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LA CAGE AUX FOLLES

Book by Harvey Fierstein

Music & Lyrics by Jerry Herman

based on the play by Jean Poiret

Directed by Bill English

Music Director: Dave Dobrusky

Choreography: Kimberly Richards

Press Opening: Wednesday, July 19, 2017, 7 pm

July 12 through September 16, 2017

Tues, Wed, Thurs 7pm / Fri, Sat 8pm / Sat 3pm, Sun 2pm

Preview Performances: July 12, 13, 14 at 8pm July 14 at 3pm, July 15 at 2pm, July 17 at 7pm

San Francisco, CA (June 2017) – **San Francisco Playhouse** (Bill English, Artistic Director; Susi Damilano, Producing Director) complete their fourteenth season of transformation with the rollicking musical *La Cage aux Folles*, featuring the bawdy humor of **Harvey Fierstein** and the melodic genius of **Jerry Herman**.

After twenty years of un-wedded bliss, Georges and Albin, two men partnered for better or worse, get a bit of both when Georges' son announces his impending marriage to the daughter of a bigoted, narrow-minded politician. Albin tries to help by making a perfect family with hilarious results. Further complicating the situation, Albin and Georges run a drag nightclub in St. Tropez, where Albin is the star performer 'Zaza.' Georges reluctantly agrees to his son's entreaty to masquerade as "normal" when he meets the family of the bride-to-be—but Albin has other plans, which bring about uproariously funny results.

The show features both beautiful and moving songs by Jerry Herman including "I Am What I Am" and "Song on the Sand," as well as hysterically comic situations. But more than anything else, *La Cage* is an

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old-fashioned love story wrapped in feathers, sprinkled with glitter and tied with a bow of honesty and romance. This wild and warmhearted farce about the importance of nonconformity and being true to oneself is an ageless story that still resonates and appeals to audiences of all ages.

Winner of six Tony Awards including Best Musical, *La Cage aux Folles* glimmers with French flair and celebrates love, romance, and being true to who you really are. *La Cage* was later turned into a popular movie, **The Birdcage**, starring Nathan Lane and Robin Williams.

Directed by Artistic Director **Bill English**, music directed by **Dave Dobrusky**, and Choreographed by **Kimberly Richards**, the cast will feature **Nikita Burshteyn, Samantha Rose Cardenas, Brian Conway, Morgan Dayley, Ryan Drummond*, John Treacy Egan*, Robert Faltisco, Josiah Frampton, John Paul Gonzalez, Adrienne Herro, Alex Hsu*, Noelani Neal, Lee Ann Payne*, Chris Reber*, Brian Yates Sharber*** and **Nicholas Yenson**.

San Francisco Playhouse's production of *La Cage aux Folles* is made possible by the generosity of: Executive Producer Robert Hulteng; Producers Clay Foundation – West and Geoffrey Jue; Associate Producer Russell Stanaland; and Artistic Underwriters Susan Atherton, William and Janet McAllister, and Maggie & Larry Thompson.

Bill English (Director) is co-founder and Artistic Director of the San Francisco Playhouse. An accomplished singer, pianist and composer, has spent his life producing works of art. He co-founded San Francisco Playhouse, and in 14 years, has overseen its growth from a storefront to a major regional theater company, with a 6-play main stage series, a 2-play World Premiere series, an education program and a New Works program that has commissioned 10 playwrights. Bill's vision propels San Francisco Playhouse to stand out among its peers for making bold choices and taking artistic risks. Bill's work in the theater has been recognized with numerous awards for acting, directing, sound and set design. Under Bill's leadership The San Francisco Playhouse, has earned multiple nominations and awards.

Harvey Fierstein (Book) is an American comedian, author, and playwright, best known as the author of *The Torch Song Trilogy*, who often spoke out about gay rights issues. He graduated from the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, with a bachelor of fine arts degree (1973) and soon made a career in New York theatre and playwriting. Having already won a part at age 16 in Andy Warhol's play *Pork* (1971; staged at La MaMa), Fierstein went on to perform in more than 60 productions, in which he often played roles in drag. In the late 1970s Fierstein wrote a trilogy of plays (*The International Stud, Fugue in*

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a Nursery, and *Widows and Children First*), eventually performed together as *Torch Song Trilogy*. Seen all at once on Broadway (1982), in a production starring the author himself, the trilogy proved to be a powerful, profoundly moving statement that took audiences into the then little-known world of gay families and their struggle for self-acceptance and love. After winning Tony Awards for acting and writing, Fierstein went on to appear in the 1988 screen version of *Torch Song Trilogy* with Anne Bancroft and Matthew Broderick. Fierstein's Tony-winning book for the 1983 musical *La Cage aux folles* (adapted from Jean Poiret's play) continued to move gay issues into the mainstream. In 2003 Fierstein elicited rave reviews on Broadway for his exuberant cross-dressing performance in the hit stage musical version of John Waters's camp film *Hairspray*. For his role as teen heroine Tracy Turnblad's doting mother, Edna, Fierstein won his fourth Tony Award. He later appeared in Broadway revivals of *Fiddler on the Roof*, in 2005–06, and *La Cage aux folles*, in 2011. In addition, he wrote the librettos for the musicals *A Catered Affair* (2007), in which he also starred; *Newsies, the Musical* (2011); and *Kinky Boots* (2012). All three works were based on films. Fierstein also wrote and produced *Casa Valentina* (2014), a play based on the true story of a group of heterosexual married men in the early 1960s who met on the weekends at a rundown resort in the Catskill Mountains of New York, where they could freely indulge in their shared desire to dress and act like women. Beyond Broadway, gay rights activists welcomed Fierstein's commentaries in the early 21st century on the public television documentary series *In the Life*. His other film credits include small roles in *Mrs. Doubtfire* (1993) and *Independence Day* (1996). Fierstein also wrote the children's book *The Sissy Duckling* (2002), a spin-off of his prizewinning animated made-for-TV film of the same name (1999).

