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Homebody/Kabul: Final Revised Version



Synopsis

Mr. Kushner's glorious specialty is in giving theatrical life to internal points of view, in which our thoughts meld with a character's wayward speculations or fantasies... He makes the personal and the universal, the trivial and the cosmic come simultaneously to life in a single character's bewilderment. • Ben Brantley, New York Times; An extraordinary play; a deeply felt, expansively ruminative drama. • Paul Taylor, Independent (London); What a feast of a play. No playwright in the English language has a greater passion for language than Kushner. And to this Kushner adds that rare quality in American theater, a yearning to go beyond domestic stories and into the great world of political struggle. Brilliant. It keeps us thinking. • Richard Christiansen, Chicago Tribune; This eerily timely work about Afghanistan is comparably mesmerizing and mournful, vast and intimate, emotionally generous and stylistically fabulist, wildly verbal, politically progressive and scarily well informed. • Linda Winer, Newsday; In Homebody/Kabul, Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Tony Kushner, author of Angels in America, has turned his penetrating gaze to the arena of global politics to create this suspenseful portrait of a dangerous collision between cultures. Written before 9/11, Homebody/Kabul premiered in New York in December 2001 and has had highly successful productions in London, Providence, Seattle, Chicago and Los Angeles. This version incorporates all the playwright's changes and is now the definitive version of the text. Tony Kushner's plays include Angels in America; Hydriotaphia, or the Death of Dr. Brown; The Illusion, adapted from the play by Pierre Corneille; Slavs!; A Bright Room Called Day; Homebody/Kabul; Caroline, or Change, a musical with composer Jeanine Tesori; and The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures. He wrote the screenplays for Mike Nichols's film of Angels in America and for Steven Spielberg's Munich and Lincoln. His books include The Art of Maurice Sendak: 1980 to the Present; Brundibar, with illustrations by Maurice Sendak; and Wrestling with Zion: Progressive Jewish-American Responses to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, co-edited with Alisa Solomon. Among many honors, Kushner is the recipient of a Pulitzer Prize, two Tony Awards, three Obie Awards, two Evening Standard Awards, an Olivier Award, an Emmy Award, two Oscar nominations, and the Steinberg Distinguished Playwright Award. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 2012, he was awarded a National Medal of Arts by President Barack Obama. He lives in Manhattan with his husband, Mark Harris.

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Customer Reviews

I have been a huge Tony Kushner fan ever since i read and subsequently performed in Angels in America my first and second years of college. I bought Homebody/Kabul as soon as it came out in paperback, and was fortunate enough to see it performed at the Intiman Theater in Seattle recently. After reading and seeing this play, my love for Kushner and his work has only deepened. At this point, to call Kushner a master of language is to belabor the point. He capable of provoking any reaction under the sun, from hilarity to pathos to utter despair, with a simple, poetic phrase one moment, then a completely different reaction the next. I also won't waste time your time with my interpretation of the "message" of the play, though it certainly has many messages. The first act of Homebody/Kabul consist of one character (the Homebody) sitting in a chair recounting a selective history of Afghanistan mixed in with stories from her life, for an entire hour! Now, read on the page this can get tedious at times, though the stories are interesting. But Ellen McLaughlin, the masterful actor who performed the role in Seattle, sat on stage in one place for that whole hour and commanded the entire attention of the audience. It was mind-boggling, awe-inspiring, transporting, and reminded me forcibly of the difference between reading and performance. McLaughlin took the, admittedly brilliantly constructed, words on the page and turned them into something vital, poetic, and magical. The rest of the play deals with the aftermath of the Homebody's decision to go to Kabul and disappear. Her husband Milton and her daughter Priscilla, hearing she has been killed, go to Kabul to recover her body. Soon evidence turns up that she may have taken the veil and married a Muslim man.

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