

# BROOKE SHIELDS AND RICHARD CHAMBERLAIN TAKE THE STAGE FOR WORLD PREMIERE ADAPTATION OF *THE EXORCIST*

*Director John Doyle's Full Cast Includes David Wilson Barnes, Stephen Bogardus, Richard Chamberlain, Manoel Felciano, Harry Groener, Tom Nelis, Roslyn Ruff, Brooke Shields and Emily Yetter*

*Opening Night July 11, 2012*

LOS ANGELES, May 17, 2012 — Stage and screen stars **Brooke Shields** and **Richard Chamberlain** take on the iconic roles of Chris MacNeil and Father Merrin in playwright **John Pielmeier's** world premiere of *The Exorcist* at the Geffen Playhouse. Helmed by acclaimed director **John Doyle**, who won a Tony Award for his striking reimagining of *Sweeney Todd*, this stage adaptation of **William Peter Blatty's** famous 1971 novel transforms the unsettling battles of good versus evil, faith versus fact and ego versus ethos into a uniquely theatrical experience as sophisticated as it is suspenseful.

Joining Shields and Chamberlain on stage is Broadway actor **David Wilson Barnes** (*The Lieutenant of Inishmore*) as the troubled young priest Father Damien Karras, Tony Award nominee and Geffen alum **Harry Groener** (*Equivocation*) as Chris' charismatic director Burke Dennings and UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television graduate **Emily Yetter** as young Regan MacNeil. The world premiere cast also includes **Stephen Bogardus**, **Manoel Felciano**, **Tom Nelis** and **Roslyn Ruff**. (Full biographical information on all cast members is available at the bottom of the release.)

"The story of the battle between faith and evil needed no spinning heads or green vomit," said playwright John Pielmeier, who is most well-known for the award-winning play/screenplay *Agnes of God* and the acclaimed miniseries *The Pillars of the Earth*. "The horror should unfold instead on a simple set with an incredible cast (which we absolutely have), and the central conflict between doubting Father Karras and the demon should be a series of debates, in which the young girl possessed is the least of the figures present."

*The Exorcist* begins in previews in the Gil Cates Theater at the Geffen Playhouse on July 3, 2012 and officially opens on **Wednesday, July 11, 2012**. Special events during the run of *The Exorcist* include the theater's Signature Series performances for no additional cost. These evenings include an intellectual, thought-provoking post show Q&A at Talk Back Tuesdays; a scintillating, one-of-a kind after-party at Girls Night Out; a cultural happy hour with Lounge Fridays and complimentary wine tastings during Wine Down Sundays. For more information, please view [www.geffenplayhouse.com/exorcistevents](http://www.geffenplayhouse.com/exorcistevents).

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**THE EXORCIST**

A play by John Pielmeier

Adapted from the novel by William Peter Blatty

Directed by John Doyle

Preview Performances: Tuesday, July 3 – Tuesday, July 10, 2012

**Opening Night:** Wednesday, July 11, 2012

**Closing Night:** Sunday, August 12, 2012

**Cast**

David Wilson Barnes	Father Damien Karras
Stephen Bogardus	Dr. Strong
Richard Chamberlain	Father Merrin
Manoel Felciano	Father Joe
Harry Groener	Burke Dennings
Tom Nelis	Dr. Klein
Roslyn Ruff	Carla
Brooke Shields	Chris MacNeil
Emily Yetter	Regan MacNeil

**Performance Schedule**

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

**Ticket Info**

Ticket prices currently range from \$37 to \$57 for preview performances and from \$67 to \$87 for the regular run.

Tickets are available in-person at the Geffen Playhouse box office, via phone at 310-208-5454 or online at

[www.geffenplayhouse.com](http://www.geffenplayhouse.com).

**Biographies****DAVID WILSON BARNES** (*Father Damien Karras*)

Broadway: *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*. Off-Broadway: *The Big Meal* (Playwright's Horizons), *All New People* (Second Stage), *Becky Shaw* (Second Stage/ATL, Drama League Honor), *Lady, St. Crispin's Day* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre), *Vengeance* (stageFARM), *The Attic* (The Play Company), *Men Without Shadows* (The Flea), *The Square* (Ma Yi Theatre Company/The Public Theatre), *Hamlet* (The Public Theatre), *Jail Bait* (The Cherry Lane). International: *Becky Shaw* (London, The Almeida, Evening Standard Nomination). Regional: The A.R.T., Actor's Theatre of Louisville, Geva Theatre, The City Theatre, The Long Wharf, Virginia Stage Company, The Cape Playhouse. Television: *A Gifted Man*, *30 Rock*, *The Eastmans* (pilot, series regular), *Sex and the City*, *Law & Order/C I/SVU*, *Conviction*, *All My Children*, *As The World Turns*. Film: *The Bourne Legacy*, *You Don't Know Jack*, *Love and Other Drugs*, *Company Men*, *Taking Woodstock*, *The Scene*, *Capote*, *How to Seduce Difficult Women*, *Ozark Savage*.

