

**WORLD PREMIERE OF
HERSHEY FELDER AS IRVING BERLIN
DIRECTED BY TREVOR HAY**

OPENING NIGHT – NOVEMBER 19, 2014
IN THE GIL CATES THEATER AT THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

LOS ANGELES (October 20, 2014) Los Angeles favorite Hershey Felder returns to the Geffen Playhouse in *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin*. The production is directed by Trevor Hay, who has collaborated with the performer and creator on *An American Story*, *Abe Lincoln's Piano*, *Hershey Felder as Franz Liszt* and *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*. Previews for *Irving Berlin* begin on November 11, the press opening will be on November 19 and the production is currently scheduled to close on December 21, 2014.

Jerome Kern famously said, "Irving Berlin has no place in American music – he *is* American music."

Felder brings to life the remarkable story of Irving Berlin, long thought of as America's composer, who enjoyed 232 top-10 hits and 25 number-one songs. From the depths of anti-Semitism in Czarist Russia, to New York's Lower East Side, and ultimately all of the country and the world, Irving Berlin's story epitomizes capturing the American dream.

Featuring the composer's most popular and enduring songs from "Alexander's Ragtime Band," "Always," "Blue Skies," "God Bless America," "Puttin' on the Ritz," "There's No Business Like Show Business," to "White Christmas," and the score of "Annie Get Your Gun." Felder's signature creation of character and musical performance will make this evening with Irving Berlin an unforgettable journey.

The creation of this latest work is inextricably linked to Felder's strong relationship with the Geffen Playhouse. The nonprofit theater's late founder, Gil Cates, met Felder in 1997 and suggested the development of a piece about Irving Berlin. Felder developed, and the Geffen Playhouse presented, several other projects over the years but Cates persisted with his request. While Felder had focused on classical composers during much of that time, he found Irving Berlin increasingly compelling. The work weaves a narrative around Berlin's 101 year lifespan including his long and heartening relationship with his wife, battles against anti-Semitism and, of course, his storied music.

Separately, Broadway producer Eva Price approached Felder with the idea of creating a piece about Irving Berlin. Price organized an introduction with Ted Chapin, who oversees publishing of the Berlin catalog and the Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization. Chapin arranged a meeting with Irving Berlin's daughters who encouraged the production, and have advised on the factual details of their father's life.

In addition to the opening night, the run of *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin* will feature over a dozen pre-show and post-show Signature Series events. Ranging from the cerebral to the celebratory these include **TGIF at the Geffen**, **Talk Back Tuesdays** (Audience Q+A with artists), **Lounge Fridays**, and **Wine Down Sundays**. Thanks to the support of Geffen Playhouse partners and sponsors, all elements of Signature Series evenings are complimentary as part of the ticket price. Signature Series events include:

- **Talk Back Tuesdays** give theater lovers a chance for a deeper conversation to discuss plot, character, themes or any other questions directly with the artists. Talk Back Tuesdays include pre-show coffee and tea tastings courtesy of Keurig and a post-show Q+A.

- Happy hour **Lounge Fridays** turns the Geffen Playhouse into a haven to help fast-paced Angelenos ease into their weekend and unwind at this cultural happy hour. Complimentary sparkling, courtesy of Barefoot Bubbly, joins other enticing refreshments starting at 7:00 pm.
- **Wine Down Sundays** provides the perfect pairing – pre-performance wine sampling poured by UVAGGIO and classic sounds of Southern California courtesy of 100.3 The Sound spinning vinyl with world class theater. Different vintages are featured for each production allowing patrons to discover new wine and great music before each theatrical experience.
- **TGIF at the Geffen** takes place on Friday of preview week and is the ideal cultural meet up and hot-spot on the west side. Enjoy classic to contemporary tunes from DJ Mike pre-show on the Simms Courtyard patio plus drink specials at the concessions bar.

For Signature Series dates associated with the run of *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin*, visit www.GeffenPlayhouse.com/IrvingBerlinEvents.

WORLD PREMIERE

Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin

Written by **Hershey Felder**

Directed by **Trevor Hay**

Previews: Tuesday, November 11 – Tuesday, November 18, 2014

Opening Night: Wednesday, November 19, 2015

Closing Night: Sunday, December 21, 2014

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Monday	No performance
Tuesday – Friday	8:00pm
Saturday	3:00pm and 8:00pm
Sunday	2:00pm and 7:00pm

TICKET INFORMATION

Ticket prices are currently \$39 - \$84 and are available in-person at the Geffen Playhouse box office, via phone at 310.208.5454 or online at www.geffenplayhouse.com. Fees apply.

LOCATION

Gil Cates Theater at the Geffen Playhouse
10886 Le Conte Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024

ABOUT HERSHEY FELDER

Hershey Felder performed *George Gershwin Alone* on Broadway at the Helen Hayes Theatre and on the West End at Duchess Theatre. His Composers Sonata (1999–2014)—*George Gershwin Alone; Monsieur Chopin; Beethoven, As I Knew Him; Hershey Felder as Leonard Bernstein in Maestro; and Hershey Felder as Franz Liszt in Musik*—has been presented at dozens of theatres across the U.S. and around the world, including a command performance of *Monsieur Chopin* for the Polish Ambassador to the United States. He received Los Angeles Ovation Awards for Best Musical and Best Actor for *George Gershwin Alone* in 2007, and live broadcasts of the production have been aired worldwide. His compositions and recordings include *Aliyah, Concerto for Piano and Orchestra; Fairytale, a musical; Les Anges de Paris, Suite for Violin and Piano; Song Settings; Saltimbanques for Piano and Orchestra; Etudes Thematiques for Piano; and An American Story for Actor and Orchestra*. As director, Mr. Felder premiered Mona Golabek in *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* at the Geffen Playhouse in April 2012 and recently premiered Chris Lemmon in *Jack Lemmon Returns*. Mr. Felder has been a scholar in residence at Harvard University's department of music and is married to Kim Campbell, former Prime Minister of Canada.

ABOUT THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

The 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 Geffen Playhouse 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, Managing Director Ken Novice, Chief Development Officer Regina Miller and Co-Chairs of the Board Martha Henderson and Pamela Robinson Hollander. Proudly associated with UCLA, the Geffen Playhouse welcomes an audience of more than 130,000 each year, and maintains an extensive education and outreach program, designed to engage young people and the community at large in the arts. For more information, please visit www.geffenplayhouse.com.

MEDIA CONTACT:

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