

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

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CAST ANNOUNCED FOR “A WICKED SOUL IN CHERRY HILL” WORLD PREMIERE AT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

WORDS & MUSIC BY MATT SCHATZ AND DIRECTED BY MIKE DONAHUE

FEATURING JAHBRIL COOK, ZEHRA FAZAL, NICHOLAS MONGIARDO-COOPER, RIVKAH REYES,
DANNY ROTHMAN AND JILL SOBULE

PREVIEWS BEGIN JUNE 21 - OPENING NIGHT IS JUNE 30

LOS ANGELES (May 24, 2022) – Geffen Playhouse today announced the full cast for its world premiere production of *A Wicked Soul in Cherry Hill*, written by **Matt Schatz** (*The Door You Never Saw Before*, *The Burdens*) and directed by **Mike Donahue** (*The Legend of Georgia McBride*, *Little Shop of Horrors*).

The cast includes **Jahbril Cook** (*Nature Whatever*, *The Snowy Day and Other Stories*) as The Son and others; **Zehra Fazal** (*FOUND: A New Musical*, *Bars and Measures*) as The Lady on the Radio and others; **Nicholas Mongiardo-Cooper** (*Rothschild & Sons*, *Lonesome Traveler*) as The Junior Rabbi, The Private Investigator and others; **Rivkah Reyes** (*Spamilton*, *American Idiot*) as The Daughter, The Reporter and others; **Danny Rothman** (*Sweeney Todd*, *The Loophole*) as The Rabbi and others; and **Jill Sobule** (*The Jill & Julia Show*, *The Simpsons*) as The Cantor, The Rabbi’s Wife and others.

Previews for *A Wicked Soul in Cherry Hill* begin Tuesday, June 21, in the Gil Cates Theater at Geffen Playhouse. Opening night is Thursday, June 30.

On a November night in 1994, a murder was committed in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. In this poignant 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—and to—their town. This wholly original production asks what it does to our souls when our leaders fall from grace.

A Wicked Soul in Cherry Hill 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. Recipient of the Edgerton Foundation New Play Award. Major support for this world premiere production provided by the Edgerton Foundation New Play Production Fund.

A WICKED SOUL IN CHERRY HILL

Words & Music by **Matt Schatz**
Directed by **Mike Donahue**

Previews: Tuesday, June 21 – Wednesday, June 29, 2022

Opening Night: Thursday, June 30, 2022

Closing Night: Sunday, July 24, 2022

CAST

Jahbril Cook as The Son and others

Zehra Fazal as The Lady on the Radio and others

Nicholas Mongiardo-Cooper as The Junior Rabbi, The Private Investigator and others

Rivkah Reyes as The Daughter, The Reporter and others

Danny Rothman as The Rabbi and others

Jill Sobule as The Cantor, The Rabbi's Wife and others

PRODUCTION TEAM

Scenic Designer **Alexander Woodward**

Original Scenic Design by **Dane Laffrey**

Costume Designer **Raquel Barreto**

Lighting Designer **Josh Epstein**

Sound Designer **Veronika Vorel**

Musical Direction, Arrangements and Orchestrations by **Scott Anthony**

Choreographer **Kathryn Burns**

Production Stage Manager **Jill Gold**

Assistant Stage Managers **Alyssa Escalante** and **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 - \$129.00. Available by phone at 310.208.2028 or online at www.geffenplayhouse.org. Fees may apply.

Not recommended to those under the age of 14. Children under 6 years of age will not be admitted.

Proof of vaccination and masks are required – additional policy details can be found at <https://www.geffenplayhouse.org/plan/reopening/>.

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

COLLEGE AUDIENCES

Through a variety of events and other opportunities, 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

Matt Schatz (Playwright & Composer)

Matt Schatz is a writer and composer. His plays and musicals include *A Wicked Soul in Cherry Hill* (Edgerton New Play Award), *An Untitled New Play By Justin Timberlake* (ASCAP Foundation Harold Arlen Musical Theatre Award), *The Door You Never Saw Before* (Geffen Stayhouse), *The Burdens* (O'Neill Conference, Riva Shiner Comedy Award, Broadway World Pittsburgh's Script of the Decade), *No One Sings Like You Anymore* (Seattle Rep Commission), *Georama* (5 New York Music Festival Awards, including outstanding lyrics), *Dunkfest '88* (Jonathan Larson Award Finalist), *Love Trapezoid* (Kleban Prize for Musical Theatre), *The Tallest Building in the World* (EST/Sloan Commission), and others. His work has been developed and produced by theaters and universities all over the country. Matt has had television and film projects sold to and developed for Fox, USA, Fullscreen, TBS, Warner Bros, EOne, and others. Matt wrote the songs for Season 3 of the Spotify/Gimlet podcast series *The Two Princes* and was a writer on Netflix Animation's upcoming *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* adaptation. Matt has recently worked on projects with Michael Arndt, Lynn Nottage, and Taika Waititi. Currently, he is a story consultant for Lucasfilm Ltd. Matt is from New Jersey and lives in Los Angeles with his wife and their daughter.

