

Oystercatcher in association with the Finborough Theatre presents

MYTHS AND HYMNS

The UK Premiere of a song cycle by Tony Award-winning composer and lyricist Adam Guettel.

Directed by Tom Cooper. Costume Design by Mike Lees.

Performed by arrangement with Josef Weinberger Limited on behalf of R & H Theatricals of New York

The multi-award-winning Finborough Theatre presents the UK premiere of Adam Guettel's *Myths and Hymns*, opening on 22 April for three Sunday performances. Originally produced by the New York Shakespeare Festival in 1998, *Myths and Hymns* explores humanity's relationships with gods old and new. Guettel was inspired to write *Myths and Hymns* after finding a 19th century Presbyterian hymnal in a second-hand bookshop. Interweaving his adaptations of these lyrics with themes from Greek mythology, Guettel has crafted a modern-day song cycle which paints an emotional landscape of faith and yearning. Musically, the songs acknowledge the spare classicism of 19th century New England even as they draw on the musical vocabulary of American pop, sweeping from romantic art song and rock to Latin, gospel and R&B.

Composer and lyricist **Adam Guettel**, the son of composer Mary Rodgers and grandson of Richard Rodgers, is one of American musical theatre's hottest new composers. His first musical, *Floyd Collins*, had its critically-acclaimed UK Premiere at the Bridewell in 1999. In 2006, his latest work, *The Light in the Piazza* was given six Tony Awards for its Broadway production, including the award for Best Score.

Director **Tom Cooper's** previous work includes Brecht's rarely performed *The Visions of Simone Machard* at Hackney Empire and on tour, *Dead Woman's Music* by Michael Ayers at the Arcola Theatre, *Judith* by Howard Barker at the Pleasance Theatre, *L'Antologia di Spoon River* for the Rapallo Festival Italy, *The Watershed Series* of new work in development at the Union Theatre, and his own adaptation of *The Trojan Women* at the Edinburgh Festival. Assistant Directing includes *Flavio* for the Early Opera Company at the Queen Elizabeth Hall and on tour, and *Emma* for the Haymarket Theatre, Basingstoke.

The Press on *Myths and Hymns* in its New York production

"Fearlessly blurs the line between art song and pop, between opera and musical comedy" *New York Post*.

"Gabriel Fauré meets Stevie Wonder, Caetano Veloso embraces Earth, Wind and Fire..." John Simon, *New York Times*.

"Guettel flexes his musical muscles and demonstrates a keen ability to develop melodies that are fresh, contemporary, interesting and inventive, and that also convey a strong sense of meaning. Covering a wide range of styles, they soar, they glide, they tease, they excite." *CurtainUp*.

The Press on Tom Cooper's previous work

"Beautiful, intelligent, moving... expertly nuanced performances... the kind of gem of a discovery that makes the Fringe a worthwhile experience..." *****Five Stars Ian Shuttleworth, *Financial Times* on *The Trojan Women*

"An extraordinary success...truly experimental, truly international, truly effective theatre"

Margherita Rubino, *La Repubblica* on *L'Antologia di Spoon River*

PRESS NIGHT: SUNDAY, 22 APRIL 2007 AT 8.00PM

PHOTOCALL: By arrangement. Please email admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk

Finborough Theatre, The Finborough, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED

Box Office 0870 4000 838 www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk

Sundays, 22 and 29 April; Sunday, 6 May 2007

All performances at 8.00pm

Tickets £18, £14 concessions

Performance Length: Approximately 80 minutes

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

Neil McPherson on e-mail admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk or **07977 173135**

118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED Telephone +44 (0)20 7244 7439 Fax +44 (0)20 7835 1853
e-mail admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk Artistic Director Neil McPherson