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ArtsEmerson presents  
THE NEW ENGLAND PREMIERE OF  
***Born For This***  
***A New Musical***

**MUSICAL WILL CALL BOSTON HOME THIS SUMMER,  
JUNE 15-JULY 15 AT THE EMERSON CUTLER MAJESTIC THEATRE**

**BOSTON (Friday, May 18, 2018)** - ArtsEmerson is honored that ***Born for This – A New Musical*** will take the stage this summer for a limited engagement, June 15 – July 15 at the Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre, 219 Tremont St, Downtown Boston. With original music and lyrics by six-time GRAMMY® Award-winning icon **BeBe Winans** book by **Charles Randolph-Wright**, BeBe Winans, and **Lisa D'Amour**, and direction by Charles-Randolph Wright (*Motown the Musical*), ***Born For This*** celebrates the incredible true story of BeBe Winans – a young man who follows his heart and finds his destiny.

As previously reported, ***Born For This*** will feature **Donald Webber Jr.** as BeBe Winans, **Loren Lott** as CeCe Winans, **Milton Craig Nealy** as Pop Winans, **Chaz Pofahl** as Jim Bakker, **Nita Whitaker** as Mom Winans, and **Kirsten Wyatt** as Tammy Faye Bakker.

Rounding out the cast are Maddie Shea Baldwin, Kurt Boehm, Phillip Brandon, TyNia Rene' Brandon, Matthew Griffin, Rod Harrelson, Gracie Jones, Liisi LaFontaine, Jay Mckenzie, Ashley Morgan, Nick Morrett, Jarran Muse, Brad Raymond, and Cullen Titmas.

For headshots and other media kit assets, [click here](#).

Rounding out the creative team for ***Born For This*** will feature choreography by **Warren Adams**, scenic design by **Neil Patel**, costume design by **William Ivey Long**, lighting design by **Jason Lyons**, sound design by **Jon Weston**, projection design by **John Narun**, and music supervision by **Donald Lawrence**.

Tickets for ***Born For This*** are now on sale, available online at [www.ArtsEmerson.org](http://www.ArtsEmerson.org), by phone at 617.824.8400, or in person at the ArtsEmerson Box Office (located at the Emerson Paramount Center, 559 Washington St, Downtown Boston). Ticket prices start at just \$18, and student, senior, group and package discounts are also available.

Detroit teenagers BeBe and CeCe Winans experience the ultimate in culture shock when they leave the comfort and safety of their family (the already-famous Winans musical dynasty) to join Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker's Praise The Lord TV Network in Pineville, North Carolina. Jim and Tammy become an unlikely surrogate family as the siblings rapidly become the hottest stars in televangelical America. Eventually crossing over to mainstream fame, BeBe must learn to reconcile the temptations of stardom and fortune with the things he ultimately values more.

***Born For This*** brings the legendary artist's story to life with acclaimed new music and lyrics by BeBe Winans that will have audiences on their feet. A wildly funny yet deeply emotional journey toward self-discovery, ***Born For This*** is the family-friendly and universal story for anyone who has ever yearned for something – for anyone who is looking to find their purpose in life.

### **About ArtsEmerson**

ArtsEmerson is Boston's leading presenter of contemporary world theatre. It is dedicated to engaging *all* communities through stories that reveal and deepen connections to each other. By cultivating diversity in the art *and* in the audience, ArtsEmerson ignites public conversation around the most vexing societal challenges as a catalyst for overcoming them. ArtsEmerson is committed to welcoming everyone into its landmark venues, located in Boston's downtown Theatre District, for a diverse program of contemporary theatre, film, and music from around the city and around the world. In addition, ArtsEmerson engages in a range of community partnerships and produces a series of initiatives that make visible the rich diversity of cultural activity in the region. These programs are core to ArtsEmerson's mission and expresses commitment to civic responsibility to create a more cohesive society. ArtsEmerson is led by Artistic Director, David Dower and Executive Director, David Howse. For more information, visit [ArtsEmerson.org](http://ArtsEmerson.org).

### **About Emerson College**

Based in Boston, Massachusetts, opposite the historic Boston Common and in the heart of the city's Theatre District, Emerson College educates individuals who will solve problems and change the world through engaged leadership in communication and the arts, a mission informed by liberal learning. The College has 3,780 undergraduates and 670 graduate students from across the United States and 50 countries. Supported by state-of-the-art facilities and a renowned faculty, students participate in more than 90 student organizations and performance groups. Emerson is known for its experiential learning programs in Los Angeles, Washington, DC, the Netherlands, London, China, and the Czech Republic. The College has an active network of 39,000 alumni who hold leadership positions in communication and the arts. For more information, visit [Emerson.edu](http://Emerson.edu).

