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GUILD HALL

GUILD HALL'S JOHN DREW THEATER IN ASSOCIATION WITH CREATIVE ALLIANCE TO PRESENT
A VIRTUAL READING OF NEW PLAY *SQUEAKY* BY JEFF COHEN

Sunday, March 28 at 7:30pm EST



February 25, 2021—East Hampton, NY — Guild Hall has announced today The John Drew Theater in association with Baltimore’s Creative Alliance will present a virtual reading of ***SQUEAKY***, a new play by **Jeff Cohen**. The production, which will premiere on Guild Hall’s YouTube channel on **Sunday, March 28 at 7:30pm EST**, is directed by **Bob Balaban** and features a multi-award-winning cast including **Jessica Hecht, Marc Kudisch, LaTanya Richardson Jackson, Ben Shenkman, and Harris Yulin**.

Drama Desk Award winner Jeff Cohen (*The Soap Myth*, *The Man Who Ate Michael Rockefeller*) has penned an audacious autobiographical comedy about his eccentric father, Stan "Squeaky" Cohen. Squeaky is the man who was banned from every Old Country Buffet in the metro Baltimore area – for stealing cake. He can't remember where he lost his car. He lives in Baltimore's most crime-ridden neighborhood in a ramshackle house that is a city inspection away from being condemned – and refuses to move. His son Jeff is a writer living in New York who finds himself battling his older brother Rob, a charmer with a felonious past for drug trafficking, over what is best for their father. He is being forced to reckon with childhood events he's spent a lifetime trying to forget. At its core, *SQUEAKY* is about wrestling with end-of-life issues while maintaining your sense of humor.

"When I was writing the play I was flooded with memories," says playwright Jeff Cohen. "Capturing my father on the page felt like he was there with me, over my shoulder, speaking to me, making me laugh. I felt a combination of sadness that he was gone and happiness that, just by thinking of him, I could conjure him and keep him alive. Writing the play gave me something very precious - the gift of spending more time with him."

The play, originally titled *Squeaky Cohen*, was developed at E.A.T. (Emerging Artists Theatre) as part of their New Work Series.

This program is **free of charge** with the option to make an additional donation to Guild Hall. **Registration Required** – A link to access the program will be emailed 24 hours prior to those who register.

JEFF COHEN has been an actor, playwright, producer and director during his four-decade award-winning theater career. His work has won every major theatrical award short of the Tony, including the Drama Desk, Lucille Lortel, Drama League, Outer Critics, Obie and AUDELCO. He won a special 2002 Drama Desk Award for *The Tribeca Playhouse Stage Door Canteen*, his response to the tragedy of 9/11 in which stars from Broadway came downtown to entertain "the troops," the rescue and recovery workers at Ground Zero. His plays include *The Soap Myth* (starring Ed Asner and Tovah Feldshuh), *The Man Who Ate Michael Rockefeller* (Critics Pick in New York Times and Time Out New York) and *Men of Clay* (Best New Play 2005 in The City Paper, Critics Pick in Time Out New York). He may be best known for his contemporary American adaptations of such classic plays as *Uncle Vanya/Uncle Jack*, *Woyzeck/Whoa-Jack!*, *Tartuffe* and *The Seagull/The Hamptons* whose various productions have featured such actors as Laura Linney, Tammy Grimes, D.B. Sweeney, Marin Hinkle, Chris Collet and Neal Huff.

Guild Hall Academy member **BOB BALABAN** is an award-winning actor, director and producer of theater and film. He received an Oscar nomination as producer of *Gosford Park* for which he also won the BAFTA. He has been honored with a Drama Desk Award, a Tony Award nomination and three Primetime Emmy Award nominations. As an actor, Balaban's feature film credits range from *Midnight Cowboy* to *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* to *Absence of Malice* to *Bob Roberts* to the Christopher Guest comedies *Waiting for Guffman*, *Best in Show*, *A Mighty Wind* and *For Your Consideration*. Among his dozens of TV credits he played fictional NBC President Russell Dalrymple on *Seinfeld*.

HARRIS YULIN portrays Squeaky Cohen. In his 50-year career Yulin, also a Guild Hall Academy Member, has become one of the world's most sought after and recognizable character actors with blockbuster films like "*Clear and Present Danger*," "*Ghostbusters 2*," and "*Training Day*," classic TV movies like "*The Missiles of October*" and "*Victory at Entebbe*", guest star in such series as "*Kojak*," "*Frazier*" (Emmy nomination), "*Cagney & Lacey*" and "*Murphy Brown*" and co-star in such series as "*24*," "*How the West Was Won*," "*Ozark*," and "*Billions*."

MARC KUDISCH, a three-time Tony award nominee, will play the role of Jeff Cohen. Kudisch has starred in over a dozen Broadway shows including *Girl From the North Country*, *The Great Society*, *Finding Neverland*, *Hand To God*, *Assassins* and *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. Marc's TV credits include Dr. Gus on "*Billions*", Ty Rathbone on "*The Tick*" and Henry Mitchell on "*House of Cards*."

BEN SHENKMAN, portraying Rob Cohen, received a Tony Award nomination for the play "*Proof*" and a Golden Globe and Emmy Award nomination for "*Angels in America*." Ben starred as Curtis Gates in "*Damages*," Jeremiah Sacani in "*Royal Pains*," Roger Gunn in "*For the People*," Roger Swindell in "*Curb Your Enthusiasm*," and Ira Schirmer in "*Billions*." He recently starred as Leonard Weinglass in Aaron Sorkin's feature film "*The Trial of the Chicago Seven*."

LATANYA RICHARDSON JACKSON will play the role of Connie Pryor, Squeaky's long time roommate and caretaker. Jackson received a 2014 Tony award nomination for *A Raisin in the Sun* opposite Denzel Washington. She co-starred in such blockbuster films as "*U.S. Marshals*," "*Sleepless in Seattle*," and "*Malcolm X*". LaTanya is married to Samuel L. Jackson.

Jeff and Rob's estranged mother Sandy Fendell will be played by **JESSICA HECHT**. Hecht was nominated for a primetime Emmy Award for the Netflix series *Special* and received a nomination for a Tony Award for *A View from The Bridge* opposite Scarlett Johansson and Liev Schreiber. Among her numerous TV credits, she most notably played Susan Bunch, the wife of Ross Geller's ex-wife, in *Friends*.

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ABOUT CREATIVE ALLIANCE

The Creative Alliance builds communities by bringing together artists and audiences from diverse backgrounds to experience spectacular arts and education programs and engage in the creative process. We provide support to area artists, promote Baltimore as a center for creative production, act as a positive force in our community, and advocate for cultural expression rooted in a sense of place. For more info visit creativealliance.org.

ABOUT GUILD HALL

Guild Hall, one of the first multidisciplinary centers in the country to combine a museum, theater, and education space under one roof, was established in 1931 as a gathering place for community where an appreciation for the arts would serve to encourage greater civic participation. For nine decades, Guild Hall has embraced this open-minded vision and provided a welcoming environment for the public to engage with art exhibitions, performances, and educational offerings. Art and artists have long been the engine of Guild Hall's activities and the institution continues to find innovative ways to support creativity in everyone.

For more information about this and other programs, visit guildhall.org.