

**CHESTER THEATRE COMPANY
PRESENTS
MEMORY HOUSE
BY KATHLEEN TOLAN**

**HEARTWARMING FAMILY DRAMA TO STAR DEBRA JO RUPP
July 29- August 9**

Chester, MA- Chester Theatre Company will explore mother-daughter relationships in the 3rd play of its 26th Season, *MEMORY HOUSE*, by Kathleen Tolan. CTC veteran Debra Jo Rupp returns to CTC in this moving story about the complex issues raised by international child adoption. Performances will run from July 29-August 9.

MEMORY HOUSE opens in a New York apartment on New Year's Eve. Maggie hovers as her teenage daughter Katia tries to finish her college application — due by midnight. Katia picks tonight — of all times — to challenge Maggie on the ethics of her adoption from a Russian orphanage, while Maggie picks tonight to learn to bake a pie. Honest, sharp-witted, sharp-tongued, and ultimately deeply loving, *MEMORY HOUSE* is “A captivating emotional ballet that is also a moving demonstration of the strenuous work that goes into good mothering.” (*New York Times*).

Tolan was commissioned by Oskar Eustis, former Artistic Director of the Trinity Repertory Company (Providence, RI) to write a play that eventually became *MEMORY HOUSE*. Inspired by a case relating to an international adoption, she wrote about the complexities of raising a child born to a different mother in another part of the world.

"*MEMORY HOUSE*" is part of our ongoing look at the fluid nature of personal identity," said CTC Artistic Director Byam Stevens, "Both characters are wrestling with their sense of self. Maggie is struggling with the ramifications of career transition from dancing to corporate life. Katia, an American teenager in every sense, fears she's losing her connection to her Russian birth identity. What's great is how Tolan deals with these issues in a way that is both deeply moving and so very witty."

Stage, film, and television actress Debra Jo Rupp will be starring as Maggie. Katia will be played by newcomer Caitlyn Griffin. The mother-daughter relationship of the play mirrors the relationship of the actors — Ms. Rupp has taken Griffin under her wing as she makes her professional debut.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Kathleen Tolan (Playwright) worked for years as an actor and is currently the head of the MFA Playwriting Program at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers.

Premiered at New York's Playwrights Horizons, MEMORY HOUSE has been produced at the Actors Theatre of Louisville, Victory Gardens in Chicago, the Seattle Rep, and at Trinity Repertory Theatre, where it was originally commissioned. Her plays have also been produced in New York (Playwrights Horizons, The Public Theatre and the Women's Project), and in Europe. She is the recipient of the 2005 McKnight National Residency and is a member of the Writers Guild, the Dramatists Guild and PEN.

Sheila Siragusa (Director) Previous CTC productions include *An Iliad*, *Mercy of a Storm*, *Blackbird* and the New England premiere of Marilyn Campbell and Curt Columbus's *Crime and Punishment*. Sheila is cofounder and director of The August Company, directing first folio Shakespeare with *Taming of the Shrew*, *King Lear*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*. Her original play *Water*, a movement/theatre piece about privatization of natural resources, was the recipient of the Theatre for Social *Justice Award*.

Debra Jo Rupp (Maggie) previous work with CTC includes *Madagascar* and *Body of Water*. She has worked regionally with the Berkshire Theatre Festival (*Deathtrap*, *Mornings at Seven*) The Williamstown Theatre Festival (*True West*, *A Flea in Her Ear*) and TheaterWorks Hartford (*Annapurna*). Ms. Rupp has been nominated for numerous awards (Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, Connecticut Critics Circle) for her role of Dr. Ruth Westheimer in *Becoming Dr. Ruth* at the Westside Arts Theatre. Her Television credits include *That 70's Show* (Kitty Forman, 8 seasons).

Caitlyn Griffin (Katia) is making her professional debut. She will be a senior at the University of Massachusetts Amherst this coming Fall, and has been performing since the age of 9, in upwards of 40 school and community productions.

Scenic Design by Geoffrey Ehrendreich, Costume Design by Sarah Nelson, Lighting Design by James McNamara, Sound Design by Tom Shread.

TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Tickets are available on CTC's website: www.chestertheatre.org, or by phone at 1800-5954TIX. To receive a brochure, contact the CTC office at 4133547770. 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.

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.