

FURTHER CASTING ANNOUNCED FOR WEST END PRODUCTION OF
MOTOWN THE MUSICAL
OPENING AT SHAFTESBURY THEATRE FEBRUARY 2016

Charl Brown (Smokey Robinson) and **Sifiso Mazibuko** (Marvin Gaye) join the previously announced **Cedric Neal** (Berry Gordy) and **Lucy St. Louis** (Diana Ross) in the West End production of ***Motown the Musical***. With music and lyrics from the legendary Motown catalogue and book by Motown founder **Berry Gordy**, ***Motown the Musical*** is directed by **Charles Randolph-Wright**. London previews will begin on 11 February 2016, with press night on 8 March 2016, with the show booking to 22 October 2016. Earlier this week it was announced that ***Motown the Musical*** will return to Broadway for an 18 week run in July next year.

Joining **Charl Brown**, **Sifiso Mazibuko**, **Cedric Neal** and **Lucy St. Louis** are **Keisha Amponsa Banson** (Mary Wells), **Cindy Belliot** (Anna Gordy), **Samuel Edwards** (Jackie Wilson), **Portia Harry** (Teena Marie), **Aisha Jawando** (Martha Reeves), **Joshua Liburd** (Eddie Kendricks), **Simeon Montague** (Jermaine Jackson), **Cleopatra Rey** (Gladys Knight), **Brandon Lee Sears** (Tito Jackson), **Jordan Shaw** (Stevie Wonder), **Cherelle Williams** (Mary Wilson) and 12 year old **Eshan Gopal** from Kingsbury, London, 13 year old **Kwame Kandekore** from Leicester and 11 year old **Joshua Tikare** from Bromley who will alternate the role of Young Michael Jackson. They are joined by swings and ensemble members Daniel Bailey, Edward Baruwa, Tanya Nicole Edwards, Eddie Elliott, Christopher Fry, Alex Hammond, Edward Handoll, Simon Ray Harvey, Elias Hendricks, Brian James Leys, Jayde Nelson, Simone Mistry Palmer, Carl Spencer and Marcel J Whyte. Final casting will be announced shortly.

Charl Brown's previous portrayal of Smokey Robinson in the Broadway production of *Motown the Musical* earned him a 2013 Tony Award nomination for Best Featured Actor in a Musical. His earlier theatre credits include the role of Hud on the European Tour of *Hair*, *Jersey Boys* on Broadway and in Las Vegas and the Off-Broadway production of *Walmartopia*. Brown's Broadway debut in 2011 was in the original cast of *Sister Act*. Brown is currently travelling across the United States with his group *The Doowop Project*.*

Sifiso Mazibuko's (Marvin Gaye) UK theatre credits include *The Tempest* for Flute Theatre, *A Land Without People* and *The First Actress* for Palindrome Productions, *Hector* at The Courtyard Theatre and *Dancers* performed in both London and New York. His American theatre credits include *the theatre is a blank page* produced by Anne Bogart, Ann Hamilton & the SITI company. Mazibuko also performed in *Shaka Zulu the Musical* at the State Theatre in South Africa, was part of the Asian Tour of *African Footprint* and was in *Dreamgirls the Musical* in South Africa. His film credits include *Pretville*.

Cedric Neal's (Berry Gordy) US theatre credits include *After Midnight* on Broadway, *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess* on Broadway and for Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, *Dreamgirls* for the Signature Theatre for which he won a Helen Hayes Award, *The Who's Tommy*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Stagger Lee* for the Dallas Theater Center. Neal has also worked at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, American Repertory Theater, Zach Theater and was a recurring character on the television series *Friday Night Lights*.

**Charl Brown is appearing with the support of UK Equity, incorporating the Variety Artistes' Federation, pursuant to an exchange program between American Equity and UK Equity.*

Lucy St. Louis (Diana Ross) is currently performing in *Beautiful – The Carole King Musical* at the Aldwych Theatre. Her previous theatre credits include *The Book of Mormon* at the Prince of Wales Theatre, *Ragtime* for Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, *Peter Pan* for the Venue Cymru, Llandudno and *Ultimate Broadway* for the Shanghai Culture Square Theatre. On film, she will be seen in the upcoming Disney live-action adaptation of *Beauty and the Beast*.

With just \$800 borrowed from his family, Motown founder Berry Gordy, goes from featherweight boxer to heavyweight music mogul, discovering and launching the careers of Diana Ross, Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder, Smokey Robinson, Marvin Gaye and many more. Motown the Musical uncovers the true story of the legendary record label that changed music history and created the soundtrack of a generation.

