

**WORLD PREMIERE!**



**BIG SKY**

WRITTEN BY **ALEXANDRA GERSTEN-VASSILAROS**  
DIRECTED BY **JOHN RANDO**

CAST FEATURES **ARNIE BURTON, EMILY ROBINSON, JON TENNEY**  
**AND JENNIFER WESTFELDT**

**JUNE 7 TO JULY 17** (OPENING NIGHT IS JUNE 15, 2016)  
IN THE GIL CATES THEATER AT THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

**LOS ANGELES** (April 14, 2016) – Geffen Playhouse announces the cast for its world premiere production of *Big Sky* written by Pulitzer Prize finalist Alexandra Gersten-Vassilaros. John Rando (Tony and Outer Critics Award winner for *Urinetown*) directs production starring Arnie Burton (*Flesh and Bone*), Emily Robinson (*Transparent*), Jon Tenney (*The Closer, Major Crimes, Scandal*) and Jennifer Westfeldt (*Kissing Jessica Stein, Ira & Abby, Friends With Kids*.)

Five-star amenities and family fallout are on the itinerary as Jack races to land a life-changing deal during an Aspen getaway. But wide open spaces offer no place to hide as Jack's family fails to keep the truth and elements at bay. Pulitzer Prize finalist playwright Alexandra Gersten-Vassilaros and Tony Award-winning

director John Rando offer a funny and poignant cautionary tale about the perils of pretense and fragility of family.

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

Tickets currently priced from \$32 to \$82 and are available in-person at the Geffen Playhouse box office, via phone at 310.208.5454 or online at [www.geffenpayhouse.org](http://www.geffenpayhouse.org). Fees may apply.

## **BIG SKY**

Written by **Alexandra Gersten-Vassilaros**

Directed by **John Rando**

Previews: Tuesday, June 7 – Tuesday, June 14

**Opening Night:** Wednesday, June 15

**Closing Night:** Sunday, July 17

## **CAST**

**Arnie Burton** as Jonathan

**Emily Robinson** as Tessa

**Jon Tenney** as Jack

**Jennifer Westfeldt** as Jen

## **PRODUCTION TEAM**

Scenic Design by **Derek McLane**

Costume Design by **Denitsa Bliznakova**

Lighting Design by **Jaymi Lee Smith**

Sound Design by **Jon Gottlieb**

Production Stage Manager **Elizabeth A. Brohm**

Assistant Stage Manager **Maggie Swing**

Casting by **Phyllis Schuringa**

## **OPENING NIGHT SPONSORS**

Audi of America

Napa Valley Grille

Hint Water

Kind

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## **PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE**

Monday                    No performance

Tuesday – Friday      8:00 pm

Saturday                3:00 pm and 8:00 pm

Sunday                    2:00 pm and 7:00 pm

## **TICKET INFORMATION**

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## **LOCATION**

Gil Cates Theater at the Geffen Playhouse  
10886 Le Conte Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

### **ARNIE BURTON** (Jonathan)

Broadway: *The 39 Steps*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Machinal*, *A Free Man of Color*, *Amadeus*. Off-Broadway highlights include *Lives of the Saints* and *Mere Mortals*, both by David Ives and directed by John Rando. Also *The Temperamentals* (Drama Desk award), 30th anniversary revival of *The Mystery of Irma Vep* (Drama League nomination), *The Last Sunday in June*, *The Explorers Club*, *Tail! Spin!*, *The Merchant of Venice/The Jew of Malta*. England: *The Merchant of Venice* at the Royal Shakespeare Company. Regional highlights include the L.A. premiere of *All in the Timing* at the Geffen Playhouse and the world premiere of *A Confederacy of Dunces* at the Huntington Theatre Company, Boston. Other theaters include the Old Globe, Berkeley Rep, Alley Theatre, A.R.T., Philadelphia Theatre Company, Berkshire Theatre Festival. Television appearances include *The Blacklist*, *Flesh and Bone* (recurring), *Frasier*, *Blue Bloods*, *Law & Order*, *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, *White Collar*, *Caroline in the City*, *Life on Mars*, *Faith and Hope*, *6 Degrees* and *Sister, Sister*. Film: *The Real Meaning of Things*, *Igby Goes Down*, *The Private Lives of Pippa Lee* and *Game 6*.

### **EMILY ROBINSON** (Tessa)

Emily made her Off-Broadway debut in Horton Foote's epic, *The Orphans' Home Cycle* at Signature Theatre in New York, directed by Michael Wilson, (Drama Desk Special Award) and is delighted to be making her L.A. theater debut at the Geffen Playhouse in *Big Sky*. Upcoming films include *Behold My Heart*, *Going Under* and *Broken Vows*. Television credits include Amazon's Golden Globe-winning *Transparent* (Screen Actors Guild Award Nomination for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series), *Criminal Minds* (CBS), *Rizzoli and Isles* (TNT), *Scorpion* (CBS), *A.N.T. Farm* (Disney), *Girl Meets World* (Disney), *The Following* (FOX), *CSI:NY* (CBS), *Person of Interest* (CBS), *Saturday Night Live* (NBC), *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon* (NBC) and *The Guiding Light* (CBS). Emily also recently wrote, directed and starred in her first short film, *Virgin Territory*.