Mike Donahue (Director)

NYC credits include: world premieres of Ana Nogueira's *Which Way to the Stage* (MCC Theater); Matthew López's *The Legend of Georgia McBride* (MCC Theater, Geffen Playhouse, and Denver Center for the Performing Arts); Jen Silverman's *Collective Rage* (MCC Theater, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company) and *Phoebe in Winter* (Clubbed Thumb); Jordan Seavey's *Homos, Or Everyone In America* (Labyrinth Theater Company); and Ethan Lipton's *Red-Handed Otter* (The Playwrights Realm). Regionally: *Little Shop of Horrors* with Mj Rodriguez, George Salazar, and Amber Riley (Pasadena Playhouse), and world premieres of Jen Silverman's *The Roommate* (Humana Festival, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Long Wharf Theatre); Rachel Bonds' *Curve of Departure* (South Coast Repertory, Studio Theatre) and *The Wolfe Twins* (Studio Theatre); Kate Cortesi's *Love* (Marin Theatre Company); Matthew López's *Zoey's Perfect Wedding* and Lauren Feldman's *Grace, or The Art of Climbing* (Denver Center for the Performing Arts); and Shostakovich's *Moscow, Cheryomushki* with a new libretto by Meg Miroshnik (Chicago Opera Theatre). Upcoming: Euripides' *Bakkhai*, in a new version by Anne Carson with music by Diana Oh (Baltimore Center Stage); and the Los Angeles premiere of Matthew López's *The Inheritance* (Geffen Playhouse). Mike's first short film, *Troy*, will premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival this June.

Jahbril Cook (The Son and others)

Jahbril is an actor, writer, baker, and musician based in Los Angeles. Jahbril received his B.A. in Drama & Theatre Arts from Columbia University, where he wrote and presented an original musical thesis project, and starred in many on-campus productions, including *Godspell*, [title of show], *Bingo*, and *The 121st Annual Varsity Show*. Theatre: *Nature Whatever* (New Georges), *The Snowy Day and Other Stories* (off-Broadway). Film: *A Week Away* (Netflix), *Spin* (Disney Channel Original). Jahbril is thrilled to be making his LA theatre debut at Geffen Playhouse! Big thanks to his manager Rikki, his agent Matt, and his supportive friends and family. @jahbrilcook

Zehra Fazal (The Lady on the Radio and others)

Zehra Fazal is thrilled to make her Geffen debut! Favorite theatre credits include *FOUND: A New Musical* (IAMA Theatre Company), *Bars and Measures* (Boston Court), *The Engine of Our Ruin* (Victory Theatre Center), *Opera Meets Improv* (LA Opera/The Groundlings), *Othello* (Folger Shakespeare Library), and her award-winning solo show *Headscarf and the Angry Bitch* (FringeNYC/Cherry Lane Theatre). Zehra provides the voice of numerous characters for Disney, Nickelodeon, Warner Bros, DreamWorks, Comedy Central, Netflix, and Cartoon Network. Notable animation credits include: *BoJack Horseman*, *Amphibia*, *Blade Runner: Black Lotus*, *Voltron: Legendary Defender*, *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power*, *Big Hero 6: The Series*, *Craig of the Creek*, *Young Justice*, and *Batman* villain Talia al Ghul. Zehra has also lent her voice to several video game franchises, including *Apex Legends*, *Halo*, *Borderlands*, *Call of Duty*, *Destiny*, and *League of Legends*. On camera, Fazal has appeared in *How to Get Away with Murder*, *Magnum P.I.*, *Lucifer*, *Mr. Mayor*, and is the voice of the spaceship in *Lost in Space*. Zehra is represented by A3 Artists Agency and NOVA Talent Group. IG & Twitter: @ZehraFazal

