

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

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ACADEMY AWARD AND PEABODY AWARD WINNER TARELL ALVIN MCCRANEY NAMED ARTISTIC DIRECTOR FOR GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

LOS ANGELES (September 12, 2023) – Academy Award (*Moonlight*) and Peabody Award (*David Makes Man*) winner and Tony Award (*Choir Boy*) nominee Tarell Alvin McCraney has been named artistic director for Geffen Playhouse, the non-profit theater’s Board of Directors announced today. Effective immediately, McCraney joins the Geffen staff to begin the work of building the 2024/2025 season, reporting to the theater’s Board of Directors.

In his new role, McCraney will program new works along with re-envisioned classics with a focus on innovative storytelling, community engagement and audience experience. McCraney will set the strategic artistic course for the Geffen’s Gil Cates and Audrey Skirball Kenis Theaters, as well as lead the artistic and production teams.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Board Chair Adi Greenberg said, “We are thrilled to have Tarell Alvin McCraney join the Geffen Playhouse family as our new artistic director. As an award-winning writer, producer and educator, he is a force of creativity and uniquely suited to lead our theater’s artistic vision. Together with Gil Cates, Jr., they are a powerhouse team who will embrace the evolution taking place in the industry, make bold, innovative choices and ensure Geffen Playhouse is well-positioned for the future.”

“I am delighted to welcome and partner with Tarell,” said Geffen Playhouse Executive Director/CEO Gil Cates, Jr. “From *Choir Boy* to the Cast Iron residency, and now as our new artistic director, Tarell has come full circle with the Geffen and we couldn’t be more excited. First and foremost, he is an exceptional artist and storyteller, and a true visionary with extraordinary ideas for where we can go as a theater, as a home for artists and as part of the cultural landscape in Los Angeles.”

McCraney’s official relationship with Geffen Playhouse began in 2014 when his highly acclaimed play *Choir Boy* made its West Coast premiere at the Geffen’s Gil Cates Theater, directed by Trip Cullman and starring Jeremy Pope. In February 2020, he was part of the new Geffen Playhouse artist residency announced with Cast Iron Entertainment, a cohort of artists also including Sterling K. Brown, Glenn Davis, Brian Tyree Henry, Jon Michael Hill and André Holland.

Commented McCraney, “It’s an honor to take on the mantle of artistic leadership at Geffen Playhouse. My connection to the Geffen began with an introduction via Lower Depths Theater Ensemble in 2012 and continued through a production of *Choir Boy*, and into a residency with Cast Iron Entertainment. I see my role as continuing a legacy of exceptional artistry, reinvesting in the Geffen's unique capability to nurture and support artists, build upon collaborative partnerships including with UCLA, and reach

audiences that we share a community with across Los Angeles. I am excited to foster intimate innovation in performance, digging deep into our collective need for live connection here at Geffen Playhouse.”

Tarell Alvin McCraney is an award-winning writer, producer, and educator: A proud, third generation Miamian, best known for his acclaimed trilogy, *The Brother/Sister Plays*. His script *In Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue* is the basis for the Oscar-winning film *Moonlight* directed by Barry Jenkins, for which McCraney and Jenkins also won a Best Adapted Screenplay Oscar. He is an ensemble member at Steppenwolf Theatre and a member of Teo Castellanos D-Projects in Miami, a graduate of New World School of the Arts, The Theatre School at DePaul University, and the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale. He received an honorary doctorate from the University of Warwick. He was recently Co-Chair of the Playwriting Program at the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale, as well as Playwright-in-Residence at Yale Repertory Theatre, where he fostered a workshop program at the David Geffen School of Drama. He is an associate at the Royal Shakespeare Company, London, and a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (Writers Branch).

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/CEO 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

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