

# Queen Latifah added to 2018 Essence Festival Concert Series this July 6-8

First-Ever ESSENCE Fest Performance Rounds Out All-Star Roster of Iconic Women including Janet Jackson, Mary J. Blige, Erykah Badu, Jill Scott, Xscape and More

NEW YORK, /PRNewswire/ -- For the first time in the event's history, a special performance by multi-talented rapper, singer, actress and producer, Queen Latifah, has been added to the all-star line up for this summer's ESSENCE Festival® presented by Coca-Cola concert series, taking place July 6-8 in New Orleans, LA.

Commemorating three decades in the entertainment business, the

Golden Globe, Emmy, Grammy and SAG Award recipient will be performing alongside Mary J. Blige and Xscape during the Festival's second evening on Saturday, July 7 in the Louisiana Superdome. Queen Latifah rounds out a stellar performance roster spotlighting women, including Janet Jackson, Erykah Badu, Jill Scott and more. The full night-by-night lineup is available here. Single-night tickets are on sale now.

Since the debut release of her classic album All Hail the Queen, Latifah has consistently promoted a message of positivity, empowerment, leadership, fear-

lessness and unity among women—specifically, young women of color. Fans will be treated to a slew of the Queen's most popular records including U.N.I.T.Y., Ladies First and Bananas [Who You Gonna Call?], along with a few thrilling surprises.

Join the Festival community by following them on Twitter, @essencefest #EssenceFest and become a fan of 2018 ESSENCE Festival on Facebook. For more information about ticket sales and accommodations and for the latest news about the ESSENCE Festival®, visit www.essencefestival.com, The ESSENCE Festival is exec-

utive produced by ESSENCE Festivals LLC, a division of ESSENCE Communications Inc., and is produced by Solomon Group. Sponsors of the 2018 ESSENCE Festival® in New Orleans include presenting sponsor Coca-Cola and major sponsors AT&T, Ford, McDonald's, State Farm and Walmart.

Essence Communications is the number one media company dedicated to Black women and inspires a global audience of more than 15 million through diverse storytelling and immersive original content. With a multi-platform presence in publishing,

experiential and online, ESSENCE encompasses its signature magazine; digital, video and social platforms; television specials; books; as well as live events, including Black Women in Music, Black Women in Hollywood, Street Style and the ESSENCE Festival.

Essence Communications is owned by Essence Ventures, an independent African-American owned company focused on merging content, community and commerce to meet the evolving cultural and lifestyle needs of women of color.

## OWN May Highlights

Editor's Note: Please check local cable and satellite provider listings for channel designations and times.

\*\*\*  
THE HAVES AND THE HAVE NOTS

Season Premiere Tuesdays (9 p.m. – 10 p.m. ET/PT) Tyler Perry's "The Haves and the Have Not," starring John Schneider and Tika Sumpter, portrays the ongoing drama between the wealthy Cryer and Harrington families and the poor Young family. WELCOME TO SWEETIE PIE'S Saturdays, at 9 p.m. ET/PT beginning May 5 -As the series says farewell to OWN's favorite family, Miss Robbie is forced to consider what kind of legacy she will leave behind, and who will be chosen to take over the Montgomery soul food empire. QUEEN SUGAR

Two-Night Season Premiere Tuesday, May 29 at 10 p.m. ET/PT and Wednesday, May 30 at 10 p.m. ET/PT\*The series will regularly air on Wednesdays at 10 p.m. ET/PT In the series' third season, the contemporary drama from Academy Award-nominated director Ava DuVernay returns as the Bordelons find themselves continuing their fight to save their family farm and father's legacy as they navigate their own personal journeys. BLACK LOVE

Season Premiere Saturday, May 12 (10 p.m. – 11 p.m. ET/PT) "Black Love," from filmmakers Codie Elaine Oliver and Tommy Oliver ("The Perfect Guy") and Confluent Films, seeks to answer the burning question, "What does it take to make a marriage work?" "Black Love" dives into how love begins while showing the reality of what lifelong love looks like and offers proof that while it can happen for everyone, it isn't a cakewalk. The docu-series shares honest, emotional and sometimes cringe-worthy always-true love stories.

