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Coming Up Next:
Now or Later press opening
Wednesday, October 17th, 7pm South End / Calderwood Pavilion at the BCA
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Rebecca Curtiss, rcurtiss@huntingtontheatre.bu.edu / 617 273 1537
PHOTOS: huntingtontheatre.org/news/photo-library (see instructions at the bottom of this release)

COMPELLING, FUNNY SOUTHIE STORY BY LOCAL PULITZER PRIZE WINNER COMES HOME TO BOSTON TO BEGIN HUNTINGTON THEATRE COMPANY’S 31ST SEASON

WHAT

Huntington Theatre Company presents Pulitzer Prize winner and Boston native David Lindsay-Abaire’s Tony Award-nominated Good People, directed by Acton native Kate Whoriskey and featuring Johanna Day (God of Carnage at the Huntington).

WHEN

September 14 – October 14, 2012

Evenings: Tues. – Thurs. at 7:30pm; Fri. – Sat. at 8pm; Select Sun. at 7pm

Matinees: Select Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2pm

Days and times vary; see complete schedule at end of release.

Press Opening: Wednesday, September 19, 7pm. RSVP online at huntingtontheatre.org/news.

WHERE

Avenue of the Arts / BU Theatre, 264 Huntington Avenue, Boston

TICKETS

Single tickets starting at $25, seated subscriptions, and FlexPasses are on sale:

- online at huntingtontheatre.org;
- by phone at 617 266 0800; or
- in person at the BU Theatre Box Office, 264 Huntington Ave. and the Calderwood Pavilion at the BCA Box Office, 527 Tremont St. in Boston’s South End.

$5 off: seniors
$10 off: subscribers and BU community (faculty/staff/alumni)
$25 “35 Below” tickets for patrons 35 years old and younger (valid ID required)
$15 student and military tickets (valid ID required)
(BOSTON) – **Good People**, Pulitzer Prize-winning Boston native David Lindsay-Abaire’s humor-filled Broadway hit about identity, fate, and class, comes home to Boston to open the Huntington Theatre Company’s 31st season. The nationally-renowned Kate Whoriskey (Ruined and How I Learned to Drive Off Broadway) directs the Huntington’s production of the New York Drama Critic’s Circle award winner that features Johanna Day (God of Carnage and Carol Mulroney at the Huntington) as Margie Walsh.

The cast also includes local favorites Nancy E. Carroll (Brendan and Present Laughter at the Huntington) and South Boston native Karen MacDonald (All My Son and Before I Leave You at the Huntington) – onstage together for the first time in their long and illustrious careers – as Margie’s Southie friends, as well as Michael Laurence (Desire Under the Elms on Broadway) as the high school boyfriend Margie tracks down in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts.

Called, “Enthralling and utterly gripping” by the Los Angeles Times, **Good People** takes place in South Boston where this month’s paycheck covers last month’s bills and bingo is a night on the town. Sharp-tongued single-mom Margie Walsh has just been let go from yet another job and is facing eviction. Scrambling to make ends meet for herself and her developmentally disabled adult daughter, she looks up an old flame – now a fertility doctor living in Chestnut Hill with his young wife – hoping he’ll help her make a fresh start. Lindsay-Abaire’s acclaimed drama explores how twists of fate determine our path. The Boston Globe says, “Good People maps the fault lines of social class with a rare acuity of perception while also packing a substantial emotional wallop.”

“David’s play explores complex social questions about class, luck, and escaping our roots with electric energy and sharp humor,” says Huntington Artistic Director Peter DuBois. “Our production marks a homecoming for him, Kate, and this local story.” Hear more from DuBois about **Good People** at huntingtontheatre.org/media/Peter-DuBois-on-Good-People.

**Good People** paints a very different portrait than recent films and literature of the storied Boston neighborhood. Rather than gritty or crime-laden, as depicted in Good Will Hunting and The Departed, **Good People**’s South Boston is drawn from the neighborhood in which Lindsay-Abaire grew up – one populated by everyday people whose individual situations either held them in the neighborhood or offered them a path out. Lindsay-Abaire’s path out was forged in part by a scholarship from the local Boys and Girls Club to the prestigious Milton Academy. There, his gift for writing was nurtured, and he subsequently became a playwright, librettist, and screenwriter.

“I spent many-a-summer with my dad selling fruit out of the back of his truck on a corner of Huntington Avenue right across the street from the Huntington,” recalls Lindsay-Abaire. “I would sell bags of plums to kids from BU and wonder what kinds of plays were performed inside. It was both thrilling and surreal to be inside that very theatre many years later, watching the Huntington’s wonderful production of my play Rabbit Hole.

“I’m excited to be back with **Good People**, especially since it’s very much about and inspired by my hometown. It’s about class in America. It’s about choices and luck, and lack of both. It’s about the good people sitting inside that building in plush theatre seats, and the equally good people selling fruit out on the corner. I can’t think of anywhere I’d rather see this play performed.”
About the Artists

The cast includes:

- **Nancy E. Carroll** (Dottie): *Prelude to a Kiss, Present Laughter, and Brendan* at the Huntington; *Present Laughter* on Broadway;
- **Johanna Day** (Margaret Walsh): *God of Carnage* and *Carol Mulroney* at the Huntington; *August: Osage County, Proof* (Tony and Lucille Lortel Award nominations), and *Lombardi* on Broadway;
- **Rachael Holmes** (Kate): *Ruined* at Arena Stage; *Romeo and Juliet* at Shakespeare on the Sound;
- **Michael Laurence** (Mike): *The Morini Strad* at Primary Stages; *Talk Radio* on Broadway;
- **Karen MacDonald** (Jean): *All My Sons, Before I Leave You, and “M”* (upcoming) at the Huntington; *The Blonde, The Brunette, and the Vengeful Redhead* (Merrimack Repertory Theatre); and
- **Nick Westrate** (Stevie): *Tribes* (Off Broadway); and *Galileo* at Classic Stage Company.

