



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING “DISGRACED” BLISTERS RACIAL AND IDENTITY PREJUDICES IN ATC’S REGIONAL PREMIERE OF FIERY BROADWAY HIT

PHOENIX, Ariz. (Oct. 21, 2015): *Disgraced*, Ayad Akhtar’s edge-of-your-seat Pulitzer Prize-winning play about a successful Muslim-American lawyer whose dinner guests’ discussion of race and identity explodes to reveal racial prejudices and personal secrets plays at the Herberger Theater Center, 222 E. Monroe, from Nov. 12-29. I. Michael and Beth Kasser are Arizona Theatre Company’s 2015-16 Season Sponsors.

The New York Times described the Tony Award-nominee for Best Play as a play that “bristles with wit and intelligence. Mr. Akhtar, a novelist and screenwriter, puts contemporary attitudes toward religion under a microscope, revealing how tenuous self-image can be for people born into one way of being who have embraced another. Terrific, turbulent, *Disgraced* comes roaring to life.”

In *Disgraced*, American-born, Muslim-raised corporate lawyer Amir Kapoor is happy, in love, and about to land the biggest career promotion of his life. But beneath the veneer, his success has come at a price. When Amir and his WASP up-and-coming-artist wife, Emily, host an intimate dinner party at their Upper East Side apartment, what starts out as a friendly celebration soon escalates into something far more damaging. Joined by Amir’s African-American work colleague, Jory, and her

Jewish husband, Isaac, all the elements for fireworks are in place at a party that swiftly turns towards chaos and violence.

“**Disgraced** will be the most-produced play in the nation this year and it is no mystery why,” said ATC Artistic Director David Ira Goldstein, who will be directing the production. “Ayad Akhtar’s masterful play seems to be more current every day. Written with the taut, brute force which comes from vital issues of racial identity, religious belief and international power politics, the play has much of the power of a great classic tragedy.”

Tickets for **Disgraced** are \$28-\$68 and can be purchased at www.arizonatheatre.org, by calling (602) 252-8497 or at the Herberger Theater Center Box Office at 222 E. Monroe.

Disgraced will be followed by Stephen Schwartz’s new musical, **Snapshots** (Dec. 30-Jan. 17, 2016), brings some of his favorite songs into a new context wrapped in a story filled with humanity and family. Two great American classics follow with August Wilson’s masterpiece **Fences** (Feb. 11-28) featuring favorite ATC artists, and John Steinbeck’s classic tale of friendship in hard circumstances, **Of Mice and Men** (March 31-April 17).

ATC will present two of the Valley’s favorite and most-celebrated actors in limited engagement one-person performances of Charles Dickens’ beloved holiday classic, **A Christmas Carol** with Katie McFadzen performing all 27 characters from Tiny Tim to Scrooge, and Ron May in David Sedaris’ edgy, irreverent hilarious anti-holiday tale, **The Santaland Diaries**. Both shows will be performed on an alternating schedule from Thursday, Dec. 10 through Saturday, Dec. 26. Ticket prices for both shows range from \$23-\$51.

ATC’s 2015-16 season comes to a sparkling close with the witty Arizona premiere of Scott Carter’s new play, **The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord** (May 5-29).

For more information call (602) 252-8497 or visit www.arizonatheatre.org.

BIOGRAPHIES

Ayad Akhtar, Playwright

Ayad Akhtar is the writer of *Disgraced* (Broadway, LCT3/Lincoln Center Theater, 2013 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, and 2013 Obie Award for Extraordinary Achievement); *The Who & The What* (LCT3/Lincoln Center Theater and La Jolla Playhouse), and *The Invisible Hand* (New York Theatre Workshop/The Repertory Theater of St. Louis). Also

a novelist, Mr. Akhtar is the author of *American Dervish*, published in 2012 by Little, Brown and Company, and in 20 languages worldwide. He co-wrote and starred in *The War Within* (Magnolia Pictures), which was released internationally and nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best Screenplay.

David Ira Goldstein, Director

David Ira Goldstein celebrates his 24th season as Artistic Director of Arizona Theatre Company. In more than two decades, he has produced over 200 mainstage plays, workshops and presentations. He has directed over 40 mainstage productions for ATC ranging from classics to new plays to musicals, as well as many world premieres. Mr. Goldstein has been a guest director at theatres across the county.

Elijah Alexander (Amir) recently played Bashir in the West Coast premiere of Ayad Akhtar's *The Invisible Hand* (Broadway World Award Critic's Pick – Best Leading Actor, Footlight Award – Great Performance, and Gregory Award Nominee – Outstanding Performance) at ACT in Seattle, Richard "Gentleman" Rivers in the world premiere of *Fingersmith* at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and Macbeth in *Macbeth* (StageSceneLA, Scenie Award for Best Lead Actor – Shakespeare). Broadway: *Metamorphoses*. Brooklyn Academy of Music: *Throne of Blood*. Royal Shakespeare Company: *Tantalus*. Regional: Denver Center, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, The Old Globe, Pasadena Playhouse, Great Barrington Stage, South Coast Repertory, Geva Theatre Center, Syracuse Stage, and Santa Fe Shakespeare Festival. Company member for five seasons at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

Richard Baird (Isaac) has previously appeared at ATC in *Romeo and Juliet* (Mercutio/Friar Laurence). Mr. Baird is the founding Artistic Director of New Fortune Theatre Company, where he played the title role of *Henry V* (San Diego Critics Circle Award) and McCann in *The Birthday Party*. Regional credits include: The Old Globe, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Portland Center Stage, North Coast Repertory Theatre, Southwest Shakespeare Company and many others. Mr. Baird received two ariZoni Awards for Best Actor for his work in *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Vandit Bhatt (Abe) is making his ATC debut. International: *Turncoats In The Land Of Absolute Honesty* (Old Vic, London). New York: *Indian Ink* (Roundabout Theater Company); *Harper Regan* (Atlantic Theater Company); The Play Company, Public Theater, Ensemble Studio Theater, Ma-Yi Theater Company, Flea Theater, Regional includes American Conservatory Theater, Know Theater of Cincinnati and Northern Stage.