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## **CAST BIOGRAPHIES**

**DONALD WEBBER JR.** (*BeBe Winans*) Raised in a family of artists whose accomplishments range from church choir director to platinum recording artists. His father developed his career under the care of gospel greats like James Cleveland, and alongside Rodena and Billy Preston wrote and played on countless memorable gospel albums. His uncle Melvin Gentry is a multi-platinum, with multiple Billboard Top 100 number 1 hit, lead singer of the 80s hit-making group Midnight Star. Donald has begun making a name for himself in NYC appearing in the title role of Alexander Hamilton on Broadway every weekend in *Hamilton: An American Musical*. Original Broadway Cast: *Motown the Musical*, *Holler If Ya Hear Me*, *Whorl Inside a Loop* (Off Broadway). TV: American Idol, The Wiz Live! on NBC. Twitter/Instagram: @donaldwebber.

**LOREN LOTT** (*CeCe Winans*) Clark Atlanta BA Mass Media Arts. 2015 American Idol Top 16. TV/Film: *Tales*, *The Quad*, *Greenleaf*, *The Game*, *Fatal Attraction*, *TAG*, etc. Theatre: *Once On This Island* (Timoune/Andrea/Asaka partial swing on Broadway) *Motown the Musical* (Diana Ross u/s, Gladys, Esther) National Tour and Broadway, *Ragtime* (Sarah) regional, *Once on this Island* (Erzulie) regional, *Shrek the Musical* (Fiona u/s) regional, etc. @LorenSharice

**MILTON CRAIG NEALY** (*Pop Winans*) Originated the role of Pop Winans at the Alliance Theater and LA's Broad Stage. Broadway credits include Pop Gordy in *Motown the Musical*, *Caroline or Change*, John in *Miss Saigon* (also London and Australian productions), 4 Eyed Moe in *Five Guys Named Moe*, *Ain't Missbehavin'* (Revival cast), Agwe in *Once On This Island*, and *Dreamgirls* (Original and Revival casts). National Tour credits include Horse in *The Full*

*Monty* (also the Australian Cast), Marty in the 2010 Tour of *Dreamgirls*, and Judas in The 20th Anniversary Tour of *Jesus Christ Superstar* at The Muny and returned in 2012 for *Dreamgirls*, where he played the role of Jimmy Early with Jennifer Holiday. Television and Film credits include *Person of Interest* and *The Blues Brothers*.

**CHAZ POFAHL** (*Jim Bakker*) hails from Charlotte, where he moved during the most turbulent years of Jim and Tammy Faye's PTL ministry. Some of his favorite Charlotte credits include *Coraline*, *Journey to Oz*, *Seussical*, *And Then They Came for Me*, *The Borrowers*, *Macbeth* and *The Secret Garden* (Children's Theatre of Charlotte); *Bat Boy* and *Dream a Little Dream* (Actor's Theatre of Charlotte); *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Tempest*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Julius Caesar* (Charlotte Shakespeare Festival); *La Ronde* and *A Woman of No Importance*, and *The Sherlock Project* (PaperHouse Theatre); *Floyd Collins* (Carolina Actors Studio Theatre); and *Rent* (Theatre Charlotte). Additional regional credits include *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (Center for Puppetry Arts); *Dracula: The Rock Opera* (7 Stages); *Avenue Q* and *Fiddler on the Roof* (Cape Fear Regional Theatre); and *The Music Man*, *Joseph...Dreamcoat* and *A Christmas Carol* (Temple Theatre); and *Born For This* (Alliance Theatre and Arena Stage).

**NITA WHITAKER** (*Mom Winans*) Theater credits include *Ragtime*, *The Ten Commandments* and *New Brain* (Los Angeles), *Me & Mrs. Jones* (Philadelphia) and *Breaking Through* (Pasadena Playhouse). TV/film credits include *The Winner Is*, *The Hour of Power*, *The Bodyguard* and *Lush Life*. After competing for Miss America, Nita was the Star Search grand champion and later toured internationally singing duets with Andrea Bocelli. She sang the original demos of several Whitney Houston standards with David Foster. Nita is also an award-winning author and CEO of a non-profit that presents books and reading fundamentals to children ([www.inaworldwithbooks.org](http://www.inaworldwithbooks.org)). Love to daughters Liisi and Skye LaFontaine and husband Scott Perkins. [www.nitawhitaker.com](http://www.nitawhitaker.com)

**KIRSTEN WYATT** (*Tammy Faye Bakker*) Broadway credits include *Annie*, *A Christmas Story The Musical*, *Elf*, *Shrek*, *Grease*, *High Fidelity*, *The Pajama Game*, *Urinetown* and *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. Favorite regional credits include Sally Bowles in *Cabaret*, Agnes Gooch in *Mame* (Connecticut Critics Circle Award), Charity in *Sweet Charity*, Miss Adelaide in *Guys and Dolls*, Rona Lisa Peretti in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, Tessie Tura in *Gypsy*, Paulette in *Legally Blonde* and Ellie Mae Chipley in *Show Boat* with the San Francisco Opera. TV credits include *Blue Bloods*, *The Naked Brothers Band*, *As the World Turns* and *All My Children*. She is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association and graduate of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Love to Sean, husband of 14 years. Twitter: @KirstenWyatt.

