



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ArtsWest Announces *English* by Sanaz Toossi **A co-production with Seda Iranian Theatre Ensemble**

SEATTLE, WA (March 5th, 2024) – ArtsWest will produce the 2023 Pulitzer Prize winning play ENGLISH by Sanaz Toossi. This co-production with Seda Iranian Theatre Ensemble will be directed by Seda co-founder, Naghmeh Samini. The cast features Vahishta Vafadari, Newsha Farahani, Janet Hayatshahi, Shereen Khatibloo, and Emon Elboudwarej. ENGLISH performs at ArtsWest from April 4 through April 28, 2024. Tickets are available online at artswest.org or by phone at (206) 938.0963.

Two words set in motion award-winning playwright Sanaz Toossi's intricate and profound New York debut: "English Only." This is the mantra that rules one classroom in Iran, where four adult students are preparing for the TOEFL — the Test of English as a Foreign Language. Chasing fluency through a maze of word games, listening exercises, and show-and-tell sessions, they hope that one day, English will make them whole. But it might be splitting them each in half.

ArtsWest is thrilled to be co-producing ENGLISH with Seda Iranian Theatre Ensemble. Seda's co-founders, Parmida Ziaei and Naghmeh Samini are both key members of ENGLISH's Creative Team. Ziaei, who has served as Scenic Designer on past ArtsWest productions of ALMA and AN ENDLESS SHIFT, will be Scenic and Costume Designer for the upcoming production. Director, Naghmeh Samini, is joining ArtsWest for the first time. A prominent, award-winning playwright and screenwriter in Iran, Samini celebrated two successful runs in Seattle as the director and playwright of *The Forgotten History of Mastaneh*. In a recent interview with *American Theatre Magazine*, Samini reflected on ENGLISH's ability to connect with audiences. Rather than focusing on the macro, like politics or history, ENGLISH focuses on the micro - five complex characters bursting with life, humor, and dreams for their future that immediately connect with audiences and draw them in. In the article, Samini shares, "What I like about this play is that it doesn't try to show Iranian women as superheroes. It just shows us as real people with strengths and weaknesses."

ArtsWest will present *English*, Thursday through Saturday at 7:30pm and Sundays at 3pm.

Cast

Vahishta Vafadari - Marjan

Newsha Farahani - Goli

Janet Hayatshahi - Roya

Shereen Khatibloo - Elham

Emon Elboudwarej - Omid

Creative Team

Directed by – Naghmeh Samini

Assistant Director – Anahita Sepehri

Assistant Director - Azadeh Zanjani

Stage Manager – Daisy Bower

Lighting Designer – Chih-Hung Shao

Costume Designer – Parmida Ziaei

Scenic Designer – Parmida Ziaei

Sound Designer – Andi Villegas

Projection Designer – Nabilah Ahmed

Music Consultant – Babak Khiavchi

About the Production

English by Sanaz Toossi and directed by Naghmeh Samini plays April 4th – 28th, 2024 at ArtsWest (4711 California Ave SW, Seattle WA 98116). Tickets (ranging from \$15 - \$45) may be purchased online at www.artswest.org, by phone at 206.938.0339, or at the Box Office Thurs. - Sat. 2:00 - 7:00pm, Sundays 11:00 am-3:00 pm.

Press Information

Press tickets are available Opening Weekend, April 4th – 7th. Please contact Rachel Ewen at rachele@artswest.org to arrange. Press & Production photos available by request to Corinne Park-Buffelen – corinnep@artswest.org . Full production photos available by April 9th.

About ArtsWest

ArtsWest is a vibrant center for both theater and visual arts located in the West Seattle Junction. This 149-seat theatre provides a unique setting for audiences and artists as stories of human emotion unfold in an intimate space. Winner of the American Theatre Wing's National Theatre Company Award, and winner of multiple Gregory Awards, ArtsWest has produced work by such varied playwrights as Dominique Morisseau, Henrik Ibsen, Annie Baker, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, Taylor Mac, and David Henry Huang. ArtsWest produces artistic events that provoke conversation, incite the imagination, and use live theater as a powerful agent of change. www.artswest.org

For Calendar Editors:

Who: ArtsWest

Where: 4711 California Ave SW Seattle, WA 98116

What: *English* by Sanaz Toossi and directed by Naghmeh Samini

When: April 4 - 28, 2024, Thursday – Saturday at 7:30pm, Sunday at 3:00pm

Tickets:

General Admission: \$45 | Senior: \$40 | Inclusion: \$15

Tickets online at www.artswest.org/theatre/buy-tickets/ by phone at 206-938-0339, and at the box office, 4711 California Ave SW, Seattle, WA 98116 , Thursday - Saturday 2 - 7pm, Sundays 11am - 3pm.