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**History and Conflict Define World Premiere**  
***Tennis in Nablus at the Alliance***

Jan. 29 – Feb. 21, 2010  
Opening / Media Night: Feb. 3, 2010

**ATLANTA** — Palestine. 1939. A dying revolution. An Arab family trapped: divided between rebellion and hope for a stable future. True events inspire this compelling story about Arab revolt against British occupation as two nations fight for their stake to land during a period of momentous global change. Emerging playwright Ismail Khalidi lends a bold, contemporary voice to the Israeli/Palestinian history in ***Tennis in Nablus***, the sixth winner of the nationally recognized Keneda Graduate Playwriting Competition. Off-beat humor abounds in this “tragipoliticomedy” about allegiance, struggle and crisis, where events and people are not what they seem. Sacramento Theatre Company Artistic Director Peggy Shannon directs this groundbreaking new work on the intimate Hertz Stage. **Opening Night is Wed, Feb. 3, at 8 p.m.** Tickets are available at the Woodruff Arts Center Box Office by calling 404.733.5000 or online at [www.alliancetheatre.org](http://www.alliancetheatre.org).

Set in Nablus in the spring/early summer of 1939, *Tennis in Nablus* brings to life the waning days of an Arab revolt that began in 1936, which almost succeeded in driving the British out of Palestine. It is a genre bending look at Palestine’s embattled status through the eyes of a lifelong rebel, his wife (a writer of anti-colonial tracts) and his enterprising young nephew.

Ismail Khalidi, born in Beirut, Lebanon, grew up in Chicago and graduated from New York University – Tisch School of the Arts with an M.F.A. in Dramatic Writing. Propelled into the national spotlight of talented playwrights, Khalidi was the recipient of the Emerging Writers Award from the Jerome Foundation and the Mizna Artists Grant. He was also a Many Voices

## ***Tennis in Nablus, 2-2-2***

Playwriting Fellow at the Playwrights' Center. His play (*Tennis in Nablus*) has also been awarded the Goldberg Prize in Playwriting (Tisch), as well as the Quest for Peace Award from the Kennedy Center (ACTF), and a second place prize for the Kennedy Center's Mark Twain Award.

The Kendeda Graduate Playwriting Competition is a one-of-a-kind national competition that transitions student playwrights to the world of professional theatre. The grand prize for the winner of the competition is a professional production at the Alliance Theatre. Khalidi is the sixth playwright to win the competition, which began in the 2003-04 Season. The competition has become a national leader in discovering the latest playwriting talent while aiding local theaters to create ongoing relationships with Kendeda winners and finalists.

The nine-member cast includes six local actors – Andrew Benator (*Eurydice*), Suehyla El-Attar (*Bluish*), Bart Hansard (*A Christmas Carol*), Joe Knezevich (*Glengarry Glen Ross*), Jim Sarbh, and Tom Thon – in addition to Demosthenes Chrysan, Bhavesh Patel and Michael Simpson from New York. (Biographical information on the cast and creative team members may be found in the attached fact sheet.)

Members of the artistic team that will bring this gripping play to life on stage are Brian Sidney Bembridge, set designer; Anne Kennedy, costume designer; Mike Post, lighting designer; and Clay Benning, sound designer.

Performances are Tuesday through Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 2:30 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Jan. 29 – Feb. 21 on the Hertz Stage. There will not be a 2:30 p.m. matinee performance on Saturday, Jan. 30. The Sunday, Feb. 14 show at 2:30 p.m. will be Audio Described.

**Tickets are \$25 and \$30 and are available at the Woodruff Arts Center Box Office by calling 404.733.5000 or online at [www.alliancetheatre.org](http://www.alliancetheatre.org).** Discount rates for groups of 10 or more are available by calling 404.733.4690. Discount rates are also available for members of the military, seniors and students. The Alliance Theatre is located at the Woodruff Arts Center, corner of Peachtree and 15th Street, in Midtown Atlanta.

### **Interactive Theatre**

**Historical Context Panel Discussion** – Friday, Jan. 15, 7 p.m., Hertz Stage

National and local scholars in the history of the Middle East discuss the true events that inspired *Tennis in Nablus*.

**Community Panel Discussion** – Wednesday, Jan. 20, 7:30 p.m., Center for Ethics at Emory

Following excerpts performed from *Tennis in Nablus*, join in a discussion about how theatre

## ***Tennis in Nablus, 3-3-3***

frames political debate with audience members from a range of religious and ethical perspectives. Moderated by Paul Root Wolpe.

### **Kendeda Graduate Playwriting Competition Finalist Readings**

To coincide with the World Premiere of *Tennis In Nablus*, Atlanta's finest actors and directors will come together to present **FREE** staged readings of the plays by the other four 2009 finalists. The readings are Feb. 1 and 2, 2010 at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Meet *Tennis in Nablus* playwright Ismail Khalidi in a special session Feb. 1 at 6 p.m. The schedule for the readings and play information can be found online on the events page of the Alliance Theatre Web site. Tickets for the FREE seats may be reserved by calling the Box Office at 404.733.5000. Seating is limited.

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***Tennis in Nablus* is part of the Turner Series on the Hertz Stage.**

***Tennis in Nablus* is a recipient of an Edgerton Foundation New American Plays award.**

Additional Sponsors: *Tennis in Nablus* is sponsored by Marriott Residence Inn – Official Hotel of the Alliance Theatre; and The Home Depot – Set Construction Sponsor of the Alliance Theatre.

Production of *Tennis in Nablus* is made possible with grants from the City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs, the Fulton County Arts Council, the Georgia Council for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

### **FOR ELECTRONIC IMAGES OF THIS PRODUCTION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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Now in its 41st season, Atlanta's nationally acclaimed Alliance Theatre, **recipient of the 2007 Regional Theatre Tony Award®**, is the leading professional resident theatre of the Southeast, creating the powerful experience of shared theatre for diverse people on two stages for youth and adult audiences. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Susan V. Booth, the Alliance Theatre is **a national theatre with a local address**, reaching out annually to almost 200,000 patrons and members of the community. Known for its high artistic standards and national role in creating significant theatrical works, the Alliance launched three Tony Award-winning hits to Broadway: Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida* and Alfred Uhry's *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*. And, in a rare event for a regional theatre, it originated the national tour of the Tony Award-winning Broadway musical *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. The theatre has premiered 60 works including adaptations of Carson McCullers' *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* and Pearl Cleage's *Blues for an Alabama Sky*. Further evidence of the Alliance's commitment to new work is found in its nationally recognized Kendeda Graduate Playwriting Competition, a cutting-edge program introducing student playwrights to professional networks while producing the world premiere of the winning student's work. The Alliance Theatre also offers extensive education and outreach programs such as the Institute for Educators and the Collision Project for high school students. The Alliance continuously brings Atlanta the finest talent and finest art—proving once again that the Alliance is where great theatre lives. 404.733.4650 or www.alliancetheatre.org

The Alliance Theatre is a division of the Woodruff Arts Center in Atlanta, Georgia, which also includes the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, High Museum of Art, Young Audiences and the 14th Street Playhouse.