

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

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CAST ANNOUNCED FOR GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE WEST COAST PREMIERE OF “BERNHARDT/HAMLET”

FEATURING GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINEE DIANE VENORA AS SARAH BERNHARDT

WRITTEN BY THERESA REBECK AND DIRECTED BY SARNA LAPINE

ALSO FEATURING NICK BORAINÉ, ALAN COX, ISAIAH JOHNSON,
SHYLA LEFNER, RAYMOND McANALLY, LEVENIX RIDDLE,
PAUL DAVID STORY, LUCAS VERBRUGGHE AND GRACE YOO

PREVIEWS BEGIN APRIL 7 - OPENING NIGHT IS APRIL 16

LOS ANGELES (February 24, 2020) – Geffen Playhouse today announced the full cast for its West Coast premiere of *Bernhardt/Hamlet*, written by **Theresa Rebeck** (*Dead Accounts*, *Seminar*) and directed by **Sarna Lapine** (*Sunday in the Park with George*). The production features **Diane Venora** (*Bird*, *Romeo + Juliet*) as Sarah Bernhardt.

In addition to Venora, the cast features **Nick Boraine** (*Homeland*, *Paradise Stop*) as Louis, **Alan Cox** (*The Dictator*, *Young Sherlock Holmes*) as Constant Coquelin, **Isaiah Johnson** (*Hamilton*, *David Makes Man*) as Edmond Rostand, **Shyla Lefner** (*Between Two Knees*, *The Way the Mountain Moved*) as Rosamond, **Raymond McAnally** (*Size Matters*, *Marvelous and the Black Hole*) as Raoul, Rosencrantz, and others, **Levenix Riddle** (*The Chi*, *Carlyle*) as Francois, Guildenstern, and others, **Paul David Story** (*The Caine Mutiny Court Martial*, *Equus*) as Maurice, **Lucas Verbrugghe** (*Icebergs*, *Lazy Eye*) as Alphonse Mucha and **Grace Yoo** (*Into The Woods*, *Root Beer Bandits*) as Lysette.

It’s 1899, and the legendary Sarah Bernhardt shocks the world by taking on the lead role in *Hamlet*. While her performance is destined to become one for the ages, Sarah first has to convince a sea of naysayers that her right to play the part should be based on ability, not gender—a feat as difficult as mastering Shakespeare’s most verbose tragic hero. Fresh off its Broadway triumph, Theresa Rebeck’s shrewd comedy puts the spotlight on a woman who used her singular talent to challenge whether a woman’s place was “to be or not to be” in the greatest role ever written.

Bernhardt/Hamlet was commissioned by and premiered at Roundabout Theatre Company (Todd Haimes, Artistic Director; Julia C. Levy, Executive Director).

Previews for *Bernhardt/Hamlet* begin Tuesday, April 7, in the Gil Cates Theater at Geffen Playhouse. Opening night is Thursday, April 16, and the production will close Sunday, May 10.

BERNHARDT/HAMLET

Written by **Theresa Rebeck**

Directed by **Sarna Lapine**

Previews: Tuesday, April 7 – Wednesday, April 15, 2020

Opening Night: Thursday, April 16, 2020

Closing Night: Sunday, May 10, 2020

CAST

Nick Boraine as Louis

Alan Cox as Constant Coquelin

Isaiah Johnson as Edmond Rostand

Shyla Lefner as Rosamond

Raymond McAnally as Raoul, Rosencrantz, and others

Levenix Riddle as Francois, Guildenstern, and others

Paul David Story as Maurice

Diane Venora as Sarah Bernhardt

Lucas Verbrugghe as Alphonse Mucha

Grace Yoo as Lysette

PRODUCTION TEAM

Scenic Designer **Mikiko Suzuki MacAdams**

Costume Designer **Camille Benda**

Lighting Designer **Paul Whitaker**

Sound Designer **Leon Rothenberg**

Production Stage Manager **Whitney McAnally**

Assistant Stage Manager **Julie Ann Renfro**

Casting Director **Phyllis Schuringa, CSA**

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Monday No performance

Tuesday – Friday 8:00 p.m.

Saturday 3:00 and 8:00 p.m.

Sunday 2:00 and 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION

Gil Cates Theater at Geffen Playhouse

10886 Le Conte Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets currently priced at \$30.00 - \$120.00. Available in person at the Geffen Playhouse box office, by phone at 310.208.5454 or online at www.geffenplayhouse.org. Fees may apply.

