OSCAR NOMINEE LEE DANIELS TO DIRECT APOLLO THEATER DOCUMENTARY FILM PROJECT

WHITE HORSE PICTURES & PIPER CUB PRODUCTIONS TO PRODUCE

FINANCED BY IMPACT PARTNERS, STUDiocanal, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP AND CHICAGO MEDIA PROJECT

APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC FOR FAN FOOTAGE

Harlem, NY, January 28, 2016 – Oscar nominated director Lee Daniels (LEE DANIELS’ THE BUTLER, PRECIOUS and creator and producer of the Fox hit series EMPIRE) will direct the documentary feature film THE APOLLO THEATER FILM PROJECT – the authorized history of New York’s famed Apollo Theater, it was announced today by the Apollo and White Horse Pictures’ Nigel Sinclair and Jeanne Elfant Festa.

In the spirit of the Apollo Theater’s tradition of active audience participation and in support of this documentary, Lee Daniels and Jonelle Procope, President and CEO the Apollo Theater, are jointly making an appeal to members of the public, audience-goers, and fans for film footage, home movies, photographs or other memorabilia that may have been accumulated by members of the community in the course of its more than 80 years of live performances.

Said Daniels and Procope, “We are asking members of the community who have been to the Apollo, who may have parents or grandparents or other family members or friends who have done so, to help us find any material - audience footage, photographs, or other memories that we can use in our documentary film. We have established a website (www.apollotheaterdocumentary.com) for anyone who wants to submit. We will, of course, respect everybody’s ownership of their property.”

The project is produced by Nigel Sinclair (GEORGE HARRISON: LIVING IN THE MATERIAL WORLD, END OF WATCH) and Jeanne Elfant Festa (FOO FIGHTERS: BACK AND FORTH), White Horse Pictures’ Director of Features and Head of Documentaries, under her Piper Cub Productions banner.
Long-established documentary financing company Impact Partners, the Europe-based STUDIOCANAL and Universal Music Group are financing the project along with The Chicago Media Project. STUDIOCANAL is handling international distribution. Impact’s Dan Cogan and Geralyn Dreyfous (THE HUNTING GROUND, THE COVE, DETROPIA), and STUDIOCANAL’s Chairman and CEO Didier Lupfer and EVP of International Production and Acquisitions Ron Halpern (CAROL, 99 HOMES, LEGEND) are serving as executive producers. The project will be presented by the Apollo Theater and Bert Marcus Productions.

Also executive producing the film are White Horse Pictures’ Head of Production Nicholas Ferrall, Matt Jackson (END OF WATCH), CMP co-founders Steve Cohen and Paula Froehle, along with Ken Pelletier, Dave Knott and Jonelle Procope.

With a roster of artists who have performed at the Apollo Theater, Universal Music Group will curate the music for the documentary.

The project is being co-written by Cassidy Hartmann of White Horse Pictures, Mark Monroe (THE COVE, CHASING ICE), and Shola Lynch (FREE ANGELA AND ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS). Karen Sim (BACK ON BOARD: GREG LOUGANIS, WATCHERS OF THE SKY) will edit the documentary.

Said Daniels, “I am honored to be entrusted with the story of this incredible American iconic institution and work with this team. I used to go to The Apollo Theater as a kid and never in a million years would I have imagined I would be back to be doing this – it is very special for me.”

“We are all honored to be entrusted with this triumphant American story, and so fortunate that Lee Daniels has committed to lead the team. The Apollo has exerted such unprecedented influence and power on American culture, from its beginnings in 1934 to its towering presence in the 21st century. It is a story that will amaze,” said Nigel Sinclair.

"As a New Yorker, I have always been in awe of the Apollo Theater. To see a show there is to participate in a glorious, righteous and magical history, and carry it forward into the present. Impact Partners is thrilled to be partnering with Lee Daniels, who is such an extraordinary artist, and Nigel Sinclair, one of the great producers of documentaries working today," said Dan Cogan.

