

The logo for the Chester Theatre Company, featuring the text "CHESTER THEATRE COMPANY" in a white, serif font, centered within a solid orange square.

CHESTER
THEATRE
COMPANY

REQUEST FOR COVERAGE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CHESTER THEATRE COMPANY BRINGS AYAD AKHTAR'S
PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING *DISGRACED* TO THE TOWN HALL THEATRE
JULY 5-JULY 15**

WAM Artistic Director Kristen van Ginhoven returns
following last season's hit *I AND YOU*

Chester, MA – Chester Theatre Company (CTC) is proud to present Ayad Akhtar's *Disgraced* in the historic Chester Town Hall, 15 Middlefield Road in Chester, MA from July 5 through July 15, 2018.

Two couples. Four backgrounds. One explosive dinner party. This Pulitzer Prize winning play explores the prickly and often painful territory of American identity, and exposes the fears and prejudices lurking in the corners of even the most progressive social circles. Kirsten van Ginhoven (director of last season's *I and You*) returns to Chester to direct this high intensity stunner.

The artistic team of *Disgraced* includes:

Kirsten van Ginhoven returns to Chester after directing last year's *I and You*. Kristen is the Artistic Director of WAM Theatre (Where Arts and Activism Meet), which she co-founded in 2010. WAM's vision is to create opportunity for women and girls through a mission of theatre as philanthropy. Kristen's directing credits at WAM include *In Darfur* (New England Premiere), *Emilie* (New England Premiere), *The Old Mezzo* (World Premiere) and *Melancholy Play*. Elsewhere, Kristen's selected directing credits include *Waxworks* (Williams College), *The Whale* (Adirondack Theatre Festival), *10 Minute Play Festival* (Barrington Stage Company), *Petticoats of Steel* (Capital Repertory Theatre). Kristen is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers and Canadian Actor's Equity Association, and is a theatre artist for the International Schools Theatre Association. She was a member of the 2013 Lincoln Center Director's Lab and is a member of the Michael Langham Workshop for Classical Direction at the Stratford Festival of Canada. She has a BA from Dalhousie University, BEd from Queen's University and an MA from Emerson College, where she received the Presidential Fellowship. Upcoming: Kristen will be directing Jayne Atkinson as Ann Richards in *Ann* for WAM and Dorset Theatre Festival in August/October.

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Ayad Akhtar (Playwright) was born in New York City and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is the author of *American Dervish*, published in 25 languages worldwide and a 2012 Best Book of the Year at *Kirkus Reviews*, Toronto's *Globe and Mail*, *Shelf-Awareness*, and *O Magazine*. He is also a playwright and screenwriter. His play *Disgraced* played at New York's Lincoln Center Theater in 2012 and premiered at the Bush Theater in London in May 2013. *Disgraced* won the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. His play *The Invisible Hand* was nominated for the ATCA/Steinberg Award, and won Best New Work 2013 from the St. Louis Theater Critics Circle. As a screenwriter, he was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best Screenplay for *The War Within*. He has received commissions from Lincoln Center and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. He is a graduate of Brown and Columbia Universities with degrees in Theater and Film Directing.

Jonathan Albert (Isaac) is an adjunct professor of acting and playwriting at Union College, University at Albany and Pace University in Manhattan. Jonathan received his Masters in Fine Arts from the Actors Studio Drama School at the New School University and was inducted as a Lifetime Member of the Actors Studio in 2005. Favorite theatre credits: Stu in *Cowboys #2* and *Chicago* by Sam Shepard, Tobin Gray in Maieutic Theatre Company's *Arpeggio* and Baylis in *Blackbird* by Adam Rapp.

Abuzar Farrukh (Abe) makes his Chester Theatre debut in *Disgraced*. Abuzar, a recent graduate from UMass Amherst, moved to the United States in 2014 from Lahore, Pakistan, where he performed in plays such as *The Accidental Death of An Anarchist*, *The Blood Wedding* and *The Unseen Hand*. His favorite credits from UMass include *The Misanthrope*, *The Happiest Song Plays Last*, *Runaways*, *Snowflakes* and *The Lily's Revenge*. The recipient of the Ed Golden Acting Award at UMass, he most recently appeared in a reading of *Honor Killing* at WAM Theatre.

