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Third Country
The World Comes to a Small Southern Town
A World Premiere Play Inspired By True Stories in Our Changing Backyard
September 20 – October 20, 2013

ATLANTA – The world comes to a small Southern town in Horizon Theatre Company’s World Premiere of *Third Country* by Suehyla El-Attar. The play, directed by Horizon Co-Artistic Director Lisa Adler, is inspired by the Clarkston, Georgia community where thousands of refugees have been resettled over the last decade. In addition to the production, Horizon is partnering with more than 20 local organizations to bring this story to life through post-show discussions, opportunities to meet the people who inspired the play, special events, and a marketplace for refugee-made goods. The play is sponsored by The MAP Fund and Macy’s Foundation.

***Third Country* runs September 20 – October 20, 2013** at Horizon Theatre in Little Five Points/Inman Park (1083 Austin Avenue NE, 30307, corner of Euclid and Austin Avenues). Performances are **Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 8 PM, Saturday at 3 PM and 8:30 PM, and Sunday at 5 PM. October weekday school performances to be announced.** Tickets are \$20-\$30 with prices subject to change based on availability. Tickets and information are available at horizontheatre.com or 404.584.7450.

STORY

Nura, a refugee, clings to her soccer ball like a lifeline as she meets Sasha, a resettlement worker who is her guide to a strange new home in a small Southern town. But the welcome is mixed in this community reeling from a flood of newcomers – all refugees from around the world. A community meeting divides the town, and a soccer field becomes the battleground for its future. Will longtime residents and these eager new Americans learn to work together to find peace?

Inspired by real life events in nearby Clarkston, Georgia, playwright Suehyla El-Attar (Horizon’s *The Perfect Prayer*) uses her signature wit and optimism to look at a community in transition, **and what happens when we must redefine and share our homes. A poignant new play from our own changing backyard.**

THE MAKING OF THE PLAY

***Third Country* was developed through Horizon’s New South Play Festival program, dedicated to creating new plays from, for, and about the contemporary South.** The play is part of Horizon’s decade-long journey of producing new plays that connect our community to the world through theatre, including plays about Afghanistan, Iraq, South Africa, Darfur and the Muslim community here in Atlanta. The idea for a play about Clarkston and the refugee community began percolating when Horizon Co-Artistic Director Lisa Adler was introduced to the community through a friend and then read about

Clarkston and the refugee boys soccer team, The Fugees, in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and the *New York Times* in 2006 and 2007. Then the book about the same subject, *Outcasts United* by Warren St. John, was published and became a best-seller. Its compelling story of long-time residents facing thousands of newcomers from different cultures was read by communities and schools around the country. This seemed like the perfect opportunity for Horizon to move forward with a story about Clarkston. Horizon approached local playwright and actress Suehyla El-Attar, whose play *The Perfect Prayer* had been developed and premiered at Horizon, to work on a loose adaptation of the book and secured a prestigious national MAP Fund grant to help support the process. However, they soon learned that the book adaptation was off limits having already been optioned for a movie. Says El-Attar, “I cursed Hollywood and then challenged myself to find another story in the town of Clarkston. And I did. It was the town itself.”

As El-Attar conducted interviews with residents of the Clarkston community over the next couple of years, the story started to come together. She explains, “I would describe Clarkston with a line I eventually deleted from the script. **‘It’s as if the Tower of Babel crash-landed here.’ But it’s also a quiet, small, southern town with railroad tracks literally dividing it in half** – and those tracks are also a cultural dividing line.” El-Attar compiled all of the people she met doing research into six characters who represent the major perspectives held by those in Clarkston as the city has grown and changed over the last 10 years. The play’s setting became the fictional town of Sidington and real events that took place over time were compressed. Ultimately *Third Country* is “a story that is not black and white, but very honest.” **The characters find a commonality in their humanity and in their search for “a safe place to call home.”**

“Third Country is about the changing face of our American communities today,” says Adler who is serving as director, dramaturg, and producer of the play. “New immigrants from around the world are moving into our towns and suburbs transforming them into multi-cultural and multi-lingual centers. And it’s not just the newcomers who have to adapt to life in this new America. How do we negotiate this successfully? What are the challenges? Can we learn to live alongside others with different cultures and beliefs? The small community of Clarkston is a microcosm for this kind of great demographic change nationally, and they have had some extraordinary successes. **We hope the play is an inspiration for people and communities facing similar challenges in Atlanta and across the country.”**

Adler has been a champion of the work, securing funding for the play and building community support by working closely with refugee service organizations and city officials. *Third Country* is funded in part by The MAP Fund, a program of Creative Capital, supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Over the course of developing *Third Country*, Horizon has cultivated numerous community partners whose knowledge of Clarkston and Georgia’s refugee community have been integral in shaping the play. Many of these partners will participate in unique events available to audience members throughout the run of the show including post-show discussions following every performance, a marketplace of refugee-made goods, and special performances benefitting select organizations.

