

“BACKSTAGE AT THE GEFFEN” RAISES MORE THAN HALF A MILLION DOLLARS

Sold Out Evening Honoring Barry Meyer and Kristin Chenoweth Shines a Spotlight on Importance of Live Arts

LOS ANGELES, March 23, 2010 — Monday night's star-studded event at the Geffen Playhouse and the pre-show dinner at W Los Angeles' NINETHIRTY restaurant netted over \$500,000 for the Geffen's Stage for Any Age education and outreach programs. The event, honoring Chairman and CEO of Warner Bros. **Barry Meyer** and Tony and Emmy award winning actress **Kristin Chenoweth**, was hosted by producing director **Gil Cates**, and featured artists of the stage and screen including **Christina Applegate, Hank Azaria, Beau Bridges, Alan Cumming, Sharon Lawrence, French Stewart, Dick Van Dyke** and **Rita Wilson**.

Performance Highlights:

- **Surprise!** – Chairman of the Board **Frank Mancuso** interrupted the evening's programming to bring the audience a very special announcement: the Geffen Playhouse board of directors voted unanimously to rename the theater's main stage the **Gil Cates** Theater at the Geffen Playhouse. Despite the fact that Mr. Cates referred to the surprise as a “mutiny” of his staff, he was ultimately proud and touched by the gesture.
- **The Good, The Bad and The Gleeful** – The incomparable **Clint Eastwood** reminisced about Warner Bros. Chairman and CEO **Barry Meyer**, cracking jokes about his seniority over the studio mogul before warmly presenting him with the Distinction in Service Award; Glee star Matthew Morrison jetted to the theater directly from the set to wax poetic on fellow musical theater maven **Kristin Chenoweth** before presenting her with the Distinction in Theater Award.
- **From Vantastix to Vivaldi** – Guests were treated to a few spectacular musical performances, including a surprise appearance by world-famous violinist **Sarah Chang** (a favorite of Mr. Meyer) who played a movement from Vivaldi's Four Seasons, a rousing performance by the quartet **Dick Van Dyke and the Vantastix** joined by Broadway star **Ashley Brown** and Tony Award winner **Alan Cumming** brought down the house (twice!) with his renditions of “Mein Herr” and “Taylor the Latte Boy.”
- **Hollywood Legends** – Both **Rita Wilson** and **Hank Azaria** alluded to industry legends in their tales. While Wilson chose to protect the guilty by not revealing the name of the producer in her comic casting couch story, Azaria not only named names, but proceeded to do a pitch-perfect

imitation of Woody Allen to drive his point home.

- **Party Animals** – Furry friends seemed to be a recurring theme in the evening with both **French Steward** and **Beau Bridges** sharing tales about making movies with animal co-stars. French seemed relieved to share that for once he wasn't the only one monkeying around on the set, and Beau Bridges' story gave a whole new meaning to man's best friend.
- **If the Shoe Fits ...** – The men may have focused on animals, but the women were all about fashion with **Sharon Lawrence** taking the audience on a tour (with props) of the various shoes of an actress' career, and **Christina Applegate** shared the details of a wardrobe malfunction story that left her nearly topless and the evening's honoree Kristin Chenoweth nearly bottomless during the same nationally televised show.

Host Committee Dinner Highlights (NINETHIRTY, W Los Angeles – Westwood):

- **Menu Worthy of Stars** – The gala host committee was treated to an intimate southern-themed dinner with the honorees at the W Los Angeles' restaurant NINETHIRTY where Executive Chef Monique King served spiced grilled chicken with mashed sweet potato, brussels sprouts, and molasses-whole grain mustard sauce.
- **Happy Reunions** – Honoree **Kristin Chenoweth** bounded across the W Los Angeles' lobby when she spotted longtime friend and fellow Tony Award winner **Alan Cumming** who flew in from NY to surprise her for the night. Also there to lend her support to the evening's honoree was friend **Kristen Bell**, who came to the evening as Ms. Chenoweth's guest.
- **Bald and Beautiful** – In his first public outing since starting to film the new Smurfs movie (in which he plays the villain Gargamel), **Hank Azaria** arrived for the evening's festivities with a newly shaved head, which quickly attracted attention – and countless rubs – from the rest of the evening's guests.

Overall Event Highlights:

- **Standing Room Only** – All parts of the “Backstage at the Geffen” evening, including the preshow host committee dinner at W Los Angeles' NINETHIRTY, were completely sold out, leaving the theater with a waitlist the night of the event and raising the theater more than \$500,000.
- **Arriving in Style** – Event attendees were greeted at the foot of the red carpet by Audi's sexy 2010 R8 with a V8 engine. The icy white luxury coupe, which retails at \$135,000 rivaled some of the red carpet fashion for style points that evening.
- **Silent Auction Makes Some Noise** – The evening's silent auction, which featured experience based items such as a weekend at Audi's racetrack in Sonoma and a chance to warm-up with the Clippers raised nearly \$35,000 for the evening, with the highest bidder nabbing an ultra-luxurious Polynesian vacation with a stay at Hilton Bora Bora Nui's Presidential Villa for about \$16,000. Continuing the theme of luxury getaways, the Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea and Four Seasons Resort Lanai at Manele Bay brought in an additional \$4000 to the evening.

- **Let Them Eat Cake** - In addition to tray passed treats including warm cookies accompanied by shots of milk, guests were treated to a dollhouse-like three-dimensional cake replica of the Geffen Playhouse donated by Montage Hotel's Executive Pastry Chef Richard Ruskell.

ABOUT BACKSTAGE AT THE GEFFEN GALA

The Geffen Playhouse's annual event raises funds for *Geffen's Stage for Any Age* programs, which help bring the excitement of live theater to 24,000 families and community members each year. The proceeds from *Backstage at the Geffen* help underwrite low ticket admissions to *Saturday Scene*, the popular theater performances for children; fully support the *Geffen School Tours Program* that takes theater to participating elementary and middle-schools that have little or no resources for the performing arts; and benefit CREATE (Community Representatives Engaged in Active Theater Education), a season-long, interactive exploration and analysis of live theater for community and social service groups, deemed a model program by the City of Los Angeles.

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 (Gil) 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.

ABOUT W LOS ANGELES - WESTWOOD

W Los Angeles-Westwood is a modern oasis – a contemporary chic retreat where design and comfort mix and mingle. Recently renewed by design guru Thom Filicia, W Los Angeles – Westwood invites you to indulge in their newly remodeled modern-bungalow suites, stylish poolside cabanas equipped with state-of-the-art IntelliChaise technology, and new outdoor restaurant The Backyard. Here, guests can dine at world-class restaurants, indulge in sexy, sophisticated nightlife, relax poolside in a private cabana, and be pampered at LA's most exclusive spa. Premiere attractions include LA's hottest bar-Whiskey Blue; critically acclaimed restaurant NINETHIRTY; new poolside bistro-The Backyard; NY's hottest spa-bliss; and a new state of the art workout facility. Centrally located and minutes from Beverly Hills/Rodeo Drive, Hollywood, and the coastline, W Los Angeles enjoys a prime location in beautiful Westwood Village offering easy access to key interest points such as UCLA, the Armand Hammer Museum and the Geffen Playhouse. Located on two acres of lush gardens with a heated pool and private furnished cabanas, W Los Angeles is a sanctuary within the city.

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