

## JAMES BARBOUR LEADS CAST DOWN NIGHTMARE ALLEY

*Jonathan Brielle's World Premiere Musical Directed by Gilbert Cates Features  
Melody Butiu, Larry Cedar, Michael McCarty, Mary Gordon Murray,  
Anise E. Ritchie, Leslie Stevens and Alet Taylor*

*Opening Night - Wednesday April 21*

LOS ANGELES, February 23, 2010 — Broadway veteran **James Barbour** (*A Tale of Two Cities*, *Assassins*, *Urinetown*) leads a colorful cast of characters in the world premiere musical ***Nightmare Alley*** opening at the Geffen Playhouse on **April 21, 2010**. With music, books and lyrics by New York-based composer **Jonathan Brielle** and helmed by Geffen Playhouse Producing Director **Gilbert Cates**, *Nightmare Alley* is a dark musical set against the shadowy world of the traveling carnivals and tented churches that dominated the Dust Bowl era.

Based on the eponymous novel by William Lindsay Gresham (which was later turned into a film with Tyrone Power and Joan Blondell), *Nightmare Alley* plays upon fate, free-will and the consequences that await when you make the wrong choice. **James Barbour** stars as Stan, the con turned carnie and back again, who falls in love with Molly, the dark darling of the traveling carnival (the role of Molly is yet to be cast and will be announced shortly). But there are many other side shows to this story: Zeena and Pete, the vaudeville stars now relegated to side show cons – played by **Mary Gordon Murray** (Broadway's *Footloose*, *Into the Woods*, *Coastal Disturbances*) and LA theater favorite **Larry Cedar** (The Colony's *Celadine*, Reprise's *She Loves Me* [Ovation Award Winner], HBO's *Deadwood*), respectively. The gruffly compassionate carnival boss **Clem**, played by musical theater maven **Michael McCarty** (Broadway's *To Be or Not to Be*, *Mary Poppins*, *Oklahoma*); and, with fate and fortune at the center of this gritty tale, four uniquely charming tarot ladies – played by **Melody Butiu**, **Leslie Stevens**, **Anise E. Ritchie** and **Alet Taylor** – act as the musical's chorus.

"When I first read the novel, I was so struck by the question of how someone sinks so low as to become part of a carnival freak show that I felt the need to put this story to music," said creator Jonathan Brielle. "After working closely with the Gresham estate and in recent years collaborating with Gil, I feel like we are truly ready to raise the big top and watch these fantastic characters come to life in all their revelry and tragedy on the Geffen stage."

*Nightmare Alley* plays on the Geffen Playhouse's main stage from April 21 to May 23, with a week of preview performances from April 13 to 20.

### **NIGHTMARE ALLEY**

Music, Lyrics and Book by Jonathan Brielle

Directed by Gilbert Cates

Previews: Tuesday, April 13 – Tuesday, April 20

Opening Night: Wednesday, April 21

Closing Night: Sunday, May 23

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**Cast**

James Barbour	Stan Carlisle
Melody Butiu	Tarot Lady
Larry Cedar	Pete/Sheriff/Addie Peabody
Michael McCarty	Clem/ Ezra Grumble
Mary Gordan Murray	Zeena/ Dr. Lilith Ritter
Anise E. Ritchie	Tarot Lady
Leslie Stevens	Tarot Lady
Alet Taylor	Tarot Lady
TBA	Molly Cahill

**Production Credits**

Musical Director	Gerald Sternbach
Set Designer	John Arnone
Costume Designer	Christina Haatainen Jones
Lighting Designer	Daniel Ionazzi
Sound Designer	Brian Hsieh
Production Stage Manager	Mary Michele Miner

**Performance Schedule**

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

**Ticket Info**

Ticket prices range from \$35 - \$55 for preview performances and from \$45 - \$75 for the regular run. Tickets are on sale now at the Geffen Playhouse box office at 310-208-5454 or online at [www.geffenplayhouse.com](http://www.geffenplayhouse.com).

**JAMES BARBOUR** (*Stan Carlisle*)

Starred on Broadway *A Tale of Two Cities* (Sydney Carton, Drama Desk, Outer Critics, Drama League Nominations, Sarasota Best Actor Award), *Carousel* (Billy Bigelow), *Jane Eyre* (Rochester, Drama League Nomination), *Beauty and the Beast* (Beast), *Urinetown* (Lockstock), *Assassins* (Czolgosz), and *Cyrano*. 'Lancelot' in *Camelot* opposite Jeremy Irons (Hollywood Bowl)/ Michael York (National Tour). Other; *Lewis and Clark* (Mark Taper Forum), *20th Century* (Signature Theatre), *Back From Broadway* (Garland Award), *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* (Ovation Award Nomination). Television/Film: *Alchemy*, *Eight Crazy Nights*, *ED*, *Sex In The City*, *Just Shoot Me*, *The District*, *That's Life*, *The Game*, *Some Enchanted Evening*, *The American Experience* and *John and Abigail Adams*.

