

# HEROMONSTER

PRESENTED BY  
FORT MASON CENTER FOR ARTS & CULTURE  
AND  
WE PLAYERS



CREATED AND PERFORMED BY  
NATHANIEL JUSTINIANO + AVA ROY

MUSIC COMPOSED BY  
CHARLIE GURKE

PRODUCED BY  
LAUREN CHAVEZ + AVA ROY

**Saxophone:** Steve Adams and Charlie Gurke

**Costumes:** Brooke Jennings

**Assistant Producer:** Britt Lauer

**Production Interns:** Rowan Beasley and Zach Wendeln

**Videography:** Kevan Jenson

**Photography:** Lauren Matley and Jim Norrena



**Special Thanks:** Jordan Battle, Jane Casamajor, Stacy Davis, Jackie Gibbons, Patrick Gillespie, Patrick Hajduk, Jordan Little, Seth Little, the wonderful staff at Montalvo Arts Center- especially Kelly Sicat and Lori Wood, members of Beowulf Book Club 2015- especially Lyn Hejinian and Emily Thornbury, all those who contributed local artisan food and drink, and all of our living room hosts!



**We Players connects people with place through site-integrated theatre.**

We present performance events that transform public spaces into realms of participatory theatre. We bring communities together, reclaiming local spaces for public discourse and civic celebration through art. Extending the transformative powers of performance beyond the stage, we invite our collaborators and audience to engage fully and awaken to the spectacular world around us.

Working with inherent energies and themes, we use the natural environment and architecture of cultural and historical landmarks to inspire new ways of seeing and experiencing both theatre and the world. Our work stimulates audiences to experience the delicacy and intricacies of their immediate physical environment; our presence raises awareness of the site and related environmental, social, and political issues; our artistry engages the depths of emotion. We use classical texts for our central narrative and employ a variety of performance modalities to create a fully immersive experience. Project history includes: *Undine* at Sutro; *Macbeth* at Fort Point; *The Odyssey* on Angel Island State Park; and *Hamlet* on Alcatraz.

**WEPLAYERS.ORG**



**Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture**

Fort Mason Center engages and connects people with arts and culture on a historic waterfront campus. We inspire and foster creativity by providing a vibrant gathering place and a home for thought-provoking programs, events, and organizations.

In this complex of renovated military buildings, at the hub of the first urban National Park, visitors can discover all the vitality and diversity that make San Francisco one of the most exciting cities in the world. The concept that inspired creation of the GGNRA was to bring the park to the people. It is the bustling activity at Fort Mason Center that brings people to the park. Fort Mason Center combines, as perhaps no other place in the country, a magnificent setting in the heart of a great city with cultural activity for people of diverse interests and backgrounds.

**FORTMASON.ORG**



WE PLAYERS & FORT MASON CENTER PRESENT  
**HEROMONSTER**



SUNSET  
OCTOBER 9 - NOVEMBER 1, 2015  
FORT MASON CENTER CHAPEL



**From We Players:** HEROMONSTER is a very different animal for our company. Our hallmark large-scale, outdoor site-integrated theatre productions employ somewhere between 30 and 60 performers, artisans, and stage crew, and usually cover dozens of acres of National Park land. This project is housed completely indoors and features only three performers, yet is still rich with poetic imagery and inspired by classical texts of epic dimension. Fundamentally driven by image and theme (as opposed to story and character), the piece has emerged through deep investigation of heroism and monstrosity. With this project and other works of this scale, we aim to build powerful theatrical events that are more flexible and can be adapted to a variety of spaces, including intimate indoor environments.

HEROMONSTER is the first phase of a larger exploration and development process. Subsequent phases of this work will include collaborations with the renowned dance theatre company inkBoat and masters in the improvised music scene, the Rova saxophone quartet. Throughout, multiple translations of the ancient anglo-saxon poem *Beowulf* serve as a jumping off point, igniting inspiration and helping to inform our understanding of heroes and monsters, where they come from, and where and how they currently live among us.

