

*“Who would have guessed that murder could be so fun?
A noir-tinged detective story elevated to the heights of delicious farce!”*
- The New York Observer

ORIGINAL NEW YORK CAST **JEFF BLUMENKRANTZ AND BRETT RYBACK**
STAR IN OFF-BROADWAY HIT ***MURDER FOR TWO***

MAY 26 TO JULY 5; OPENING NIGHT FRIDAY JUNE 3, 2015
IN THE AUDREY SKIRBALL KENIS THEATER AT THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

LOS ANGELES (April 1, 2015) – Original New York cast members, Jeff Blumenkrantz and Brett Ryback star in the Geffen Playhouse engagement of the Off-Broadway hit *Murder for Two* May 26 through July 5, 2015 in the intimate Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater. The press opening is Wednesday, June 3.

Everyone is a suspect in *Murder For Two*, a hilarious musical murder mystery with a twist: one actor investigates the crime, the other plays all of the suspects and they both play the piano! A zany blend of classic musical comedy and madcap mystery, this 90-minute whodunit is a highly theatrical duet loaded with killer laughs.

Featuring book and music by Joe Kinosian, book and lyrics by Kellen Blair and direction by Scott Schwartz, Charles Isherwood of *The New York Times* calls *Murder for Two*, “an ingenious miniature musical in the form of a snazzy vaudevillian double act.” Roma Torre from *NY1* calls *Murder For Two* “A 90-minute jolt of caffeinated creativity.”

Murder for Two stars Jeff Blumenkrantz as The Suspects, and Brett Ryback as Marcus. Blumenkrantz performed on Broadway in *Into the Woods* (1987), *Threepenny Opera* (1989), *Damn Yankees* (1994), *How to Succeed in Business...* (1995), and *A Class Act* (2001), as well as Off-Broadway in *Murder for Two* (Lortel Award nomination) and in the City Center Encores production of *Anyone Can Whistle*. His regional theater credits include productions at La Jolla Playhouse, Old Globe, Kennedy Center, Long Wharf, and Asolo. On camera, Jeff can be seen in *30 Rock*, *The Good Wife*, *Ugly Betty*, *Joseph ... Dreamcoat*, *Will and Grace*, *Law and Order*, and the PBS telecasts of the New York Philharmonic concerts of *Sweeney Todd* and *Candide*. Also a musical theatre composer/lyricist, Jeff received a Tony Award nomination as one of the co-writers of the score of *Urban Cowboy*. He is the recipient of the 2011 Fred Ebb Award as well as commissions from Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and Guggenheim Works and Process. Most recently, he released a CD titled *I've Been Played: Alysha Umphress Swings Jeff Blumenkrantz*, featuring his jazz songs and arrangements. His songs have been recorded by Audra McDonald, Sutton Foster, Rebecca Luker, and Victoria Clark, among others. To hear Jeff's music, check out *The Jeff Blumenkrantz Songbook* Podcast by visiting either iTunes or jeffblumenkrantz.com.

Brett Ryback is an actor, composer, and playwright based in Los Angeles. He originated the role of Marcus Off-Broadway in *Murder for Two* at Second Stage and New World Stages. His recent TV/Film appearances include: *Modern Family*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *House*, and the Coen Brother's upcoming film, *Hail, Caesar!* Regional theatre credits include: *The History Boys* (Ahmanson); *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* (Mark Taper Forum); *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Broadway Bound* (La Mirada); and the world premieres of *The Prince of Atlantis*, *Dr. Cerberus* (South Coast Rep), and *Upright Grand* (Theatreworks, Palo Alto). His plays and musicals include: *Liberty Inn: The Musical* (Ovation nominations Best Book, Best Music/Lyrics); *Darling* (Weston Playhouse New Musical Award, Featured on NBC's "The Apprentice"); *The Tavern Keeper's Daughter* (Best Musical, Pasadena

Weekly), and *The Many Selves of Mia Scott*. He was commissioned to write music for *Just a Little Critter Musical* for First Stage Milwaukee, which will premiere in February 2016, and this past winter he was invited to participate in the Johnny Mercer Writers Colony at Goodspeed to develop his latest project *Passing Through*. www.brettryback.com

Zachary Stewart in *TheaterMania* said, "This musical-whodunit relies on just two performers to act, sing, dance, and play all of the music. It is an incredible feat of athletic theatricality to behold . . . it is thrilling to watch these two performers work. Blumenkrantz contorts his rubbery face and modulates his formidable voice to create 10 different personalities . . . the straight man to Blumenkrantz's clown, Ryback matches his partner toe to toe with equal energy and a winning smile. And an upstage shelf prominently displays a candlestick, a wrench, a lead pipe, a knife, a revolver, and a rope."

