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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TAMING THE LION, A WORLD PREMIERE PLAY, STARTS MARCH 12 AT THEATRE 40

WHAT: *Taming the Lion*. World Premiere engagement of a new play.

WHO: Written by Jack Rushen. Directed by Melanie MacQueen. Produced by David Hunt Stafford for Theatre Forty.

WHERE: Theatre 40, in the Reuben Cordova Theatre, 241 S. Moreno Dr., Beverly Hills, CA 90212. The venue is on the campus of Beverly Hills High School. Free parking is available in the parking lot beneath the theatre. To access parking, enter through the driveway at the intersection of Durant and Moreno Drives.

WHEN: March 12- April 12, 2020. Thurs.- Sat. at 8:00, Sun. at 2:00. The performance on Friday, March 13 will begin at 7 p.m.

ADMISSION: \$35.

RESERVATIONS: (310) 364-0535.

ONLINE TICKETING: www.theatre40.org

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Taming the Lion is suggested by true events.

William Haines acted in 50 films between 1922 and 1934 and was the number one box-office draw at the end of the silent era. He was also the first openly gay movie star, a fact that the MGM studio attempted to conceal, fearing that Haines' gayness would prove to be box-office poison.

Studio executives Louis B. Mayer and Irving Thalberg attempt to force Haines to marry a woman, to please the fans. But Haines is devoted to his male lover, Jimmie Shields. Mayer sends Haines' best female friend, Joan Crawford, to try and persuade Haines to marry a woman.

Mayer gives Haines an ultimatum: marry a woman and continue to be a movie idol, or turn his back on his movie career and lose everything so that he can stay with Jimmie.

What will Haines do?

Jack Rushen is the playwright. He is the two-time recipient of the Julie Harris Playwriting Award from the Beverly Hills Theatre Guild. His full-length plays include *Image*, *Petey*, and *Means to an End*. He is also the author of 30 short plays. He is also an actor.

Melanie MacQueen directs. Her directing credits at Theatre 40 include *Engaging Shaw*, *The Drawer Boy*, *Months on End*, *On Borrowed Time*, *Separate Beds* and *Roses in December*. Her directing career spans several decades, and includes the award-winning musical that she also

wrote and produced, *In the Name of God, or Honk If You Love Satire*, which moved from the Valley to Off-Broadway. Also an actor, Theatre 40 audiences might know her best from her appearances in the perennial cast of *The Manor*.

Her cast for *Taming the Lion* includes, in alphabetical order, Landon Beatty, Niko Boles, Marie Broderick, Kevin Dulude, Jean Mackie and Jeffrey Winner.

Stage manager: Don Solosan. Lighting design: Brandon Baruch. Costume design: Michèle Young. Sound design: Joseph “Sloe” Slawinski. Set design: Jeff G. Rack.

This true story of a Hollywood legend is more fascinating than anything a screenwriter could invent.