

PERI GILPIN AND FRENCH STEWART JOIN MATTHEW MODINE TO SAVE THE ALPACAS

*Tony Award Winning Director John Rando's Cast Also Includes
Reggie De Leon, Mark Espinoza, Mark Fite and Edward Padilla*

Opening Night Wed, Sept 16

LOS ANGELES, Sept 16, 2009 — With **Matthew Modine** playing a role he is unequivocally perfect for (a fictionalized version of himself), one can imagine the casting challenge for the rest of the characters in the Geffen Playhouse's upcoming production of *Matthew Modine Saves the Alpacas*. But – barring having identical names to the characters they play – the Geffen Playhouse's cast includes a troupe of comedians befitting their satirical roles. **Peri Gilpin**, best known for her stint as Roz on NBC's *Frasier*, takes on the role of Whimberly North – Matthew's piquant publicist; and **French Stewart**, best known as Harry Solomon on *Third Rock from the Sun*, plays dual roles as Whimberly's ubiquitous assistant Jeffrey, as well as the bungling United Nations Ambassador Perrier du Pierre Jouet. Other cast members include **Reggie De Leon, Mark Damon Espinoza, Mark Fite** and **Edward Padilla** playing a range of roles from a Chimborrazzi tribesman to Matthew Modine's Conscience.

"To have Matthew Modine, one of the greatest (and dare I say, underappreciated) actors of our generation, surrounded by comic geniuses like Peri Gilpin and French Stewart, is the most phenomenal gift a playwright could ever receive," said playwright Blair Singer. "I do not deserve a cast this exceptional; that said, I'm not giving them back."

Written by **Blair Singer** and directed by **John Rando**, this rollicking comedy tells the plight of Matthew Modine – a celebrity desperately in need of getting back in the limelight. He needs a Cause. Luckily (for him), there is a rare breed of Chimborazzi Alpacas on the verge of extinction in the mountains of Ecuador. So Matthew jets down south to resurrect the alpacas – and, more importantly, his career. After all, desperate times call for desperate celebrities. A world premiere production, *Matthew Modine Saves the Alpacas* is a satire in which no one is left unscathed.

Matthew Modine Saves the Alpacas runs through Oct 18 on the Geffen Playhouse's main stage.

MATTHEW MODINE SAVES THE ALPACAS (World Premiere)

Written by Blair Singer

Directed by John Rando

Opening Night: Wednesday, September 16

Closing Night: Sunday, October 18

Cast

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Reggie De Leon | Angel |
| Mark Damon Espinoza | Santos Panchos |
| Mark Fite | Matthew Modine's Conscience / Shaman / Charlie Rose / Puppeteer |
| Peri Gilpin | Whimberly North |
| Matthew Modine | Matthew Modine |
| Edward Padilla | Abraham |
| French Stewart | Jeffrey / Pierre Perrier du Jouet |
| Lauren Lovett | Puppeteer |
| Kevin Noonchester | Puppeteer |

Production Credits

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|-------------------|-----------------|
| Set Designer | Beowulf Boritt |
| Costume Designer | Robert Blackman |
| Lighting Designer | Jeff Croiter |
| Sound Designer | Jon Gottlieb |

Performance Schedule

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|------------------|-----------------|
| Monday | No performances |
| Tuesday – Friday | 8:00pm |
| Saturday | 3:00pm; 8:00pm |
| Sunday | 2:00pm; 7:00pm |

Ticket Info

Tickets (\$45 to \$75) are on sale now at the Geffen Playhouse box office, online at GeffenPlayhouse.com, via credit card phone order at (310) 208-5454, at all Ticketmaster outlets, or by calling Ticketmaster at (800) 745-3000. Student rush tickets are available one hour prior to curtain for \$15.

REGGIE DE LEON (Angel)

Favorite roles include Bun Foo in *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Sacramento Music Circus), LeFou in the west coast regional premiere of “*Disney’s Beauty and the Beast*” (California Theatre), Horton the Elephant in *Seussical* and Toad in *A Year with Frog and Toad* with MainStreet Theatre Company at the Lewis Family Playhouse, and Sancho in *Man of La Mancha* all over the southland. Film and TV credits include *Free Radio* (VH1), *My Own Worst Enemy* (NBC), *The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson* (CBS), national commercials, and the upcoming indie short *Hip Hop Head*. Reggie holds a BA from USC and an MA from Cal State LA.

