



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan 8, 2026

Contact: Erica Skarohlid,
Marketing and Communication Director
email: eskarohlid@historytheatre.com
phone: 651-461-4329

History Theatre Presents WHOOSH! by Andrew Erskine Wheeler

ST. PAUL, MN — History Theatre is proud to present the expansion of WHOOSH! The Civil War Mythology of Michael Hickey and His Perilous Precipitation Over St. Anthony Falls. Written and performed by Twin Cities artist Andrew Erskine Wheeler and directed by Allison Vincent. This evocative solo performance transforms a celebrated family legend into a profound exploration of heroism and the complicated layers of Minnesota history. WHOOSH! runs Jan. 29 – Feb. 22; tickets are on sale now.

Step back in time with WHOOSH! a powerful ghost story that breathes life into Minnesota's complex past. Follow Michael Hickey, an Irish immigrant, lumberjack, and wounded Civil War veteran, on a haunting journey through the history of St. Anthony Falls. Through soul-stirring music by the Irish folk group Northern Shores, explore the Capitol's art and ancient regional folklore. Together, we'll speak the Anishinaabe and Dakota names of the land, meeting the spirits that haunt and eventually heal our narrator. Don't miss this award-winning, deeply moving blend of song and history.

Wheeler's family oral history about his great-great-grandfather focused on how he was a central figure in Douglas Volk's mural *The Battle of Mission Ridge* located at the Minnesota State Capitol. His research into the mural led to a deeper investigation of Volk's other works and the ongoing efforts to recontextualize problematic historical depictions within the Capitol's art collection. Through this lens, Wheeler examines two coexistent histories of Minnesota: one we traditionally venerate and another we are only beginning to fully understand. Thus sparked the initial idea for the play.

Building on its award-winning debut at the 2022 MN Fringe Festival, this expanded production features live music with traditional Irish acoustic music performed by the band Northern Shores, an expanded narrative with new stories, more humor, and a deeper look at local folklore, and authentic artifacts including Wheeler's grandfather's actual pipe, bridging the gap between past and present. A master of the solo format, Wheeler has been hailed by Stages of MN as "a true tour de force and a master class in stage acting," and praised by Cherry and Spoon for his "captivating performance as multiple characters."

Audiences are invited to witness a story where Wheeler weaves a hauntingly local and unforgettable ghost story. When asked what Wheeler hopes audiences take away from this story he stated "Our histories, both personal, family, and collective are nearly always far more complicated than we're raised to believe. If even our family oral histories can be mistaken, then we should remain inquisitive and

curious about what truths are hidden in plain sight of our collective acceptance. Truth remains stranger than all the fictions.”

During the writing process, a discovery shifted its heart. Wheeler learned from family elders that he was not related to his Great-Great Grandfather by blood; rather, his great-grandmother had been left on his doorstep in a basket. This revelation deepened Wheeler’s admiration for his ancestor, turning the play into a moving meditation on what it means to heal from the trauma of war and Irish immigration by choosing to build a family through love rather than lineage.

“Getting to emotionally explore what it must have meant for him to carry the weight of being a survivor of that war, to be an Irish immigrant in America, finding healing and laughter through tears and deep trauma, and taking a foundling into his family who eventually became my Great Grandmother is maybe the most personal and rewarding experience I’ve ever had as an artist.”

Cast: Andrew Erskine Wheeler (Michael Hickey), Derek Lee Miller (Understudy Michael Hickey).

Northern Shores: Brian Miller and Danny Diamond

The creative team includes **Andrew Erskine Wheeler** (Playwright and Performer), **Allison Vincent** (Director), **Erik Paulson** (Scenic Designer), **Mandi Johnson** (Costume Designer), **Richard Graham** (Sound Designer), **Tony Stoeri** (Lighting Designer), **Kirby Moore** (Properties Designer), **Brant Miller** (Video Designer), **Haley Pelissier Walsh*** (Stage Manager), **Becca Kravchenko** (Assistant Stage Manager).

*Member, AEA,

About the Artists

Andrew Erskine Wheeler (Playwright and Performer): History Theatre: All The Way & Great Society as Hubert Humphrey. Not For Sale. Walking Shadow: The Christians, The River. Genie in Aladdin's Oasis at Disneyland, CA 1996 Actors' Gang, Los Angeles, Company Member 1997-2015 As a touring artist: Pasadena Playhouse; NYC Public Theatre; Brisbane Arts Festival, Australia; London's Riverside Studios; Madras, New Delhi & Bangalore, India. Previous Solo Shows: Booth's Ghost, winner of 2 Garland Awards; Garden of American Heroes at MN Fringe. Andrew's first TV role was in 1974 as Honk in Sid & Marty Kroft's Far Out Space Nuts! He appears regularly in Film/T V/Commercials and can be seen currently in the film Hockey Mom's Revenge on Lifetime.

