

# GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

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### CAST ANNOUNCED FOR GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE WEST COAST PREMIERE OF “THE ENGAGEMENT PARTY”

FEATURING RICHARD BEKINS, BELLA HEATHCOTE, BRIAN LEE HUYNH, MARK JACOBSON,  
WENDIE MALICK, BRIAN PATRICK MURPHY, JONAH PLATT & LAUREN WORSHAM

WRITTEN BY SAMUEL BAUM AND DIRECTED BY DARKO TRESNJAK

PREVIEWS BEGIN OCTOBER 4 - OPENING NIGHT IS OCTOBER 12

LOS ANGELES (August 22, 2023) – Geffen Playhouse today announced the full cast for its West Coast premiere of *The Engagement Party*, written by **Samuel Baum** (*The Wizard of Lies*, *Lie to Me*) and directed by Tony Award winner **Darko Tresnjak** (*A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder*, *Anastasia*).

The cast includes **Richard Bekins** (*Happy New Year*, *Love! Valour! Compassion!*) as Conrad; **Bella Heathcote** (*Pieces of Her*, *The Man in the High Castle*) as Katherine; **Brian Lee Huynh** (*War Horse*, *A Clockwork Orange*) as Kai; **Mark Jacobson** (*57 Seconds*, *The 12 Days of Christmas Eve*) as Alan; **Wendie Malick** (*Just Shoot Me*, *Dream On*) as Gail; **Brian Patrick Murphy** (*Billions*, *Vinyl*) as Johnny; **Jonah Platt** (*Wicked*, *A Walk on the Moon*) as Josh; and **Lauren Worsham** (*A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder*, *Sunday in the Park with George*) as Haley.

Previews for *The Engagement Party* begin Wednesday, October 4, 2023, in the Gil Cates Theater at Geffen Playhouse. Opening night is Thursday, October 12, 2023.

The champagne is on ice, the hors d'oeuvres are perfectly arranged, and the table is exquisitely set. At a swank Park Avenue apartment, a young couple is celebrating 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.

*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 ENGAGEMENT PARTY

Written by **Samuel Baum**

Directed by **Darko Tresnjak**

**Previews:** October 4, 2023 – October 11, 2023

**Opening Night:** October 12, 2023

**Closing Night:** November 5, 2023

**CAST**

**Richard Bekins** as Conrad  
**Bella Heathcote** as Katherine  
**Brian Lee Huynh** as Kai  
**Mark Jacobson** as Alan  
**Wendie Malick** as Gail  
**Brian Patrick Murphy** as Johnny  
**Jonah Platt** as Josh  
**Lauren Worsham** as Haley

**PRODUCTION TEAM**

Scenic Designer **Alexander Dodge**  
Costume Designer **Joshua Pearson**  
Lighting Designer **Matthew Richards**  
Original Music & Sound Design by **Jane Shaw**  
Intimacy Director **Sasha Nicolle Smith**  
Production Stage Manager **Edward Khris Fernandez**  
Assistant Stage Manager **Mikayla Bettner**  
Casting Director **Phyllis Schuringa, CSA**

**PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE**

Monday, Tuesday	No performance
Wednesday – 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 - \$129.00. Available by phone at 310.208.2028 or online at [www.geffenplayhouse.org](http://www.geffenplayhouse.org). Fees may apply.

All Geffen Playhouse productions are intended for an adult audience; children under ten years of age will not be admitted.

Rush tickets for each day's performance are made available to the general public one hour 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](http://www.geffenplayhouse.org/college).

**ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

### **Samuel Baum (Playwright)**

Samuel Baum is a playwright, screenwriter, and producer. He is thrilled to be collaborating with Geffen Playhouse on the West Coast premiere of his play, *The Engagement Party*, directed by Tony Award winner Darko Tresnjak. The play was originally produced at Hartford Stage, where it received four Critics Circle Awards, an Edgerton Foundation New Play Award, and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Laurents/Hatcher Foundation. As a screenwriter, Baum was nominated for a Writers Guild of America Award for the Emmy-nominated HBO Film *The Wizard of Lies*, starring Robert DeNiro. Previously, Baum created and executive produced the Fox television drama *Lie to Me*, which ran for three seasons. He also co-created and executive produced the ABC series *The Evidence*, as well as television pilots for Amazon, Netflix, Showtime, and CBS. He is currently an executive producer of the upcoming NBC series *The Irrational*, inspired by the work of behavioral psychologist Dan Ariely. Baum has been a speaker at the WGA Showrunner Training Program, The Smithsonian Institute, and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. He has served as a mentor for Young Storytellers in Los Angeles and Screenbuzz in Cairo, where he fostered emerging voices from the Middle East. Originally from New York, Baum is a graduate of Harvard College.