Rush tickets for each day's performance are made available to the general public 30 minutes before showtime at the box office. \$35.00 General/\$15.00 Student

COLLEGE AUDIENCES

Through a variety of events and other opportunities, the Geffen Playhouse welcomes college students to experience the live storytelling presented on our stages. We are proud of our association with UCLA's School of Theater, Film, and Television, and open our doors to all college students throughout Los Angeles. More information is available at www.geffenplayhouse.org/college.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Theresa Rebeck (Playwright)

Theresa Rebeck is an acclaimed and widely produced playwright, whose work can be seen and read throughout the United States and abroad. Rebeck is the most Broadway-produced female playwright of our time, whose Broadway plays include *Bernhardt/Hamlet*, *Dead Accounts*, *Seminar*, and *Mauritius*. Other notable NY and regional plays include: *Seared* (MCC Theater); *Downstairs* (Primary Stages); *The Scene*, *The Water's Edge*, *Loose Knit*, *The Family of Mann*, and *Spike Heels* (Second Stage Theater); *Bad Dates*, *The Butterfly Collection*, and *Our House* (Playwrights Horizons); *The Understudy* (Roundabout Theatre Company); *View of the Dome* (New York Theatre Workshop); *What We're Up Against* (Women's Project Theater); *Omnium Gatherum* (Pulitzer Prize finalist). As a director, her work has been seen at the Alley Theatre (Houston), the REP Company (Delaware), Dorset Theatre Festival, the Orchard Project, and the Folger Theatre. Major film and television projects include *Trouble*, starring Anjelica Huston, Bill Pullman and David Morse (writer and director); *NYPD Blue*; the NBC series *Smash* (creator); and the upcoming female spy thriller *355* (for Jessica Chastain's production company). As a novelist, Rebeck's books include *Three Girls and Their Brother* and *I'm Glad About You*. Rebeck is the recipient of the William Inge New Voices Playwriting Award, the PEN/Laura Pels Foundation Award, a Lilly Award, and more.

Sarna Lapine (Director)

Sarna Lapine is a New York-based director. Upcoming productions include: the West End transfer of the acclaimed Broadway production *Sunday in the Park with George*, starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Annaleigh Ashford, as well as a radical revival of Irving Berlin's *Annie Get Your Gun* (Pasadena Playhouse) and Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (Boston Lyric Opera). Recent credits include: the world premiere of Kate Hamill's *Dracula* (Classic Stage Company) as well as Hamill's *Little Women* (Primary Stages); *The Rape of Lucretia* (Boston Lyric Opera), named Best Opera of 2019 by the *Boston Globe*. Sarna has worked across North America and internationally. She directed Cynthia Erivo in her first concert in Japan, the Japanese premiere of Anna Ziegler's *Photograph 51* and re-mounted the touring production of the National Theatre's *War Horse*, in Tokyo, after touring in North America for two years. Concerts include *Sondheim on Sondheim* at the Hollywood Bowl, starring Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Jonathan Groff, and Vanessa Williams. Sarna began as Bartlett Sher's assistant director on Lincoln Center Theater's Broadway productions of *The Light in the Piazza*, *South Pacific*, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, and *Awake and Sing!* She holds an M.F.A. in Film from Columbia University.

Nick Boraine (as Louis)

Nick recently completed arcs for *Designated Survivor*, *Homeland*, *Black Sails*, and *Chicago Fire*. Recent films include *Running for Grace* with Matt Dillon and Jim Caviezel, as well as *Money Monster*, and *The Brothers Grimsby* alongside Sasha Baron Cohen. He was in the touring production of *Truth in Translation* for a number of years and continues to work in the field of social justice and reconciliation. Nick also recently relocated to the United States from South Africa.

Alan Cox (as Constant Coquelin)

Alan Cox recently played *Uncle Vanya* at the Hampstead Theatre in London and Claudius in *Hamlet* for the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, D.C. He played David Frost in the national tour of

Frost/Nixon, for which he received a Helen Hayes Award nomination. He made his Broadway debut in *Translations*, which transferred from McCarter Theatre Center in New Jersey. He made his motion picture debut as Watson in *Young Sherlock Holmes*. His film work includes *Contagion*, *The Dictator*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, and *An Awfully Big Adventure*. Alan's television credits include *The Good Wife*, *John Adams*, and *The Odyssey*.

