



Press Release  
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## ABIGAIL'S PARTY

By Mike Leigh

Directed by Amy Glazer

May 21 to July 6

**PRESS OPENING: May 25, 8pm**

Link to [BBC interview](#) with Mike Leigh 2012 about West End Transfer

San Francisco, CA (April 2013) –San Francisco Playhouse (Bill English, Artistic Director and Susi Damilano, Producing Director) continues its **Tenth Season**, now in their new venue at **450 Post Street**, with a **revival of Mike Leigh's** acclaimed play, **Abigail's Party**, directed by **Amy Glazer**. The ensemble cast features **Julia Brothers\***, **Susi Damilano**, **Patrick Jones\***, **Remi Sandri\*** and **Allison White\***

*"brilliant and hilarious "* - Daily Telegraph.

This biting, hilarious, disco infused satire of British suburbia in the 70's is a party only Mike Leigh could conceive. Stolen straight from real life, these friends test the strength of the ties that bind. Beverly and her husband Laurence are hosting a cocktail party for their neighbors. There is plenty of alcohol, an array of cheese-pineapple savory bites and olives, and Donna Summer on the record player. But as prejudices are unmasked and tempers flare, the evening seems headed for disaster.

More than 35 years after its first appearance, the social discomfort, the monstrous characters, and underlying resentments seem uncomfortably familiar. Perhaps the middle class wannabe characteristics and materialistic conceits we laughed at in 1977 have become a way of life.

**Mike Leigh**, is a British writer and director of film and theatre. He began as a theatre director and playwright in the mid-1960s. In the 1970s and 1980s his career moved between work for the theatre and making films for BBC Television, many of which were characterized by a gritty "kitchen sink realism" style. His well-known films include *Life is Sweet* (1990), the comedy-drama *Career Girls* (1997), the Gilbert and Sullivan biopic *Topsy-Turvy* (1999), and the bleak working-class drama *All or Nothing* (2002). His most notable works are arguably *Naked* (1993) for which he won the Best Director Award at Cannes,[3] the BAFTA-winning (and Oscar-nominated) Palme d'Or winner *Secrets & Lies* (1996) and Golden Lion winner *Vera Drake* (2004). Leigh begins his projects without a script, but starts from a basic premise, which is developed through improvisation by the actors. Leigh works initially one-to-one with each actor,

## THE SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE

### *Abigail's Party*

*Continued:*

developing a character that is based, in the first place, on someone he or she knows. "The world of the characters and their relationships is brought into existence by discussion and a great amount of improvisation – that is, improvising a character. And research into anything and everything that will fill out the authenticity of the character." It is only after months of rehearsal, or 'preparing for going out on location to make up a film', that Leigh writes a shooting script, a bare scenario. Then, on the shoot, on location, after further 'real rehearsing', the script is finalized. "I'll set up an improvisation ,... I'll analyze and discuss it,... we'll do another, and I'll ... refine and refine... until the actions and dialogue are totally integrated. Then we shoot it."

**Amy Glazer** (Director) is the Associate Artistic Director of the San Francisco Playhouse. She has directed numerous world, American and West Coast premieres, most recently, *Becky Shaw*, *Animals Out of Paper*, *Harper Regan*, *Shining City* and *The Scene* (SF Playhouse), *The Couch* (3Girls), *The Model Apartment* (TJT). For Magic Theatre, where Glazer was an associate artist for many years, her work included *The God Of Hell*, *The Crowd You're In With*, *The Sweetest Swing in Baseball*, *Blue Surge* and *The American in Me*, *Drifting Elegant*, *Tape*, and *Wyoming*. She has also directed at Marin Theater Company, Eureka Theatre, TheatreWorks, Glazer's short film, *Ball Lightning*, premiered at the Locarno International Film Festival, and her feature film, *Drifting Elegant*, premiered at the Mill Valley Film Festival. Her latest feature film, *Seducing Charlie Barker*, adapted from Theresa Rebeck's *The Scene* is now showing in film festivals throughout the country. Amy Glazer is a theatre and film professor at San Jose State University.

Founded by Bill English and Susi Damilano in 2003, **The San Francisco Playhouse** has been described in the New York Times as "a company that stages some of the most consistently high-quality work around." Located right in the heart of the Union Square Theater District, **The San Francisco Playhouse** is the city's Off-Broadway company, an intimate alternative to the larger more traditional Union Square theater fare. The San Francisco Playhouse provides audiences the opportunity to experience professional theater with top-notch actors and world-class design in a setting where they are close to the action. The company has received multiple awards for overall productions, acting, and design including the SF Weekly Best Theatre Award and the Bay Guardian's Best Off-Broadway Theatre Award. Presenting a diverse range of plays and musicals, **The San Francisco Playhouse** produces new works as well as re-imagining classics, "making the edgy accessible and the traditional edgy." As the company marks its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the launch of its 2012-2013 season in a new venue, The San Francisco Chronicle recently raved: "On the verge of opening its 10th season, the company that lived a hand-to-mouth existence for its first few years has become the little playhouse that could. It quickly established a reputation for attracting some of the Bay Area's best acting and directing talent, as well as for its exciting play choices. And with its bold Sandbox Series, it's become a player in developing new works as well." **The San Francisco Playhouse** is committed to providing a creative home and inspiring environment where actors, directors, writers, designers, and theater lovers converge to create works that celebrate the human spirit.

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**FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

**WHAT:** This biting, hilarious, disco infused satire of British suburbia in the 70's is a party only Mike Leigh could conceive. Stolen straight from real life, these friends test the strength of the ties that bind.

**SHOWS:** **Previews** 5.21-5.24 at 8pm, **Opens** 5.25 at 8pm through 7.6.  
Tues/Wed/Thurs. 7 p.m., Friday & Saturday 8 p.m., plus Saturdays 3 p.m.

**WHERE:** **The San Francisco Playhouse**  
450 Post Street (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of Kensington Park Hotel, b/n Powell & Mason)

**TICKETS:** For tickets (\$30-\$100) or more information, the public may contact The San Francisco Playhouse box office at **415-677-9596**, or [www.sfplayhouse.org](http://www.sfplayhouse.org).