**Inspiration, guidance and excerpts drawn from the following sources:**

- Grendel* by John Gardner
- Beowulf* translated by Burton Raffel
- "Last Meals" from [henryhargreaves.com/no-seconds](http://henryhargreaves.com/no-seconds)
- Brené Brown
- Hafiz: "It happens all the time in heaven"

**Suggested Reading:**

- Beowulf* translated by Howell D. Chickering
- Violence* by James Gilligan
- The Hero with a Thousand Faces* by Joseph Campbell

**Our feast has been provided in-kind by** 21st Amendment Brewery, Amphora Nueva: Berkeley Olive Oil Works, Arizmendi Bakery, Bi-Rite Market, Cipponeri Farms, Far West Fungi, Field of Greens, Fruit Tree, G. L. Alfieri Farms, Lagunitas Brewery, Mellows, Panorama Bakery, Petaluma Creamery, Rainbow Orchards, Safeway, San Francisco Mead Company, Speakeasy Ales & Lagers, Spring Hill Jersey Cheese Company, and Trader Joe's.



**Ava Roy** founded We Players in 2000, and serves the company as director/producer/performer. She is an alumna of Stanford University where she earned her BA, 2003. Since 2008, Ava has pioneered unique partnerships with both the National Park Service and California State Park system, at sites such as Alcatraz, Angel Island, Fort Point, Hyde Street Pier and Sutro Baths. Her practice highlights historical and natural treasures and encourages new ways of experiencing and appreciating these places.

**Nathaniel Justiniano** is an actor/creator, director and teacher, as well as the founder of Naked Empire Bouffon Company where he has created and performed outrageously satirical physical comedies derived from today's tragedies since 2009. He teaches and directs a wide range of performance-based skills and styles including bouffon, physical theater, clown, playwriting, comedy, improvization, and acting. He holds an MFA in Physical Theatre from Dell'Arte International.

**Charlie Gurke** is in his 5th year as music director for We Players, a collaboration that began with *Hamlet* on Alcatraz in 2010. A saxophonist and composer adept in many styles, he can be heard performing with some of the Bay Area's best jazz and latin musicians. He is on faculty at Laney College in Oakland, where he directs the jazz ensembles and teaches theory and jazz history. Charlie was recently awarded 'best musical score' by Theatre Bay Area for his work on We Players' *Macbeth* at Fort Point. See his site at [gurkestra.com](http://gurkestra.com) for more!

**Steve Adams** is active both as a composer and performer on saxophones, flutes and electronics. Steve is best known as a member of the Rova Saxophone Quartet, with whom he has played for over twenty five years. Steve has appeared on more than fifty recordings, and has five recordings as leader or co-leader on the 9 Winds and Clean Feed labels. He received a California Arts Council Fellowship in 2000 and teaches at Mills College.



**We Players Board of Directors:** Drew Baglino (Treasurer), Lauren D. Chavez, Rick Holden, Susan Miller-Davis, Lisa Nash, Jennifer Niedermeyer, Andy Popell (President), Ava Roy, Dana Taylor (Secretary), Kathleen Taylor (Vice President)

**We Players is currently supported by** Grants for the Arts/ General Fund Portion of the San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, The Zellerbach Family Foundation, and Fort Mason Center Presents. This work was developed while in residence at the Lucas Artist Residency Program, Montalvo Arts Center.



**Our Mead-Hall:** For We Players, Place is a character. Locations have distinct energies, personalities and even desires. In the poem *Beowulf*, King Hrothgar's great hall of Herot functions as an important cultural institution that provides light and warmth, food and drink - a place for singing, story-telling and safety. The mead-hall served as a place of refuge within a dangerous and precarious external world - a world continuously threatened by attacks of neighboring peoples and wild beasts of the great northern forests. The mead-hall was also a place of community, where traditions were preserved and loyalty was rewarded. This is where legends were created and perpetuated, reputations were built, fame broadcast, and history written through the telling of it.

Built during the Korean War, the Fort Mason Center Chapel is one of only two remaining military chapels left in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Ten beautiful stained glass windows, which depict several Army branches, the twelve Apostles and eight Hebrew prophets, line both sides of the aisle. Inlaid wood Army insignias adorn the front of the choir loft. Chaplains of all faiths provided services for military members and their families until 1997, when it became part of the Park. While available for private rental, the chapel is now generally closed to the public. We Players is thrilled to bring our audiences into this well-crafted space. Our mead-hall of Herot, like the chapel, is a sanctuary, a refuge for the tired and a place for rituals that support community.

**Your feedback helps us make great theatre.  
Please fill out the survey that will land in your inbox in a few days.**

**We Players has moved into a new home at Pier 54!  
On the waterfront in the Port of San Francisco!**

**YOU can help in this crucial transition and vitalize our growth.**  
With our \$15K matching grant campaign,  
every contributed dollar is doubled, through November 15!

To offer your support, please visit  
**[WePlayers.org/portfolio/pier-54](http://WePlayers.org/portfolio/pier-54)**

