

Press Inquiries Contact: Anne Abrams
goanne@comcast.net

Football and Dance Collide in West Coast Premiere of **COLOSSAL**

Written by Andrew Hinderaker
Directed by Jon Tracy

Press Opening: Saturday, March 19, 8 pm

March 15 to April 30, 2016

Tues, Wed, Thurs 7pm / Fri, Sat 8pm / Sat 3pm, Sun 2pm

Preview Performances: March 15,16,17,18 at 8pm

No matinees March 20 & 21

San Francisco, CA (January 2016) – **San Francisco Playhouse** (Bill English, Artistic Director; Susi Damilano, Producing Director) continues its thirteenth Mainstage season with West Coast premiere of Andrew Hinderaker's *Colossal*, directed by **Jon Tracy**.

Colossal, structured like a football game (performed in four quarters with a pre-show training session and half-time show), tells the story of Mike, a former University of Texas football player struggling to move forward in the wake of a catastrophic spinal injury. Through the physical languages of football and modern dance and unfolding in vivid flashbacks, the play explores Mike's relationship with his father, his physical therapist, his teammates, and himself. The show, turning on a dime between intimate and epic, calls for a full drumline, a football team, a modern dance company, four perfectly timed fifteen-minute quarters counted down on a scoreboard, and a lead actor who uses a wheelchair.

When football and dance collide, you get more than you bargained for. Start with four full quarters and a half-time show, complete with a dance company, a drum corps, and a fully-padded cast: what have you got? Grace and violence, victory and defeat. Is football a metaphor for life, or just the bread and circuses

THE SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE

Colossal

Continued:

of our time? *Colossal* is an epic event that impossibly merges the worlds of football and dance, loss and recovery, and the toughest act of all: being yourself.

The Inspiration: When playwright Andrew Hinderaker was at the University of Texas, a mentor gave him an interesting challenge: write an unproduceable play. Write a play so big, so bold, so seemingly impossible that theaters would be intimidated to put it on. “We have general assumptions about how big a cast is going to be or what a theater space is going to look like or what an actual play looks like,” says Andrew. “And we’ve gotten to a place a lot of times in the theater where it’s not a choice, it’s a default. So what was so exciting to me about that challenge was that it really gave me the permission to ignore every part of me that is going to have that kneejerk reaction of, ‘Oh, nobody will ever do this’ – to just let all of that go.” **From that let-go came *Colossal*, an epic theatrical event about life, love, and Texas football that, perhaps ironically, has become Hinderaker’s most-produced play.**

The performance team for *Colossal* is comprised of a cast of dancers and actors including **Jason Stojanovski, Thomas Gorrebeeck*, Cameron Matthews, Wiley Naman Strasser, Robert Parsons*, Dave Maier*, Xander Ritchey, Brandon Leland, Ed Berkeley, Jacob Hsieh, Brian Conway,** and **Travis Santell Rowland.**

San Francisco Playhouse’s production of *Colossal* is made possible by Executive Producers Susan Atherton, Bill Gregory, Producer Margot Golding, and Associate Producers Loni & Bob Dantzler, Harry & Kay Rabin, Tom & Mary Foote and Margaret Sheehan.

Andrew Hinderaker (Playwright) is a Resident Playwright at Chicago Dramatists, an ensemble member of the Gift Theatre in Chicago, and a three-time Jeff Award nominee. His plays include: *I Am Going to Change the World*, *Dirty*, *Kingsville*, and *Suicide, Incorporated*, which premiered at the Gift in 2010 and was subsequently produced Off-Broadway at the Roundabout Theatre. Hinderaker’s newest play, *Colossal*, featuring a dance company, a drumline, and a fully-padded football team, was the recent recipient of multiple awards from the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. *Colossal* will receive a National New Play Network (NNPN) Rolling World Premiere in 2014-15, with productions at the Olney Theatre Center, Mixed Blood Theatre, the Dallas Theater Center, and Southern Rep. Collectively, Hinderaker’s plays have been produced/developed by Manhattan Theatre Club, the Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf, the Araca Group, the Alliance Theatre, ACT, No Rules Theatre Company, Victory Gardens, Rattlestick, Stage Left, and several others. He currently holds commission from the Roundabout Theatre Company and Marc Platt Productions, and recently completed his M.F.A. in Playwriting at the University of Texas in Austin. Hinderaker was a member of the 2013-2014 Playwrights Unit at the Goodman Theatre.