Jerry Herman (Music & Lyrics) is one of the leading composers and lyricists for the American musical theater. Herman was playing piano by the age of six under the tuition of his mother, a professional piano teacher. He wrote the book, music and lyrics and directed "Parade" (1960), and in 1961, he enjoyed his first real success with his score for the Broadway musical "Milk and Honey". He had a smash hit three years later with "Hello, Dolly" which stayed at the St. James Theater in New York for nearly seven years. The show — with its Grammy-winning title number — gave Carol Channing her greatest role, and has been constantly revived ever since. In 1966, Herman had another triumph with "Mame," which is generally considered to be his best score. Since then, his infrequent, but classy scores have included "Dear World", "Mack & Mabel", "The Grand Tour" and "La Cage aux Folles". Herman won a Grammy for the "Mame" cast album, and Tony Awards for his work on "Hello, Dolly!" and "La Cage aux Folles." There was some controversy when Herman's "old fashioned" music and lyrics for the latter show triumphed over Stephen Sondheim's typically contemporary score for "Sunday in the Park with George." Herman has been inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame. The latter

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organization honored him with their Johnny Mercer Award in 1987, and in 1996, he received a lifetime achievement award from the Hollywood Press Club. Herman occasionally presents an evening devoted to his own songs, and many shows have been staged in tribute to him over the years, including “Jerry’s Girls,” which played on Broadway in 1986.

John Treacy Egan* (Albin) recently appeared Off Broadway as Newt Gingrich in *Clinton* the musical. His recent credits include the tony-nominated *Casa Valentina* at Manhattan Theater Club. He played Chief Berry in *Nice Work If You Can Get It* and created the roles in the Broadway productions of *Sister Act* (Joey) and *Disney’s The Little Mermaid* (Chef Louis). He played Max Bialystock in the Broadway Production of *The Producers* as well as the roles of Roger DeBris and Franz Liebkind. He was an original cast member of the Broadway production of *Jekyll & Hyde* and Roundabout’s *Bye Bye Birdie*. He has toured the U.S. and Europe in productions of *Kiss me Kate* and *CATS*. Off-Broadway, John created roles in Howard Crabtree’s *When Pigs Fly!*, *Disaster The Musical*, *It Must Be Him* and *Batboy The Musical*. He has performed at Carnegie Hall as Nicely Nicely in *Guys & Dolls* with Nathan Lane and Megan Mullaly. He was also performed with Josh Groban in The Actor’s Fund of America Benefit of *Chess*. Regionally, John has performed with Yale Repertory Theater in *The Servant of Two Masters*. He has appeared on television in *Younger*, *The Good Wife*, *The Knick*, *Boardwalk Empire*, *Nurse Jackie*, *30 Rock*, *Cupid*, *Law & Order*, and the films *Last Night*, and the film version of *The Producers*. He can be heard on many theatrical recordings as well as his own solo CDs *Count the Stars* and *On Christmas Morning* are available on itunes and cdbaby.com.

Founded in 2003, **San Francisco Playhouse** is the only mid-sized professional venue in downtown San Francisco, an intimate alternative to the larger more traditional Union Square theater fare. Presenting a diverse range of plays and musicals, **San Francisco Playhouse** produces new works as well as re-imagined classics, “making the edgy accessible and the traditional edgy.” And with its bold Sandbox Series, dedicated to nurturing World Premieres, the Playhouse has become a significant player in developing new works as well. **San Francisco Playhouse** is committed to providing a creative home and inspiring environment where actors, directors, writers, designers, and theater lovers converge to create and experience dramatic works that celebrate the human spirit.

**Actors appear courtesy of Actors’ Equity Association.*

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FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: Georges manages a Saint-Tropez drag-show nightclub headlined by his longtime love and partner Albin. Things are looking up until Georges' son, Jean-Michel, brings home his fiancée's highly conservative parents to meet them. Winner of six Tony Awards including Best Musical, *La Cage aux Folles* glimmers with French flair and celebrates love, romance, and being true to who you really are.

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WHERE: 450 Post Street, San Francisco, 2nd Floor of the Kensington Park Hotel.

TICKETS: For tickets (\$30-\$125) or more information, the public may contact the San Francisco Playhouse box office at 415-677-9596, or <http://sfplayhouse.org/sfph/2016-2017-season/la-cage-aux-folles/>