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SoBe Arts Presents the World Premiere of

HAMLET

Soundtheater/Opera

Music and Libretto by Carson Kievman

Based on *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* by William Shakespeare

Friday, February 24, through Sunday, March 11, 2012

Little Stage Theater at SoBe Arts, 2100 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach

MIAMI BEACH, FL – SoBe Institute of the Arts presents the World Premiere of Carson Kievman's *HAMLET Soundtheater/Opera* in the Little Stage Theater on Miami Beach. This provocative, sophisticated, and radically re-imagined musical setting of Shakespeare's masterpiece was the final commission by legendary producer Joseph Papp ("A Chorus Line," "Hair," etc.) for the New York Shakespeare Festival / Public Theater. Due to Papp's tragic passing soon after the work was completed, *HAMLET* remained unperformed, until now.

"I worked on *HAMLET Soundtheater/Opera* with Papp for four years, and his intention was to produce it at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park," Kievman remembers. The loss of Papp affected the composer deeply. A main theme of *HAMLET* is, painfully and ironically, the death of fathers, and during Kievman's years of preparing the libretto and working on the score, several other important mentors and father figures in his life passed away, including Florida Philharmonic's General Director Joseph Leavitt, visionary composers Luigi Nono and Olivier Messiaen, and Kievman's own father, Michael. Kievman continues, "... so I placed it in my desk drawer, and there it remained for 21 years, until now."

HAMLET Soundtheater/Opera is interwoven with spiritual and sexual conflicts, it challenges boundary lines, and is multi-dimensional in its cultural and musical reference points. Pulsing with collective zeitgeist and new shapes, the chilling vocals spiral beyond the confines of language to articulate emotional truths behind literal meaning.

Conducted by celebrated New York opera conductor John Yaffé, lighting by award-winning designer Robert Perry (<http://sobearts.org/ROBERTPERRY.html>), *HAMLET Soundtheater /Opera* is being performed by a top-flight cast of 13 singers from Miami and New York including:

- Expressive and critically-acclaimed lyric baritone Kenneth Mattice as Hamlet
<http://sobearts.org/KENNETHMATTICE.html>
- Unique and versatile Meagan Brus as Ophelia
<http://sobearts.org/MEAGANBRUS.html>
- Highly praised bass Michael Douglas Jones as Claudius and Ghost of Hamlet's Father
<http://sobearts.org/MICHAELDOUGLASJONES.html>
- Internationally trained Finnish soprano Danielle Krause as Gertrude
<http://sobearts.org/DANIELLEKRAUSE.html>
- Recording artist and actor Richard Cassell as Polonius
<http://sobearts.org/RICHARDCASSELL.html>
- Rising young tenor Justin John Moniz as Horatio
<http://sobearts.org/JUSTINJOHNMONIZ.html>

Also rounding out the *dramatis personae* are Jeffrey Wienand (Laertes), Enrique Estrada (Rosencrantz), David Schnell (Guildenstern), Jillian Staffiera (the Player Queen), Kunya Rowley (Marcellus), Enrique Coizeau (Cornelius) and John Cabrali (Fortinbras).

Kievman states, "My intention was and is to create a *HAMLET* with the highest impact to contemporary audiences primarily with actions and gripping music, while maintaining a clear respect for Shakespeare's genius. This *HAMLET* takes place as a 'medieval carnival' visits Elsinore Castle. The sense of Elsinore being on the border (and shore) of Denmark will hopefully evoke the excitement of mystery and instability caused by the constant questioning of what lies just across the border. As Hamlet confronts his fellow characters, a merry-go-round, a house of horrors and a house of mirrors are brought to mind."

"Carson Kievman is a composer of extremely original music, which is rare"
Olivier Messiaen, composer

*"I never thought it could be done - you have done the impossible...
enhanced Shakespeare's words."*
Joseph Papp, producer

"...But that won't stop Kievman from writing for the rest of the world. He spends part of each day composing the last scenes of HAMLET. He has promised Papp he'll finish the opera by April 23, Shakespeare's birthday. The premiere production is slated for next season in New York. Remarkably, Kievman is setting the original and problematic old English text to music. Though he has done a little condensing, it is essentially a complete, faithful HAMLET. But the music, with its often aggressive, rockish vocal writing and minimalist-flavored rhythmic pulses, and the staging, which will be wildly visual, might have startled the Danish prince."
Tim Smith, Sun-Sentinel, Sunday, April 2, 1989 (Mr. Smith is now music writer for The Baltimore Sun.)

The birth of this compelling new work, the perfect Miami winter weather, the beautiful setting, and excellent acoustics of this intimate South Beach venue, all promise to make this event a once-in-a-lifetime experience. [For schedules and ticket information, call 305.674.9220 or go to www.sobearts.org.](http://www.sobearts.org)

About Carson Kievman, composer (www.carsonkievman.com):

For nearly 40 years, Carson Kievman has been creating music and theater works in performing arts centers and festivals around the world. Kievman has written nine full-length operas, five symphonies, numerous other music-theater and orchestral works and a variety of chamber ensembles and multimedia compositions.

