

IN THIS HOUSE: NEW LONDON MAKING HISTORY. MOVING FORWARD.

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In This House Comes Home to New London with October Premiere at the Garde Arts Center

Hartford-based Judy Dworin Performance Project and the New London community collaborate to make history with theater, dance, discussion and community participation



(Hartford | New London, CT) New London's own 1678 Joshua Hempstead House – one of New England's oldest and most historically well-documented houses – is the setting and central character of Judy Dworin Performance Project's *In This House*, premiering on Thursday, October 13, at 7:30 p.m. at the Garde Arts Center, 325 State Street, New London.

A contemporary and engaging mix of dance, song and multimedia, *In This House* begins with the true story of the Hempstead House, its owner Joshua Hempstead and his enslaved African American resident Adam Jackson. The story moves through three centuries – and subsequent

generations of Hempsteads – detailing their evolution from slave owners to passionate abolitionists who worked to create the integrated and interracial New London of today.

Through a meaningful and graceful reflection on the house, the land, the imprint of slavery and its abolition, *In This House* seeks to provoke, challenge and engage audiences to pursue a world that bridges the racial divide.

“When we think about slavery in this country, we often think of it as a Southern phenomenon,” creator and choreographer Judy Dworin said. “But slavery was very much a Northern institution as well. The journey from slavery to contemporary questions of race, racism is compressed into the story of this very old frame house that is still so full of vibrant energy. This family and this house have inspired a volatile and probing journey through history bringing us face-to-face with where we are today.”

Reserved seating for Judy Dworin Performance Project’s *In This House* at the Garde Arts Center on Thursday, October 13, at 7:30 pm are \$28 and are available at the Garde Box office, 325 State Street, New London, during regular box office hours. Or, online at www.gardearts.org, or by calling 860-444-7373, ext 1. For more information about the Judy Dworin Performance Project, or to see a clip of *In This House*, www.judydworin.org/gallery.

A Community Conversation

Produced by the Garde Arts Center and Mitchell College, *In This House* is the catalyst and central component of an ongoing community collaboration, **In This House: New London Making History • Moving Forward**. For several months, leaders from the New London arts, culture, education, civic, history, faith and youth communities have come together to begin a creative process of healing dialogue, historical discovery and creative expression addressing issues of race, racism and slavery in the region’s past, present and future.

Rosetta Jones, a Garde Arts Center Trustee, says “We see the hometown stage presentation of *In This House* as an opportunity for our citizens to further the process of improving and healing human relationships in New London, raise awareness about New London and Connecticut history and provide creative opportunities for young people and artists to explore New London history in new ways,”

In addition to the New London premiere of *In This House*, **In This House: New London Making History • Moving Forward** includes community events, educational forums, living history tours, art exhibits, theatrical productions and other activities that are still in the planning process. Along with New London residents, community collaborators include: Connecticut Landmarks (Hempstead Houses), New London County Historical Society, I Am Me Studios, Kenté Cultural Center, New London Anti-Violence, The Provenance Center, SECT Multicultural Collaborative, Shiloh Development Corporation, The Writer’s Block Ink., and The Connecticut Humanities Council.

Funding for, **In This House: New London Making History • Moving Forward** has been generously provided by the Connecticut Humanities Council and the City of New London Water

Authority Community Fund. One of the largest humanities councils in the nation, the Connecticut Humanities Council (CHC) nurtures thoughtful exploration of history and literature along with the cultural benefits of both. CHC's reading programs benefit Connecticut Citizens of all ages by opening up the world of books to children, encouraging reading as a family activity and engaging adults in thought provoking book discussions. CHC granting programs support the work of museums, historical societies and other cultural institutions that bring stories of Connecticut's past to life. This year, CHC will create or fund hundreds of cultural experiences and enrich the lives of residents and visitor's statewide.

Find us on Facebook! "Like " **In This House: New London Making History • Moving Forward** to receive news and project updates.

About the Garde Arts Center

Now in its eighty-third season, the Garde Arts Center is southeastern Connecticut's non-profit center for the performing arts. The Garde owns and operates the historic 1450-seat Garde Theatre and the 130-seat Oasis Room where it presents musicals, opera, orchestras, contemporary music, film, dance, and family events. Home of the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, the Garde hosts performances by regional arts organizations and provides educational programs for more than 12,000 young people. Under the leadership of Steve Sigel, executive director, since 1988, the Garde has become a major catalyst for the cultural and economic revitalization of New London. www.gardearts.org.

