

DATELINE: June 4, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACTS:

Maureen M. Sullivan
Maureen Sullivan Media Group
[413-535-8872](tel:413-535-8872)
maureensullivanmedia@gmail.com

**CHESTER THEATRE COMPANY
ANNOUNCES
First Production of 2015 Season
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THOMAS JEFFERSON,
CHARLES DICKENS AND COUNT LEO TOLSTOY: DISCORD
by Scott Carter**

**East Coast Premiere of Comedy of Ideas
From the Executive Producer of Real Time With Bill Maher
Runs June 24-July 5**

Chester, MA-- Chester Theatre Company will open its 26th season at the Town Hall in Chester, MA with the East Coast premiere of **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THOMAS JEFFERSON, CHARLES DICKENS AND COUNT LEO TOLSTOY: DISCORD**. This comedy of ideas, from Scott Carter, the Executive Producer of Real Time with Bill Maher, will run from June 24 through July 5.

Carter's play tells the story of an American Founding Father, a British Victorian novelist and a Russian revolutionary who find themselves locked in a room from which there seems to be no exit. How can this trio escape? They will have to collaborate. **DISCORD** reveals what happens when great men of history are forced to repeat it.

The World Premiere production **DISCORD** at Los Angeles' Geffen Theatre was a hit, running for over one hundred performances. The Los Angeles times called it: "Funny and thought-provoking... hilariously theatrical!" CTC is thrilled to be presenting the play's 2nd production and East Coast Premiere.

DISCORD will be directed by CTC Artistic Director Byam Stevens, his last directing assignment as the company's artistic leader, a position he has filled since 1998. Stevens is excited about the project, "This play is totally in keeping with our CTC sensibility; it's smart, it's funny and it's deep. Ultimately, it's a play about walking the Walk after you've talked the Talk – in this case extremely engaging Talk from three of the great writers of the Western tradition. I promise that it will provide extremely rich material for our signature TalkBacks."

(more)

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Scott Carter (Playwright) is Executive Producer/Writer for "Real Time with Bill Maher" on HBO. He produced the first 1,100 episodes of "Politically Incorrect with Bill Maher," from its Comedy Central debut to its move to ABC. While at "P.I.," Carter received eight Emmy nominations and three consecutive CableAce Awards for Best Talk Series. In 2007, he won the Producers' Guild of America's Johnny Carson Award for "Real Time." DISCORD has just been published by Dramatists Play Service; will be produced in three cities across America next year.

Byam Stevens (Director) has been the Artistic Director of CTC since 1998, where he has directed six World Premieres including *Arms on Fire* by Steven Sater and Duncan Sheik. His Off Broadway credits include: *Tea For Three: Lady Bird, Pat and Betty*, *The Dishwashers* by Morris Panych; *The Bully Pulpit*, starring Michael O. Smith as Teddy Roosevelt; the World Premiere of *Carbondale Dreams* by Steven Sater; *The Underlings* by Tom Fontana and the American Premiere of *Beef* by David Pownall. He recently wrote, produced and directed American Ballet Theatre's 75th Anniversary Gala at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York.

Ezra Barnes (Thomas Jefferson) appeared in, and produced, the New York premiere of Fraser Grace's drama *Breakfast With Mugabe*, a critic's pick of the *New York Times*. Ezra founded Shakespeare on the Sound in Connecticut and served as its Artistic Director for 13 seasons. His Regional theater work Hartford Stage, Cincinnati Playhouse, Paper Mill Playhouse. He has been featured on TV in *The Blacklist*, *Blue Bloods*, *Law & Order As The World Turns* and *Royal Pains*. He is a graduate of Amherst College.

Rik Walter (Charles Dickens) has appeared locally at Connecticut Rep and Ivoryton Playhouse. On TV he's been on *30 Rock*, all the *Law & Order* franchises, and PBS' *American Masters* series. He is the co-founder and producing director of UP Theater Company where he's produced, directed and acted in over 20 new plays, all in the "upstate Manhattan" neighborhood of Inwood.

Michael Sean McGuinness (Count Leo Tolstoy) has worked extensively Off-Broadway including: *2.0* at 59E59; *The Three Sisters* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* at The Pearl Theatre Company. Regionally, *Safe House* and *Double Indemnity* at The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis; *Tribes* at Portland Stage Company; *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* at Vermont Shakespeare Company. TV: *Frasier*, *Law and Order*, *The Guiding Light*, *As The World Turns*.

Set Design by David Towlun, Lighting Design by Lara Dubin, Costume Design by Charles Schoonmaker.

TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Tickets are available on CTC's website: www.chesterttheatre.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 \$37.50. Student, Chester Resident, and group rates for 10 or more are also available. For further information visit CTC's website at: www.chesterttheatre.org.

(more)

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.

- 0 -