

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Alert for Theatre Editors, Reviewers and Calendar Listings

**Chance Theater proudly presents
The Southern California premiere of the multi-generational family drama**

The Big Meal

The Extraordinary Story of an Ordinary Family

**This fast-paced, time-bending family odyssey starts April 21 on the Fyda-Mar Stage
at Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken *theater arts* Center**



March 21, 2016 ... Anaheim, California ... Anaheim's official resident theater company, Chance Theater is pleased to present the Southern California premiere of ... ***The Big Meal***. Written by Orange County native Dan LeFranc, and directed by Associate Artistic Director Jocelyn A. Brown, ***The Big Meal* will preview from April 21 through April 28. Regular performances will begin April 30 and continue through May 22 on the Fyda-Mar Stage at Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken *theater arts* Center.**

In this hilarious and poignant Southern California premiere, you are invited on a time-bending odyssey of birth, death, divorce and dinner. When a man meets a young waitress in a local diner, neither of them knows the nearly 80 years of history that will follow. Filled with those little moments that you will recognize from your own life, we dare you not to fall in love with this stunning, big-hearted play that tells the extraordinary story of an ordinary family.

"A life-in-overdrive comic drama." – *The New York Times*

"Intimate and exhilarating." – *The New Yorker*

Showcasing an OC native playwright who's making a national splash

Although he has since moved to New York, Dan LeFranc hails from Dana Point, and uses the suburban Los Angeles and Orange County landscapes as a backdrop to many of his plays, infusing them with a sense of place and language unique

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to Southern California. While this local-born playwright takes on more universal themes in *The Big Meal*, he uses the investigation of “people and landscapes and ideas, [to] serve as a kind of celebration of the imagination and its enormous powers for healing and hope and wonder and destruction.” The Chance is proud to bring his unique voice back to Southern California.

Jocelyn Brown, who has previously directed the Chance productions of *Evita*, *Never In My Lifetime*, and *Big Love* (among others) said that the script’s narrative style presents quite a few challenges, and just as many opportunities to explore. “LeFranc’s narrative entails multiple actors playing different stages of a character’s life. The actors are working closely with each other, coordinating essential parts of their characterization to find the ‘essence’ of each role which is passed on to another actor each time the character ‘ages up’ to a new stage of their life,” Brown said. “Alongside this being a wonderful acting challenge, the design team is finding subtle ways through staging, costuming, and props to reinforce the through line of each character without distracting from the rapid-fire pace of the script. The goal is to help the audience experience a character’s maturity over a lifetime and discover those rare moments, as in our own lives, when we look at ourselves and our loved ones and wonder, “When did that all happen?”

Jocelyn A. Brown (Director) has been a resident artist of Chance Theater since 2001 and has served as the Associate Artistic Director since 2011. Chance highlights include spearheading the On The Radar Series for four years, writing and performing in *A Celtic Holiday with Craic in the Stone* (Best Special Event, Best of OC Theater 2014 by *Examiner.com*), portraying Bonnie in the staged singing of *Swing State: A Musical Fable*, Reggie Fluty and Dave O'Malley (among others) in *The Laramie Project and Ten Years Later* (Ovation Recommended), directing staged readings of *Magic Forest Farm* and *The Artist*, directing *Evita*, portraying Blitzen in *The Eight: Reindeer Monologues*, the Witch in *Into the Woods* (*Back Stage Critic's Pick*), Cathy in *The Last 5 Years* (*Back Stage Honorable Mention for Actor*), directing *Never In My Lifetime* (*Back Stage Critic's Pick*), portraying Nancy in *Closer Than Ever* (*L.A. Times Critic's Choice*), Ann in *Goodnight Children Everywhere* (*OC Weekly Theater Award for Best Actress*), directing *The Cherry Orchard* (*OC Weekly Theater Award nomination for Best Direction*), and receiving a nomination for Outstanding Individual Artist in 2003 by Arts Orange County. Outside of the Chance, Jocelyn teaches at Laguna Hills High School where she was an honoree for the California League of High Schools "Teacher of the Year" in 2012 for Orange County and served as the band leader and lead singer for Celtic folk band Craic in the Stone. Jocelyn double majored in Theatre and Biology at the University of California San Diego, studied theater abroad at the University of East Anglia in England, and earned a Masters in Education from Vanguard University.

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In addition to Jocelyn, the production team for **The Big Meal** includes scenic designer Joe Holbrook (*Maple & Vine*, *ROOMS: a rock romance*), sound designer Dave Mickey (*Overlooked*, *Sunday in the Park with George*), lighting designer Martha Carter (*After The Revolution*), costume designer Lorenzetti (*Loch Ness, a new musical*), dramaturg Laurie Smits Staude, and stage manager Bebe Herrera.

The cast for **The Big Meal** includes resident artists Karen Webster (*After The Revolution*), Jennifer Ruckman (*Samsara*), and Robert Foran (*After The Revolution*), as well as returning Chance artists David Carl Golbeck (*After the Revolution*), Angela Griswold (*Anne of Green Gables*), Ben Green (*Jesus Hates Me*), Abby Lutes (*Anne of Green Gables*), and Kelly Ehlert (*Maple and Vine*). Dylan Barton will be making his Chance debut with this production.

Scott and Sandra Graham are the Executive Producers for **The Big Meal**. This is their third time as producers for the Chance, having previously been producers on last season's *The Dragon Play* and 2014's *Maple and Vine*. Producers for Chance's 2016 Season are Bette and Wylie Aitken.

To schedule press interviews, request photos, schedule press comps or for any additional information, please contact Casey Long at (714) 900-3284 or by e-mail at casey@chancetheater.com.

ABOUT CHANCE THEATER

Proud to be one of the leading ensemble-driven theatre companies in Southern California, CHANCE THEATER has won five Ovation Awards (including two for Best Production of a Musical--Intimate Theater for *Triassic Parq -- The Musical* and *Jerry Springer: The Opera*). The Chance also received an LADCC Award for its reimagined revival of *West Side Story*. The Anaheim City Council recently named Chance Theater "the official resident theater company of Anaheim". Twice named "Outstanding Arts Organization" by Arts Orange County, Chance Theater is also a recipient of the LADCC's Polly Warfield Award for Excellence. Founded in 1999, Chance Theater is focused on its goal of being Orange County's premiere mid-size contemporary theater by contributing to a more compassionate, connected, and creative community. As a constituent member of Theatre Communications Group, Network of Ensemble Theaters, and the LA Stage Alliance, Chance Theater continues to bring national attention to the Southern California and Orange County theater scenes.

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CALENDAR LISTING

WHAT: *The Big Meal*

You are invited on a time-bending odyssey of birth, death, divorce and dinner. When a man meets a young waitress in a local diner, neither of them knows the nearly 80 years of history that will follow. Filled with those little moments that you will recognize from your own life, we dare you not to fall in love with this stunning, big-hearted play that tells the extraordinary story of an ordinary family.

Note: This show contains strong language.

WHEN: Preview Performances: Thursday, April 21 – Thursday, April 28

Thursdays at 7:30pm

Saturday at 8pm

Sunday at 7pm

Regular Performances

Saturday, April 30 – Sunday, May 22

Thursdays at 7:30pm

Saturdays at 8pm

Sundays at 3pm

Special performance on Wednesday, May 4 at 7:30pm

REVIEWERS and OTHER PRESS are encouraged to attend:

Opening Night on Saturday, April 30 at 8pm

WHERE: Fyda-Mar Stage at Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken *theater arts* Center
5522 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807

TICKETS: \$25.00 - \$35.00. Call (714) 777-3033 or visit www.ChanceTheater.com.

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