David Lindsay-Abaire’s (playwright) *Rabbit Hole* was produced at the Huntington in 2006. The play was honored with the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, five Tony Award nominations, and the Spirit of America Award. His most recent play, *Good People*, premiered on Broadway and received two Tony Award nominations and the 2011 New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play of the Year. Other plays include *Fuddy Meers, Kimberly Akimbo, Wonder of the World*, and *A Devil Inside*. Lindsay-Abaire is also a screenwriter, lyricist, and librettist. He has been nominated for a Grammy Award and two Tony Awards (Best Score and Best Book of a Musical) for his work on *Shrek The Musical* and the Kleban Award as America’s most promising musical theatre lyricist. Lindsay-Abaire’s screen credits include the film adaptation of *Rabbit Hole* (starring Nicole Kidman, Academy Award nomination) and the upcoming *Rise of the Guardians* (Dreamworks) and *Oz: The Great and Powerful* (Disney).

Kate Whoriskey (director) directed *The Miracle Worker* on Broadway. Her Off Broadway credits include *How I Learned to Drive* (Second Stage Theatre), *Ruined* (Manhattan Theatre Club, Drama Desk and Lucille Lortel Award nominations), *The Piano Teacher* (Vineyard Theatre), *Oroonoko* (Theatre for A New Audience), the world premieres of *Fabulation* and *Inked Baby* (Playwrights Horizons), and *Massacre* by José Rivera (Labyrinth Theater Company, member). Internationally, she directed *Magdalena* (Chatelet Theatre, Paris). Regional credits include *Ruined, Vigils, Heartbreak House, The Rose Tattoo, and Drowning Crow* (Goodman Theatre), *The Tempest* (Shakespeare Theatre Company), *The Piano Teacher, Life is a Dream, Caucasian Chalk Circle, Antigone, The Clean House*, and the world premiere of *Intimate Apparel* (South Coast Repertory, Master Builder (American Repertory Theater), and productions at Geffen Playhouse, Baltimore Center Stage, Perseverance Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Sundance Theatre Lab, The Fisher Center, and the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. She is a graduate of NYU and the ART/MXAT Institute at Harvard University and is currently a visiting lecturer at Princeton University. She is a native of Acton, Massachusetts.

Scenic design by Alexander Dodge (*Present Laughter* at the Huntington and on Broadway, *Rapture, Blister, Burn* at Playwrights Horizons); costume design by Ilona Somogyi (*Clybourne Park* on Broadway and at Playwrights Horizons, *Maple and Vine* at Playwrights Horizons); lighting design by Matthew Richards (*Bell Book and Candle* at Long Wharf Theatre, *The Birds* at the Guthrie Theater); sound design by Rob Milburn and Michael Bodeen (*Private Lives* and *How Shakespeare Won the West* at the Huntington). Production stage manager is Marti McIntosh. Stage Manager is Kathryn Most.
SPONSORS

- Grand Patron: Boston University
- Season Sponsors: Carol G. Deane, J. David Wimberly
- Production Sponsors: Jill and Mitchell J. Roberts
- Production Co-Sponsors: Linda and Bill McQuillan, Faith and Joseph Tiberio

ABOUT THE HUNTINGTON

Since its founding in 1982, the Huntington Theatre Company has developed into Boston’s leading theatre company. Bringing together superb local and national talent, the Huntington produces a mix of groundbreaking new works and classics made current. Led by Artistic Director Peter DuBois and Managing Director Michael Maso, the Huntington creates award-winning productions, runs nationally renowned programs in education and new play development, and serves the local theatre community through its operation of the Calderwood Pavilion at the BCA. The Huntington is in residence at Boston University. For more information, visit huntingtontheatre.org.

MEDIA NOTES

For interviews and more information, contact Communications Manager Rebecca Curtiss at rcurtiss@huntingtontheatre.bu.edu or 617 273 1537.

PHOTO DOWNLOAD INSTRUCTIONS

To download high-resolution (or smaller) photos of Good People:

2. Click on a thumbnail, and let the image load in your browser on the Flickr site. **Note caption information is displayed below the image.**
3. Click the **Action** button, located above the image on the Flickr site, and select **View All Sizes**.
4. Select the size you wish to download from the choices listed across the top of the image.
5. Let the image load in your browser, then right-click on it to save to your computer.
**Post-Show Audience Conversations**

Ongoing

Led by members of the Huntington staff. After most Tuesday - Friday, Saturday matinee, and Sunday matinee performances throughout the season. Free with a ticket to the performance.

**35 Below Wrap Party**

Fri. 9/14, following the 8pm performance

A post-show wrap party with drinks, live music, and exclusive backstage access. $25 ticket includes admission to both performance and party. Learn more at huntingtontheatre.org/35Below.

**Student Matinee Performance**

Thurs. 9/27 at 10am

For students in grades 8-12. To reserve tickets, call 617 273 1558.

**Audio Described Performance**

Thurs. 9/27 at 10am (student matinee)

Sat. 10/6 at 2pm

Performances are audio-described for blind and low-vision patrons.

**Actors Forum**

Thurs. 9/27 following the 10am student matinee

Thurs. 10/4, following the 7:30pm performance

Wed. 10/10 following the 2pm matinee

Participating cast members answer questions from the audience.

