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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CAST ANNOUNCED FOR GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE WEST COAST PREMIERE OF
*LIGHTS OUT: NAT "KING" COLE***

NOW EXTENDED THROUGH MARCH 17

FEATURING DULÉ HILL AS NAT "KING" COLE

**ADDITIONAL CAST INCLUDES GISELA ADISA, CONNOR AMACIO MATTHEWS, BRYAN DOBSON,
RUBY LEWIS, ZONYA LOVE, MARCIA RODD, BRANDON RUITER AND DANIEL J. WATTS**

PREVIEWS BEGIN FEBRUARY 5 - OPENING NIGHT IS FEBRUARY 13

LOS ANGELES (December 19, 2018) – Geffen Playhouse today announced the full cast for its production of *Lights Out: Nat "King" Cole*, written by Tony and Olivier Award nominee **Colman Domingo** (*Summer: The Donna Summer Musical*, *If Beale Street Could Talk*, *Fear the Walking Dead*) and **Patricia McGregor** (*Place*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Skeleton Crew*), directed by Patricia McGregor and featuring Emmy Award nominee **Dulé Hill** (*Bring in 'da Noise*, *Bring in 'da Funk*; *The West Wing*; *Psych*) as Nat "King" Cole. This marks the West Coast premiere for the production, which made its world premiere in 2017 at People's Light, one of Pennsylvania's largest professional non-profit theaters. Under the auspices of the Geffen Playhouse, the production from People's Light has been further workshopped, songs have been added and the play has continued to evolve.

In addition to Hill, the cast features **Gisela Adisa** (*Beautiful*, *Sister Act*) as Eartha Kitt and others; **Connor Amacio Matthews** (*In the Flow with Connor Amacio*) as Billy Preston and others; **Bryan Dobson** (*Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Rocky Horror Show*) as Producer and others; **Ruby Lewis** (*Marilyn! The New Musical*, *Jersey Boys*) as Betty Hutton, Peggy Lee and others; **Zonya Love** (*Emma and Max*, *The Color Purple*) as Perlina and others; **Marcia Rodd** (*Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, *Shelter*) as Candy and others; **Brandon Ruter** (*Sex with Strangers*, *A Picture of Dorian Gray*) as Stage Manager and others; and **Daniel J. Watts** (*Hamilton*, *In the Heights*) as Sammy Davis Jr.

Previews for *Lights Out: Nat "King" Cole* begin Tuesday, February 5 in the Gil Cates Theater at the Geffen Playhouse, with opening night on Wednesday, February 13. The production has been extended for one week and will close on Sunday, March 17, which also marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Nat "King" Cole.

In this electrifying exploration into the soul of an American icon, Colman Domingo and Patricia McGregor imagine Nat "King" Cole as he faces the final Christmastime broadcast of his groundbreaking variety show and weighs the advice of his friend Sammy Davis Jr. to "go out with a bang." Cole's hit

songs, such as “Nature Boy,” “It’s a Good Day” and “Smile,” underscore this boldly original homage to the renowned performer who struggled to break through America’s color barrier in the early days of television.

Lights Out: Nat "King" Cole was originally commissioned and produced by People's Light, Malvern, PA. Abigail Adams, Artistic Director/CEO; Ellen Anderson, General Manager/CFO; Zak Berkman, Producing Director. The original development and premiere of *Lights Out: Nat "King" Cole* was supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.

LIGHTS OUT: NAT “KING” COLE

Written by **Colman Domingo and Patricia McGregor**

Directed by **Patricia McGregor**

Music Supervision, Arrangements & Orchestrations by **John McDaniel**

Previews: Tuesday, February 5 – Tuesday, February 12, 2019

Opening Night: Wednesday, February 13, 2019

Closing Night: Sunday, March 17, 2019

CAST

Gisela Adisa as Eartha Kitt and others

Connor Amacio Matthews as Billy Preston and others

Bryan Dobson as Producer and others

Dulé Hill as Nat King Cole

Ruby Lewis as Betty Hutton, Peggy Lee and others

Zonya Love as Perlina and others

Marcia Rodd as Candy and others

Brandon Ruiter as Stage Manager and others

Daniel J. Watts as Sammy Davis Jr.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Set Design by **Clint Ramos and Ryan Howell**

Costume Designer **Katherine O’Neill**

Lighting Designer **Alan C. Edwards**

Sound Designer **Alex Hawthorn**

Music Director/Conductor **David Witham**

Choreographer **Edgar Godineaux**

Tap and Additional Choreography **Jared Grimes**

Associate Director **Dennis Whitehead Darling**

Production Stage Manager **Ross Jackson**

Assistant Stage Manager **Lindsay Lowy**

Casting Director **Phyllis Schuringa, CSA**

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Monday No performance

Tuesday – Friday 8:00 p.m.

