

For immediate release

**CENTER THEATRE GROUP AND THE SPRINGHILL COMPANY
TEAM UP TO BRING “FETCH CLAY, MAKE MAN”
TO THE KIRK DOUGLAS THEATRE JUNE 18 THROUGH JULY 16, 2023**

As The SpringHill Company embarks on its first theatrical endeavor in partnership with Center Theatre Group, together the two entertainment companies will bring Will Power’s play about two cultural icons Muhammad Ali and Stepin’ Fetchit to Los Angeles audiences.

Center Theatre Group will work alongside **The SpringHill Company’s** Emmy Award-winning studio team, founded by LeBron James and Maverick Carter, to bring **Will Power’s “Fetch Clay, Make Man”** to the Kirk Douglas Theatre in June. Emmy Award winner **Debbie Allen** will make her Center Theatre Group directorial debut. “Fetch Clay, Make Man” will play June 18 through July 16 in Culver City with the opening set for June 25, 2023. Please note that these are different dates than previously announced.

“We’ve been eager to expand into the world of theatre, but it was imperative to us that our first foray to the stage combines our pillars of creative excellence, empowerment and culture shifting content,” said Philip Byron, SpringHill’s lead producer on the production. “It’s only fitting that we would tell a fresh story about ‘The Greatest of All Time’ after producing our 2020 Emmy-winning documentary ‘What’s My Name: Muhammad Ali’ for HBO. We are equally excited that Will Power’s powerful play sheds a light on Lincoln Perry aka Stepin’ Fetchit, a pioneer in the entertainment industry who we’ve discovered is unknown by a younger generation. Collaborating with Debbie Allen is simply a dream come true, our design team is filled with aces and our partners at Center Theatre Group are the best in the business,” said Byron. “We truly assembled an all-star team for our journey to opening night at the Kirk Douglas Theatre this summer.”

“This partnership with The SpringHill Company proves just how important and vital theatre is to the grand entertainment ecosystem. Center Theatre Group has brought to life many productions that are now part of the theatrical canon, but that can’t be done without partners like The SpringHill Company,” said Center Theatre Group’s Associate Artistic Director Tyrone Davis. “As SpringHill navigates into the world of theatre, we are honored to be collaborating with them on their first theatrical production. Combined with their track record of bringing moving stories to life, Will Power’s poetic writing about two dynamic

figures in history, and Debbie Allen’s expert directing, we know that ‘Fetch Clay, Make Man’ is going to be a knockout success.”

In the days leading up to one of his most anticipated fights, heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali (formerly Cassius Clay) forms an unlikely friendship with the controversial Hollywood star Stepin Fetchit (born Lincoln Perry). With a rhythmic and enticing script by award-winning performer and playwright Will Power and direction by Tony nominated Debbie Allen, “Fetch Clay, Make Man” explores the improbable bond that forms between two drastically different and immensely influential cultural icons. One a vibrant and audacious youth, the other a resentful and widely resented relic — each fighting to form their public personas and shape their legacies amidst the struggle of the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-1960s. This true story is as powerful and poetic as Ali himself while also humorous and irreverent like Fetchit’s signature act. Finding commonality in contradiction, “Fetch Clay, Make Man” examines the true meaning of strength, resilience, and pride.

“I am thrilled to take the reigns as director of Will Power’s dynamic ‘Fetch Clay, Make Man,’ which unearths the real-life relationship between Cassius Clay, the Champion fighter/poet and Stepin Fetchit/Lincoln Perry, the Vaudevillian/comedian, considered the first Black actor to have a successful career in old Hollywood,” shared director Debbie Allen. “The play explores universal themes like racism, politics, sexism, and religion through a mythic realism that is certain to provoke much thought and debate from audiences.”

“‘Fetch Clay, Make Man’ highlights the ebbs and flows of public personas and how one builds a legacy. This will be a rewarding collaboration that I am thrilled to bring to audiences in the intimate Kirk Douglas Theatre,” said playwright Will Power. “‘Fetch Clay, Make Man’ illustrates the vast tensions that exist between a celebrities’ public persona and the complexities of their true selves that bubble and brew underneath. In that sense, it is a very Los Angeles story, as the struggle to craft ones’ own image that actor Stepin Fetchit, movie mogul William Fox and a soon-to-be-icon Muhammad Ali wrestle within the play, still resonate in the 21st century.”

Tickets for “Fetch Clay, Make Man” are currently on sale and start at \$30. They are available through CenterTheatreGroup.org, Audience Services at (213) 628-2772 or in person at the Center Theatre Group Box Offices (at the Ahmanson Theatre) at The Music Center, 135 N. Grand Avenue in Downtown L.A. 90012 or at the Kirk Douglas Theatre (open 2 hours prior to curtain) at 9820 Washington Blvd. in Culver City 90232. Performances run Tuesday through Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sunday at 1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

The SpringHill Company’s Emmy Award-winning studio team, founded by LeBron James and Maverick Carter, develops and produces high-quality sports and entertainment film, audio and theatrical releases with the biggest content creators, networks, streamers, brands and platforms in the world. All studio projects are empowerment led, where content

isn't simply to entertain, but to inspire with thought-provoking themes, conversations and journeys within documentaries and scripted verticals. Studio projects include “The Shop,” “Space Jam: A New Legacy,” “Hustle,” “Turning the Tables with Robin Roberts,” “Recipe for Change,” “Top Boy,” “Self Made: Inspired by the Life of Madam C.J. Walker,” “The Wall,” untitled Nipsey Hussle docuseries, “What’s My Name: Muhammad Ali,” “The First One” with DJ Khaled, “Top Class” and many more.

