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GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES 2019/2020 SEASON

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE A WORLD PREMIERE PLAY FROM QUI NGUYEN AND THE VAMPIRE COWBOYS, A WORLD PREMIERE ADAPTATION OF *KEY LARGO* AND AN IMMERSIVE THEATRICAL EXPERIENCE FROM RENOWNED MAGICIAN DAVID KWONG

FEATURING IDINA MENZEL, ANDY GARCIA AND NIKOLAJ COSTER-WALDAU

LOS ANGELES (February 21, 2019) – Geffen Playhouse today announced eight productions that will make up its 2019/2020 season, with one additional production to be announced. This marks the second lineup curated by Artistic Director Matt Shakman and the 24th season for the Los Angeles theater. The season will launch Tuesday, August 20, 2019 and run through Sunday, July 19, 2020.

The 2019/2020 Geffen Playhouse season will commence with comedies including *Witch* by Jen Silverman, *Skintight* by Joshua Harmon (*Bad Jews*, *Significant Other*), featuring Tony Award winner Idina Menzel, and *The Thanksgiving Play* by Los Angeles-based playwright Larissa FastHorse. As the season continues, the productions take on a more dramatic tone with Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, directed by Matt Shakman and starring Emmy nominee Nikolaj Coster-Waldau (*Game of Thrones*), and a world premiere adaptation of *Key Largo* by Jeffrey Hatcher and Academy Award nominee Andy Garcia, also featuring Garcia. Geffen Playhouse Chairman Emeritus and former Paramount Pictures and MGM Chairman/CEO Frank G. Mancuso will serve as a producer for this new *Key Largo* adaptation, uniting with Garcia, his longtime collaborator. Rounding out the season will be the comedy *Bernhardt/Hamlet* by Theresa Rebeck (*Seminar*), *The Enigmatist*, a highly inventive, immersive theatrical experience from renowned magician David Kwong, and a world premiere production of *Revenge Song: A Vampire Cowboys Creation*, a play with music written by Qui Nguyen (*Vietgone*), which also serves as the West Coast debut of New York City's Obie Award-winning "geek theater" Vampire Cowboys Theatre Company. One additional production will be announced to complete the 2019/2020 lineup.

"From theater legends like Idina Menzel to Sarah Bernhardt, bloody Scottish kings to a French swordfighter lost to history, this is a season that dreams big and will boldly entertain," said Geffen Playhouse Artistic Director Matt Shakman. "Though this is my second season as artistic director, 2019-2020 marks some notable firsts for the Geffen—our first Shakespeare production, two world premieres, and a co-production with the dazzlingly inventive Vampire Cowboys Theatre Company from NYC. What isn't new is our dedication to innovative theatricality, inspirational new voices, and to comedies and sweeping dramas that reflect the wonderful city of Los Angeles while transporting us to places we have only imagined."

"Matt continues to find a great fusion of classics and new work—all equally provocative," added Geffen Playhouse Executive Director Gil Cates, Jr. "His choices fuel our commitment to growing and diversifying

the Geffen audience. We are excited to be announcing what's in store for 2019/2020 and to continue to build on the success of our current season."

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE 2019/2020 SEASON

WITCH (Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater)

WEST COAST PREMIERE

Written by Jen Silverman

Inspired by *The Witch of Edmonton* by Rowley, Dekker and Ford

Directed by Marti Lyons

August 20 – September 29, 2019

In this fiendishly funny new play by Jen Silverman (*The Roommate*, *Collective Rage: A Play in Five Betties*), a charming devil arrives in the quiet village of Edmonton to bargain for the souls of its residents in exchange for their darkest wishes. Elizabeth should be his easiest target, having been labeled a "witch" and cast out by the town, but her soul is not so readily bought. An inventive retelling of a Jacobean drama, this sharp, subversive fable debates how much our souls are worth when hope is hard to come by.

Witch was commissioned by and premiered at Writers Theatre (Michael Halberstam, Artistic Director; Kathryn M. Lipuma, Executive Director).

SKINTIGHT (Gil Cates Theater)

WEST COAST PREMIERE

Written by Joshua Harmon

Directed by Daniel Aukin

Featuring Idina Menzel (*Rent*, *Wicked*)

September 3 – October 6, 2019

Hanging on by a thread after her ex-husband gets engaged to a much younger woman, Jodi (Tony Award winner Idina Menzel, *Rent*, *Wicked*) retreats to her dad's swanky Manhattan townhouse. But rather than the comforts of home, she instead finds her aging father's new live-in boyfriend, Trey—who is 20. In his new comedy, Joshua Harmon (*Bad Jews*, *Significant Other*) brings neurotic family drama to the forefront as father and daughter contend with the age-old questions of how to age gracefully in a world obsessed with youth and where love fits into it all.

Skintight was commissioned by and premiered at Roundabout Theatre Company (Todd Haimes, Artistic Director; Julia C. Levy, Executive Director).

THE THANKSGIVING PLAY (Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater)

Written by Larissa FastHorse

Directed by Michael John Garcés

October 22 – December 1, 2019

How does one celebrate Thanksgiving and Native American Heritage Month at the same time? In Larissa FastHorse's biting satire, this is the question facing three "woke" white thespians tasked with devising an elementary school pageant about the first Thanksgiving while avoiding any culturally appropriative missteps. A roast of the politics of entertainment and well-meaning political correctness alike, *The Thanksgiving Play* puts the American origin story itself in the comedy-crosshairs.