Saturday 3:00 and 8:00 p.m.

Sunday 2:00 and 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION

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

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets currently priced at \$30.00 - \$120.00. Available in person at the Geffen Playhouse box office, by phone at 310.208.5454 or online at www.geffenplayhouse.org. Fees may apply.

Rush tickets for each day's performance are made available to the general public 30 minutes before showtime at the box office. \$35.00 General / \$10.00 Student

COLLEGE AUDIENCES

Through a variety of events and other opportunities, the Geffen Playhouse welcomes college students to experience the live storytelling presented on our stages. We are proud of our association with UCLA's School of Theater, Film, and Television, and open our doors to all college students throughout Los Angeles. More information is available at www.geffenplayhouse.org/college.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Colman Domingo (Playwright)

A Tony, Olivier, Drama Desk and Drama League Award nominated artist, Mr. Domingo's plays include *Dot* (Samuel French), *Wild with Happy* (Dramatist Play Service) and *A Boy and His Soul* (Oberon Books), among others. He co-wrote the Broadway musical *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical*. His work has been produced by the Public Theater, Vineyard Theatre, Humana Festival of New American Plays, New York Stage and Film, A.C.T, Tricycle Theatre in London, Brisbane Powerhouse in Australia, among others. He is the recipient of a Lucille Lortel, Obie, Audelco and GLAAD Award. His theater career of over 26 years spans the West End, Broadway, Off-Broadway, Australia, France and regional theaters across America. The multi-hyphenate has two television series in the works for AMC and HBO, which he will executive produce and write. He stars in the Golden Globe-nominated film *If Beale Street Could Talk* and on television on AMC's *Fear the Walking Dead*.

Patricia McGregor (Playwright, Director)

Patricia McGregor is a director and writer from St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. She has been profiled by *The New York Times* three times for her direction of world premieres. Recent credits include *Place* (world premiere at BAM Next Wave Festival), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (The Old Globe), *Skeleton Crew* (Geffen Playhouse), *Lights Out: Nat "King" Cole* (People's Light), *Skeleton Crew* (Studio Theatre), *Measure for Measure* (The Old Globe), *The Parchman Hour* (Guthrie Theater), *Hamlet* (Public Theater), *Ugly Lies the Bone* (Roundabout Theatre Company), *brownsville song (b-side for tray)* (Lincoln Center Theater) and the world premieres of *Good Grief* (Center Theatre Group), *Stagger Lee* (Dallas Theater Center), *Hurt Village* (Signature Theatre), *Holding It Down* and *Blood Dazzler* (Harlem Stage) and *The House That Would Not Stand* (Berkeley Rep/Yale Rep). Other credits include *A Raisin in the Sun*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Spunk*, *Becky Shaw*, *Adoration of the Old Woman*, *Four Electric Ghosts* and *Nothing Personal*. She has directed the 24 Hour Plays on Broadway and staged readings for HBO's writer's Access program. She was a Paul & Daisy Soros Fellow at Yale School of Drama where she earned her M.F.A. and served as Artistic Director of the Yale Cabaret.