MARK ESPINOZA (Santos Panchos)

Audiences may best remember Mark as Jesse from *90210*; or as Carlos, Kelly Bundy’s clueless boyfriend on *Married With Children*, but recently Mark has been seen as any number of cranky cops and blood-sucking priests. Credits include series regular, recurring characters and guest spots on episodic television; including most recently, *The Mentalist* and *Without A Trace*, as well as feature films. A variety of award-winning regional theaters across the country have also provided a place to play. The acclaimed Goodman Theatre in Chicago, San Diego’s Old Globe and Portland Center Stage are among favorites. Webisodes include *Gemini Division* and the upcoming *Chapin Circle*. On occasion you’ll hear him warble a tune in a variety of cabaret venues, international stages, Irish bars and shower stalls...the latter reserved for private audiences.

MARK FITE (Matthew Modine’s Conscience, Shaman, Charlie Rose)

Mark Fite has been very active in live theatre, improv, and comedy in Los Angeles for over twenty years. He has worked with several reputable theater companies such as Theater of Note, The Actors’ Gang, and The Padua Hills Playwrights’ Festival. Original plays and comedy shows include *Wife Swappers*, *Klub*, *Shatter n’ Wade*, *The Chemistry of Change*, *Bob’s Office Party*, *Clowntown City Limits*, *The Rudy Casoni Show*, and *Two Headed Dog*. He has performed at The Comedy Store, The Improv, Upright Citizen’s Brigade, Dixon Place (NYC), The U.S. Comedy Arts Festival in Aspen, The Comedy Festival in Las Vegas, and The San Francisco Comedy Festival. Film and television credits include *Happy Endings*, *Fight Club*, *Off The Lip*, *Independence Day*, *Godzilla*, *Rules of Engagement*, *Private Practice*, multiple episodes of *Sponge Bob Squarepants* and over thirty commercials. Mark received a B.A. in Communications and Theatre Arts from the University of Iowa.

PERI GILPIN (Whimberly North)

Gilpin starred as 'Roz Doyle', the producer of 'Dr. Frasier Crane's' talk radio show, on NBC's long-running, Emmy Award-winning show, *Frasier*. Recent works include Hallmark's Hall of Fame Movie *A Story of Forgiveness* and the Lifetime Television original movie *For the Love of a Child*. Other recent works include voicing the role of Professor Kate Corrigan in the Hellboy animated movies. Some of Gilpin's film credits include roles in the following: *How to Kill Your Neighbor's Dog*; the digitally-animated feature film *Final Fantasy: The Spirit Within*; the independent film *Spring Forward*; and Neil Simon's Emmy-nominated film for Showtime, *Laughter of the 23rd Floor*. Gilpin makes her much-anticipated return to the small screen this summer in ABC Family's *Make it or Break It* in which she will play Kim Keeler. On stage, spent four consecutive summers in Williamstown where she appeared in productions of *The Crucible*, *Hawthorne Country* and *Peer Gynt*, and at Massachusetts' Stage West Theater where she appeared in productions of *Guys and Dolls* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. On the Los Angeles stage, Gilpin appeared in *The Maderati* at the Tiffany Theater while also serving as Associate Producer. Gilpin also performed in the Ensemble Theater Production of *Women of Manhattan*.

LAUREN LOVETT (Puppeteer)

Lauren is thrilled to be a part of *Matthew Modine Saves the Alpacas*! Lauren has appeared in many plays across the country, the most recent being *Antony and Cleopatra* (Cleopatra) at The Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, and *Rabbit Hole* (Becca) at IRT. In the Los Angeles area she has appeared in *Therese Raquin* (Therese) at ensemble Theatre; *Spin* (Sally), *Theatre 40*; and *iWitness* (Margaret u/s), at the Mark Taper Forum; Off Broadway; *Merchant of Venice* (Portia u/s), Public Theater; *Perfect Crime* (Margaret u/s), Duffy Theater. Television; ER, Days Of Our Lives, and Guiding Light. She is a graduate of the Juilliard Drama Division.