**Humanities Forum**

Sun. 9/30, following the 2pm performance

A post-performance talk exploring the context and significance of Good People.
USEFUL LINKS: GOOD PEOPLE

- Read interviews with playwright David Lindsay-Abaire and more: huntingtontheatre.org/articles
- Video of interviews with director Kate Whoriskey and members of the cast, the design presentation, our teaser trailer, and more: huntingtontheatre.org/media/
- Biographical information about the artists who created and perform in this production under the “ARTISTS” tab: huntingtontheatre.org/goodpeople
- High-resolution production photos – available for download: huntingtontheatre.org/news/photo-library/2012-2013/good-people
- The spring issue of Spotlight, the Huntington’s magazine: huntingtontheatre.org/season/Spotlight/Fall-2012/
- Huntington Theatre Company website: huntingtontheatre.org
PHOTO LIBRARY

**Good People**
by David Lindsay-Abaire
Directed by Kate Whoriskey
September 14 – October 14, 2012
Avenue of the Arts/ BU Theatre

Available at huntingtontheatre.org/news/photo-library/20112-2013/Good-People

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**GoodPeople_HuntingtonTheatreCompany_25**
AN UPDATE ON THE PLAYWRIGHT: FROM *RABBIT HOLE* TO *GOOD PEOPLE*
When playwright David Lindsay-Abaire looks for his next project, he always pushes himself in a new direction. Over the past decade, his work has spanned both across genres from absurd comedy to naturalistic tragedy and through the different mediums of plays, musicals, and movies. “I love saying yes to things I haven’t done before,” he says. “I challenge myself to do something different just to see if I can.”

Lindsay-Abaire’s early career was distinguished by off-kilter farces, such as Fuddy Meers, a 2001 play about an amnesiac on a wild, and somewhat violent, journey of self-discovery. His play Rabbit Hole, seen at the Huntington in 2006, was a striking departure, a turn to naturalistic drama that follows a family grieving the loss of a young child. The play won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, and in 2010, he adapted it into a well-received movie starring Nicole Kidman in an Oscar-nominated performance.

In adapting Rabbit Hole, Lindsay-Abaire expanded the world of the characters, moving unseen moments from the play to front and center in the film. “[It was] a great opportunity, because I had lived with the characters for so long,” he says. “What the play had in its back pocket that most plays don’t is a fairly involved off-stage life that I could pillage and put onscreen.” The husband’s possible affair that’s only alluded to in the play became a backbone of the movie’s plot. Many other moments, like a support group that the mother joins, transform from an unseen description to an onscreen depiction.

Following the stage premiere of Rabbit Hole, Lindsay-Abaire crafted the book and lyrics for Shrek the Musical and wrote the screenplay for the upcoming feature Rise of the Guardians for Dreamworks, as well as Disney’s prequel Oz: The Great and Powerful, directed by Sam Raimi. (He also wrote the screenplays for the animated movie Robots and the 2008 fantasy film Inkheart.) A spirit of challenge continues even in Good People, which premiered in 2011. “Before I wrote Rabbit Hole, I had never done a straightforward drama,” he says. “For Good People, I feel like the canvas has expanded a little bit, and I’m writing more with a social mind and about current events.”

Good People finds Lindsay-Abaire writing about his hometown of South Boston for the first time, a setting that will now likely continue to appear in his work. “Once I got a taste of it, I thought, I have to go back to that neighborhood, because it’s so interesting and rich,” he says. “In particular, the way South Boston has transformed is really interesting to me, and a new play that I am writing is similar in tone to Good People.”

For another play in progress, Lindsay-Abaire is returning to the wacky farces that made his career as a writer. “The other thing that I’m writing is much closer to the earlier plays that I wrote, absurdist comedies,” he says. “People keep saying to me, ‘When are you going to write another funny play like Fuddy Meers?’ I thought, ‘I don’t know, I’ll give it a go.’”

As Lindsay-Abaire returns to the rougher, less controlled form of his early career, he expects the new work to benefit from the more traditional plays he has written in recent years. “I have improved in terms of my craft, so it is interesting to go back to the tone and style of those early plays, but infusing it with some of the craft I’ve gained,” he says. He is undecided whether the next Southie play or the comedy will see the stage first. “They’re very different plays,” he says. “They fight in my head over who is going to get written first.”

- CHARLES HAUGLAND
I've heard that you waited to write about your home neighborhood, South Boston. How did you know it was time?

A few things came together. I had wanted to mature as a person and as a writer. If I was going to write about Southie, I wanted to do it responsibly and respectfully. These are my friends and relatives after all. But in terms of "why now," I kept hearing about English playwrights who were writing about class, and people kept asking why American playwrights don't. I knew I didn't want to write some didactic play, preaching about class in America. But then I went back to Southie and thought, "If I write about the old neighborhood, the subject of class will inevitably bubble to the surface because it's so present in the community." Also, the economy is in a really crappy place right now, and I thought if I was going to write about class, this was the time to do it. What's most interesting to me is that, before I wrote the play, I thought, "Why would you do this? It's going to be irrelevant in three years." But the play has actually become more relevant and hums in a way that it didn't when it was on Broadway two years ago.

I've found there are several different ideas of South Boston, depending on whom you ask.

And I think it gets even harder to define every day because the neighborhood is so much in transition. The play hints at the changes in the neighborhood, but mostly what's onstage is the version of South Boston that I remember, and that I know still exists in at least pockets of the neighborhood. I grew up in the Lower End, which was mostly comprised of regular, working class people who were trying to make good lives for themselves and for their families. They were salt of the earth people, and lots of us were struggling, but no one I knew really fit the Southie stereotypes that people seem to have. Part of writing the play was my responding to those stereotypes —
most of which are thirty years old and weren’t even accurate thirty years ago.

Which ones?