Featuring a sixteen piece orchestra playing 50 Motown tracks including *Ain't No Mountain High Enough*, *I'll Be There*, *Dancing In The Street*, *Stop! In The Name Of Love*, *My Girl* and *I Heard It through the Grapevine*, Charles Randolph-Wright's production tells the story behind the classic hits.

Tony nominated ***Motown the Musical*** received its world premiere in April 2013 in New York at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre and recouped its \$18 million investment by the end of 2014. The first US National Tour opened to critical acclaim last spring in Chicago, grossing \$20 million dollars during its standing room only sixteen-week run, and continues to play to packed houses across America.

Motown the Musical has music supervision, orchestrations and arrangements by **Ethan Popp**, co-orchestrations and additional arrangements by **Bryan Cook**, dance arrangements by **Zane Mark** and music direction by **Gareth Weedon**. Choreography is by **Patricia Wilcox** and **Warren Adams**, scenic design by **David Korins**, costumes by **Esosa**, lighting by **Natasha Katz**, sound by **Peter Hylenski** and projections by **Daniel Brodie**. UK associate director is **Tara Wilkinson**, UK associate set designer is **Andrew Edwards** and UK associate lighting designer is **Alistair Grant**. ***Motown the Musical*** will be produced in the West End by **Kevin McCollum**, **Doug Morris**, **Berry Gordy** and **Adam Spiegel**.

Berry Gordy is the founder of Motown, the enterprise that nurtured the careers of, amongst others, Smokey Robinson and The Miracles, Diana Ross and The Supremes, Stevie Wonder, The Temptations, The Four Tops, Michael Jackson and The Jackson 5 and more. Gordy is also a songwriter, producer, director, boxer, innovative entrepreneur, teacher and visionary. Actively involved in the Civil Rights movement, he also released the recorded speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. His films include *Mahogany* and *Lady Sings the Blues*, which received five Academy Award nominations. He has been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, received a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame, the Rhythm and Blues Foundation's Lifetime Achievement Award, the Songwriter's Hall of Fame Pioneer Award, the Grammy Salute To Industry Icon's President's Merit Award and was honored by President Barack Obama with a Salute to Motown evening at the White House. Berry Gordy's unparalleled contribution to music and popular culture is chronicled in his autobiography, *To Be Loved: The Music, The Magic, The Memories of Motown*.

Charles Randolph-Wright is a director, writer and producer for theatre, film, and television. His theatre directing credits include *Motown the Musical* on Broadway and the US tour, the Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Ruined* and *Sophisticated Ladies* at Arena Stage where he is an inaugural resident playwright, the 75th Anniversary international tour of *Porgy and Bess*, *Love/Life* at Lincoln Center with Brian Stokes Mitchell, the national tour of *Guys and Dolls*, *They're Playing Our Song* in Brazil in Portuguese, and most recently, the world premiere of *Akeelah and the Bee*. Randolph-Wright wrote the plays *Blue*, *The Night Is A Child*, *Cuttin' Up*, *Love in Afghanistan*, and co-wrote *Just Between Friends - Bea Arthur* on Broadway. He directed the award-winning film *Preaching to the Choir*, and has written screenplays for HBO, Showtime, Disney and Fox. His television credits include directing *Lincoln Heights*, *South of Nowhere*, Bebe Winans' special *America America*, the "Freestyle" football commercial for Nike, and producing and writing the Showtime series *Linc's*.

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The original Broadway cast recording of ***Motown the Musical*** is available via Motown Records, a label of UMG Recordings - www.classicmotown.com

LISTINGS INFORMATION

Theatre: Shaftesbury Theatre, 210 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8DP
Dates: First booking period 11 February – 22 October 2016
Press Night: 8 March 2016 at 7pm
Performances: Monday – Saturday 7.30pm, Thursday & Saturday matinees at 3pm
First midweek matinee 18 February 2016
Prices: £19.50 - £69.50 Monday – Thursday, £19.50 - £75 Friday and Saturday.
No booking fees via www.motownthemusical.co.uk, over the phone on 020 7379 5399 or in person at the Shaftesbury Theatre Box Office.
Day seats will go on sale from the Box Office, in person only, from 10am on the day of performance.
Box Office: 020 7379 5399
Website: www.motownthemusical.co.uk
Twitter: @MotownUK
Facebook: MotownMusicalUK