“The Apollo’s place in world culture in this century is part of both the American journey, and the journey for all music and culture. Lee Daniels’ stature all around the world speaks for itself, and we at StudioCanal are honored to bring to the marketplace Lee telling this tale," said Ron Halpern.

“We are so proud to be collaborating with Lee Daniels and the entire production team on this documentary that will further illuminate the Apollo’s legacy and impact,” said Jonelle Procope. “As we continue our work with artists and audiences here in Harlem and around the globe today, we are always looking to our shared legacy as a source for inspiration.”

STUDIOCANAL will distribute the film in its key direct territories, France, Germany, United Kingdom, and Australia, and the company’s international sales team, led by Anna Marsh, will license the picture in the remaining international territories. STUDIOCANAL, Impact Partners and White Horse Pictures jointly represent the US rights.
The film will tell the story of the Apollo Theater in Harlem, New York. One of the most famous theaters in the world and a driving force in shaping America’s music and cultural landscape, the Apollo’s impact on the local Harlem community and the legendary musicians who performed at the historic venue is immeasurable. Its significance as a symbol of all that is great in Harlem, New York, and American culture has transcended its origin as a place of culture and entertainment. The Apollo today is recognized as an influential center for culture and performing arts with programming across music, comedy, dance, theater and opera. The Apollo continues to build on its legacy by nurturing emerging voices and presenting ground-breaking artists across genres, both nationally and internationally.

Born out of the Harlem Renaissance, the theater became the most prized venue on the “Chitlin’ Circuit” during the time of racial segregation in the United States. On the entertainment circuit, becoming the Harlem community’s answer to Carnegie Hall, it showcased a stunning list of renowned artists, including Aretha Franklin, Nat King Cole, Gladys Knight, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Billie Holiday. It was a launch pad for many musical greats, including Ella Fitzgerald, Jimi Hendrix, and the Jackson Five. Today, the Apollo hosts more than 100 performances on its stages annually, including artistic offerings from around the globe, robust education and community programs, and shows by some of the most celebrated contemporary artists in the world, such as Paul McCartney, Bruce Springsteen, Smokey Robinson, Metallica and Sam Smith.

Amateur Night at the Apollo has been running virtually every Wednesday since it premiered in 1934, and to this day remains a centerpiece of the theater’s performance schedule. The theater also continues to serve as a gathering place and focus for African Americans and all New Yorkers at times of cultural and social crisis (the Civil Rights Movement), times of community joy (the election of Barack Obama, the visit of Nelson Mandela), and times of mourning the nation’s greats (including James Brown and Michael Jackson).

Oscar-nominated Lee Daniels directed the worldwide box office hit, LEE DANIELS’ THE BUTLER, starring Forrest Whitaker, Oprah Winfrey and Terrence Howard. Daniels produced and directed the Fox television production EMPIRE, and is currently in production on his new untitled music project for Fox television. Daniels also directed and produced the critically acclaimed PRECIOUS, which was nominated for six Academy Awards, including nominations for Daniels in the category of "Achievement in Directing" and "Best Motion Picture of the Year," and wins in the categories of “Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role” and “Best Writing, Adapted Screenplay.”

ABOUT WHITE HORSE PICTURES
Next on White Horse Pictures’ slate is the Untitled Beatles Documentary, currently in post-production, and the newly announced feature film, Emperor. The fully authorized Beatles Documentary is directed by Academy Award-winning director Ron Howard and produced with the full cooperation of Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, Yoko Ono Lennon and Olivia Harrison. White Horse’s Grammy Award-winning Nigel Sinclair, Scott Pascucci and Academy Award-winner and multiple nominee Brian Grazer of Imagine Entertainment are producing the film for Apple with Howard.

Emperor is being produced with Lionsgate’s Summit and is a dramatic coming of age tale set in a world of passion, power, and intrigue at the height of the Roman Empire. The film is produced by Nigel Sinclair and the producers of 300 and 300: Rise of an Empire: Gianni Nunnari and Mark Canton. Matt Jackson also produces.

