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The Catastrophic Theatre Announces 2018-2019 Season

The new season includes two world premieres, the next installment in the series of highly popular avant-garde classics, and an unprecedented partnership with Austin-based Hyde Park Theatre and University of Houston School of Theatre & Dance

Houston, TX- The Catastrophic Theatre is proud to announce its 12th season of producing original work, world premieres, and rarely produced classics in Houston. The new five-play season kicks off with the avant-garde classic **CURSE OF THE STARVING CLASS** by Pulitzer Prize winner Sam Shepard, followed by the world premiere of **FIRST SUBURB** by resident playwright Chana Porter; the season continues with the Houston premiere of *New York Times* Critic's Pick **BOOTYCANDY** by Robert O'Hara, the world premiere of **TOAST** by groundbreaking director Brian Jucha, and finally a very exciting summer musical to be announced at a later time. Also included in the new season as a special off-season addition is a very limited run of an acclaimed production of Will Eno's **WAKEY, WAKEY** by Austin-based theatre company Hyde Park Theatre.

THE CATASTROPHIC THEATRE 2018-2019 SEASON

***CURSE OF THE STARVING CLASS* by Sam Shepard**

September 28 – October 21, 2018

The Tate family is in serious trouble. Parents Ella and Weston are cornered and feuding, each struggling at cross-purposes to unload the family's homestead and get out from under crushing debt. Meanwhile, their raucous and unpredictable teenage kids Emma and Wesley fight to scratch out an existence of their own. Winner of the 1977 Obie Award for Best New American play, *CURSE OF THE STARVING CLASS* balances a searing portrait of a rural, working class family in distress against savage dark comedy in Shepard's trademark style.

CURSE OF THE STARVING CLASS is the earliest of Shepard's renowned cycle of family tragicomedies, which also include fellow modern classics *BURIED CHILD* and *TRUE WEST*. Catastrophic company member Jeff Miller will direct. Miller previously directed *BURIED CHILD* in a 2016 Catastrophic production that made the *Chronicle's* shortlist of the best theatrical productions of the year, and *CURSE OF THE STARVING CLASS* promises to be an equally striking, can't-miss experience.

***FIRST SUBURB* by Chana Porter**

World Premiere

November 16 – December 19, 2018

Five preteens teeter on the brink of adolescence when a shocking and violent act interrupts their insular world of personal struggles and triumphs. Catastrophic favorite Chana Porter takes us back to the early '90s

in a suburban planned community, the first of its kind in America, for a subversive, mischievous, and oh-so-familiar (or is it?) look at childhood.

The world premiere of *FIRST SUBURB* follows last season's world premiere of Porter's *LEAP AND THE NET WILL APPEAR*, about which the *Houston Press* noted: "Porter's type of risky storytelling is, well.... like a lion's roar in an all too often timid jungle." *FIRST SUBURB* will be directed by Catastrophic company member Kyle Sturdivant, who previously directed *EVENING AT THE TALK HOUSE*, *EVERYTHING WILL BE DIFFERENT: A BRIEF HISTORY OF HELEN OF TROY* and *MIDDLETOWN*, among others.

***Bootycandy* by Robert O'Hara**

***Houston Premiere ***

February 15 – March 10, 2019

Robert O'Hara's semi-autobiographical and wildly subversive comedy tells the story of Sutter, a young gay black man on an outrageous odyssey through his childhood home, his church, dive bars, motel rooms, and his grandmother's nursing home. At times poignant, shocking, hilarious, and wise, *BOOTYCANDY* is a kaleidoscope of scenes, sermons, sketches, and daring meta-theatrics. Winner of the 2015 Lambda Literary Award for Best LGBT Drama and a *New York Times* Critic's Pick. Directed by first-time Catastrophic collaborator Vance Johnson, whose production of *PASSING STRANGE* for Standing Room Only Productions won the 2017 *Houston Press* Theatre Award for Best Musical.

***TOAST* by Brian Jucha created in collaboration with The Catastrophic Theatre**

World Premiere

April 12 – May 5, 2019

TOAST takes audiences on a raucous and mind-bending journey through Dante's Nine Circles of Hell! This original, collectively-realized work brings together eight members of Catastrophic's acting company with groundbreaking director Brian Jucha, a key collaborator of Catastrophic's predecessor company, Infernal Bridegroom Productions. *TOAST* completes a trilogy that started with 1997's *LAST RITES* and 2002's *WE HAVE SOME PLANES*, two legendary Infernal Bridegroom productions, the latter of which landed Jucha and the company on the cover of *American Theatre* magazine.

TOAST marks the New York-based Jucha's long-awaited return to Houston after seventeen years. *American Theatre* called *WE HAVE SOME PLANES* "Darkly hilarious and compelling," and noted "Jucha and the extraordinary Infernal Bridegroom Company have given us a way to open our eyes." The *Houston Press* raved about *LAST RITES*, calling it "ridiculously funny and mesmerizingly thoughtful." Jucha's longtime collaborator, internationally renowned lighting designer Roma Flowers, will join the production team, as she did for both *LAST RITES* and *WE HAVE SOME PLANES*.

A new summer musical yet to be announced! More information coming soon!

Special Off-season Addition

***Wakey, Wakey* by Will Eno**

***Houston Premiere ***

January 24 – February 3, 2019

In an unprecedented partnership, The Catastrophic Theatre and University of Houston School of Theatre & Dance will co-present a visiting production of Will Eno's *WAKEY, WAKEY*, created by Hyde Park Theatre (HPT) in Austin, TX. Through its lead character, a dying man named Guy, the play grapples inventively and honestly with the human impulse to keep expressing ourselves, even as we near our inevitable end. The result is joyous, surprising, frequently funny, and ultimately rapturous. *WAKEY, WAKEY* offers a kind of spiritual bookend to Eno's Pulitzer Prize-nominated one-man show *THOM PAIN (BASED ON NOTHING)*, staged

by Catastrophic in a 2016 production that the *Houston Press* called “a searing lesson in how life is messy and wonderful and sucks from time to time.”

HPT Artistic Director Ken Webster directs the show and stars as Guy alongside co-star Rebecca Robinson. *WAKEY, WAKEY* is presented in a limited run at the José Quintero Theatre at the University of Houston School of Theatre & Dance.

TICKET AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Season Tickets can be ordered online (catastrophictheatre.com or matchouston.org) or by phone (713-521-4533). Subscribers can purchase a 5 - play package containing *Curse of the Starving Class*, *First Suburb*, *BooTycandy*, *Toast*, and a new summer musical yet to be announced; prices range from \$175 - \$210.

Subscribers may purchase priority tickets for the season add-on production *Wakey, Wakey* before going on sale to the general public.

All singles tickets are Pay-What-You-Can. Suggested ticket price is \$40.

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ABOUT THE CATASTROPHIC THEATRE

Formed in 2007 by Jason Nodler, Tamarie Cooper, The Catastrophic Theatre is Houston’s premier creator and producer of new work for the theatre. The nationally acclaimed organization is dedicated to developing productions that foster a meaningful exchange between artists and audiences. A recipient of two prestigious MAP Fund commissioning grants, the theatre has gained an international reputation for its original pieces, which have attracted audiences from across the United States, Europe, and Australia. Artistic director Jason Nodler is the recipient of a NEA/MacDowell Colony fellowship, a Houston Press Mastermind award, and an unsolicited and unrestricted creative grant from Creative Capital. Awarded Best Season, Best Actor, and Best Artistic Director by the Houston Press Theatre Awards in 2017, The Catastrophic Theatre offers Houston audiences a repertoire of challenging, innovative work that can't be seen anywhere else in the country.

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