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**Award-Winning LGBTQ+ Play Series Continues in Houston**

*Thunderclap Productions presents the world premiere of Adi Teodoru's "Melville & Hawthorne"*

**Houston, Texas (June 10, 2024)** On August 1-10, 2024, Thunderclap Productions will present the world premiere production of Houstonian Adi Teodoru's play *Melville & Hawthorne* at the MATCH. This production is Thunderclap's fourth production in its award-winning John Steven Kellett Memorial Series, which presents LGBTQ+ plays, musicals, and films.

*Melville & Hawthorne* follows the year and a half that authors Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne spent living only a mile away from each other in the Berkshires while Melville wrote and developed the novel *Moby Dick* (which is dedicated to Hawthorne). It is based entirely on historical fact and the correspondence between the two, and it fills in the gaps of their relationship. It chronicles their growing feelings for each other and Melville's struggle to write about open sexuality and race in the year 1851, as our country struggles with talks of secession and heads into civil war, as well as the influence Melville's relationship with Hawthorne had on *Moby Dick*. The play covers modern themes such as race equality, sexual liberation, social justice, freedom and the impact of literature on political events.

"*Melville & Hawthorne* is at its core a simple love story. Two monoliths of the American literary canon loved each other, and that love shaped their best-known works in ways that continue to reverberate in our society even today," said playwright Adi Teodoru.

Director Andrew Ruthven added, "You don't very often get to see queer stories represented in theater that aren't traumas driven by homophobia and physical violence. *Melville & Hawthorne* challenges you to think about how love, whether it is tragic or 'happily ever after,' has always been love."

This play is the fourth production of the John Steven Kellett Memorial Series. This production series was created in memory of John Steven Kellett, a Houston-based retired Exxon executive and philanthropist who passed away in 2018. Mr. Kellett founded the John Steven Kellett Foundation, which has awarded Thunderclap Productions numerous grants, including a large grant in support of this memorial series that was part of their final grant cycle. Thunderclap has used the grant to produce a series of plays and musicals dealing with equality and pushing back against LGBTQ+ discrimination.

Thunderclap Productions ([thunderclapproductions.com](http://thunderclapproductions.com)) is a Houston-based nonprofit production company dedicated to producing new and under-recognized plays, musicals, and screenplays. They have a commitment to making the arts accessible to all patrons and a special interest in producing works that highlight issues of social justice and inequity. Thunderclap is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

*Melville & Hawthorne* runs August 1-10, 2024 in Matchbox 1 of the Midtown Arts and Theatre Center Houston at 3400 Main St, Houston, TX 77002. Tickets are \$25 (\$15 students), with Pay-What-You-Can ticketing on opening night, in support of the company's mission of accessibility. Further information about the production, including a link to buy tickets, is available at <https://thunderclapproductions.com/melville-hawthorne/>.

Thunderclap Productions has also just announced its 2025 production for the John Steven Kellett Memorial Series, which will be the world premiere of the musical *The Chosen Ones*, by Aaron Alon. *The Chosen Ones* tells the story of six LGBTQ+ teens in a conversion therapy summer camp. Learn more at:

<https://thunderclapproductions.com/thechosenones/>

**About MELVILLE & HAWTHORNE**

*Melville & Hawthorne* is a world premiere production of the play MELVILLE & HAWTHORNE by Adi Teodoru. In its development stages, *Melville & Hawthorne* was performed for the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival by the Galveston Community College Theatre Department and as a staged reading workshop by Main Street Theater.

RUN TIME: 2 hours, including one intermission

GENRE: Drama, LGBTQ+

DATES & TIMES: Aug. 1-3, 5, and 9-10 at 7:30PM, with 2:30PM matinées on Aug. 5 and Aug. 10, 2024.

LOCATION: Matchbox 1, Midtown Arts and Theatre Center Houston at 3400 Main St, Houston, TX 77002

TICKETS: \$25 (students: \$15); opening is Pay-What-You-Can. Tickets available at

<https://matchouston.org/events/2024/melville-hawthorne>

To learn more, visit <https://thunderclapproductions.com/melville-hawthorne/>.

**About Thunderclap Productions**

Thunderclap Productions is a Houston-based nonprofit production company dedicated to producing new and under-recognized plays, musicals, and screenplays. We are committed to making the arts accessible to all patrons and have a special interest in producing works relating to social justice and equity. Thunderclap is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. The board is composed of five members: Aaron Alon, DMA; Justin Doran, MFA; Erin Rodgers, JD; Russell Sarre, DMA; and Tamara Siler.

To learn more, visit [thunderclapproductions.com](https://thunderclapproductions.com).

**About the John Steven Kellett Memorial Series**

Thunderclap Productions is proud to present the John Steven Kellett Memorial Series, an annual production of a play, musical, or film dealing with equality and pushing back against LGBTQ+ discrimination. This production series was created in memory of John Steven Kellett, a Houston-based retired Exxon executive and philanthropist who passed away in 2018. Mr. Kellett founded the John Steven Kellett Foundation, which has awarded Thunderclap Productions numerous grants, including a large grant in support of this memorial series that was part of their final grant cycle.

To learn more, visit [thunderclapproductions.com/kellettseries](https://thunderclapproductions.com/kellettseries)