



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW PRODUCTION DATES & CREATIVE TEAM MEMBER ANNOUNCED FOR IMITATION OF LIFE AT THE SHED

Music & Lyrics by Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony Award winner John Legend
Book by Two-Time Pulitzer Prize winner Lynn Nottage
Directed by Two-Time Tony Award Nominee Whitney White

NOW EXTENDED FOR AN ADDITIONAL TWO WEEKS!

Performances Now Begin Saturday, November 21, 2026

For A Strictly Limited 6-Week Engagement Through Sunday, January 3, 2027 ONLY
At The Griffin Theater at The Shed

The Shed Member Pre-Sale Happening Now

Mastercard Cardholder Pre-Sale Begins Wednesday, May 27

Tickets for the General Public Go On-Sale Friday, May 29

Visit theshed.org/imitationoflife for more information

(New York, NY) The new musical **IMITATION OF LIFE** has announced new production dates and a new creative team member for its world premiere engagement at The Griffin Theater at **The Shed** (Meredith “Max” Hodges, Chief Executive Officer; Alex Poots, Artistic Director), in a co-production with **National Black Theatre** (Sade Lythcott, Chief Executive Officer; Jonathan McCrory, Executive Artistic Director).

Featuring a book by Pulitzer Prize winner **Lynn Nottage**, music and lyrics by Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony Award winner **John Legend**, and directed by Two-Time Tony Award nominee **Whitney White**, **IMITATION OF LIFE** will now begin performances on Saturday, November 21, 2026 in an extended for two weeks strictly limited 6-week engagement through Sunday, January 3, 2027.

National Black Theatre, John Legend and Mike Jackson of Get Lifted Film Co., Liesl Tommy and Jennifer Mudge of Crocodile Eyes, Universal Theatrical Group (UTG), Sue Wagner, John Johnson, Mickey Liddell and Pete Shilaimon of LD Entertainment and The Shed serve as producers.

Whitney White joins the creative team of **IMITATION OF LIFE** as a 2026 Tony Award nominee for direction of the Pulitzer Prize winning play *Liberation*. This season, she also helmed *Saturday Church* at New York Theatre Workshop and is set to direct the Broadway premiere of *School Girls; or, the African Mean Girls Play* on Broadway next season at Manhattan Theater Club. She will also direct *The Whoopi Monologues* at Lincoln Center Theater this summer. White previously worked with Lynn Nottage on the musical *The Secret Life of Bees* at the Almeida in the UK.

Tickets for **IMITATION OF LIFE** go on sale to the public on Friday, May 29. The Mastercard cardholder presale begins Wednesday, May 27. For tickets and pre-sale access for Shed members and Mastercard cardholders, visit theshed.org/imitationoflife.

Additional details including casting, design and creative team members and more will be announced at a later date. For more information visit <https://nationalblacktheatre.org/production/imitationoflife/>. For tickets, please visit theshed.org/imitationoflife.

Inspired by the 1933 best-selling novel by Fannie Hurst and the beloved 1934 and 1959 Universal films, Imitation of Life follows two single mothers, one Black and one White, as well as their daughters, who build a shared life while each strives for success and love in a society divided by race and class. Set across the vibrant backdrop of 1920s Atlantic City and 1930s New York, this new, profoundly moving musical explores themes of identity, the American Dream, and what we leave for future generations.

The novel *Imitation of Life* by Fannie Hurst was originally published in 1933. Universal Pictures produced two film adaptations based on the book: in 1934 directed by John Stahl, starring Claudette Colbert and Louise Beavers; and in 1959 directed by Douglas Sirk, starring Lana Turner and Juanita Moore. The 1934 film is included in the U.S. National Film Registry of The Library of Congress for its “cultural, historical and aesthetic significance.” It was nominated for the 1934 Academy Award for Best Picture. The 1959 film was nominated for two Academy Awards (Best Actress, Juanita Moore and Best Supporting Actress, Susan Kohner).

BIOS

LYNN NOTTAGE (*Book*) is a playwright and screenwriter, and the first woman in history to receive two Pulitzer Prizes for Drama. Among the most produced playwrights of her generation, her work has been staged extensively throughout the United States and internationally, earning Tony Award nominations, an Olivier nomination, an Evening Standard award, and numerous other awards. Her recent projects include the libretto for *This House*, premiered at Opera Theatre of St. Louis, co-written with Ruby Aiyō Gerber with music by Ricky Ian Gordon (Finalist for the 2025 International Opera Awards); the opera adaptation of *Intimate Apparel* at Lincoln Center Theater; the book for the Tony-nominated Broadway musical *MJ*; and *Clyde's*, produced on Broadway and at Second Stage Theater. She has also co-curated immersive performance installations, including *This Is Reading* and *The Watering Hole* at Signature Theatre. Nottage's acclaimed body of work includes *Sweat and Ruined* (Pulitzer Prizes), *Mlima's Tale*, *By the Way*, *Meet Vera Stark*, *Fabulation*, *Crumbs From the Table of Joy*, and *The Secret Life of Bees*. For television, she served as Writer/Producer on “She's Gotta Have It” and Consulting Producer on “Dickinson.” Her honors include the PEN/Laura Pels Master Dramatist Award, Doris Duke Artist Award, MacArthur Fellowship, Guggenheim Fellowship, and induction into the Theater Hall of Fame. She is a Professor at Columbia University School of the Arts and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

