

CHESTER THEATRE COMPANY
Presents
The Regional Premiere of
AN ILIAD
by Lisa Peterson and Denis O'Hare

Obie Award-Winning One Man Show
Original Accompaniment Played Live

August 15-25

CHESTER, MA- The final production in CTC's 2013 season will be **AN ILIAD** by Lisa Peterson and Denis O'Hare, based on a translation of *The Iliad* by Robert Fagles. This acclaimed retelling of Homer's classic brings the epic roaring back to life in a version *The New York Times* calls: "Spellbinding... an age-old story that resonates with tragic meaning today." Playwrights Lisa Peterson and Tony Award-winner Denis O'Hare were honored with a special citation from the 2012 Obie Awards for bringing a modern sensibility to Homer's epic tale. The production will run from August 15 through August 25.

AN ILIAD opens with the entrance of an old man carrying a battered suitcase. The man it turns out is a Poet, and his "song" is Homer's story of Achilles and Hector, of Troy, of gods and goddesses, kings and heroes, epic battles and an endless war. It soon becomes clear the Poet has been telling this story for a very long time – and observed much in the process. All of which he shares, with the wit and wisdom gleaned of long experience.

AN ILIAD pairs actor Steve Hendrickson with director Sheila Siragusa for the fourth time CTC (*Crime and Punishment*, *Blackbird*, *Mercy of a Storm*). "A big part of making good theatre is making, and keeping, good relationships," says Hendrickson, "Sheila and I met a moment of crisis when her CTC production of *Mercy of a Storm* lost an actor at the 11th hour. I had done the play before, stepped in sight unseen and the show went on. It ended well and, having been "in the wars" and survived, Sheila and I became great friends." Siragusa agrees, "Steve is just a director's dream. He is at once the most passionate and the least precious actor I've worked with. While some of the material we've collaborated on has been heavy, heavy stuff, being in the rehearsal room together is always a joy."

Hendrickson and Siragusa will be working closely in rehearsal with CTC Resident Sound Designer Tom Shread who is composing an accompaniment he will play live at every performance. According to CTC Artistic Director Byam Stevens, "Every production of **AN ILIAD** to date has featured a live accompaniment, often an acoustic bass or cello. This is very much in keeping with the ancient, bardic tradition in which traveling poets accompanied themselves on a lyre or lute. Tom is being mysterious about his exact instrumentation – he'll be playing a range of acoustic and electric instruments, with the intent that the sounds won't be readily identifiable as this instrument or that – he's aiming for a mysterious and ancient soundscape."

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Steve Hendrickson will play the Poet, accompanied by Tom Shread. Directed by Sheila Siragusa, Set Design and Costume Design by Vicki R. Davis, Lighting Design by Lara Dubin, Sound Design by Tom Shread.

Lisa Peterson is a theater director who teamed with actor Denis O'Hare to write and adapt *An Iliad*, for which they won a 2012 Obie Award. Lisa Peterson has directed *The Model Apartment* by Donald Margulies, *Slavs!* by Tony Kushner, *Traps and Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* by Caryl Churchill (Obie Award for Direction), and *The Scarlet Letter* adapted by Phyllis Nagy. Her other adaptations include *The Waves*, adapted from the novel by Virginia Woolf (two Drama Desk nominations), *The Good Book* with Denis O'Hare, and *Insurance Men* with composer Todd Almond. She was Resident Director at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles for ten years.

Denis O'Hare is an actor, author, and artist who has appeared in numerous Broadway productions, films, and television shows. In 2003, he won a Tony Award for Best Actor for his performance in *Take Me Out* and later won the 2005 Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Featured Actor in a Musical for his role as Oscar Lindquist in the Broadway revival of *Sweet Charity*. He has written three screenplays, numerous poems, and one other play, *The Good Book*, with Lisa Peterson.

Steve Hendrickson has appeared on and off-Broadway and across the country at the Folger Shakespeare, Chicago Shakespeare, Orlando Shakespeare & Yale Repertory Theatres, Arizona Theatre Company, Old Globe Theatre, Asolo Theatre, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse and the Guthrie. He has received several awards, including a 2000 Best Actor citation from CityPages for Macheath in *Threepenny Opera*, 2003 and 2005 Best Actor citations from the Star Tribune for King Arthur in *Camelot* and Shylock in *Merchant of Venice* and an Ivey Theatre Award in 2005 for *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

Sheila Siragusa 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*. Other credits with August Company: *Onwords:Gone*, *Onwords:Chekhov* and *Santacide*. Her original play *Water*, a movement/theatre piece about privatization of natural resources was the recipient of the Theatre for Social Justice Award.

Tom Shread is a musician, sound designer and dramaturg. Previous CTC productions include *The Dishwashers*, *Grace*, *The Bully Pulpit*, *Animals Out of Paper*, *Pride @ Prejudice*, *The Swan*, *The Nibroc Trilogy*. Tom has an MA in dramaturgy, has played music throughout Europe and East Africa, and in the early 1980s had a residency at *Happy Land*, Khartoum's only nightclub.

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. 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 top-flight 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 16 years. For further information go to CTC's website, www.chestertheatre.org.

CTC performances are supported, in part, by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Local Cultural Councils of Blandford, Chester, Montgomery, Russell, Otis, Washington, and Worthington.

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