

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

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GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES 2020/2021 25TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

PULITZER PRIZE WINNER DONALD MARGULIES' *COLLECTED STORIES* RETURNS TO THE GEFFEN IN ITS FIRST MAJOR LOS ANGELES REVIVAL TO LAUNCH THE SEASON

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE A FULL LINEUP OF WORLD PREMIERES IN THE AUDREY SKIRBALL KENIS THEATER, GEFFEN'S FIRST PRESENTATION OF A PLAY IN TWO PARTS WITH THE WEST COAST PREMIERE OF MATTHEW LOPEZ'S *THE INHERITANCE* AND RENOWNED MENTALIST VINNY DePONTO MAKING HIS GEFFEN DEBUT WITH THE WORLD PREMIERE OF HIS MAGIC AND STORYTELLING MASHUP *MINDPLAY*

ALSO FEATURING DGA AWARD NOMINEE, EMMY, GOLDEN GLOBE AND TONY AWARD WINNER BRYAN CRANSTON IN HIS GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE DIRECTORIAL DEBUT

LOS ANGELES (March 10, 2020) – Geffen Playhouse today announced six productions that will make up the 2020/2021 season in its Gil Cates and Audrey Skirball Kenis Theaters, with two additional productions to be announced. This marks the 25TH anniversary season for Geffen Playhouse, which will launch September 8, 2020, and run through July 25, 2021.

The 2020/2021 Gil Cates Theater season will commence with Pulitzer Prize winner Donald Margulies' *Collected Stories*, making its return to the Geffen after an initial run in 1999 that was directed by Geffen Playhouse Founder Gil Cates, Sr. Next up will be Samuel Baum's riveting mystery *The Engagement Party*, which will be directed by Tony Award winner Darko Tresnjak (*A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, *Anastasia*). The third production will be Geffen's first presentation of a play in two parts with the West Coast premiere of the highly acclaimed and Olivier Award-winning *The Inheritance*, a poignant drama chronicling the legacy of the AIDS epidemic in New York, inspired by E. M. Forster's *Howards End*. The season will close with a to-be-announced production directed by DGA Award nominee (*Modern Family*, *Breaking Bad*) and Emmy Award, Golden Globe and Tony Award winner Bryan Cranston, who has previously appeared in Geffen's production of *The God of Hell* (2006). One additional production for the Gil Cates Theater will be announced to complete the 2020/2021 season lineup.

The 2020/2021 Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater season will be a full lineup of world premieres and will launch with the brand new musical *A Wicked Soul in Cherry Hill*, a true-crime tale from writer and composer Matt Schatz, who developed the work in The Writers' Room playwrights program at the Geffen. Following will be Emily Kaczmarek's *Soft Target*, the powerful story of a young girl navigating the aftermath of a traumatic event with the help of the beloved toys in her bedroom. The Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater will complete its season by welcoming its first mentalist, Vinny DePonto, as he debuts his magic and storytelling mashup *Mindplay*, from Broadway producer Eva Price (*Oklahoma!*, *Jagged Little Pill*).

“For our 25th anniversary season, we are honoring the past while simultaneously launching into the next quarter century,” said **Geffen Playhouse Artistic Director Matt Shakman**. “My hope is with this combination of reimagined classics, new plays and legendary Geffen alums, we’ve managed to do both. Starting the season is a revival of Pulitzer Prize winner Donald Margulies’ hilarious and heartbreaking *Collected Stories*—a play that is central to the history of the theater not only because it was one of our early hits written by our most-produced playwright, but also because it was directed by beloved Geffen Playhouse Founder Gil Cates, Sr. I’m thrilled to welcome back Bryan Cranston, who is making his Geffen directing debut in the final slot of the season. In a nod to the next 25 years, we have a full season of world premieres in the ASK Theater, our first mentalist in Vinny DePonto, our first two-parter with *The Inheritance*, and a lineup of diverse, resonant voices that speak to our nostalgic past, our provocative present and our exciting future.”

“This is an inspired lineup to commemorate our 25th anniversary,” added **Geffen Playhouse Executive Director Gil Cates, Jr.** “Matt’s creative vision continues to propel our evolution as a theater, breaking ground with brave new works, as well as celebrating the classics that reflect the Geffen’s rich history in Los Angeles.”