Nicole Lewis (Jory) is excited to make her ATC debut. Broadway: *Hair*, 2009 Tony Award – Best Revival (Original Cast); *Rent* (Joanne); *Lennon*. Off-Broadway credits: Isabella in *Measure for Measure* and Lady Macduff in *Macbeth* (The Public Theater Mobile Unit); *Murder Ballad* and *Boy Gets Girl* (Manhattan Theater Club); *Happiness* (Lincoln Center Theater workshop). Regional credits include Geva Theater, Indiana Repertory Theater, Philadelphia Theater Company, Intiman Theater, Williamstown Theater Company, the Old Globe, American Conservatory Theatre and Hartford Stage.

Special engagements include: *Far But Close* by/with Daniel Beaty (Dance Theater of Harlem) and *Flowers are Sleeping* by/with Eisa Davis (Symphony Space).

Allison Jean White (Emily) is making her ATC debut. Credits include: Broadway: *Man and Boy* (Roundabout). Off-Broadway: *The Shaughraun* (Irish Repertory Theatre). National Tour: *The 39 Steps*. Other NY and regional credits: *The House of Yes* (Access Theater); *Chez Moi, A Clown Cabaret* (The Players Theater); *Orwell in America* (world premiere, Northern Stage); *Uncle Vanya* (Living Room Theatre); *Abigail's Party* (SF Playhouse); *The Odd Couple* (Virginia Stage Company); *Heartbreak House* (Berkeley Rep); *The Crowd You're In With* and *Tir na nOg* (world premieres, Magic Theatre); *Travesties*, *The Circle*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, *The Real Thing*, and *A Christmas Carol* (ACT); and *Red Light Winter* (Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theater).

CREATIVE TEAM

Scenic Design: John Ezell

Costume Design: Kish Finnegan

Lighting Design: David Lee Cuthbert

Sound Design: Brian Jerome Peterson

Fight Choreographer: Brent Gibbs

Production Stage Manager: Glenn Bruner

Tickets for *Disgraced* start at \$28 and are subject to change depending on time, date and section, and are available at www.arizonatheatre.org or by calling the box office at (602) 252-8497. Discounts are available for seniors and active military. A \$10 student ticket pricing is now available for all performances. Half-price rush tickets are available for balcony seating for all performances one hour prior to curtain at the ATC box office (subject to availability). **Pay What You Can** performance is Sunday, Nov. 15 at 7 p.m. Tickets are available for a suggested \$10 donation. (Tickets must be purchased at the Herberger Theater Center starting one hour prior to curtain. Tickets are first-come, first served. *Cash only*. Two tickets maximum per person.) For discounts for groups of 10 or more, call (602) 252-8497.

Arizona Theatre Company offers accessibility services for patrons with disabilities for select performances. **Audio Description** provides patrons with vision loss a running audio description of the movement and activities onstage through an infrared broadcast system. An Audio-Described performances are offered on Thursday, Nov. 19 at 2 p.m. and Wednesday, Nov. 25 at 7:30 p.m. Interested patrons with vision loss may request a tactile tour one hour prior to curtain. **American Sign Language Interpretation** is presented by professional, theatrically-trained ASL-interpreters for people who have deafness or hearing impairment. An ASL-interpreted performance is offered on Saturday, Nov. 28 at 4 p.m. **Open captioning** allows patrons to read the play's dialogue on an LED screen as the play progresses. An open captioned performance is offered on Saturday, Nov. 22 at 7 p.m. For open-captioned or ASL-interpreted performances, patrons should request seats best suited to ASL interpretation or captioning when purchasing tickets. Large print and Braille playbills and infrared listening amplification devices are also available at every ATC performance with reservation. TTY access for the box office is available in Phoenix at (602) 256-6995 or via Arizona Relay at (800) 367-8939 (TTY/ASCII).

Fact Sheet:

Disgraced

Written by Ayad Akhtar
Directed by David Ira Goldstein

Venue:

Herberger Theater Center
222 E. Monroe
Phoenix, AZ 85004

Previews Begin: Thursday, Nov. 12 at 8 p.m.

Opening Night: Saturday, Nov. 14 at 8 p.m.

Closing Performance: Sunday, Nov. 29 at 1 p.m.

Ticket Info:

Ticket prices currently start at \$28 and are available in-person at the Herberger Theater box office, via phone at (602) 252-8497 or online at www.arizonatheatre.org.

About Arizona Theatre Company:

Arizona Theatre Company (ATC) is the preeminent fully professional theatre in the state of Arizona committed to inspiring, engaging, and entertaining - one moment, one production, and one audience at a time. Boasting the largest seasonal subscriber base in the performing arts in Arizona, ATC is the only resident company in the U.S. that is fully based in two cities providing its wide array of programming and community outreach across the region. Now in its 49th season, more than 130,000 people a year attend our performances at the historic Temple of Music and Art in Tucson, and the elegant Herberger Theater Center in downtown Phoenix. Each season of home-grown productions reflects the rich variety of world drama—from classics to contemporary plays, from musicals to new works—along with a wide array of community outreach programs, educational opportunities, access initiatives and new play programs. Designated The State Theatre of Arizona, ATC is led by Artistic Director David Ira Goldstein, General Manager Billy Russo and a dedicated Board of Trustees.