### **Darko Tresnjak (Director)**

Darko Tresnjak directed the world premiere of *The Engagement Party* at Hartford Stage, where he was the artistic director from 2011-2019. Favorite productions: *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* (Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, LA Drama Critics Circle, SD Critics Circle, CT Critics Circle awards), *The Killer* with Michael Shannon at Theatre for a New Audience (2015 Obie Award), *The Ghost of Versailles* with Patti LuPone and Patricia Racette at Los Angeles Opera, *Rear Window* with Kevin Bacon at Hartford Stage, *The Merchant of Venice* with Kate Forbes and F. Murray Abraham at TFANA and the RSC, *Titus Andronicus* with John Vickery and Dion Johnstone at the Stratford Festival, *Cyrano de Bergerac* with Patrick Page at The Old Globe, *The Skin of Our Teeth* with Marian Seldes at Williamstown Theatre Festival, and *Anastasia* (Broadway, National Tour, Spain, Germany, Netherlands, Brazil, Japan, Mexico). Upcoming productions: *Russian Troll Farm* by Sarah Gancher, *Noir* by Kyle Jarrow and Duncan Sheik, and *Der Zwerg* at Los Angeles Opera with Rodrick Dixon. He wrote the book and the lyrics of a new musical comedy, *Ask for the Moon*, with the composer Oran Eldor. You can find out more about Darko, his work, and his French bulldogs, Hector Berlioz and Bruce, on Instagram @darkotresnjak.

### **Richard Bekins (Conrad)**

Broadway: *Happy New Year*, *Love! Valour! Compassion!*, *Tartuffe*. Off-Broadway: *Too Much Sun*, *Somewhere Fun* (Vineyard Theatre); *The Maddening Truth* (Keen Company); *The Normal Heart* (The Public Theater); among others. Regional, partial list: *The Engagement Party* (Hartford Stage, directed by Darko Tresnjak), *Other Desert Cities* (Alley Theatre), *Glengarry Glen Ross* (Actors Theatre of Louisville), *A Number* (The Wilma Theatre), *A Question of Mercy* (Long Wharf Theatre and Bush Theatre, London), *Heartbreak House* (The Huntington Theatre, directed by Darko Tresnjak). Film: *Armageddon Time*, *The Sixth Reel*, *Vampires vs. the Bronx*, *You're Not Alone*, *Unintended*, *Limitless*, *Young Adult*, *Julie & Julia*, *United 93*, among others. Television: *The Girls on the Bus*, *The Other Two*, *Bull*, *The Sinner*, *Mr. Robot*, *Designated Survivor*, *Madoff*, *Younger*, *The Path*, *Madam Secretary*, *The Blacklist*, *Elementary*, *Boardwalk Empire*, *Daredevil*, *Person of Interest*, *The Good Wife*, *Law & Order*, among others.

### **Bella Heathcote (Katherine)**

Bella Heathcote played the lead role of "Andy Oliver" in the original series *Pieces of Her* opposite Toni Collette (Netflix). She recently wrapped production on Australian series *C\*A\*U\*G\*H\*T* and *Scrublands* as well as two independent films *Roof* and *The Moogai*. Additionally, Heathcote performed as "Lisa" in the Acting for a Cause reading of *The Room Returns!* opposite Bob Odenkirk which will be released later

this year. She starred alongside Emily Mortimer as “Sam” in *Relic* which received rave reviews at its premiere at Sundance 2020. Previously, Bella starred as “Susan Parsons” in drama series *Strange Angel* (CBS All Access) with Jack Reynor and as “Nicole Dörmer” in the acclaimed original drama series *The Man in the High Castle* (Amazon). Other credits include Nicolas Winding Refn’s *The Neon Demon*, Tim Burton’s *Dark Shadows*, and Angela Robinson’s *Professor Marston and the Wonder Women*.  
@bellaheathcote

### **Brian Lee Huynh (Kai)**

He has appeared in *War Horse* (Lincoln Center Theater) on Broadway. His off-Broadway credits include *Romeo and Juliet* (National Asian American Theatre Company), *A Clockwork Orange* (New World Stages), and *The Light Years* (Playwrights Horizons). Regional credits include *Pride and Prejudice* (Long Wharf Theatre), *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* (The Huntington), *Vietgone* (Denver Center for the Performing Arts), *The 39 Steps* (Triad Stage), *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure* (Portland Stage), *Auctioning the Ainsleys* and *A Single Shard* (People’s Light). Television credits include appearances on *Instinct*, *Gotham*, *Madam Secretary*, and *Elementary*. He holds a B.F.A. from Ithaca College and M.F.A. from The Old Globe/University of San Diego.

### **Mark Jacobson (Alan)**

Mark is honored to play in the Geffen sandbox for the first time with this incredible team. He has appeared off-Broadway and regionally, including at TheatreSquared, The Phoenix Theatre Company, Rubicon Theatre Company, Garry Marshall Theatre, A Noise Within, Rogue Machine Theatre, Kingsmen Shakespeare Company, and Coeurage Ensemble. Recent Film/TV: *57 Seconds* (opposite Morgan Freeman and Josh Hutcherson), *The 12 Days of Christmas Eve* (opposite Kelsey Grammer), *Welcome to Chippendales*, *FBI*, *This Is Us*, *Good Trouble*, *9-1-1*, *The Rookie*, *NCIS: Los Angeles*, *The Resident*, *Speechless*, *How to Get Away with Murder*, and Netflix’s upcoming action comedy, *Obliterated*. Mark has lent his voice to Marvel/Insomniac’s upcoming *Spider-Man 2*, Nickelodeon’s *I Am Frankie*, *Final Fantasy VII Reunion*, *Genshin Impact*, *Tower of Fantasy*, *NBA 2K21–2K23*, and Amazon’s *New World*. An actor, improviser and coach, Mark had the privilege of teaching the U.S. Army’s first on-camera acting class in Kaiserslautern, Germany. Training: B.A. USC School of Dramatic Arts, British American Drama Academy, The Groundlings, UCB. Thanks to Darko, Samuel, and Phyllis for the opportunity and Victoria and Jada for filling his heart and bucket. @sirmarkofj

