares playwright **Jeana Scotti**. "Restaurants are often a workplace for many creatives and I'm excited to showcase those talents throughout this production and put those that are often sidelined to the forefront."

The cast of **OH, HONEY** includes **Carmen Berkeley** (*Mari*), **Katherine Renee Cortez** (*Lu*), **Maia Karo** (*Vicki*), Jesse Pennington (Diner Guy/ Anthony), **Jamie Ragusa** (*Bianca*), and **Mara Stephens** (*Sarah*).

The production will include lighting design and sound design by **Attilio Rigotti**, and costume consultation by **Iliana Paris**. **Samantha Clarke** will be the production stage manager and **Ruth Gershberg** will be the stage manager.

"I've always been interested in contradictions, and how we hold them or struggle with them in ourselves, and in those we love," says co-producer and performer **Maia Karo**. "As an actor, this challenge is exceptionally exciting: to play a character that is so fiercely loyal, so dedicated to their version of reality, even as it comes up against their principles and starts to erode their idea of who they are in the world."

BIOS:

JEANA SCOTTI (*Playwright*) is a NYC based playwright, educator, and producer originally from Staten Island and currently living in Brooklyn. Her work has been developed with Clubbed Thumb, Dixon Place, The Tank, Fresh Ground Pepper, New Perspectives, The Bechdel Group, Access Theatre, Rutgers University, Fringe and Fur, and Theater for a New City. She is an alumna of Clubbed Thumb's 2021/2022 Early Career Writers' Group. Her plays include *oh, Honey* (Ugly Face Theatre, 2024) and *The Possessed Girls of St. Mary's* (NPC semi-finalist). She is a founding member of the collective, Ugly Face. She currently lectures at Purchase College and the Maggie Flanigan Studio, and teaches devising to youth theatre. MFA Playwriting, Rutgers Mason Gross. jeanascotti.com

CARSEN JOENK (*Director*) is a director // designer interested in the weird, wild, and unfamiliar. She is the co-artistic director of Rat Queen Theatre Company, a 23'/24' Clubbed Thumb Directing Fellow, and a founding member of the interactive media company, Sour Milk. Carsen is an alumna of the Roundabout Directors Group, Mercury Store Directing Lab, Wingspace Directing Mentorship, Oregon Shakespeare Festival Directing Assistantship, and National Alliance of Musical Theatre Directing Observership. She is also the co-creator of *Miss Atomic Power* (Yale Drama Series Prize runner-up and NPC finalist). She has developed and presented work with Colt Coeur, Rattlestick, Exponential Festival, Fresh Ground Pepper, EST, Gingold Theatrical Group, Ice Factory/New Ohio, La MaMa, Seattle University, Hunter College, and more. Her sound designs have been heard across theatre, film, and podcasts. www.carsen-joenk.com

CARMEN BERKELEY (*Mari*) is originally from Washington Heights and currently based in Brooklyn. Off Broadway credits include: *The Night of the Iguana* (La Femme Theatre Productions), *Our Dear Dead Drug Lord* (WP Theater/Second Stage). Regional: *Wintertime* (Berkeley Rep), *Our Town* (Barnstormers Theatre). She has also worked with New York Theatre Workshop, Manhattan Theatre Club, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Shakespeare's Globe, ArsNova, Playwrights Horizons, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, Page 73, Normal Ave, The Playwrights Realm, The Players Theatre and others. Film/TV: *Step Back*, *Doors Closing*; *Law and Order: SVU*. BFA: Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University.

MAIA KARO (*Vicki*) is the Co-founder/Co-Artistic Director of Ugly Face Theatre and a NYC based actor and educator who also writes, directs, and sings. Past collaborations include: Rattlestick, Bushwick Starr, The Brick, Clubbed Thumb, New Ohio Theatre, Target Margin, HERE, 3LD, Dixon Place, O'Neill Theater Center, LARK, Edinburgh Fringe, Moscow Art Theater (Russia), Shakespeare's Globe (London). TV/Film: *Blacklist* (NBC), *New York (YES./Dori Media)* Training: Yale University, Rutgers University MFA

KATHERINE RENEE CORTEZ (*Lu*) is thrilled to be returning to the stage in "oh, Honey" after taking an extended hiatus from acting to raise her three children. Stage performances include *The A-Train (Re) Plays* at Playwrights Horizons, *Alphabet City* at Metropolitan Playhouse, and *The Laramie Project* at Gallery Players, where she portrayed multiple roles. Katherine recently filmed a supporting role in the feature film "Trouble-in-Law," as well as a co-star role on a really fun, really big TV show she can't tell you about yet (or she'd get in trouble). Thank you to Jeana Scotti and Ugly Face for this wonderful play and this wonderful opportunity, and gratitude, always, to my family