One World, One Region, One Home Post-Show Discussions

Following each performance Horizon will offer a facilitated post-show discussion to allow audiences to reflect on the play, share their own experiences, talk with some of the people who inspired the play, and learn more about refugees in Georgia. Discussions will be led by professionals from [Welcoming America](#) and [CDF: A Collective Action Initiative](#). A special guest respondent from Clarkston or a refugee services organization will also be part of each discussion. The post-show discussions are sponsored in part by

One Region, an initiative of The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta. For more information see the One World, One Region, One Home attachment.

Marketplace of Goods Made By Refugee Women

Throughout the run of *Third Country*, Horizon will partner with two local organizations, the [Refugee Sewing Society](#) and [Peace of Thread](#), to create a marketplace of goods made by refugee women that will be open to audience members during performances. Both organizations empower refugee women to make a new life for themselves by teaching sewing and artisan skills as well as providing social and English language support.

Performances to Benefit Local Nonprofits

Horizon is partnering with four local nonprofits to raise funds and awareness for the Clarkston community and the Georgia refugee population. The preview performance on Tuesday, September 17 will benefit CDF: A Collective Action Initiative and the Rollins School of Public Health. The preview performance on Wednesday, September 18 will benefit Refugee Resettlement & Immigration Services of Atlanta (RRISA) and Refugee Family Services. For more information see the benefit performances attachment.

PLAYWRIGHT

Suehyla El-Attar was born and raised in Starkville, MS, but is rooted in Atlanta as an actor and playwright. **As a first generation American of parents who emigrated from Egypt, she has a personal connection to this story of new Americans.** Her first professional play, *The Perfect Prayer*, based on her own experiences growing up Muslim in the South, had its world premiere at Horizon Theatre in 2006, and has enjoyed several productions across the United States. As a playwright, Suehyla has focused on plays based on real life events and scripts specifically made for teens. Her three world premieres for teen theatre were commissioned by Shiloh High School: *Fish Bowl*, *Desperadoes*, and *The Fall of the Devil's Blues*. Suehyla has been a professional actor since the mid 2000's, delving into film and television, recently. She has been seen at the Alliance Theatre, Horizon Theatre, 7 Stages, Dad's Garage, Georgia Ensemble Theatre, Theatre in the Square, Synchronicity Theatre, and Essential Theatre.

DIRECTOR

As co-founder and Co-Artistic/Producing Director of Horizon Theatre Company, director Lisa Adler brings over two decades of experience developing new plays and focusing on global issues to *Third Country*. **“There is nothing like creating a new play from the stories of your own community – it feels vital and alive in a very special way. We feel a huge responsibility to tell this story with truth and compassion since so many people have shared their time and personal experiences with us.”** Adler has directed or dramaturged more than 60 plays at Horizon and founded the New South Play Festival of plays from, for, and about the contemporary South. Critically-acclaimed productions of *Time Stands Still* by Donald Marguiles (Atlanta Theatre Fans 2012 Award for Best Direction), *Third* by Wendy Wasserstein, *The Clean House* by Sarah Ruhl, *In Darfur* by Winter Miller, *9 Parts of Desire* by Heather Raffo, *The Syringa Tree* by Pamela Gien, *Boy Gets Girl* by Rebecca Gilman, *Quills* by Doug Wright, and *Skylight* by David Hare, all directed by Ms. Adler, were voted top productions of their year by local media. She dramaturged and/or directed many of Horizon's New South Play Festival world premieres, including the recent long-running hit *The Waffle Palace: Smothered, Covered and Scattered*, *24/7/365* and *Charm School* by Larry Larson and Eddie Levi Lee, *Night Blooms* by Margaret Baldwin and *The Perfect Prayer* by Suehyla El-Attar. She is an alumna of the Lincoln Center Director's Lab in NYC and holds a BFA in Acting from the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, where she also returned for post-graduate study in directing.