Nicholas Mongiardo-Cooper (The Junior Rabbi, The Private Investigator and others)

Nicholas Mongiardo-Cooper has appeared off-Broadway in *Rothschild & Sons*, *Lonesome Traveler*, and *Julius Caesar*. Regional appearances include *Once* (Geva Theatre Center); *Rounding Third* (Florida Studio Theatre); *House of Dreams* (San Diego Repertory Theatre); *Matilda* (5 Star Theatricals); *Sweeney Todd*, *Once*, *Shakespeare in Love* (South Coast Repertory); *King Lear* (Rubicon Theatre Company); *Harvey*, *End of the Rainbow* (Laguna Playhouse); *Our Lady of 121st Street* (Redhouse Performing Arts Center); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Santa Barbara City College); *Side Show* (La Jolla Playhouse); *Of Mice and Men*, *Side by Side by Sondheim*, *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Great Nome Gold Rush*, *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*, *Words by Ira Gershwin* (North Coast Repertory Theatre). His TV credits include *Fuller House* (Netflix, Warner Bros.), *Superstore* (NBCUniversal), *Casual* (Hulu), *The Connors* (ABC), *The Fairly Oddparents: Fairly Odder* (Paramount+), and *Danger Force* (Nickelodeon). He attended Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School for Performing Arts and received a B.F.A. from NYU. He is a proud Equity member. nicholasmongiardocooper.com

Rivkah Reyes (The Daughter, The Reporter and others)

Rivkah Reyes (they/she) is a queer Filipina-Jewish actor, writer, musician, and host of the *Where Are We Now?* podcast. In 2003, Riv made their film debut in the beloved *School of Rock* and has been an active force in Chicago, New York and L.A.'s theatre and comedy scenes ever since. Theatre: *Spamilton* (Center Theatre Group), *American Idiot* (The Hypocrites) and *A Doll's House, Part 2* (Indiana Repertory Theater). TV/Film: *Easy* (Netflix), *A Picture Perfect Holiday* (Lifetime), and *Bring the Funny* (NBC). Rivkah is represented by Framework Entertainment and DDO Artists Agency. You can follow Riv on TikTok and IG @rivkah.reyes! Special thanks to Allan, Brando, Kevin, Jess, and the family—blood and chosen.

Danny Rothman (The Rabbi and others)

Geffen debut! Off-Broadway: *Sweeney Todd* (Barrow Street Theatre), *The Loophole* (The Public Theater), *Easter Mysteries* (Theatre at St. Clements). Other West Coast: *Rags* (TheatreWorks Silicon Valley), *Ace* (The Old Globe), *Ragtime* (Portland Center Stage). As well as roles around the country at Tony Award-winning venues such as Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Goodspeed Musicals, Signature Theatre, The Denver Center for the Performing Arts, as well as with The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, York Theatre Company, North Shore Music Theatre, Fulton Theatre, Maine State Music Theatre, Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma, Stages St. Louis, Stamford Center for the Arts, The Muny, Starlight Theatre, Pittsburgh CLO, Hangar Theatre, and Theatre Aspen, to name a few. Concerts: Lincoln Center's David Geffen Hall. TV upcoming: *Jigsaw* (Netflix) and *Let the Right One In* (Showtime). B.F.A. Carnegie Mellon University. Love to my amazing wife Stacie for all her support, mom, dad, family, and friends. www.dannyrothman.com Instagram: @dannyrothman

Jill Sobule (The Cantor, The Rabbi's Wife and others)

Jill Sobule has recorded 12 albums, composed music for TV and films and has two top 20 hits—“Supermodel” from the film *Clueless*, and “I Kissed a Girl” (the 1995 original), the first openly queer-themed song to break the Billboard Top 20. Jill has performed with Cyndi Lauper, Billy Bragg, X, Neil Young, Joe Jackson, Tom Morello, and Warren Zevon. She toured with *SNL* alum Julia Sweeney in *The Jill & Julia Show*, and played herself in *The Simpsons*, the high point of her career/life. She will be performing her own autobiographical musical, *F*ck 7th Grade*, this fall at the Wild Project in NYC. Jill has been tear gassed—twice. “Jill Sobule can claim her place among the stellar New York singer-songwriters of the last decade. Topical, funny, and more than a little poignant... grown-up music for an adolescent age.” — *New York Times* pop music critic Jon Pareless.

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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 Adi Greenberg. Proudly associated with UCLA, the Geffen welcomes an audience of more than 130,000 each year, and 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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