White Horse Pictures 9100 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 423E, Beverly Hills, CA 90212
White Horse Pictures is a production company focused on high quality, commercial content creation across various different media – Film, TV, Documentaries, and Digital. Based in Los Angeles, the company is built on the foundation of Nigel Sinclair and Guy East’s experience of producing independent movies and takes a “millennial” approach to storytelling and distribution. Sinclair and East’s previous partnerships at Intermedia and Exclusive Media resulted in dozens of successful award-winning films and docs with top talent, including Oscar-winning documentary Undefeated, The Woman in Black with Daniel Radcliffe, Snitch with Dwayne Johnson, End of Watch with Jake Gyllenhaal, Rush with Ron Howard and Chris Hemsworth, and The Ides of March with George Clooney.

ABOUT PIPER CUB PRODUCTIONS
Piper Cub Productions is Jeanne Elfant Festa’s production company and is producing THE APOLLO THEATER PROJECT as part of its joint venture with White Horse Pictures. Jeanne Elfant Festa previously collaborated with Nigel Sinclair and Exclusive Media, executive producing the Grammy-winning documentary, “FOO FIGHTERS: BACK AND FORTH.” Jeanne also serves as Head of Documentaries and Director of Features at White Horse Pictures. Under Piper Cub Productions, Jeanne is currently in production on the documentary, “MY NEXT BREATH,” which follows a group of talented artists – actors, directors and writers with disabilities as they fight to take their place in our creative community. Piper Cub Productions’ goal with all its projects is to ignite emotions and to use the media and the arts as a vehicle for the force of social change.

ABOUT STUDIOCANAL
STUDIOCANAL is Europe’s leader in production, rights acquisition, distribution, and international sales of feature films and TV series. STUDIOCANAL operates directly in all three major European markets, France, the United Kingdom and Germany, as well as in Australia and New Zealand. STUDIOCANAL has fully-financed recent box office hits like Paddington, Shaun the Sheep and Non-Stop. Upcoming films backed by STUDIOCANAL include The Commuter, featuring Liam Neeson, and Nick Park’s stop-motion movie Early Man, with Aardman Studios.

STUDIOCANAL is actively developing and distributing high-end TV series through its network of award-winning production companies, including Tandem Productions (Crossing Lines, Spotless) and the UK’s RED Production Company (Happy Valley).

Additionally, STUDIOCANAL owns one of the most important film libraries in the world, with more than 5,000 international titles.

STUDIOCANAL’s parent company, CANAL+ Group, is fully-owned by Vivendi, a global media and content production and distribution group.

ABOUT UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP
Universal Music Group is the global music leader, with wholly owned operations in 60 territories. Its businesses also include Universal Music Publishing Group, one of the industry’s premier music publishing operations worldwide.

Universal Music Group’s labels include A&M Records, Angel, Astralwerks, Blue Note Records, Capitol Christian Music Group, Capitol Records, Capitol Records Nashville, Caroline, Decca, Def Jam Recordings, Deutsche Grammophon, Disa, Emarcy, EMI Records Nashville, Fonovisa, Geffen
Records, Harvest, Interscope Records, Island Records, Machete Music, Manhattan, MCA Nashville, Mercury Nashville, Mercury Records, Motown Records, Polydor Records, Republic Records, Universal Music Latino, Verve Music Group, Virgin Records, Virgin EMI Records, as well as a multitude of record labels owned or distributed by its record company subsidiaries around the world. The Universal Music Group owns the most extensive catalogue of music in the industry, which includes the last 100 years of the world’s most popular artists and their recordings. UMG’s catalogue is marketed through two distinct divisions, Universal Music Enterprises (in the U.S.) and Universal Strategic Marketing (outside the U.S.). Universal Music Group also includes Global Digital Business, its new media and technologies division and Bravado, its merchandising company.

Universal Music Group is a fully owned subsidiary of Vivendi.

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