The racist, the low-life, the Irish drunk, the drug addict, the welfare mom, the mobster working for Whitey Bulger. Some of those stereotypes come from the movies and books about Southie, some of them come from the front page of The [Boston] Globe. The forced busing era in particular gave people a really bad picture of the neighborhood; there was some truth in the stories, but what was really going on in the neighborhood was much more complicated than “a bunch of racists are throwing bottles at kids in buses.”

Did you live through the busing era?

I was four when it happened, so I was much more aware of the repercussions and people’s takeaways from it. There are also all these movies that have come out — some of them are about Southie, some of them I found people have just assumed are about Southie, like The Fighter in Lowell or The Town in Charlestown. People tend to lump urban Boston stories together. I wanted to write a different story about South Boston.

One of the things you hear about Southie that I find the play illustrates is that it is a place that is very protective of its own.

I’m obviously not a historian, but I was always told that South Boston came to be when the Irish immigrants came and were shunned in most quarters because they were thought to be filthy, dirty lowlifes, and nobody wanted them in their neighborhood. So, [the immigrants] were like, “What about this little patch of mud,” and they went over to this uninhabited isthmus and they formed a community. Because they were so ostracized, they turned to each other for comfort and protection, and became a segregated community in every sense of the word. They took care of each other, and learned to be suspicious of outsiders, often for good reasons. And it stayed that way for generations. So, yes, it was a wonderfully tight-knit and protective community, but unfortunately that mindset can also have its ugly side.

What do you still recognize about the neighborhood when you go back?

Not as much as I’d like, sadly. There are still a few people I grew up with, a few families, but so many have moved away. The Boys Club is still there, Sully’s is still on Castle Island, but so many churches and schools have become condos. The neighborhood has become much more gentrified and diverse — I’m not saying that that’s necessarily a good thing or a bad thing, it’s just not the Southie I grew up in. Last time I was there, I walked down West Broadway and saw these quaint cafes and artisanal chocolatiers. I thought, what the hell is this? Even the new bars that claim to be “authentic Irish pubs” have Thai chicken salads on the menu. Don’t get me wrong, I love a Thai chicken salad, but despite the claims of authenticity, big parts of the neighborhood feel like they’ve been bought out by a franchise that caters to a different clientele.

I’ve run into people from South Boston that saw the show in New York. Have you heard reactions from the neighborhood?

Yes, I was surprised how many folks from Southie came to see it. Generally, people only seek out the writer if they have something nice to say. I wouldn’t have been surprised if some of my neighbors had wanted to tell me off, but that didn’t happen. A couple people said, “Forget the clam rolls at Sully’s. It was the hot dogs! Why didn’t you say hot dogs?” Other than preferences, people felt like it was truthful, funny, and accurate, and they were happy it wasn’t about drugs and Whitey Bulger.

Are there things you still recognize about yourself where you say, “That’s Southie?”

All the time. I will always be the working class kid. I have a deep respect for hard work and people trying to make their lives better. I hope it informs my own work ethic. My sense of humor is very Southie — dark and inappropriate. Laughter in the face of hardship, that’s still very present. I also have a little bit of a temper. I think most people consider me pretty mild-mannered. But I don’t suffer fools gladly. Not too many people from Southie do.
In South Boston, this month’s paycheck covers last month’s bills, bingo is a night on the town, and sharp-tongued single-mom Margie Walsh has just been let go from yet another job. Scrambling to make ends meet, she looks up an old flame, hoping he’ll help her make a fresh start in this humor-filled drama from Pulitzer Prize winner and Boston native David Lindsay-Abaire about how twists of fate determine our path.

“Enthralling and utterly gripping!”
– LOS ANGELES TIMES
“David’s play explores complex social questions about class, luck, and escaping our roots with electric energy and sharp humor. Our production marks a homecoming for him, Director Kate Whoriskey, and this local story.”

– PETER DuBOIS

THE GOOD PERSON OF SOUTHIE:
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE’S NEW PLAY COMES HOME

“No, I know. You’re a good guy, Mikey. I’m just bustin’ balls. You’re good people. I always said that about you. You are good people, right?” – MARGIE, GOOD PEOPLE

When sharp-tongued single mother Margie loses her minimum wage job at the Dollar General in South Boston, she has to find a new one quick. Rent is due at the end of the month, and she has been living paycheck-to-paycheck. She can’t go to the Gillette plant, and none of her friends can help her — except maybe one, her high school summer fling who got out of the neighborhood and is now a fertility doctor out in Chestnut Hill. Their interaction creates the central spark for playwright David Lindsay-Abaire’s newest play Good People.

South Boston native David Lindsay-Abaire’s Pulitzer Prize-winning play Rabbit Hole was staged at the Huntington in 2006. He explains that he had avoided writing about his own neighborhood, but the idea came back when he started thinking about a play about class. “I kept hearing over and over again about British playwrights writing about class in their country, and people were asking, ‘Where are the new American plays about class?’” he recalls. “I asked myself if I were to write a play on the subject, what would that be? I knew I wasn’t interested in writing any didactic, message-laden play, so I put it aside for a while [but then] thought, ‘Wait a minute, if I write about Southie in any way, class will inevitably bubble up to the surface.’”

In exploring this serious subject, Lindsay-Abaire created a nuanced and incredibly funny exploration of getting by in America. “I thought I had written another naturalistic drama,” he says. “On Broadway, [Good People] got wall-to-wall laughs, more laughs than any of my comedies. It was surprising.”

Lindsay-Abaire’s fresh perspective on class springs from a personal history that breaks down any binary concept of the haves and have-nots. “I grew up in Boston and spent many-a-summer with my dad selling fruit out of the back of his truck on a corner of Huntington Avenue right across the street from the BU Theatre wondering what kinds of plays were performed inside,” says Lindsay-Abaire. “Needless to say, it was both thrilling and surreal to be inside that very theatre in 2006 watching the Huntington’s wonderful production of my play Rabbit Hole. I’m excited to be back with Good People, which is very much about and inspired by my hometown. It’s about choices and luck, and lack of both. It’s about the good people sitting inside that building in plush theatre seats, and the equally good people selling fruit out on the corner.”