About Mitchell College

Mitchell College, a private institution of higher education, provides a transforming educational experience. Within a diverse and student-centered community and with an emphasis on holistic student development, Mitchell College supports individual learning differences, nurtures untapped academic potential, and instills professional knowledge and skills necessary for students to contribute to an ever-changing world. The Cultural Programming Advisory Committee (CPAC) coordinates planning of College-sponsored events that promote awareness of diversity and an appreciation of the fine and performing arts, and that support cross-disciplinary co-curricular experiences. These events also aim to foster a sense of community, both within and outside Mitchell College, and to support the development of the baccalaureate culture. www.mitchellcollege.edu.

About the Judy Dworin Performance Project (JDPP)

JDPP is a company of professional performing and teaching artists who, on stage and in our communities, seek to innovate, inspire, educate and collaborate while engaging in art-making that addresses important issues that face our world. For more than 23 years, the Judy Dworin Performance Ensemble has brought highly acclaimed and cutting edge dance/theater to the region, the state and beyond. Its edgy, evocative and humorous repertory speaks to critical issues of social justice through an imagistic blend of dance, theater, song and visual effects. JDPP also offers a comprehensive *Moving Matters!* Multi-Arts Residency Program in schools, community centers and correctional institutions throughout the state. www.judydworin.org

Calendar of Community Events:

Wednesday, October 5, 2011, 5 pm

Mitchell College, Clark Center

437 Pequot Ave., New London

Performing the Hempstead House: Converging New London History, the Arts and the Community.

A panel discussion with historians, members of the Judy Dworin Performance Ensemble and community leaders with an excerpted performance of *In This House*. Free and open to the public.

Media contact: Renee Fournier, Director of Public Relations & Marketing,

fournier_r@mitchell.edu, 860.701.5084. www.mitchellcollege.edu

Saturday, October 8, 1 to 3 pm

The Secret Wells Behind These Walls: Excerpted performance on location at the Hempstead House presented by The Writer's Block Ink.

Hempstead Houses

11 Hempstead St., New London

An original work created and written by the students of Writers Block Ink, *The Secret Wells Behind These Walls* is inspired by the Joshua Hempstead House and the Judy Dworin Performance Project's *In This House*. The Hempstead House is open for tours through Columbus Day weekend on Saturday and Sunday, 1 to 4 pm.

Media contact: Beverly Lucas, Curator, Beverly.lucas@ctlandmarks.org, 860.247.8996

For more information about Connecticut Landmarks and the Hempstead House visit

www.ctlandmarks.org.

For more information about The Writer's Block, Ink., visit www.writersblockink.org.

For more information about *The Secret Wells Behind These Walls* visit

<http://www.theday.com/article/20110811/NWS01/308119991>

Thursday, October 13, 2011, 10 am

Schoolltime Performance of In This House

The Garde Arts Center

Box Office: 860.444.7373 ext. 1

Comprehensive arts programming for children and students, the Garde Arts Center and the Garde Institute for Creativity offer opportunities for young people with the Schoolltime Series, a daytime series of plays and musicals with complete study guides and links to educational curricula.

Thursday, October 13, 2011 7:30 pm

New London Premiere of In This House

The Garde Arts Center

325 State St., New London

www.gardearts.org

Reserved Seating \$28

Box Office: 860.444.7373 ext. 1

Media contact: Jeanne Sigel, Director of Marketing & Development, jsigel@gardearts.org, 860.444.4430

October 15 – November 27, 2011

Child Trafficking: 21st Century Slaves

Provenance Center

165 State St., New London

www.provenancecenter.org

Trafficking in humans is the world's second largest criminal enterprise, after drugs, with the market for child trafficking estimated to generate over 12 billion dollars and impact nearly 1.4 million child victims annually. The purpose of this thematic exhibition is to present an overview of the child trafficking phenomenon, specifically as a continuation of human slavery and oppression into the 21st century.

Media contact: Nadesha Mijoba, nmijoba@provenancecenter.com, 860.405.5887

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Garde Arts Center

325 State St.

New London, CT 06320

www.gardearts.org



Mitchell College

437 Pequot Ave.

New London, CT 06320

www.mitchellcollege.edu



Judy Dworin Performance Project

City Arts on Pearl

233 Pearl St.

Hartford, CT 06103

www.judydworin.org

(Photo: *In This House*. The Judy Dworin Performance Ensemble. Photo by Nick Lacy)