

EXTENDED BY POPULAR DEMAND

MONA GOLABEK IN THE PIANIST OF WILLESDEN LANE NOW THROUGH MARCH 19 AT THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

LOS ANGELES (February 28, 2014) – Due to popular demand *Mona Golabek in The Pianist of Willesden Lane*, a **Geffen Playhouse Spotlight Entertainment Series** event has been extended through Wednesday, March 19 (opening night is February 28). Adapted and directed by L.A. audience favorite **Hershey Felder**, the show played a record-setting 21 weeks during its 2012 world premiere run at the Geffen. Since then the show has taken the country by storm, earning critical praise and enthusiastic audiences in the Bay Area, Chicago, Boston and Las Vegas. Originally produced in the Geffen's intimate Audrey Skirball Kenis, this engagement will be presented in the company's larger space, the 522-seat Gil Cates Theater.

The music-filled evening recounts award-winning pianist Mona Golabek's true life story of her mother in Nazi-occupied Europe. *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* tells the story of Lisa Jura, a young Jewish pianist who is dreaming about her concert debut at the storied Musikverein concert hall. But with the issuing of new ordinances under Nazi regime, everything for Lisa changes, except for her love of music and the pursuit of her dream. Featuring some of the world's most beloved piano music played live, *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* is the performer's true family story, chronicling hope, survival and how through our darkest times, music has the power to help us survive.

An "astonishing tour de force," said *The San Francisco Chronicle* of the show. *The Chicago Tribune* said "A stirring case of art preserving life...Golabek sitting down at the Steinway piano is enough to make your mouth fall open with a certain wonder at the way of the world." *The Boston Globe* added "Golabek delivers an exceptionally heartfelt daughter-to-mother tribute."

"Part of the power of Mona's artistry is that this is a story that only she can tell," said Geffen Playhouse Artistic Director **Randall Arney**. "With the pathos of her story coupled with her extraordinary expertise as a pianist, it is no surprise that she has taken the country by storm. Having had the pleasure of premiering this play, we welcome her home with open arms."

A Grammy nominee, Ms. Golabek has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the Avery Fisher Career Grant and the People's Award of the International Chopin Competition. She has been the subject of several PBS television documentaries, including *More Than the Music*, which won the grand prize in the 1985 Houston Film Festival, and *Concerto for Mona*, featuring Ms. Golabek and conductor Zubin Mehta. She has appeared in concert at the Hollywood Bowl, the Kennedy Center, Royal Festival Hall and with major orchestras and conductors worldwide.

BIOGRAPHIES

Mona Golabek (Lisa Jura)

American concert pianist Mona Golabek has appeared at the Hollywood Bowl, the Kennedy Center, and Royal Festival Hall. She is a Grammy nominee who has been the subject of several documentaries, including *Concerto for Mona* with conductor Zubin Mehta. Her syndicated radio program, *The Romantic Hours*, combines music with poetry. Her recordings include *Carnival of the Animals* and *Ravel's Mother Goose Suite* featuring Meryl Streep, both

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recorded with Mona's sister, Renee Golabek-Kaye. Both daughters were taught by their mother, Lisa Jura, who is the subject of Mona's acclaimed book, *The Children of Willesden Lane*. Mona founded Hold On To Your Music, a foundation devoted to spreading the message of the power of music. With the help of the Milken Family Foundation, Facing History and Ourselves, and the Annenberg Foundation, she created educational resources which, with her book, have been adopted into school curricula across America.

Hershey Felder (Director/Adaptor)

Mr. Felder created and performed *George Gershwin Alone*, which played on Broadway at the Helen Hayes Theatre, in the West End at the Duchess Theatre, and in theatres around the country including Berkeley Rep. His Composers Sonata – *George Gershwin Alone*; *Monsieur Chopin*; *Beethoven, As I Knew Him*; *Maestro: Leonard Bernstein*; *Hershey Felder as Franz Liszt in Rock Star* – has been presented at dozens of theatres across the U.S. and around the world, including a command performance of *Monsieur Chopin* for the Polish Ambassador to the United States. His compositions include *Aliyah, Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*; *Fairytale*, a musical; *Les Anges de Paris, Suite for Violin and Piano*; *Song Settings*; *Saltimbanques for Piano and Orchestra*; *Etudes Thematiques for Piano*; *An American Story for Actor and Orchestra*. As director, he premiered Mona Golabek in *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* at the Geffen Playhouse in April 2012, and will soon direct *Jack Lemmon's Son* starring Christopher Lemmon. Mr. Felder has been a Scholar-in-Residence at Harvard University's Department of Music and is married to Kim Campbell, former Prime Minister of Canada.

Trevor Hay (Associate Director/Scenic Co-Design)

Directed the world premiere of Hershey Felder's *An American Story For Actor And Orchestra* as well as subsequent productions. He is Associate Director for Mona Golabek's *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*. He is a former member of the historic Old Globe Theatre in San Diego where, at the age of nine, his first position was selling Old Globe memorabilia. Over the next 32 years, Mr. Hay went on to various aspects of production on more than 80 presentations, including the Broadway productions of Jack O'Brien's *Damn Yankees*, *How The Grinch Stole Christmas!*, and Twyla Tharpe's *The Times They Are A-Changin'*. Included in his 23 seasons at the Old Globe were eleven seasons of the Summer Shakespeare Festival Repertory, as well work on Tracy Letts' *August: Osage County*, directed by Sam Gold, and Hershey Felder's *George Gershwin Alone*, *Monsieur Chopin* and *Maestro*.

A GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE SPOTLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT SERIES EVENT:

HERSHEY FELDER AND THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE PRESENT

THE EIGHTY EIGHT ENTERTAINMENT, SAMANTHA F. VOXAKIS, AND ROBERT M. BIRMINGHAM, AND MOSES & SUSAN LIBITZKY PRODUCTION OF

MONA GOLABEK IN THE PIANIST OF WILLESDEN LANE

Adapted and directed by Hershey Felder

Based on the book *The Children of Willesden Lane* by Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen

Opening Night: Friday, February 28

Closing Night: Wednesday, March 19 – NOTE DATE CHANGE

LOCATION

The Geffen Playhouse, 10886 Le Conte Avenue, Los Angeles

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Monday	No performances
Tuesday, March 4	8:00pm
Wednesday, March 5 & 19	8:00pm
Thursday, March 6, 13	8:00pm
Friday, February 28, March 7 & 14	8:00pm
Saturday, March 1, 8 & 15	3:00pm; 8:00pm
Sunday, March 2, 9 & 16	2:00pm

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TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets are on sale now for *Mona Golabek in The Pianist of Willesden Lane*. Prices are \$37-77 and are available at the Geffen Playhouse box office, via phone at 310.208.5454 or online at www.geffenplayhouse.com.

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, General Manager Behnaz Ataee, Chief Development Officer Regina Miller and Co-Chairs of the Board Martha Henderson and Pamela Robinson Hollander. 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 www.geffenplayhouse.com.

MEDIA CONTACT

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High resolution photos available at the Geffen Online Media Center: <http://geffenplayhouse.com/mediacenter.php>