



**DISNEY'S THE LION KING
KICKS OFF INTERNATIONAL TOUR
WITH THE MANILA GALA PREMIERE**

March 29, 2018 – After a week of sold-out preview performances, the world's #1 musical has opened its first international tour at The Theatre at Solaire last night, Wednesday 28 March 2018. A spectacular gala saw guests flying in from all corners of the world, led by Disney Theatrical Group President and Producer, **Thomas Schumacher** who was joined by celebrated composer **Lebo M**, Producer of the international tour, **Michael Cassel**, and theatrical impresario Sir Cameron Mackintosh. Joining them were the leading lights of Filipino media, fashion and entertainment.

Thomas Schumacher said “When we opened our production of THE LION KING on Broadway in 1997, none of us could have imagined that we’d one day be taking this show on an astonishing tour around the world, featuring a wonderfully diverse company and crew from more than 18 countries across the globe. We couldn’t be more excited to begin right here in Manila.”

Disney’s **THE LION KING** is now playing and runs until 6 May 2018. Presented by Michael Cassel Group and Concertus Manila in association with Disney Theatrical Productions, the production’s co-presenting sponsors in Manila are Globe and Visa.

“It has been a dream come true to partner with Disney Theatrical Productions to present the world’s first international tour of this magnificent production. I am delighted that we can begin this journey with Manila’s enthusiastic and welcoming audiences,” commented **Michael Cassel**.

“The Philippines has been our home since we began rehearsals in January and the country is now firmly a part of this production’s DNA. We will take that with us as the show embarks on its world tour”, he added.

The principal cast of **THE LION KING** includes **Ntsepa Pitjeng** who returns to the role of ‘Rafiki’, having performed the role in the USA, UK, Brazil, and Switzerland productions. Direct from London’s West End production is **Mthokozisi Emkay Khanyile** in the role of ‘Mufasa’. Also from the United Kingdom is music theatre performer **Antony Lawrence** as ‘Scar’.

Australian actor **André Jewson** features as ‘Zazu’; the charismatic New Zealand-born performer **Jamie McGregor** plays ‘Timon’ and South African favourite **Pierre van Heerden** returns as ‘Pumbaa’.

Joining the company are six actors from the Philippines. Sharing the role of Young Simba are **Julien Joshua M. Dolor Jr.**, **Gabriel P. Tiongson**, and **Omar Sharief L. Uddin**; sharing the role of Young Nala are **Sheena Kirsten Bentoy**, **Uma Naomi Martin** and **Felicity Kyle Napuli**.

Rounding out the principal cast are South African performers **Calvyn Grandling**; playing the much-loved role of ‘Simba’; the up-and-coming star **Noxolo Dlamini** as ‘Nala’; **Candida Mosoma** returns to the role of ‘Shenzi’; **Björn Blignaut** as ‘Banzai’; and **Mark Tatham** as ‘Ed’.

THE LION KING ensemble is: **Chachano Báez**, **Dayan Kingsley Beukes**, **Tertia Coetzee-Dippenaar**, **Viridiana Cortés**, **Felipe Flores**, **Jabulani Gambu**, **Liso Gcwabe**, **Sheila Hernández**, **Phumelele Jili**, **Kudzai Christine Kapswarah**, **Amanda Kunene**, **Sfiso Matlala**, **Lungile Mkhize**, **Fumane Moeketsi**, **Noluyanda Mqulwana**, **Zodwa Mrasi**, **Lwazi Mzimase**, **Zolina Ngejane**, **Thato Nkwe**, **Thabani Ntuli**,

Peace Nzirawa, Nonfo Olekeng, Angeles Reyes, Khanyisani Shoba, Phumelele Sikhakhane, Romy Jo Swales, Clifford Tlomatsana, Vuyelwa Tshona, Tiholo Tsotetsi, Benn Welford, Zi-Rong Wu, Daniel Zazueta, Monde Zondi, and Sandile Zondi.

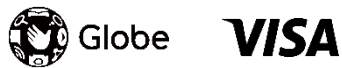
After the Philippines, the international tour of **THE LION KING** heads to Singapore, Korea and Taiwan with more engagements to be announced soon.

