

NEW SPACE FOR ART AND ENGAGEMENT IN WESTWOOD: THE JASON AND YVONNE LEE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE ANNEX

TO BE OPENED IN CONJUNCTION WITH ONGOING UCLA PARTNERSHIP, SPACE WILL SERVE THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT'S ARTISTIC, COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION MISSION

LOS ANGELES (January 21, 2015) – The Geffen Playhouse's Westwood footprint is expanding. The not-for-profit's largest growth came nearly a decade ago with the renovation of the original 10886 Le Conte address and opening of the adjoining Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater at the Geffen Playhouse. The last few years have seen an increase from five to eight season productions plus added special events and augmented education and community outreach programs. The result: a significant increase in demand for real estate in one of the busiest commercial districts in Los Angeles.

Enter longtime partner UCLA, which owns the space in which the Geffen Playhouse continues to operate and which recently agreed to a long term lease for the Jason and Yvonne Lee Geffen Playhouse Annex. The newly named space, located in a previous retail location at 930 Westwood Boulevard, is across the street from the primary entrance to the university and a close neighbor to the main Geffen Playhouse campus – home to the Gil Cates and Audrey Skirball Kenis Theaters. Funding for the lease came from Jason and Yvonne Lee.

"Jason and Yvonne Lee's gift and our partnership with UCLA expand the Geffen Playhouse's artistic and community-engagement mission," says Artistic Director Randall Arney. "We are programming and producing more than ever before and, subsequently, have been squeezing every bit of use out of our current spaces – day and night. Loading-in productions, strike, rehearsals, community and education events all must fit into a calendar already packed with public events. This gives our artists and the wider community an additional resource to produce and engage with our work."

The Jason and Yvonne Lee Geffen Playhouse Annex will be the home for future Geffen Playhouse production rehearsals. The multi-year lease will see the space transform from its prior retail storefront layout to a flexible venue hosting not only artists but also the Geffen's growing list of community groups and education programs.

ABOUT JASON AND YVONNE LEE

Both founding company members of Lower Depth Theatre Ensemble, Jason Lee (Jason Delane) and Yvonne Lee (Yvonne Huff) have produced and acted in countless productions, television works and films across the country. The couple is currently co-producing with Skylight Theatre Company the rolling world premiere of *Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea* by Nathan Alan Davis which opens February 2015 at the Skylight Theatre. The couple recently co-produced LDTE's acclaimed production of *Bulrushers* by Eisa Davis (*Los Angeles Times* Critic's Choice, *LA Weekly* Go!). Other producing credits include *Elmina's Kitchen* by Kwame Kwei Armah (NAACP Theatre Award for Best Ensemble) and *Three Sisters After Chekhov* by Mustafa Matura. In addition, Mr. and Mrs. Lee are Executive Directors of the The Lagralane Group, LLC, a film production company.

Mr. Lee most recently played Lord Capulet in Classical Theatre of Harlem's *Romeo and Juliet*. He also played Malcolm X in *One Night in Miami* by Kemp Powers at Rogue Machine Theatre. The production won an L.A. Drama Critics Circle award for Best Ensemble. Other Los Angeles stage credits include *Cobb* with The Group Rep Theatre; *Three Sisters After Chekhov* with Lower Depth Theatre Ensemble; *Stickfly* with the Matrix Theatre, which was named the Best Ensemble of 2010 by the Ovation Awards, L.A. Drama Critics Circle, and the Garlands; and *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* where he earned a Best Actor Nominee by the NAACP Theatre Awards. His other L.A. stage credits include work at the Geffen Playhouse, Evidence Room, Robey, and Towne Street Theatres. His Chicago credits include work at the Goodman, Victory Gardens, Lookingglass, Northlight, and Court Theatres. His T.V. appearances: *Criminal Minds*, *The Ex List*, *Secret Lives of American Teenagers*, and *Make it or Break it*. Jason is a life member of the Actor's Studio.

Mrs. Lee began her professional career in Chicago working at the Goodman Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre, and Victory Gardens Theatre, among many others. In February 2015, she will appear in her company's upcoming *Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea* by Nathan Alan Davis. She most recently played Neyla Dirbash in Hatikva Production's *Closely Related Keys*. Other Los Angeles stage credits include *Three Sisters After Chekhov* with Lower Depth Theatre Ensemble, *Stop Kiss* with Theatre 150 and *Private Battle* with Watts Village Theatre. In film and television, she has appeared on *Beyond the Pretty Door*, *Barry Munday*, *NCIS: Los Angeles*, *Rake*, *Parenthood*, *Bones*, *Strong Medicine*, *Eli Stone*, *Without a Trace*, *Young and The Restless*, *Monk*, *Boston Legal*, among others.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee are philanthropists, art lovers, backgammon and Parcheesi fanatics and the proud parents of Grace and Maya. Mr. Lee serves on the boards of the L & N Andreas Foundation and the Classical Theatre of Harlem. Mrs. Lee is on the Los Angeles Film Festival Advisory Board. They both serve on the Geffen Playhouse Advisory Board. More acting and producer credits can be found at [Facebook.com/OfficialJasonDelane](https://www.facebook.com/OfficialJasonDelane) and YvonneHuff.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, 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.

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