

**CHESTER THEATRE COMPANY
OPENS 25th ANNIVERSARY SEASON WITH
THE HAUNTING MYSTERY
MADAGASCAR**

**by J.T. Rogers
Running June 25 - July 6**

CHESTER, MA (June 3, 2014) – Chester Theatre Company will open its 25th Anniversary Season with J.T. Rogers' haunting mystery **MADAGASCAR**. The production, which runs from June 25th through July 6th at the Chester Town Hall in Chester, MA, will feature CTC favorites Debra Jo Rupp (*A Body of Water*) and Kim Stauffer (*Crime and Punishment*).

MADAGASCAR tells the story of three Americans who find themselves alone, in the same hotel room overlooking the Spanish Steps in Rome at three different periods in time: June (played by Stauffer), a young woman who works as a tour guide of the city's ancient ruins; Lilian (played by Rupp), her wealthy and elegant jet-setting mother; and Nathan, a rumpled university economist and the best friend of Lilian's famous, deceased husband. As they each tell their individual tale, their relationships to each other, the meaning of this room and why they have been called to it is revealed. Their stories weave back and forth in time — each contradicting, clarifying, deepening what the others say — as they attempt to discover the truth: why did the young man disappear? What responsibility do they bear for his vanishing?

“At the heart of this play is the fascinating idea that we are all mysteries, foreign and exotic countries, to each other,” said Byam Stevens, CTC's Artistic Director. “No matter how much time you spend with someone, that person is, on some level, unknowable. That unknowability, the capacity to surprise us, is both the greatest joy and the deepest sorrow. J.T. Rogers builds a rich, heartfelt drama around this truth that everyone of us experiences every day.”

“**MADAGASCAR** lures you into its tale with captivating power...wondrous, elegiac, unforgettable drama,” says the Miami Herald. **MADAGASCAR** will be directed by former CTC Associate Artistic Director James Warwick (*The Retreat From Moscow, Duet for One, Skylight*). Warwick returns to Western Massachusetts after heading the Los Angeles Campus of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts.

In addition to their work at CTC, area audiences will recognize Debra Jo Rupp and Kim Stauffer from their recent hit shows - Rupp in *Dr. Ruth, All the Way* at BSC and Stauffer in *Emilie: La Marquise Du Châtelet Defends Her Life Tonight* at WAM Theatre.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

J.T. Rogers' (Playwright) other plays include *Blood and Gifts* (Drama Desk Award Nominee and Lucille Lortel Award Nominee), *The Overwhelming*, and *White People*. As one of the original playwrights for the Tricycle Theatre of London's *The Great Game: Afghanistan* he was nominated for a 2009 Olivier Award. His works have been staged throughout the United States and in Germany, Canada, Australia, and Israel. He is a 2012 Guggenheim fellow in playwriting.

James Warwick (Director) has now directed over 40 productions in US regional theatres. He has served as associate artistic director at both Chester Theatre Company and the Berkshire Theatre Festival. In 2007, Mr. Warwick was appointed Interim President of AADA in Los Angeles and in 2009, President of Theatre of Arts in Hollywood, two of the oldest drama schools in the US. For CTC, James Warwick has directed *Retreat From Moscow*, *Duet for One* and *Skylight*. As an actor, Mr. Warwick has played several leading roles in London's West End and starred in many filmed series for BBC Television and PBS Masterpiece Theatre. In 1995, Mr. Warwick toured America as Arthur in *Camelot*, followed by Sir Robert Chiltern in *An Ideal Husband* on Broadway.

Debra Jo Rupp (Lilian) is returning to CTC following the 2009 production of *Body of Water*. Area audiences will also recognize Debra Jo Rupp from her numerous performances with Williamstown Theatre Festival, Berkshire Theatre Group, and Barrington Stage Company (BSC). Ms. Rupp is well-known in our area for her hit one-woman show *Dr. Ruth, All the Way* at BSC, which later transferred to TheatreWorks in Hartford and Westside Theatre in NYC. Her Broadway credits include *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (with Kathleen Turner and Charles Durning). Her Off-Broadway credits include *Frankie and Johnny in the Claire de Lune*, *The Butcher of Baraboo* at Second Stage and *A Girl's Guide to Chaos* in NYC and Los Angeles. TV credits include: Kitty Forman in *That 70s Show*; *Seinfeld* and *Friends*. Film credits include *Big* and *From the Earth to the Moon* (both with Tom Hanks).

Kim Stauffer (June) is returning to CTC following the 2011 production of *Crime and Punishment*. Area audiences will be familiar with her performances in: *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *The Crucible* (Barrington Stage Company), *Emilie* (WAM Theatre), and *The Crucible* (Capital Repertory Theatre). She has extensive classical credits; in New York: *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Mary Stuart*, *Macbeth* (New York Classical Theatre) and regionally: *Othello* (Shakespeare Festival St. Louis); *Dracula* (Actors Theatre of Louisville); *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *The Tempest*, *Macbeth*, *Pericles*, *Lorenzaccio* (The Shakespeare Theatre Company); *Merchant of Venice*, *The Tempest* (North Carolina Shakespeare Festival).

Paul O'Brien (Nathan) is a CTC newcomer, though his son Tom O'Brien starred in CTC's hit production of *THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW*. His Broadway credits include: *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever* (with Harry Connick Jr), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (with Brian Bedford), *Equus* (with Daniel Radcliffe), *Democracy*, *King Lear* (with Christopher Plummer), *The Crucible* (with Liam Neeson and Laura Linney) and *Twelfth Night* (with Paul Rudd, Helen Hunt and Kyra Sedgewick). His Regional work includes stints at Williamstown Theater Festival, Huntington Theatre, Long Wharf, Trinity Rep, and The Guthrie.

Set Design by Travis A. George, Lighting Design by Lara Dubin, Costume Design by Arthur Oliver, and Sound Design by Tom Shread.

TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Tickets are available on CTC's website: 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. There will be no performance on July 4th. Tickets are \$30 for weekday performances (Wed-Fri), \$35 for weekend (Sat & Sun). Student, Chester Resident, and Saturday Night Rush tickets available; 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 17 years. For further information go to CTC's website, www.chestertheatre.org.

MADAGASCAR's media sponsor is New England Public Radio. Other corporate sponsors this season include Baystate Health, Esselon Café, Harvest Moon Realty, Morgan Stanley and Valley Advocate/Preview Magazine. CTC performances are supported, in part, by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Local Cultural Councils of Blandford, Chester, Huntington, Montgomery, Washington, Westfield and Worthington.

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