

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Alert for Theatre Editors, Reviewers and Calendar Listings

Chance Theater proudly presents the Southern California Premiere of
Middletown

**Will Eno's award-winning dissection of the human experience starts April 21
at Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken *theater arts* Center on the Fyda-Mar Stage**

March 22, 2017 ... Anaheim, California ... Chance Theater, Anaheim's official resident theater company, is pleased to announce the second show in our 19th Anniversary Season... ***Middletown***. Written by Will Eno and directed by Trevor Bishop, ***Middletown* will preview from April 21 through April 28; regular performances will begin April 29 and continue through May 21 at Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken *theater arts* Center on the intimate Fyda-Mar Stage.**

Mary Swanson just moved to Middletown, eager to start a family and enjoy the neighborly bonds a small town promises. When she befriends resident John Dodge, she quickly discovers that below Middletown's flinchingly honest exterior lies something much more complex. *Middletown* is a wry, human portrait of a town with two lives — one ordinary and visible, the other epic and mysterious.

"Utterly spellbinding! 4 stars! Will Eno's comic genius inspires us all." – *Time Out New York*

"Richly engaging and satisfyingly theatrical, with heart and humor. A modern-day equivalent to Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*" – *TheatreMania*

"*Middletown* is lusciously written, strangely poignant, dizzyingly modern spin on life." – *Newsday*

"*Middletown* is a meditation about growth and about life," said director Trevor Bishop. "Inspired by Thornton Wilder's amazing and influential play of a similar title, Will Eno's play explores everyday moments of everyday lives. Set in an average town called...you guessed it...Middletown, cops, librarians, mechanics and city landscapers carry out their daily lives and activities. In the telling of these seemingly mundane stories, *Middletown* humorously and poignantly defines the simpler events of life that exist between birth and death, ones that Eno calls the 'unexamined middle.' "

"Will Eno is a modern day Samuel Beckett," Bishop continues, "a playwright whose inventive language and quirkily human characters are snapshots of human life. Indeed, Eno is interested in asking big questions about what it means to live in our complex world. But he does so with an artful curiosity. His characters don't speak at us. They listen and they learn, from each other and us. At a time of such contention, when it is so difficult to actually listen to those different from us and our own deeply rooted views, this play is a breath of fresh air."

Middletown premiered in New York City at The Vineyard Theatre in 2010, under the direction of Ken Russ Schmall. The script later won the inaugural Horton Foote Prize for Promising New American Play, and was then produced at Steppenwolf Theatre.

MEET THE TEAM

Will Eno (Playwright) has been called “a Samuel Beckett for the Jon Stewart generation” by *The New York Times*. He recently made his Broadway debut with his critically acclaimed new play, *The Realistic Joneses*. Eno's internationally heralded play *Thom Pain (based on nothing)* had a successful year long run at the DR2 in New York, after a sold out run at the 2004 International Edinburgh Festival, where it won all the major awards, and was a finalist for the 2005 Pulitzer Prize in Drama. Eno's play *The Flu Season* received the 2004 Oppenheimer Award for the best debut production in New York by an American playwright. His play *Gnit*, an adaptation of Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, premiered at the Actor's Theatre of Louisville, in the Humana Festival, in the spring of 2013. Eno's plays have also been produced by the Gate Theatre, the SOHO Theatre, BBC Radio, The Print Room and elsewhere. His plays are published by Oberon Books, TCG, and playscripts, and have appeared in *Harper's*, *The Antioch Review*, *The Quarterly*, and *Best Ten-Minute Plays for Two Actors*. He has been commissioned by the Royal National Theatre in London and the Yale Repertory Theatre. He is a Helen Merrill Playwriting Fellow, a Guggenheim Fellow, an Edward F. Albee Foundation Fellow, a Fellow of the Cullman Center at the NY Public Library, and was awarded the first-ever Marian Seldes/Garson Kanin Fellowship by the Theater Hall of Fame, as well as the Alfred Hodder Fellowship at Princeton. Will Eno lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Trevor Bishop (Director) directs the works of diverse contemporary playwrights. This is Trevor's sixth production at the Chance Theatre, including the premieres of Sarah Ruhl's *Passion Play* and Bridget Carpenter's *Up*. His production of the Southern California Premiere of *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, earned the Ovation Award for Best Musical – Intimate Theatre, and Trevor received the Backstage Garland Award for Best Direction. World and regional premieres include *Film*, *Grey Gardens*, *Just Say No*, *Bash: Latterday Plays* and *Psalms of a Questionable Nature*. He has worked with numerous Los Angeles theatres, including South Coast Repertory, Circle X Theatre, Theatre of NOTE, California Repertory Company, Cornerstone Theatre Company and the Pasadena Playhouse. Bishop's productions have been lauded by every major press outlet in Southern California and have received nominations from the Ovation Awards, Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Awards, LA Weekly Theatre Awards and Backstage Garland Awards. Trevor teaches directing at California State University, Long Beach, and received his M.F.A. in Directing from the University of California, Irvine.

The production team for **Middletown** also includes scenic designer Bruce Goodrich (*Samsara*, *Bright New Boise*), lighting designer Karyn Lawrence, costume designer Megan MacLean, sound designer Ryan Brodtkin (*Claudio Quest*, *After the Revolution*), projection designer Nick Santiago, and stage manager Bebe Herrera (*The Big Meal*).

Middletown will star Chance Theater Resident Artists James McHale (*Samsara*), Robert Foran (*The Big Meal*), Karen O'Hanlon (*Passion Play*), and Karen Webster (*The Big Meal*). Returning for this production are Lola Kelly (*The Eight: Reindeer Monologues*), Ahmed Brooks (*The Eight: Reindeer Monologues*) and Ned Liebl (*Seminar*).

Scott and Sandra Graham are the Executive Producers. Bette & Wylie Aitken are the Season Producers for the entire 2017 production schedule.

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 recently received a National Theatre Company grant from American Theatre Wing. The Chance has won six Ovation Awards, including two for Best Production of a Musical – Intimate Theater for its West Coast premiere of *Triassic Park – The*

Musical and Southern California premiere of *Jerry Springer – The Opera*, as well as four LADCC Awards, including the Polly Warfield Award for Outstanding Season. The Anaheim City Council named Chance Theater “the official resident theater company of Anaheim”, and Arts Orange County has twice named the Chance as “Outstanding Arts Organization”. Known for using bold and personal storytelling to promote dialogue and connection within the Southern California theatrical landscape, the Chance is committed to 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.

CALENDAR LISTING

WHAT: **MIDDLETOWN**

Mary Swanson just moved to Middletown, eager to start a family and enjoy the neighborly bonds a small town promises. When she befriends resident John Dodge, she quickly discovers that below Middletown’s flinchingly honest exterior lies something much more complex. *Middletown* is a wry, human portrait of a town with two lives — one ordinary and visible, the other epic and mysterious.

WHEN:

Preview Performances:

April 21 - 28, 2017

Fridays at 8pm

Saturday at 8pm

Sunday at 7pm

Regular Performances

April 29 - May 21, 2017

Fridays at 8pm

Saturdays at 8pm

Sundays at 3pm

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

TICKETS: \$21.00 - \$35.00. Call (888) 455-4212 or visit www.ChanceTheater.com.
Discounts available for seniors, students and military.

REVIEWERS and OTHER PRESS are encouraged to attend:

Opening Performance on Saturday, April 29 at 8pm

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