Good People is not autobiographical, but Lindsay-Abaire shares a biographical detail with the Chestnut Hill doctor, Mike Dillon. Both got out of the neighborhood on a scholarship from the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Lindsay-Abaire has remarked on the luck involved in a scholarship. His, which enabled him to attend Milton Academy, was awarded only every six years, and he happened to be the right age at the right time. The scholarship was also given mainly to athletes, but a concerned and impassioned teacher campaigned on his behalf. This incident illuminated for Lindsay-Abaire the intersection of chance and opportunity.

“We have this myth that if you work hard, you can accomplish anything,” he says. “It’s not a very American thing to say, but I don’t think that’s true. It’s true for a lot of people, but you need other things to succeed. You need luck, you need opportunity, and you need the life skills to recognize what an opportunity is.”

– CHARLES HAUGLAND

LEARN MORE ONLINE Visit huntingtontheatre.org/goodpeople to watch a video about how David Lindsay-Abaire took the threads of his working-class South Boston roots and spun them into Good People.
A PORTRAIT OF A NEIGHBORHOOD: SOUTH BOSTON IN POP CULTURE

To create a picture of his hometown onstage, playwright David Lindsay-Abaire eschewed Southie’s recent pop culture myths. In the past fifteen years since Good Will Hunting, South Boston has become a frequent presence onscreen through movies like The Departed, Gone Baby Gone, Mystic River, and others. Lindsay-Abaire wanted to tell the story of its people at a deeper, and perhaps more ordinary, level. “I wanted to write about the people that I knew,” he says in a 2011 interview with The Boston Globe. “I didn’t know many criminals. I didn’t know many drug addicts. But, I knew people who were just struggling to get by.”

For one cast member, local actress Karen MacDonald who plays a brash neighbor Jean in the upcoming Huntington production, research for the role began when she lived in the neighborhood as a child, near the M Street Beach. “My dad passed away when I was three, and my mother and I moved back in with her parents,” MacDonald recalls. “So I lived with my Polish and Russian grandparents in Southie until my mother got married to my stepfather, also from South Boston. Certainly, there’s a strong connection in my family to that place.”

Lindsay-Abaire grew up in the well-known Lower End, and his parents were both working class, as much of the neighborhood was at the time. South Boston is seen in the play as largely blue-collar and fiercely protective of its own. “It was a tight knit neighborhood, but I don’t think that’s unique in Boston,” MacDonald tells, and emphasizes that even the neighborhood isn’t a monolith. “Even in Southie, there was a difference whether you grew up by the beach or over by Columbia Point, which was technically Dorchester, or in the projects. Everyone stuck to their own.”

The flipside of the compassion between neighbors is an insularity that can be hard to escape, even in the face of limited opportunities for a middle-
LUCKY CARD: PLAYING THE ODDS IN BINGO

“I think the Irish woman was freed from slavery by bingo. They can go out now, dressed up, with their handbags and have a drink and play bingo. And they deserve it.”
- IRISH PLAYWRIGHT JOHN B. KEANE

“I-17...I-17.” In a church basement in South Boston, the characters of Good People listen as a priest calls number after number. For all who play, the simplicity of bingo makes the game seem easy: twenty-five squares in a five-square grid, and you only have to get five in a row. One space even starts as “free,” so you only have to get four more.

Bingo started in America in 1929 after a businessman picked up the game in Germany. (Bingo has its roots in first the Italian lottery and then a French game “Le Lotto.”) The game came first to county fairs, but within a year or two, churches and local service organizations realized the fundraising capacity of the game. If you have players purchase unique bingo cards, and set a prize for the winner that is lower than the total of all the entry fees, you take the profit.

There are an astronomical number of unique bingo cards. On a traditional bingo card, the first column is five different numbers between 1 and 15, the second column is five different numbers between 16 and 30, and so on. Bingo probability expert Bill Butler tells that simple format leads to more than a billion billion (yes, a billion billion) possible unique combinations. If boards are truly produced randomly, few players may get the same board twice, even in years of playing.

The math takes a turn for the worse when you consider how many other players there are. For example, imagine a game where there are just fifty boards in play (a low-ball figure when many players have six or more boards at once and the number of boards may climb into the thousands). If there are fifty boards, Butler suggests that the odds are 1 in 50 that you will have a bingo by the time the 20th ball is pulled. But the odds that someone else will win by that point: 3 out of 5. Bingo is a losing game, and you have to pay to play.

- CHARLES HAUFLAND

class life for those who stay. (The economic profile of Southie has recently changed somewhat as waterfront real estate values have skyrocketed due to waves of gentrification and the lower crime levels.) MacDonald echoes the tension between staying with your circle or moving out to the suburbs. “There was always a question of are you going to be loyal to your neighborhood or are you going to follow an opportunity and go elsewhere? My mother’s parents had passed away when we moved, but my stepfather’s parents were both still there. There was an attitude from them of, ‘Oh, I see. You hit the number. Now, you’re gonna get out of Southie.’”

In a coincidence, MacDonald’s family moved to Milton, subtly mirroring Lindsay-Abaire’s own journey from South Boston to the Milton Academy prep school. Lindsay-Abaire’s family remained in Southie, though, even as he attended school elsewhere, the people of Southie were part of his blood. “I know so many women like the ones in this play,” he notes. “Margie’s best friend [Jean, played by MacDonald] — that lady walked into my mother’s kitchen every morning to have coffee. She’s my mother’s friend from across the street; she’s the lady that works up at the nursing home. She was a combination of different women, with a brashness, honesty, and loyalty that is so part of the community.”

Though residents of Southie are unlikely to see a more deeply-felt depiction of their neighborhood, the pop culture-prominence of South Boston isn’t going anywhere. Two reality series (rumored to be named “Southie Rules” and “Southie Pride”) are currently shooting in the area, and may premiere in the next year.

- CHARLES HAUFLAND

SEE PAGE 27 FOR SHOW PERFORMANCE CALENDAR AND EVENT LISTINGS
Boston. The people in the play are a composite of many people I know. To put it in front of those very people and say, “Is this right?” is a scary thing to do.”

The play, by design, is not about the seedy underworld of South Boston so often portrayed on film and in print. Whitey Bulger, after all, now resides at the Plymouth County House of Correction. Lindsay-Abaire can’t resist one nod to the infamous local gangster, but it’s a quick retort and hardly central to the play. “It’s about normal people trying to do the best they can,” Lindsay-Abaire, 42, says. “They are not losers or slobs or drug addicts. And as boring as that might sound, it’s exciting to see.”

“In a word, the play is about class. It focuses on Margie (pronounced with a hard ‘g’), a 50-something single mother who struggles to hold down a job and support her severely disabled adult daughter. She seeks out Mike, an old flame who is now a successful fertility doctor with a swank home in Chestnut Hill. He lives amid manicured lawns and sculpted shrubbery, while she still resides among the box-on-intruder-teams that defined Southie before the developers came in with their luxury condos and upscale cafes. Memories flow, tempers flare, and long-held confidences are unearthed.

The play asks the timely question that is at the core of the current political debate in this country: Do people rise above their circumstances by hard work or by sheer luck? “It’s very exciting, because David is writing about the great American themes,” Whoriskey says. “It’s America a place where you can actually believe in the idea of rugged individualism, or is it a place where the deck is stacked against people in the lower classes? The play goes back and forth between those two major ideas.

It does so in a way that is particular to the Boston area. When one character accuses another of becoming “lace-curtain Irish,” the insult stings in a way it wouldn’t, in, say, SoHo or Seattle. And that’s why everyone in the cast has Southie on their minds. Johanna Day, who plays the monumental role of Margie, hails from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, and her first task was to cultivate a convincing accent (unlike the wandering accents in films like The Departed). “I was thinking: Oh, geez, this better be perfect, or those Southies might knock me in the head,” the actress says.

The themes of the play are not unfamiliar to Day, who has long had a distinguished reputation in New York and in regional theaters. She knows what it’s like to worry about balancing the checkbook and making the rent. She’s had tough times over the last few years financially, so I can understand that desperation,” she says. “Believe me, I work constantly and I have the best career creatively, but there is not a lot of money in theater.”

Day can relate to her character’s determination to stick to the job, hour after hour, whatever the circumstances. “It’s where I’m from, and the people who know it will nod to the infamous local gangster, but it’s a quick retort and underscore the importance of bonds formed in childhood: ‘I can see my friends from high school, and it’s just the same, ’ she says. “Those memories are locked in, and it’s almost like you can smell them. It’s a sensory thing.”

Lindsay-Abaire and the creative team are trying to evoke that kind of visceral feel for the neighborhood he once knew. The goal is to go deeper than the colloquial references to the now-closed Hanagami market and Jordan Marsh. The point is to create a sense of place, albeit one enconced in secrets. But the playwright is adamant that the characters are not based on individual people, but are fictionalized amalgams of folks whose accents he recognizes, whose quirks he admires. He does admit, however, that his mother, Sally, and her best friend saw a bit of themselves onstage when they attended the New York production. “My mother had a bruise on her arm because her best friend kept elbowing her,” he says, noting that the two women were quite familiar with a craft item one character makes and markets for $34 a pop.

His parents moved from South Boston to Brockton 10 years ago — “The minute my father mentioned it, my mother was packing her bags” — but his friends and relatives from the old neighborhood will be in the audience here. “Look, this production is the most important out of all the productions around the country, because it is about Boston,” he says. “It’s where I’m from, and the people who know it will be in the seats.” That prospect is both terrifying and liberating for Lindsay-Abaire. In fact, he says, he was so inspired by the experience of bringing Good People into the world that he’s working on two more plays about South Boston, which has more secrets waiting to be unraveled.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PHOTOS: huntingtontheatre.org/news/photo-library (see instructions at the bottom of this release)

HUNTINGTON THEATRE COMPANY’S AMERICAN PREMIERE OF CHRISTOPHER SHINN’S TIMELY POLITICAL DRAMA “NOW OR LATER” ECHOES CURRENT HEADLINES

WHAT
Huntington Theatre Company stages the American premiere of *Now or Later* by Christopher Shinn (*Dying City*) directed by Michael Wilson (*The Best Man* on Broadway).

WHEN
October 12 – November 10, 2012
Evenings: Tues. – Thurs. at 7:30pm; Fri. – Sat. at 8pm; Select Sun. at 7pm
Matinees: Select Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2pm
Days and times vary; see complete schedule at end of release.
Press Opening: Wednesday, October 17, 7pm. RSVP online at huntingtontheatre.org/news.

WHERE
South End / Calderwood Pavilion at the BCA, 527 Tremont Street, Boston

TICKETS
Single tickets starting at $25, seated subscriptions, and FlexPasses are on sale online at huntingtontheatre.org: by phone at 617 266 0800; or in person on the Avenue of the Arts at the BU Theatre Box Office, 264 Huntington Ave. and in the South End at the Calderwood Pavilion at the BCA Box Office, 527 Tremont St.