**JONATHAN BRIELLE** (*Playwright, Composer and Lyricist*)

BROADWAY: *Foxfire* (words & music); OFF-BROADWAY: Composer in Residence Circle Rep, NYC, includes: *Besides Herself* (music & lyrics) The Great Grandson of Jedidiah Kohler (music & lyrics); REGIONAL: *Himself & Nora* (book, music, lyrics) – Recipient of the National Endowment Award at The Old Globe in San Diego; The Mill Theater, Dublin; TOURS: *Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus*; *Rugrats*; *Goosebumps*; LAS VEGAS: *MadHattan* - New York, New York Hotel (book, music, lyrics); *Enter The Night* - 12 years at the legendary Stardust Hotel (book, music, lyrics); HONORS: Former National Projects Director of the Songwriters Guild of America and currently Executive Committee Member of the Johnny Mercer Foundation, devoted to preserving and celebrating the great American Songbook in the tradition of Johnny Mercer. For more see [www.jonathanbrielle.com](http://www.jonathanbrielle.com).

**MELODY BUTIU** (*Tarot Lady*)

Butiu is returning to the Geffen Playhouse where she last performed in Donald Margulies' *Shipwrecked! An Entertainment*. Theatre includes: *Long Story Short* (San Diego Rep), *Shipwrecked!* (South Coast Rep and Actors Theatre of Louisville), *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow* (SCR and Actors Theatre of Phoenix), *Hippolytos* (Getty Villa), *Long Season* (Perseverance Theatre), *36 Views* (Geva Theatre, Portland Center Stage, and Laguna Playhouse), *A Perfect Wedding* (Kirk Douglas Theatre), *Hair* (Reprise!), *The Theory of Everything* (Singapore Rep/East West Players), *Golden Child* (EWP), *Dogeaters* and *Boy* (La Jolla Playhouse). TV includes: *Desperate Housewives*, *Samantha Who*, *Cold Case*, *Without a Trace*, *Rules of Engagement*, *Scrubs*, and *Strong Medicine*. She received her MFA from UC San Diego.

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**GIL CATES** (*Director*)

Gil Cates is the founder and producing director of the Geffen Playhouse, for which he directed *A Picasso*, *Paint Your Wagon*, *Under the Blue Sky* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. In addition to his role at the theater, he currently serves as Treasurer of the Directors Guild of America where he previously served two terms as President from 1983 to 1987. In 1989, he received the Guild's Robert B. Aldrich Award for extraordinary service and in 1991, he received the DGA's Honorary Life Membership. He also served as Dean of the UCLA School of Theater Film and Television (which he founded) from 1990-1998. In 2008, Cates produced the 80th Annual Academy Awards show for ABC, his 14th occasion producing the Awards, for which he has already garnered 84 nominations and 17 Emmy Awards.

**LARRY CEDAR** (*Pete/Sheriff/Addie Peabody*)

Cedar just received rave reviews for his performance as King Charles in *Celadine* at the Colony Theater. Also at the Colony, *Billy Bishop Goes to War*, *Around the World in 80 Days*, *Accomplice*, and *Stage Struck*. Other Theater: Reprise! Production's *She Loves Me* (Ovation Award Winner; Best Featured Actor in a Musical), *L'il Abner* (Ovation Award Nominee), *Anything Goes* (Ovation Award Nominee), *On the Town*, *Brigadoon*, *1776 the Musical* and *They're Playing Our Song*. In addition to starring as Hoagy Carmichael in the Mark Taper Forum production of *Hoagy, Bix and Wolfgang Beethoven Bunkhaus*, Larry has appeared in *It's A Wonderful Life* (Laguna Playhouse), *Twelve Angry Men* (The Complex), *Let's Call the Whole Thing Gershwin* and *Billy Barne's Movie Star* (Westwood Playhouse), and Garry Trudeau's *Rapmaster Ronnie* (Odyssey Theater). Larry recurred for three seasons as Leon, the opium-addicted card dealer in the HBO hit series *Deadwood*, and for six seasons on the Children's Television Workshop's *Square One TV*. Film work includes *The Crazies*, *Towelhead*, *Hollywoodland*, *National Treasure 2*, *Constantine*, *Feds*, *Duck*, and *Fear & Loathing in Las Vegas*. Other Television: *House M.D.*, *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles*, *The Riches*, *Without a Trace*, *Alias*, *The Closer*, *Stargate*, *NCIS*, *The Shield*, *Charmed*, *Enterprise*, *Frasier*, *The Gilmore Girls*, and *Boston Legal*.

