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**A.R.T. and OBERON
present
an epic reading of
BEOWULF
on Thursday, April 25 @ OBERON at 12 noon**

Cambridge, Mass — The American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University, and OBERON will host an epic reading of **Beowulf** in the original Old English — beginning at 12 noon, and preceding the evening performance of the 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.

Under the leadership of Harvard English Department Fellow **Steven Rozenski** and Wellesley College English professor **Matthew Sergi**, scholars, students, and fans of medieval literature will be able to participate in a live reading of the epic poem **Beowulf** — over drinks, as it was meant to be done. Over a thousand years before **Beowulf - A Thousand Years of Baggage**, Anglo-Saxon poets (called scop) composed and performed this four-hour epic poem orally, performing it for their lords and friends in mead halls much like **Beowulf**'s Heorot, in the earliest form of English:

"Hwæt! We Gardena in geardagum, þeodcyninga, þrym gefrunon, hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon."

The reading is free and open to the general public. Participants are welcome to attend for as long as they wish, or stay for the whole epic, or, if familiar with Old English, sign up to read a passage. Volunteer guest readers already include an array of accomplished medieval scholars, including **Beowulf** specialist **Dan Donoghue** (Harvard). Translations will be made available for newer readers; on breaks, our scholars will field questions about the poem and about the medieval history and culture behind **Beowulf**. To sign up for your favorite passage in advance, email Matthew Sergi at msergi@wellesley.edu, or sign up at OBERON at the event. Doors

open at 11:45am for the 12pm start, event runs from 12pm to 5pm. Audience should feel free to come and go as needed throughout the event.

Steven Rozenski, a scholar of late-medieval English, German, and Dutch mysticism and devotional literature, earned his Ph.D. in English from Harvard in 2012; he received a B.A. from Northwestern in 2002 and an M.Th. from the University of Glasgow in 2003. He has studied in Germany as a Fulbright scholar and conducted research in Italy, England, and Belgium. Currently a Harvard College Fellow, teaching early English poetry and drama, he is at work on a book entitled *Wisdom's Journey: Continental Mysticism and Devotional Mobility in Trans-Reformation England*.

Matthew Sergi specializes in medieval English performance, with a growing interest in the History of the English Language. His research toward his current book project, *Play Texts and Public Practice in the Chester Cycle: c. 1421-1607*, was awarded the Medieval Academy's 2008 Schallek Grant and a number of other honors. He has published in the US and UK, where his first article, "Festive Piety: Food and Drink at Chester," earned him the 2012 Barbara D. Palmer Award for Best New Essay in Early Drama Archives Research. Currently an Assistant Professor of English at Wellesley College, Matt will move north this fall to become an Assistant Professor of Early English Drama at the University of Toronto. Matt is also an actor: you may recognize him from A.R.T.'s production of *The Lily's Revenge* last fall.

First seen in Cambridge at OBERON in 2010 and later as part of the 2011 Emerging America Festival, ***Beowulf – A Thousand Years of Baggage*** 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***.

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

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.

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.

OBERON is located at 2 Arrow Street at the corner of Mass Ave. in Harvard Square. Visit www.cluboberon.com for more information.

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