

## GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES 2010/11 SEASON

*World Premieres by Jane Anderson and Neil LaBute Join Lauded West Coast Premieres by Pulitzer Prize Winners Tracy Letts and Lynn Nottage*  
*New Season Begins September 15, 2010*

LOS ANGELES, April 12, 2010— The Geffen Playhouse's 2010 / 2011 season builds on successful relationships with playwrights who have worked at the Geffen Playhouse in the past – **Jane Anderson**, **Hershey Felder** and **Neil LaBute**, and welcomes the newer voices of Pulitzer Prize winners **Tracy Letts** and **Lynn Nottage**. The first season in the newly named Gil Cates Theater, this collection of plays tackles often polarizing issues ranging from faith to war to sex. The season opens with Lynn Nottage's multi-award winning drama ***Ruined***, continues with the crowd pleaser ***Hershey Felder in Maestro: The Art of Leonard Bernstein***, then kicks off the new year with the world premiere of Neil LaBute's ***The Break of Noon***, followed by the world premiere of Jane Anderson's ***The Escort*** (a Geffen Playhouse commission), and concludes with the West coast premiere of Tracy Lett's ***Superior Donuts***.

"These plays take on provocative subjects in incredibly engaging ways," said Producing Director Gil Cates. "The potency and raw drama with which these issues are explored is a true testament to the caliber of playwrights working with us this season – many of whom we're thrilled to welcome back to the Geffen."

The Geffen Playhouse 2010-2011 season includes:

***Ruined* (West Coast Premiere Co-Production with Intiman Theatre)**

Written by Lynn Nottage

Directed by Kate Whoriskey

Run: September 7 – October 17, 2010

Opening Night: September 15, 2010

The winner of the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, Lynn Nottage's *Ruined* is a powerful portrayal of the triumph of human spirit in a war-torn country. Guided by music and the rhythm of life in the Congo, *Ruined* transports us to Mama Nadi's bar, a small town refuge where intimacy comes at a price. But by creating this uneasy oasis for women who have no place else to go, is Mama a protector or profiteer? Expertly navigating relationships and politics, this remarkable story, rich with humor, hope and humanity, was lauded in numerous critic top 10 lists and was extended eight times during its New York run.

Directed by **Kate Whoriskey**, who also helmed the award-winning 2009 Manhattan Theatre Club production, *Ruined* is co-produced with Seattle's Intiman Theatre where it will run in the summer; the show will subsequently travel to South Africa's Market Theatre, where the story will be shared with Congolese refugees in Johannesburg.

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***Hershey Felder in Maestro: The Art of Leonard Bernstein*****Music by Leonard Bernstein****Written by Hershey Felder****Directed by Joel Zwick****Run: November 2 – December 12, 2010****Opening Night: November 10, 2010**

*Hershey Felder in Maestro: The Art of Leonard Bernstein* is a new work from the creators of *George Gershwin Alone*, *Monsieur Chopin* and *Beethoven, As I Knew Him*. With a story spanning the entire twentieth century, Leonard Bernstein, America's greatest musician, broke through every artistic ceiling possible to become the world's musical ambassador. Conductor, composer, pianist, author, teacher, librettist, television star ... for Leonard Bernstein boundaries simply did not exist. Director Joel Zwick guides Hershey Felder as he brings to life the composer of *West Side Story*, *Candide*, *On the Town*, *Mass* and many more in his fourth appearance at the Geffen Playhouse.

***The Break of Noon* (World Premiere Co-Production with MCC Theatre)****Written by Neil LaBute****Directed by Jo Bonney****Run: January 25 – March 6, 2011****Opening Night: February 2, 2011**

Playwright and provocateur Neil LaBute's newest play takes off from George Bernard Shaw's quote: "All truths begin as blasphemies." And then we meet John Smith. He's a selfish, philandering liar – or at least he was. After hearing the voice of God during a tragic office shooting, this imperfect man reforms himself and goes on a mission to spread the word about a better way of life. But is Joe's divine encounter merely a ploy for celebrity, a chance to escape his rocky past, or is it part of an infinite and almighty plan? In *The Break of Noon*, LaBute explores the trials and tribulations of a modern day prophet – and what he signifies in a jaded world that is thousands of years removed from burning bushes and stone tablets.

Helmed by LaBute's oft-collaborator **Jo Bonney**, this world-premiere is co-produced with MCC Theatre. *The Break of Noon* marks the fourth time LaBute's work has been at the Geffen Playhouse; his past works at the theater include *Fat Pig* (also directed by Bonney), *Some Girl(s)* and *Wrecks*, all of which ran in the Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater.

***The Escort: An Explicit Play for Discriminating People* (World Premiere Commission)****By Jane Anderson****Directed by Lisa Peterson****Run: March 29 – May 8, 2011****Opening Night: April 6, 2011**

Nothing is taboo in **Jane Anderson's** world premiere comedy about a high-class call girl. Charlotte is charged with escorting us through this titillating tale – she's got lube and she knows how to use it. And so does her esteemed gynecologist. As the two women's relationship develops, more than just body parts are revealed. What happens when our liberal ideals are in direct conflict with our personal lives? How far are we willing to go to prove our own

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open-mindedness? While this provocative play is laced with sex, bad language and nudity, *The Escort*, directed by **Lisa Peterson**, also takes us down a path of unexpected thoughtfulness and depth.

*The Escort* is the Geffen Playhouse's second commission from Emmy Award winning playwright Jane Anderson. Her first, *The Quality of Life*, premiered in the Audrey Skirball Theater in 2007 and was honored with numerous awards including both an LADCC and Ovation Award for Best New Play, before moving on to subsequent productions around the country.

### ***Superior Donuts* (West Coast Premiere)**

**Written by Tracy Letts**

**Directed by Randall Arney**

**Run: May 31 – July 10, 2011**

**Opening Night: June 8, 2011**

Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize winning playwright **Tracy Letts** weaves a heart-warming and humorous tale of unlikely friendships in one of Chicago's most diverse neighborhoods. Arthur Przybyzewski's *Superior Donuts* has been a community hub for decades, and both the neglected storefront and its rundown owner are evidence to that. But when Franco, a young fast-talking dreamer, bounds into the shop, the writing is on the wall that things are going to change – maybe even for the better.

Following sold out performances in Chicago and New York, the Geffen Playhouse's production, helmed by Artistic Director **Randall Arney**, marks the West Coast premiere of this sweet new play. While Arney and Letts are both ensemble members of the Steppenwolf Theatre Company, this is the first time a work by Letts, most well-known for his lauded drama *August Osage County*, has been performed at the Geffen Playhouse.

#### **EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:**

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#### **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](http://GeffenPlayhouse.com)**.

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