

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

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FULL CAST ANNOUNCED FOR
“MASTER HAROLD”...AND THE BOYS AT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

FEATURING BEN BEATTY, NYASHA HATENDI AND JOHN KANI

WRITTEN BY ATHOL FUGARD
AND DIRECTED BY EMILY MANN & TARELL ALVIN McCRANEY

PREVIEWS BEGIN APRIL 8 - OPENING NIGHT IS APRIL 16

LOS ANGELES (January 27, 2026) – Geffen Playhouse today announced the full cast for its production of *“Master Harold”...and the Boys*, written by six-time Tony Award nominee and recipient of the 2011 Special Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Theatre, **Athol Fugard** (*The Island, A Lesson from Aloes*). The production is co-directed by Tony Award–nominated director and playwright **Emily Mann** (*Anna in the Tropics, A Streetcar Named Desire*), alongside Geffen Playhouse Artistic Director **Tarell Alvin McCraney**. Rehearsals begin Tuesday, March 3, 2026.

The cast includes **Ben Beatty** (*Hail, Caesar!, UFO*) as Hally; **Nyasha Hatendi** (*King Charles III, The Seven Dials Mystery*) as Willie; and **John Kani** (*Black Panther, The Lion King*) as Sam. John Kani previously appeared in the 1984 filmed adaptation of *“Master Harold”...and the Boys* in the role of Willie, alongside Matthew Broderick and Zakes Mokae.

Regarding Kani's return to the Geffen Playhouse production of *“Master Harold”...and the Boys* after more than four decades, now in the role of Sam, director Emily Mann said, "John Kani and I share a long relationship with each other and Athol Fugard. The idea of John's lived wisdom and age coming to bear on the role of Sam seemed so right to me. When I wrote to John to ask him to play Sam, he immediately answered yes. He, like I, was looking for a way to honor Athol the year of his passing, and *“Master Harold”... and the Boys* at the Geffen under Tarell's artistic leadership seemed the perfect opportunity to honor him together."

Previews for *“Master Harold”...and the Boys* begin Wednesday, April 8, 2026, in the Gil Cates Theater at Geffen Playhouse. Opening night is Thursday, April 16, 2026.

Step into the charged atmosphere of a 1950s South African tea shop in Athol Fugard's *“Master Harold”...and the Boys*, a gripping, deeply personal drama that unflinchingly confronts the realities of race, power, and betrayal. On a rainy afternoon, Hally, a white teenager, passes the time with Sam and Willie, two Black waiters who have helped raise him by filling the gaps of a broken home with warmth,

wisdom, and laughter. But as the day unfolds, playful memories give way to painful truths, and a single moment threatens to shatter the fragile bond between them forever.

Geffen Playhouse is supported, in part, by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Department of Arts and Culture.

Geffen Playhouse is proud to welcome members of local arts, non-profit, and service organizations during our Community Meetup Nights. These special evenings offer patrons the chance to connect with community partners and discover more about their missions and values. A full list of participating organizations can be found [here](#).

“MASTER HAROLD” ...AND THE BOYS

Written by Athol Fugard

Directed by Emily Mann & Tarell Alvin McCraney

Previews: April 8, 2026 – April 15, 2026

Opening Night: April 16, 2026

Closing Night: May 10, 2026

CAST

Ben Beatty as Hally

Nyasha Hatendi as Willie

John Kani as Sam

PRODUCTION TEAM

Scenic Designer Beowulf Boritt

Costume Designer Susan Hilferty

Lighting Designers Adam Honoré & Spencer Doughtie

Sound Design by UptownWorks–Noel Nichols, Bailey Trierweiler & Daniela Hart

Associate Director Rodney Gardiner

Dialect Coach Jane Guyer Fujita

Dramaturg Amy Levinson

Production Stage Manager Sam Allen

Assistant Stage Manager Colleen Danaher

Casting Director Phyllis Schuringa, CSA

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Monday, Tuesday No performance

Wednesday, Thursday 7:30 p.m.

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 \$36.00 - \$139.00. Available by phone at 310.208.2028 or online at www.geffenplayhouse.org. Fees may apply.

