

NEWS RELEASE

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**ARIEL AWARD WINNER DEMIÁN BICHIR AND
OBIE AWARD WINNER SHANNON COCHRAN
JOIN FORCES IN *BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON***

***Acclaimed Mexican Actor Bichir Makes
US Theatrical Debut at the Geffen Playhouse***

Richard Seyd Directs New Work by Robert Schenkkan, Pulitzer Prize Winner for The Kentucky Cycle

Opens Wednesday, November 5 at 7:30pm

LOS ANGELES, August 28, 2008 — The Los Angeles premiere of Pulitzer Prize winner Robert Schenkkan's *By the Waters of Babylon* brings two award-winning, long-time theater actors to the Geffen stage for the first time: Demián Bichir and Shannon Cochran. Bichir, who is currently starring as Mary Louise-Parker's love interest on Showtime's *Weeds*, will play the role of Arturo, a Cuban immigrant who is hired to (coincidentally) weed the garden of unconventional Austin widow Catherine. Cochran, who will star as Catherine, is straight from Chicago where she starred in sold out performances of *The Lion in Winter* at the Writers Theatre.

While both actors will be making their Geffen Playhouse debut with this production, Bichir – who comes from one of the most well-known theatrical families in Mexico, will be making his US stage debut. On screen Bichir is already becoming familiar to American audiences; in addition to his role on *Weeds*, Bichir recently portrayed Fidel Castro in Steven Soderbergh's Che Guevara biopics *The Argentine* and *Guerilla*. In his home country, Bichir's film *Sexo, Pudor y Lágrimas* held the box office record for number one movie in Mexico for three years straight, and he has been awarded numerous honors ranging from the prestigious Ariel Award for Best Actor to a medal presented by the cultural commission in Mexico City for distinction in the arts.

Playing opposite Bichir, Cochran brings her own vast stage experience to the production. The actress, who has won accolades for her work on some of America's most prominent stages including Steppenwolf, The Goodman and South Coast Repertory, starred off-Broadway in *Bug*, for which she was the recipient of the 2004 Theatre World Award, an Obie Award and was nominated for a Drama Desk Award.

"With this play, I'm doing something very different – a two-character contemporary love story. This kind of piece can be very challenging but in Demián and Shannon we have found two extraordinary talents who will bring out all of the complexity and passion with which these characters struggle," said playwright Robert Schenkkan. "It's a great pleasure to bring this play to Los Angeles. Audiences here are so enthusiastic, sophisticated, and knowledgeable. With *Babylon*, I think they're in for a very special experience."

By the Waters of Babylon, directed by Old Vic and A.C.T. alum Richard Seyd, opens on the main stage of the Geffen Playhouse on Wednesday, November 5, 2008.

BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON

Previews: Tuesday, October 28 to Tuesday, November 4, 2008
Opening Night: Wednesday, November 5, 2008
Closing Night: Sunday, December 7, 2008

Written by Robert Schenkkan
Directed by Richard Seyd

Arturo Demián Bichir
Catherine Shannon Cochran

Scenic Design Michael Ganio
Lighting Design York Kennedy
Sound Design Jon Gottlieb
Costume Design Frances Kenny
Projection Design Jason H. Thompson
Production Stage Manager Mary Michele Miner
Assistant Stage Manager Elizabeth A. Brohm

DEMIÁN BICHIR (Arturo)

Bichir is one of the most well known and well respected actors in his home of Mexico and all of Latin America. In his native Mexico he has performed in plays such as in O'Neill's *Ah! Wilderness* directed by José Quintero (Best Newcomer, Mexican Association of Theater Press), Shakespeare's *Richard III* directed by Clifford Williams, Strindberg's *The Ghost Sonata* (Best Actor, Mexican Association of Theater Press), Neil Simon's *Broadway Bound* and the *Odd Couple*, Halliwell's *Little Malcolm and his Struggle Against the Eunuchs* (Best Actor, Mexican Association of Theater Press) and *Extras*, Sabina Berman's adaptation of Marie Jones' *Stones in His Pockets*. His films have been seen by more than twelve million people in Mexico alone without mentioning the vast audience in Spain and South America, and include *Rojo Amanecer* (winner of the Grand Jury Prize in the San Sebastian Film Festival), *Hasta Morir* (winner Ariel Award for Best Actor), *Sin Noticias de Dios* with Penélope Cruz, *Sex, Shame and Tears* (Ariel Best Actor nominee), *American Visa* (Best Foreign Film nominee at the Goyas in Spain), and *Enemigos Intimos* (soon to be released worldwide). Bichir received a special award at the 35th Chicago International Film Festival for three of his films. He's been invited to be part of the jury in three different film festivals; LALIFF, Málaga and Ibiza. He has received two tributes, one at the San Diego film festival, and recently received another with his brothers at the Monterrey film festival in México in 2008. In addition, Bichir received a medal for recognition in the arts from the cultural commission in Mexico City in 2007. Demián Bichir can currently be seen on the hit Showtime series *Weeds*, portraying Mary Louise Parker's new love interest. In addition, he also completed the pivotal role of Fidel Castro in the upcoming Che movies, *Guerilla* and *The Argentine* for director Steven Soderbergh which recently premiered at the Cannes Film Festival. Bichir currently resides in Los Angeles and Mexico.

