

CHESTER THEATRE COMPANY
Presents
The Regional Premiere of
BODY AWARENESS
by Annie Baker

Comedy from Multiple Obie Award winner and Amherst Native Annie Baker
July 31- August 11

CHESTER, MA (July 15, 2013) - The third installment in CTC's 2013 season will be **BODY AWARENESS** by Amherst native Annie Baker. In this smart and gentle comedy, Baker's amazingly acute ear for dialogue is on full display. The *New York Times* called **BODY AWARENESS** "an engaging new comedy by a young playwright with a probing, understated voice... its quiet rewards steal up on you." The production will run from June 31st to August 11th.

BODY AWARENESS tells the story of an unconventional, modern American nuclear family. Phyllis is professor at a college where she has organized a series of events for "Body Awareness Week". She and her partner, Joyce, are hosting Frank, a guest artist whose nude photos are being shown at the campus gallery. When Joyce's grown son Jared—who swears he doesn't have Asperger's Syndrome—turns to Frank for advice, and Joyce considers posing for Frank, tensions rise in this comedy about family ties, political correctness on campus and putting labels on people who are different from us.

According to CTC Artistic Director Byam Stevens, "Annie Baker has a wonderful way of creating comedy that both exposes her characters' foibles and exhibits an abiding empathy for them. There's a lovely warmth that runs through the play – it's comedy, but it's not cruel. In fact, one of the themes she explores in **BODY AWARENESS** is the tension between judgment and empathy."

Annie Baker is one of America's foremost young playwrights. Her full length plays include *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Playwrights Horizons, OBIE Award for Best New American Play), *The Aliens* (Rattlestick Theater, OBIE Award for Best New American Play), *Body Awareness* (Atlantic Theater Company, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle nominations for Best Play/Emerging Playwright). Ms. Baker's plays have been performed at over 100 theatres across the USA and in Europe and South America. Recent honors include a New York Drama Critics Circle Award, a Susan Smith Blackburn Prize nomination, and a MacDowell fellowship. *The Vermont Plays*, an anthology of her work, is available from TCG books.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

The cast features Caitlin McDonough-Thayer as Phyllis, Jennifer Rohn as Joyce, David Rosenblatt as Jared and Bruce McKenzie as Frank. Directed by Knud Adams, Set Design by Travis A. George, Lighting Design by James McNamara, Costume Design by Heather Crocker Aulenback, Sound Design by Tom Shread.

Knud Adams is a Brooklyn-based director of new plays. His recent NYC work includes Max

Posner's *Gun Logistics* with Birgit Huppuch & Paul Thureen (Directorfest), *Home Universe* (Columbia Stages), *Children of the Future Age* (Calliope), *Carmen and Suor Angelica* (dell'Arte Opera Ensemble), and *Ghost Life* (Playwrights Horizons Workshop). He has assisted some of the nation's foremost theatre artists, including André Gregory (*Grasses of a Thousand Colors*), Richard Foreman (*Old Fashioned Prostitutes*), Sam Gold (*Uncle Vanya*, *A Doll's House*, *Kin*), and Sarah Benson (*Orange*, *Hat & Grace*).

Caitlin McDonough-Thayer's virtuoso comic performance playing both mother and daughter in last season's *The Betrothed* was a hit with CTC audiences. She has worked extensively in New York's "Downtown theatre scene" with giants like Richard Foreman, Woodshed Collective, Theater of a Two-Headed Calf, Nature Theater of Oklahoma and Ohio Theater.

Jennifer Rohn also has extensive credits in the Downtown scene, having worked with Robert Wilson in *the CIVIL wars* (BAM), *Hamletmachine* (European Tour) *Salome* (La Scala), and *Quartet* (American Repertory Theater) and at the Public Theater, LaMama and P.S. 122. Her "Uptown credits" include two Broadway gigs *The Kentucky Cycle* and *The Crucible*. This will be her fifth CTC gig: *Boston Marriage*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Home Fires Burning* and *John Brown's Body*. As a member of The Acting Company she toured the country and performed at the Barbican Center in London.

David Rosenblatt will be making his CTC debut. His recent NY credits include: *queerSpawn* (HERE) and *The Play About My Dad* (59E59). He starred in Mac Roger's sci-fi trilogy, *Advance Man* (NYIT Award) and *Blast Radius*. Regional Theatre: Branden Jacobs Jenkins' *Appropriate* (Humana) and *The Duchess of Malfi* (Actors' Shakespeare Project).

Bruce McKenzie also has extensive experience in new plays. A co-founder of Sledgehammer Theatre in San Diego, he appeared there in works by Charles Mee, Mac Wellman and Erik Ehn. He has also appeared on Broadway in *The Farnsworth Invention*, and Downtown in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *True Love* (New York Theatre Workshop), and *Big Love* (BAM Next Wave Festival). Regional credits include: Actors Theatre of Louisville, Yale Rep, Huntington Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Berkeley Rep and La Jolla Playhouse.

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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