

POLLY DRAPER, MAGGIE SIFF,
JAMES ECKHOUSE AND GABRIEL SUNDAY
ESCORT THE AUDIENCE THROUGH
JANE ANDERSON'S WORLD PREMIERE

Geffen Playhouse Commission The Escort Directed by Lisa Peterson Opens April 6

LOS ANGELES, April 5, 2011 — In her second commission for the Geffen Playhouse, **Jane Anderson** combines the two oldest professions: theater and prostitution. *The Escort* follows the relationship between Charlotte, a high-class call girl played by **Maggie Siff** (*Mad Men*, *Sons of Anarchy*) and Rhona, her upper West side female gynecologist, played by **Polly Draper** (*thirtysomething*, *Broadway's Closer*). **James Eckhouse** (CTG's *The Goat*, *Beverly Hills 90210*) doubles as Rhona's self-righteous liberal ex-husband and one of Charlotte's johns, and LA-theater newcomer **Gabriel Sunday** (*My Suicide*, *Taking Woodstock*) doubles as Rhona's manipulative teenage son and a seductive male escort. Helmed by **Lisa Peterson**, *The Escort* opens at the Geffen Playhouse on **April 6** and runs **through May 8**.

"The last play I wrote for the Geffen was about cancer, fire, suicide and death; so I thought I'd give us all a break this time and write about sex," said playwright Jane Anderson. "Audiences shouldn't expect from me some bawdy farce filled with a lot of slamming of bedroom doors, but what I hope to do is to give them a great roller coaster ride where they swing between asking 'why not?' to saying 'enough is enough is enough.'"

The Escort is the Geffen Playhouse's second commission from Emmy Award winning playwright Jane Anderson. Her first, *The Quality of Life*, premiered in the Audrey Skirball Theater at the Geffen Playhouse in 2007 and was honored with numerous awards including both an LADCC and Ovation Award for Best New Play before moving on to subsequent productions around the country.

Opening night festivities for *The Escort*, which are sponsored by Audi of America and Los Angeles magazine with botanicals by Bittersweet Butterfly, will be celebrated at Napa Valley Grille with Chef Joseph Gillard's seasonal specialties, complete with wine by Malibu Family Wines and a specialty drink courtesy of Krol Vodka. Other festivities during the run of *The Escort* include the theater's special Signature Series options for no additional cost. Special evenings include an intellectual, thought-provoking post show Q&A at Talk Back Tuesdays; a scintillating, one-of-a-kind after-party at Girls Night Out; a cultural happy hour with Lounge Fridays and complimentary wine tastings during Wine Down Sundays. For more information, please view www.geffenplayhouse.com/signatureseries.

For complete biographies, please view the following pages.

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THE ESCORT

Written by Jane Anderson

Directed by Lisa Peterson

Preview Performances: Tuesday, March 29 – Tuesday, April 5

Opening Night: Wednesday, April 6

Closing Night: Sunday, May 8

Cast

Polly Draper	Rhona
James Eckhouse	John / Howard
Maggie Siff	Charlotte
Gabriel Sunday	Lewis / Matthew

Production Credits

Set Designer	Richard Hoover
Costume Designer	Laura Bauer
Lighting Designer	Rand Ryan
Sound Designer	Paul James Prendergast
Production Stage Manager	James T. McDermott

Performance Schedule

Monday	No performances
Tuesday – Friday	8:00pm
Saturday	3:00pm; 8:00pm
Sunday	2:00pm; 7:00pm

Ticket Info

Ticket prices range from \$47 - \$77 for the regular run. Tickets are on sale now in-person at the Geffen Playhouse box office, via phone at **310-208-5454** or online at **www.geffenplayhouse.com**.

BIOGRAPHIES

Jane Anderson (Playwright)

Jane Anderson is an award-winning writer and director for theater, film and television. Her plays have been produced Off-Broadway and in theaters around the country, including Arena Stage, Actors Theater of Louisville, The McCarter Theater, Long Wharf, ACT, the Geffen Playhouse and the Pasadena Playhouse. *The Quality of Life* was commissioned by the Geffen Playhouse and won the 2008 Ovation Award for Best New Play. *Looking for Normal* premiered at the Geffen Playhouse and won the 2001 Ovation Award for Best New Play. For television she wrote HBO's ground-breaking *The Positively True Adventures of the Alleged Texas Cheerleader Murdering Mom* for which she received an Emmy, a Penn Award and Writers Guild Award for best teleplay. She wrote and directed *The Baby Dance* (adapted from her play) for which she received a Peabody Award, a Golden Globe nomination and three Emmy nominations for best writing and made-for-TV film. She wrote and directed *Normal* for HBO (adapted from her play, *Looking for Normal*) which garnered six Emmy nominations, three Golden Globe nominations and a Directors' Guild and Writers' Guild nominations for best directing and writing. Her other television films include *When Billie Beat Bobby* and the first segment of *If These Walls Could Talk II* which starred Vanessa Redgrave and earned Ms. Anderson an Emmy nomination for best writing. Her other screenwriting credits include: *How to Make An American Quilt*, *It Could Happen to You* and *The Prizewinner of Defiance, Ohio* which she also directed. Ms. Anderson resides in Los Angeles with her spouse Tess Ayers and their son, Raphael.