MARA STEPHENS (*Sarah*) has an acting career spanning over 25 years. Mara has a background in Broadway (Original Titanic cast), off Broadway working with companies (Clubbed Thumb, American Place Theatre, Playwrights Horizons, Civilians, Soho Rep and NY Theater Workshop), Regional (Denver Center, Cleveland Playhouse, George Street Playhouse) and TV/Film (*Law & Order*, *High Maintenance*- HBO, *Everything's Trash*-HULU, *King of the Corner*). Mara originated the one person show traveling nationally for two years based on Lois Lowry's book, "The Giver" portraying 12 roles. Mara has also performed in London & Amsterdam with *Charlotte: Life or Theater* based on the life of Charlotta Salomon. Mara was in a play 24 years ago which changed her life providing her with the privilege to embrace ASL and the Deaf community. She is a mom to her two children (favorite and most challenging role to date), a daily yoga practitioner (500 hours certified) and a sign language interpreter.

JAMIE RAGUSA (*Bianca*) is a proud member of AEA and SAG-AFTRA and works across Theater, TV and Film. Jamie graduated from Maggie Flanigan's acting conservatory program under Charlie Sandlan. She has also studied with The Barrow Group under Lee Brock and Seth Barrish, and at The Lee Strasberg Institute. She holds a BA and MA from Point Park University. Recent credits include: NYC Theater- "HORSESHOE EMPIRE" written by Margo Hammond /directed by Scott Alan Evans; "FOREVER?" by Michael and Linda Teverbaugh, and "NOWHERE TO GO NIGHTS" by Christian Missonak. TV- *FBI* (CBS), *BULL* (CBS) FILM- Most notable: *Alvara* in indie short "Double Zero," *Sara* in indie short "The Rest Of My Life" for which she earned various acting accolades for these

performances. When not acting, she's a busy mom to two, and an Aussiedoodle. She is repped by ATN Entertainment. More information at: jamieragusa.com

JESSE PENNINGTON (*Diner Guy/ Anthony*) Uncle Vanya (Hunter Theater Project), A Raisin in the Sun; The Winter's Tale (Public Theater), Bootycandy, Rodney's Wife, Franny's Way (Playwrights Horizons), The Mountains Look Different (Mint), A General from America (TFANA), The False Servant (CSC), A Place at the Table (MCC). European Tour: Richard Nelson's The Apple Family Plays (Berlin, Brighton, Vienna). Regional: Old Globe, Guthrie, Huntington, A.C.T., Alley, Geffen Playhouse, Williamstown, New York Stage and Film, Actors Theater of Louisville, People's Light. Film: When Zachary Beaver Came to Town, American Gun. TV: Uncle Vanya. Awards: Obie, Lucille Lortel (nomination). Training: NYU Grad. Acting.

ABOUT UGLY FACE THEATRE:

UGLY FACE THEATRE has a mission of celebrating flaws and reclaiming what was once shameful, we seek to deconstruct hierarchy in theatre spaces, while creating new plays that center stories by women and non-binary voices in sometimes unconventional types of space that allow for the meeting of different communities. We also seek to create spaces for parents/caregivers to create and nurture happy meetings for new collaborations. uglyfacetheatre.com

TICKET INFORMATION

OH, HONEY begins performances at the restaurant, Little Egg (657 Washington Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11238), on Tuesday, September 17 and will run through Saturday, September 28, with an official press opening on Wednesday, September 18.

Tickets can be accessed by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/54xc6r7n>.

Ugly Face Theatre will offer \$25 tickets to the preview performance on Tuesday 9/17 for theatre and service industry workers. Regular performance schedule is Wednesday 9/18, Thursday 9/19, Friday 9/20, Thursday 9/26, Friday 9/27, and Saturday 9/28 at 7pm. All ticket purchases include a Little Egg mug of soup.

There are only 35 seats available per performance and all shows will have desserts from local vendors. Beer, wine, and coffee cocktails will be available for purchase. Select evenings will also include guest chefs **Patti Jackson** of **Delaware and Hudson** and **Evelyn Wang** of **Little Egg** serving curated diner style options.

The full performance calendar can be found at <https://uglyfacetheatre.com/oh-honey>.

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