**STEPHEN BOGARDUS** (*Dr. Strong*)

Broadway: *White Christmas*, *Old Acquaintance*, *Man of La Mancha*, *James Joyce's, The Dead* (Helen Hayes nom.) *High Society*, *King David*, *Love! Valour! Compassion!* (Tony nom., Obie Award), *Falsettos*, *Grapes of Wrath*, *Les Miserables*, *West Side Story*. Off-Broadway: *The Pavillion* (Rattlestick Theatre), *Sweet Adeline* and *Allegro* (Encores!), *Love! Valour! Compassion!* (MTC), *March of the Falsettos* and *Falsettoland* (Playwrights Horizons), *Genesis* and *Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (NYSF), *No Way to Treat a Lady* (Hudson Guild), *Feathertop* (WPA), *In Trousers* (Promenade). Regional: *God of Carnage* (Huntington Theatre, Boston), *Samantha* (Goodspeed), *Some Men* (Philadelphia Theatre Co), *White Christmas* (Boston/Wang Theater), *A Little Night Music* (Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera), *M. Butterfly* (Arena Stage), *Elegies* (Canon Theatre), *Bells Are Ringing* (LA/Reprise!), *Show Boat* and *Chess* (Nat. tours), *City of Angels* (LA/Shubert), *80 Days* (La Jolla), *Progress* (Long Wharf). Film/Television: *Eleventh Hour*, *Life*, *Monk*, *Without A Trace*, *Criminal Intenet*, *Law & Order*, *SVU*, *Alchemy*, *Love! Valour! Compassion!*, *Ed* (recurring), *New York Undercover*.

**RICHARD CHAMBERLAIN** (*Father Merrin*)

Chamberlain's career began in the 1960s starring in the hit TV series *Doctor Kildare*. His career reached its zenith in the 1980s with: *Shogun*, *Wallenberg*, *The Thornbirds*, *The Bourne Identity*, *Dream West* and *Centennial*. Feature

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credits: *Petulia The Music Lovers*, *The Towering Inferno*, *The Last Wave*, *Lady Carolyn Lamb* and *The Madwoman of Chaillot*. MOW Credits: *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *The Man in the Iron Mask*, *The Lady's Not For Burning*, *The Last of the Bells*, *Aftermath* and *The Night of The Hunter*. Theater credits: *Hamlet* (Birmingham Rep.), *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Night of the Iguana* (Ahmanson Theatre), *Fathers and Sons* (Public Theatre), *Blithe Spirit*, *My Fair Lady* and *The Sound of Music* (Broadway), *Richard II* (Seattle Rep. and Ahmanson Theatre) and *Scrooge*. Recent Credits: *Leverage*, *Chuck*, *Brothers & Sisters*, *Meet the Hartmans* and *The Perfect Family*.

#### **MANOEL FELCIANO** (*Father Joe*)

Broadway: *Sweeney Todd* (dir. John Doyle, Tony nomination) *Brooklyn*, *JC Superstar*, *Cabaret*. Off-Broadway: *Trumpery* (Atlantic Theater Company), *Shockheaded Peter*, *Much Ado about Nothing* (NYSF/The Public Theater). Regional: *Scorched*, *Tales of the City*, *Clybourne Park*, *Round and Round the Garden*, John Doyle's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *November*, *At Home at the Zoo* and *Rock 'n' Roll*, (all A.C.T.) *Elektra* with Olympia Dukakis (Getty Villa), *Ragtime* (Kennedy Center), *The Three Sisters* (Williamstown), *I Just Stopped By to See the Man* (Old Globe), George in *Sunday in the Park with George* (dir. Jason Alexander). Film & TV: *Trauma*, *Life on Mars*, *The Unusuals*, *One Life to Live*, *All My Children*. Concerts: *The World of Nick Adams* (San Francisco Symphony) *Zipperz* (Oakland Symphony, Marin Symphony). Singer-songwriter, nascent playwright. master classes and directing at A.C.T., Boston University, U.C. Berkeley and the University of Florida. San Francisco native, B.A. Yale University, M.F.A. NYU.

