

CHESTER
THEATRE
COMPANY

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**CHESTER THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS
THE AMERICAN PREMIERE OF TOM WELLS'S *FOLK*
CTC's Final Production of the Season Directed by Berkshire Favorite James Warwick**

Chester, MA – Chester Theatre Company (CTC) is proud to present Tom Wells's *Folk* in the historic Chester Town Hall, 15 Middlefield Road in Chester, MA, from August 17 - 27, 2017. The production is directed by James Warwick, staging his eighth production for the company.

Folk was first produced by Birmingham Repertory Theatre at the start of a tour by Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Hull Truck Theatre and Watford Palace Theatre. *The Guardian*, in reviewing that production, noted Wells's "priceless ability to endow the ordinary with luminous significance."

For Winnie, a Guinness-hoisting nun, and Stephen, a shy maintenance worker, Friday nights are for playing and singing. Until fifteen-year-old Kayleigh lobbs a brick through Winnie's window. These three band together into the unlikeliest of folk trios, and an equally unexpected family. Dappled with humor and melody, this charming play asks whether we may have more in common than our apparent differences suggest.

"Working on the script of *Folk* and listening to the music that Tom Wells has so sensitively incorporated has touched me deeply," said director Warwick. "His sense of these characters' hopes and fears, his gentle humor and joy in bringing this heartwarming story to life is very special. I'm excited to share this new young playwright's rare talent with our Chester audiences...my eighth production with this great little theater company."

Folk, while not a musical, *per se*, is infused with song. The three actors will be singing and playing a variety of instruments, including tin whistles, guitar, and the spoons. Katryna Nields, of The Nields, is Music Consultant for the production.

As with the previous production in The Town Hall Theatre, *Every Brilliant Thing*, *Folk* will be staged in the round.

The artistic team includes:

Emery Henderson (Kayleigh) is a native of Western Massachusetts. Regional credits include The Majestic Theater (*Next to Normal*, *One Slight Hitch*) and New Century Theater (*The Little Foxes*) as well as three seasons with Majestic Children's Theater. She started singing at the age of 7 with jazz artist Montenia Shider. Emery is very happy to be out of high school and will attend The Boston Conservatory at Berklee as a musical theater major in the fall.

Michael Sean McGuinness (Stephen) National Tour: Dad Barton in *Goosebumps* (Writer/Director: Rupert Holmes). Off-Broadway: The Stage Manager in *A Wilder Christmas* at Peccadillo Theatre Company; Jerry Gold in *2.0* at 59E59; Algernon in *The Importance of Being Earnest* at The Pearl Theatre Company. Regional: Tolstoy in *The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord*; Bracken in *Safe House* at The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis; Christopher in *Tribes* at Portland Stage; Leontes in *The Winter's Tale* at Vermont Shakespeare Company; Keyes in *Double Indemnity* at The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis and Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park; Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* at Pig Iron Theatre Company; Iago in *Othello* at Philadelphia Area Repertory Theatre. TV/Film: *The Blacklist*, *Frasier*, *Law and Order*, *Terry Tate Office Linebacker*, *Double Header* (with David Margulies), *The Guiding Light*, *As The World Turns*. Education/Training: BFA Acting, New York University; Stella Adler.

Michele Tauber (Sister Winnie) is pleased to return to Chester Theatre Company where she performed numerous roles in the production of *pride@prejudice*. More recently, she was seen on television as Martha Plemmons in *BULL* on CBS. New York: Nurse Porter in *Orpheus Descending*, directed by Austin Pendleton (also at The William's Festival in 2010 & 2011); *The Charity That Began at Home* at The Mint Theatre Company; The Roundtable Ensemble; two seasons with The Acting Company touring in *The Rivals*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *O, Pioneers!*, and *Macbeth*; NYC International Fringe Festival; Phoenix Theatre Ensemble; and Turnip Theatre Co. Regional Theatre: Pig Iron Theatre Company in Philadelphia & Actor's Theatre of Louisville's 39th Humana Play Festival in *I Promised Myself To Live Forever* (Creator and Actor); Nurse Guinness in *Heartbreak House* at the Resident Ensemble Players at the University of Delaware; six seasons of *A Christmas Carol* at The McCarter Theatre; *See How They Run* at Barrington Stage; the one-woman show *The Ghosts of Mary Lincoln* as Mary Todd Lincoln at Theatre 40 in LA; Two River Theatre Company; Indiana Repertory Theatre; Syracuse Stage; New Jersey Rep; Capital Rep; Gulfshore Playhouse; Alabama, Pennsylvania, and Texas Shakespeare Festivals; The Cleveland Playhouse; Forum Theatre Company; Luna Stage Company; Olney Theatre Company; Shadow Lawn Stage; Dreamcatcher Rep; and Arkansas Repertory Theatre. TV/Film work: *Boardwalk Empire*, *Law & Order*, *Kate & Allie* and *The Street*. Training: MFA from the PTPP at the University of Delaware.

