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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**DIRECTORS MICHAEL ARDEN, JO BONNEY AND ROBERT O'HARA ADDED TO
Geffen Playhouse's 2018/2019 SEASON**

**UNDER NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MATT SHAKMAN, THE SEASON FEATURES THE WORLD
PREMIERE PLAYS "MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES," "THE UNTRANSLATABLE SECRETS OF
NIKKI CORONA," "BLACK SUPER HERO MAGIC MAMA" AND "INVISIBLE TANGO;"
NEW ADAPTATIONS OF "ANTIGONE" AND "A CHRISTMAS CAROL;"
"LIGHTS OUT: NAT 'KING' COLE," "THE CAKE," "HUGHIE" AND "KRAPP'S LAST TAPE"**

**FEATURING WORKS BY PLAYWRIGHTS JOSÉ RIVERA, COLMAN DOMINGO,
PATRICIA MCGREGOR, MICHAEL MITNICK, INDA CRAIG-GALVÁN, EUGENE O'NEILL
AND SAMUEL BECKETT**

LOS ANGELES (June 7, 2018) – The Geffen Playhouse today announced that it has added three directors to its upcoming 2018/2019 season, the first from new Artistic Director Matt Shakman. Tony Award nominee Michael Arden will direct *Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol*, adapted by and starring Tony Award winner Jefferson Mays; Obie Award winner Jo Bonney will direct the world premiere of José Rivera's *The Untranslatable Secrets of Nikki Corona*; and Obie Award winner Robert O'Hara will direct the world premiere of Inda Craig-Galván's *Black Super Hero Magic Mama*.

Arden is the director of Broadway's current production of *Once On This Island*, which is nominated for eight 2018 Tony Awards, including Best Revival of a Musical and Best Direction of a Musical. He directed the celebrated Deaf West revival of *Spring Awakening*, which earned three Tony Award nominations, and the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts 2016 production of *Merrily We Roll Along*.

Bonney, an award-winning Off-Broadway director, returns to the Geffen Playhouse having recently completed Off-Broadway productions of Suzan-Lori Parks' *The Red Letter Plays: Fucking A* at Signature Theatre and Martyna Majok's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Cost of Living* at Manhattan Theatre Club. In 2011, she helmed the Off-Broadway production of Lynn Nottage's *By The Way, Meet Vera Stark*, which she directed at the Geffen the following year.

O'Hara is the writer and director of *Bootycandy*, which debuted Off-Broadway at Playwrights Horizons in 2014 and was nominated for a Lucille Lortel Award and a Drama League Award for

Best Play, and the director of Center Theatre Group's production of Danai Gurira's *Eclipsed*, for which he received a 2010 NAACP Award for Best Director. His playwriting credits include *Antebellum*, which earned him a 2010 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding New Play, and *Barbecue*, which ran at the Geffen in 2016.

Arden, Bonney and O'Hara join previously announced directors Jennifer Chambers (*The Cake*), Frank Marshall (*Invisible Tango*), Patricia McGregor (*Lights Out: Nat "King" Cole*), Steven Robman (*Hughie, Krapp's Last Tape*), Matt Shakman (*Mysterious Circumstances*) and Kate Whoriskey (*Antigone*).

The new season will focus on world premiere plays from acclaimed playwrights that reflect a culturally diverse Los Angeles and revivals of classic works that are relevant to the issues of today.

In the Gil Cates Theater, the 2018/2019 season will commence with the world premiere of celebrated writer José Rivera's ***The Untranslatable Secrets of Nikki Corona*** and a new adaptation of Charles Dickens' ***A Christmas Carol***, adapted and performed by Tony Award-winner Jefferson Mays. In January 2019, Patricia McGregor and Colman Domingo bring two American music icons to the Geffen stage in the West Coast premiere of ***Lights Out: Nat "King" Cole***, starring Dulé Hill as Nat "King" Cole and Daniel J. Watts as Sammy Davis Jr. A new adaptation of ***Antigone***, reimagined for the 21st century by director Kate Whoriskey, and the world premiere of ***Mysterious Circumstances***, inspired by an article from *The New Yorker* by David Grann and written by Michael Mitnick, directed by Shakman, round out the Cates season.

The Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater's season will include four productions for the first time. The season begins with a presentation of Echo Theater Company's world premiere production of ***The Cake*** by Bekah Brunstetter, starring Debra Jo Rupp, followed by Tony Award-winner Brian Dennehy in a double-billing of Eugene O'Neill's ***Hughie*** and Samuel Beckett's ***Krapp's Last Tape***, and the world premieres of Los Angeles-based playwright Inda Craig-Galván's ***Black Super Hero Magic Mama*** and magician Helder Guimarães' highly anticipated new show ***Invisible Tango***, directed by Frank Marshall.