Isaiah Johnson (as Edmond Rostand)

Played series regular "Sky" on the Oprah Winfrey Network's *David Makes Man*. He finished his lengthy run as George Washington in *Hamilton's* "And Peggy" tour in August 2019. He has appeared on and off Broadway, working with Al Pacino and Daniel Sullivan in *The Merchant of Venice*, Kevin Spacey and Sam Mendes in *Richard III*, Kelli O'Hara and Michael Greif in *Far From Heaven*, Roger Rees and Alex Timbers in *Peter and the Starcatcher*, Lin-Manuel Miranda and Thomas Kail in *Hamilton* (lab production) and on various projects with Norm Lewis, Bill Condon, and Randy Newman. He has also been a guest star on CBS's *Person of Interest* and the Cinemax series *The Knick*. Isaiah received a B.F.A. from Howard University and an M.F.A. from NYU's Tisch Grad Acting.

Shyla Lefner (as Rosamond)

Shyla Lefner is thrilled to be making her Geffen Playhouse debut. She recently appeared in the East Coast premiere of Mary Kathryn Nagle's *Manhatta* at Yale Repertory Theatre. Shyla was in the American Revolutions world premieres *Between Two Knees* by the 1491s and *The Way the Mountain Moved* by Idris Goodwin at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, a Tony Award- and Pulitzer Prize-winning multi-decade commissioning program about moments of change in U.S. history. Other theater credits include: *Alice in Wonderland*, *Henry V* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *Fairly Traceable*, *Off the Rails*, *The Frybread Queen* (Native Voices at the Autry); *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (Urban Theatre Movement, Company of Angels); *Ackia* (Idyllwild Native Arts Festival); *Ungipamsuuka: My Story, Our Voices Will Be Heard* (La Jolla Playhouse/Native Voices Festival of New Plays Workshop). Film and television credits include: *Polar Sun* (ImagineNATIVE), *Grace* (Cinequest), *Fashion House*, *Lies & Alibis*, *Whatever It Takes*, *Woo*.

Raymond McAnally (as Raoul, Rosencrantz, and others)

Raymond McAnally is honored to be making his Geffen Playhouse debut. Television credits include a supporting role in *Black Mirror: San Junipero*, winner of the 2017 Emmy Award for Best TV Movie; guest starring roles on *Better Call Saul*, *Modern Family*, *Chicago Fire*, *Rizzoli & Isles*, *Law & Order: SVU*, *Royal Pains*, and *30 Rock*. Film credits include *Marvelous and the Black Hole* (Premiering Tribeca 2020); *The Revival*, *Compliance*, *I Don't Know How She Does It*, and *Ghost Town*. Theater credits of note include *God's Ear* (Off-Broadway), Vineyard Theatre; *Casa Valentina*, Pasadena Playhouse*; *One Man, Two Guvnors*, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis*; *Mrs. Mannerly*, Ensemble Theatre Cincinnati*; *The Foreigner*, Cincinnati Playhouse*(*award winning). Raymond's full-length solo-play *Size Matters*, directed by the late Ed Stern, received its world premiere at Ensemble Theatre Cincinnati in 2014 and is now a comedy special available for streaming on Amazon. B.A. in Philosophy from Sewanee. M.F.A. in Acting from Rutgers. raymondmcanally.com

Levenix Riddle (as Francois, Guildenstern, and others)

Levenix is extremely proud to be making his Geffen Playhouse debut in this production of *Bernhardt/Hamlet*. He has appeared in several stage plays and television shows. You may have seen him as Ricky in his recurring role on the most recent season of *The Chi* on Showtime (season 2) as well as various guest star roles on *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago Med*, and others. During his last stage production, Levenix appeared as Omar in the world premiere of *Carlyle* at Goodman Theatre. Other recent roles include: Flute/Thisby in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and The Prince/Paris in *Romeo and Juliet*, both at

Chicago Shakespeare Theater. He hails from Chicago but decided to trade the polar vortices for warmer pastures and now calls L.A. home. Levenix attended The Theatre School at DePaul University, earning his Bachelor's in Fine Arts. He wants to thank his family for their continued love and support.