Polly Draper (Rhona)

Polly Draper's Broadway credits include *Closer*, *Brooklyn Boy*, and *Crazy He Calls Me*. Polly also starred in the original New York productions of *Four Dogs And A Bone* (New York Magazine's best Broadway actress award), Neil Simon's *Actors and Actresses*, John Cassavetes' *Thorn Hill*, *Imagining Brad*, *Sister Mary Ignatius*, *Rum and Coke*, and *Top Girls* among others. Her most recent film and television credits include a role on the Showtime series *The Big C*, and a role in the upcoming feature film *My Idiot Brother* starring Paul Rudd. Miss Draper is most famous for her role on ABC's groundbreaking series *thirtysomething* (Emmy nomination) She wrote, produced and starred in the critically acclaimed feature film, *The Tic Code*, which won awards at film festivals worldwide including Berlin, Vancouver, and the Hamptons. Miss Draper has also spent the last five years writing, producing, and directing *The Naked Brothers' Band*, a movie and subsequent hit Nickelodeon television series she created, for which she won many awards, including a WGA award.

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James Eckhouse (John / Howard)

Most recent West Coast appearances: *Six Degrees of Separation* at the Old Globe, *Mother Courage* at La Jolla, *The Goat* at Mark Taper Forum, and the award winning *Heads* at the Blank Theater. He has performed in world premieres on Broadway, at The Public, Playwrights Horizons, Manhattan Theater Club, and Lincoln Center, and at regional theaters including The Guthrie, Hartford Stage, Williamstown, Portland Stage, and Wisdom Bridge. Screen credits include films such as *One True Thing*, *Defending Your Life*, *Junior*, *S.W.A.T.*, *Leaving Normal*, *Fat Man and Little Boy*, *84 Charing Cross Road*, and the Sundance prize winning *Half Life*. Best known to TV audiences as Jim Walsh on *90210*, James has starred on dozens of pilots and ongoing series such as *Harry's Law*, *Boston Legal*, *Criminal Minds*, *Southland*, *CSI*, etc. He is a native Chicagoan and a graduate of the Juilliard School. James is also a director and begins production on two films this summer.

Maggie Siff (Charlotte)

Maggie stars as Tara Knowles on FX's hit series *Sons of Anarchy*. Gaining attention playing Rachel Katz, Don Draper's (Jon Hamm) lover on AMC's Emmy and Golden Globe-winning series *Mad Men*, for which she was included in a SAG award nomination, she also did an arc on ABC's *Life on Mars*, opposite Michael Imperioli, and another arc on FX's *Nip/Tuck*. Siff has appeared in films including *Leaves of Grass*, opposite Edward Norton and Susan Sarandon, Judd Apatow's *Funny People* Universal, opposite Adam Sandler, and Helen Hunt's indie drama *Then She Found Me*, opposite Helen Hunt and Colin Firth. Maggie's theatre credits include *A Life of the Mind*, directed by Ethan Hawke (Off Broadway), the New York premiere of *The Ruby Sunrise* at The Public, the world premieres of *Frank's Home* at the Catherine Goodman and *Dollhouse* at the Nora Goodman (Jefferson Award Nomination for 'Outstanding Principle Actress'), Interact Theatre's production of *Aunt Dan and Lemon* (Barrymore Award for 'Best Leading Actress'), and Walnut Street Theatre's production of *Oleanna* (Barrymore Award Nomination for 'Best Leading Actress').

Lisa Peterson (Director)

Lisa Peterson has directed world premieres by Donald Margulies, Tony Kushner, Beth Henley, Naomi Wallace, Chay Yew, Luis Alfaro, Culture Clash, Jane Anderson, David Henry Hwang, Stephen Belber, William Bolcom & Arnold Weinstein, Ellen McLaughlin, Marlane Meyer, Annie Weisman, Philip Gotanda, John Belluso, David Bucknam, Caryl Churchill, Janusz Glowacki, and many others at theaters including New York Theater Workshop, The Public, The Vineyard, MCC, MTC, Primary Stages, Guthrie, Actors Theater of Louisville, Arena Stage, Seattle Rep, Baltimore Center Stage, Hartford Stage, Long Wharf, Huntington, Yale Rep, Intiman, Berkeley Rep, Seattle Rep, and more. She was Associate Director at La Jolla Playhouse for 3 years and Resident Director at Mark Taper Forum for 10 years. Lisa has developed new work at Sundance Theater Lab, O'Neill Playwrights Festival, Playwrights Center, New Dramatists, and the Royal Court. Graduate of Yale College. Member of EST and the executive board of SDC.

Gabriel Sunday (Lewis / Matthew)

Gabriel Sunday began his career as a magician/juggler at the age of 10. He appeared in countless stage productions and avidly studied Shakespeare, improv and musical theater. He moved into film production at 16, documenting his time on the road with three of his mentors in *On the road with Wavy Gravy*, *Patch Adams* and *Ram Dass*. This led to work with David Lee Miller, Eric J. Adams and Regenerate in Los Angeles. Sunday was cast as the lead in their feature film, *My Suicide*. He co-edited, co-produced and co-wrote the film, which won over 20 best picture awards at festivals including the Crystal Bear at the Berlin Film Festival. During the four-year process of *My Suicide*, Sunday appeared in various TV shows and recently in films *Year One* and *Taking Woodstock*. For his next project, Sunday is starring in the upcoming feature film about the life of schizophrenic musician/artist Daniel Johnston, where he will play the role of a young Daniel.

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 musicals, 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 helmed by Producing Director and President of the Board Gilbert Cates, 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.

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