#### **HARRY GROENER** (*Burke Dennings*)

Broadway credits include: *Crazy For You* (Tony nomination), *Oklahoma!* (Theatre World Award, Tony and Drama Desk Award nominations), *Cats* (Tony Award nomination), *Harrigan and Hart* with Mark Hamill (Drama Desk Award nomination), *Oh Brother!*, *Is There Life After High School?*, *Sleight Of Hand*, George in *Sunday In The Park With George*, *Imaginary Friends*, and, in 2006, Kind Arthur in *Spamalot*. Lincoln Center: *Twelve Dreams* by James Lapine. Off-Broadway: *Picasso At The Lapin Agile* by Steve Martin, and *If Love Were All* with Twiggy. Regional Theatre: *The March* at Steppenwolfe Theatre, Chicago. Geffen Playhouse: *Equivocation*. South Coast Repertory: *Putting It Together*. Reprise Theatre Company: *The Fantasticks*. Over 60 TV credits include: Frenchy in the *Untitled Dana Gould Pilot*, Clint in *How I Met Your Mother*, The Mayor in *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, Ralph in *Dear John*, and episodes of *Start Trek: The Next Generation*, *Voyager*, and *Enterprise*, *Medium*, *Bones*, *Las Vegas*, *CSI*, *Mad About You*, *Breaking Bad*, *The West Wing*. Film: *About Schmidt* with Jack Nicholson, *Road To Perdition* with Tom Hanks, *Amistad*, *Dance With Me* with Vanessa Williams, *Patch Adams* with Robin Williams, *Burbaker* with Robert Redford, *Manna From Heaven*, *Beautiful Loser* with Keith David, *Role Of A Lifetime* with Scott Bakula, *The Selling*, *The Happiest Day of His Life* and *The Day The World Ended*. He is an Associate Artist of the Globe Theatre in San Diego. He is also a proud member of The Antaeus Company in Los Angeles and is happily married to his wife of 30 years, Dawn Didawick.

#### **TOM NELIS** (*Dr.Klein*)

Broadway: *Enron*; *The Caine Mutiny Court Martial*, *Aida*. Off Broadway: *Road Show*, *Richard III*, *Henry IV*, the title role in *Henry VI*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *'Tis Pity She's A Whore* (Public Theater); *Doris to Darlene* (Playwrights Horizons); *Ipheginia 2.0*, *Hot 'N' Throbbin*, (Signature Theater); *The Merchant of Venice* (Theater for a New Audience, The Royal Shakespeare Company); Ahab in Laurie Anderson's *Songs and Stories from Moby Dick* (BAM/World Tour); Oscar Wilde in *Gross Indecencies* (Mineta Lane); *Hot Mouth* (Manhattan Theater Club); *Pearls for Pigs* (Richard Foreman/World Tour). Mr. Nelis is a founding member of SITI Co, Anne Bogart Artistic Director and as such has appeared in *Cafe Variations*, *American Document*, *Antigone*, *Under Construction*, *Score*, *bobraushenbergameica*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *War of the Worlds*, *Going, Going, Going*, *The Medium* and *Orestes*. Awards: OBIE (*The Medium*), Drama League Nomination (*Score*), San Diego Critics Ensemble Award, (*Wintertime*), Barrymore Nomination (*Candide*). MFA, UC San Diego.

#### **ROSLYN RUFF** (*Carla*)

Broadway: *Fences* (standby for Viola Davis), Off-Broadway: *Love, Loss and What I Wore*, *Macbeth* (TFNA), *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (NY & world premieres) and *Things of Dry Hours* (Drama League Nomination) at NYTW, *Seven Guitars* (Obie Award for Performance) at The Signature, *The Cherry Orchard* and *Macbeth* at the Classical Theatre of Harlem and *Pudd'nhead Wilson* and *Taming of the Shrew* with The Acting Co. National Tour. Regional includes: *Jitney* (Two River Theatre Co.), American premiere of Athol Fugard's *Coming Home* (Long Wharf/Berkeley Rep), *August Wilson's 20th Century Cycle* (Kennedy Center), *Gem of the Ocean* (McCarter/ACT), *Gee's Bend* at Alabama Shakespeare Festival, *King Lear* (Yale Rep) *In the Blood* (Barrymore Award-Outstanding Lead Actress) at the People's Light & Theatre Co. Also, Indiana Rep, Geva Theatre, Old Globe and Alliance Theatre. International: *Piano Lesson* BBC Radio, *Lady Macbeth* at the 2004 Bonn Biennale and Shakespeare Festival of Neuss; *Ismene* in *The Oedipus Plays* at the 2003 Athens Festival. Films include: *Detachment*, *The Help*, *Salt*, *Life During Wartime* and *Rachel Getting Married*. TV: Upcoming Showtime pilot *Masters of Sex* (guest star), *A Gifted Man*, *The Big C*, *The Good Wife*, *The Sopranos*. Training: MFA from the IATT at Harvard University.