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE 2020/2021 SEASON

COLLECTED STORIES (Gil Cates Theater)

Written by Donald Margulies

September 8 – October 11, 2020

Ruth Steiner, a renowned writer turned teacher, has taken student Lisa Morrison under her academic wing. As their relationship deepens, the line between stories shared amongst friends and material sourced for personal gain begins to blur. In this ever-timely, taut, and moving play, Pulitzer Prize winner Donald Margulies examines the toll that ambition can take and the moment when literary license turns into betrayal.

As the first play directed by Geffen Playhouse Founder Gil Cates, Sr. and the beginning of our artistic partnership with Donald Margulies, this play holds a special place in our history.

A WICKED SOUL IN CHERRY HILL (Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater)

WORLD PREMIERE MUSICAL

Words and Music by Matt Schatz

Directed by Mike Donahue

October 6 – November 15, 2020

On a November night in 1994, a murder was committed in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. In this true-crime story told completely through song, a tight-knit Jewish community gathers to recount, remember, and reckon with the details of what happened in their town and to their town. Written with humor and chutzpah, this wholly original musical asks what it does to our souls when our leaders fall from grace.

This play was created during the Geffen Playhouse inaugural The Writers’ Room program, in which six Los Angeles playwrights develop new works with the support and guidance of the Geffen Playhouse artistic team.

Major support for this world premiere production provided by the Edgerton Foundation New Play Production Fund.

THE ENGAGEMENT PARTY (Gil Cates Theater)

WEST COAST PREMIERE

Written by Samuel Baum

Directed by Darko Tresnjak

November 10 – December 13, 2020

In this suspenseful contemporary drama, a young couple celebrates their engagement with an intimate gathering of family and friends. When a glass of wine is spilled, the night takes an unexpected turn, unleashing a spiraling sequence of events and revelations that will irrevocably change their lives.

Directed by Tony Award winner Darko Tresnjak, *The Engagement Party's* original production at Hartford Stage in 2019 was heralded as a "masterful piece of playwriting" and a "theatrical experience worth its 85 minutes in gold."

THE INHERITANCE (Gil Cates Theater)

WEST COAST PREMIERE

Written by Matthew Lopez

Inspired by E. M. Forster's *Howards End*

January 12 – March 14, 2021

Eric and Toby are on the precipice of having it all: promising careers, tight-knit friends, an upcoming wedding, and a rent-controlled apartment in Manhattan. But when two strangers enter their lives—an older man and a younger one—their future suddenly becomes uncertain as they navigate the treacherous waters of modern gay life. Inspired by E. M. Forster's masterpiece *Howards End*, *The Inheritance* examines the debt we owe to our lost generation and whether we're living up to our promise to take care of our own.

In our 25th anniversary season, Geffen Playhouse welcomes back alum Matthew Lopez (*The Legend of Georgia McBride*, 2017) for a run of his celebrated two-part epic after its Olivier Award-winning London production and Broadway run.

SOFT TARGET (Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater)

WORLD PREMIERE

Written by Emily Kaczmarek

Directed by Jo Bonney

March 2 – April 11, 2021

Nine-year-old Amanda's room is her haven, and her beloved toys are her best friends and confidantes—or at least they used to be. Lately, something's gone dark inside Amanda—and her toys make it their mission to discover why. Highly visual and brilliantly written, *Soft Target* invites its audience into the wild imagination and theatricality of childhood—even as it asks us to grapple with some of the most painful questions of our time.

Produced with the generous support of Fran & Barry Weissler.

Major support for this world premiere production provided by the Edgerton Foundation New Play Production Fund.

TO BE ANNOUNCED (Gil Cates Theater)

April 13 – May 16, 2021

MINDPLAY (Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater)

WORLD PREMIERE

Written by Vinny DePonto and Josh Koenigsberg

Directed by Andrew Neisler

Featuring Vinny DePonto

May 4 – June 13, 2021

A delightful head-trip, *Mindplay* will astound you with the art of mentalism. Drama Desk Award-nominated theater-maker Vinny DePonto escorts us on a jaw-dropping journey through the dark corners of our minds. In the spirit of the Geffen's long tradition of magic comes an entirely new theatrical event in which your thoughts play a leading role.

TO BE ANNOUNCED (Gil Cates Theater)

Directed by Bryan Cranston

June 22, 2021 – July 25, 2021

The Geffen Playhouse 2020/2021 season is currently available by subscription only. For more information and to purchase a subscription, please call 310.208.2028. Single tickets for all 2020/2021 season productions will be available this summer at www.geffenplayhouse.org.

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 young people and the community at large in the arts. www.geffenplayhouse.org

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