

CONTACT:

Joel Ewing, 773.791.5635

joel@livewirechicago.com



**LIVEWIRE'S 6TH SEASON BEGINS WITH THE CHICAGO PREMIERE OF
A BRIGHT NEW BOISE
BY 2011 OBIE AWARD-WINNER SAMUEL D. HUNTER**

2011-12 season marks a bold new chapter under new Artistic Director Joel Ewing

UPDATED – CHICAGO – (Monday, July 11, 2011) LiveWire Chicago Theatre's 2011-12 season begins with the Chicago premiere of ***A Bright New Boise* by 2011 Obie Award-winning playwright Samuel D. Hunter**. Directed by Joshua Aaron Weinstein, LiveWire's production of *A Bright New Boise* takes place at the Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave., in the Upstairs Studio, November 12 through December 17, 2012 [Date corrected].

Boise premiered in New York by Partial Comfort Productions at The Wild Project in September 2010. *Time Out New York* gave the show five out of five stars and raved, "**This clear-eyed comedy will lift your heart.**" David Rooney of *The New York Times* hailed *Boise* as "**uniformly strong and sympathetic...There's plenty to chew on here.**" The production garnered three Drama Desk Awards including one for Outstanding Play and the 2011 Obie Award for Playwriting went to Samuel D. Hunter.

Boise is a dark comedy that examines the meaning of family and faith. After controversy forces Will to leave his home and church, he takes a job at a Hobby Lobby in rural Idaho in order to reconnect with his estranged son. Will's new life unravels when his co-workers uncover the secrets of his past and he must stand up for what he believes in, or lose that something that's given order to his existence.

Performances are Thursday – Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m.; no performance on Thursday, November 24th. General admission: \$20, Students and Seniors: \$15. Tickets will be available at www.greenhousetheater.com or by calling [773.404.7336](tel:773.404.7336). For information on LiveWire, visit www.livewirechicago.com.

Our 2011-2012 season welcomes an exciting new chapter in LiveWire's artistic vision as we announce **Joel Ewing as our new Artistic Director**. Ewing has spearheaded much of LiveWire's artistic mission over the last two years in his capacity as Managing Director, and was an obvious choice when former Artistic Director Glenn Proud chose to pursue other interests within the LiveWire Collective. Glenn serves as the Board Chair and now assumes the role of Company Manager. LiveWire is also proud to welcome Chris Zdenek as new Associate Artistic Director. Chris is an actor/director and curates our annual new play festival, *VisionFest*.

Samuel D. Hunter is originally from Moscow, Idaho. He is a graduate of NYU, the Iowa Playwrights Workshop and Juilliard. Recent productions include *Jack's Precious Moment* (59E59), *Five Genocides* (Ohio Theatre), and *I Am Montana* (Arcola Theatre in London, Mortar Theatre, Chicago). His newest play, *Norway* will be produced regionally at the Phoenix Theater of Indianapolis and Boise Contemporary Theater in 2011. His plays have been developed at the O'Neill Playwrights Conference, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, PlayPenn, Ojai Playwrights Conference, the Lark's Playwrights Workshop, Juilliard, LAByrnth Theater Company,

-more-

Rattlestick, Seven Devils Playwrights Conference and elsewhere. Awards: 2011 Obie Award in Playwriting, 2008-2009 PONY Fellowship from the Lark Theater, two Lincoln Center Le Compté du Nuoy Awards, others. Internationally, his work has been translated into Spanish and presented in Mexico City, and he has worked in the West Bank with Ashtar Theatre of Ramallah and Ayyam al-Masrah of Hebron.

LiveWire's Executive Director Joshua Aaron Weinstein will direct *A Bright New Boise*. Weinstein directed LiveWire's Chicago premiere production of the Jeff Recommended *Red Angel* by Eric Bogosian ("Director Joshua Aaron Weinstein calibrates the tension just so... this LiveWire production has it nailed." – Nina Metz, *Chicago Tribune*; "Joshua Aaron Weinstein's thoughtful and calibrated production in the tiny Side [Project] space (made to feel much more expansive by Anders Jacobson's terrific book-lined set) teases out the tensions with wit and intelligence." – Kerry Reid, *Chicago Reader*). Other directing credits include *The Short Straw*, *Recognition*, *Green* and *Happy Hour* as part of LiveWire's annual new play festival, *VisionFest*, *The Bout* (Abbie Hoffman Festival) and LiveWire's world premiere of his original one-act *A/other Lover*. Of the production, *Time Out Chicago* raved, "There's plenty to admire about writer-director Weinstein's short head trip... this sounds a lot like Woody Allen territory, as do Weinstein's insights..."

About Livewire Chicago Theatre

The LiveWire Collective was established in 2006 by a group of artists who wanted make their mark in the Chicago community as a professional arts organization, producing thought-provoking, modern works of new and established playwrights. During our first three seasons as Visiting Artists at the Side Project Theatre, we were able to put the purpose of the company into practice and collaborated with other like-minded individuals who were later invited to become members of our Collective.