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**BROOKE SHIELDS** (*Chris MacNeil*)

Shields has starred on Broadway as Ruth Sherwood in *Wonderful Town*, Roxie Hart in *Chicago*, Sally Bowles in *Cabaret* and Rizzo in *Grease*, for which she won a Theatre World Award. She was most recently seen as Morticia Addams alongside Roger Rees in the hit Broadway show, *The Addams Family* which was directed by Phelim McDermott. She starred opposite Raul Esparza in Alan Menken's *Leap Of Faith*, at the Ahmanson Theater in L.A. last year. Her work in Roger Kumble's *Girls Talk* won her rave reviews. Last year seen in her own show *In My Life* at Feinstein's at the Loews Regency. Shields has received numerous awards and accolades for her extensive repertoire of talents. She was nominated twice for a Golden Globe Award for Best Actress in a Television Series - Musical or Comedy and was also nominated for The American Comedy Awards' Funniest Female Performer in a Television Series Leading Role for her hit comedy show, *Suddenly Susan*. She is the recipient of five People's Choice Awards. A Princeton University honors graduate, Shields is the author of the *New York Times* bestseller, *Down Came the Rain: My Journey Through Postpartum Depression*. She has also penned two highly acclaimed children's books: *Welcome To Your World, Baby* and *It's the Best Day Ever Dad* for Harper Collins.

**EMILY YETTER** (*Regan MacNeil*)

Emily recently completed Theater Threesixty's National Tour of *Peter Pan* as the role of Tinker Bell. Prior to that, she performed at L.A.'s regional theaters such as The John Anson Ford Amphitheatre, LATC and the Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater at the Geffen Playhouse. In fringe theater, she co-wrote and choreographed *Word of Mouse* at Artworks Theater. Her film and TV credits include *Project X*, *Safehouse*, *Prom Queen*, *Goth Girl* and others. She trained at UCLA's School of Theater, Film and Television as well as The British American Dramatic Academy and is an award-winning Shakespearean performer.

**JOHN PIELMEIER** (Playwright)

John Pielmeier began his career with the play and movie *Agnes of God* and the television film *Choices of the Heart*. Most recently he has written and acted in the extremely successful television miniseries *The Pillars of the Earth* and written a stage adaptation *The Exorcist*. In between he has won the Humanitas Award (plus two nominations), five Writers' Guild Award nominations, a Gemini nomination, an Edgar Award, the Camie Award, a Christopher Award, and his projects have won a Gemini Award and have been nominated for the Emmy Award (three times) and the Golden Globe Award. He is married to writer Irene O'Garden. They live in Garrison, New York. If you want to know more, please visit his website at [johnpielmeier.com](http://johnpielmeier.com).

**JOHN DOYLE** (Director)

Theater in the US includes *Sweeney Todd* (Tony Award: Best Director of a Musical), *Company* (Tony Award: Best Musical Revival) and *A Catered Affair* (Drama League Award, Best Musical Production); *Ten Cents A Dance* (Williamstown Theatre Festival/ McCarter Theatre, Princeton); *Road Show* (Public Theatre/Menier Chocolate Factory); *Where's Charley?* (Encores! New York City Center); *Wings* (Second Stage, New York); *Kiss Me Kate* (Stratford Shakespeare Festival); *Caucasian Chalk Circle* (American Conservatory Theatre, San Francisco); *Merrily We Roll Along* (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park). In the UK, John has been artistic director of four regional theaters. Numerous credits include: *The Gondoliers*, *Mack and Mabel* (West End), *Fiddler on the Roof* (Watermill); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Regent's Park); *Oklahoma!* (Chichester); *Amadeus* (Wilton's Music Hall). Opera includes *Madame Butterfly* (Grange Park); *Lucia Di Lammermoor* (Houston/La Fenice/ Mariinsky/ Scottish Opera); *Peter Grimes* (Metropolitan Opera, New York); *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (LA Opera). He directed the feature film *Main Street*.

**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 second productions, 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 was founded by Gilbert Cates, and is currently helmed by 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](http://geffenplayhouse.com).

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