

LOUIS & KEELY LIVEN UP
THE AUDREY SKIRBALL KENIS THEATER
AT THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

*Acclaimed Film Director Taylor Hackford Helms New Production
of 2008 Ovation Winner for Best Musical 'Louis & Keely Live at the Sahara'*

Opening Night Thursday, March 19

LOS ANGELES, March 19, 2009 — A new production of *Louis & Keely Live at the Sahara*, helmed acclaimed Hollywood director/biographer **Taylor Hackford**, opens tonight at the Geffen Playhouse's Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater. The play, co-written and starring **Jake Broder** and **Vanessa Smith**, won the 2008 Ovation Award for Best Musical, four Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Awards – including Best Production and Best Actor and is nominated for five LA Weekly Theater Awards – including Musical of the Year (winners will be announced on March 30). *Louis & Keely Live at the Sahara*, which follows the life and love of Las Vegas' infamous onstage couple Louis Prima and Keely Smith, is set to run until April 26.

"I saw *Louis & Keely* during its initial run at Sacred Fools, and was immediately struck by the music, the story, and most of all, by its stars and creators – Jake Broder and Vanessa Smith," said director Taylor Hackford. "This was a wonderfully entertaining piece of theater that came together through will and sheer talent, and I wanted to help Jake and Vanessa expand and develop this show so it could reach its ultimate potential."

Hackford is most well-known for his film work, including *An Officer and a Gentleman*, *Against All Odds*, *The Devil's Advocate*, *La Bamba*, *Proof of Life* and most recently *Ray*, which was nominated for six Academy Awards including Best Picture, Best Director and Best Actor. While Hackford has helmed many films about musicians and their art, including the aforementioned *Ray* and *La Bamba* as well as the documentary *Chuck Berry: Hail!, Hail! Rock n' Roll*, *Louis & Keely Live at the Sahara* marks Hackford's stage directorial debut.

Hackford, who has joined forces with Broder and Smith to guide the revision process, estimates about 40 percent of the script is different from the original production. This includes the addition of seven new songs – "I Wish You Love," "Hey Boy, Hey Girl," "What is this Thing Called Love," "Night Train," "Ai, Ai, Ai" and "I Can't Believe that You're in Love with Me," as well as new characters, including ol' blue eyes himself, Frank Sinatra. Creators Broder and Smith revisit their roles as Louis and Keely respectively, and new cast members **Nick Cagle** and **Erin Matthews** play various other characters in the couple's story. In addition to the four actors, *Louis & Keely Live at the Sahara* features a seven-piece live swing band that brings down the house as the orchestra for the play and as well as Louis Prima's Vegas band 'The Witnesses.'

The original production of *Louis & Keely*, which was produced by the Sacred Fools Theatre Company and directed

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by Jeremy Aldridge, opened in June 2008. After an extended summer run at Sacred Fools, the production found a new home at Hollywood's Matrix Theater in October of last year where it ran for 15 weeks of sold-out performances.

Louis & Keely Live at the Sahara is set to run at the Geffen Playhouse's Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater from March 15 through April 26, with the possibility for extension pending audience demand. The intimate Audrey Skirball Theater will be configured with four rows of premium stage-front seating (\$65) in addition to the standard orchestra seating (\$55).

LOUIS & KEELY LIVE AT THE SAHARA

By Jake Broder & Vanessa Smith

Directed by Taylor Hackford

Opening Night: Thursday, March 19, 2009

Closing Night: Sunday, April 26, 2009

Cast (Alphabetical order)

Jake Broder	Louis Prima
Nick Cagle	Frank Sinatra, Leon Prima
Vanessa Claire Smith	Keely Smith
Erin Matthews	Mrs. Keely, Louis' third wife, Various Prima dames

Crystal Keith	Keely Smith u/s
Michael Lanahan	Louis Prima u/s

Design Team

Choreography	Vernel Bagneris
Set / Projection Design	Joel Daavid
Lighting Design	Anne Militello
Sound Design	Lindsay Jones
Costume Design	Melissa Bruning
Production Stage Manager	Consuelo Bingham Mira

Musicians

Colin Kupka	Sam Butera / Saxophone
Richard Levinson	Pee Wee / Piano
Nate Light	u/s Eddie / Bass
Paul Litteral	Hollywood / Trumpet
Jeff Markgraf	Eddie / Substitute Bass
Dan Sawyer	Doc / Guitar, Saxophone, Clarinet, Flute, Piccolo
Michael L. Solomon	Rocco / Drums
Brian Wallis	Jimmy / Trombone

Performance Schedule

Monday	No performances
Tuesday – Thursday	8:00pm
Friday	7:30pm
Saturday	3:30pm; 8:00pm
Sunday	2:30pm; 7:30pm

Ticket Info

Preview Performances: Premium Stage Seating - \$55; Orchestra Seating – \$45

Regular Run: Premium Stage Seating - \$55; Orchestra Seating – \$65

Tickets are on sale now at the Geffen Playhouse box office, online at GeffenPlayhouse.com, via credit card phone order at (310) 208-5454, at all Ticketmaster outlets, or by calling Ticketmaster at (213) 480-3232.

Student rush tickets are available one hour prior to curtain for \$15.

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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 (Gil) Cates, Artistic Director Randall Arney, Managing Director Susan Barton 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**.

EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

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