



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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503-804-2402

Hand2Mouth (H2M) Is Launching Their First Full Season of Performance In 2017-18

PORTLAND, OR, October 24— Hand2Mouth announces their first ever season, seven months of genre defying performance events. This season honors local dreamers who follow their passions— be it for cooperative living, music, food or fashion. In two major performance premieres and four one-off events, Hand2Mouth will collaborate with a composer collective, an ice cream maker, a clothing designer, and dozens of other makers to create events that animate the senses, celebrate big visions, and illuminate how the past informs the present.

Since Hand2Mouth is a group of artists who have collaborated for almost two decades, it is fitting that they kick off the season with a collectively created piece of theatre that chronicles the struggles and pleasures of communal life. Inspired by firsthand interviews with dozens of residents of utopian communities of the 60s, 70s and 80s, *Psychic Utopia* honors all those who've felt that the call of Oregon could lead to something larger than themselves. With scenic design by New York visual artist Larry Krone and sound composed entirely of human voices by Seth Nehil, *Psychic Utopia* will be a visually and sonically rich exploration of how the Pacific Northwest's draw for twentieth century back-to-the-landers and utopians informs Portland's current popularity as a destination for young people.

In April Hand2Mouth teams up with Third Angle New Music to present the final installment in our *Portland Trilogy*, an exploration of three major Portland artists, including Ursula Le Guin, Gus Van Sant, and Elliott Smith. The first two were Hand2Mouth's *Left Hand of Darkness* (2013), a "gutsy leap into LeGuin's world" and the "dirty, intimate and splendid" *Time, A Fair Hustler* (2015), a play inspired by Gus Van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho*). For two nights only at Alberta Rose Theatre, in a concert staged by Hand2Mouth's Jonathan Walters, *A Fond Farewell* celebrates Smith's electrifying musicality through newly commissioned pieces from six "daring" nationally renowned composers.

In February 2018 Hand2Mouth will present two projects as part of StagedCraft, a collaboration with Artists Repertory Theatre and Disjecta that aims to bridge the gap between Portland's creative communities by integrating local makers, their products and their passions

HAND2MOUTH is a theatre ensemble committed to creating original work.

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into the art and theater community. The first event will be an unveiling of a uniform for staff and company designed in collaboration with Adam Arnold. The uniform project is a playful, aesthetic reinforcement of the team and a way of making the day to day labor of theatre more visible. The second project, *Object Karaoke*, is a piece of original theatre that takes objects, crafted by local makers for Artists Rep's 2016-2017 season, to create an entirely new performance. The performance will be followed by a conversation with local designers, makers and recyclers about sustainability in the theatre and what theatre makers can learn about creative reuse from Portland's craft scene.

In December Hand2Mouth will hold a weekend long holiday portrait gallery at their studio with costumes, wigs and festive backdrop. For \$25 families and friends will receive a printed portrait and a digital file. In May the season ends with their annual collaboration with ice cream maker Morgan St. Theater. This year's three course event will be inspired by highlights from the 2018-19 season.

Throughout the year Hand2Mouth will deepen their youth education program beginning with a residency at Parkrose High School and smaller residences throughout the year in partnership with SUN Community Schools and the Right Brain Initiative.

The launch of a regular annual cycle of work is exciting leap for Hand2Mouth. For the last 17 years the company has created work as they go. Now, audiences can regularly expect original performances with a new work in the fall and spring and a smaller project in the winter. Hand2Mouth's Founder and Artistic Director Jonathan Walters says, "I am proud that our first-ever Season includes three performances that defy any easy category and all explore, or forge, a local ethos and aesthetic". Executive Director Jen Mitas says, "Over the past five years we have built to this moment when we have three staff, a home studio and regular funding. We can now finally respond to the demand we see for new work— plays and events that have support from national funders like Doris Duke and world class collaborators yet draw on the stories and talents of our city."

Performance listings below.

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FULL PERFORMANCE LISTINGS

PSYCHIC UTOPIA

A show about intentional communities and the impulse to create paradise on earth inspired by accounts from dozens of people about their experiences in off-the-grid communities throughout the Pacific Northwest.

