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For Immediate Release
May 3rd, 2012

ÆDEM THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS *BEFORE. AFTER. NEVER.*
New Play Inspired By *Peter Pan* Deals With Autism

ST. LOUIS PARK, MN - Ædem Theatre Company is thrilled to present the world premiere of *Before. After. Never.* by Kayla Hambek on May 21st and 22nd. Inspired by J.M. Barrie's classic tale *Peter Pan*, this ensemble-devised work offers a new perspective on some favorite characters and what happens *after* Neverland. It also approaches some serious, real-life struggles, including autism.

Both playwright Kayla Hambek and director Evelyn Digirolamo have siblings on the spectrum, which influenced the decision to make the character of John Darling autistic. "[It] allowed me to explore his relationship to his siblings, his psychotherapist, and Peter Pan in a unique way that I haven't seen on the stage before," says Hambek. In the show, John struggles with feelings of losing control. His journey from confusion to despair and ultimately, to hope, is a major focal point. Digirolamo points out that directing the show has allowed her to empathize and connect to her own brother's struggles. "I understand more now how hard it is for him, and how much he has achieved. And seeing John's journey to hope makes me excited to continue watching my brother's."

Just as it balances scripted storytelling with movement-based theatre, *Before. After. Never.* balances the whimsical nature of Neverland with the often overlooked darker elements. But Digirolamo is confident that everyone will be able to connect to the universal themes. "We all struggle with the passage of time. Our characters face many of life's turning points: letting go of that relationship that is never going to work, learning to be assertive, facing your fears head on, being ready for your first child, finally saying what's on your heart – and all the while struggling with the difficulties of dementia, autism, and of course, the less than usual problems of being a fairy...or a shadow."

Before. After. Never., by Kayla Hambek, is directed by Evelyn Digirolamo and features costume designs by Angela Van Epps and a set design by Jess LeVeque. Featuring Karen Elaine Massey as Child/Peter, Evelyn Digirolamo as Time, Kayla Hambek as Mary Darling, Matthew J. Anderson as George Darling, Angela Van Epps as Wendy Darling, Brendan Veerman as John Darling, Austan

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Peterschick as Michael Darling, Danielle Krivinchuk as Lily Oldham, Joe Digirolamo as Smee, Seth Hambek as Sam Chaten, Rachel Gryte as Tinkerbell, Chase L. Van Epps as Seldon Morris, and Zachary Thoreau Schaeffer as Dr. Scott Brennard.

Performances will be at the Sabes Jewish Community Center on 4330 Cedar Lake Road South, St. Louis Park, MN 55416. Performances are May 21st and 22nd @ 7pm. Seating is limited. Tickets (\$10 adults, \$8 students/seniors) can be purchased at the door (cash only) or pre-ordered at aethemtheatrecompany.webs.com.

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ABOUT ÆðEM THEATRE COMPANY

Æðem Theatre Company is an ensemble based in the Twin Cities that specializes in physical theatre and performs original works that display a sense of play, discovery, and imagination. The company first began as a group of Bethel University students who decided to develop non-traditional theatrical skills outside of the classroom. Æðem (pronounced AY-thum) is an Old English word for “air exhaled from the lungs,” or “residual breath.” It can also mean the breath of inspiration, such as the Genesis account of God breathing life into the nostrils of his creation, Adam. Æðem Theatre Company strives to produce inventive and meaningful theatre that is just that – a breath of inspiration. To learn more, visit aethemtheatrecompany.webs.com.