

# INTO THE DARK UNKNOWN: THE HOPE CHEST

# HOLCOMBE WALLER & THE HEALERS



## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

*Into the Dark Unknown: The Hope Chest* is a performance of contemporary folk songs presented as a new form of popular art music.

*“He’s got the crazy-beautiful voice of an androgynous seraph, but he’s really a coffee-house troubadour from San Francisco and a classically trained pianist, a jazz saxophonist, and a visual artist.”*  
— SPIN MAGAZINE

With incisive song lyrics and monologues slyly masquerading as extempore between-song banter, Holcombe holds a potent mirror to his generation’s psychology in a time of war, religious stratification and environmental demise, making a new commentary on an emerging American liturgy where weekly recycling may trump Sunday church. Backed by his acoustic ensemble *The Healers*, Holcombe sifts through the personal

histories behind his songs to hold a potent mirror to his generation, tracing an elusive but vitally tenable sense of hope and renewal.

*Into the Dark Unknown* emerged from Holcombe’s desire to engage in multi-disciplinary music performance. His first move in this direction was a 2006 folk operetta comprised of Patty Griffin and Townes Van Zandt

songs. Titled *Mihael Sagalovesky and the Tragic Torments of Patty Heart Townes*, the piece linked the storytelling of folk music with vaudevillian sensibilities. *Into the Dark Unknown* began as an experiment in presenting Holcombe’s own songs within a theatrical framework that would allow a deeper contextualization of the songs. Originally workshopped in the PICA Time-Based Arts Festival in 2007, the piece debuted at *On the Boards* in Seattle in the Fall of 2008. Next, the show heads to the Public Theater’s *Under the Radar* Festival in New York City, San Francisco’s *Dance Mission Theater*, the *Vancouver PuSh Festival* and back to Portland in March. *Into the Dark Unknown* is currently being booked nationwide and internationally for 2009–10.

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Holcombe Waller is a singer-songwriter and performance artist with three critically acclaimed albums. Waller studied Art as an undergraduate at Yale University, specializing in Video Installation, and he spent his twenties honing his folk songwriting skills in the coffee houses of San Francisco. He has spent the past several years creating and studying interdisciplinary performance integrating music, movement, video and theatrical staging. He is the recipient of a 2008 MAP Fund for his new live

performance work, *Into the Dark Unknown: The Hope Chest*, which premiered at Seattle’s *On the Boards*’ main stage this past October. The piece will run at The New York Public Theater from January 8th through 18th, and will be coming to San Francisco March 5 through 8 at *Mission Dance Theater*. Waller is an avid fan of dance and recently collaborated on the latest performance by Seattle-based choreographer Zoe Scofield, commissioned by *Spectrum Dance Theater*. He is currently collaborating and performing with the *Joe Goode Performance Group* of San Francisco on a new piece titled, *Small Experiments in Song and Dance*.

*Into the Dark Unknown: The Hope Chest* is a National Performance Network Creation Fund Project co-commissioned by *On the Boards* in partnership with *Portland Institute for Contemporary Art* and the *National Performance Network*. Major contributor of the *National Performance Network* are *Doris Duke Charitable Foundation*, *Ford Foundation*, *Nathan Cummings Foundation*, and the *National Endowment for the Arts* (a federal agency). For more information, please visit [NPN.org](http://NPN.org).

Created by **HOLCOMBE WALLER**  
Performed by **HOLCOMBE WALLER & THE HEALERS**  
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Booking [HOLCOMBE@MAC.COM](mailto:HOLCOMBE@MAC.COM)

## 2008–2009 PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

[www.holcombewaller.com](http://www.holcombewaller.com)

2008	October 2–4	SEATTLE, WA	<i>On the Boards</i>
2009	January 8–18	NEW YORK, NY	<i>Under the Radar</i>
	January 31	VANCOUVER, BC	<i>PuSh Festival</i>
	March 5–8	SAN FRANCISCO, CA	<i>Dance Mission</i>
	March 26–29	PORTLAND, OR	<i>PICA Presents</i>