

# GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

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### GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES WORLD PREMIERE OF LIVE, VIRTUAL AND INTERACTIVE THEATRICAL EXPERIENCE “THE PRESENT”

MARKS INAUGURAL FULL-LENGTH EFFORT FROM NEW *GEFFEN STAYHOUSE* INITIATIVE

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY MASTER ILLUSIONIST HELDER GUIMARÃES

DIRECTED BY ACADEMY AWARD NOMINEE FRANK MARSHALL

PREVIEWS BEGIN MAY 7 - OPENING NIGHT IS MAY 14

LOS ANGELES (April 22, 2020) – Geffen Playhouse today announced the world premiere of *The Present*, a live, virtual and interactive theatrical experience written and performed by master illusionist, storyteller and Geffen alum Helder Guimarães. Directed by Academy Award nominee Frank Marshall (*Jurassic World*, *Indiana Jones*, *Goonies*, *Back to the Future*), *The Present* marks the first full-length production to emerge from Geffen Playhouse’s new *Geffen Stayhouse* initiative.

*The Present* is inspired by Helder Guimarães’ own life experience with quarantine during childhood. Using his signature mind-bending illusions, Guimarães leads us through a funny, moving and ultimately illuminating story of lessons he learned when he least expected it.

*The Present* will take place virtually via a secure online platform with a maximum of 25 participants per show. Each participant will be mailed a sealed mystery package in advance, the contents of which will only be revealed during the course of each performance, as Guimarães’ story unfolds. In a unique twist, *The Present* will provide both a virtual and physical experience for the audience, as magic will also take place in their own hands, in their own home environment.

"The Geffen knows that theatre can survive—and flourish—even in the most challenging of times, and so we are proud to present *The Present*—our first full virtual production," said Geffen Playhouse Artistic Director Matt Shakman. "Led by the charismatic and brilliant Helder Guimarães, this a true play in every sense. A mysterious package arrives at your door. You pour a glass of wine, dim the lights, and settle into your favorite chair. Theatre is alive and you didn't have to leave your house. Join us for a funny, moving, mysterious interactive play brought to you in the comfort of your own home."

In characterizing *The Present* Guimarães said, "There is something fun about overcoming obstacles with creativity. While theater isn't happening in the room we usually physically share, it lives in the spectators' mind, in their emotions, and in their perceptions. That's what we want to connect with."

*The Present* marks the second collaborative effort between Guimarães and Frank Marshall, who first worked together on *Invisible Tango*, which made its world premiere May 7, 2019, as part of the Geffen Playhouse 2018/2019 season.

"In these extraordinary times, I'm very excited to be collaborating again with Helder and the Geffen to bring a new magical experience to the audience in an innovative way," said Marshall.

*Geffen Stayhouse* launched March 25, providing free, short-form original content from Geffen Playhouse alumni and others on a weekly basis, including Tony Award winner Jefferson Mays (*Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, A Gentlemen's Guide to Love and Murder*), Tony Award nominee Rory O'Malley (*Hamilton, The Book of Mormon*), Obie Award winner Lauren Patten (*Jagged Little Pill, Fun Home*), Emmy Award nominee Kathryn Hahn (*Transparent, Bad Moms*), Drama Desk Award winner Benjamin Scheuer (*The Lion*), Dixie Longate (*Dixie's Tupperware Party*) and others.

Previews for *The Present* begin Thursday, May 7. Opening night is Thursday, May 14.

## **THE PRESENT**

Written and Performed by **Helder Guimarães**

Directed by **Frank Marshall**

**Previews:** Thursday, May 7 – Wednesday, May 13, 2020

**Opening Night:** Thursday, May 14, 2020

**Closing Night:** Sunday, June 7, 2020

## **PRODUCTION TEAM**

Production Design Consultant **François-Pierre Couture**

Costume Design Consultant **E.B. Brooks**

Lighting Design Consultant **Daniel Ionazzi**

Dramaturg **Amy Levinson**

## **PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE**

Monday	No performance
Tuesday – Friday	8:00 p.m. PT
Saturday	3:00 and 8:00 p.m. PT
Sunday	2:00 and 7:00 p.m. PT

Running time: 45 minutes with no intermission.

## **TICKET INFORMATION**

Tickets are currently priced at \$60.00 - \$75.00 per household. Available by phone at 310.208.2028 or online at [www.geffenplayhouse.org](http://www.geffenplayhouse.org). Fees may apply. **Given the unique nature and logistics of this production, tickets must be purchased at least seven days in advance of any given performance date.**

## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

### **Helder Guimarães (Writer and Performer)**

Helder Guimarães is Portuguese-born performer, magician and creator of theatrical and immersive magic experiences. Recognized by The New York Times as "a master of illusions," he is a World-

Champion of Magic, two-time Parlor Magician of the Year by the Academy of Magical Arts and Ascanio Prize winner. Known for his unique approach to sleight-of-hand magic, storytelling and performance, Guimarães' work has been featured at the Kennedy Center, TED Talks and Off-Broadway productions. His previous creations include *Nothing to Hide*, directed by Neil Patrick Harris, the Los Angeles sold-out *Borrowed Time* experience and the Off-Broadway theatrical *Verso*, directed by Rodrigo Santos. Using his knowledge of deception, Guimarães has consulted for major entertainment entities like NBC, Disney and Warner. As an example, he personally trained Oscar-winning actresses Sandra Bullock and Cate Blanchett for their roles in the movie *Ocean's 8*. Most recently, Guimarães' one-man show *Invisible Tango* made its world premiere in Los Angeles at the Geffen Playhouse. In their review of the production, The Los Angeles Times described him as "either a magician posing as a philosopher or a philosopher posing as a magician. But however you classify him, he's excellent company in his new show, *Invisible Tango*." Guimarães currently resides in Los Angeles.

### **Frank Marshall (Director)**

Marshall is one of the premier film producers in the entertainment industry, with a career marked by classics like the *Indiana Jones* series, *Back to the Future*, *Seabiscuit*, *The Color Purple*, and the *Jason Bourne* series. Marshall's work has earned him five Academy Award nominations for titles as diverse as *The Sixth Sense* and *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*. In November 2018, he and wife Kathleen Kennedy received the Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award, an honor presented to creative producers "whose body of work reflects a consistently high quality of motion picture production." In addition to his prolific producing career, Marshall is also an acclaimed director, having helmed *Arachnophobia*, *Eight Below*, *Alive*, and several documentaries, including the award-winning ESPN 30 for 30, *Right to Play*. An amateur magician since he was ten, he is currently directing *How Can You Mend a Broken Heart*, a documentary about the Bee Gees, and producing *Jurassic World: Dominion* on film and *Diana: A True Musical Story*, on Broadway.

### **OPENING NIGHT SPONSORS**

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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](http://www.geffenplayhouse.org)

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### **MEDIA CONTACT**

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