

Crowded Fire Theater

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Contact: Tiffany Cothran (415) 523-0034
tiffany@crowdedfire.org

**CROWDED FIRE THEATER'S 2017 SEASON
WITH PLAYS BY MIA CHUNG AND
PLAYWRIGHT-IN-RESIDENCE CHRISTOPHER CHEN**

YOU FOR ME FOR YOU by Mia Chung, March 9-April 1

A TALE OF AUTUMN by Christopher Chen, September 14-October 7
Translated by Rachel Willson-Broyles

Presented at the Thick House
1695 18th St, San Francisco

San Francisco - Crowded Fire Theater (CFT) Crowded Fire's Artistic Director Mina Morita unveiled the 2017 mainstage season lineup including two contemporary plays that continue to uphold the company's long tradition of producing boundary - pushing, thought-provoking theater. At a season-announcement party on Saturday, November 19th Morita addressed Crowded Fire donors, patrons, and artists saying "We are a divided country in the midst of a divisive time. It is more important now, more than ever to use our creative and critical thought to mine our cultural memory and to interrogate our existence. I am thrilled to present selections next season that do just that."

Crowded Fire's 2016 season begins with the Bay Area premiere of Mia Chung's **YOU FOR ME FOR YOU** (3/9-4/1), a heart-wrenching and magical tale of two North Korean sisters divided in their patriotism and separated in their attempt to leave North Korea for the United States. **YOU FOR ME FOR YOU** will be directed by M. Graham Smith. The mainstage season concludes with local favorite Christopher Chen's world premiere of **A TALE OF AUTUMN** (9/14-10/7), a Crowded Fire commissioned piece born from a deep mutual concern over the ever-increasing power of corporate personhood in present day capitalism. **A TALE OF AUTUMN**, which has been developed over the past year in Crowded Fire's Matchbox: New Play Development Program will be directed by Artistic Director Mina Morita.

Christopher Chen was also announced as the company's first Playwright-In-Residence at the event on Saturday. The company and playwright have a long history of mutual respect and shared aesthetics. Chen's **THE HUNDRED FLOWERS PROJECT** (co-commissioned and produced by Crowded Fire and Playwrights Foundation) catapulted him onto the Bay Area theater scene in 2012, garnering accolades and both the Glickman Award and Rella Lossy Award. Crowded Fire also commissioned and produced Chen's **THE LATE WEDDING** in 2014. Chen joins a robust group of Crowded

Fire Resident Artists that include actors, designers, technicians, dramaturgs, and directors. New Resident Artists also announced at the event include director M. Graham Smith, actor and choreographer Nican Robinson, and dramaturg Julie McCormick.

Crowded Fire's mainstage season will be presented at the Thick House in Potrero Hill. Due to renovations to the space, including a new HVAC system and lighting and sound upgrades, the company is presenting a two-play mainstage season rather than their traditional three-play season. In addition to the mainstage productions, Crowded Fire will continue to develop new plays through the Matchbox: New Play Development Program which commissions, facilitates workshops, and present public readings of new plays in process. The company is also focused on building an official mentorship program for emerging Bay Area artists.

THE PLAYS

YOU FOR ME FOR YOU by Mia Chung

Crowded Fire presents the Bay Area premiere YOU FOR ME FOR YOU by Mia Chung, directed by M. Graham Smith March 9 - April 1. It is the first Bay Area production of Chung's work, whose plays have previously been developed locally through both the Bay Area Playwrights Festival and Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor. YOU FOR ME FOR YOU is a magical tale of two North Korean sisters Minhee and Junhee torn apart at the border as they attempt to flee the Best Nation in the World, Each must race across time and space to be together again—navigating the perilous Land of the Free and the treacherous terrain of personal belief. YOU FOR ME FOR YOU was hailed by *The Washingtonian* as "...*(a) magical universe...a dizzying, sometimes surreal tale...endlessly creative...*" in it's world premiere production at Woolly Mammoth Theatre in Washington D.C.

A TALE OF AUTUMN by Christopher Chen

The work Bay Area playwright, Christopher Chen, returns to the Crowded Fire stage with the Crowded Fire Commission and World Premiere of A TALE OF AUTUMN, directed by Mina Morita September 14-October 7. This marks the third Chen commission in Crowded Fire's history. Inspired by Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *Macbeth*, along with popular "quest-for-power" TV shows *Game of Thrones* and *House of Cards*, this new collaboration with Crowded Fire Playwright-In-Residence Christopher Chen is a modern day fable about the psychology of a one-time altruistic corporation whose seemingly benign tactics destroy a community over time.

THE PLAYWRIGHTS AND DIRECTORS

Christopher Chen (playwright) is an international award-winning playwright whose full-length works have been produced and developed across the United States and abroad. Plays include THE HUNDRED FLOWERS PROJECT and THE LATE WEDDING (both Crowded Fire commissioned world premieres), MUTT, AULIS: AN ACT OF NIHILISM ON ONE LONG ACT, YOU MEANT TO DO ME HARM, and CAUGHT, currently showing at Shotgun Players. Honors include the 2015-2016 Sundance Institute/Time Warner Foundation Fellowship for theater; the Paula Vogel

Playwriting Award, through which he was the 2013-2014 playwright-in-residence at The Vineyard; the Barrymore Award; the Glickman Award. Current commissions include American Conservatory Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, San Francisco Playhouse and Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Chris is a graduate of U.C. Berkeley and holds an M.F.A. in playwriting from S.F. State. He is a San Francisco native.

