



Photo by John Everett.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

### BRANDON WEINBRENNER

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There's something lurking beneath the surface of *The Humans*. At face value, the play is a family drama set on Thanksgiving in the youngest daughter's apartment. But the Blakes holiday gathering is beset by more than their tradition of eating, drinking, quibbling, and peppermint pig smashing. Playwright Stephen Karam says that he originally wrote the play to "try and locate the black pit of dread and malaise Americans have been trying to climb out of post-9/11 and post financial crisis." And locate it he has. It's in the Blake family. It's in all of us. It is fear.

Fear is equal parts crippling as it is motivating. We don't know what lies ahead in our lives, and yet every day we make choices on how to best spend our time, how to best orient ourselves and move forward. This fear of the unknown lives with us every day and it is up to us as individuals to decide how we manifest and, ultimately, deal with it.

I invite you to watch Erik, Deirdre, Aimee, Brigid, Richard, and Momo as they navigate their own specific relationship to fear over just 90 minutes of their lives. Each character's relationship to fear is different, and each is greatly influenced by the others. After all, we live our lives around other people with other energies and other fears. We opt to experience life together, just as you have opted to watch this story tonight as a shared experience with live actors and fellow theatregoers. Let the treasured curiosity of live theatre attune you to your fellow patrons' reactions to fear represented onstage. You may find depths within the play and within yourself that you otherwise wouldn't.

It is an honor to direct Stephen Karam's brilliant play at my home, the Alley Theatre. And I'd like to go on record saying that the family in this play is nothing like my own dear family and I didn't draw any parallels to them in any way whatsoever... I hope you believe that as much as my family does.