

For Immediate Release

Neil LaBute's Challenging New Comedy Drama *This Is How It Goes* Closes Out the Ensemble Theatre Company's Season with a Bang.

(Santa Barbara, CA)— **Ensemble Theatre Company (ETC) of Santa Barbara** will present *This Is How It Goes*, an edgy and at times unsettling comedy drama by the critically acclaimed contemporary playwright Neil LaBute. This powerhouse play, which challenges preconceived notions of gender, ethnicity, morality, and even love, will begin performances on Thursday, May 31 and continue through Sunday, June 24, 2007. Opening night is Friday, June 1.

In *This Is How It Goes*, LaBute takes on the taboos and unspoken truths of contemporary American life. Cody Phipps, once the star of the high school track team, has become a successful businessman while his wife Belinda, a former cheerleader, stays at home with the baby. Once teenage sweethearts, they are now married with children and a luxurious home. Belinda and Cody appear to be a typical American couple, except that Cody is in almost every respect an outsider – “rich and black and different”, in the words of Belinda, who finds herself attracted to a white former classmate who has recently returned to town under mysterious circumstances. As the battle for her affections is waged against a backdrop of a serene small mid-western town, Belinda and Cody frankly question the foundation of their initial attraction, opening the door to an insurgence of bigotry, deception, and betrayal.

“I’m always surprised by the shocking twists in Neil LaBute’s work,” says Jonathan Fox, the show’s director and ETC’s Executive Artistic Director, “He pushes fascinating buttons and asks the provocative questions that other playwrights shy away from. We have found a great cast to bring this captivating play to life.”

The *New York Post* said “Neil LaBute is the first dramatist since David Mamet and Sam Shepard —since Edward Albee, actually— to mix sympathy and savagery, pathos and power.” LaBute is the writer/director of the films *In the Company of Men* and *Your Friends and Neighbors*, and author of the stage-plays *Bash*, *The Shape of Things* (which he also adapted for the screen) and *Fat Pig*. He has also directed the feature films *Nurse Betty*, *The Wicker Man* and *Possession*, the last adapted from the novel by A. S. Byatt.

(more)

914 Santa Barbara St., • Santa Barbara, CA 93101 • Administrative Office (805) 965-6252 • Box Office (805) 962-8606

The Ensemble Theatre is a professional theater employing members of Actor's Equity Association and maintains a policy to hire, without discrimination regarding race, color, national origin, gender, handicap, or political or sexual persuasion.

Ensemble Theatre is pleased to welcome back Aaron Serotsky, who last appeared in the ETC hit production of *Visiting Mr. Green* earlier this season. Mr. Serotsky, a New York based actor, has appeared at theaters across the country including Denver Center Theatre Company, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Alliance Theatre, George Street and Cincinnati Playhouses; the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis; and the Utah Shakespearean Festival. His musical work includes the Chicago premiere of *The Immigrant*, for which he was nominated for a 2005 Joseph Jefferson Award, as well as the first national tour of *Titanic*.

Performing the part of Belinda is Shannon Koob, who has appeared at theatres across America, including Yale Repertory Theatre, Denver Center Theater Company, Two River Theatre Company, Long Wharf Theater, Shakespeare in Santa Fe, and Lizard Head Theater Company. New York credits include the world premieres of *The Bridge in Scarsdale* and Jeff Baron's *What Goes Around*. Other highlights include: Dawn in *Lobby Hero*, Kate in *Taming of the Shrew*, Millie in *Picnic*, Perdita in *The Winter's Tale*, Miranda in *The Tempest*, and Cherie in *Bus Stop*.

Rounding out the cast is Los Angeles based actor Adam Lazarre-White as Cody. He has appeared in numerous films and episodic television in addition to both New York and Los Angeles theatre.

Jonathan Fox is pleased to welcome the creative team of Barbara Lackner as Costume Designer, Steve Olson as Set Designer and Kent Inasy as Lighting Designer.

The **Ensemble Theatre Company of Santa Barbara** was founded in 1979 and is housed at the intimate Alhecama Theatre located in the historic Presidio District in downtown Santa Barbara at 914 Santa Barbara Street. ETC is Santa Barbara's longest running, most award winning professional resident theatre company, now in its 27th anniversary season. ETC gratefully acknowledges the Mosher Foundation for its generous sponsorship of this production.

Performances run Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8:00 pm and Sundays at 2:00 and 7:00 pm. Ticket prices for *This Is How It Goes* range from \$25.00 to \$37.50. ETC offers discounts to students, seniors and groups of 10 or more. Subscriptions, single tickets and group tickets are available through the **Ensemble Theatre Box Office at (805) 962-8606** or online at www.ensembletheatre.com.

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