

CHESTER
THEATRE
COMPANY

“Some of the most adventurous programming in the area.” *The New Yorker*

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Chester Theatre Company Announces its 2020 Season

Season Includes the Company’s First-ever World Premiere Commission
and a New England Premiere

SWITZERLAND (New England Premiere)

WRITTEN BY JOANNA MURRAY-SMITH

DIRECTED BY JAMES BARRY

JUNE 18 – 28, 2020

THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME (World Premiere)

WRITTEN BY DARCY PARKER BRUCE

DIRECTED BY KEIRA NAUGHTON

JULY 2 – 12, 2020

THE NICETIES

WRITTEN BY ELEANOR BURGESS

JULY 23 – AUGUST 2, 2020

TINY BEAUTIFUL THINGS

WRITTEN BY NIA VARDALOS

DIRECTED BY DANIEL ELIHU KRAMER

AUGUST 6 – 16, 2020

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Chester, MA – Chester Theatre Company (CTC) is expanding its reputation for “**some of the most adventurous programming in the area**” (*The New Yorker*) with a season that includes its first-ever World Premiere commission, and a New England Premiere that will kick off the season which begins on June 18.

This season marks CTC’s 31st, and its fifth under **Producing Artistic Director Daniel Elihu Kramer**. Co-founded in 1990 by former Artistic Director of Dublin’s Abbey Theatre, Vincent Dowling, with the belief that every town should have a professional theatre, CTC has grown both in scope and reputation in the past three decades.

From the season opener, a literary thriller set in the Alps, to the closer, a work that brings to life the letters sent to the writer of “Dear Sugar,” the company’s 2020 programming will excite, entertain, and move audiences in the intimate space of the Town Hall Theatre. CTC takes on challenging topics, including race, loneliness, celebrity, and abuse and trauma, and presents them in a way that invites engagement and conversation. Sixty percent of CTC’s performances are followed by post-show events that give the audience and community an opportunity to share in their experiences and learn more about the work they’ve just experienced.

“I love the journey our audiences will take this summer,” says **Kramer**. “It’s a thrill ride of the very best kind: provocative, chilling, funny, and moving. Each of the four plays, all written by women playwrights, offers a gripping story, remarkable characters, and plenty of fodder for the deeper conversations our audiences cherish.”

The Season:

Switzerland (New England Premiere)

Written by Joanna Murray-Smith

Directed by James Barry

June 18 – 28

Patricia Highsmith, misanthropic master of psychological thrillers and author of *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, lives and writes in the shadow of the Swiss Alps. When a charming visitor arrives, he may not be who he first appears in this twisting two-hander. **James Barry**, seen in many roles on the Town Hall stage (*The Aliens*, *The Night Alive*, *Sister Play*) and award-winning director of last season’s *Working* at Berkshire Theatre Group, makes his CTC directorial debut.

“[*Switzerland*] grows with intrigue as it moves forward, pulling back the layers of its two characters to reveal their true selves—neither being who they initially appeared to...and the result is gripping.” (*Entertainment Weekly*)

The Life of the World to Come (World Premiere)

Written by Darcy Parker Bruce

Directed by Keira Naughton

July 2 – 12

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June is lost, adrift. What went on in her house when she was a child prevents it from being her home now. Living with her chosen family in the house next door, June is moving between a life defined her past and a life that might just include a future. **Keira Naughton**, nominated for a Best Director Award by the Berkshire Theatre Critics Association for her work on last season's hit *Curve of Departure*, directs. A World Premiere commissioned by Chester Theatre Company through a gift from Frances Henry and Walter Korzec.

"Darcy Bruce has written a remarkable play, inspired by Fran Henry's work to stop abuse," says **Kramer**. "Through Fran and Walter's gift, we have the opportunity to share this story of love and hope from one of America's most promising young playwrights."

The Niceties

Written by Eleanor Burgess

July 23 – August 2

During office hours, in a discussion about slavery and the American Revolution, the gloves come off between an ambitious student and her professor. When the niceties are abandoned, neither comes out unscathed.

The Washington Post calls *The Niceties* "a barnburner of a play," and "one of the best plays I've seen about who gets to tell the story of America, and how."

Tiny Beautiful Things

Written by Nia Vardalos

Directed by Daniel Elihu Kramer

August 6 – 16

Based on the "Dear Sugar" column written by Cheryl Strayed (author of #1 *New York Times* Bestseller *Wild*), *Tiny Beautiful Things* offers affirmation of love and loss, of pain and pleasure, of intense loneliness and shared humanity. Adapted for the stage by Nia Vardalos (*My Big Fat Greek Wedding*), *Tiny Beautiful Things* is the story of what we can feel and learn when we open up to hearing the answers to questions we can't figure out on our own. Starring CTC Associate Artistic Director **Tara Franklin** as Sugar.

"*Tiny Beautiful Things* turns out to be about the endangered art of listening to — and really hearing and responding to — other people." *The New York Times*

In addition to the four mainstage productions, the company will be introducing two cabaret evenings featuring current and past CTC artists, hosted by beloved Berkshire performers James Barry and Tara Franklin. Audiences can expect music and theatrical performances. More details to come.

All performances will take place in the intimate setting of Chester's Historic Town Hall, 15 Middlefield Road, Chester, MA. Show times are 8:00 pm Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, and

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2:00 pm Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Talkbacks follow Thursday and Saturday matinees. Cast Conversations follow Friday evening performances. Panel Discussions featuring outside experts take place after the first Sunday matinee of each play.

Complete casting and additional production information will be announced at a later date.

Individual ticket prices are \$42.50. Chester and Middlefield residents, members of the military and their families, ConnectorCare enrollees, and those holding EBT/SNAP cards may purchase discounted tickets at the door or by calling the box office. Student Rush \$10 tickets are available day of show. Single tickets, season subscriptions, and flex passes may be purchased online at chestertheatre.org, or by phone at 413.354.7771. Special rates for groups of 10 or more are available.

Tickets go on sale to the general public at noon on Monday, March 23, 2020.

About Chester Theatre Company

Chester Theatre Company, an award-winning professional theatre company located between the Berkshires and the Pioneer Valley, and convenient to both, is known for presenting high-quality, contemporary productions with top-notch actors, directors, and designers from across the country since 1990. Co-founded by former Artistic Director of Dublin's Abbey Theatre, Vincent Dowling, CTC produces four thought-provoking plays each summer in the intimate setting of the Town Hall Theatre at 15 Middlefield Road in Chester, MA.

For further information, please call CTC at 413.354.7770, or visit www.chestertheatre.org.

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