Princeton University’s Lewis Center for the Arts presents a panel on

The Dramaturgy of Political Violence:
Ayad Akhtar, Aasif Mandvi, and Muslims on U.S. Stages

April 6, 2015
6 p.m.
FRIEND CENTER
Convocation Room (113)
The Dramaturgy of Political Violence: Ayad Akhtar, Aasif Mandvi, and Muslims on U.S. Stages

organized by
Fawzia Afzal-Khan (Montclair State University)
Jill Dolan (Princeton University)

OPENING REMARKS
Jill Dolan

READING
Aasif Mandvi

READING
Ayad Akhtar

CRITICAL COMMENTARY
Fawzia Afzal-Khan

HISTORICAL COMMENTARY
Neilesh Bose

THE PRACTICE OF THEATRE
Jamil Khoury

DISCUSSION

AUDIENCE Q&A

Presented by Princeton University’s Lewis Center for the Arts, in collaboration with the English Department, the Muslim Life Program in the Office of Religious Life, the Program in Theater, and the Program in Gender and Sexuality Studies

SPEAKER BIOS

FAWZIA AFZAL-KHAN is a University Distinguished Scholar, Professor of English, and Director of Women and Gender Studies at Montclair State University. She works at the intersection of feminist theory, cultural and performance studies, and postcolonial studies. She created the first course on writings by and about Muslim women at Montclair State and has published extensively on this topic. She is the author of five books, including her recent controversial memoir, Lahore With Love: Growing Up With Girlfriends Pakistani-Style. Afzal-Khan is a published poet and playwright, a contributing editor to The Drama Review, and a trained vocalist in the North Indian classical tradition. Her current research focuses on female singers in Pakistani popular culture.

AYAD AKHTAR is a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, screenwriter, and novelist. His play, Disgraced, which won the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, is the story of a successful Pakistani-American lawyer whose dinner party spins out of control amid a heated discussion of identity and religion. He is also the author of the critically acclaimed, poignant coming-of-age novel, American Dervish, which describes a family's struggle to identify both as Muslim and American, one boy's devotion to his faith, and the sometimes tragic implications of extremism. The book was voted a 2012 Best Book of the Year by Kirkus Reviews, Toronto’s Globe and Mail, Shelf-Awareness, and O (Oprah) Magazine. As a screenwriter, Akhtar was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best Screenplay for The Way Within. He has received commissions from Lincoln Center and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

AASIF MANDVII is an Indian-American actor and comedian who is perhaps best known for his work as a regular correspondent on The Daily Show with Jon Stewart. Mandvi received an OBIE award for his critically-acclaimed one-man show, Sakina’s Restaurant. His stage credits also include the 2002 Broadway revival of Oklahoma!, Guantanamo: Honor Bound to Defend Freedom, Homebody/Kabul, Suburbia, Trudy Blue, and Speak Truth to Power. His film and television credits include the title role in Merchant/Ivy’s The Mystic Masseur; Music and Lyrics, on which he worked with Hugh Grant and Drew Barrymore; as well as Spider-Man 2, Freedomland, The War Within, Sorry Haters, Sex and the City, The Sopranos, CSI, Law and Order, and ER.

NEILESH BOSE is Assistant Professor in the Department of History at St. John’s University. He earned his Ph.D. in history from Tufts University. As a historian of modern South Asia, he researches 19th and 20th century nationalism, religion, and culture, and the decolonization process of the mid-20th century. His other research interests include diasporas and migrations, popular culture, and the philosophy of history. He is the author of Beyond Bollywood and Broadway: Plays from the South Asian Diaspora (Indiana 2009) and Recasting the Region: Language, Culture, and Islam in Colonial Bengal (Oxford 2014).

JAMIL KHOUSE is a playwright and the founding artistic director of the theater collective Silk Road Rising, where he employs his experiences living in the Middle East and his eleven years as a cross-cultural trainer and international relocations consultant to promote playwrights of Silk Road backgrounds. As a playwright, Khoury focuses on diaspora and other Middle Eastern themes, with a particular interest in the intersections of culture, national identity, sexuality, and class. Khoury conceived of and curated the Silk Road Cabaret: Broadway Sings the Silk Road. Khoury also was a featured playwright in Silk Road Rising’s production of The DNA Trail: A Genealogy of Short Plays about Ancestry, Identity, and Utter Confusion. Khoury’s play Precious Stones won Gay Chicago Magazine’s 2003 After Dark Award for Outstanding New Work and has been performed in ten cities across the United States.

JILL DOLAN is Annan Professor in English, Professor of Theater, and Director of the Program in Gender and Sexuality Studies at Princeton. She received the 2011 George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism for her blog, The Feminist Spectator. She received the Distinguished Scholar Award for Outstanding Career Achievement from the American Society for Theatre Research in 2013. She also received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Women and Theatre Program in 2011 and the 2011 Outstanding Teaching Award from the Association for Theatre in Higher Education. Her books include The Feminist Spectator as Critic; Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theatre; and The Feminist Spectator in Action: Feminist Criticism for Stage and Screen.