Allison Vincent (Director): History Theater: (upcoming) *Hungry Like the Wolf, Christmas of Swing*. Theater-Directing: Walking Shadow: *FEAST, Mae West and the Trial of Sex*. Dark & Stormy: *The Physicists, The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. Playwright's Center: *Spukhaus, Yawp*. Fringe: *Daddy Issues, Edith Gets High, WHOOSH!* The Hive: *Loudly, Clearly Beautifully*. TC Horror Festival: *A Morbid History of Sons and Daughters*. University of Minnesota: *Depth, This Little Piggy Went to Hell*. Theater-Acting: Transatlantic Love Affair, Four Humors, The Illusion, Playwright's Center, Park Square, The Jungle, Frank Theater, Mainly Me, Ladybrain, HUGE, Strike, Jon Ferguson, Walking Shadow, Sod House, Black Label Movement, The Winding Sheet Collective, Artistry, Theater Novi Most. Other: Allison teaches at the University of Minnesota and Augsburg University. Awards: 2025-2027 Jungle Emerging Artistic Leadership cohort, MISA Residency, Everwood Farmstead Residency, 2026 Creative Individuals Grant Recipient, University of

Minnesota Outstanding Alumni Award, 2022 Naked Stages Fellow, Ivey Awards- Ballad of the Pale Fisherman and W;t, Golden Lanyard recipient for the MN Fringe- *Daddy Issues*, *WHOOSH!*, *5x5*, *Edith Gets High*. Training: BAs, MEd. University of Minnesota. Upcoming: (dir) *Walking Shadow*, *FEAST*, (writing) Wonderlust Productions, *Hidden Herald* Season 3, (acting) Park Square, *The Butler Did It*.

Ticket Information

Tiers 1-5: \$25-70. **Students:** \$15. Additional discounts are available for seniors (available online), patrons under 30, students, and veterans (must call to purchase). Call 651-292-4323 or visit historytheatre.com. Discount rates for groups of 10 or more. Call 651-292-4320 or email groups@historytheatre.com to book a group.

Afterthoughts held following Sunday Matinees

Feb 1, 8, 15, and 22. Free and open to all ticketed patrons get closer to the story on stage with a lively post-show talkback. Special guests TBA at www.historytheatre.com.

Special Events: History Theatre presents Northern Shores Feb 15 7pm

Northern Shores features the talented duo of Danny Diamond on fiddle and Brian Miller on guitar, bouzouki, and vocals. This collaboration unites two of the finest Irish folk and traditional musicians in the United States. Belfast-born Diamond delivers music that is profoundly connected to the north of Ireland, highlighting a unique and eclectic repertoire, infused with rhythm and sensitivity. Miller, hailing from Minnesota, immerses himself in his local roots to bring back to life Irish-American folk songs from the Great Lakes. Their captivating and heartfelt live shows span a wide range, from enchanting waltzes to lively reels, highlighted by flawless arrangements of rediscovered traditional tunes. Northern Shores are the musicians behind the show *Whoosh!* Tickets \$35-\$35, on sale now at www.historytheatre.com

Accessibility at History Theatre

History Theatre strives to make all events accessible to all patrons. When purchasing tickets please alert the box office of any accommodation or assistance needed. Contact the box office at 651-292-4323 for more information. www.historytheatre.com/box-office/accessibility

- **American Sign Language and Audio Description:** Sunday, Feb 15, 2:00 p.m.
- **Open Captioning:** Saturday, February 21 7:30 p.m. and February 22, 2:00 p.m.

#####

History Theatre Mission: History Theatre entertains, educates, and engages through creating, developing, and producing new and existing works that explore Minnesota's past and the diverse American experience. Its work provides a unique lens which links our past to the present, explores our common heritage, and illuminates our understanding of what it means to be American.
www.historytheatre.com

Land Acknowledgement: History Theatre sits on the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary land of the Dakota people, for whom the land holds historical, spiritual, and political significance. We recognize and honor the Dakota people, ancestors, and descendants, as well as the land itself, and all the sovereign

Native nations in Minnesota and beyond. We recognize that this acknowledgement itself is not enough and only serves as a first step towards decolonization.