THE BOOK OF JOHN GRAY Saturdays (10 p.m. – 11 p.m. ET/PT) -Pastor John Gray is back, preaching at one of the largest churches in America by night, while ministering one-on-one to those in great need of his inspiring words by day. THE PAYNES Fridays (9 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. ET/PT) - In Tyler Perry's new comedy series "The Paynes," Cassi Davis and LaVan Davis reprise their roles as Ella and Curtis Payne from the hit series "House of Payne." "The Paynes" also stars Emmy-winner Jackée Harry, Stephanie Charles, Markice Moore, JD McCrary, Sana Victoria and Anthony O. Dalton.

HOME MADE SIMPLE WITH LAILA ALI Saturdays (9 a.m. – 10 a.m. ET/PT) Emmy award-winning "Home Made Simple with Laila Ali" creates homes that deserving families love to live in. The show pairs inspiring families, a team of professional designers, carpenters and special guest artists, who work together with the families to create simple solutions to everyday home challenges and design dilemmas. Host Laila Ali works alongside families as they transform their

Email entertainment news to [MSTentertainment@prodigy.net](mailto:MSTentertainment@prodigy.net) and sports news to [MSTsports@prodigy.net](mailto:MSTsports@prodigy.net)

# OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network inks two new series deal with prolific producer Will Packer

LOS ANGELES, CA— OWN announced recently two new series from prolific hit-maker Will Packer ("Girls Trip," "Straight Outta Compton," "Ride Along," "Roots") and his Will Packer Media banner: the soapy new drama series "Ambitions" from global content leader Lionsgate and the unscripted dating series "Ready to Love." Packer will serve as executive producer for both series. The new shows mark the first television series to be created under Packer's first-look deal with the network.

*Ready to Love" (working title), which begins production in Atlanta this spring, will join OWN's popular Saturday night unscripted programming lineup later this year. The dating series will focus on successful men and women of all shapes, sizes and shades, each of whom is looking for lasting love. A unique twist on a typical dating show, "Ready to Love" will specifically bring the perspective of men to the forefront.*

multigenerational family saga centered around one woman who, having recently relocated and intent on revitalizing her marriage, finds herself going head to head with some of the most powerful and deceitful players in the city. "Ambitions" will begin production later this year and will debut on OWN in 2019.

The new series will be produced for OWN by Will Packer Media in association with Lionsgate/Debmarm-Mercury. Will Packer is executive producer. Will Packer Media's Sheila Ducksworth also serves as executive producer and writer Jamey Giddens serves as co-executive producer.

"Ready to Love" (working title), which begins production in Atlanta this spring, will join OWN's popular Saturday night unscripted programming lineup later this year.

The dating series will focus on successful men and women of all shapes, sizes and shades, each of whom is looking for lasting love. A unique twist on a typical dating show, "Ready to Love" will specifically bring the perspective of men to the forefront. It will present a unique opportunity to see what men say about dating, when women aren't around. "Ready to Love" will be produced by Will Packer Media and Lighthearted Entertainment.

Will Packer is executive producer. Will Packer Media's Kelly

Smith and Lighthearted's Rob LaPlante and Jeff Spangler will also executive produce.

The two new series join OWN's primetime programming slate including the popular dramas "Queen Sugar," "Greenleaf," "The Haves and the Have Nots," and "If Loving You is Wrong" – four of the top eight original scripted series on ad-supported cable in 2017 for women 25-54; the hit sitcom "The Paynes," the upcoming dramedy "Love Is..." premiering this summer, and the successful Saturday night unscripted series "Iyanla: Fix My Life," "The Book of John Gray," "Welcome to Sweetie Pie's" and "Black Love." In addition, the network's new drama series from Academy Award winner Tarell Alvin McCraney ("Moonlight") will go into production this summer.

### About Lighthearted Entertainment

For over 25 years independently owned Lighthearted Entertainment has been prolific in unscripted entertainment, specializing in unique and loud formats that break through the noise. Recent successes include multi-season relationship hits "Are You the One?" on MTV and "Dating Naked" on VH1.