LiveWire's inaugural season featured Jean-Paul Sartre's mind-bending *No Exit*, Joshua Aaron Weinstein's mysterious new love story *A/other Lover* and the epic tragedy *Love of the Nightingale* by Timberlake Wertenbaker. Our second season paired the "thoroughly commanding" (*Chicago Reader*) production of *The Collector* by Mark Healy, which garnered LiveWire our first Jeff nomination, and the world premiere of Weinstein's *Soldiers: The Desert Stand*, an absurd take on war. Collective member Madeline Long received an After Dark Award for 'Outstanding Performance.'

We began our third season in the summer with the launch of ***VisionFest***, a short play festival exposing new works to the community and getting the community involved in new works. The festival started with an online poll seeking input on the festival theme. "Control" won the popular vote and from more than 100 submissions, LiveWire presented nine short plays on this theme for *VisionFest 2008*. In the fall, LiveWire presented the Chicago premiere of ***Red Angel by Eric Bogosian***. *Time Out Chicago* hailed the production as, "a hell of a lot of fun to watch," and the *Chicago Tribune* declared, "This LiveWire Chicago Theatre production has it nailed." Scenic Designer Anders Jacobson received a Jeff Nomination. Featured actors, Erin Barlow and Steve Wilson, were listed on *NewCity's* "Top 5 of Everything 2008: Stage" for their performances. The season concluded in the spring with our Jeff Recommended production of Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright David Lindsay-Abaire's ***Wonder of the World***.

By the end of these first three seasons, we had grown from a Collective of six members to 14 members. During our third season at the Side Project, we wanted to challenge ourselves as an organization to expand our audience base and seek new artistic collaborations. In the fall of our fourth season, we were given the opportunity to develop a new play as part of the Chicago DCA

Theater's INCUBATOR program. We used this opportunity to develop the world premiere play ***Lower Debt***, which we then produced in the spring at the Viaduct. The production of *Lower Debt* served as the catalyst for the next chapter of LiveWire a company focused on original and contemporary theatre.

It was during our fourth season that LiveWire began to reevaluate our mission in order to clearly specify the work that was been produced, as well as give us the freedom to push our creative boundaries and grow artistically. We discovered as a company we are most passionate about original works and Chicago premieres, feeling a stronger connection to these plays because they offered new theatrical experiences to the community. We were also drawn to plays that addressed an issue or dealt with a theme that our community was currently experiencing. We wanted to ensure our mission reflected these key principles.

Our 5th season began under the new mission statement: ***LiveWire Chicago is a collective of artists who create theatre that reflects the current cultural landscape of our community through productions of original and contemporary works.***

We opened with the world premiere of **Emily Dendinger's *Hideous Progeny***, as part of the Chicago DCA Storefront Theater's fall 2010 season. *Time Out Chicago* gave *Progeny* four out of five stars and Zac Thompson praised the work to be "a seamless blend of fact and fantasy." Monica Westin of *Flavorpill* exclaimed, "Dendinger's dialogue is inventive and Stoppard-esque in her vivid, updated reimagining. [Jessica] Hutchinson's direction is equally fresh...while actors bring the energy and claws appropriate to the party."

In November 2010, we produced our third annual *VisionFest*, ***VisionFest3: Feast***. Plays surrounded the theme of 'Feast' and incorporated the line, "*I can't remember the last time we were all together,*" which won the majority of votes via our online polling system. The *Chicago Reader* recommended the festival praising its, "compelling original works" and *Flavorpill* claimed the festival to be "shockingly affecting."

Our season concluded in March of 2011 at the Greenhouse Theater Center with the Chicago premiere of ***The 13th of Paris* by Mat Smart**, who had just received a production of his play, *Samuel J & K* at Steppenwolf. We were extremely excited to give Chicago audiences an additional exposure to this rising playwright. The *Windy City Times* chose *Paris* as one of their Critics' Picks and Mary Shen Barnidge praised, "Livewire Chicago Theatre has invested much care and affection into its production... Under Steve Wilson's sensitive direction, the six actors all but glow with innocent charm." Monica Westin of *Flavorpill* went on call the show, "The most romantic play you'll see all year..."

LiveWire will begin our sixth season with a return trip to the Greenhouse and another Chicago premiere, ***A Bright New Boise***, by the 2011 Obie Award-winning playwright Samuel D. Hunter. LiveWire is honored to bring the premiere of this exciting new play to the Chicago community.

In the spring, LiveWire will present the Chicago premiere of Melissa James Gibson's ***Current Nobody***, location and time TBA. We will conclude our season with ***VisionFest 4*** in the summer of 2012.

LiveWire Collective Members

Sebastian Aguirre, Erin Barlow, Suzanne Bracken, Eric Branson, Brian Cicirello, Cory Conrad, Joel Ewing (Artistic Director), Erin Fast, Amber Hilgenkamp, Anders Jacobson, Becca Lasser, Madeline Long, Allison McNeela, Deborah Proud, Glenn Proud, Judy Radovsky, Joshua Aaron Weinstein (Executive Director) and Chris Zdenek (Associate Artistic Director).

For more information, visit livewirechicago.com.