Mia Chung (playwright) is the author of YOU FOR ME FOR YOU, CATCH AS CATCH CAN, THIS EXQUISITE CORPSE, and SKIN IN THE GAME. Recently, Mia was honored with the 2016 Stavis Playwright Award. YOU FOR ME FOR YOU had its UK premiere at The Royal Court Theatre in London (December 2015) and its world premiere at Woolly Mammoth Theatre (in association with Ma-Yi, supported by NEA; 2012). Past productions: Company One, Portland Playhouse, and Mu Performing Arts/Guthrie Theater. The play is published by Bloomsbury Methuen Drama. Mia's work has been supported by awards, fellowships, and workshops, including the Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Berkeley Rep Ground Floor, Civilians' R&D Group, Hedgebrook Women Playwrights Festival, Icicle Creek Theatre Festival, Inkwell, LABYrith, NYTW, RISCA, Southern Rep, the Stella Adler Studio, and TCG. She is a member of New Dramatists, a Huntington Playwright Fellow, and an alumni member of the Ma-Yi Writers Lab and the Playwrights Realm.

Mina Morita (CFT Artistic Director/A TALE OF AUTUMN director) previously served as the artistic associate at Berkeley Rep and helped found its center for the creation and development of new work, The Ground Floor. At Berkeley Rep, she directed in the Fireworks Festival, served as assistant director to Tony Taccone for Tony Kushner's THE INTELLIGENT HOMOSEXUAL'S GUIDE TO CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM WITH A KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES and to Les Waters for Sarah Ruhl's Tony-nominated IN THE NEXT ROOM, OR THE VIBRATOR PLAY. In 2012, Mina worked with Anna Deavere Smith as the artistic coordinator for ON GRACE.

Mina has directed at several Bay Area theaters including Shotgun Players, UC Berkeley, and Just Theatre, as well as developed work at ACT, Campo Santo, Aurora, and Playwrights Foundation. She will be directing Philip Kan Gotanda's SISTERS MATSUMOTO at Center Rep this coming Spring. Mina serves on the Zellerbach Family Foundation's Community Arts Panel, previously served as Board President of Shotgun Players, and is one of the original founders of Bay Area Children's Theatre. She holds a degree from NYU's TSOA and attended the 2014 Lincoln Center Director's Lab. In 2014, Mina won the Theatre Bay Area (TBA) Award for Outstanding Direction of a Musical and in 2016 was recognized as a TBA 40@40 for her impact on Bay Area Theater. In 2015, Mina was honored to share her story on TEDx, and this year, she was chosen as one of the YBCA100, for "asking questions and making provocations that will shape the future of culture."

M. Graham Smith (Director) is a San Francisco-based Director, Educator and Producer. He is an O'Neill National Directing Fellow and an Oregon Shakespeare Festival FAIR Fellow. He's directed at HERE in New York City, and venues in San

Francisco including A.C.T., Aurora Theatre, Central Works, The EXIT Theatre, PlayGround, Brava, The Playwright's Foundation, Cutting Ball Theatre, Berkeley Playhouse, Golden Thread, SF Opera, and New Conservatory & Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor. He directed the West Coast Premiere of JERRY SPRINGER: THE OPERA in SF with Ray of Light and TRUFFALDINO SAYS NO at Shotgun Players, winning Best Director for the Bay Area Critics Circle. He is thrilled to return to Crowded Fire where he directed SHE RODE HORSES LIKE THE STOCK EXCHANGE. Recent credits: THE LADY ONSTAGE at Profile Theatre in Portland, Oregon, THE LIAR at Occidental College in Los Angeles as an Edgerton Foundation Fellow, the World Premiere of Christopher Chen's HOME INVASION with 6NewPlays and DEAL WITH THE DRAGON at Edinburgh Fringe. He teaches at A.C.T.'s actor-training programs, Berkeley Rep School of Theatre and at Barcelona's premiere Meisner Technique program in Spain.

###

For Calendar Editors:

Crowded Fire's 2017 season begins with Mia Chung's play YOU FOR ME FOR YOU (3/9-4/1), a fantastic and magical tale of two North Korean sisters separated in their attempt to leave North Korea for the United States. The 2017 mainstage season concludes with Christopher Chen's world premiere A TALE OF AUTUMN (9/14-10/7), addressing the ever-increasing power of corporate personhood.

YOU FOR ME FOR YOU by Mia Chung

A heart-wrenching and magical North Korean border crossing tale.

directed by M. Graham Smith

March 9-April 1 (Press Opening March 13)

Thick House, 1695 18th St., SF

A TALE OF AUTUMN

A modern day fable about the psychology of corporate personhood.

directed by Mina Morita

September 14-October 7 (Press Opening September 18)

Thick House, 1695 18th St., SF

PERFORMANCES:

Wed-Saturdays 8 PM with Special Opening Night Performances on Mondays, 8PM

Tickets: Prices range from \$10-\$35 progressively during the course of the run.

We offer Pay-What-You-Can Preview performances and student/senior/group rates.

Tickets: Visit www.crowdedfire.org for more information and to purchase tickets.

Box Office by phone (415) 523-0034 ext 1

www.crowdedfire.org or (415) 523-0034 ext 0