

CHESTER THEATRE COMPANY

Announces 25th Anniversary Season

**Silver Anniversary celebrated with plays from
a spectrum of eminent, established and emerging playwrights**

MADAGASCAR by J.T. Rogers – June 25 - July 6

ANNAPURNA by Sharr White – July 10 - 20

A NUMBER by Caryl Churchill – July 30 - August 10

THE AMISH PROJECT by Jessica Dickey – August 14 - 24

CHESTER, MA (March 24, 2014) Chester Theatre Company will present its 25th Anniversary season from June 25th to August 24th at the Chester Town Hall in Chester, MA. This landmark year will include J.T. Roger's haunting mystery **MADAGASCAR**, Sharr White's sharp comedy **ANNAPURNA**, Caryl Churchill's futuristic thriller **A NUMBER**, and Jessica Dickey's transformative one-woman show **THE AMISH PROJECT**.

"While we're known for producing theatre with high-quality acting, directing and production, I have always viewed CTC as a writers' theatre," says CTC Artistic Director Byam Stevens. "Good writing is the bedrock of good theatre. Without a quality script, you can't produce theatre that has a lasting impact. We're marking our 25th anniversary with compelling scripts from playwrights across the spectrum of acclaim – from the eminent Caryl Churchill to the emerging Jessica Dickey."

MADAGASCAR – A Haunting Mystery Weaving through Time

The season opens on June 25th with **MADAGASCAR**, by J.T. Rogers, the haunting story of a young man's mysterious disappearance. **MADAGASCAR** will feature CTC favorites Debra Jo Rupp (*Body of Water*) and Kim Stauffer (*Crime and Punishment*). The play 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 deceased husband. As they each tell their individual story, their relationship 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?

"**MADAGASCAR** lures you into its tale with captivating power...wondrous, elegiac, unforgettable drama," says the *Miami Herald*. J.T. Rogers' 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.

MADAGASCAR will be directed by former CTC Associate Artistic Director, James Warwick (*The Retreat From Moscow*, *Duet for One*, *Skylight*).

ANNAPURNA – A Trailer Park Reunion Twenty Years in the Making

Running July 10 - 20, **ANNAPURNA** is a “comic and gripping duet” (*San Francisco Chronicle*) on the persistence of love. Twenty years ago, in the middle of the night, Emma walked out on Ulysses, her cowboy-poet husband. Now, hearing he's in dire straits, she tracks him down to a trailer park in the wilds of Colorado where she finds him hooked to an oxygen tank and cooking sausages in the buff. Their reunion, alternately comic and conflicted, is full of razor sharp wit and brutal honesty. To their surprise, the more they understand what drove them apart, the more they are drawn together.

Sharr White's other plays include *Sunlight*, *Six Years*, *The Other Place* and *The Snow Geese*. **ANNAPURNA** premiered at the Magic Theatre in San Francisco and was a finalist for the Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award.

Robert Egan will be making his directing debut at CTC with **ANNAPURNA**. Egan is the Founding Artistic Director/Producer of the Ojai Playwright's Conference (OPC), one the most prestigious summer new play development conferences in America. Before OPC, he served for twenty years as the Producing Artistic Director of the Mark Taper Forum, one of the country's leading theatre companies.

A NUMBER – A Fast-Paced Futuristic Thriller

Bernard has made a shocking discovery: he is one of “a number” of clones that were created from the cells of an older brother he never knew he had. Caryl Churchill's **A NUMBER** opens as Bernard seeks an explanation from his widowed father, Salter. But, in succeeding scenes so do two other “sons.” Who is the original? Who are the clones? Why did the father have the clones made? **A NUMBER** is a fast-paced psychological thriller, a fascinating puzzle and a dark tale of a father's love for his son, from one of the great playwrights of our time.

The *London Evening Standard* called **A NUMBER** “the first true play of the 21st century.” Multi-Obie Award Winner Caryl Churchill is “one of the pre-eminent playwrights of the last century,” says Byam Stevens. Churchill's other plays include *Cloud Nine*, *Top Girls*, *Fen*, *Serious Money*, and *Mad Forest*. Her latest play, *Love and Information* is currently an Off-Broadway hit. CTC Artistic Director Byam Stevens will direct.

THE AMISH PROJECT – An Uplifting One-Woman Tour de Force

In this stunning tour-de-force, CTC favorite Allison McLemore (*Tryst*, *Turn of the Screw*, *Nibroc Trilogy*) plays a host of characters in an Amish community devastated by a terrible tragedy. From a supermarket employee to the gunman, each character comes to life – those caught up in cycles of grief or rage, and those who have a truly unexpected reaction. Jessica Dickey's fictional exploration of the Nickel Mines schoolhouse shooting is a tale of redemption that forges a path of forgiveness and compassion in the aftermath of inexplicable violence.

“Extraordinary... a remarkable piece of writing,” said the *New York Times*. **THE AMISH PROJECT** premiered in 2011 to rave reviews and has since been produced around the country and the world. Dickey's other plays include *Charles Ives Take Me Home* (Susan Blackburn Prize) and *Row After Row*, which premiered Off-Broadway this winter to critical acclaim. Associate Artistic Director Daniel Elihu Kramer, who has collaborated with McLemore three times (*Tryst*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Gulf View Drive*), will direct.

TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Tickets are available on CTC's website: www.chestertheatre.org, or by phone at 1-800-595-4TIX or 413-354-7771. To receive a brochure contact the box office at 413-354-7771. CTC performances take place at Chester's Historic Town Hall, 15 Middlefield Road, Chester, MA. Performances are Wednesday through Saturday at 8:00 p.m., with matinees Thursday and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. There will be no performance Friday, July 4th. Tickets are \$10-\$35; group rates are 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 17 years. For further information go to CTC's website: www.chestertheatre.org.

CTC's season sponsor is the restaurant Roscoe's. Other corporate sponsors this season include Baystate Health, Esselon Café, Harvest Moon Realty, Morgan Stanley, New England Public Radio 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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