

1119 East Fwy
Houston, Texas 77002
Ph. 713-522-2723

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Contact:
Kirk Markley, Managing Director
kirk.markley@catastrophictheatre.com
713.522.2723, ext. 3

For immediate release:

**THE CATASTROPHIC THEATRE PRESENTS
THE WORLD PREMIERE OF THE PINE BY MICKLE MAHER**

"How does sorrow become beautiful? It takes a room. In a sad hotel."

The Pine opens Friday, September 27 and runs Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8 pm through October 19 at The Catastrophic Theatre, 1119 East Fwy, 77002.

All tickets Pay-What-You-Can

September 9, 2013 – Houston, Texas – The Catastrophic Theatre is pleased to announce the world premiere of *The Pine*, a new play by the author of past Catastrophic favorites *There is a Happiness That Morning Is*, *Spirits to Enforce*, and *The Strangerer*, **Mickle Maher**.

The play was commissioned by Catastrophic and is funded in part by a grant from **The MAP Fund**, the leading national funder of new works for the stage.

Set in the ghost of an old hotel, a way station between alive and dead, *The Pine* follows our sad hero Gordon as he attempts to rescue his girlfriend and piano teacher Danelle from a place of eternal grieving. Having lost Danelle to suicide one year prior Gordon attempts to follow in her footsteps only to find he is trapped in a magic hotel of infinite rooms, each more sorrowful than the last. His charge is to find Danelle and check them both out. The hotel has been magicked to defy death and provide a place of eternal grieving for those that have lost their greatest loves.

An extraordinary comic and a genuine heartbreaker, Maher draws from a variety of unlikely sources to create something much greater than the sum of its parts. *The Pine* counts among its influences Dante's *Inferno*, the poetry of Emily Dickinson, the graphic novels of Neil Gaiman, and the myth of Eurydice and Orpheus.

A fairy story or parlor tale in style, told entirely in verse, *The Pine* is populated by a middle-class nineteenth century hotel proprietor; a nine-foot tall, green bellhop; the knight Morris the Hesitant; demons, monsters, and countless lost souls; and Gordon's only friend in this hell, a common housefly.

A book club discussion of *The Unread Book*. A boy born of echoes. A song, haunting the hotel, that even angels would get wrong. Mysterious counterfeits of lost loves known as Deer Hearts.

The Pine is like a picture book; it is like a living, breathing graphic novel. It is a tale of a sad hotel with a happy ending in a place without end, a place that resides in the great waters and tiny waves of Lake Michigan.

Catastrophic Theatre artistic director Jason Nodler directs a cast of thirteen of Houston's finest actors: Troy Schulze, Miki Johnson, Amy Bruce, Greg Dean, Jeff Miller, George Brock, Abraham Zeus Zapata, Jessica Janes, Noel Bowers, John Dunn, Patricia Duran, Karina Pal-Montaña Bowers, and Shanon Adams. Fight direction by Leraldo Anzaldúa and Luke Fedell; Sets by Laura Fine Hawkes; lights by Kirk Markley and Dustin Tannahill; costumes by Tiffani Fuller; props by Jodi Bobrovsky; sound by Chris Bakos; stage management by Tawny Tidwell.

About Mickle Maher

Mickle Maher is a cofounder of Chicago's Theater Oobleck, and has been a playwright/adaptor/translator for 20 years. He has authored eight plays for Oobleck, including *The Strangerer* (funded by a grant from Creative Capital), *Spirits to Enforce*, and *The Hunchback Variations*. Other plays include *Cyrano* (translator) and *The Cabinet for Redmoon Theater*, and *Lady Madeline* for Steppenwolf Theatre Company. Maher's works have been produced throughout the country and in Europe. His children's book, *Master Stitchum and the Moon*, is published by Bollix Books. His plays are published by Hope and Nonthings. He is currently working with Redmoon's Frank Maugeri on a shadow/slide theater work about a very old Superman.

About The Catastrophic Theatre

The Catastrophic Theatre imagines, commissions, develops, and produces new work, with a pronounced emphasis on emotional experience, that encourages diverse interpretations and personal associations, through a focus on mystery, poetry and a considered preference for questions rather than answers. We challenge audiences and artists to rethink questions of form, style, and the value of art in our lives; examine the human experience in all its wild, myriad glories; and promote Houston's profile as a cultural arts destination.

All tickets to Catastrophic Theatre performances are Pay-What-You-Can.