



AHMANSON THEATRE
MARK TAPER FORUM
KIRK DOUGLAS THEATRE

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For immediate release.

**AYAD AKHTAR'S "DISGRACED" OPENS SUNDAY, JUNE 19 AT MARK TAPER FORUM
THE PULITZER-WINNING PLAY RUNS THROUGH JULY 17**

Ayad Akhtar's 2013 Pulitzer Prize-winning play "Disgraced," opens Sunday, June 19, at 7 p.m. at Center Theatre Group/Mark Taper Forum. Directed by Kimberly Senior, "Disgraced" plays through July 17.

The cast features, in alphabetical order, J Anthony Crane, Behzad Dabu, Hari Dhillon, Karen Pittman and Emily Swallow.

In a riveting, contemporary exploration of identity and religion, "Disgraced" follows a married couple living in Upper East Side Manhattan. Amir is a corporate lawyer and Emily an artist, and though Amir was raised Muslim, he has left that faith behind. The couple hosts a small dinner party and soon, before anyone can stop it, polite protocol is abandoned and the talk turns to religion, politics and sex.

Scenic design is by John Lee Beatty, costume design by Jennifer von Mayrhauser, lighting design by Christine A. Binder and sound design by Jill BC Du Boff. Casting is by Meg Fister and the production stage manager is David S. Franklin.

Charles Isherwood of The New York Times called "Disgraced" a "terrific, turbulent drama" and David Rooney of The Hollywood Reporter called it "smart, spiky entertainment." "Nothing is sacred," said Linda Winer of Newsday, "the Quran, the Old Testament, terrorism, art history, cultural tourism, ancient prejudices and blazing ambivalence – as Akhtar rubs unexpected raw spots with enormous intelligence and humor."

Ayad Akhtar was born in New York City and raised in Milwaukee. His play "Disgraced" premiered at the American Theater Company in January 2012 and was staged at LCT3/Lincoln Center in New York in October 2012. "Disgraced" then premiered in London at the Bush Theatre in 2013, and made its Broadway debut in 2014. Akhtar's play "The Invisible Hand" was nominated for the ATCA/Steinberg Award, and won Best New Work 2013 from the St. Louis Theater Circle. As a screenwriter, he was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best Screenplay for "The War Within." He is the author of "American Dervish," published in 25 languages worldwide and a 2012 Best Book of the Year at Kirkus Reviews, Toronto's Globe and Mail, Shelf Awareness and O Magazine.

Kimberly Senior has worked closely with Akhtar since the inception of “Disgraced” and has directed productions of the play on Broadway and at Lincoln Center Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre and Goodman Theatre. Other credits in her prolific career include Akhtar’s “The Who & The What” (La Jolla Playhouse), “Rapture, Blister, Burn” (Goodman Theatre), “Marjorie Prime” (Writers Theatre) and “The North Plan” (Steppenwolf). Senior is the founder of Collaboraction, a Resident Director at Writers Theatre and an Associate Artist at TimeLine Theatre Company. In 2012, she was named Best Director in Chicago by Chicago Magazine.

Tickets for “Disgraced” are available by calling (213) 628-2772 or online at www.CenterTheatreGroup.org. Tickets range from \$25 - \$85 (ticket prices are subject to change). The Mark Taper Forum is located at the Music Center, 135 N. Grand Avenue in Downtown L.A. 90012.

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