MATTHEW MODINE (Matthew Modine)

Matthew Modine has worked with many of the most highly regarded directors in the industry, including Oliver Stone, Sir Alan Parker, Stanley Kubrick, Robert Altman, Alan J. Pakula, John Schlesinger, Tony Richardson, Robert Falls, Sir Peter Hall, Abel Ferrara, Spike Lee, Tom DiCillo, Mike Figgis, Jonathan Demme and John Sayles. A partial list of his films includes *Birdy*, *Married to the Mob*, *Vision Quest*, *Full Metal Jacket*, *Gross Anatomy*, *The Browning Version*, *Pacific Heights*, *Any Given Sunday*, *Memphis Belle* and *Shortcuts*. Matthew is the recipient of a Golden Globe Award, Venice Film Festival Volpi Cup and Golden Lion for best actor. He's also received Golden Globe and Emmy Award nominations for *What the Deaf Man Heard* and the Emmy Award winning *And the Band Played On*. Recent stage appearances include a new theatrical adaptation of Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* at Hartford Stage and Arthur Miller's *Resurrection Blues* directed by Robert Altman at The Old Vic in London. He also worked with Arthur Miller in *Finishing the Picture* directed by Robert Falls at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago. As a director, Matthew has helmed several distinguished short films, each of which has played in film festivals worldwide including the prestigious Museum of Modern Art's New Directors/New Films (NYC). He also directed a theatrical production of *12 Angry Men* starring F. Murray Abraham, Wallace Shawn and Seymour Cassel.

KEVIN NOONCHESTER (Puppeteer)

Kevin Noonchester most recently played the role of Marlin in Disney's *Finding Nemo: The Musical* and prior to that was in the Las Vegas company of *Avenue Q*. Also as a puppet performer, Kevin has done commercials for Sony PSP and spots currently airing for Jitterbug cellphones. Kevin's dream is to one day work with the Henson company. Theater credits include the East Coast Tour of *Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber's Music of the Night*, Mordred in *Camelot* for Fullerton CLO where he also played Armand St. Just in *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. He also starred as Frankie in the CLO of South Bay Cities' Hermosa Beach Playhouse production of *Forever Plaid* alongside Original Plaid, Stan Chandler. Other favorite roles include Joseph in *Joseph... Dreamcoat*, Finch in *How To Succeed...*, Dickon in *The Secret Garden* and the title role in *Pippin* directed by Ovation Award winner, Nick DeGruccio. Being partially of Peruvian descent and having seen alpacas up close in their native land as a child, Kevin is excited to "represent" in his Geffen Playhouse debut.

EDWARD PADILLA (Abraham)

Edward Padilla is former Artistic Director for Casa 0101 Theater in Boyle Heights (June 2006 to March 2009). He has worked on stage, film and television for more than 20 years. Stage credits include numerous productions with Bilingual Foundation of the Arts, Sinergia, Blank Theater Company, Ethical Arts Company, among others. He has done workshop productions of *Sister Act* (the musical) for Pasadena Playhouse, and *Zorro* (the musical) for Zorro Productions (LA, SF, NY). In film, he appeared in *Spider-Man 3* (2007), opposite Brad Pitt in *Mr. & Mrs. Smith* (2005), and with Richard Gere in *Mr. Jones* (1992). His TV credits include appearances on *Southland*, *General Hospital*, *Dirt*, *The Shield*, *Windfall*, *Bones*, *King of Queens*, *Drew Carey Show* (voice only), *Los Beltran* and more. He received his B.A. in Theater from the USC School of Theater and won the David Dukes Scholarship for Acting in 2004. He studied with the

British American Drama Academy at Oxford University. He directed Teatro Izcalli at the San Diego Lyceum in *Anthology* (2009) and *Juan More Beer* (2008). At Casa 0101, he has produced more than 20 shows and events, and directed *Trio Los Machos*, *Soledad*, *Split Second*, and more.