Christina Gordon (Jory) makes her Chester Theatre debut. Elsewhere: *In Darfur* (WAM Theatre), *Good People* (The Public Theatre & Shadowland Theatre), Company Member with The Pushcart Players, performing: *Little Red Riding Hood & Other Stories* and *Stone Soup & Other Stories*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, *Reasons to be Pretty*. TV: *HAPPYish*, *Person of Interest*, *Guiding Light*. Film: *I Hate Being Black*, *Damsel*. Training: MFA in Acting, Rutgers University. Co-wrote and co-produced the award winning short-film, *I Hate Being Black*.

J. Paul Nicholas (Amir) has twice been in Ayad Akhtar's *The Invisible Hand*, most recently at Cleveland Play House, and before that at Theater Exile in Philadelphia in 2016. Between those two turns he was on a national tour with the Broadway phenomenon *The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time*. Some of his other recent credits include *The Butcher* at Gulfshore Playhouse, *Ciphers* at Inis Nua Theater, *Blood and Gifts* at the Lincoln Center Theater, and *The English Bride* at Theater Exile. Paul has also performed regionally at The Shakespeare Theater; The Wilma; The Olney; Interact Theater; Alabama Shakespeare Festival; Geva Theatre; Seattle Repertory; Woolly Mammoth; The Alliance; and Everyman Theater. He has also performed Off-Broadway. He can be seen on several TV series, most recently on ABC's *Deception*, and for 8 seasons he was Attorney Linden Delroy on TV's *LAW & ORDER: SVU*. Paul earned an MFA from the Academy for Classical Acting at GWU.

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Kim Stauffer (Emily) Previous CTC credits include *Crime and Punishment* and *Madagascar*. NEW YORK: *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Mary Stuart*, *Macbeth* (New York Classical Theatre). REGIONAL: *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *The Tempest*, *Macbeth*, *Pericles*, *Lorenzaccio* (Shakespeare Theatre Company, DC); *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Kansas City Repertory Theatre); *Gaslight*, *The Crucible*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Barrington Stage Company); *Outside Mullingar*, *Taming of the Shrew* (Capital Repertory Theatre); *Emilie: La Marquise du Chatelet Defends her Life Tonight* (WAM Theatre); *Dracula* (Actors Theatre of Louisville); *Othello* (Shakespeare Festival St. Louis); *Proof* (Triad Stage); *Time Stands Still* (New Century Theatre); *A Christmas Carol* (Virginia Stage Company) FILM/TV: *Hence the Stars*, *Pearl Divers*, *Small Shots: The Amish Matrix*. EDUCATION: MFA, University of North Carolina Greensboro. Kim teaches acting in the University at Albany Theater Program.

The rest of the artistic team includes **James McNamara** (Lighting Designer), **Stella Schwartz** (Costume Designer), **Tom Shread** (Sound Designer), and **Adele Traub** (Stage Manager.)

Individual ticket prices are \$42.50. Chester residents, members of the military and their families, and those holding EBT/SNAP cards may purchase \$10 tickets at the door or by calling the box office. (Call box office for details.) Student Rush \$10 tickets are available day of show. Single tickets and flex passes may be purchased online at chestertheatre.org, or by phone at 413.354.7771. Special rates for groups of 10 or more are available.

About Chester Theatre Company

Chester Theatre Company, a professional theatre company located between the Berkshires and the Pioneer Valley, and convenient to both, is known for presenting high-quality productions with top-notch actors, directors, and designers from across the country since 1990. Founded by former Artistic Director of Dublin's Abbey Theatre, Vincent Dowling, CTC is now in its 29th season, and produces four thought-provoking plays each summer in the intimate setting of the Town Hall Theatre at 15 Middlefield Road in Chester, MA.

For further information, please call CTC at 413.354.7770, or visit www.chestertheatre.org.

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