James Warwick (Director) As a resident US theatre director since 1997, Mr. Warwick has many regional and NYC productions to his credit. He has served as associate artistic director at both Chester Theatre Company and Berkshire Theatre Festival, and artistic director at the Colonial Theatre in Pittsfield. In March 2007, Mr. Warwick was named Interim President of The American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Los Angeles and in Oct. 2009, President of Theatre of Arts in Hollywood, two of the oldest drama schools

in the US. He is the recipient of BAFTA, Spotlight, Helen Hayes, Dramalogue, Ovation, and Berkshire Eagle awards for his work.

In 2014, he returned to his freelance directing career and directed *Madagascar* with Debra Jo Rupp and *High Dive* with Jennifer Roan at the Chester Theatre Company. James also redirected, for the second year running, the Moscow Ballet's *Nutcracker* for its US tour and directed 6 one act plays for Theatre of Arts in LA. In 2015, he directed a critically acclaimed new play called *Halcyon Days* by Deidre Kinahan for Chester Theatre Company and an adaptation of *Little Women* at Farleigh Dickenson University as well as Gogol's *The Government Inspector* for Bard College. His 2017 projects include directing *Almost, Maine* by John Cariani for Bard College and recording several audio books for Amazon's Audible series. *Folk* will mark his 8th production for Chester Theatre Company. His plans for the future include a rehearsed reading of a new play by Steven Otfinoskii called *Mortal Friends* at Ventord Hall on Sept 15, followed by a new audio book recording of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

James Warwick trained at London University/Royal Central School of Speech and Drama as an actor, left with The Spotlight award for the most promising actor of the year and spent much of his early career in English regional theatre learning his craft. Subsequently, he played several leading roles in London's West End and starred in many filmed series for BBC Television and PBS Masterpiece Theatre, including *Partners in Crime* playing Tommy Beresford, and *Lillie*, playing Suggie de Bath, both opposite Francesca Annis. In 1995, Mr. Warwick toured America as Arthur in *Camelot*, followed by Sir Robert Chiltern in *An Ideal Husband* on Broadway. He has played leading roles at the Arena Stage DC, Berkshire Theatre Festival, South Coast Rep, Santa Monica Playhouse, Bay St. Playhouse, and other regional theatres.

The design team includes:

Heather Aulenback (costumes), **Travis George** (set design), and **James McNamara** (lighting and sound).

All performances will take place in the intimate setting of Chester's Historic Town Hall, 15 Middlefield Road, Chester, MA. Show times are 8:00 p.m. Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and 2:00 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays, and Sundays. Individual ticket prices are \$37.50. Chester residents, members of the military and their families, and those holding EBT/SNAP cards may purchase \$10 tickets at the door or by calling the box office. (Call box office for details.) Student Rush \$10 tickets are available day of show. Single tickets, season subscriptions, and flex passes may be purchased online at chestertheatre.org, or by phone at 413.354.7771. Special rates for groups of 10 or more are available.

About Chester Theatre Company

Chester Theatre Company, a professional theatre company located between the Berkshires and the Pioneer Valley--and convenient to both--is known for presenting high-quality productions with top-notch actors, directors, and designers from across the country since 1990. Founded by former Artistic Director of Dublin's Abbey Theatre, Vincent Dowling, CTC is now in its 28th season, and produces four thought-provoking plays each summer in the intimate setting of the Town Hall Theatre.

For further information, please call CTC at 413.354.7770, or visit www.chestertheatre.org.

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