

NEWS RELEASE

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Boojum! Nonsense, Truth, and Lewis Carroll

**Caffeine Theatre and Chicago Opera Vanguard present
a fun-filled romp through the looking glass and into the mind of Lewis Carroll
at the Chicago DCA Storefront Theater
November 16 – December 19, 2010**

Caffeine Theatre and Chicago Opera Vanguard, in association with Chicago DCA Theater, present the United States premiere of ***Boojum! Nonsense, Truth, and Lewis Carroll***. The production, featuring a book, lyrics, and music by Martin Wesley-Smith and Peter Wesley-Smith, comes to Chicago DCA's Storefront Theater at 66 E. Randolph Street, from November 16 to December 19, 2010. Members of the press are invited to the opening performance on Thursday, November 18, at 7:30 pm. Playwrights and composers Martin Wesley-Smith and Peter Wesley-Smith will be in Chicago from Australia for the opening night.

"For the Snark was a Boojum, you see," sets the stage for this fun-filled romp through the mind of writer Lewis Carroll. Part existential musical theatre and part fantasy adventure story, this riff on Carroll's epic poem "The Hunting of the Snark" follows a motley crew of eccentrics (including Alice) as they set out to capture a mysterious and elusive creature known as the Snark. Examining the reputation of Lewis Carroll (famed "Alice in Wonderland" author) and the psychological profile of the Rev. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (the man behind Carroll's pseudonym), their hunting expedition turns up rare glimpses into the life and legacy of an Anglican deacon, his most famous literary creations, and the real life little girl that inspired them all.

Billed as a full-length work of "choral nonsense theatre" for soloists, choir, piano & percussion, ***Boojum!*** is an imaginative evening of genre-jumping musical treats: operatic solos compete with Victorian music hall ditties, Broadway showstoppers, Renaissance part song, and doo-wop ballads. Although hailed by critics and audiences alike when it premiered in Sydney, Australia in 1986, ***Boojum!*** has never received much notice outside of its native country... until now.

Performances of ***Boojum! Nonsense, Truth, and Lewis Carroll*** are on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings at 7:30 pm. and Sunday afternoons at 3 pm. There is no performance on Thursday, November 25, due to the Thanksgiving holiday, but an additional matinee performance will take place on Saturday, November 27, at 2 pm. Post-show discussions with playwrights Martin Wesley-Smith and Peter Wesley-Smith will follow the performances on Saturday, November 20, and Sunday, November 21. An additional post-show discussion with the cast and crew will follow the performance on Thursday, December 2.

Tickets are \$25 for general admission and \$15 for students and seniors. The preview performances on November 16 and 17 cost \$10. Discounts are available for Chicago Cultural Center Mosaic Members, theater industry affiliates, military personnel, ADA companions, and large groups. All tickets are available by calling 312.742.TIXS (8497), visiting www.dcatheater.org, or stopping by the DCA Box Office in the Chicago Cultural Center at 78 E. Washington Street, open Tuesday through Saturday, noon to 6 pm and Sundays, noon to 4 pm. When available, tickets go on sale one hour before each performance at the Storefront Theater.

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Cast and Production Team

The cast features Alex Balestrieri, Kevin Bishop, Marielle de Rocca-Serra, Laura Deger, Kevin Grubb, Stephen Rader, Michael Reyes, Sara Sevigny, Heather Townsend, and Jeremy Trager.

Jimmy McDermott directs the performance, with musical directors Andra Velis Simon and Chicago Opera Vanguard Associate Myron Silberstein. Dramaturgy is by Caffeine Theatre Associate Artistic Director and Resident Dramaturg Daniel Smith, musical dramaturgy by Chicago Opera Vanguard Artistic Director Eric Reda, and choreography by Natalja Aicardi. Marianna Cszasz designed the set, with costumes by Chicago Opera Vanguard Associate Philip Dawkins, lighting by Caffeine Theatre Artistic Associate Casey Diers, and projection by Justin Meredith. Stage manager is Micah Trapp, technical director is Eric Sisco, and producers are Caffeine Theatre Managing Director Jason Beck and Chicago Opera Vanguard Managing Director Dan Cox.

Caffeine Theatre mines the poetic tradition to explore social questions. In bringing language-intense, idea-driven works to the stage, Caffeine renews poetry's place in public life and brings to light buried theatrical treasures. The company's productions include *Like the Moon Behind the Clouds* at Chicago DCA's Studio Theater, the Jeff Committee recommended productions of *Translations* and *Wild Nights with Emily*, and *Under Milk Wood* which premiered at DCA's Storefront Theater and was reprised at Theater on the Lake. Caffeine Theatre also organizes a successful series of readings and Coffeehouse Discussion Forums at local bookstores, coffee shops, and cultural institutions.

Chicago Opera Vanguard (COV) designs staged music experiences for progressive audiences. Since its founding in 2007, COV has staged the Chicago premieres of *Orpheus and Euridice* by Ricky Ian Gordon, *Greek* by Mark-Anthony Turnage, *No Exit* by Andy Vores, *Reagan's Children* by Eric Reda and commissioned dozens of new songs for the Chicago AIDS Quilt Songbook. COV was acknowledged in the Chicago Reader's Best of 2010 issue as the company making "the best effort to keep opera a living art form."

Special Events

In association with the production, Caffeine Theatre, Chicago Opera Vanguard, and Chicago DCA Theater present:

Lewis Carroll Coffeehouse

Monday, November 29, at 7-8:30 pm

Storefront Theater, 66 E. Randolph

FREE, Reservations encouraged at 312.742.TIXS (8497), or at www.dcatheater.org

Caffeine Theatre and Chicago Opera Vanguard bring together local and international performers, writers, composers and choreographers to celebrate and respond to Lewis Carroll's work. Winning entries of "Old Father William's Frabjous and Curious Poetry Contest" will be performed. Refreshments will be provided.

The Storefront Theater and the Studio Theater, its companion theater located in the Chicago Cultural Center at 78 E. Washington Street, comprise Chicago DCA Theater, an anchor of the downtown theater district. Chicago DCA Theater offers downtown audiences an off-Loop theater experience with an exciting look at the vibrant emerging theater companies that call Chicago home. Proposals for creative and innovative productions for the July to December 2011 season are being accepted now through October 15, 2010.

Discounted parking is available at Wabash Randolph Self Park at 20 E. Randolph. Patrons can receive the \$10 rate by validating their ticket at the Storefront Theater box office.

For more information about Caffeine Theatre and Chicago Opera Vanguard's ***Boojum! Nonsense, Truth, and Lewis Carroll*** and Chicago DCA Theater, call 312.742.TIXS (8497) or visit www.dcatheater.org. The enhanced website features more about DCA Theater performances and programs, including a blog, photo galleries, and visitor information. More information on Caffeine Theatre is available at www.caffeinetheatre.com and on Chicago Opera Vanguard at www.chicagovanguard.org.

The Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs is dedicated to promoting an ongoing celebration of the arts and supporting the people who create and sustain them.

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