The Geffen Playhouse 2018/2019 season is currently available by subscription only. For more information and to purchase a subscription, please call 310.882.6533. Single tickets for all 2018/2019 season productions will be available this summer at www.geffenplayhouse.org.

GIL CATES THEATER

THE UNTRANSLATABLE SECRETS OF NIKKI CORONA

WORLD PREMIERE

Written by José Rivera

Directed by Jo Bonney

September 4 – October 7, 2018

A Better Orpheus Inc. provides an unusual service—one that allows the living to communicate with the dead. When Nikki Corona loses her twin sister, A Better Orpheus puts her in touch with Orlando, a man dying too young. The ensuing love story leads to a journey through a vivid, surprising afterlife. In the rich literary tradition of magical realism and inspired by Dante's *Inferno* comes the world premiere of a new play by Obie Award-winning playwright and Academy Award®-nominated screenwriter José Rivera.

Major support of this world premiere production provided by the Edgerton Foundation New Play Production Fund.

CHARLES DICKENS' A CHRISTMAS CAROL

WORLD PREMIERE ADAPTATION

Adapted & Performed by Jefferson Mays

Directed by Michael Arden

October 30 – December 2, 2018

Tony Award-winner Jefferson Mays (*I Am My Own Wife*) brings new life to the greatest ghost story ever told. While the heart of *A Christmas Carol* is evergreen, Mays' fresh perspective on Scrooge, Bob Cratchit, Tiny Tim and the rest will create a wildly theatrical and original experience. With a world premiere adaptation based on a version Dickens performed throughout his life, the holidays come early to the Geffen this year.

LIGHTS OUT: NAT "KING" COLE

WEST COAST PREMIERE

Written by Patricia McGregor & Colman Domingo

Directed by Patricia McGregor

Featuring Dulé Hill and Daniel J. Watts

February 5 – March 10, 2019

In this highly theatrical exploration into the soul of an American icon, Tony and Olivier Award-nominee Colman Domingo and Patricia McGregor imagine Nat "King" Cole as he faces the final Christmastime broadcast of his groundbreaking variety show and weighs the advice of his friend Sammy Davis Jr. to "go out with a bang." Songs such as "Nature Boy," "It's a Good Day" and "Unforgettable" underscore this innovative look at one of America's greatest talents. Starring Emmy Award-nominee Dulé Hill (*West Wing*, *Stick Fly*, *Bring in 'da Noise*, *Bring in 'da Funk*) as Nat "King" Cole and Daniel J. Watts (*Hamilton*, *Memphis*) as Sammy Davis Jr.

ANTIGONE

A NEW ADAPTATION

Directed by Kate Whoriskey

April 9 – May 12, 2019

Antigone has, for centuries, been a protest, an outcry and even a call to arms. Now Drama Desk, Lucille Lortel and Outer Critics Circle Award-nominated director Kate Whoriskey (*Sweat*, *Ruined*) revisits *Antigone* for our time. A young heroine, in an act of utter defiance, gives her

traitorous brother a proper burial. A powerful woman who is willing to die for what she believes, Antigone remains one of the boldest characters ever conceived.

MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES

WORLD PREMIERE and GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE COMMISSION

Written by Michael Mitnick

Inspired by *The New Yorker* article “Mysterious Circumstances: The Strange Death of a Sherlock Holmes Fanatic” by David Grann

Directed by Matt Shakman

June 11 – July 14, 2019

Based on a true story, Richard Lancelyn Green, the world’s foremost scholar on Sherlock Holmes and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, is found dead in his London apartment. With multiple suspects and competing motives, Green’s death raises questions that may be answered only by Holmes himself. Inspired by *The New Yorker* article by David Grann (*The Lost City of Z, Killers of the Flower Moon*), this world premiere play by Michael Mitnick (Drama Desk Award nominee for *Fly By Night, The Siegel*) is an ode to literature’s most cerebral detective and a meditation on the line between love and obsession.

This play was commissioned as part of the Geffen Playhouse’s New Play Development Program thanks to the generosity of The Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust. Major support of this world premiere production provided by the Edgerton Foundation New Play Production Fund.

