



## NEWS RELEASE

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UPDATED 08/09 SEASON ANNOUNCEMENT

### **GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE PRODUCES WEST COAST PREMIERE OF TONY NOMINATED *THE SEAFARER***

***Artistic Director Randall Arney Helms Irish Playwright  
Conor McPherson's Acclaimed New Work Both at  
Geffen Playhouse and Chicago's Steppenwolf Theater***

***Previews Begin April 14, 2009  
Runs April 22, 2009 – May 24, 2009***

**LOS ANGELES, June 13, 2008** — With a season that already boasts two Pulitzer Prize winning playwrights, Tony and Emmy Award winning directors and two world-premiere productions, the Geffen Playhouse announces Conor McPherson's *The Seafarer*, nominated for four 2008 Tony Awards including Best Play, as its fourth production of the 2008/09 season. Geffen Playhouse Artistic Director Randall Arney not only directs the Geffen Playhouse production set to open on April 22, 2009, but will also helm a production at Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre (set to open December 4, 2008).

Arney, who also directed Conor McPherson's *The Weir* at the Geffen Playhouse in 2000, will be the first to direct a production other than playwright McPherson, who led the casts at the National Theatre in London (2006) and on Broadway (2007). The Geffen Playhouse and Steppenwolf are the only regional theaters in the country to secure the rights to this acclaimed new work since the show closed on Broadway in March of this year.

A whiskey laden tale set over a poker game in the Dublin home of two brothers on Christmas Eve, *The Seafarer* is wrought with the playwright's signature anguish, otherworldliness and unapologetically raw characters. Yet, the play is also warmly hilarious, surprisingly inspiring, and (ironically) sobering. McPherson's tenth play, *The Seafarer* is a fable about power, redemption and betting against the odds.

Conor McPherson's *The Seafarer* will take the fourth slot in the Geffen Playhouse's 2008-2009 season, which currently includes:

#### ***Beethoven, As I Knew Him***

Award-winning performer Hershey Felder returns to the Geffen Playhouse for *Beethoven, As I Knew Him*, the highly anticipated culmination of his musical trilogy. Felder brings the character of Ludwig

-more-

Gilbert Cates, Producing Director   Randall Arney, Artistic Director   Stephen Eich, Managing Director

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van Beethoven to life through the eyes of Beethoven's last surviving friend as well as through the eternal sounds of the maestro's greatest musical works.

Felder, now world-famous for his lauded portrayals of George Gershwin, Fryderyk Chopin and Beethoven, returns to the Geffen after his sold-out run of *George Gershwin Alone* and *Monsieur Chopin* last summer. The productions received twelve LA Ovation Award nominations and won four awards, including *Best Musical* and *Best Lead Actor in a Musical*. The Geffen Playhouse also welcomes back award winning director Joel Zwick (*My Big Fat Greek Wedding*). Zwick, who helmed the productions of *George Gershwin Alone* and *Monsieur Chopin*, is currently directing the world-premiere production of *Beethoven, As I Knew Him*.

### ***By the Waters of Babylon***

The winner of the Pulitzer Prize for his epic work *The Kentucky Cycle*, playwright Robert Schenkkan joins forces with lauded local director Richard Seyd for the Los Angeles premiere of *By the Waters of Babylon*. A two-character play, this personal and touching romance takes place over the course of one afternoon as two relative strangers begin to learn the truth about themselves from the stories they reveal. Juxtaposing Cuban politics with Southern stoicism, *By the Waters of Babylon* intertwines storytelling, scenery and humor to show that in life, as in gardening, sometimes you need to clear away the weeds to make something more beautiful grow.

## **SPECIAL ENGAGEMENT**

### ***Hershey Felder as George Gershwin Alone***

After its limited run last season which left the audience literally shouting (and singing) for more, Hershey Felder celebrates the holidays in Los Angeles by bringing back one of America's most well-known composers. Performed and acclaimed all over the world, this Geffen Playhouse special engagement marks the final time Felder will perform this piece. Recreating key moments in George Gershwin's life through song and spoken word, this musical retelling features a look behind some of the composer's most famous works, including Felder's solo rendition of "A Rhapsody in Blue," and culminating with an interactive audience sing-a-long to their favorite Gershwin tunes. Winner of four Ovation awards including Best Musical and Best Lead Actor in a Musical, *George Gershwin Alone* is a wonderful evening for the whole family: It's got rhythm, it's got music – who could ask for anything more?

### ***Time Stands Still***

*Time Stands Still* (originally titled *The Elephant in the Room*) is a Geffen-commissioned World Premiere production. After multiple award-winning productions, Pulitzer Prize winner Donald Margulies (*Collected Stories*, *Dinner with Friends*) and Tony Award winner Daniel Sullivan (*Proof*) team up once again to give us a glimpse into the life of Sarah and James, a journalistic team and longtime couple. Recently reunited after a stint covering the turmoil in the middle east, the pair slowly find that their words and pictures are no longer a perfect match. Through humor, trauma and photographs that are worth a thousand words, *Time Stands Still* examines how a little shift in perspective can change an entire picture.

### ***Nightmare Alley***

Composer and musician Jonathan Brielle, a staple of New York's music and theater scene, brings the World Premiere of his new musical *Nightmare Alley* to the Geffen Playhouse. Helmed by Geffen Producing Director Gilbert Cates, *Nightmare Alley* explores the darker side of entertainment by taking us into the world of carnies, cons and clairvoyants. With a score as wild as a funhouse and as emotionally evocative as a beautiful tightrope walker, this new musical tells the story of shocks that await you inside the big tent. Based on the William Lindsay Gresham novel and subsequent cult-classic film, *Nightmare Alley* is a night at the theater full of special effects, wondrous feats and enough spirit to make believers of us all.

## 2008 – 2009 Season Chronology

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**August 27 – October 12, 2008**  
(Previews begin August 19)

***Hershey Felder in Beethoven As I Knew Him***  
Music by Ludwig van Beethoven  
Text by Hershey Felder  
Directed by Joel Zwick

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**November 5 – December 7, 2008**  
(Previews begin October 28)

***By the Waters of Babylon***  
Written by Robert Schenkkan  
Directed by Richard Seyd

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*SPECIAL ENGAGEMENT\**  
**December 19, 2008 – January 4, 2009**

***Hershey Felder as George Gershwin Alone***  
Music and Lyrics by George & Ira Gershwin  
Text by Hershey Felder  
Directed by Joel Zwick

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\*This production is not part of the 08/09 subscription series

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**February 11 – March 15, 2009**  
(Previews begin February 3)

***Time Stands Still***  
Written by Donald Margulies  
Directed by Daniel Sullivan

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**April 22 – May 24, 2009**  
(Previews begin April 14)

***The Seafarer***  
Written by Conor McPherson  
Directed by Randall Arney

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**June 24 – July 26, 2009**  
(Previews begin June 16)

***Nightmare Alley***  
Book, Music & Lyrics by Jonathan Brielle  
Directed by Gilbert Cates

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### **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 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).