Playwrights Horizons, Inc., New York City, produced the world premiere of *The Thanksgiving Play* in 2018.

The Thanksgiving Play was commissioned and originally produced by Artists Repertory Theatre (Damaso Rodriguez, Artistic Director; Sarah Horton, Managing Director; Portland, Oregon).

MACBETH (Gil Cates Theater)

Written by William Shakespeare

Directed by Matt Shakman

Featuring Nikolaj Coster-Waldau (*Game of Thrones*)

November 5 – December 8, 2019

“Something wicked this way comes.” Three witches, a prophecy and the ambitious general Macbeth (Emmy Award nominee Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, *Game of Thrones*) set the stage for Shakespeare’s timely and timeless tragedy about the dangerous allure of power. As Macbeth violently sets forth to fulfill his fate, he and his wife find themselves mired in murder and cover-up in a bloody attempt to hold onto the throne. Following a triumphant collaboration on *Game of Thrones*, director Matt Shakman and Nikolaj Coster-Waldau reunite for Shakespeare’s most cinematic play.

KEY LARGO (Gil Cates Theater)

WORLD PREMIERE ADAPTATION AND GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE COMMISSION

Adapted by Jeffrey Hatcher and Andy Garcia

Based on the play by Maxwell Anderson and the screenplay by Richard Brooks & John Huston

Produced in association with Frank Mancuso and Andy Garcia

Featuring Andy Garcia

February 4 – March 8, 2020

Welcome to the eye of the storm! *Key Largo* is a bold reimagining of Maxwell Anderson’s Broadway hit that became the iconic noir film starring Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall. Returning from World War II, disillusioned Frank McCloud travels to a hotel in Key Largo to pay his respects to the widow of a fallen friend. What McCloud doesn’t count on is an entirely different battle with mobsters who have overtaken the hotel, led by the ruthless Johnny Rocco (Academy Award nominee Andy Garcia). As a hurricane barrels toward the Keys, McCloud must face his demons in order to take down a monster.

TO BE ANNOUNCED (Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater)

March 3 – April 12, 2020

BERNHARDT/HAMLET (Gil Cates Theater)

WEST COAST PREMIERE

Written by Theresa Rebeck

Directed by Sarna Lapine

April 7 – May 10, 2020

It’s 1899, and the legendary Sarah Bernhardt shocks the world by taking on the lead role in *Hamlet*. While her performance is destined to become one for the ages, Sarah first has to convince a sea of naysayers that her right to play the part should be based on ability, not gender—a feat as difficult as mastering Shakespeare’s most verbose tragic hero. Fresh off its Broadway triumph, Theresa Rebeck’s shrewd comedy puts the spotlight on a woman who used her singular talent to challenge whether a woman’s place was “to be or not to be” in the greatest role ever written.

Bernhardt/Hamlet was commissioned by and premiered at Roundabout Theatre Company (Todd Haimes, Artistic Director; Julia C. Levy, Executive Director).

THE ENIGMATIST (Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater)

WEST COAST PREMIERE

Written and performed by David Kwong

May 5 – June 14, 2020

Can you solve the enigma? Prepare for an immersive experience of puzzles, cryptology and illusions by renowned magician and *New York Times* crossword constructor David Kwong in the intimate Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater. Clues are everywhere, so keep your eyes open and be ready for surprises behind every flip of the card.

REVENGE SONG: A VAMPIRE COWBOYS CREATION (Gil Cates Theater)

WORLD PREMIERE AND GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE COMMISSION

Written by Qui Nguyen

Directed by Robert Ross Parker

Featuring the Vampire Cowboys Theatre Company

June 16 – July 19, 2020

A rousing, romping, music-filled look at the real life of Julie d’Aubigny, a queer 17th century French swordswoman and opera singer, *Revenge Song* is a heroine’s journey toward self-discovery and acceptance. In this world premiere Geffen Playhouse commission, conversations about gender and sexuality blend together with the outrageous fun and superhero style of the Vampire Cowboys Theatre Company to create a genre unto itself—a hilarious, historical comedy with hip hop, rock and epic fight scenes.

Since the world premiere of *Vietgone* at South Coast Repertory in 2015, Qui Nguyen has become one of the most lauded and sought-after contemporary American playwrights, as well as a writer for Marvel and Disney. In *Revenge Song*, he returns to his theatrical roots by building the piece with Vampire Cowboys, his OBIE Award-winning company that develops new action/adventure plays with a comic book aesthetic.

Major support for this world premiere production provided by the Edgerton Foundation New Play Production Fund.

The Geffen Playhouse 2019/2020 season is currently available by subscription only. For more information and to purchase a subscription, please call 310.882.6533. Single tickets for all 2019/2020 season productions will be available this summer at www.geffenplayhouse.org.

ABOUT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

Geffen Playhouse has been a hub of the Los Angeles theater scene since opening its doors in 1995. Noted for its intimacy and celebrated for its world-renowned mix of classic and contemporary plays, provocative new works and second productions, the not-for-profit organization continues to present a body of work that has garnered national recognition. Named in honor of entertainment mogul and philanthropist David Geffen, who made the initial donation to the theater, the company was founded by Gilbert Cates and is currently helmed by Executive Director Gil Cates, Jr., Artistic Director Matt Shakman and Board Chair Howard Tenenbaum. Proudly associated with UCLA, the Geffen welcomes an audience

of more than 130,000 each year, and maintains extensive education and community engagement programs, designed to involve underserved young people and the community at large in the arts.
www.geffenplayhouse.org

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