

*How one voice can change the world*  
**THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES  
A WORLD PREMIERE AND TWO WEST COAST PREMIERES  
FOR THE 2014-2015 SEASON**

**West Coast Premiere of *CHOIR BOY***  
Written by Tarell Alvin McCraney, directed by Trip Cullman,  
with its off-Broadway star Jeremy Pope

**World Premiere of *HERSHEY FELDER AS IRVING BERLIN***  
Directed by Trevor Hay

**West Coast Premiere of *BAD JEWS***  
Written by Joshua Harmon, directed by Matt Shakman

**Additional plays for the season to be announced**

**LOS ANGELES** (March 20, 2014) – The Geffen Playhouse is announcing three plays of its eight-play 2014-2015 season, including the West Coast Premiere of *Choir Boy*, written by 2013 MacArthur Fellow Tarell Alvin McCraney, directed by Trip Cullman, with its off-Broadway star Jeremy Pope; *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin*, directed by Trevor Hay; and the West Coast Premiere of *Bad Jews*, which received rave reviews for its off-Broadway production, written by Joshua Harmon and directed by Matt Shakman.

Two additional plays for the Gil Cates Theater, and three for the Audry Skirball Kenis Theater are to be announced at a later date. For information, please visit [www.geffenplayhouse.com](http://www.geffenplayhouse.com).

“Each play that we’ve put into this season has something specific and singular about it,” said Randall Arney, Geffen Artistic Director. “Taken together, an undeniable theme emerges. These writers, and the characters they’ve created, have distinct voices and the stories they tell explore how one voice can change the world. Through singing a song, writing a song, righting a wrong -- each of these plays is a battle cry to raise one’s voice.”

The season begins with the West Coast Premiere of Tarell Alvin McCraney’s new play with gospel music, *Choir Boy* (September 16 - October 26, 2014), which had previous productions at Manhattan Theatre Club and at London’s Royal Court Theatre. The London Guardian said *Choir Boy* is “an exhilarating multi-layered new play.” Variety said it is “a mighty coming-of-age play that deserves its kudos.” McCraney is the author of *The Brother/Sister Plays* trilogy that premiered at the New York Public Theater and *Head of Passes* that premiered at Steppenwolf Theatre Company.

Actor Jeremy Pope makes his Geffen debut in *Choir Boy* following his critically acclaimed off-Broadway performance as Pharus Jonathan Young. The New York Times said, "Pope gives a magnetic, moving performance ... he sings forth his dialogue with the rhythmic bite." Trip Cullman once again directs.

Jerome Kern famously said, "Irving Berlin has no *place* in American music—he *is* American music." From "God Bless America" and "White Christmas" to "There's No Business Like Show Business" and "Blue Skies," Berlin created the American sound. Los Angeles favorite Hershey Felder returns to the Geffen in *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin* (November 11 – December 21, 2014), a music-filled tribute to Irving Berlin's two great loves – his wife Ellin and his adopted homeland.

Among the most popular and creative members of the Los Angeles theater community, Felder's memorable resume includes *George Gershwin Alone*, *Monsieur Chopin*, *Beethoven*, *As I Knew Him*, *Abe Lincoln's Piano*, and *Franz Liszt in Rock Star*. He both directed and adapted *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* for the stage.

Hailed as one of the funniest plays of the year, Joshua Harmon's *Bad Jews* (June 9 – July 19, 2015) had its off-Broadway premiere last fall. The New York Times said that *Bad Jews* is "the best comedy of the season to date ... a zesty play with delectably savage humor." Variety said, "A biting comedy ... all this nastiness is enjoyable on its own terms." Entertainment Weekly said, "A wonderful play." This West Coast premiere will be helmed by Matt Shakman who returns to the Geffen following directing the 2013 world premiere adaptation of *Wait Until Dark* and the West Coast premiere of David Lindsay-Abaire's *Good People* (eight Ovation nominations, including Best Director).

## THE GIL CATES THEATER AT THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

**CHOIR BOY** (West Coast Premiere)

Written by **Tarell Alvin McCraney**

Directed by **Trip Cullman**

Featuring **Jeremy Pope**

Run: September 16 – October 26, 2014

Opening Night: September 26, 2014

At the Charles R. Drew Prep School for Boys, a young black man knows what is expected of him. Work hard, fall in line and if you've got the voice for it, use it to praise God in the school choir. Within these walls, Pharus Young, with the voice of an angel and a keen mind, should be a star. But in the face of Drew's time-honored traditions, can music overcome silence? Playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney navigates expectation, alienation and the overwhelming desire to be heard.

**HERSHEY FELDER AS IRVING BERLIN** (World Premiere)

Written by **Hershey Felder**

Directed by **Trevor Hay**

Featuring **Hershey Felder**

Run: November 11 – December 21, 2014

Opening Night: November 19, 2014

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

Hershey Felder brings to life the remarkable story of Irving Berlin, "America's Composer." From the depths of anti-Semitism in Czarist Russia, to New York's Lower East Side, and ultimately all of America and the world, Berlin's story epitomizes capturing the American dream. Featuring the composer's most popular and enduring songs from "God Bless America" to "White Christmas" and beyond, Hershey Felder's masterful creation of character and musical performance makes this evening with Irving Berlin an unforgettable journey.

***BAD JEWS*** (West Coast Premiere)

Written by **Joshua Harmon**

Directed by **Matt Shakman**

Run: June 9 – July 19, 2015

Opening Night: June 17, 2015

In the Feygenbaum family, Daphna is the most devout. Just ask her. But her cousin Liam has the rights of the first-born grandchild. Just ask him. When their grandfather dies leaving a treasured family heirloom, a battle ignites escalating to Old Testament proportions. Hailed as one of the funniest plays of the year, *Bad Jews* can't resist pointing out the worst in all of us.

**EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:**

The Geffen Playhouse

10886 Le Conte Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024

310.208.5454

[www.geffenplayhouse.com](http://www.geffenplayhouse.com)

**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, General Manager Behnaz Ataee, 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](http://www.geffenplayhouse.com).

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Tim Choy, Davidson & Choy Publicity

[t.choy@dcpublicity.com](mailto:t.choy@dcpublicity.com) 323-954-7510 ex 13