Gisela Adisa (Eartha Kitt and others)

Gisela Adisa makes her Geffen Playhouse debut. Broadway: *Beautiful* (Lucille). National Tour: *Sister Act* (Michelle, Deloris u/s). Some other credits include *Trial*, directed by Lori Petty at New York's Beckmann

Theatre. Other New York theater credits include *Caroline, or Change* (The Moon) and *Marie Christine* (title role). Regional credits include the world premiere of *Lights Out: Nat "King" Cole* (People's Light), for which she earned a Barrymore nomination for Outstanding Supporting Performance. Gisela recently appeared in *Man of La Mancha* at Westport Country Playhouse (Aldonza), earning a Broadway World nomination for Best Actress. Television/film credits include *Younger*, *Royal Pains*, *Shield* and *Ride by Night*. Gisela holds a B.A. in Drama with an African Studies minor from Fordham University. She is a proud member of the non-profit organizations Broadway Inspirational Voices and Vocal Ease. She thanks her brother Eric for his unbending support. More at www.iamgisela.com. Instagram: @imgisela

Connor Amacio Matthews (Billy Preston and others)

Connor Amacio Matthews, aka Connor Amacio, is a twelve-year old actor, singer, dancer and horseman. He lives in California with his mother Renay Matthews-Delgado and his stepfather Ricardo Delgado. Early recognition by family as a precocious child, equipped with innate willingness to entertain, shaped his affable fit with acting, dancing, rapping and singing. This led to the creation of *In the Flow with Connor Amacio*, his own YouTube show at the age of seven. After professional training, he achieved roles in short movies and commercials. A master at improv and a natural in front of the camera and on stage, Connor loves the arts. He is also a singer and songwriter. He released his anti-bullying song "Buzzin' Bee" in 2018. In his spare time, he plays games with his dad, writes with his grandfather and trains in horseback riding in the English style at TES in Burbank.

Bryan Dobson (Producer and others)

Bryan Dobson is delighted to make his debut at the Geffen. Most recently, he was seen as Santa in *Elf* for Musical Theatre West. European/National Tours: *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Herod), *The Rocky Horror Show* (Brad), *Man of La Mancha* (Tenorio). Regional shows include: *Yankee Doodle Dandy* (Old Lou), *Footloose* (Shaw), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Jacob/Potiphar), *Carrie* (Stephens), *The Spitfire Grill* (Caleb), *Noises Off* (Lloyd), *My Fair Lady* (Higgins), *On Golden Pond* (Bill), *The Diviners* (Ferris). Proud member of Actors Equity. Many thanks to Patricia, Colman, John and the entire Geffen team!

Dulé Hill (Nat "King" Cole)

Dulé Hill can currently be seen in the eighth season of *Suits* (USA). Hill recently appeared in *Ballers* (HBO) and *Doubt* (CBS). He starred in the People's Light production of *Lights Out: Nat "King" Cole*. Hill played Burton "Gus" Guster in *Psych* (USA) for eight seasons, was a producer and was nominated for four NAACP Image Awards for his role, which he revived in the film *Psych: The Movie*. Hill appeared in the Tony Award-nominated musical *After Midnight* (Brooks Atkinson Theatre) and co-starred in the play *Stick Fly* (Cort Theatre). Hill first came to prominence as The Kid in *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk* (Public Theater/Ambassador Theatre). His stage credits also include *Black and Blue* (Minskoff Theatre), *Shenandoah* (Paper Mill Playhouse) and *The Little Rascals* (Goodspeed Opera House). He starred in *Dutchman* (Cherry Lane Theatre) by Amiri Baraka. He is best known as Charlie Young from *The West Wing*. For this, Hill garnered an Emmy Award nomination, four Image Award nominations and two SAG Awards.

Ruby Lewis (Betty Hutton, Peggy Lee and others)

Ruby Lewis has made headlines in New York, Los Angeles, Las Vegas and across the country as a versatile singer, actress and dancer. She starred as Indigo in *Cirque du Soleil's* premiere Broadway show *Paramour*, which led to features on *Nightline*, *Build Series* and two *Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parades*. Most recently, Ruby played the title role in *Marilyn! The New Musical* at the Paris Theater in Las Vegas, backed by the Marilyn Monroe Estate. Prior to *Marilyn*, Ruby had become known for the role of Daisy in the critically-acclaimed production of *BAZ* as a member of the Los Angeles-based company

"For the Record." National Tours: *Gypsy, Grease, Jersey Boys, We Will Rock You*. Television: *Girl Meets World, Masters of Sex, Heart of Dixie, Desperate Housewives, Entertainment Tonight*, among others. She performs her own one-woman show *A Golden Hour* across the country, soon in Los Angeles. Stay up to date: www.rubylewis.com Instagram: @rubylewla.

Zonya Love (Perlina and others)

Zonya Love is elated to make her debut at the Geffen Playhouse with *Lights Out: Nat "King" Cole*. She was recently seen in the Todd Solondz play *Emma and Max* at The Flea Theater in New York City. Some favorite credits include Broadway: *The Color Purple* (Celie). Off-Broadway: *Avenue Q* (Gary Coleman), first National Tour of *Avenue Q, The Devil's Music* (Bessie Smith at Milwaukee Rep), *Dreamgirls* (Effie at Theatre Under the Stars), *The Wiz* (Evilene at Maltz Jupiter Theatre), *The Parchman Hour* (Lucretia Collins/Others at Guthrie Theater), *Sister Act* (Deloris Van Cartier at Broadway at Music Circus), *Intimate Apparel* (Mayme at Nevada Conservatory). Television: *Blue Bloods, Smash, The David Letterman Show*. Proud member of Broadway Inspirational Voices Romans 8! www.zonyalove.com @lovezonya on IG & Twitter.

Marcia Rodd (Candy and others)

Marcia made her Broadway debut in *Oh What a Lovely War!*, played Olivia in *Your Own Thing* and Bobbi Michelle in Neil Simon's hit *Last of the Red Hot Lovers* and received a Tony nomination for her starring role in the musical *Shelter*. In Los Angeles, she played the title role in *Driving Miss Daisy* and starred in *Agnes of God, The Last of Mrs. Lincoln, Once In a Lifetime* (Mark Taper Forum), *On Golden Pond* (Ahmanson Theatre) and *Fiddler on the Roof* (Dorothy Chandler Pavilion). She guest-starred in countless television shows and had recurring roles in *Trapper John M.D., 21 Jump Street, Family Law* and *13 Queens Blvd*. Films include *Little Murders, T.R. Baskin* and *Handle With Care*. She portrayed Diana Vreeland in *Full Gallop* at the Actors' Theatre of Louisville, starred in *Remember Me?* in Kansas City and fulfilled a childhood dream of playing Anna in *The King & I*.

Brandon Ruitter (Stage Manager and others)

Brandon Ruitter makes his Geffen Playhouse stage debut after having understudied the 2016 production of *Sex with Strangers*. He spent much of his professional career on stages in Chicago, where he is a company member with The House Theatre of Chicago. Los Angeles theater: *Failure: A Love Story* (Center Theatre Group, Coeurage Theatre); *A Picture of Dorian Gray* as understudy of Dorian (A Noise Within); *Macbeth* (The Vagrancy ensemble). Film/television: *Gilmore Girls: A Year in the Life* (Netflix), *Into the Storm* (WB), *Crisis* (NBC), *Law and Order: The Menendez Murders* (NBC). Education/training: B.A. in Theatre from Hope College, Holland MI.

Daniel J. Watts (Sammy Davis Jr.)

Daniel is thrilled to make his Geffen Playhouse debut reprising the role of Sammy, for which he won a Barrymore Award. Broadway credits include: *Hamilton, In the Heights* and *Memphis*. Off-Broadway: Suzan-Lori Parks' *Death of the Last Black Man in the Entire World AKA the Negro Book of the Dead* (Signature Theatre), *Whorl Inside A Loop* (Second Stage Theater). Television credits include: NBC's *Blindspot*; HBO's *Boardwalk Empire, The Deuce* and *The Night Of*; CBS' *The Good Wife, Blue Bloods; Broad City* (Comedy Central); and "Felony" in *The Last OG* (TBS). "Daniel J. Watts' The Jam," an homage to his great-grandmother who made homemade jam and gave away what she couldn't eat herself, is a spoken word/storytelling experience where Watts encourages audiences to focus on social similarities opposed to differences. He is featured in the young adult anthology "How I Resist." B.F.A. Graduate Elon University Music Theatre Program. Original work at www.wattswords.com. @dwattswords Instagram and Twitter.

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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 Executive Director Gil Cates, Jr., Artistic Director Matt Shakman and Board Chair Howard Tenenbaum. 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.

www.geffenplayhouse.org

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