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TOWN HALL THEATRE ANNOUNCES

ALAN AYCKBOURN'S COMEDY *WOMAN IN MIND*

JANUARY 12, 2018 – Town Hall Theatre “Generations” Season 2017-2018 jumps into 2018 with Alan Ayckbourn's dark comedy, ***WOMAN IN MIND***. ***WOMAN IN MIND*** will have 12 performances, including two previews, March 1 through March 24, 2018, at Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street, in Lafayette, CA. Tickets are \$18 - \$30, and are available through the Box Office at (925) 283-1557 or online at www.TownHallTheatre.com.

THT will host three Special Events for ***WOMAN IN MIND***: *Opening Night* gala, on Saturday, March 3, 2018; *LIT UP at Town Hall*, a literary salon, on Wednesday, March 14, 2018; and Theatre Club, our post-show talk-backs with complimentary wine, Friday, March 9, and Friday, March 23, 2018. We welcome audiences to enjoy THT's full bar and entertainment in our lobby one hour before performances.

THT's production of ***WOMAN IN MIND*** is directed by THT's Managing Director Dennis Markam, and features Suzie Shepard as Susan, Michael Sally as Gerald, Craig Souza as Andy, Erin Gould as Bill, Tim Holt Jones as Tony, Gretchen Lee Salter as Muriel, Brooke Silva as Lucy and Louis Kehoe as Rick.

WOMAN IN MIND by “the comic poet of middle class life” Alan Ayckbourn, has been called “perhaps the most daring and poignant” of all the British playwright's works (*The Telegraph*) and features a tour-de-force role for an

actress. Essentially a first person narrative, the play is seen through the eyes of Susan, a middle-class English housewife trapped in a lackluster marriage with a dreary, unappreciative family, during the space of 48 hours. After accidentally being conked unconscious by stepping on a garden rake, Susan finds herself suddenly surrounded by the ideal fantasy family, handsomely dressed in tennis whites and sipping champagne. When her real and imaginary worlds collide, and the lines between her truth and fiction increasingly blur, those fantasies take on a comical and nightmarish life of their own.

“ ... one of the best women's roles in the modern repertory ... A remarkable, unnerving evening.” – *International Herald Tribune*

“Laughter and seriousness can travel hand in hand in most of my plays very happily.” – Alan Ayckbourn

At one and the same time very funny and a bit disturbing, clever and alarming, painful and exhilarating, **WOMAN IN MIND** challenges the notion that everyone in an audience should have the same response to a play. Ayckbourn felt that the reactions of an audience to his play could and should differ, depending on their experiences; and in the end he leaves it to us to decide what is – or is not – funny.

History of play

WOMAN IN MIND, Alan Ayckbourn's 32nd play, was partially inspired by Dr. Oliver Sacks' book, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife For A Hat* (Sacks' best-selling collection of neurological case histories); the play is now regarded as a significant part of Ayckbourn's substantial canon. **WOMAN IN MIND** had its World Premiere in 1985 at Stephen Joseph Theatre in The round in Scarborough, and its London premiere at the Vaudeville Theatre the following year. The play premiered at the Manhattan Theatre Club in New York City in February 1988, directed by Lynne Meadow and starring Stockard Channing as Susan, for which she won the Drama Desk Best Actress award. In 2009, Ayckbourn directed a

London revival of the play, again at the Vaudeville Theatre. Helen Mirren made her Los Angeles stage debut in a 1992 production at the Tiffany Theatre playing Susan, calling the part, "probably one of the best roles written for a woman. I would count it among the top 10 best ever."

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Alan Ayckbourn is a preeminent English playwright, director and actor whose comedic plays frequently satirize middle-class manners. He served as the Artistic Director at Stephen Joseph Theatre Scarborough for 37 years where he made both his professional playwriting in 1959 and his directorial debut in 1961. His 82 plays to date include *Relatively Speaking*, *How the Other Half Loves*, *Absurd Person Singular*, *The Norman Conquests*, *Absent Friends*, *Bedroom Farce*, *A Chorus of Disapproval*, ***Woman in Mind***, *A Small Family Business*, *House & Garden* and *Private Fears in Public Places*, among many others. His plays have been translated into over 35 languages, performed around the world on stage and on television. Mr. Ayckbourn enjoys a long relationship with 59E59 Theaters, where he will direct the New York premiere of his play *A Brief History Of Women* for the *Brits Off Broadway* festival in May 2018. Among his numerous awards are induction into American Theatre's Hall of Fame, the 2010 Critics' Circle Award for Services to the Arts, the Laurence Olivier Special Award, Tony Special Lifetime Achievement Awards, and a knighthood in 1997 for 'services to theatre.'

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Dennis Markam has previously directed *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (Shellie Nominee) and *Pygmalion* for Town Hall Theatre's Main Stage. He has also appeared as an actor in Louis in *Angels in America* (Shellie Award Winner), Robert Chiltern in *An Ideal Husband*, and Yvan in *Art*, among others. As an actor and director, Mr. Markam has worked with Central Works, Contra Costa Civic Theatre, Diablo Actors' Ensemble, Fantasy Forum Actors' Ensemble,

and others. Mr. Markam has served as a Teaching Artist at Town Hall since 2008 and Managing Director since 2014.

ABOUT TOWN HALL THEATRE COMPANY

Established in 1944 as the Dramateurs, Town Hall Theatre turned 74 this year, making it the oldest continuously active theatre in Contra Costa County. Town Hall Theatre was awarded Best Theatre Troupe 2016 in *Diablo Magazines*, *Best of The East Bay*, and is the past recipient of numerous Shellie Awards, and four regional 2016 Theatre Bay Area Awards. THT is also home to an extensive children's educational program, twice voted the "Best Children's Theatre Company" by *Bay Area Parent Magazine*. THT's 102-year old historical building is managed by the Lafayette Association (LIA).

Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street, in Lafayette, CA 94549. The Box Office is open Tuesday through Friday, 4:00 to 6:00PM and Saturday 2:00-4:00 pm and can be reached at 925.283.1557. Information is also available at www.TownHallTheatre.com.

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CALENDAR Information on *WOMAN IN MIND*

WHO: TOWN HALL THEATRE COMPANY presents

WHAT: *WOMAN IN MIND* by Alan Ayckbourn, directed by Dennis Markam.

CAST: Erin Gould, Tim Holt Jones, Louis Kehoe, Michael Sally, Gretchen Lee Salter, Suzie Shepard, Brooke Silva, and Craig Souza.

DATES: Thursday, March 1, 2018, Preview @ 8:00 p.m.

Friday, March 2, 2018, Preview @ 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 3, 2018: OPENING RECEPTION

THROUGH March 24, 2018

SHOWTIMES: March 1 – March 24, 2018

Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays @ 8:00pm

Sundays, March 11 and March 18 @ 2:00 PM

CLOSES: March 24

WHERE: Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street, Lafayette, CA 94549

SPECIAL EVENTS:

March 3, 2018: *Opening Night*

March 14, 2018: *LIT UP at Town Hall*, a Literary Salon, 7:30-9:00pm

March 9 & 23, 2018: **Theatre Club** 8:00pm Post-Show Talk-Backs

TICKETS: \$18 Previews

\$27-30 Thurs. eve., Fri. eve., Sat. eve

\$25-27 Sun. matinee

Discounts available for Seniors and youth

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