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

Third Country brings together a group of Atlanta's most talented local actors. **Marcie Millard**, most recently seen in *Les Misérables* as Madame Thenardier at Aurora Theatre and Peggy Musgrove in *Angry Fags* at 7 Stages, plays Sasha, an enthusiastic refugee resettlement worker. Audiences will remember

Cynthia D. Barker, who plays refugee Nura, from her roles in *Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery* at Horizon and *Macbeth* at Georgia Shakespeare. Taking on the role of resettlement director Mary Margaret is **Tess Malis Kincaid** who in recent years has been lauded for her roles in *Broke* and *August: Osage County* at the Alliance Theatre and *Swell Party* at Georgia Ensemble Theatre. After winning the Suzi Bass Award for Outstanding Featured Actor in a Play for his role in Horizon's *Superior Donuts*, **Eric J. Little** returns to the Horizon stage as Asad, a Sudanese immigrant on the brink of United States citizenship. Rounding out the ensemble cast are **Tom Thon**, previously seen in Horizon's *The Perfect Prayer*, *Third*, and *Night Blooms*, as Malcolm, the town's mayor, and **William S. Murphey**, seen last season at Theatrical Outfit in *Two Drink Minimum* and *The Fabulous Liptones*, as Charlie, the town's international grocer.

To create the world for *Third Country*, Horizon has engaged a team of longtime collaborators. Set designers **Isabel and Moriah Curley-Clay** (*every tongue confess*, *The Book Club Play*, *The Waffle Palace*) return after several acclaimed designs including the Atlanta Theater Fans Award-winning set for 2012's *Time Stands Still* to create a world meets small town setting. Also on board are resident lighting designer **Mary Parker** (Suzi Award for *Avenue Q*, also *every tongue confess*, *The Book Club Play*, *The Waffle Palace*), sound designer **Thom Jenkins** (*The Book Club Play*, *The Waffle Palace*), costume designer **Sydney Roberts** (*Night Blooms*), and props designer **Kate Bidwell LaFoy** (*The Waffle Palace*, *Time Stands Still*). The team is led by stage manager **Julianna M. Lee** (*The Book Club Play*).

CAST

Sasha	Marcie Millard
Nura	Cynthia D. Barker*
Mary Margaret	Tess Malis Kincaid*
Asad	Eric J. Little*
Malcolm	Tom Thon*
Charlie	William S. Murphey*

CREATIVE TEAM

Director/Dramaturg	Lisa Adler
Scenic Designers	Isabel A. Curley-Clay & Moriah Curley-Clay
Lighting Designer	Mary Parker
Sound Designer	Thom Jenkins
Costume Designer	Sydney Roberts
Props Designer	Kate Bidwell LaFoy
Stage Manager	Julianna M. Lee*

*Member of Actors Equity Association

SNEAK PEEK

Atlantans can get an inside look at *Third Country* at the Sneak Peek on Tuesday, September 10 at 7:30 PM at Horizon Theatre. The Sneak Peek will include a performance of select scenes from the production and discussion with the playwright, director, cast, and creative team. This event is free and open to the public. Call 404.584.7450 to reserve seats or visit tickets.horizontheatre.com.

GROUP RATES AVAILABLE

Group discounts are available for parties of 10 or more. Horizon has a lounge space available for rental for pre-show gatherings. Contact Group Sales at 404.523.1477 x111 or groups@horizontheatre.com for more information.

PRESS PHOTOS

Press photos can be downloaded [here](#).

TICKETING INFORMATION

Third Country runs September 20 – October 20, 2013 at Horizon Theatre in Little Five Points/Inman Park (1083 Austin Avenue NE, 30307, corner of Euclid and Austin Avenues). General admission tickets for *Third Country* are \$20-\$30, and prices are subject to change based on ticket availability. Tickets may be ordered by phone at 404.584.7450 or online at www.horizontheatre.com. Performances are Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday at 8 PM; Saturday at 3 PM and 8:30 PM; and Sunday at 5 PM. Call for information about daytime school performances. 8% sales tax will be added to all ticket orders. Internet convenience fee added to all online orders. No refunds, exchanges, or late seating.

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ABOUT HORIZON THEATRE COMPANY

Horizon Theatre Company, 1083 Austin Avenue, connects people, inspires hope and promotes positive change the stories of our times. We produce professional area and world premieres of smart, funny, and provocative contemporary plays. For more information about tickets, group sales, or to receive a season brochure, call 404.584.7450 or visit horizontheatre.com.

Horizon Theatre Company is grateful for the sponsorship by the Turner Voices initiative of Turner Broadcasting, who provides generous support to the 2013 season. Additional major funding is provided by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners under the guidance of the Fulton County Arts Council. Horizon Theatre is also supported in part by the Georgia Council for the Arts through appropriations of the Georgia General Assembly. The Council is a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional funding is provided by the City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs, the Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund, and The Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta.