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## **QUINCY JONES & MEL BROOKS TO BE HONORED AT 15<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL "BACKSTAGE AT THE GEFFEN" FUNDRAISER**

**Geffen Playhouse's Exclusive Event Set for Sunday, March 19, 2017; hosted by Aisha Tyler**

**City National Bank Returns as Title Sponsor, along with Presenting Sponsor Audi of America**

LOS ANGELES (December 5, 2016) – The Geffen Playhouse will honor legendary Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony award-winning artists Quincy Jones and Mel Brooks at its 15<sup>th</sup> annual *Backstage at the Geffen* fundraiser, which honors the accomplishments of leaders in the artistic community and supports the theater's mission to produce original, quality works that inspire thought, evoke conversation, and engage the community in the live arts.

This lighthearted, star-studded event is an unexpected evening of unscripted, surprise performers and storytellers sharing songs and personal tales of life behind-the-scenes. It will be held on Sunday, March 19, 2017 in the Gil Cates Theater at the Geffen Playhouse and hosted by Aisha Tyler.

"*Backstage at the Geffen* is a beloved Geffen Playhouse tradition for artists and art-lovers alike. Year after year, the event brings together the artistic community's most prominent players to share the magic of live performance through funny and heartfelt stories," said Geffen Playhouse executive director Gil Cates, Jr., who produces the show alongside Geffen Playhouse board member Kevin Bright. "This year, we are pleased to honor Quincy Jones and Mel Brooks, two enormous talents whose artistic contributions are matched only by their philanthropic efforts."

Quincy Jones, a founding Board Member of the Geffen Playhouse, will be honored with the Distinction in Service Award. Celebrating more than 60 years in music, beginning with the sounds of the post-swing era and continuing through today's high-technology and international multi-media hybrids, Jones stands as one of the most successful and admired creative artists in the entertainment world. An impresario in the broadest and most creative sense of the word, his career has encompassed the roles of composer, record producer, artist, film producer, arranger, conductor, instrumentalist, TV producer, record company executive, magazine founder, multi-media entrepreneur and humanitarian. As a master inventor of musical hybrids, he has shuffled pop, soul, hip-hop, jazz, classical, African and Brazilian music into many dazzling fusions, traversing virtually every medium, including records, live performance, movies and television.

Jones has earned an Emmy Award, Tony Award, seven Oscar nominations, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award, 27 Grammy Awards, N.A.R.A.S.' prestigious Trustees' Award, and the Grammy Living Legend Award. He is the all-time most nominated Grammy artist with a total of 79 Grammy nominations. In 2001 Jones was named a Kennedy Center Honoree for his contributions to the cultural fabric of the U.S. He has been recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts as a Jazz Master, the nation's highest jazz honor, and was most recently bestowed the National Medal of Arts, our nation's highest artistic honor.

Director, producer, writer and actor Mel Brooks will be presented with the Distinction in Theater Award. Brooks won his first Oscar in 1964 for writing and narrating the animated short *The Critic* and his second in 1969 for the screenplay of his first feature film, *The Producers*. For three successive seasons, Brooks won Emmy Awards for his role as Uncle Phil on the hit sitcom *Mad About You*. Additionally, his TV specials, including *Mel Brooks: Live at the Geffen* (HBO 2015), have all been nominated for Emmy Awards. He received three 2001 Tony Awards and two Grammy Awards for *The Producers: The New Mel Brooks Musical*, which ran on Broadway from 2001 to 2007. With twelve awards total, *The Producers* holds the all-time record for the most Tony Awards ever won by a Broadway musical.

Brooks has been presented with the Kennedy Center Honors in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to American culture and the AFI Life Achievement Award, which recognizes talents that fundamentally advance the art of film. He is one of only 30 foreigners to be awarded with the prestigious BFI Fellowship for outstanding contributions to film and television by the British Film Institute. In 2016 President Obama presented him with The National Medal of Arts, the highest award given to artists by the United States government.

*Backstage at the Geffen* brings together artistic, entertainment and business leaders and the Los Angeles region's most prominent philanthropic organizations to raise funds for the Geffen Playhouse's artistic endeavors, including new play development, playwright commissions, second productions and artistic risks, as well as the theater's award-winning education and outreach programs, which help bring the excitement of live theater to more than 15,000 disadvantaged youth, seniors and veterans annually. Last year, *Backstage at the Geffen* raised more than \$1 million, allowing the Geffen to expand its literacy, high school, veterans and Lights Up programs.

City National Bank continues for the 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive year as Title Sponsor. Audi of America is returning as a Presenting Sponsor for the 12<sup>th</sup> year.

Host Committee memberships / levels of support begin at \$5,000. Individual mezzanine tickets are \$1,500. For more information, please visit [www.geffenplayhouse.org/backstage](http://www.geffenplayhouse.org/backstage) or call (310) 208-6500 Ext. 112.

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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 Artistic Director Randall Arney, Executive Director Gil Cates, Jr., and Co-Chairs of the Board Martha Henderson and Pamela Robinson. 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](http://www.geffenplayhouse.org).

### **ABOUT CITY NATIONAL**

With \$42.8 billion in assets, City National Bank provides banking, investment and trust services through 73 offices, including 16 full-service regional centers, in Southern California, the San Francisco Bay Area, Nevada, New York City, Nashville and Atlanta. In addition, the company and its investment affiliates manage or administer \$58.3 billion in client investment assets.

City National is a subsidiary of Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), one of North America's leading diversified financial services companies. RBC serves more than 16 million personal, business, public sector and institutional clients through offices in Canada, the United States and 36 other countries. For more information about City National, visit the company's website at [cnb.com](http://cnb.com).

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