### About OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network

OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network is the first and only network named for, and inspired by, a single iconic leader. Oprah Winfrey's heart and creative instincts inform the brand and the magnetism of the channel. OWN is a leading destination for premium scripted and unscripted programming from today's most innovative storytellers. OWN connects with its audience wherever they are, inspiring conversation among a global community of like-minded viewers on social media and beyond. Launched on January 1, 2011,

OWN is a joint venture between Harpo, Inc. and Discovery Communications. The venture also includes the award-winning digital platform Oprah.com. Access OWN anytime, anywhere on WatchOWN.tv or across mobile devices and connected TVs.

### About Will Packer Media

Led by Hollywood producer Will Packer, Will Packer Media is a first-of-its-kind production and branded content company focused on the New American Mainstream audience, with an urban millennial core.

In partnership with Discovery Communications and Universal Pictures, the company produces episodic scripted and unscripted series across television and digital platforms, compelling content for brand clients, and short-form digital content for millennial audiences. Will Packer's films have earned more than \$1 billion, with

The announcement comes as OWN's momentum and diversified programming slate continues to grow. The network recently delivered its highest rated first quarter in four years in the network's key W25-54 demo with year-over-year gains of +6% in W25-54, +15% in African American women and

*"Will is a creative powerhouse who knows what audiences want," said Erik Logan, president of OWN. "He has an insightful approach to relationships and a keen eye for great storytelling that resonates with viewers across the board. We can't wait to bring these two new series to our viewers."*

+5% in total viewers. In addition, year-to-date OWN is the #1 cable network for African American women in primetime. "Will is a creative powerhouse

who knows what audiences want," said Erik Logan, president of OWN. "He has an insightful approach to relationships and a keen eye for great storytelling that resonates with viewers across the board. We can't wait to bring these two new series to our viewers."

"Partnering with OWN to bring 'Ambitions' and 'Ready to Love' to their fast-growing lineup of critically acclaimed series is a win-win scenario," said Will Packer, CEO and founder of Will Packer Media. "OWN has been on an incredible streak with its recent slate, and we're looking forward to extending the network's primetime success with these new shows created specifically with the OWN audience in mind."

"Ambitions" (working title) is a

## Disney's Peter Pan Signature Collection ready for family viewing May 29

In celebration of its 65th anniversary, Disney's beloved flight of fantasy, "Peter Pan," joins the highly celebrated Walt Disney Signature Collection, landing in homes on Digital and Movies Anywhere on May 29 and on Blu-ray June 5. With a little faith, trust and pixie dust, every mem-

ber of the family will let their imagination soar on this epic adventure to Never Land, sparkling with legendary animation, extraordinary music and both all-new and classic bonus features.

The Walt Disney Signature Col-

lection edition of "Peter Pan" invites adventures of all ages to believe in magic once again and experience a timeless treasure from Disney's golden age of animation that has stirred the hearts and imaginations of moviegoers worldwide since its

original 1953 release. The Signature Collection edition offers over two hours of classic bonus features plus never-before-seen extras, including the latest installment of "Stories from Walt's Office," which explores

Walt's love of flying and the company planes; a nostalgic reunion between Kathryn Beaumont (the voice of Wendy) and Paul Collins (the voice of John); and new "Oke" renditions of the classic song "You Can Fly" and deleted song "Never Smile at a Crocodile" accompanied by on-screen lyrics and the film's unforgettable animated characters. Check out a new trailer for Peter Pan Walt Disney Signature Collection on YouTube at:

For a spring time read....

**Listen to "Forgiving Christmas" by Arelya J. Mitchell**

Performed by Janine Santana

**on Audible**

Also available on Kindle and in print on Amazon

What happens when a holiday is no longer a holiday?

**Register for today for T.D. Jakes' Woman Thou Art Loosed Master Class**

**Oct. 18-20, 2018**

**Dallas, Texas**

For more information, visit

**WTAL.org**

or call

**1-800-Bishop2**

**WKNO**  
The Station Mid-South Parents Trust

wkno.org