### **JON TENNEY** (Jack)

*Big Sky* marks Tenney's third production at the Geffen, having previously starred in David Lindsay-Abaire's *Good People* and David Mamet's *Speed-the-Plow*. His Broadway credits include: the Tony Award-winning revival of *The Heiress* (opposite Cherry Jones), *Biloxi Blues*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, and *Sweet Sue* as well as the national tour of Tom Stoppard's *The Real Thing* directed by Mike Nichols. Off-Broadway credits include: *The Substance of Fire* (Playwrights Horizons and Lincoln Center), *Chaucer In Rome* (Lincoln Center) *Beggars in the House of Plenty* (Manhattan Theatre Club), *Impossible Marriage* (opposite Holly Hunter at The Roundabout), and *Tuesdays with Morrie* (opposite/ Alvin Epstein at The Minetta Lane). His numerous television credits include seven seasons starring opposite Kyra Sedgwick on TNT's *The Closer*, reprising his role in its spin-off *Major Crimes* and directing episodes of both. Tenney played Vice President Andrew Nichols on ABC's *Scandal* and recurs on Amazon's original *Hand of God*. His film credits include featured roles in *You Can Count On Me*, *Tombstone*, *Fools Rush In*, *Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World*, and *Rabbit Hole*. A Vassar graduate and trained at The Juilliard School, Tenney will next be seen in the film adaptation of Chekhov's *The Seagull* opposite Annette Bening and Saoirse Ronan.

### **JENNIFER WESTFELDT** (Jen)

An actress and filmmaker, Jennifer Westfeldt is perhaps best known for writing and starring in the indie films *Kissing Jessica Stein*, *Ira & Abby* and *Friends With Kids*, which also marked her directorial debut. Jennifer made her Broadway debut in *Wonderful Town*, directed by Kathleen Marshall, for which she

received a Tony nomination, a Theater World Award and a Drama League Award. Recent stage work includes the world premieres of Nicky Silver's *Too Much Sun* at Vineyard Theatre (directed by Mark Brokaw), Scott Z. Burns' *The Library* at the Public Theater (directed by Stephen Soderbergh), Nell Benjamin's *The Explorers Club* at Manhattan Theatre Club (directed by Marc Bruni), Cusi Cram's *A Lifetime Burning* at Primary Stages (directed by Pam McKinnon) and Stephen Belber's *The Power of Duff* at the Huntington Theatre Company and New York Stage and Film (directed by Peter DuBois). Television credits include *Girls*, *24*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Notes From the Underbelly* and *Children's Hospital*, among others.

**ALEXANDRA GERSTEN-VASSILAROS** (Playwright)

Her play *Omnium Gatherum* (2004 Pulitzer Prize Finalist, co-written with Theresa Rebeck) premiered at the Humana Festival and went on to Off-Broadway, national and international productions. Her controversial play *The Argument* (Vineyard Theatre) had a recent "revised" production at Theatre J in Washington, D.C. *The Ordinary Yearning of Miriam Buddwing* (directed by Anna Shapiro), *My Thing of Love* (directed by Terry Kinney; Broadway, directed by Howard Davies) and *Supple in Combat* (directed by Max Mayer) were commissioned and premiered at Steppenwolf Theatre Company. *Mother of Invention* (directed by Nicholas Martin) premiered at the Williamstown Theatre Festival starring Estelle Parsons. *Mean Time*, about the fracturing effects of war on soldiers and their families, was workshopped at Juilliard, NYU Graduate Theatre Program and New York Stage and Film (directed by Daniel Aukin). Her plays are published by Smith & Kraus and Samuel French. A selection of her short plays will soon be published by Samuel French. Public Radio/Playing for Air is currently featuring two of her short plays: *Two Jews in their Seventies* with Jerry Stiller and *Open Arms* with Julie White and Bill Irwin. She has developed several television projects with co-writer Carl Capotorto for HBO, Executive Producers Will Scheffer and Mark Olsen, and for KILLER/MOXIE films. Alexandra is a graduate of the NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and a member of PEN. She leads writing workshops for veterans, children and women at The Bowery Mission in N.Y.C. She has three sons and dedicates *Big Sky* to Johnny.

**JOHN RANDO** (Director)

Broadway credits include *Penn & Teller on Broadway*, *On The Town* (Tony Nomination for Best Direction of a Musical), *A Christmas Story*, *The Wedding Singer*, *Urinetown* (Tony and Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Director), *A Thousand Clowns* and Neil Simon's *The Dinner Party*. His recent Off-Broadway credits include *Lives of the Saints* (Primary Stages), *The Heir Apparent* (2014 SDCF Calloway Award for Direction – Classic Stage Company), *All in the Timing* (Primary Stages – 2013 Obie Award for Direction), and *The Toxic Avenger*, among many others. He directed the *Encores!* Productions of *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Little Me*, *It's a Bird... It's a Plane... It's Superman*, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, *On the Town*, *Damn Yankee*, *Face the Music*, *Strike Up the Band*, *Do Re Mi*, *The Pajama Game* and *Of Thee I Sing*. He also directed the staged performance of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel* with the New York Philharmonic.

**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, Executive Director Gil Cates, Jr., and Co-Chairs of the Board Martha

Henderson and Pamela Robinson. 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. Following a strong 2014/2015 season during which five productions extended, the company's 20th anniversary season features eight productions (two world and three West Coast premieres) featuring some of the nation's leading playwrights and directors. [www.geffenplayhouse.org](http://www.geffenplayhouse.org).

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**MEDIA CONTACT**

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