

**CHESTER THEATRE COMPANY  
PRESENTS NEW ENGLAND PREMIERE OF  
BLINK  
BY PHIL PORTER**

**Innovative and Timely Love Story Plays August 13 - 23**

**Chester, MA-** Chester Theatre Company will bring its 26<sup>th</sup> season to a close with the New England Premiere of **BLINK** by British playwright Phil Porter. Not only will this production be a regional premiere, but it features the play's first American cast – the Off Broadway production featured the original British cast. Performances will run from August 13<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**BLINK** is the tale of Jonah and Sophie. It's a love story, a quirky love story about virtual reality, fear of intimacy, and love in the digital age. According to The New York Times, "**Blink** is everything you want in a relationship play: funny, painful, affecting."

In his last season as CTC Artistic Director, Byam Stevens wanted to "Share a slate of plays that represent the best contemporary writing for the theatre, by men and women, from England, Ireland and the United States. **BLINK** is the English entry. Phil Porter's play is not only hip, innovative and fun, it asks a truly fascinating question: What shape will our relationships take in an increasingly technological world?"

Phil Porter graduated from the University of Birmingham in 1999. Since then his work has been produced by major British theatre institutions including: The National Theatre and multiple productions for the Royal Shakespeare Company. **BLINK** was a smash hit at the Edinburgh Festival before transferring to London and New York. Phil is a fan of sport, mostly cricket, and his latest play for the RSC, *The Christmas Truce*, celebrates the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1914 Christmas soccer matches between British and German soldiers fighting in the trenches of World War I.

Clearly, **BLINK** is a departure from this historical mode of playwriting. According to director Daniel Elihu Kramer, "**BLINK** is a wonderfully unconventional love story--two remarkable characters invite us into their story of finding love in the modern world. Their journey is funny, surprising, and full of unexpected beauty"

**THE CREATIVE TEAM**

**Phil Porter (Playwright)** is a playwright, screenwriter and librettist. His plays include: *The Christmas Truce* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *Blink* (Soho Theatre / Nabokov), *The Cracks In My Skin* (Manchester Royal Exchange), *Here Lies Mary Spindler* (Royal Shakespeare Company). He adapted Janos Hay's *The Stonewatcher* for The National Theatre and edited Middleton's *A Mad World, My Masters* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and *Pericles* for the Royal Shakespeare Company.

**Daniel Elihu Kramer (Director)** is the Associate Artistic Director at CTC, where his previous directing credits include last season's hit *The Amish Project*, the box office smash *Tryst*, *The Swan*, and *The Turn of the Screw*. Daniel also wrote the CTC hit *Pride @ Prejudice*. He is on the faculty of the Theatre Department at Smith College. This fall, Daniel will become Producing Artistic Director of CTC.

**Joel Ripka (Jonah)** won the hearts of CTC audiences playing Raleigh in the 2010 hit production of *The Nibroc Trilogy*. Since then he has returned to play Hamlet in *Wittenberg* and the swan in *The Swan*. Prior to moving to New York, Joel worked extensively in Pittsburgh's professional theatre scene, playing a wide range of classical and contemporary roles in *Othello*, *Beautiful Dreamer*, *Jane Eyre*, *Crime and Punishment*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The School for Scandal*, *Amadeus*, *Cymbeline*, *The Wild Duck*, *Ah, Wilderness!*, *The Real Thing*, *A View From The Bridge*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Beirut*.

**Therese Plaehn (Sophie)** is a newcomer to CTC, but no stranger to the Massachusetts theatre scene, having played in David Cromer's acclaimed production of *Our Town* at the Huntington, *Paradise Lost* at American Repertory Theatre, and *North Shore Fish* at Gloucester Stage. Her new York credits include the Broadway production of *The Heidi Chronicles* and a stint the Public Theatre in *A (radically condensed and expanded) Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again, after David Foster Wallace*. Therese has an MFA from the A.R.T./Moscow Art Theatre Institute at Harvard.

Scenic Design by Travis A. George, Costume Design by Heather Crocker Aulenback, Lighting Design by Lara Dubin, Sound Design by Tom Shread.

## **TICKETS AND INFORMATION**

Tickets are available on CTC's website: [www.chestertheatre.org](http://www.chestertheatre.org), or by phone at 1-800-595-4TIX. To receive a brochure, contact the CTC office at 413-354-7770. CTC performances take place at Chester's historic Town Hall, 15 Middlefield Road, Chester, MA. Performances are Wednesday through Saturday at 8:00pm, with matinees Thursdays and Sundays at 2:00pm. Tickets are \$37.50. Student, Chester Resident, and group rates for 10 or more are also available. For further information visit CTC's website at: [www.chestertheatre.org](http://www.chestertheatre.org).

## **About Chester Theatre Company**

Chester Theatre Company, a professional theatre company located in the foothills of the Berkshires, produces 4 plays each summer, performed by topflight actors, directors and designers from across the country. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Byam Stevens, CTC has earned a reputation for producing the best in contemporary theatre -- 17 CTC productions have gone on to Off Broadway, regional, national, and international engagements in the last 18 years. For further information go to CTC's website, [www.chestertheatre.org](http://www.chestertheatre.org).