TO PREMIERE:

November 16-December 2, 2017 @ 7:30 pm; special matinee performance on **December 3, 2017 @ 2 pm**

Please note there will be no performance on Thanksgiving November 23.

Talk backs: 11/16, 11/26, & 12/3.

@ **New Expressive Works**, 810 SE Belmont St, Portland, OR 97214. (Entrance is the South side door of the WYSE Building)

Tickets: \$15 Thursdays, \$25 general admission Friday, Saturday and Sunday; \$20 for seniors (65+) and anyone under 30

PSYCHIC UTOPIA

In the last decades of the last century, thousands migrated to the Pacific Northwest in pursuit of radical freedom, land, forest and sky. They formed communes, cohousing and collectives. Some communities endured and others crumbled, fell apart, mossed over.

Inspired by firsthand interviews with dozens of residents of utopian communities of the 60s, 70s and 80s, *Psychic Utopia* honors all those who've felt the call of Oregon could lead to something larger than themselves. Using special techniques, in a studio brimming with house plants and humans, Hand2Mouth's new show is a joyful experiment in what it takes to build utopia with all of us, here, now and in the future.

CREDITS

DIRECTOR: Jonathan Walters*

PERFORMER/CREATORS: Sascha Blocker, Jean-Luc Boucherot, Jenni Green-Miller, Liz Hayden*, Erin Leddy*, Heather-Rose Pearson, and Judson Williams

DRAMATURGS: Jessie Drake* & Hannah Nutter

COLLABORATING WRITER: Andrea Stolowitz^

SOUND DESIGNER: Seth Nehil

SCENIC DESIGNER: Larry Krone

COSTUME DESIGNER: Sarah Marguier

LIGHTING DESIGNER: Katelan Braymer^

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PROP/ OBJECT DESIGNER: Drew Dannhorn

**H2M Company Member ^H2M Resident Artist*

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PRODUCTION IS SUPPORTED IN PART BY: the Regional Arts & Culture Council and Work for Art; the Oregon Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts; the Kinsman Foundation; James F. & Marion L. Miller Foundation; the Network of Ensemble Theatres (NET/TEN grant); the Oregon Cultural Trust: Oregonians sustaining, developing, participating in our arts, heritage and humanities; Templeton Foundation; two artist residencies at PLAYA; & H2M season sponsor Ronni Lacroute.

PUBLICITY PHOTOS

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ccat6su59nc2hve/AABlobOYGMybTfXmb-xWKLuoa?dl=0>

A FOND FAREWELL

A Fond Farewell is a collaboration between **Third Angle New Music** and **Hand2Mouth Theatre** that reimagines the music of singer-songwriter Elliott Smith as a staged suite of classical art-songs performed by a chamber ensemble and six singers. Six nationally lauded composers will be commissioned to compose 15 new works of music inspired by songs written by Smith. The suite of music will be recorded for commercial release.

TO PREMIERE:

April 12 & 13, 2018 @ 7:30 pm

@ **Alberta Rose Theatre**, 3000 NE Alberta St, Portland, OR 97211.

Tickets: <https://www.albertarosetheatre.com/tickets.html?Page=https://public.ticketbis-cuit.com/AlbertaRoseTheatre/Ticketing/314730>

The influence of Elliott Smith continues to echo. To honor and explore the music of this Portland icon, we have commissioned 6 leading young composers to reimagine his music. Hand2Mouth will pair with Third Angle New Music to create an evening-long performance piece that illustrates and celebrates Smith's musical talents and legacy.

CREDITS

DIRECTOR: Jonathan Walters* & Hand2Mouth

PERFORMERS: Ron Blessinger (violin); Daniel Buchanan (tenor), Marilyn de Oliveira (cello), Chloe Payne (mezzo-soprano) & Louis DeMartino, (clarinet)

COMPOSERS: ROBERT HONSTEIN, JACOB COOPER, CHRISTOPHER CERRONE, TED HEARNE, SCOTT WOLLSCHLEGER & LJ WHITE

SOUND DESIGNER: Seth Nehil

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*H2M Company Member

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EVENTS

Third Annual Holiday Portrait Studio

Dates: December 9 & 10, 2017 @ 2:00-7:00 pm

Venue: Shout House, 210 SE Madison, Ste. 11

For \$25 you (and any number of guests) get a printed portrait to take home with you and a digital file sent straight to your email.