### **Wendie Malick (Gail)**

Wendie Malick last appeared at the Geffen in *The Underpants*. Other theater credits include *Big Night* (Kirk Douglas Theatre), *Closure* (New Jersey Repertory Company), *Blithe Spirit* and *What is the Cause of Thunder?* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), and off-Broadway in *North Shore Fish* and *Burleigh Grimes*. With over 100 television credits, Malick is a Golden Globe and two-time Emmy nominee for her role as Nina Van Horn on *Just Shoot Me*. She won four CableACE Awards on HBO’s *Dream On*, and she and her castmates on *Hot in Cleveland* earned a People’s Choice Award and a Screen Actors Guild Award nomination. Animated shows: *BoJack Horseman* (Annie Award nomination) and *The Owl House* (Peabody Award). She has recurring roles on *Shrinking*, *Physical*, *Billions*, and *Young Sheldon*. Favorite film roles: *7000 Miles*, *Adventureland*, *The American President*, *Waiting...*, *Fifty-Nothing*, *Confessions of a Shopaholic*, and *Racing Stripes*. Malick is on the Environmental Media Association Board, and the Advisory Board of Return to Freedom, a wild horse sanctuary.

### **Brian Patrick Murphy (Johnny)**

Select Theatre Credits – Regional: *The Engagement Party*, Hartford Stage (directed by Darko Tresnjak), Connecticut Critics Circle nomination for Best Supporting Actor. Off-Broadway: *The Clearing* (directed by Josh Hecht), “Buckingham” in *Wars of the Roses* (directed by Austin Pendleton), *Hamlet* (“Laertes”), *The*

*Two Gentlemen of Verona* (“Proteus”), *Burn This* (“Pale”), *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea* (“Danny”).  
TV/Film: *The Changeling* (Apple TV+), *Vinyl* (HBO pilot, directed by Martin Scorsese), *Billions* (Showtime),  
*Seven Seconds* (Netflix), *Blue Bloods* (CBS), *Law & Order: SVU* (NBC). He is also a former Golden Gloves  
boxer trained by two-time World Champion Joey Gamache. @bpm32

### **Jonah Platt (Josh)**

Jonah Platt grew up a mile from this theater and is thrilled to be making his Geffen debut. Select stage:  
*Wicked* (Broadway), *A Walk on the Moon* (A.C.T. and George Street Playhouse), *The Heart of Rock & Roll:*  
*The Huey Lewis Musical* (2023 Workshop), *Floyd Collins* (Ovation Award for Best Musical), *Hair*  
(Hollywood Bowl). Film: *Being the Ricardos*, *I'll Be Watching*, *Menorah in the Middle*, *The List*, *Spread*.  
TV: *Uncoupled*, *The Office*, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *Parenthood*, *Country Comfort*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*  
*Live in Concert*, *A Million Little Things*. Select Voice: *Trolls: The Beat Goes On!*, *Harry Potter: Magic*  
*Awakened*, *Call of Duty: Black Ops Cold War*, *Monster Wheelies*, *Harley Quinn*. Jonah is a highly sought-  
after singer, musician, emcee, speaker, and arranger, who has performed at major venues and events all  
over the country. He recently sold an original TV series to Apple TV+, and is currently penning the lyrics  
and co-writing the music for the musical stage adaptation of bestselling classic *The Giver*. @jonahplatt

### **Lauren Worsham (Haley)**

Lauren Worsham was nominated for a Tony and won Drama Desk and Theatre World Awards for the  
role of “Phoebe” in *A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder* and is thrilled to be reunited with Darko on  
this production! Other favorites include New York City Center Encores! productions of *Sunday in the*  
*Park with George*, *Call Me Madam*, *Big River*, and *Where’s Charley?*; “Lisa” in *Dog Days* at Montclair  
Peak Performances and LA Opera; “Flora” in *Turn of the Screw* at New York City Opera; and  
“Cunegonde” in New York City Opera’s *Candide*. She performs frequently in concert including at the  
Getty Villa, Carnegie Hall, 54 Below, Joe’s Pub, and Merkin Hall. Lauren recurred on multiple episodes of  
The CW’s *Valor* and she is a founding member of the indie rock band Sky-Pony. Love always to my  
family, you carry my heart. [www.laurenworsham.com](http://www.laurenworsham.com)

### **OPENING NIGHT SPONSORS**

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Geffen Playhouse continues its longstanding relationships with City National Bank (CNB) and UCLA  
Health as supporters of the 2023/2024 season.

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

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