Center Theatre Group, one of the nation’s preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles’ leading not-for-profit theatre company, which under the leadership of Managing Director / CEO Meghan Pressman and Producing Director Douglas C. Baker, and in collaboration with the four Associate Artistic Directors, Lindsay Allbaugh, Tyrone Davis, Neel Keller, and Kelley Kirkpatrick, programs seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1,600 to 2,100-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 country’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 circumstances to serve Los Angeles. Founded in 1967, Center Theatre Group was led by Founding Artistic Director Gordon Davidson until 2005 when Michael Ritchie was the artistic director until his retirement in 2021; Snehal Desai has been appointed the organization’s next artistic director and will begin in August of 2023. Center Theatre Group has produced more than 700 productions across its three stages, including such iconic shows as “Zoot Suit;” “Angels in America;” “The Kentucky Cycle;” “Biloxi Blues;” “Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992;” “Children of a Lesser God;” “Curtains;” “The Drowsy Chaperone;” “9 to 5: The Musical;” and “Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo.”

CenterTheatreGroup.org

April 25, 2023

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BIOGRAPHIES:

Will Power (*Playwright*) is an internationally renowned playwright, performer, lyricist, and educator. His plays and performances have been seen in hundreds of theatres and concert halls throughout the world. Called “the best verse playwright in America” by New York Magazine, Mr. Power is an innovator and dramatic explorer of new theatrical forms. He is known as one of the pioneers and co-creators of hip-hop theatre, a late 20th century art form that led the way for future iconic works such as Lin-Manuel Miranda’s “Hamilton,” as well as dozens of hip-hop education programs throughout the country. Power is also a master craftsman of traditionally based plays and musicals.

“Fetch Clay, Make Man,” has been produced in regional companies including the McCarter Theater, New York Theater Workshop, the Round House Theater, True Colors

Theater Company, The Ensemble Theater, and Marin Theatre Company. Other plays include “Stagger Lee” (Dallas Theater Company), “Five Fingers of Funk” (Children’s Theater Company), “The Seven” (La Jolla Playhouse, New York Theater Workshop, Ten Thousand Things Theater Company), “Seize the King” (La Jolla Playhouse, The Alliance Theater) and “Detroit Red” (Arts Emerson). Power’s collaboration with Anne Bogart’s SITI Company and composer Julia Wolfe resulted in the performance piece “Steel Hammer” (Humana Festival, UCLA Live, Brooklyn Academy of Music, plus world tour).

Power has received numerous awards for his work as a writer and performer in the field including The Doris Duke Artist Award, an Andrew W. Mellon Playwright in Residence Grant, a Lucille Lortel Award, a United States Artist Prudential Fellowship, an NEA/TCG Residency Grant, TCG Peter Zeisler Memorial Award, a NYFA Award, a Joyce Foundation Award, and a 2020 Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding New Script (“Detroit Red”). An assistant professor at Occidental College, Power is a passionate teacher of writing and performance. He has held fellowships, residencies or faculty positions at the City College of New York, Princeton University, Wayne State University, The University of Michigan at Flint, Southern Methodist University, the University of Massachusetts (Amherst), and Spelman College (Atlanta).

Debbie Allen (*Director*), a B.F.A. graduate of Howard University in Theatre and Classical Greek Studies, holds four honorary doctorate degrees, has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and is an award-winning director/choreographer who has choreographed The Academy Awards a record 10 times. She has directed and choreographed for legendary artists such as Michael Jackson, Mariah Carey, James Earl Jones, Phylicia Rashad, Janet Jackson, Whitney Houston, Gwen Verdon, Lena Horne, Sammy Davis, Jr., Dolly Parton, and Savion Glover. Ms. Allen received the Golden Globe for her role as Lydia Grant in the 1980s hit series “Fame,” the Drama Desk Award for her portrayal of Anita in “West Side Story” and is a three-time Emmy Award winner in choreography for “Fame” and “The Motown 25th.” Awarded 10 Image Awards as director, actress, choreographer and producer for “Fame,” “A Different World,” “Motown 25th,” “The Academy Awards,” “The Debbie Allen Special,” and “Amistad,” she has also directed the best that network TV offers, including “Scandal,” “How To Get Away With Murder,” “Jane The Virgin,” “Empire,” and “Insecure.” She currently serves as Executive Producing Director of “Grey’s Anatomy,” where she recurs as Dr. Catherine Fox. She is the daughter of poet Vivian Ayers and Dr. Andrew Allen, wife to NBA All-Star Norman Nixon, sister to Phylicia Rashad, Tex Allen, and Hugh Allen, mother of Vivian and Thump, and grandmother of Shiloh and Aviah.

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