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**RAISING THE CURTAIN: CONVERSATIONS AT THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE
LAUNCHES WITH DISCUSSION OF ROBERT O'HARA'S BARBECUE
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19.**

**NEW FREE SERIES IS PRESENTED BY PARTICIPANT MEDIA
AND MODERATED BY JOHN HORN, HOST OF KPCC'S "THE FRAME"**

LOS ANGELES (September 14, 2016) - The Geffen Playhouse announced today a new and innovative public program, *Raising the Curtain: Conversations at the Geffen Playhouse*, inviting audiences to join storytellers, artists, and subject-matter experts to explore the social issues and cultural themes raised by the plays on the Geffen's stages this season.

Presented with the generous support of Participant Media, the series launches this fall with conversations on the themes raised by the first three plays of the Geffen's season: *Barbecue*, *The Model Apartment*, and *Icebergs*. John Horn, award-winning host of KPCC's "The Frame" will moderate the series. Admission is free, and audiences must RSVP to conversations@geffenplayhouse.org. All attendees will receive the opportunity to purchase discount tickets for future performances of the plays featured at each session.

"We are extremely excited about this new series and the opportunity to engage audiences in discussions of the pressing issues raised in our plays," said Geffen Playhouse Executive Director Gil Cates, Jr. "In addition to providing stimulating context for the work on our stages, these conversations promote the cultural and personal relevance of theater today. Our thanks to Participant Media, KPCC, and the participating artists and audiences."

Launching on Monday, September 19, at 8:00pm in the Gil Cates Theater at the Geffen Playhouse, the first conversation in the series centers around Obie and Helen Hayes Award winning playwright Robert O'Hara's *Barbecue* and its themes of race, class, family, media representation, cultural appropriation and more. Running through Sunday, October 16 in The Gil Cates Theater, this marks the west coast premiere of the politically thoughtful and thought-provoking comedy which Hilton Als of *The New Yorker* described as "...my idea of an American classic, or the kind of classic we need."

Barbecue director, Tony, Drama Desk, Drama League and Olivier Award nominee Colman Domingo will be among the featured panelists for the September 19th inaugural session. In addition to his directorial credits Off Broadway and regionally, Domingo is a Lortel and Obie Award winning playwright

whose works include *Dot*, *Wild with Happy* and *A Boy and His Soul*. On television, he has starred as Strand in AMC's *Fear the Walking Dead* and co-stars in the upcoming Fox Searchlight film *The Birth of a Nation*.

Series moderator John Horn has been covering arts and entertainment in Southern California for nearly 30 years. Prior to joining KPCC, he covered the film industry at *The Los Angeles Times* for more than a decade. Before joining *The Times*, Horn was a senior writer at *Newsweek* magazine, a senior editor for *Premiere* magazine, an entertainment reporter for The Associated Press, covered the television industry for the *Orange County Register* and was a regular contributor to KCRW's "The Business." He has served on the board of directors of The National Arts Journalism program, where he was a fellow in the mid-1990s.

Participant Media is a leading media company dedicated to entertainment that inspires and compels social change. Founded in 2004 by Jeff Skoll, Participant combines the power of a good story well told with opportunities for viewers to get involved. Participant's more than 75 films, including *Spotlight*, *Contagion*, *Lincoln*, *The Help*, *He Named Me Malala*, *The Look of Silence*, *CITIZENFOUR*, *Food, Inc.*, and *An Inconvenient Truth*, have collectively earned 50 Academy Award® nominations and 11 wins, including Best Picture for *Spotlight*. Participant's digital hub, TakePart, serves millions of socially conscious consumers each month with daily articles, videos and opportunities to take action.

89.3 KPCC-FM is part of Southern California Public Radio (SCPR) — a member-supported public radio network that is the most listened-to public radio news service of any kind in Southern California. SCPR serves the diverse communities of Southern California with award winning local news coverage as well as the most National Public Radio (NPR) content available anywhere in the region. SCPR's flagship station, KPCC, has garnered more than 300 journalistic honors since 1999, more than all of the other radio stations in Los Angeles combined. SCPR features signature public radio programs from APM, the BBC and PRI. Listeners around the globe can access news, join blogs, download podcasts, as well as hear a live web stream at www.kpcc.org.

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 Artistic Director Randall Arney, Executive Director Gil Cates, Jr., and Co-Chairs of the Board Martha Henderson and Pamela Robinson. 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.

**“Raising the Curtain: Conversations at the Geffen Playhouse” –
A Discussion of Robert O’Hara’s *Barbecue***

DATE: Monday, September 19, 2016
TIME: 8:00pm
LOCATION: Gil Cates Theater at the Geffen Playhouse
10886 Le Conte Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024
TICKETING: Admission is free to the public, but attendees must
RSVP to conversations@geffenplayhouse.org

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