## CREATIVE TEAM

**BEBE WINANS** (Book, Original Music and Lyrics) The inspirational R&B and gospel vocalist, songwriter and producer, was born into the legendary Winans family, the first family of gospel music. Over his distinguished career, he has amassed six GRAMMY® Awards (three solo which includes Producer for Record of the Year for *The Bodyguard* soundtrack, and three with his sister CeCe), ten Dove Awards, six Stellar Awards, four NAACP Award and three Soul Train Music Awards. BeBe is a multi-faceted artist with film, TV and Broadway credits and can be heard every Sunday on *The BeBe Experience* on Sirius XM's Heart & Soul channel. His seven solo albums feature guest appearances from Eric Clapton, Stevie Wonder, David Foster, Anita Baker, Whitney Houston and members of the Winans family. Teaming with his younger sister Priscilla "CeCe," the duo first began crossing lines as "adopted children" of Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker on the television show *Praise the Lord*, and together they have nine successful gold and platinum recordings.

**CHARLES RANDOLPH-WRIGHT** (Book, Direction) Theatre Directing: *Motown the Musical* (Broadway, National Tour, London), *Sophisticated Ladies* (starring Maurice Hines), *Ruined* (Arena Stage) *Love/Life* (with Brian Stokes Mitchell, Lincoln Center), *Porgy and Bees*, *Guys and Dolls* (National Tour), *The Diva is Dismissed* (starring Jenifer Lewis). Writing: *Blue* (starring Phylicia Rashad, Diahann Carroll), *The Night is a Child* (starring JoBeth Williams), *Cuttin' Up*, *Love in Afghanistan*, *Bea Arthur on Broadway: Just Between Friends* (co-writer), *Linc's* (Showtime, producer and writer), screenplays for HBO, Disney, Fox. Film/Television Directing: *Preaching to the Choir* (film), *Greenleaf*, *Step Up Highwater*, *Lincoln Heights*, *South of Nowhere*.

**LISA D'AMOUR** (Book) Lisa is a playwright and interdisciplinary artist and one half of the OBIE-Award winning performance duo PearlDamour. Her plays have produced by theaters across the country, including Manhattan theater Club's Samuel J. Friedman Theater on Broadway, Playwrights' Horizons, Theatre of a Two-Headed Calf, Clubbed Thumb, (all in NYC), Children's Theater Company (Minneapolis), The Wilma Theater (Philadelphia) and Woolly Mammoth Theater (Washington D.C.). Lisa's play *Detroit* premiered at Steppenwolf in 2010, directed by ensemble member Austin Pendleton; Mr. Pendleton also directed the second production at the Royal National Theater with a British cast. *Detroit* was a finalist for the 2011 Pulitzer Prize in Drama and the 2011 Susan Smith Blackburn prize. Lisa is the recipient of the 2008 Alpert Award for the Arts in theater, the 2011 Steinberg Playwright Award and is a recipient of the 2013 Doris Duke Performing Artist Award. She is a former Jerome Fellow and Core Alum of the Playwrights' Center and an alumna of New Dramatists.

**WARREN ADAMS** (Choreography) *Motown the Musical*: Broadway (Fred Astaire Award) US Tours (NAACP Theatre Award) West End, *Born For This*: Alliance and Arena. Adams is an award-winning producer director, choreographer. He recently directed the film documentary *Africa Straight Up* and also choreographed the Pulitzer Prize-winning Off-Broadway plays *How I Learned to Drive* and *Ruined*. Other notable credits include the opera *Magdalena* at the Theatre du Chatelet in Paris, *Toy Story the Musical* for Disney and Nora Ephron's last film *Julie and Julia* starring Meryl Streep. His theatrical work has been presented at New York City Center, the Joyce, 2nd Stage, South Coast Rep, Teatro du Municipal Sao Paulo, Theatre for a New Audience, the Intiman, the Geffen and several dance companies. Upcoming Works include directing Michael Ogborn's *T R I A L* and Gilbert Bailey's *Bout to Blow*.

