



September 4, 2018  
For immediate release

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## The Catastrophic Theatre presents Sam Shepard's timely avant-garde classic *Curse of the Starving Class*

The Catastrophic Theatre begins its 2018-2019 Season by celebrating the influential playwright on the one-year anniversary of his death

(Houston, TX) On the heels of the one year anniversary of Sam Shepard's passing, The Catastrophic Theatre kicks off its new season with Shepard's CURSE OF THE STARVING CLASS, the Pulitzer Prize winning playwright's searing portrait of a rural, working class family. The production begins September 28 and runs through October 21. Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased at [matchouston.org](http://matchouston.org) or by calling the Box Office at 713-521-4533. Performances are Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00 p.m., and Sundays at 2:30 p.m.

*"I'm going into crime. It's the only thing that pays these days."*

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. Violent creditors are at the door, swindlers are all around, and everyone is hungry, both physically and spiritually. Gazing into the empty refrigerator becomes for them an absurdist ritual.

At turns harrowing, hilarious, ritualistic, and surreal, CURSE OF THE STARVING CLASS digs deeply into the psyche of a desperate family fighting to stay alive. Its portrayal of the ambitions and heartache of the working poor is as affecting now as it was more than forty years ago. Winner of the 1977 Obie Award for Best New American play, it is the earliest of Shepard's renowned cycle of family tragicomedies, which also include fellow modern classics BURIED CHILD and TRUE WEST. CURSE OF THE STARVING CLASS is directed by long-time Catastrophic company member Jeff Miller, who previously directed BURIED CHILD in a 2016 Catastrophic production that the *Houston Chronicle* called "quietly devastating" with "the pull of a whisper and the force of a cannon." That production 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.

CURSE OF THE STARVING CLASS features a powerhouse cast of Houston favorites: Sarah Becker, Ronnie Blaine, Luis Galindo, Jayden Key, Courtney Lomelo, Troy Schulze, Charlie Scott, Kyle Sturdivant, and Abraham Zeus Zapata. Set by Ryan McGettigan, costumes by Macy Lyne, lights by Mitchell Cronin, sound by Tim Thomson, and props by Lauren Davis. Jacey Little and Kyle Sturdivant assistant direct.

### **ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT**

Sam Shepard ranks as one of America's most celebrated dramatists. He wrote nearly 50 plays and his work has been produced across the nation, in venues ranging from Greenwich Village coffee shops to regional, professional and community theatres, from college campuses to commercial Broadway houses. His plays are regularly anthologized, and theatre professors teach Sam Shepard as a canonical American author. Outside of his stage work, he achieved fame as an actor, writer, and director in the Film industry. With a career that spanned nearly 40 years, Sam Shepard gained the critical regard, media attention, and iconic status enjoyed

by only a rare few in American theatre. Throughout his career Shepard amassed numerous grants, prizes, fellowships, and awards, including the Cannes Palme d'Or and the Pulitzer Prize.

### **JOIN THE CONVERSATION**

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### **2018-2019 SEASON**

Season tickets can be ordered online (matchouston.org OR catastrophictheatre.com) or by phone (713-521-4533). Subscribers can purchase a 5-play package containing *Curse of the Starving Class*, *First Suburb*, *Butycandy*, *Toast*, and *Speeding Motorcycle*; prices range from \$175-\$210.

### **ABOUT THE CATASTROPHIC THEATRE**

Formed in 2007 by Jason Nodler and 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.

**TICKET INFORMATION:** All performances are held at The Midtown Arts Theatre Center (MATCH). Tickets can be ordered online (catastrophictheatre.com OR matchouston.org) or by phone (713-521-4533). ALL PERFORMANCES ARE PAY-WHAT-YOU-CAN.

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