**MICHAEL MCCARTY** (*Clem/Ezra Grimble*)

As well as performing in over 100 regional theater productions, Michael McCarty's Theater Credits include Broadway: *To Be or Not to Be*, *Mary Poppins*, *Oklahoma!*, *42nd Street*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Big River*. Off Broadway: *Lucky Stiff*, *Assassins*. National Tours: *Pippin*, *1776*, *Greater Tuna* and *Phantom*. Television Credits include *ER*, *Crossing Jordan* and *3<sup>rd</sup> Rock from the Sun*. Film credits: *Legend of Bagger Vance*, *Dudley Do Right*, *Dunston Checks In*.

**MARY GORDON MURRAY** (*Zeena/Dr. Lilith Ritter*)

Theater credits- Broadway: *Footloose*, *Into the Woods*, *Coastal Disturbances*, *Little Me*. Off Broadway: *The Spitfire Grill*, *A...My Name is Alice*, *The Knife*, *Terry by Terry*, *Merrily We Roll Along*. TV includes: *Cry Baby Lane*, *Love and Betrayel*, *Rockabye*, *Daytime*, *One Life to Live*, *Episodic* and *Nip/Tuck*. Film credits include: *Junior*, *Born Yesterday*, *My Boyfriends Back*, *Evolver*.

**ANISE E. RITCHIE** (*Tarot Lady*)

Anise started performing in Portland, Oregon as Crystal in *Little Shop of Horrors* and at the Ashland's famed Shakespeare Theatre. Theatre credits San Diego: The Old Globe Theatre: *Sammy*, *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* (Auntie Who 07, 08, 09). National Tours: *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Menopause The Musical*. San Francisco Bay Area credits: TheatreWorks *Once on this Island* (Euzlie) *Caroline or Change* (Moon) *Sparks*, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre *Dance On Widows Row*, (Simone), *Blue* (Peggy), Woodmeister Theatre: *Sophisticated Ladies* (Phylis Hyman), *Ain't Misbehavin'*, Townsend Light Opera *Showboat* (Julie), California Conservatory, *A Grand Night for Singing*, *Smoky Joe's Cafe* (BJ), Sierra Reporatory Theatre: *Beehive*, San Francisco Workshop: *AfterShocks*. European Gospel Tour: Emmitt Powell and the Gospel Elites (lead singer) , New Beginnings Gospel (lead singer). Anise has performed the National Anthem for the Golden State Warriors for 4 years in Oakland, California. She has appeared in many television commercials and has recorded many radio spots. Anise is proud to be a member of Actor's Equity Association.

**LESLIE STEVENS** (*Tarot Lady*)

On Broadway, Leslie originated the role of Anne in *La Cage Aux Folles* and appeared in *Victor/Victoria* with the delightful Julie Andrews. Her Off-Broadway credits include: James Lapine's *Twelve Dreams* at Lincoln Center, *Most Happy Fella* with New York City Opera, *My Fair Lady* with Kelsey Grammar & Kelli O'Hara at the New York Philharmonic, and *MacBeth* with The Shakespeare Project as Lady MacDuff. Regionally, she appeared in *Comedy of Errors* at Actor's Theatre of Louisville, as Miranda in *The Tempest* at North Shore, and in *CAN CAN & Ray*

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*Charles LIVE!* at the Pasadena Playhouse. Ms. Stevens played "Charity" in *Sweet Charity* for Austin Musical Theatre and Downtown Cabaret Theatre in Connecticut, both directed by Scott Thompson. She was acknowledged with two Best Actress Awards for that role and a Connecticut Critic's Circle nomination. Leslie was part of the original cast of *DIVORCE the Musical* at the Hudson Theatre in Hollywood in 2009, which received 5 Ovation nominations. She's a proud alumnae of the fabulous Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, the Shakespeare LAB at the Public Theatre in New York City, and part of Los Angeles Opera's excellent Education & Community Programs Department. Recent TV appearances include *Criminal Minds*, *True Blood*, *Dollhouse* and *Close to Home*. Leslie won a Best Supporting Actress Awards at the Action on Film Festival 09 for the short "Charlie Thistle".

**ALET TAYLOR** (*Tarot Lady*)

Alet Taylor recently played Miss Adelaide in *Guys & Dolls* at Cabrillo Music Theatre and was Hold Me/Touch Me in Mel Brooks' *The Producers* at the Paris Hotel in Las Vegas after playing Lick Me/Bite Me in the first national tour of *The Producers*. She played Yanni the alien in *The Brain from Planet X* at NYMF in New York and has twice performed at Carnegie Hall, in George Gershwin's *Tip-Toes* and *Louisiana Purchase*. She has performed four times in the Encore Series in New York, in *Lil Abner*, *One Touch of Venus*, *Sweet Adeline*, and *Boys from Syracuse*. She has also been a featured soloist on 13 Varese Sarabande albums including *Sondheim in the Movies* and *Lost in Boston*.

**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 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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