AUDREY SKIRBALL KENIS THEATER

THE CAKE

A PRESENTATION OF ECHO THEATER COMPANY’S WORLD PREMIERE PRODUCTION

Written by Bekah Brunstetter

Directed by Jennifer Chambers

Featuring Morrison Keddie, Shannon Lucio, Rod McLachlan, Carolyn Ratteray & Debra Jo Rupp
September 10 – October 21, 2018

From hit television writer and producer Bekah Brunstetter (*This is Us, Switched at Birth*) comes *The Cake*, a play about Della, a North Carolina baker and devout Christian whose best friend’s daughter is returning home to plan her wedding. When Della discovers that the girl she helped to raise is engaged to marry another woman, she must decide whether or not she can bake a wedding cake topped with two brides. Starring as Della, Debra Jo Rupp (*That ‘70s Show, Friends*) reprises the role for which she received an LA Stage Alliance Ovation Award.

The Geffen Playhouse is proud to present the Echo Theater Company’s world premiere production as part of its commitment to celebrating the vibrant Los Angeles intimate theater community.

HUGHIE by Eugene O’Neill and ***KRAPP’S LAST TAPE*** by Samuel Beckett

Directed by Steven Robman

Featuring Brian Dennehy
November 5 – December 16, 2018

Two-time Tony Award-winner Brian Dennehy comes to the Geffen as Erie Smith in Eugene O'Neill's *Hughie* and as Krapp in Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*. The double billing explores the ways in which two very different men grapple with the realization that their winning odds only diminish with age. Reprising roles that have garnered critical and popular acclaim, theater legend Dennehy takes the stage in the intimate Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater.

Hughie by Eugene O'Neill

When high-rolling gambler and small-time hustler Erie Smith loses his confidant Hughie, his luck takes a turn for the worse. In his grief, Erie befriends a new hotel night clerk and sees a chance for a winning streak.

Krapp's Last Tape by Samuel Beckett

Preparing for his birthday ritual, Krapp stumbles upon a recording of a tender memory from half a lifetime ago. As he immerses himself in his own personal history, Krapp questions whether his present lives up to his past.

BLACK SUPER HERO MAGIC MAMA

WORLD PREMIERE

Written by Inda Craig-Galván

Directed by Robert O'Hara

March 5 – April 14, 2019

When Sabrina's 14-year-old son dies in a police shooting, it prompts a flurry of media attention and calls for racial justice. Unable to play the expected role of grieving mother, Sabrina retreats into the fantasy world of superheroes and arch-villains that inhabit the comic book created by her son before his death. Both heartbreaking and highly imaginative, this stunning world premiere marks the professional debut of Los Angeles-based playwright Inda Craig-Galván and signals the arrival of an exciting and distinctive new voice in American theater.

Major support of this world premiere production provided by the Edgerton Foundation New Play Production Fund.

INVISIBLE TANGO

WORLD PREMIERE

Created & Performed by Helder Guimarães

Directed by Frank Marshall

May 7 – June 16, 2019

Magic sensation Helder Guimarães returns to the Geffen with the world premiere of his one-man show, *Invisible Tango*. Directed by legendary film producer and director Frank Marshall (*Jurassic World*, *Indiana Jones*, *Goonies*, *Back to the Future*), *Invisible Tango* explores the nature of secrets and how far we are willing to go to discover them. In the midst of the information

age and our culture of over-sharing, Guimarães challenges our interaction with the unknown and explores how we can embrace the magic of wonder and mystery. Guimarães last amazed and charmed Geffen audiences in the smash hit *Nothing to Hide*, the two-man magic show that extended four times before transferring to New York.

SEASON SPONSORS

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SIGNATURE SERIES

Each production in the 2018/2019 season will feature the Geffen Playhouse's popular Talk Back Tuesdays, which give theater lovers a chance for a deeper conversation to discuss plot, character themes and other questions directly with the artists in a post-show Q&A from the stage.

COLLEGE AUDIENCES

Through a variety of events and other opportunities, the Geffen Playhouse welcomes college students to experience the live storytelling presented on our stages. We are proud of our association with UCLA's School of Theater, Film and Television, and open our doors to all college students throughout Los Angeles. More information is available at www.geffenplayhouse.org/college.

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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 renowned mix of classic and contemporary plays as well as provocative world premiere productions, the not-for-profit organization continues to present a body of work that garners 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 Executive Director Gil Cates, Jr., Artistic Director Matt Shakman and Board Chair Howard Tenenbaum. Proudly associated with UCLA, the Geffen welcomes an audience of more than 130,000 each year, and maintains extensive education and community engagement programs, designed to involve underserved young people and the community at large in the arts.

www.geffenplayhouse.org

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