

## “BACKSTAGE AT THE GEFFEN” RAISES MORE THAN \$850,000 DOLLARS

### *Sold Out Evening Honoring Julie Andrews and CAA Shines a Spotlight on Arts Education*

**LOS ANGELES, May 3, 2011** — Last night’s star-studded event at the Geffen Playhouse and the pre-show dinner at W Los Angeles’ NINETHIRTY restaurant grossed over **\$850,000** for the Geffen’s Stage for Any Age education and outreach programs. The event, honoring entertainment icon **Julie Andrews** and powerhouse entertainment agency **Creative Artists Agency (CAA)**, was hosted by producing director **Gil Cates**, and featured personal “backstage” stories or songs by stars of the stage and screen including **Carol Burnett, Kristin Chenoweth, Dana Delany, Tom Hanks, Ricky Jay, Jane Kaczmarek, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Tracie Thoms and Bruce Vilanch.**

#### **Event Highlights:**

- **Legendary Tales** – Both **Rita Wilson** and **Julia Louis-Dreyfus** told stories of meeting their childhood icons (Monkee Michael Nesmith and Woody Allen, respectively). But neither turned out quite like the actresses had planned, leaving Ms. Wilson with an illegible autographed photo and Ms. Louis-Dreyfus mostly on the cutting room floor...
- **Music to Our Ears** – **Dana Delany** closed her story with a short serenade to Julie Andrews, Broadway star **Tracie Thoms** opened the show with a powerful rendition of “Maybe This Time,” up-and-coming opera star **Nathan Pacheco** took the audience’s breath away with his rendition of “Nessun Dorma,” and **Kristin Chenoweth** once again proved that a big voice can come from a tiny person with a stunning performance of “Til There Was You” ... that is until **Tom Hanks’** cell phone rang in the middle of the piano break (he fessed up when he went up to present CAA’s award.)
- **Hollywood Hijinks** – Malcolm in the Middle actress **Jane Kaczmarek** shared the lengths the production would go to hide her real-life pregnancy on-air – including cutting a whole in the bottom of a mattress so that when she layed down her stomach would appear flat; and veteran funny guy **Bruce Vilanch** took a jab at agents with a story about an agent so intent on a deal that he made one for a client who was deceased.
- **And the Award Goes To ... CAA** – **Tom Hanks** took the stage in a storm with a hilarious rant about his **CAA** agent **Richard Lovett**, a hilarious (and fairly accurate) impression of a phone call from Geffen **Playhouse Producing Director Gil Cates**, and after fessing up to the Kristin Chenoweth cell phone fiasco, Mr. Hanks gave a heartfelt presentation about the work CAA does both for the community and the Geffen Playhouse and welcomed managing partner **David O’Connor** onto the stage who accepted on behalf of the agency.
- **And the Award Goes To ... Julie Andrews** – **Carol Burnett** introduced her friend of more than 50 years with a story about the two of them getting all wrapped up in the presence of Lady Bird Johnson and when

**Julie Andrews** accepted the award, she matched her chum with an equally embarrassing tale. Both Ms. Andrews and Ms. Burnett were greeted with a resounding standing ovation adding minutes to the show's program.

- **Dining with the Stars** – W Los Angeles – Westwood and its restaurant NINETHIRTY hosted an exclusive pre-show reception and dinner by Executive Chef Dakota Weiss for honorees, special guests and the event's Host Committee that included the NINETHIRTY chopped salad, red wine braised short ribs or baked spaghetti squash lasagna and an array of mignardises for dessert.
- **Green with Envy** – One of the evening's presenting sponsors, **ClearEdge Power**, installed a brand new ClearEdge5 system at the Geffen Playhouse. This unique fuel cell appliance cleanly converts natural gas to electricity and heat. In short, ClearEdge Power helped make this Geffen Playhouse's event (as well as all of theater's future events) more environmentally responsible in an unprecedented way.
- **Arriving in Style** – Event attendees were greeted at the foot of the red carpet by Audi's sexy 2011 A7. The icy white luxury vehicle rivaled some of the red carpet fashion for style points that evening.
- **Silent, But Powerful**– The evening's silent auction, which featured donated items ranging from dream vacations to a Simpsons Fan Dream package, raised an additional \$50,000 for the evening.
- **Badge of Honor** – To show support for presenting sponsor City National Bank, Geffen Playhouse ushers donned the company's signature ladder pin in honor of the evening's partnership.

*Backstage at the Geffen* presenting sponsors included Audi of America, Los Angeles magazine, the W Los Angeles – Westwood and its acclaimed NINETHIRTY restaurant and Whiskey Blue bar, Clear Edge Power and City National Bank.

#### **ABOUT BACKSTAGE AT THE GEFFEN FUNDRAISER**

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 20,000 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**.

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