JOHN LEGEND (*Music & Lyrics*) is an EGOT-winning, critically acclaimed, multiplatinum artist who has garnered 13 Grammy Awards, an Academy Award, a Golden Globe Award, a Tony Award and four Emmy Awards, among others. Legend is one of only twenty-two people in the prestigious EGOT club. Legend has released ten celebrated albums over the course of his career, including *Get Lifted* (2004), *Once Again* (2006), *Evolver* (2008), *Wake Up!* (with The Roots, 2010), *Love in the Future* (2013), *Darkness and Light* (2016), *A Legendary Christmas* (2018), *Bigger Love* (2020), *LEGEND* (2022), *LEGEND (Solo Piano Version)* (2023) and most recently, *My Favorite Dream* (2024). After releasing the 20th anniversary deluxe version of his Grammy®-winning debut album, *Get Lifted*—featuring new remixes and collaborations with artists including Tems, Blackthought, Simi, Killer Mike, and Lil Wayne—Legend launched the “Get Lifted 20th Anniversary World Tour,” bringing his acclaimed debut album back to venues across North America and Europe. Legend joined “The Voice” as a coach for Season 16 (2019) and will next be seen on Season 29 (2026), his 11th season on the show. Beyond music, Legend co-founded Get Lifted Film Co., a production company that has developed projects across multiple forms of media, alongside partners Mike Jackson and Ty Stiklorius. Following their success in film, TV and theater, Get Lifted partnered with Zando to form Get Lifted Books, building upon Get Lifted Film Co.'s mission of spotlighting stories from dynamic creatives. Get Lifted Film Co. are among the producers of *Imitation of Life* and this show represents Legend's first time composing a full musical. Expanding his entrepreneurial footprint, Legend launched his self-care brand, Loved01, in 2023, to bring consumers luxurious skincare formulas at affordable prices and in 2024, he and his wife, Chrissy Teigen, introduced Kismet, a dog

lifestyle brand offering premium food and accessories for modern dog families. As an advocate for social justice, Legend founded FREEAMERICA in 2014 to transform the conversation around criminal justice policies and combat mass incarceration. He also serves on the boards of Harlem Village Academies, Global Citizen and Management Leadership for Tomorrow, as well as advisory boards for The Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice and Teach for All.

Whitney White (*Director*) is an Obie and Lilly Award-winning and two-time Tony Award-nominated director, actor, and musician known for her bold and innovative approach to storytelling. Most recently, White earned a 2026 Tony Award nomination for her direction of Bess Wohl's *Liberation*, making her the first Black female director nominated for two "Best Direction of a Play" Tony Awards. Her Broadway credits include Bess Wohl's *Liberation* at the James Earl Jones Theatre, *The Last Five Years* at the Hudson Theatre, and *Jaja's African Hair Braiding* at the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre. She will next direct *School Girls; or, The African Mean Girls Play* at the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre this fall. Off-Broadway, White directed *Saturday Church* at New York Theatre Workshop in 2025 and wrote, composed, and starred in *Macbeth in Stride* at Brooklyn Academy of Music, in addition to *All Is But Fantasy* with the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, England. Upcoming, she is set to direct a reimagining of *The Whoopi Monologues* starring Kerry Washington and Kara Young, with previews beginning July 7, as well as the English-language premiere of *Ellen B.* by Marius von Mayenburg at Steppenwolf Theatre beginning in April 2027. Her film and television acting credits include *Ocean's Eight*, Freeform's "Single Drunk Female," Fx's "Louie," and NBC's *The Playboy Club*. She also wrote for Boots Riley's *I'M A VIRGO* for Prime Video. Whitney received the 2026 Obie Award for Sustained Achievement in Directing for *Liberation* and the 2025 Drama League Founders Award for Excellence in Directing. In 2024, she was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Direction of a Play for *Jaja's African Hair Braiding* and, in 2025, for Outstanding Director at the Lucille Lortel Awards for *Liberation*.

Major Support for **IMITATION OF LIFE** is provided by:



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As part of its ongoing partnership with The Shed, Mastercard offers cardholders exclusive benefits including 48-hour presale access to all Shed-produced programming as well as seasonal Priceless Experiences. Cardholders also enjoy a 10% discount at Cedric's Lobby Bar, with additional savings opportunities at the gift shop (restrictions may apply). This partnership extends Mastercard's Arts & Culture presence across New York City and into one of the city's most dynamic cultural institutions.

The creation of new work at The Shed is generously supported by the Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch Commissioning Fund and the Shed Commissioners. Major support for live productions at The Shed is provided by the Charina Endowment Fund, with additional support from The Shubert Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor, and the New York State Legislature.