Tickets:

Let local theatre makers, Hand2Mouth, help you get the holidays done in style at their annual portrait studio. They will provide the costumes, wigs, backdrop and photographer. All you have to do is show up and smile. Stick around for festive cocktails, music, and gift vendors.

Object Karaoke

February 27, 2018

Venue: Artists Repertory Theatre

Free, open to the public

An experiment in objects as inspiration for theatre making, H2M will use things made by local makers for Artists Rep's 16-17 season, to create an entirely new performance. The show will be followed by a conversation with local designers, makers and recyclers about sustainability in the theatre and what theatre makers can learn about creative reuse from Portland's craft scene.

H2M: The Uniform

Date for catwalk party to be confirmed

Venue: Shout House

Free, open to the public

This winter H2M company members and staff will each receive a uniform to be worn during all working hours. Designed collaboratively with local legend, Designer Adam Arnold, the uniforms will be a playful, aesthetic reinforcement of the team, and a way of making the day to day labor of theatre production visible.

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H2M: The Uniform is also part of StagedCraft, an initiative, funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and administered by Theatre Communications Group, that aims to bridge the gap between Portland's creative communities by integrating local Makers, their products and their passions into the art and theater community.

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Artists Repertory Theatre, in collaboration with Hand2Mouth and Disjecta Contemporary Arts Center, is a participant in the Audience (R)Evolution Cohort Grants program, funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and administered by Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the professional not-for-profit American theatre.

A Preview of 2018-19 in Desserts

In Collaboration with Morgan Street Theatre

Date: Sunday May 6, 2017 @ 5:00-7:00 pm

Venue: Shout House, 210 SE Madison, Ste. 11

Price: \$50 (for 3 bespoke dessert courses & performances)

TOURING

After a sold out run in April Andrea Stolowitz's *Berlin Diary* will tour Oregon, upstate New York and Toronto.

Dates: September 25 and 28, 2017, *Berlin Diary* and *PEP TALK* at Colgate University in Hamilton, NY

October 2, *Berlin Diary* at Oregon Contemporary Theatre in Eugene, OR

October 3, *Berlin Diary* at Havurah Shir Hadash in Ashland, OR

November 6, *Berlin Diary* at the City Theatre Playhouse (presented by the Prosserman Jewish Community Center) in Toronto, Canada

H2M Education

H2M will be in residency at Parkrose High School as part of SUN. In January 2018 they will launch Quarterly, a workshop series at Shout House for local artists to get introduced to skills in creating original theatre.

Quarterly Dates: Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm, January 6, March 3 and June 2

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COMPANY

Hand2Mouth is a group of artists who make plays and places for people today. We celebrate the potential of the live encounter and investigate the passions of our hearts and times in order to build new windows that open to the world. Driven by connection and joy, we use evolving methods to create original performance events that are bold and accessible.

Described by The Seattle Times as having “the kind of promise, fearlessness and energy that the American theater needs, and should encourage,” Hand2Mouth is a permanent ensemble of artists led by Artistic Director Jonathan Walters. Hand2Mouth has received multiple Portland “Drammy” Awards, including for Outstanding Ensemble Performance and Outstanding Production. Recent performances have been presented by La MaMa E.T.C. (New York, NY), Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, On the Boards (Seattle), Bumber-shoot Arts Festival (Seattle), Ontological Hysteric Incubator (New York, NY), Myrna Loy Center (Helena, MT), furyFACTORY Festival (San Francisco), and the Network of Ensemble Theaters (SF).

Jonathan Walters founded Hand2Mouth in 2000 after training with street theatre troupe Teatr Biuro Podrozy in Poland. Hand2Mouth has since created 18 original performances from its home in Portland, OR, and the ensemble has grown to include a core of company members and associate artists. Company members have traveled and studied in London, New York, Poland, Denmark and Mexico City to find new performance forms. Hand2Mouth performances are developed through intensive rehearsals; each show demands its own creation process and training which builds over months of exploration including long form improvisations, endurance singing and rigorous mind-research. From these raw seeds, the company hones fragments into cohesive wholes, producing theatre that could not be produced from the pages of a script.

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