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**American Repertory Theater presents
A Banana Bag & Bodice SongPlay
BEOWULF — A Thousand Years of Baggage
Text by Jason Craig • Music by Dave Malloy •
Co-Directed by Rod Hipskind & Mallory Catlett
April 16 – May 5
OBERON**

Cambridge, Mass — The American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University, under the Artistic Direction of Diane Paulus, presents A Banana Bag & Bodice SongPlay **BEOWULF — A Thousand Years of Baggage**, text by Jason Craig, music by Dave Malloy, co-directed by Rod Hipskind & Mallory Catlett. It begins performances on April 16 at OBERON, 2 Arrow Street, Cambridge and runs through May 5. The production will be available for press viewing on April 17 at 7:30pm.

First seen in Cambridge at OBERON in 2010 and later as part of the 2011 Emerging America Festival, **BEOWULF** went on to win the Edinburg Festival Fringe Herald Angel Award. Digging into the roots of the original epic poem, this club-style "SongPlay" harkens back to the raw and rowdy style of storytelling in the old Scandinavian mead halls – with a passion for fierce poetry and a pint of thick beer. Monsters and professors collide in a blood-soaked frenzy as the epic poem is transformed into a defiantly raucous dissertation on art and violence. Featuring a 7-piece band, including dueling trombones, bass clarinet, accordion and saw, with music composed by Dave Malloy, from last season's sold-out **Three Pianos**.

"A thrashing, bashing rendition of the 'Beowulf' story." — *The New York Times*

"Hilarious...clever...has the makings of a cult fave." — *Variety*

"...joyfully raucous and silly...brings out the power and the color of the legend..."
— *The New Yorker*

"This is such fun. Smart, thoughtful and tuneful, a terrific band, witty lyrics, severed limbs, a goldfish bowl full of blood and a fantastic ensemble who use the space with swaggering

confidence... boldly theatrical, full of bravado and even as it playfully tears the narrative apart, it never forgets that it has a story to tell." — *The Guardian*

Founded in San Francisco in 1999 by Co-Artistic Directors Jason Craig and Jessica Jelliffe and now based in New York City, **Banana Bag & Bodice** is a critically acclaimed, ensemble-based company that creates unique theatre-shows with an emphasis on original text and composed music. Some of their productions are large in scope while others are more intimate portraits of every day life, yet each one embraces the awkwardness of being a human. BB&B's provocative and compelling shows have entertained audiences nationally and internationally, each one mixing music and text with satire, mischief and whim. They are known for their intricate, intimate and complex design of sets, sound and costume that "trashes even its big budget competition" (*Time Out New York*). BB&B productions include *Sandwich*, a musical about eating animals (2003); *The Young War*, a panel discussion on the death of love (2004); *The Sewers*, a futuristic costume drama (2006); *The Fall & Rise of The Rising Fallen*, the post-punk exploits of a band that finds faith on an oilrig (2007); and *Space//Space*, a claustrophobic container tale (2010).

Beowulf – A Thousand Years of Baggage received its World Premiere with The Shotgun Players, Berkeley, CA in May, 2008; Patrick Dooley, Artistic Director / Elizabeth Lisle, Managing Director

The company includes **Jen Baker** (Trombone), **Rick Burkhardt** (Performer/Music Director), **Lisa Rafaela Clair** (Performer), **Jason Craig** (Performer), **Anna Ishida** (Performer), **Jessica Jelliffe** (Performer), **Sam Kulik** (Guitar), **Mario J. Maggio** (Clarinet/Bass Clarinet), **Brian McCorkle** (Performer), **Blake Newman** (Bass), **Andy Strain** (Trombone), **Shaye Troha** (Performer), and **Peter Wise** (Drums). Lighting Design is by **Miranda Hardy** and Sound Design by **Charles Shell**.

About the creative team:

Rick Burkhardt (Performer/Music Director) was seen at the A.R.T. as one of the creators and performers of the Obie-Award winning **Three Pianos** (A.R.T.'s 2011/12 Season). He is an award winning composer, songwriter, and playwright; his original chamber music, theatre, and text pieces have been performed by dozens of ensembles in over forty US cities, as well as in Europe, Mexico, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. He is a founding member of the Nonsense Company, a touring experimental music/theater trio, and the songwriter and accordionist for the Prince Myshkins, a political cabaret/folk duo whose songs have been performed and recorded by a wide variety of musicians across the US.

Mallory Catlett (Co-Director/Dramaturg) has been working with Banana Bag & Bodice since 2005. She is also a founding member of Latitude 14 whose multi-media work *Red Fly/Blue Bottle & Tinder* premiered at HERE Arts Center NYC has toured to the Noorderzon Festival, EMPAC & The Exit Festival. She is the Artistic Director of Restless Productions NYC, dedicated to producing on and off-site reconstructions of the classical repertoire. Currently developing a site-specific production of *R ii*, and *Vanya*, which will premiere at the Chocolate Factory in 2013. She is also collaborating with Aaron Landsman and Jim Findlay on *City Council Meeting*, which is being developed and will premiere at HERE Arts Center NYC in 2013 and will also have local productions in Houston, Phoenix, San Francisco, and Detroit.

Jason Craig (Playwright/Performer) is Co-Founder/Co-Artistic Director of Banana Bag & Bodice for which he is a writer, performer and set designer/technical director; his work with the company has won him awards nationally and internationally. His adaptation of *Beowulf*

was commissioned by, and received its world premiere with Shotgun Players in Berkeley CA and played at The Ashby Stages, Berkeley Rep, and Abrons Arts Center. And received the Will Glickman Award for Best New play in the Bay Area. Other awards include Best New Production 2006 at The Dublin Fringe for *The Sewers*. As a performer, he has worked with such companies as gALE gATES et al, foolsFURY, Misery/Loves Company, Inverse, Radiohole, The Exit Theatre and Shotgun Players.

