



For Immediate Release
April 9, 2017

Contact: In-Fin Tuan, 651-292-4323 x106
cell: 651-998-4011; email: pr@historytheatre.com

History Theatre is proud to present
Sweet Land, the musical
A poignant, lyrical celebration of land, love premieres April 29, 2017

SAINT PAUL, MN – History Theatre presents ***Sweet Land the musical*** written by Perrin Post and Laurie Flanigan Hegge, lyrics by Laurie Flanigan Hegge, music by Dina Maccabee and directed by Perrin Post. This moving new musical, premiering April 29-May 28, 2017, will explore the American immigrant experience set under cathedral skies and against an unforgiving landscape of prejudice and mistrust.

It's 1920. Inge Altenberg journeys to America to marry a bachelor farmer, sight unseen. But in the wake of World War I, Inge's German heritage turns her new neighbors against the match. The determined young immigrant and her stoic farmer fight for their lives, facing their own misgivings and the harshness of an unforgiving land. A lyrical celebration of hard-won independence and a reflection of generations past, *Sweet Land the musical* reminds us of who we are – and where we came from.

When Lars Torvik's grandmother Inge dies in 2004, he is faced with a decision – to sell the family farm on which she lived since 1920, or cling to a legacy of the land. Seeking advice, he turns to the memory of Inge and the stories that she has passed on to him.

Based from the film by Ali Selim and Will Weaver's short story "A Gravestone Made of Wheat," *Sweet Land* was a critically acclaimed independent film that tells a universal story of love and discovery. Selim's film about Scandinavian immigrant farmers reminded Post of the stories she had heard from her Finnish grandparents. Post who also directs the musical recalls being so touched by the movie that she wrote a note to Selim who shared it with Weaver. "I still don't know why they chose me except that I was passionate about it and really cared about this simple and quiet story."

"Their union was more than a piece of paper. It was much more about the love in your heart. This musical gives us the opportunity to hear her thoughts. A musical will stop, take a moment in time and elaborate, giving us a brilliant opportunity to really listen to the story," shares Ann Michels, who plays Inge. Dina Maccabee's lush and haunting music helps to transform the sweeping fields of Southern Minnesota farm country into a reflective symbol for memory, family and history.

The cast features **Ann Michels, Robert Berdahl, Michael Gruber, Jon Hegge, Tinia Moulder, Norah Long, Jim Ramlet, Matt Riehle, Colleen Bertsch, and Randall Davidson**. Orchestra will feature **Colleen Bertsch, Randall Davidson, Josh Ackerley, Jason Hansen and Dylan Younger**. Design team includes **Paula Post** (costumes), **Erica Zaffarano** (set), **Mike Grogan** (lighting), **C. Andrew Mayer** (sound), and **Lee Christiansen** (properties), **Robert Elhai** (Music Arranger) and **Joe Chvala** (choreography).

Sweet Land the musical runs April 29-May 28. For more information, visit www.historytheatre.com.

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Creative Team

Sweet Land the musical (production)

Perrin Post, Playwright/Director

Perrin Post (Bookwriter/Director): After seven years and many workshops (with Buffalo Gal Productions, Nautilus Music-Theater, and the History Theatre) Ms. Post is thrilled to premiere *Sweet Land, the Musical* at the History Theatre! As producer/director: *Broadway's Legendary Ladies* (Ordway McKnight Theater, Loring Playhouse, thirteen-state tour), *The Spitfire Grill* (Loring Playhouse, Jon Hassler Theater), *Zombies From the Beyond* (Bryant Lake Bowl), *Vixens; Martinis, Girls & Guns; Monsters, Witches & Freaks* (Loring Playhouse), *Ten Years Later* (Hopkins House), *Working, The Sound of Music, Jesus Christ Superstar, Once Upon a Mattress* (Lake Harriet Players). She conceived *Hormel Girls*, a new musical which premiered at the History Theatre in 2007, created and directed the opening numbers for the Ivey Awards from 2005 to 2011, and was a 2015 Minnesota Artists Initiative Grant recipient.