Jon Tracy (Director) returns to the San Francisco Playhouse where he directed *Tree, Man of La Mancha, Bug, Slasher, Bloody, Bloody Andrew Jackson*, and Aaron Loeb's award winning *First Person Shooter*, as well as being under commission to write *All of the Above* (and adaptation of the story of Joan of Arc). He works as a director, playwright, designer and educator throughout the Bay Area including Shotgun Players (company member), Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, American Conservatory Theatre, Aurora Theatre, Darkroom Productions (Founder, Former Artistic Director; directed, wrote and designed productions), Willows Theatre, Impact Theatre, TheatreFIRST, Sonoma County Repertory, New Conservatory Theatre, Missouri St. Theatre, Solano Repertory Company, Traveling Lantern Theatre Company (former Artistic Director), and the San Francisco, Marin, Carmel, Napa, Sebastopol, and Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festivals. Jon is a Company Member and Resident Director for PlayGround, an Associate Artist at The Berkeley Playhouse and an Affiliate Artist with Marin Shakespeare Company. A graduate of Solano College Theatre's Actor Training Program, Jon recently trained with IUGTE Director's Lab in Carrara, Italy. He is the recipient of the Kennedy Center Meritorious Achievement Award, fifteen North Bay Arty Awards, a Sacramento Elly Award, Bay Area Critics Circle Award and is a grant recipient from Theatre Bay Area and the National Endowment for the Arts. He is the Co-Artistic Director of Groundswell: The International Theatre Intensive, a proud member of Theatre Bay Area's Gender Parity Commission and of SDC, the union for stage directors and choreographers.

Founded by Bill English and Susi Damilano in 2003, **San Francisco Playhouse** has been described in the New York Times as "a company that stages some of the most consistently high-quality work around." Located right in the heart of the Union Square Theater District, **San Francisco Playhouse** is the city's Off-Broadway style company, an intimate alternative to the larger more traditional Union Square theater fare. The San Francisco Playhouse provides audiences the opportunity to experience professional theater with top-notch actors and world-class design in a setting where they are close to the action. The company has received multiple awards for overall productions, acting, and design including the SF Weekly Best Theatre Award and the Bay Guardian's Best Off-Broadway Theatre Award. Presenting a diverse range of plays and musicals, **San Francisco Playhouse** produces new works as well as re-imagining classics, "making the edgy accessible and the traditional edgy." The San Francisco Chronicle raved: "On the verge of opening its 10th season, the company that lived a hand-to-mouth existence for its first few years has become 'the little playhouse that could.' It quickly established a reputation for attracting some of the Bay Area's best acting and directing talent, as well as for its exciting play choices. And with its bold Sandbox Series, it's become a player in developing new works as well." **San Francisco Playhouse** is committed to providing a creative home and inspiring environment where actors, directors, writers, designers, and theater lovers converge to create works that celebrate the human spirit.

*Actors appear courtesy of Actors' Equity Association.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

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Continued:

WHAT: Colossal, structured like a football game (performed in four quarters with a pre-show training session and half-time show), tells the story of Mike, a former University of Texas football player struggling to move forward in the wake of a catastrophic spinal injury. Through the physical languages of football and modern dance and unfolding in vivid flashbacks, the play explores Mike's relationship with his father, his physical therapist, his teammates, and himself. The show, turning on a dime between intimate and epic, calls for a full drumline, a football team, a modern dance company, four perfectly timed fifteen-minute quarters counted down on a scoreboard, and a lead actor who uses a wheelchair.

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WHERE: 450 Post Street, San Francisco, 2nd Floor of the Kensington Park Hotel.

TICKETS: For tickets (\$20-\$120) or more information, the public may contact The San Francisco Playhouse box office at 415-677-9596, or www.sfplayhouse.org.