

***THE PIANIST OF WILLESDEN LANE* BRINGS MUSIC AND HISTORY TO THE GEFFEN'S 11/12 SEASON**

Mona Golabek Shares Her Family's True Story in this World Premiere Adapted and Directed by Multi-Ovation Award Winner Hershey Felder

Opens in the Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater at the Geffen Playhouse on April 25, 2012

LOS ANGELES, January 3, 2012 – Acclaimed performer **Hershey Felder** returns to the Geffen Playhouse – but this time behind-the-scenes – as adapter and director of a world premiere theatrical event: *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*, featuring award-winning musician **Mona Golabek**. Performed in the intimate Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater, *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* begins in previews on April 17, 2012 with an official opening night of **April 25, 2012**.

Set in 1938 Vienna, *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* tells the story of Lisa Jura, a young Jewish pianist who is dreaming about her concert debut at the storied Musikverein concert hall. But with the issuing of new ordinances under Nazi regime, everything for Lisa changes, except for her love of music and the pursuit of her dream. Featuring some of the world's most beloved piano music played live, *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* is performer Mona Golabek's true family story, chronicling hope, survival and how through our darkest times, music has the power to help us survive.

"This beautiful tale told by Mona herself is performed in the style of musical storytelling that Geffen Playhouse audiences have come to know from me," said adapter/director Hershey Felder, creator and performer of audience favorites including *George Gershwin Alone*, *Monsieur Chopin*, *Beethoven As I Knew Him* and *Maestro: The Art of Leonard Bernstein*. "Being able to work with Mona to present this piece has been an incredible joy both because her skill as a musician enables the evening to showcase some of the world's most beautiful and enduring piano music ever composed, and also because no one else could tell this story the way she can."

**HERSHEY FELDER AND THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE
PRESENT THE ONE MORE ENTERTAINMENT AND TREVOR HAY PRODUCTION OF
MONA GOLABEK IN THE PIANIST OF WILLESDEN LANE**

Adapted and directed by Hershey Felder

Based on the book *The Children of Willesden Lane* by Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen

Preview Performances: Tuesday, April 17 – Tuesday, April 24, 2012

Opening Night: Wednesday, April 25, 2012

Closing Night: Sunday, May 27, 2012

Featuring

Mona Golabek

Production Credits

Scenic Design

David Buess and Trevor Hay

Lighting Design

Chris Rhyne

Sound Design

Erik Carstensen

-more-

Projection Design	Greg Sowizdrzal
Scenic Construction	Christian Thorson
Costumes	Princess Designs
Production Manager	Trevor Hay
Production Stage Manager	Gigi Garcia

Performance Schedule

Monday	No performances
Tuesday – Friday	8:00pm
Saturday	3:00pm; 8:00pm
Sunday	2:00pm; 7:00pm

Ticket Info

The ticket price for preview performances is \$62 and the price for the regular run is currently \$67. Tickets are on sale now at the Geffen Playhouse box office, via phone at **310-208-5454** or online at www.geffenplayhouse.com.

Biographies

MONA GOLABEK (Performer)

American concert pianist Mona Golabek has appeared at the Hollywood Bowl, the Kennedy Center and the Royal Festival Hall alongside major orchestras worldwide. A Grammy nominee, she has been the recipient of numerous awards including the Avery Fisher Prize and the People's Award of the International Chopin Competition, and has been the subject of several PBS television documentaries. Ms. Golabek is the creator and voice of *The Romantic Hours*, a syndicated radio program which combines classical music with readings of poetry, letters, and stories, and is heard on 80 stations and XM Satellite Radio. Ms. Golabek and her family are founders of the non-profit, Hold On To Your Music, which spreads the message of the power of the arts, especially music, to embolden the human spirit. In addition, Ms. Golabek and Lee Cohen are award-winning authors of *The Children of Willesden Lane*, the book upon which *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* is based.

HERSHEY FELDER (Adaptation/Director)

Broadway, London's West End: *George Gershwin Alone* (Helen Hayes Theatre, Duchess Theatre). Regional and international appearances of "Composers Sonata" (1999-2012) – *George Gershwin Alone*, *Monsieur Chopin*, *Beethoven, As I Knew Him*, and *Maestro: The Art of Leonard Bernstein* - include Old Globe Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, Geffen Playhouse, Laguna Playhouse, Ford's Theatre, Cleveland Playhouse, Pasadena Playhouse, American Repertory Theatre, Hartford Stage, Ravinia Festival, Chicago's Royal George Theatre, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Prince Music Theatre, The Gilmore International Keyboard Festival, Uijeongbu Theatre Festival (South Korea) and many others, as well as a command performance of *Monsieur Chopin* for the Polish Ambassador to the United States, Polish Embassy, Washington. Winner of 2007 Los Angeles Ovation Awards, Best Musical and Best Actor for *George Gershwin Alone*. Compositions include *Aliyah*, *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*; *Fairytale*, a musical; *Les Anges de Paris*, *Suite for Violin and Piano*; *Song Settings*, poetry by Vachel Lindsay; *Saltimbanques for Piano and Orchestra*; *Etudes Thematiques for Piano*; *LINCOLN: An American Story*, for actor and orchestra. Recordings include *Love Songs of the Yiddish Theatre*, *Back from Broadway*, *George Gershwin Alone* and *Monsieur Chopin* for the WFMT Radio Network Recordings label, *Beethoven, As I Knew Him* and *LINCOLN: An American Story* for the Eighty Eight Entertainment label. Worldwide live broadcasts, *George Gershwin Alone*, July 2005 and May 2011. Current projects include a new musical, *LINCOLN: An American Story*, recorded with Chicago's Ars Viva Symphony conducted by Alan Heatherington, which had its staged world premiere at the Pasadena Playhouse in March 2012. Mr. Felder has been a Scholar in Residence at Harvard University's Department of Music and is married to Kim Campbell, former Prime Minister of Canada.

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 second productions, 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 was founded by Gilbert Cates, and is currently helmed by 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.

LISTING EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

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