www.buffalogalproductions.com / www.sweetlandthemusical.com

Laurie Flanigan Hegge, Playwright/Lyricist

Laurie is a playwright, lyricist, and actor. Plays at History Theatre: *Hormel Girls* (book & lyrics), *20 Days to Find a Wife* (book & lyrics), *Tales Along the Minnesota Trail* (book & lyrics, a commission for the MN Zoo.) Other work includes *Loose Lips Sink Ships* (book & lyrics with co-writer Jacinda Duffin) and *See Jane Vote* (book & lyrics) for Northern Sky Theater in Door County, Wisconsin. She was most recently seen onstage in the *Diary of Anne Frank* at Park Square Theatre and at History Theatre in *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story*, *Radio Man*, and *Baby Case*. Laurie is the Twin Cities Regional Representative for the Dramatists Guild of America.

Dina Maccabee, Composer

Dina Maccabee is a composer, songwriter, and violinist/violist who works in variety of styles, from traditional American string music to contemporary experimental composition. She was a founding member of Real Vocal String Quartet and company composer for Berkeley's Just Theater, and she has performed internationally with Julia Holter, Vienna Teng, Feist, and many others. Current projects include her songwriting duo Ramon & Jessica's original, staged a cappella musical storybook for children based on text by Gertrude Stein, and a solo performance project of songs for viola, voice, and electronics.

Ann Michels, Inge

Ann Michels (AEA) is a Minneapolis-based performer who's worked extensively throughout the community in theaters such as: Guthrie Theater, Chanhassen Dinner Theaters, Ordway, Old Log, Children's Theater, Torch Theater, Jungle, Theater Latte Da, Nautilus Music Theater, Illusion, Buffalo Gals, History Theater, Orchestra Hall, Outward Spiral, Jon Hassler Theater, North Star Opera and Theater de la Jeune Lune. She's also a longtime member of The George Maurer Jazz Group. Favorite roles include Mary Poppins, in *Mary Poppins*, Yitzhak in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, Dot/Marie in *Sunday in the Park with George*, and Adlonza in *Man of La Mancha*.

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Sweet Land the musical

(See page 3-4 for complete performance calendar listing and special events).

Opens: Saturday, April 29, 2017 Closes: Sunday, May 28, 2017

TICKETS:

Adults: **\$37-\$52**; Seniors (60+ years): **\$35-\$50**. Adults (Under 30): **\$30** (offer good by phone only); Students (college ID): **\$15** (offer good by phone only); Children (up to 18): **\$10**.

Discount rates are available for groups of 10 or more. Call 651-292-4320 or groups@historytheatre.com

History Theatre Box Office at 651-292-4323 or www.historytheatre.com/tickets/

Location: History Theatre, 30 East 10th Street, St. Paul, MN 55101

For directions and parking information visit: http://www.historytheatre.com/directions_and_parking/

PLAY DESCRIPTION:

Sweet Land the Musical is the heartfelt story of a young German woman who travels to America to marry a bachelor farmer in the wake of World War I, braving a small town's intolerance and forging a new life under Minnesota's majestic skies

Production Photos are available by request. Email pr@historytheatre.com

About History Theatre

Since 1978, History Theatre has been one of the nation's most prolific incubators of original plays. In recent years, History Theatre has staged new works by Jeffrey Hatcher, Lee Blessing, Melanie Marnich, Craig Wright, Kim Hines, Dorie Baizley, John Olive, Kira Obolensky, and more. From the celebratory *Wellstone!* to the dark, complex *Piece of the Rope* about Minnesota's first public execution and the hilarious *Glensheen: The Musical* about an infamous Minnesota murder, History Theatre has moved Minnesotans to rediscover, relive, and respect every piece of their history. More than 200,000 students have connected with history through matinee performances and theatre arts residencies led by History Theatre actor/teachers.