**NEIL PATEL** (Scenic Design) New York credits include *The Lion: Pretty Filthy*; *MR. BURNS*, *A Post-Electric Play*; *Stage Kiss*; *Indian Ink* and *Father Comes Home From the Wars* (Parts 1, 2 and 3). Additional credits include *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* and *Pacific Overtures* (Alliance Theatre) and production design for the Peabody Award-winning HBO series *In Treatment*, Neil LaBute's DirecTV series *Billy and Billie*, Denis Leary's FX series *Sex&Drugs&Rock&Roll*, and the feature films *Some Velvet Morning* (Tribeca Films), *Loitering with Intent* (Parts & Labor/The Orchard) and *Little Boxes* (2016 Tribeca Film Festival).

**WILLIAM IVEY LONG** (Costume Design) Broadway: *Chicago* now in its 22ND year; *Cabaret* (2014 and 1998), *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella*, *Grey Gardens*, *The Producers*, *The Boy from Oz*, *Hairspray*, *Crazy For You*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Nine*. William has been nominated for 15 Tony Awards, winning 6 times. He was inducted into the Theatre Hall of Fame in 2005, and recently completed a 4 year elected term as Chairman of The American Theatre Wing. Mr. Long grew up in Rock Hill, SC, a stone's throw from both Charles Randolph-Wright in York, SC, and the PTL Headquarters in Pineville, NC.

**JASON LYONS** (Lighting Design) Broadway: *Hand to God*, *On the Town*, *Bronx Bombers*, *Let it Be*, *Bring it On*, *Rock of Ages* (Vegas, Toronto, Australia, London and National Tours), *The Threepenny Opera*, *Barefoot in the Park*, *Good Vibrations*. Recent Regional: 5TH Ave: *Romy & Michele...*; Old Globe: *Red Velvet*, *Loves Labors Lost*, *Macbeth*. The Public Theatre: *Dry Powder*, *Barbecue*, *Venice*. 2nd Stage: *Smart People*. MTC: *Linda*, *Important Hats of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, *The Commons of Pensacola*. Primary: *Lives of the Saints*, *Poor Behavior*, *All in the*

*Timing*. New World Stages: *Heathers*. He received the 2016 Obie Award for Sustained Excellence in Lighting Design.

**JON WESTON** (Sound Design) Broadway: *The Prince of Broadway*, *She Loves Me*, *An American in Paris*, *On the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, *You Can't Take it With You*, *The Bridges of Madison County*, *Big Fish*, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *13*, *The Color Purple*, *Caroline, Or Change*, *Nine*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie* and *On the Town*.

**JOHN NARUN** (Projection Design) Has theatre credits that include *Born For This* at the Arena Stage, *The Secret Life of Edward Gorey* at the Sheen Center, *The Tallest Tree in the Forest* and *The Laramie Project* at BAM, *What I Did Last Summer* at The Signature Theatre (NYC), *Blueprints For Freedom* at Kansas City Rep, *Mughal-E-Azam* at the NCPA in Mumbai, India, and *The Radio City Christmas and Spring Spectaculars*. His visuals have also shared the concert stage with Madonna, Ricky Martin, Christina Aguilera, Jennifer Lopez, Celine Dion, Britney Spears, and The Spice Girls. John's work has appeared on television on "The Oprah Show", and on ABC, CBS, NBC, HBO, Fox, Discovery, E!, HGTV, and TV Guide. His projection design work has earned him a Drama Desk Award nomination, a Henry Hewes Design Award nomination, 2 Craig Noel Award nominations, and an NYIT Award nomination. His broadcast work earned him an Emmy Nomination for Outstanding Title Design in 2002.

**DONALD LAWRENCE** (Music Supervision) Donald is one of the most influential figures in modern gospel music. Over the course of his career, he directed the Tri-City Singers, noted as one of the best choirs in the world. Donald trained in musical theater at the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music and started his career as the musical director for Stephanie Mills. He has since worked with many of music's top names, including The Clark Sisters, Mary J. Blige, Faith Evans and Lalah Hathaway, among others. Donald is also a GRAMMY® Award winning producer and has won over 20 Stellar Awards and one Dove Award. He has written six Billboard number one hits and has had 12 songs chart in the top 10.

**RON GILLYARD** (Producer) An award-winning label executive and artist manager. A trusted industry advisor who spent more than 20 years in the music industry. As a record executive, he served in prestigious positions such as president of Urban Music at Interscope Records, head of Urban Music at J Records and General Manager at Bad Boy Entertainment. While in these positions he oversaw A&R, marketing and sales of more than 100 million albums. In 2011 Gillyard was awarded a GRAMMY® award for his work as producer of BeBe and CeCe Winans' album "Still" (Best Contemporary R&B Gospel Album).

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