

THE HOUSE

THEATRE OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 24, 2013

CONTACT: Chelsea Keenan
Chelsea@thehousetheatre.com
773.769.3832

COMPOSER KEVIN O'DONNELL TAKES CENTER STAGE WITH BRAND NEW *PLOUGHED UNDER: AN AMERICAN SONGBOOK*

Nightclub design and 10 musicians enhance this theatrical concert of folk tales

Chicago, IL—The House Theatre of Chicago ventures into new territory, giving life to a concert-style telling of American folk and tall tales. Composer Kevin O'Donnell delves into our nation's early history illuminating stories often outside of the mainstream. The production begins performances April 19, 2013 at The Chopin Theatre (1543 W. Division St.) *Ploughed Under: An American Songbook* will open to the press on Sunday April 28 at 7:00pm and run through June 9.

RSVP for Press Night Sunday April 28 at 7:00pm to Chelsea@thehousetheatre.com

ABOUT THE PLAY

Kevin O'Donnell's enveloping, rich musical scores for The House have propelled the Sparrow to flight, Valentine to victory, and Houdini to battle Death. His original compositions now come front-and-center as The House weaves American folk stories and tall tales into a rich tapestry of all-original music. This theatrical concert is carefully focused on vocal and rhythmic dynamics, echoing the clarity and power of African and Native American folk music. Each song is a story unto itself, some familiar, some forgotten, connecting our musical roots to the churning of our early history.

This is **Company Member Kevin O'Donnell's** first time leading a new work for The House. Pairing new compositions with familiar folk tales and tall tales, O'Donnell remarks, "The point for me is to find a way to be proud without ignoring the horrible truths and contradictions of our history. I want to be proud of Central Park's beauty without ignoring the fact that we took this land from the Native Americans. I want to be proud of California's beauty without forgetting that the people of Mexico were once the native people of that state's southern half. And jazz music, often called the only truly American art form, would simply not exist if we had never had a slave trade."

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

PLOUGHED UNDER: AN AMERICAN SONGBOOK is conceived and composed by Kevin O'Donnell who also directs the production. O'Donnell is the recipient of numerous Jeff Awards for his work as a composer, musician, and music director, including *Valentine Victorious*, *The Sparrow*, *Rose and The Rime* and *The Nutcracker* with The House.

A cast of six actor-musicians is complemented by a four-piece band. Familiar guest artists appear in the cast, including **Abu Ansari** (*Death and Harry Houdini*, *Wilson Wants It All*), **Kevin Crowley** (*Wilson Wants It All*), **Carla Kessler** (*The Nutcracker*, 2010), and **Christine Mayland Perkins** (*The Nutcracker*, 2012). The cast is completed

with new voices **Alejandro Cordoba** and **Genevieve VenJohnson**. O'Donnell will lead the band each performance as percussionist along with **Company Member Maria McCullough** and her husband **Yavi Pechardo**. **Matt Martin** rounds out the band.

Company Member **Collette Pollard** transforms the Chopin Upstairs into a well-loved nightclub, complete with tables and bar. Company Member **Lee Keenan** designs lights to shape the shared space between audience and actors. Costume Designer **Mieka van der Ploeg** takes on her first lead designer role after several shows as a design associate and Costume Manager for The House. Co-Sound Designers **Joshua Horvath** and Company Member **Michael Griggs** team up to give these new songs the best possible support, and Dramaturgs **Dixie Belinda Uffelman** and **Chad Kenward** (both Company Members) lend their love of history to the project.

Join The House for our theatrical concert, *Ploughed Under: An American Songbook*.

LISTING INFORMATION

PLOUGHED UNDER: AN AMERICAN SONGBOOK

Conceived and Composed by Kevin O'Donnell
April 19 – June 9, 2013

PREVIEWS: April 19 - 27

PRESS OPENING: SUNDAY APRIL 28, 2013 at 7:00pm
Chopin Theatre, 1543 W Division St., Chicago
RSVP to Chelsea@thehousetheatre.com

REGULAR RUN: May 2 – June 9

SHOWTIMES: Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays at 8:00pm, Sundays at 7:00pm
LOCATION: The Chopin Theatre Upstairs Theatre (1543 W. Division St., Chicago, IL)

TICKETS: All tickets are \$25 at www.thehousetheatre.com or by phone at 773.769.3832, \$10 Student and Industry night-of tickets available at all performances. Tickets are now on sale.

ARTISTS

Featuring:

Actor-musicians and guest artists Abu Ansari, Alejandro Cordoba, Kevin Crowley, Carla Kessler, Christine Perkins, and Genevieve VenJohnson with musicians Company Members Kevin O'Donnell and Maria McCullough, with guest artists Yavi Pechardo and Matt Martin.

Production Team: Kevin O'Donnell (Composer/Director), Collette Pollard (Scenic), Lee Keenan (Lighting), Mieka van der Ploeg (Costumes), Michael Griggs and Joshua Horvath (Sound), Chad Kenward and Dixie Uffelman (Dramaturgy), Sarah Hoferlin (Stage Management).

ABOUT THE HOUSE THEATRE OF CHICAGO

The House is Chicago's premier home for original works of physical and spectacle storytelling. Founded and led by Artistic Director Nathan Allen and driven by an

interdisciplinary ensemble of Chicago's next generation of great storytellers, The House aims to become a laboratory and platform for the evolution of the American theatre as an inclusive and popular artform.

The House was founded in 2001 by a group of friends to explore connections between Community and Storytelling through a unique theatrical experience. In 2002 The House was hailed by the Chicago press as "The Next Big Thing." In early 2007, following dozens of world premiere productions, and national attention from *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, NPR, *Variety*, and *American Theatre Magazine*, The House achieved even greater success with "The Sparrow," which *Chicago Tribune* theater critic Chris Jones called, "Among the very best original theater pieces I've ever seen."

Since becoming eligible in 2004, The House has been nominated for 56 Joseph Jefferson Awards (19 wins) and became the first recipient of Broadway in Chicago's Emerging Theater Award in 2007. Now in its 11th year of original work, The House continues its mission to unite Chicago in the spirit of Community through amazing feats of Storytelling.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT www.THEHOUSETHEATRE.com