Accessibility

History Theatre is equipped with an FM hearing enhancement system. We offer ASL interpreted and Audio Described performances. We have complimentary wheelchairs for those patrons who need extra assistance into the building. The handicap-accessible entrance is on Cedar St. Just inside the entrance is an elevator that will take patrons to the theatre level. Patrons are asked to indicate any special needs that when ordering tickets.

Sweet Land the musical

Performance Schedule, April 29-May 28, 2017

Location: 30 E 10th Street, St. Paul MN 55101

Box Office phone: 651-292-4323 **Website:** www.historytheatre.com

Thursday, April 27	PREVIEW	7:30 p.m.
Friday, April 28	PREVIEW	7:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 29		
Pre-show Reception (music by Skalmusik, folk music of Scandinavia)		6:30 p.m.
OPENING		7:30 p.m.
Post-show Reception		9:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 30		2:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m.
<i>Afterthoughts: Short Story Inspiration</i>		
<i>Guest: Will Weaver, author</i>		
Thursday, May 4		10:00 a.m. 7:30 p.m.
Friday, May 5		7:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 6		2:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, May 7		2:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m.
<i>Afterthoughts: Anti-German Sentiment</i>		
Thursday, May 11		10:00 a.m. 7:30 p.m.
Friday, May 12		7:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 13		2:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, May 14		2:00 p.m. ASL/AD 4:00 p.m.
<i>Afterthoughts: From Page to Stage</i>		
Thursday, May 18		10:00 a.m. 7:30 p.m.
Friday, May 19		7:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 20		7:30 p.m. OC
Sunday, May 21		2:00 p.m. OC 4:00 p.m.
<i>Afterthoughts: Protecting Immigrant Rights</i>		
Thursday, May 25		10:00 a.m. 7:30 p.m.
Friday, May 26		7:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 27		7:30 p.m.
Sunday, May 28	CLOSING	2:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m.
<i>Afterthoughts: TBA</i>		

AD/ASL = Audio Description & American Sign Language interpreted performance
OC = Open Captioning

Sweet Land the musical **Special Events**

Saturday, April 29, 6:30pm-7:15pm: Skalmusik, Folk music of Scandinavia
Opening Night Pre-Show Reception

Go Behind the Scenes: Sweet Land, the musical

Sunday Brunch May 7, 11am-1pm

Public Kitchen + Bar, 229 6th St, St. Paul.

\$55 brunch; \$85 brunch + 2pm performance of Sweet Land, the musical

Reserve your seat for an intimate conversation with the creators of *Sweet Land the musical* Perrin Post and Laurie Flanigan Hegge and Will Weaver, author of "A Gravestone Made of Wheat." Join us for brunch and then come see Sunday matinee.

Alle Herzlich Willkommen! All Welcome!

Thursday, May 18, 6-8pm. Germanic-American Institute, 301 Summit Ave, St. Paul

\$5; Note: space not handicap accessible.

Enjoy happy half hour, enjoy a short film and hear firsthand stories of anti-German sentiment from those who lived in Minnesota during WWI and WWII.

Honoring Our Ancestors

Bring your family photos and stories to add to our *Sweet Land the musical* family tree. For more information, call box office at 651-292-4323.

Afterthoughts (April 30, May 7, 14, 21, 28)

A lively post-show talk after Sunday 2 p.m. matinees.

April 30 – Short story inspiration

Will Weaver, author "A Gravestone Made of Wheat"

May 7 – Anti-German Sentiment, 20th Century

Dave Bredemus, historian, Germanic-American Institute

May 14 – From Page to Stage

Perrin Post and Laurie Flanigan Hegge, musical creators

May 21 – Protecting Immigrant Rights

John Keller, Immigrant Law Center of MN; Sara Brenes, Advocates of Human Rights; Catalina Morales de Sanchez, ISIAAH organizer

May 28 - TBA

Note: All Afterthought discussions are subject to change.

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