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## DIVE INTO THE HORNETS' NEST AT GEVA THEATRE CENTER

**Geva's nationally recognized program of thought-provoking theatre concludes with *Disgraced* by Ayad Akhtar on Monday, May 9.**

**Rochester, N.Y., May 4, 2016** - Few experiences can ignite a great conversation like a thrilling night in the theatre. **The Hornets' Nest** series has theatre-goers itching for that conversation.

The Hornets' Nest series of script-in-hand readings with professional actors and directors returns with three plays investigating the most challenging and controversial ethical dilemmas of our time. Following each reading, audience members will have the opportunity to engage in open discussion with key figures from the Rochester community. Since its inception in 2007, the Hornets' Nest series of readings has become nationally recognized and lauded as one of the most innovative theatrical initiatives in the country.

The 2015-2016 series concludes on **May 9** with ***Disgraced* by Ayad Akhtar**. Amir Kapoor is a successful Pakistani-American lawyer who is rapidly moving up the corporate ladder while distancing himself from his cultural roots. Emily, his wife, is white; she's an artist, and her work is influenced by Islamic imagery. When the couple hosts a dinner party, what starts out as a friendly conversation escalates into something far more damaging. Can you escape your heritage? What happens when you try?

Ayad Akhtar was born in New York City and raised in Milwaukee. He is the author of *American Dervish*, published in over twenty languages worldwide and a 2012 Best Book of the Year at Kirkus Reviews, Toronto's *Globe and Mail*, Shelf-Awareness, and *O Magazine*. He is also a playwright and screenwriter. His latest play, *The Who & The What*, premiered at La Jolla Playhouse in February 2014. As a screenwriter, he was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best Screenplay for *The War Within*. He has been the recipient of fellowships from MacDowell and Yaddo, as well as commissions from Lincoln Center Theater and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. He is a graduate of Brown and Columbia Universities with degrees in Theatre and Film Directing.

*Disgraced* premiered at the American Theater Company in Chicago before serving as the inaugural production of New York's LCT3/Lincoln Center Theater in 2012. The play won the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. It premiered in London at the Bush Theatre in early 2014 and opened on Broadway in October 2014. The Broadway production was nominated for a Tony Award as Best Play in 2015.

The cast of the Hornets' Nest reading includes **Rajesh Bose, Ben Curns, Rasool Jahan, Imran Sheikh** and **Nichole Scipione** and is **directed by Shishir Kurup**. Following the reading of *Disgraced*, audience members will have the opportunity to discuss the questions that the play poses with a panel of members of the community brought together specifically for this event.

**The play reading is at 7:00pm in the Fielding Stage.** Tickets are free and, due to the popularity of this series, are limited to two per person. Reservations are recommended. Due to anticipated demand, all unclaimed tickets will be released at 6:45pm on the day of performance. Patron discretion is advised: *Disgraced* deals with adult subject matter. To reserve tickets phone the Box Office: (585) 232-Geva (4382) or reserve online at [www.gevatheatre.org](http://www.gevatheatre.org).

Leadership support for the Hornet's Nest is provided by The Gouvernet Arts Fund at The Community Foundation, The Mary S. Mulligan Charitable Trust, Jack and Barbara Kraushaar, and New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

#### **GEVA THEATRE CENTER**

Founded in 1972, Geva Theatre Center is a not-for-profit, professional theatre company dedicated to creating and producing professional theatre productions, programs and services of a national standard. As Rochester's leading professional theatre, Geva Theatre Center is the most attended regional theatre in New York State, and one of the 25 most subscribed in the country, serving up to 160,000 patrons annually, including more than 16,000 students.

The 526-seat Elaine P. Wilson Stage is home to a wide variety of performances, from musicals to American and world classics. The 180-seat Ron & Donna Fielding Stage is home to Geva's own series of contemporary drama, comedy and musical theatre; Geva Comedy Improv; Geva's New Play Reading Series and the Hornets' Nest - an innovative play-reading series facilitating community-wide discussion on controversial topics. In addition, the Fielding Stage hosts visiting companies of both local and international renown.

Geva Theatre Center offers a wide variety of educational, outreach and literary programs, nurturing audiences and artists alike. Since 1995, the organization has been under the artistic direction of Mark Cuddy.

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