All Geffen Playhouse productions are intended for an adult audience; children under 10 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. \$40.00 General/\$20.00 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

Athol Fugard (Playwright)

Athol Fugard (1932-2025) was an internationally acclaimed South African playwright whose best-known work dealt with the political and social upheaval of the apartheid system in South Africa. He was educated at the University of Cape Town. His plays include *"Master Harold" ...and the Boys*, *The Captain's Tiger*, *Valley Song*, *My Children! My Africa!*, *A Lesson from Aloes*, *The Island*, and the award-winning *Sizwe Banzi is Dead*. Mr. Fugard received six honorary degrees from esteemed colleges and was an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

Emily Mann (Director)

Emily Mann is a Tony Award–nominated playwright and director and a Tony Award–winning Artistic Director, leading McCarter Theatre Center for 30 years where she directed 50 productions, wrote 15 plays and adaptations, and premiered the work of Athol Fugard, Tarell Alvin McCraney, Edward Albee, Danai Gurira, Nilo Cruz, and many others. Her plays seen on and Off-Broadway, regionally, and internationally include: *Having Our Say*; *Execution of Justice*; *Annula, An Autobiography*; *Still Life*; *Betsey Brown*, an R&B musical; *Hoodwinked*; *Greensboro: A Requiem*; *Meshugah*; *Mrs. Packard*; *Gloria: A Life*; and *The Pianist*. On Broadway, she directed her plays *Having Our Say* and *Execution of Justice*, Nilo Cruz's *Anna in the Tropics*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. She is currently in development for her new play *Code Red*. Awards include: Peabody, Guggenheim Fellowship, seven Obies, Hull-Warriner, NAACP Image, Margo Jones; and the Lilly, Gordon Davidson, and Dramatist Guild awards for Lifetime Achievement. She's been inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Theater Hall of Fame.

Tarell Alvin McCraney (Director)

Tarell Alvin McCraney is Artistic Director of Geffen Playhouse. In this role, he is responsible for identifying, developing, and programming new works and re-envisioned classics. He sets the strategic artistic course for the Geffen's Gil Cates and Audrey Skirball Kenis Theaters. McCraney is an award-winning writer, producer, and educator, 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 Playwriting at the David Geffen School of Drama, where he remains on faculty. He is an associate at the Royal Shakespeare Company, London, and a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (Writers Branch).

Ben Beatty (Hally)

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Ben Beatty is honored to be making his Geffen Playhouse debut in *“Master Harold”...and the Boys*. Film credits include *Hail, Caesar!* (dir. Joel and Ethan Coen) and *UFO* (dir. Ryan Eslinger). He is an alumnus of Northwestern University, where he studied Theater and Middle Eastern History. Love and gratitude to his family and his team at CAA.

Nyasha Hatendi (Willie)

Born in Washington D.C. and raised in Zimbabwe, Nyasha studied Ancient History and Classical Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh before training at Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) in London from 2001-2004. His breakout role on the London stage was in the European Premiere of *The Brothers Size* at the Young Vic written by Tarell Alvin McCraney, which went on to receive the Laurence Olivier Award nomination for Best Play. He made his West End debut in the Olivier Award-winning *King Charles III* transferred from the Almeida Theatre, directed by Rupert Goold. The play finished its run at the Music Box Theatre on Broadway, receiving 6 Tony Award nominations, including Best Play. His U.S. breakout was as “Leon” in Hulu’s first Golden Globe-nominated show *Casual* directed by Jason Reitman. Currently, Nyasha is starring as series regular in Netflix’s Agatha Christie adaptation of *The Seven Dials Mystery*, opposite Martin Freeman, and in *Debriefing the President* (TNT), opposite Joel Kinnaman. Nyasha wrote and directed *Sacrilege: Curse of the Mbirwi*, an African-set cinematic podcast starring Caleb McLaughlin (*Stranger Things*) which was nominated for Audible’s Best Horror of The Year 2025 and is currently in development as a feature. He is also currently in production on *Sacrilege* Season 2.

John Kani (Sam)

John Kani is a South African actor, playwright, director, and cultural activist. He received the 1975 Tony Award for his performances in *The Island* and *Sizwe Banzi Is Dead*, which he co-wrote with Athol Fugard and Winston Ntshona. A longtime member of Johannesburg’s Market Theatre, his stage credits include *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Othello*, *Miss Julie*, *My Children! My Africa!* (Vita Award), and *Nothing But the Truth* (Fleur du Cap Award for Best Actor and Best New South African Play). He wrote and starred in *Kunene* and the King for the Royal Shakespeare Company, receiving the Pragnell Shakespeare Birthday Award. His film and television work includes *The Grass Is Singing*, *“Master Harold”...and the Boys*, *An African Dream*, *Saturday Night at the Palace*, *Sarafina!*, *The Ghost and the Darkness*, *Final Solution*, *The Lion King* (2019) and *Mufasa: The Lion King* as “Rafiki,” and portraying “King T’Chaka” in *Captain America: Civil War* and *Black Panther*. In 2005, he was awarded South Africa’s Order of Ikhamanga in Silver. He is the founder of the John Kani Performing Arts Academy. In 2023, he was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE). In 2025, the World Wildlife Fund awarded him the Living Planet Award for his work in nature conservation and climate change.

2025/2026 SEASON SPONSOR

S. Mark Taper Foundation

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., Artistic Director Tarell Alvin McCraney and Board Chair Mary Ann Cloyd. 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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