Kievman has been Composer and/or Director-in-Residence for the Tanglewood Music Festival, The New York Shakespeare Festival, the Eugene O'Neill Opera/Music-Theater Conference, Florida Philharmonic Orchestra and the Darmstadt Summer Music Festival, among others. He has received commissions and awards for his work from the prestigious Donaueschingen Festival, The National Endowment for the Arts, the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs, the American Music Center, Tanglewood, Alte Stiftung Boswil, BMI, Gaudeamus Music Week, I.S.C.M, Janet A. Hooker Charitable Trust, the Fromm Foundation at Harvard, the Pennsylvania Ballet Theater, the Darmstadt Ferienkürse für Neue Musik, 4th International Composer's Festival Zurich, the American Opera Theater, the Rockefeller Foundation and New York's Joseph Papp Public Theater.

His works have been performed worldwide including several international tours of his multimedia production *Multinationals & the Heavens*, and a critically acclaimed retrospective of his music-theater works at the Nationaltheater Mannheim (Germany). His *Symphony No. 2(42)*, commissioned by James Judd and the Florida Philharmonic, was recorded by the Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra-Katowice and the Polish Radio Choir of Krakow and released by New Albion Records in 1996 to

universal acclaim and solidified Kievman's place among the finest living composers. Other CD projects include *The Temporary and Tentative Extended Piano*, David Arden pianist, released in 2000 on CRI Records and *Symphony No. 3 (Hurricane)* conducted by Delta David Gier, released in 2002 on Mystery Park Arts Records. His work *Henry Eighth Harvest* was commissioned for the opening night concert of the 2000 European Expo on Nature & Technology and premiered in Hanover, Germany. *Dear John*, the first movement from his *Chamber Symphony No. 1(628)*, was commissioned in 2004 for the Collegiate Chamber Orchestra at the oldest school in America, founded in 1628. His works have been performed in over 36 countries around the world.

Born in Los Angeles, California, Carson Kievman holds a Ph.D. from Princeton University and an MFA from California Institute of the Arts, where he studied with the distinguished composer Earle Brown. He is the founder and Executive Artistic Director of SoBe Institute of the Arts, a world-class independent non-profit organization which provides high-level arts instruction to community and professionals alike, as well as unique and compelling concerts and productions at its historic facility in the CANDO district of Miami Beach.

About John Yaffé, conductor (www.johnyaffe.com):

Conductor John Yaffé was recently named Music Director of the New York Contemporary Players, a new chamber orchestra devoted to the music of the 20th and 21st centuries. He recently led the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra on their tour of the United States, and has led the Colorado Springs Symphony, Staten Island Symphony, the Warsaw Philharmonic (at the Warsaw Autumn Contemporary Music Festival), the San Antonio Symphony, the Chattanooga Symphony, the Chattanooga Opera, the Walla Walla Symphony and the Turkish State Opera.

Early in his career, Yaffé served as apprentice conductor for the New York City Opera and the Washington DC National Opera. Then he moved to Europe, where he spent ten years as Répétiteur and Conductor in several German opera houses, served as Music Director of the Stuttgarter Operettentheater and was a widely-traveled symphonic guest conductor.

In 1989, Joseph Leavitt brought Yaffé back to the USA to conductor the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra as its Resident Conductor. During his tenure, Yaffé conducted over 175 performances to critical acclaim.

Most recently, he has served as Music Director of New York Lyric Opera Theatre (2009-10), the orchestra of New York's prestigious 92nd Street Y (1996-2009), Encompass New Opera Theatre (1996-2008), Centre Symphony (1999-2004), as a principal guest conductor at the Mannes College of Music (1996-2006), and as Co-Director of the Orchestral and Chamber Music Program of the Tanglewood Institute.

About SoBe Institute of the Arts:

SoBe Institute of the Arts, a nonprofit organization, promotes excellence, creativity, and accessibility of the arts through performance events and arts instruction of the highest quality, in music and related artistic disciplines. Since its founding six years ago, SoBe Arts has established a unique arts complex in the historic Carl Fisher Clubhouse and adjoining Little Stage Theater, located in a park-like setting between the Miami Beach Botanical Gardens and the Miami City Ballet.

The 2011/12 season is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Arts Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners, the City of Miami Beach, the Cultural Arts Council of Miami Beach, the Leroy Schecter Foundation, the Firestone Family Foundation, the Audrey Love Charitable Trust, The J.A. & H.G. Woodruff Jr. Charitable Trust and the Horowitz Family Foundation.

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