SHANNON COCHRAN (Catherine)

Shannon Cochran most recently appeared in sold-out performances of *The Lion in Winter* at Writers Theatre, in the Chicagoland area. Prior to that, Shannon starred in the World Premiere of *System Wonderland* at South Coast Repertory. She appeared at the Long Wharf Theatre in *Private Lies*, after starring Off-Broadway in *Bug* at the Barrow Street Theatre. She was a recipient of the 2004 Theatre World Award, an Obie Award and was nominated for a Drama Desk Award. Prior to her New York debut, she had appeared in Tracy Lett's Lett's *Man From Nebraska*, directed by Anna B. Shapiro at Steppenwolf, which was voted one of TIME MAGAZINE'S TOP 10 plays of 2003. Other theatre performances include: *The Unmentionables* and *Stepping Out* at Steppenwolf, *Twelfth Night*, *Pal Joey* and *A Flea in Her Ear* at Chicago's Goodman Theatre, *Space* and *93 Acres of Barley* at The Mark Taper Forum and *Private Lies* and *The Father* at Writers Theatre. She has directed *Theresa Raquin* for greasyjoan and *Private Passage* for Odyssey Theatre. Shannon lists among her film and television credits: *The Ring*, *Law and Order: SVU*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *The Office*, *The Unit*, *Star Trek: Nemesis*, *Frasier*, *Gilmore Girls* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Shannon currently resides in Los Angeles.

ROBERT SCHENKKAN (Playwright)

Robert is the author of *The Kentucky Cycle*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, as well as an LA Critics Best Play Award, PEN WEST Award, Tony Nomination and Outer Critics Circle Nomination. He has written eight other full-length plays: *Lewis and Clark Reach The Euphrates*, *The Marriage of Miss Hollywood and King Neptune*, *The Devil And Daniel Webster*, *Handler*, *Heaven on Earth* (Julie Harris/Beverly Hills Theatre Guild Award), *Tachinoki*, *Final Passages*, and *The Dream Thief* and a collection of One Act plays, *Conversations with the Spanish Lady and other Plays*. He is currently at work on two musicals: *A Night At the Alhambra Café*, and *The Twelve*. Robert is the co-author of the film, *The Quiet American*. For television he wrote: *The Andromeda Strain* (A&E)

nominated for 6 Emmys including "Best Miniseries"; four episodes of the much anticipated Hanks/Spielberg/HBO miniseries, *The Pacific*; *Crazy Horse (TNT)*; and *Spartacus (USA)*. He is currently adapting *Anabasis* as a feature film for SONY. Other films in development include *Fall of Saigon (Fox)*, *Desmond Doss (Pandemonium Films)* and *Ugly Americans (2929)*. He is a member of the Dramatists Guild, PEN America, the Ensemble Studio Theatre, the Friar Society, and is an alumnus of New Dramatists. Robert is married to the writer, Maria Dahvana Headley, and lives in Seattle with his two children. www.robertschenkan.com

RICHARD SEYD (Director)

Most recently, Seyd directed *A Reckoning* with Jonathan Pryce in London at the SoHo Theatre. Previously, he directed *a Feast of Fools* (with Geoff Hoyle) at the Marines Memorial Theatre and previously at LaJolla Playhouse. He has also received Drama-Logue, Backstage West and Bay Area Critics Circle Awards for his direction of *Cloud Nine*, *About Face*, *Noises Off*, *Oleanna*, *A View From the Bridge*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. From 1992 - 1997 he served as Associate Artistic Director of the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco. For ACT, he directed *The Learned Ladies*, Dario Fo's *The Pope And The Witch*, *Pygmalion*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, *Oleanna*, *Rosencrantz And Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Othello*, *The Matchmaker*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. In the 1980's Seyd was Associate Producing Director of the Eureka Theatre, and directed many productions for the company including *Cloud Nine*, *The Wash*, *Threepenny Opera*, and Dario Fo's *About Face*. In addition, he is the director of an award-winning 35 mm short film entitled *Brass Tacks*. Seyd received his Theatre Training at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and acted with the affiliated Old Vic Company. He became a founding member of Stage Two - a company based on the works of Jersey Grotowski that was begun by James Roose-Evans. In 1968, he co-founded Red Ladder Theatre, Britain's first professional, political theatre collective, now 35 years old. He acted, directed and produced for the company for seven years. Upon moving to San Francisco in 1975, Richard taught at the Cultural Training Center. From here, directing became his main focus as detailed above. In the early 1990's, Richard returned to teaching for professional actors in the Bay Area and Los Angeles.

TICKET INFO

Tickets (\$40 to \$74) 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 (213) 365-3500.

Student rush tickets are available one hour prior to curtain for \$15.

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Tuesday through Thursday	7:30 p.m.
Fridays	8:00 p.m.
Saturdays	4:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.
Sundays	2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

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 Susan Barton 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.

EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

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