$5 off: seniors
$10 off: subscribers and BU community (faculty/staff/alumni)
$25 “35 Below” tickets for patrons 35 years old and younger (valid ID required)
$15 student and military tickets (valid ID required)

(BOSTON) – To coincide with the ongoing presidential campaign, the Huntington Theatre Company will stage the American premiere of *Now or Later*, Christopher Shinn’s timely political drama about our freedoms. Drama Desk and Outer Critic’s Circle Award winner Michael Wilson, who recently helmed the acclaimed Broadway production of Gore Vidal’s presidential drama *The Best Man*, directs the new production.
“I am so thrilled to be directing Chris’s play at this moment,” says Wilson, “as it directly explores how Americans defend a core principle – freedom of expression – in the face of violence sparked by the mockery of another society’s faith. As we begin rehearsals, I am profoundly struck by the recent tragic events in Libya, Egypt, and Yemen sparked by ridicule of Muhammad. The incendiary event of this play is perceived similarly – only the perpetrator in *Now or Later* is the son of the President-elect. Chris’s play puts these events in a fuller context, affording our audience the opportunity to explore more fully what is at stake in these complex clashes of culture, government, and faith.”

Called, “riveting, urgent, and unmissable” by *The Times of London*, the play takes place in real time in a hotel room on election night as the returns are being announced. The gay son of the favored presidential candidate sends his father’s team into crisis mode when controversial photos of him at a college party dressed as the prophet Muhammad and accompanied by a friend dressed as the ultra-conservative “Pastor Bob” spread over the internet, potentially sparking an international incident. Quickly, the son must wrestle to explain his motives and personal beliefs about freedoms of religion and expression to members of his father’s campaign team, his mother, and ultimately his father. *The Telegraph* calls *Now or Later*, “The play we have been waiting for – a gripping, daring work that examines the Western response to Islamic fundamentalism and the consequent threat to freedom of speech.”

“Experiencing *Now or Later* at the height of election season adds an extra twist to this provocative tale of political fiction,” says Huntington Artistic Director Peter DuBois. “I’m proud we are producing the US debut of this play that was such a success at London’s Royal Court and that we’re introducing Huntington audiences to the fine work of Christopher Shinn and Michael Wilson.”

Shinn wrote *Now or Later* as a commission for London’s Royal Court in 2008. The production was extended and became the American dramatist’s biggest UK hit. “*Now or Later* was written at a very specific time, both for the world and in my life, and returning to it four years later is fascinating for me,” says Shinn. “On the political level, seeing what has changed – both substantially and superficially – has strengthened my sense of what’s timeless about the play’s questions (and lack of answers). On the personal level, the characters’ yearnings and maneuverings feel even murkier to me. To revisit the play is to face what I believed then, what I believe now, and what I suspect I might believe in the future.”

**ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

The cast includes:

- **Michael Goldsmith** (Matt, John’s good friend): *Clybourne Park* (London’s West End and Royal Court Theatre) and *Six Degrees of Separation* (The Old Vic);
- **Ryan King** (Marc, a campaign staffer): *Eurydice* (Second Stage Theatre), *Goodbye New York, Goodbye Heart* (HERE);
- **Tom Nelis** (John, Sr., a presidential candidate): *Enron* on Broadway, *The Broken Heart* (Theatre for a New Audience);
- **Adriane Lenox** (Tracy, a campaign staffer): *Doubt* (Tony and Drama Desk Awards for Best Featured Actress) and *Kiss Me, Kate* on Broadway;
- **Grant MacDermott** (John, Jr.): Emerson College graduate, *Mister Roberts* (New Repertory Theatre), *The Great American Trailer Park Musical* (SpeakEasy Stage Company); and
- **Alexandra Neil** (Jessica, John, Sr.’s wife): *Rock ‘n Roll* and *Match* on Broadway
Christopher Shinn (playwright) was born in Hartford, Connecticut and lives in New York. His plays have premiered at the Royal Court, Lincoln Center Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, the Vineyard Theatre, Playwrights Horizons, and South Coast Rep. His plays include *Picked, Dying City, On the Mountain, Four, What Didn’t Happen* and others. His adaptation of *Hedda Gabler* for the Roundabout appeared on Broadway in 2009. He is a winner of an Obie Award in Playwriting and a Guggenheim Fellowship. He has been a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama and short-listed for the Evening Standard Theatre Award for Best Play. He teaches playwriting at the New School for Drama.

Michael Wilson (director) makes his Huntington debut. His Broadway credits include the Tony Award-nominated *The Best Man, Dividing the Estate, and Enchanted April*, as well as *Old Acquaintance*. His Off Broadway credits include *Defying Gravity, Necessary Targets, The Carpetbaggers Children, Chasing Manet, The Red Devil Battery Sign, The Milk Train Doesn’t Stop Here Anymore, and Picked and What Didn’t Happen* (both by Christopher Shinn). He directed *Angels in America, Parts 1 & 2* at the Venice Biennale, and has directed regionally at American Repertory Theater (Elliott Norton Award for Outstanding Visiting Production for *The Glass Menagerie*), Alley Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Guthrie Theater, Long Wharf Theatre, The Old Globe, and Hartford Stage, where as Artistic Director from 1998 to 2011, he oversaw the commissioning and development of many new plays, including Quiara Hudes’ 2012 Pulitzer Prize winner, *Water By the Spoonful*. Wilson received 2010 Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards for his commissioning and direction of Horton Foote’s three-part, nine-hour version of his epic *The Orphans’ Home Cycle*.

Scenic design by Jeff Cowie (*The Carpetbaggers Children* at Lincoln Center Theater and *What Didn’t Happen* at Playwrights Horizons); costume design by David C. Woolard (*Dividing the Estate* and *West Side Story* on Broadway); lighting design by Russell H. Champa (*Captors* at the Huntington Theatre Company and *Completeness* at Playwrights Horizons); sound design and original composition by David Remedios (*The Luck of the Irish* and *Before I Leave You* at the Huntington). Production stage manager is Carola Morrone Lacoste. Stage manager is Candace D. Mongellow.

