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For immediate release.

**PERFORMANCES HAVE BEGUN FOR SAMUEL BECKETT'S
"HAPPY DAYS" FEATURING DIANNE WIEST
AT THE MARK TAPER FORUM THROUGH JUNE 30, 2019**

The Yale Repertory Theatre production of Samuel Beckett's classic "**Happy Days**" has begun performances at Center Theatre Group/Mark Taper Forum. Directed by **James Bundy**, the production features Academy Award winner **Dianne Wiest** ("Hannah and Her Sisters," "Bullets Over Broadway") as Winnie and **Michael Rudko** as Willie. Currently in previews, "Happy Days" will play at the Mark Taper Forum through June 30, 2019, with the opening set for May 22 at 8 p.m.

The design team includes scenic designer **Izmir Ickbal**, costume designer **Alexae Visel**, lighting designer **Stephen Strawbridge** and sound designer **Kate Marvin**. **Catherine Sheehy** and **Nahuel Telleria** serve as dramaturgs and the production stage manager is **Kelly Montgomery**.

Samuel Beckett's absurdist masterpiece "Happy Days" centers on Winnie (played by Wiest). With her husband Willie (played by Rudko) increasingly out of reach and the earth itself threatening to swallow her whole, Winnie's buoyant optimism shields her from the harsh glare of the inevitable in this absurdly funny and boundlessly compassionate portrait of the human spirit. Winnie is considered modern drama's pinnacle female role. She is an endlessly fascinating spirit of cheery resourcefulness and unassuming grace in the face of inevitable oblivion in a play Wiest refers to as "Hamlet" for women.

Jesse Green of the New York Times said, "Ms. Wiest's Winnie is more like nature's plaything, knocked about and childlike. Several times I thought I recognized in her skittishness the affect of an abused woman, clinging to what abuses her, which in this case is life." He adds, "She shows us what a deeply womanly role Beckett has written, albeit one whose tragedy is refracted through a distorting comic lens. She finds laughs not only in the words but also in the gaps between.

Dianne Wiest's New York theatre credits include "Rasheeda Speaking" (The New Group), "The Cherry Orchard" (Classic Stage Company), Arthur Miller's "All My Sons" on Broadway, "The Seagull" (CSC), "Third," "Memory House," "Salome" and "Oedipus" with Al Pacino, "The Shawl," "Hunting Cockroaches," "After the Fall," "Beyond Therapy" and "The Art of Dining." For Yale Rep, she previously appeared in "Hedda Gabler" and "A Doll House." Her film credits include "Five Nights in Maine," "Sisters," "The Humbling," "Synecdoche, New York," "A Guide to Recognizing Your Saints," "Hannah and Her Sisters" (Academy Award), "The Purple Rose of Cairo" "Radio Days," "September," "Bullets Over Broadway" (Academy Award), "Parenthood" (Academy Award nomination), "Rabbit Hole," "Footloose," "Edward Scissorhands" and "The Birdcage." She received Emmy Awards for

her performances in “The Road to Avonlea” and the HBO series “In Treatment” and currently appears in the CBS series “Life in Pieces.”

The Los Angeles engagement of “Happy Days” is generously supported in part by Ruth Flinkman-Marandy and Ben Marandy.

Center Theatre Group, one of the nation’s preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles’ leading nonprofit theatre company, which, under Artistic Director Michael Ritchie, programs seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1600 to 2100-seat Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the 317-seat Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. In addition to presenting and producing the broadest range of theatrical entertainment in the country, Center Theatre Group is one of the nation’s leading producers of ambitious new works through commissions and world premiere productions and a leader in interactive community engagement and education programs that reach across generations, demographics and circumstance to serve Los Angeles.

Tickets are available online at CenterTheatreGroup.org, by calling Audience Services at (213) 628-2772 or in person at the Center Theatre Group Box Office (at the Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles). Tickets range from \$32 – \$115 (ticket prices are subject to change). The Mark Taper Forum is located at The Music Center, 135 N. Grand Avenue in Downtown L.A. 90012.

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May 17, 2019