For further information about **THE LION KING**, visit: TheLionKing.ph

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PRODUCTION SHOTS AND VIDEO CAN BE DOWNLOADED BELOW:

LionKingInternational.com/media

ABOUT THE LION KING

In its 20th year, **THE LION KING** continues ascendant as one of the most popular stage musicals in the world. Since its Broadway premiere on November 13, 1997, 24 global productions have been seen by more than 90 million people. Produced by Disney Theatrical Productions (under the direction of Thomas Schumacher), **THE LION KING** is the only show in history to generate six productions worldwide running 15 or more years. Performed in eight different languages (Japanese, German, Korean, French, Dutch, Spanish, Mandarin and Portuguese), productions of **THE LION KING** can currently be seen on Broadway, London’s West End, Hamburg, Tokyo and Sapporo, Madrid, Mexico City, Scheveningen, Holland, and on tour across North America, for a total of nine productions running concurrently across the globe. Having played over 100 cities in 19 countries on every continent except Antarctica, **THE LION KING**’s worldwide gross exceeds that of any film, Broadway show or other entertainment title in box office history.

THE LION KING won six 1998 Tony® Awards: Best Musical, Best Scenic Design (Richard Hudson), Best Costume Design (Julie Taymor), Best Lighting Design (Donald Holder), Best Choreography (Garth Fagan) and Best Direction of a Musical. **THE LION KING** has also earned more than 70 major arts awards including the 1998 NY Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Musical, the 1999 Grammy® for Best Musical Show Album, the 1999 Evening Standard Award for Theatrical Event of the Year and the 1999 Laurence Olivier Awards for Best Choreography and Best Costume Design.

The show’s director, costume designer and mask co-designer Julie Taymor continues to play an integral part in the show’s ongoing success. The first woman to win a Tony Award® for Direction of a Musical, Taymor has in recent years supervised new productions of the show around the world.

The Broadway score features Elton John and Tim Rice's music from *The Lion King* animated film along with three new songs by John and Rice; additional musical material by South African Lebo M, Mark Mancina, Jay Rifkin, Julie Taymor and Hans Zimmer; and music from "Rhythm of the Pride Lands," an album inspired by the original music in the film, written by Lebo M, Mark Mancina and Hans Zimmer. The resulting sound of **THE LION KING** is a fusion of Western popular music and the distinctive sounds and rhythms of Africa, ranging from the Academy Award®-winning song "Can You Feel the Love Tonight" to the haunting ballad "Shadowland."

The book has been adapted by Roger Allers, who co-directed *The Lion King* animated feature, and Irene Mecchi, who co-wrote the film's screenplay. Other members of the creative team include: Michael Curry, who designed the masks and puppets with Taymor, Steve Canyon Kennedy (sound design), Michael Ward (hair and makeup design), Anthony Lyn (associate director), Marey Griffith (associate choreographer), David Kreppel (associate music supervisor) and Doc Zorthian (production supervisor). Anne Quart serves as co-producer.

For more information worldwide, visit **LionKing.com**

ABOUT MICHAEL CASSEL GROUP

The Michael Cassel Group is a live entertainment company formed to produce, create and present the world's greatest musical and theatrical productions, live entertainment experiences, marquee events and concert attractions.

Current productions include *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* and *Priscilla Queen of the Desert* and the forthcoming production of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* (opening early 2019).

The company is producing the world's first international tour of Disney's **THE LION KING**, now playing in Manila.

Previous productions include *Les Misérables*, *Kinky Boots*, *Singin' In The Rain* and *Lea Salonga in Concert*.

In addition to the group's theatrical interests, the company represents former Australian Prime Minister, The Hon. Julia Gillard AC, former Olympian and global sporting administrator, Lord Sebastian Coe CH, KBE and media personality, Sami Lukis.

For more information, visit **michaelcassel.com**.

ABOUT CONCERTUS MANILA

Founded in 2004, Concertus Manila is one of the leading promoters of live entertainment in the Philippines.

The company focuses on providing high-calibre shows that elevate the entertainment scene year after year.

They are a full-service concert and event production company with a reputation for excellence, creativity and passion, they have presented numerous concerts, musical and theatrical events as well as corporate events.

Concertus Manila partners with foreign producers and treats Filipinos to world-class musicals and shows like *CATS*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Wicked*, *STOMP*, *Chicago*, *Singin' In The Rain*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Les Misérables*, *West Side Story*, and *The Sound of Music*.