JOHN RANDO (Director)

John Rando made his Broadway debut directing Neil Simon's *The Dinner Party*, starring Henry Winkler and John Ritter. Other Broadway credits include *Urinetown: The Musical* (2002 Tony Award, Best Director and Outer Critics Circle Award), the 2006 Tony nominated musical *The Wedding Singer*, the revival of Herb Gardner's *A Thousand Clowns* starring Tom Selleck, and *Dance of the Vampires*, starring Michael Crawford. For City Center's Encores! series, John recently directed the highly-acclaimed concert version of *On The Town*. Also for Encores! he directed Irving Berlin and Moss Hart's *Face The Music, Of Thee I Sing, The Pajama Game, Do Re Mi* and *Strike up the Band*. And for the Encores Summer Stars, he directed *Damn Yankees*. His current Off-Broadway production of *The Toxic Avenger Musical* won the 2009 Outer Critics Circle Award for best Off-Broadway Musical. Rando achieved prominence in New York as director of the David Ives' comedies: *Mere Mortals* (Primary Stages, John Houseman Theatre), *Polish Joke* (Manhattan Theatre Club) and *Ancient History/English Made Simple* (Primary Stages), as well as *Lives of the Saints* (Philadelphia Theatre Company and Berkshire Theatre Festival). Additional Off-Broadway credits include *Pig Farm* (The Roundabout Theatre), *Bright Ideas* (Manhattan Class Company), Peter Ackerman's *Things You Shouldn't Say Past Midnight* (Promenade Theatre) and *Comedy of Errors* (The Acting Company).

BLAIR SINGER (Playwright)

Blair Singer is both a playwright and a television writer. His play about adoption, *Placement*, recently concluded a successful run at The Black Dahlia Theater in Los Angeles, California, and was nominated for four 2006 LA Weekly Awards (receiving one award for Best Actor). His other plays and adaptations have been presented or read at Manhattan Theatre Club, Manhattan Class Company, The Guthrie Theater, Rattlestick Playwrights' Theater, The Cherry Lane Theatre, Jean Cocteau Repertory Theatre, The Vital Theater, The Chautauqua Theatre Institute, Pace University and The Juilliard School. Blair is a graduate of the Juilliard School of Drama.

FRENCH STEWART (Jeffrey / Perrier du Pierre Jouet)

French is best known for his role as Harry Solomon on the smash hit *Third Rock from the Sun*, which ran for six years on N.B.C. Other television credits include *Seinfeld*, *The Larry Sanders Show*, *Just Soot Me*, *Mad T.V.*, *The Drew Carey Show*, *Becker*, *News Radio*, *Pushing Daisies*, *C.S.I.*, *The Closer*, and the series regular role on *Misconceptions* with Jane Leeves. Film roles include *Stargate*, *Leaving Las Vegas*, *Dick*, *Love Stinks*, *Broken Arrow*, *The Flock*, and has received critical acclaim for his dark turn in the David Lynch produced *Surveillance*.

As an artist in residence for Justin Tanner at the legendary Cast Theatre for the past twenty years, French has originated roles in such favorites as *Zombie Attack* (which went on to become L.A.'s longest running play), *Party mix*, *Teen Girl*, *Happy Time X-Mas*, *Intervention*, *Space Therapy*, *Voice Lessons* (with Laurie Metcalf) and *Pot Mom* - for which he won an L.A. Weekly award. Other theater credits include *Little Egypt*, *The Nerd*, *Romeo and Juliet*, as well as *King Lear*, *Richard II* and *Comedy of Errors*, all For the Grove Shakespeare Festival.

ABOUT THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

The 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 musicals, the Geffen Playhouse 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 is helmed by Producing Director and President of the Board Gilbert Cates, Artistic Director Randall Arney, Managing Director Ken Novice and Chairman of the Board Frank Mancuso. Proudly associated with UCLA, the Geffen Playhouse welcomes an audience of more than 130,000 each year, and maintains an extensive education and outreach program, designed to engage young people and the community at large in the arts. For more information, please visit geffenplayhouse.com.

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