



AHMANSON THEATRE
MARK TAPER FORUM
KIRK DOUGLAS THEATRE

JASON MARTIN
Head of Publicity

T: 213.972.7376 | CTGMedia@CTGLA.org

601 W TEMPLE ST | LOS ANGELES, CA 90012 | CenterTheatreGroup.org

For immediate release.

**DEMIAN BICHIR TO PLAY EL PACHUCO
IN CENTER THEATRE GROUP'S PRODUCTION OF "ZOOT SUIT"
AT THE CENTER THEATRE GROUP / MARK TAPER FORUM**

International stage and screen star Demian Bichir (Tarantino's "The Hateful Eight," FX's "The Bridge," Showtime's "Weeds" and Soderbergh's "Che") is set to play the indelible role of El Pachuco in Center Theatre Group's production of "Zoot Suit" at the Mark Taper Forum, with previews beginning January 31, opening set for February 12 and performances continuing through March 12, 2017. Written and directed by Luis Valdez, "Zoot Suit" is presented in association with El Teatro Campesino.

"It's a tremendous honor to be able to portray such an iconic character of modern American theatre. I grew up dreaming of playing El Pachuco when I was a young member of the National Theatre Company in Mexico City. Having the opportunity to work with legendary director Luis Valdez represents my biggest challenge in the theatre to date. These times couldn't be more perfect to present this play to a whole new generation of theatre lovers," said Bichir.

"Zoot Suit" was originally commissioned and developed by Center Theatre Group, playing for nearly a year in Los Angeles first at the Taper from August 6 to October 1, 1978, then from October 10, 1978, through July 1, 1979, at the Aquarius in Hollywood. It went on to become Broadway's first Chicano play, was made into a major motion picture and became a cultural phenomenon.

Nearly 40 years after its world premiere, original creator Valdez will once again fill the Taper's stage with a company of 25 actors, singers and dancers weaving fact and fiction together as they portray the events surrounding the infamous 1942 Sleepy Lagoon murder in Los Angeles. Filled with heart, sly wit and the infectious songs of Lalo Guerrero, "Zoot Suit" remains an urgent portrayal of the clash between generations in a Chicano family, the rifts between cultures in America and how racism and injustice can haunt a city and a society.

Demian Bichir was born in Mexico City in a family dedicated to the theatre. He first took to the stage at the age of three at the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City. A member of the National Theatre Company for seven years, he starred in a dozen plays there, including works by Valle-Inclán, Shakespeare and Eugene O'Neill. He has

appeared in over 20 films shot in Mexico, Spain, Ireland, Argentina, Colombia, Bolivia, New Zealand and Australia.

In the United States, Bichir is best known for his roles in Showtime’s “Weeds” and FX’s “The Bridge,” as well as Steven Soderbergh’s “Che,” Oliver Stone’s “Savages,” and Quentin Tarantino’s “The Hateful Eight.” He will next be seen in Ridley Scott’s “Alien: Covenant.” Bichir was recognized for his acclaimed performance as Carlos Galindo in the 2011 drama, “A Better Life,” for which he earned nominations for the Independent Spirit Award, Screen Actors Guild Award and the Academy Award for Best Actor. “Circus Tale & a Love Song” is his first film as writer and director, and it will be seen this fall at the Morelia International Film Festival, the Denver International Film Festival and will open the Huelva Ibero-American Film Festival in Spain.

Center Theatre Group, one of the nation’s preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles’ leading nonprofit theatre company, programming seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1600 to 2000-seat Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the 317-seat Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. In addition to presenting and producing the broadest range of theatrical entertainment in the country, Center Theatre Group is one of the nation’s leading producers of ambitious new works through commissions and world premiere productions and a leader in interactive community engagement and education programs that reach across generations, demographics and circumstance to serve Los Angeles.

Tickets to “Zoot Suit” go on sale Friday, November 18 and will be available by calling (213) 628-2772 or online at www.CenterTheatreGroup.org. Tickets range from \$25 – \$95 (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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November 17, 2016/Updated January 6, 2017