Miranda Hardy (Lighting Design) is a visual artist and light designer now based in Portland, Oregon. Her work with light has been for theater, opera, dance, live music, museum and corporate events. She is a member of the performance by design collective TENT, has company affiliations with Banana Bag & Bodice and Latitude 14 as well as being a co-founder of tinyelephant, a studio dedicated to the performing object.

Rod Hipkind (Co-Director) is a freelance photo stylist, art director, actor, and director. His ensemble collaborations with Banana Bag & Bodice include *The Young War*, *The Sewers*, and *The Fall & Rise of The Rising Fallen*. As a company member of foolsFury he directed *The Turn of the Screw* and *Twelfth Night*, and played the roles of Michael Majeski in Don DeLillo's *Valparaiso* and Lorko Levic in the U.S. premiere of *The Devil on all Sides*. As artistic director of the now defunct underground ensemble Wit's End, he directed Eric Overmeyer's *On the Verge* and adapted George Buchner's *Woyzeck*, touring from San Francisco to Montreal in 1998. He created the scenic design for the West Coast premiere of Charles Mee's *Gone for Crowded Fire Theater Company* and for Mugwumpin's 2010 premiere of *And I Need That. This is All I Need*.

Jessica Jelliffe (Performer) is Co-Founder/Co-Artistic Director of Banana Bag & Bodice. She has been collaborating on and performing in each of their productions since 1999. Additional roles for the company include design, direction, company management and production management. Additional performing credits include, *Shadows* (Hoi Polloi, NYC), *Oh What War* and *As You Like It* (Restless Productions NYC), *Valparaiso*, *Attempts On Her Life*, and *Jacques and His Master* (foolsFURY, SF), *History of the World Pt IV* (gALE gATES et al, NY), and *Gogol: a clown-opera* (Exit Theater, SF).

Dave Malloy (Composer) is one of the creators and performers of ***Three Pianos***, presented by the A.R.T. in 2011. He is a composer/performer/sound designer/musical director/pianist, winner of an OBIE Award, Glickman Award and Jonathan Larson Grant, a recipient of the 2009 NEA/TCG Career Development Program for Theatre Directors and Designers, and the 2011 composer-in-residence at Ars Nova, where he developed a new opera, *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*, based on Tolstoy's *War & Peace*. He has written the music for six full-length musicals, most recently *Beardo*, a Russian-ballet inspired retelling of the Rasputin myth including a string quintet and a 40-piece choir, written by Jason Craig and presented by the Shotgun Players in Berkeley, CA; and *Ten Red Hen's Clown Bible*, a gypsy-jazz infused telling of biblical stories from Genesis to Revelation told through clowns, winning "Best Play of the Year" and "Best Music of the Year" from the East Bay Express.

Tickets for ***BEOWULF — A Thousand Years of Baggage*** start at \$25 and are on sale now by calling 617-547-8300 or by visiting americanrepertorytheater.org/events/show/beowulf-thousand-years-baggage.

Production photos of ***BEOWULF*** are available for download at the same site; Click on GALLERY.

The 2012-13 Season will conclude with The Hypocrites' **Pirates of Penzance**, directed by Sean Graney, Loeb Drama Center (May 10-June 2).

The American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University is dedicated to expanding the boundaries of theater. Winner of the 2012 Tony Award for Best Musical Revival for its production of **The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess**, the A.R.T. is a leading force in the American theater, producing groundbreaking work in Cambridge and beyond. The A.R.T. was founded in 1980 by Robert Brustein, who served as Artistic Director until 2002, when he was succeeded by Robert Woodruff. In 2008, Diane Paulus became the A.R.T.'s Artistic Director. The A.R.T. is the recipient of numerous other awards including the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theater, the Pulitzer Prize, and many Elliot Norton and I.R.N.E. Awards. Its recent premiere production of **Death and The Powers: The Robots' Opera** was a 2012 Pulitzer Prize finalist.

During its 32-year history, the A.R.T. has welcomed many major American and international theater artists, presenting a diverse repertoire that includes premieres of American plays, bold reinterpretations of classical texts and provocative new music theater productions. The A.R.T. has performed throughout the U.S. and worldwide in 21 cities in 16 countries on four continents. The A.R.T. is also a training ground for young artists. The Theater's artistic staff teaches undergraduate classes in acting, directing, dramatic literature, dramaturgy, voice, and design at Harvard University. In 1987, the A.R.T. founded the Institute for Advanced Theater Training at Harvard University. A two-year, five-semester M.F.A. graduate program that operates in conjunction with the Moscow Art Theater School, the Institute provides world-class professional training in acting, dramaturgy and voice.

Since becoming Artistic Director, Diane Paulus has enhanced the A.R.T.'s core mission to expand the boundaries of theater by continuing to transform the ways in which work is developed, programmed, produced and contextualized, always including the audience as a partner. Productions such as **Sleep No More, The Donkey Show, Gatz, The Blue Flower, Prometheus Bound, The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess, Pippin**, and **Wild Swans** have engaged audiences in unique theatrical experiences. The A.R.T.'s club theater, OBERON, which Paulus calls a second stage for the 21st century, has become an incubator for local and emerging artists, and has also attracted national attention for its innovative programming model.

The Loeb Drama Center, located at 64 Brattle Street, Harvard Square, Cambridge, is fully accessible. ASL interpreted and audio described performances are available at select productions. Visit americanrepertorytheater.org/access for more information.

For further information call 617-547-8300 or visit americanrepertorytheater.org