Paul David Story (as Maurice)

Broadway: Junius Urban in *The Caine Mutiny Court Martial*; Alan Strang in *Equus*. Off-Broadway: Ferguson/Wilkes Booth in *Our Leading Lady* (Manhattan Theatre Club); David in *The Basic Training of Pavlo Hummel* (Public Theater). Regional theater: Will Shakespeare in *Shakespeare In Love* and Ken in *Red* (South Coast Repertory); Mr. Bingley in *Pride & Prejudice* (Dallas Theatre Center); Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet* (Arizona Theatre Company); Malcom in *Macbeth* and Philip, King of France in *The Lion in Winter* (Ensemble Theatre Company); Philip, King of France in *The Lion In Winter* (The Colony Theatre); Ferdinand in *The Tempest*, Arviragus in *Cymbeline* and Hamlet in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (A Noise Within); Gus in *White* (Coachella Valley Repertory). Film/television: *Them: Covenant*, *The Mentalist*, *Body of Proof*, *Nip/Tuck*, *Law & Order: SVU*, *In Time*, *American Violet*, *The Undying*, *St. Nick*, and *Vartan LLP*. Education: The University of North Carolina School of the Arts, B.F.A.
@pauldavidstory

Diane Venora (as Sarah Bernhardt)

Diane began her career at Juilliard studying under John Houseman. Diane was the first American woman to play the title role in *Hamlet*, directed by Joe Papp (1982, New York Shakespeare Festival). Diane played Ophelia in Kevin Kline's production of *Hamlet* (1990), and Gertrude (1999) opposite Liev Schreiber, directed by Andrei Serban; Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Hermoine opposite Mandy Patinkin in *The Winters Tale*, both directed by James Lapine; and Lady Macbeth in Terry Hands' Broadway production of *Macbeth* (2000). In film, Diane received the New York Critics Circle Award for Best Supporting Actress and a Golden Globe nomination for her work in *Bird*, directed by Clint Eastwood. Other credits include: *FX* by Robert Mandel, *Wolfen*, Francis Ford Coppola's *The Cotton Club*, Michael Mann's *Heat* and *The Insider*, *Surviving Picasso* directed by James Ivory, Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*, *Hamlet* opposite Ethan Hawke, and Clint Eastwood's *True Crime*.

Lucas Verbrugghe (as Alphonse Mucha)

Lucas Verbrugghe most recently appeared in South Coast Repertory's *M. Butterfly*. California theater credits include Alena Smith's *Icebergs* at Geffen Playhouse (Ovation nomination); *Seminar* at Ahmanson Theatre; Jon Caren's *Need to Know* at Rogue Machine Theatre; and the West Coast premiere of *An Entomologist's Love Story* by Melissa Ross at San Francisco Playhouse. New York credits include *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* and *The Ritz* on Broadway; *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Macbeth* at Public Theater; Robert Askins' *Permission* at MCC Theater; *The Common Pursuit* at the Roundabout Theatre Company; Leslye Hedland's *Assistance* at Playwrights Horizons; and the world premieres of *boom* by Peter Sinn-Nachtreib at Ars Nova and *Oohrah!* by Bekah Brunstetter at Atlantic Theater Company. Film credits include *Our Idiot Brother*; *Lazy Eye*; *A Woman, A Part*; *A Birder's Guide to Everything*; and *Point and Shoot* (short). Television credits include *Dickinson*, *Splitting Up Together*, *Ten Days in the Valley*, *Grimm*, *Law & Order*, and *Law & Order: SVU*. Lucas has an M.F.A. from NYU.

Grace Yoo (as Lysette)

Grace Yoo is thrilled to be making her Geffen Playhouse debut in the West Coast premiere of *Bernhardt/Hamlet*. Earlier this year she was seen at the Garry Marshall Theatre in *Root Beer Bandits* as Pollyanna Peppercorn, the David Henry Hwang Theater in East West Players' production of *Mamma Mia!* as Sophie Sheridan and the Hollywood Bowl in *Into the Woods* as Florinda. Other favorite roles include Kei Kimura in *Allegiance* and Minnie Fay in *Hello Dolly*. In 2015 and 2017, Grace had the opportunity to tour with Todd Rundgren (*Global, White Knight*), which has led her to perform on

stages at YESTIVAL and the Fuji Rock Festival in Japan. She would like to thank her friends, family, Phyllis Schuringa, and her team at KMR. @graceyloufreebush. Hi Max!

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ABOUT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

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 Executive Director Gil Cates, Jr., Artistic Director Matt Shakman and Board Chair Howard Tenenbaum. Proudly associated with UCLA, the Geffen maintains extensive education and community engagement programs, designed to involve underserved young people and the community at large in the arts. www.geffenplayhouse.org

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