Produced by Jayson Raitt, Barbara Whitman, Steven Chaikelson and Second Stage Theatre, *Murder for Two* first played New York in a limited summer engagement at Second Stage Theatre Uptown (Carole Rothman, Artistic Director, Casey Reitz, Executive Director and Christopher Burney, Curator and Associate Artistic Director) in the summer of 2013. It was extended twice, due to popular demand, before transferring to New World Stages for an eight-month run through June 2014.

Murder for Two features choreography by Wendy Seyb, scenic design by Beowulf Boritt, costume design by Andrea Lauer, lighting design by Jason Lyons, and sound design by Jill BC DuBoff.

The original cast recording of *Murder For Two* was produced by Joel Moss and executive produced by Kurt Deutsch. The CD album features complete lyrics, never-before-seen photos, a show synopsis by creators Joe Kinosian and Kellen Blair and an essay by Oscar and Grammy Award-winning composer Stephen Schwartz.

Murder for Two was recently published by Samuel French and is available for purchase on their website, www.samuelfrench.com.

Murder for Two was developed at The Adirondack Theatre Festival and 42nd Street Moon. Chicago Shakespeare Theater presented the world premiere production in May, 2011, which was extended four times, running for more than six months. Kinosian and Blair were recognized with a 2011 Joseph Jefferson Award for Best New Musical.

Tickets are available in-person at the Geffen Playhouse box office, via phone at 310.208.5454 or online at www.geffenplayhouse.com.

EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

MURDER FOR TWO

Book and Music by **Joe Kinosian**

Book and Lyrics by **Kellen Blair**

Directed by **Scott Schwartz**

CAST

Jeff Blumenkrantz as The Suspects

Brett Ryback as Marcus

PRODUCTION STAFF

Choreography by **Wendy Seyb**

Scenic design by **Beowulf Boritt**

Costume design by **Andrea Lauer**

Lighting design by **Jason Lyons**

Sound design by **Jill BC DuBoff**

DATES

May 26 – July 5, 2015

Previews: Tuesday, May 26, 2015 – Tuesday June 2, 2015

Opening Night: Wednesday, June 3, 2015

Closing Night: Sunday, July 5, 2015

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Monday No performance*

Tuesday – Friday 8:00pm

Saturday 3:00pm; 8:00pm

Sunday 2:00pm; 7:00pm

*There will be no performance on 6/17/15 and an 8:00pm Monday performance on 6/15/15.

TICKET INFORMATION

Ticket prices currently range from \$59-\$74 and are available in-person at the Geffen Playhouse box office, via phone at 310.208.5454 or online at www.geffenplayhouse.com. Fees may apply.

LOCATION

Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater at the Geffen Playhouse
10886 Le Conte Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024
www.geffenplayhouse.com or 310.208.5454

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

JOE KINOSIAN (Book and Music). Joe is the co-recipient of Chicago's Joseph Jefferson Award recognizing *Murder for Two* as Best New Musical following its record-breaking run at Chicago Shakespeare Theater; Joe was also nominated for Best Actor as *The Suspects*. *Murder for Two* had its Off-Broadway premiere at Second Stage Uptown, going on to a year-long run at New World Stages. Joe's work with Kellen Blair has been showcased at The Kennedy Center, The York Theater, and on Broadway at the Theatre World Awards. Joe received the ASCAP Foundation Mary Rodgers/Lorenz Hart Award and the Harrington Award from the BMI Workshop. Joe also appeared in *Dirty Blonde* with Emily Skinner (Hangar Theater) and the NYC premiere of *Dear Edwina* Off-Broadway. kinosianandblair.com

KELLEN BLAIR (Book and Lyrics) is the Drama Desk nominated co-creator of *Murder for Two* (Off-Broadway: Second Stage Theater and New World Stages. World premiere: Chicago Shakespeare Theatre). Kellen and co-writer Joe Kinoshian are the recipients of the Joseph Jefferson Award for Best New Musical Work in Chicago (2011) and the ASCAP Foundation Mary Rodgers / Lorenz Hart Award (2013). Their work has been showcased on Broadway, the Kennedy Center, and theaters across the country. Kellen is excited to be developing a new musical farce with Joe titled *The More Things Change*; he's also working with Broadway composer Larry Grossman on a new show called *Scrooge in Love*. Updates, videos, song demos, and sheet music can be found at www.kinosianandblair.com.

ABOUT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

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 not-for-profit organization 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, Interim Managing Director Gil Cates Jr., and Co-Chairs of the Board Martha Henderson and Pamela Robinson Hollander. Proudly

associated with UCLA, the Geffen 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 CONTACTS:

Tim Choy, Davidson & Choy Publicity: t.choy@dcpublicity.com or 323.954.7510 ext. 13

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