SPONSORS
- Grand Patron: Boston University
- Season Sponsors: Carol G. Deane, J. David Wimberly
- Production Co-Sponsors: Carol Langer, Mary Wolfson & Bob Rosenberg

ABOUT THE HUNTINGTON
Since its founding in 1982, the Huntington Theatre Company has developed into Boston’s leading theatre company. Bringing together superb local and national talent, the Huntington produces a mix of groundbreaking new works and classics made current. Led by Artistic Director Peter DuBois and Managing Director Michael Maso, the Huntington creates award-winning productions, runs nationally renowned programs in education and new play development, and serves the local theatre community through its operation of the Calderwood Pavilion at the BCA. The Huntington is in residence at Boston University. For more information, visit huntingtontheatre.org.

PHOTO DOWNLOAD INSTRUCTIONS
To download high-resolution (or smaller) photos of *Now or Later*:
2. Click on a thumbnail, and let the image load in your browser on the Flickr site. **Note caption information is displayed below the image.**
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**PRODUCTION CALENDAR AND RELATED EVENTS**

![Calendar](calendar.png)

**Post-Show Audience Conversations**

**Ongoing**
Led by members of the Huntington staff. After most Tuesday - Friday, Saturday matinee, and Sunday matinee performances throughout the season. Free with a ticket to the performance.

**Student Matinee Performance**

**Fri. 11/9 at 10 am**
For students in grades 8-12. To reserve tickets, call 617 273 1558.

**Actors Forum**

**Thurs. 10/1 following the 7:30pm performance**
**Wed. 10/7, following the 2pm performance**
**Fri. 10/9 following the 10am student matinee**
Participating cast members answer questions from the audience.

**Humanities Forum**

**Sun. 10/4, following the 2pm performance**
A post-performance talk exploring the context and significance of *Now or Later.*
MAKE “OUR TOWN” YOUR TOWN AND BECOME HONORARY MAYOR OF GROVER’S CORNERS AT A PERFORMANCE OF DAVID CROMER’S ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME EVENT “OUR TOWN”

(BOSTON) – When the Huntington Theatre Company brings David Cromer’s landmark production of Thornton Wilder’s classic Our Town home to New England this winter, local residents will have the opportunity to become Honorary Mayor of Grover’s Corners for a day. Huntington Trustee Judi Krupp and her husband Douglas have issued the Make Our Town Your Town Challenge and will match all new and increased gifts to the Huntington’s Annual Fund dollar for dollar up to $50,000.

Donors who sponsor an Our Town performance with a new or increased gift of $5,000 or more will be sworn in as Honorary Mayor of the fictional Grover’s Corners and will receive VIP “Mayor” seating, up to ten complimentary tickets, and additional tickets at a special rate at the chosen performance; an exclusive post-performance toast with cast members; special recognition in the Our Town playbill and in the lobby; and a copy of the script.

To qualify for the Challenge match and to be an Our Town performance sponsor, gifts must be received by October 25, 2012. Contact Meg White, Director of Major Gifts at mwhite@huntingtontheatre.bu.edu or 617 273 1596. Learn more at huntingtontheatre.org/makeourtownyoutown.

Acclaimed by the press as “landmark,” “astounding,” and “exceptional,” MacArthur “Genius” David Cromer’s Our Town is a once-in-a-lifetime event. In 1901 Grover’s Corners, George and Emily fall in love, marry, and live out their lives. One New England town becomes a microcosm of everyday life in Wilder’s Pulitzer Prize winner. The groundbreaking production was an Off Broadway smash, playing for more than 600 performances. (Burnt Umber, Judi Krupp’s company with her partner Bill Gerber, was a producer of the Off Broadway production.)

Cromer’s wonderfully intimate staging marks the Huntington’s first production in the Roberts Studio Theatre in the Calderwood Pavilion at the BCA since the Huntington built and opened the facility as its second home in 2004. (The Huntington produces regularly in the Wimberly Theatre and occasionally in Deane Hall.) The limited run of Our Town begins December 7, 2012 and coincides with the 75th anniversary of the play.

Tickets to Our Town are currently available exclusively to Huntington subscribers and FlexPass holders. More information at huntingtontheatre.org/subscribe.
“Thornton Wilder’s play mines the depths of our relationship to home and community,” says Huntington Artistic Director Peter DuBois, “and so I find it fitting and deeply satisfying that David will be engaging a company of actors comprised of Boston’s best talent for this homegrown production.”

ACCLAIM FOR OUR TOWN


“RIVETING, RELEVANT, ENDURING, AND EXCEPTIONAL! It stirs the imagination and senses and sends you out deeply touched!” – NY Daily News

“DAVID CROMER’S RETHINKING OF THORNTON WILDER’S MASTERPIECE IS A LANDMARK! I don’t use the word ‘genius’ casually, but Mr. Cromer may fill the bill. I don’t know a more gifted stage director! Arrestingly original!” – Terry Teachout, The Wall Street Journal

BEST of 2008. “David Cromer’s brilliantly revisionist and astounding new production of Our Town is his masterwork to date. In the jaw-dropping third act I found myself speaking the words ‘Oh, my God’ to no one. Cancel whatever you’re doing tonight and go and see this show.” – The Chicago Tribune

More at huntingtontheatre.org/ourtown.

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MEDIA NOTES

For interviews and more information, contact Communications Manager Rebecca Curtiss at rcurtiss@huntingtontheatre.bu.edu or 617 273 1537.

PHOTO DOWNLOAD INSTRUCTIONS

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