

BACKSTAGE AT THE GEFFEN RAISES MORE THAN \$1 MILLION TO BENEFIT ARTS EDUCATION

Sold Out Evening Honoring Carol Burnett and Jim Gianopulos Marks Most Successful Backstage To Date

LOS ANGELES, June 5, 2012 — Last night's star-studded event at the Geffen Playhouse and the pre-show host committee dinner at W Los Angeles' The Backyard restaurant grossed over **\$1 million** for the Geffen Playhouse's education, outreach and artistic initiatives. The fundraiser, honoring Hollywood legend **Carol Burnett** and Chairman and CEO of Fox Filmed Entertainment **Jim Gianopulos**, was co-chaired by Chairman and CEO of The Walt Disney Company **Robert A. Iger** and his wife, journalist **Willow Bay**. Entertainment icon **Dick Van Dyke** presented the Distinction in Theater Award to **Ms. Burnett** and award-winning actor **Warren Beatty** presented the Distinction in Service Award to **Mr. Gianopulos**; the evening was hosted by Emmy Award winning actress **Jane Lynch**. In addition to the award presentations, the irreverent evening of laughter, music and stories featured personal "backstage" stories or songs by stars of the stage and screen including **Beth Behrs, Annette Bening, Dana Delany, Andy Garcia, Monica Mancini, Joe Mantegna, Helen Mirren, Matthew Morrison, Arturo Sandoval and Bruce Vilanch**.

Event Highlights:

- **A Spirited Evening** – Almost all of the evening's participants paid tribute to Geffen Playhouse founder and producing director **Gil Cates** who passed away last October. Referring to him as "a visionary," "a giver" and "fearless," Gil was no doubt present in spirit throughout the evening. He was formally remembered in a moving video created by loyal Geffen Playhouse supporter **Barbara Schroeder** (whose husband **Richard** serves on the Board of Directors) and narrated by **Laurence Fishburne**, highlighting the education and outreach programs that Gil developed and made a tenet of the Geffen's mission. **Annette Bening**, a longtime friend and Geffen alum, introduced the piece with a personal anecdote about her first performance as a student.
- **Music to Our Ears** – Award-winning actor **Andy Garcia** paid tribute to his Cuban roots by performing an impromptu solo on the bongo drums with his friend and renowned jazz musician **Arturo Sandoval** whom he portrayed in *For Love Of Country: The Arturo Sandoval Story*. **Monica Mancini** joined in with a stunning rendition of "The Shadow of Your Smile." And **Beth Behrs**, currently one of the *Two Broke Girls* who began her career at the Geffen stuffing gift bags, opened the evening with "Someone To Watch Over Me."
- **Gleeful Anecdotes** – Host **Jane Lynch** kept the evening flowing with laughter, striking the perfect chord between honor and irreverence. She called **Dame Helen Mirren** "hot," introduced her *Glee* co-star **Matthew Morrison** as "The guy I've been carrying all these years!" and even threw in some Yiddish for good measure.
- **Hollywood Hijinks** – Stage and screen actor **Joe Mantegna** relived the moment when he first fell in love with acting...after seeing the movie *West Side Story* 11 times. **Dana Delany's** first blush, literally, with the stage took the fledgling college student to a summer stock turn in the mid-west where the only shows the producer put on involved more than their share of nudity. **Dame Helen Mirren** took aim at the angst-ridden

turn some actors take with a hilarious look at on-stage nervous breakdowns featuring the meltdowns of some of her early British co-stars. Veteran funny guy **Bruce Vilanch** had the audience rolling in the aisles with “backstage” tales from the 17 Academy Awards he worked on with **Gil Cates**.

- **Dancing with the Stars** – Broadway and *Glee* star **Matthew Morrison** pulled up his favorite gal, dancer/singer **Renee Puente**, from the audience so the couple could share a dance on stage to “The Lady is a Tramp” – a number they performed the night before in Washington D.C. for President and First Lady Obama.
- **And the Award Goes To ... Jim Gianopulos** – **Warren Beatty** took the stage saluting his long-time friend **Jim Gianopulos** naming his accomplishments with “a few blockbuster films” from *Titanic* and *Avatar* to *Bulworth*, the 1999 film which **Beatty** was nominated for an Oscar. Honoree **Jim Gianopulos** accepted his award stating “I love this night, love this theater and love **Gil Cates!**”
- **And the Award Goes To ... Carol Burnett** – In introducing his long-time friend and sometime co-star **Carol Burnett**, presenter **Dick Van Dyke** referred to the comedic legend as “born with a funny bone imbedded in her body.” Van Dyke also shared some wild moments forgetting their lines on stage in *Same Time Next Year*. Accepting the award, **Burnett** reminisced about her early lean years in New York when she managed to talk her way backstage at a performance of *The Pajama Game* with the hope of talking one of the stars into finding her an agent. **Ms. Burnett** was greeted with a resounding standing ovation that literally stopped the show.
- **Dining with the Stars – W Los Angeles – Westwood** and its restaurant **The Backyard** hosted an exclusive pre-show reception and dinner by Executive Chef Dakota Weiss for honorees, special guests and the event’s Host Committee that included baby heirloom tomatoes stuffed with avocado mousse, grilled peaches with burrata and wild arugula, braised beef short rib and grilled vegetable tart with goat cheese and tomato fondue with an array of mignardises for dessert.
- **Arriving in Style** – Host Committee members were each given their own **Audi** for the evening, and event attendees were greeted at the foot of the red carpet by Audi’s R8 5.2 V10 coupe with R-tronic transmission. The stunning red and black luxury vehicle rivaled some of the red carpet fashion for style points that evening.
- **Silent, But Powerful** – The evening’s silent auction, which featured donated items ranging from dream vacations and “priceless” one-of-a-kind experiences raised an additional \$68,000 for the evening.
- **Cheers** – Starting with a **Veuve Clicquot** toast at the host committee dinner, continuing with beautifully presented specialty drinks such as a thyme infused tea cocktail pre-show and finishing with delicious dessert libations including the Chocolate Grand, **Belvedere Vodka** and **Grand Marnier** kept the guests in high spirits all night long.
- **Just Desserts** – After the show, guests indulged in desserts ranging from warm cookies with shots of milk to a gelato bar with flavors including Coffee Crunch, Crème Brulee and Coconut.

Backstage at the Geffen title sponsor **City National Bank** was joined by presenting sponsors **Audi of America**, **NewsCorporation**, **W Los Angeles–Westwood** and its acclaimed restaurant **The Backyard**. The Geffen also thanks sponsors **Los Angeles** magazine, **Belvedere Vodka** and **Grand Marnier**.

ABOUT BACKSTAGE AT THE GEFFEN

The Geffen Playhouse’s annual event raises funds for *Geffen’s Stage for Any Age* programs, which help bring the excitement of live theater to 20,000 families and community members each year. The proceeds from *Backstage at the Geffen* help underwrite low ticket admissions to *Saturday Scene*, the popular theater performances for children; fully support the *Geffen School Tours Program* that takes theater to participating elementary and middle-schools that have little or no resources for the performing arts; and benefit CREATE (Community Representatives Engaged in Active Theater Education), a season-long, interactive exploration and analysis of live theater for community and social service groups, deemed a model program by the City of Los Angeles.

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 is was founded by Gilbert Cates, and is currently helmed by Artistic Director Randall Arney, Managing Director Ken Novice and Chairman of the Board Frank Mancuso. 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 GeffenPlayhouse.com.