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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FOR INFORMATION:
LIZ LISLE at 510-841-6500 x302
SHOTGUN PLAYERS

SHOTGUN PLAYERS PRESENT

Beowulf: A Thousand Years of Baggage

A Rock Opera

BY JASON CRAIG

DIRECTED BY ROD HIPSKIND

Created in collaboration with BANANA, BAG & BODICE

BERKELEY— Any story that survives the test of time will have a few battle scars. After 1,000 years of telling and retelling, who decides what the facts actually were? What was the story of Beowulf before it was written down and what is it now in the hands of the academics? Flawed heroes, sympathetic monsters and haughty professors collide as one of the most twisted stories in the literary cannon comes to life— with a live musical score! *Beowulf* opens **Friday, May 16th, and runs Thursday-Sunday through June 22nd at The Ashby Stage in Berkeley.**

Shotgun Players and collaborating company Banana, Bag and Bodice have gotten down to work inspecting this classic poem—adapting its powerful narrative to make a new play that is part homage and part parody. *Beowulf: A Thousand Years of Baggage* will breathe an operatic voice, allowing the original epic poem and the language of modern musical theater a uniquely outrageous platform on which to unite.

Some would say the old world character of Beowulf is a rugged warrior fighting for survival. Others would argue that he is fighting for the destruction of society. Is the great story a structurally pagan tale with Christian overtones or a Christian tale inspired by the book of Genesis? With so many contrary ideas, the only reasonable plan is to create a new version of Beowulf, one where each narrator battles to tell the story from their own perspective.

Banana, Bag & Bodice is an ensemble theatre company who work to redefine the traditional notion of performance through original texts and music. Jason Craig, playwright and founding member of Banana,

Bag & Bodice, says of the production: “What attracts me most about this classic text is how its poetry was born out of the oral tradition of story telling, and how the narrative may have been obscured and altered before it was finally written down. Similar to Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and countless other ancient poems, *Beowulf* and its narrative existed as many different variations as it was passed down through generations orally before being written down around 700AD. We’re creating an operatic piece using music, songs, and multi-media to explore how a story transforms in the telling.”

Dave Malloy, a composer and musician who has worked with theatres and artists all over the Bay Area has created a stunning original score for *Beowulf*. Dave Malloy has also served as music director for Shotgun Players productions of *Cabaret* and *Ragnarok*. Using music, Mr. Malloy will seek to subvert traditional expectations of the characters in *Beowulf*, and explore the tale instrumentally from multiple perspectives. The relationship – and development – between the oral tradition and the “final” written word is key for this original adaptation of *Beowulf*.

The production will be directed by Rod Hipkind, with music composed and performed by Dave Malloy. Set Design by Jason Craig, Costume Design by Kaibrina Sky Buck, Lighting Design by Miranda Hardy. Jahana Azodi will Stage Manage, and Mallory Catlett will Dramaturg.

The cast of *Beowulf* features Banana, Bag & Bodice company members Jason Craig and Jessica Jelliffe, as well as Chris Kuckenbaker (*The Skriker, As You Like It*), Anna Ishida (*Blood Wedding, Bright Ideas*), Cameron Gallaway and Shaye Troha. The band, led by Dave Malloy (*Cabaret, Ragnarok*) on prepared piano and other technology, features Shotgun Company member Daniel Bruno (*Cabaret, The Forest War, Mother Courage*) on percussion, Chris Broderick (*Three Musketeers, The Forest War*) on Clarinet, Andre Nigoghossian on Guitar & Jennifer Baker on Trombone.

CALENDAR LISTING

WHAT: Opera versus criticism in mead-soaked Scandinavia! Any story that survives the test of time will have a few battle scars. Flawed heroes, sympathetic monsters, and haughty professors collide as one of the most twisted stories in the literary cannon comes to life—with a live musical score! Shotgun Players and collaborating company Banana, Bag and Bodice have gotten down to work inspecting this classic poem and adapting its powerful narrative to make a rock opera that is part homage and part parody.

WHEN: Previews Wednesday, May 14, and Thursday, May 15, Opens Friday, May 16 and runs Thursday –Sunday through June 22. Thursday – Saturday performances at 8PM. All Sundays at 5PM.

WHERE: The Ashby Stage, 1901 Ashby Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94703

TICKET PRICES: Pay What You Can - \$25. The first week of performances, May 14 - 18 are Pay-What-You-Can at the door for general seats. For May 22 – June 22, Tickets are \$17 for Thursdays, \$22 for Fridays and Sundays, and \$25 for Saturdays. Reservations for all performances are strongly advised. For every performance there will be tickets released at the door. The waiting list for these tickets begins taking names one hour before the performance.

For more information go to www.shotgunplayers.org or call 510.841.6500

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