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For Immediate Release

STAR CASTING ANNOUNCED

SHERRIE HEWSON, JESSICA ELLIS AND LES DENNIS

JOIN LEE MEAD IN

THE UK AND IRELAND TOUR OF KAY MELLOR'S SMASH HIT

FAT FRIENDS THE MUSICAL

Producer **Joshua Andrews** is delighted to announce star casting for the UK and Ireland tour of **Kay Mellor's** smash hit **FAT FRIENDS THE MUSICAL**. With original music by **Nick Lloyd Webber**, the tour will come to **Theatre Royal Plymouth from 27 June – 02 July 2022**. Joining the previously announced **Lee Mead** as 'Kevin' will be **Sherrie Hewson** as 'Julia', **Jessica Ellis** as 'Kelly' and **Les Dennis** as 'Fergus'. **Marc Akinfolarin** also joins the cast as 'Alan' with **Alex-May Roberts** as 'Val'. Further casting to be announced soon.

Kay Mellor said today **'I am thrilled with the amazing star cast we have assembled for our second outing of Fat Friends The Musical. Lee Mead and Jessica Ellis are fantastic performers and will be wonderful as Kevin and Kelly, and it's great to be welcoming two iconic actors, Sherrie Hewson and Les Dennis who first worked together 40 years ago and are now reunited on stage'**.

Lee Mead is a much loved actor of stage and screen. Having won the nations hearts when they voted him their Joseph in BBC One's 'Any Dream Will Do', Lee has gone on to star in the West End in 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat', 'Legally Blonde' and 'Wicked' before establishing himself as a TV favourite on 'Casualty' and then 'Holby City' in the role of Lofty.

Sherrie Hewson is probably best known as the iconic Maureen Holdsworth in ITV's 'Coronation Street' and Joyce Temple-Savage in six series of 'Benidorm'. Her other TV credits include 'Russ Abbot's Madhouse' and ten years as the comedy cornerstone of 'Loose Women'. No stranger to the stage, her many theatre credits include 'Stepping Out', 'Billy Liar', 'Run For Your Wife' and 'Arsenic and Old Lace'.

Jessica Ellis played Tegan Lomax in Channel 4's 'Hollyoaks' for five years. She most recently filmed the feature film 'Catherine Called Birdy', written and directed by Lena Dunham. She has appeared on stage in 'Bedroom Farce' at Theatre by the Lake and in three Old Vic New Voices productions in New York. Fat Friends marks her musical

theatre debut.

Les Dennis most recently starred as Wilbur in 'Hairspray' opposite Michael Ball at the London Coliseum. His other West End credits include Amos Hart in 'Chicago' and Bill in 'Me and My Girl'. His touring theatre credits include 'Art', 'Legally Blonde', 'High School Musical 2' and Uncle Fester in the musical comedy 'The Addams Family'. His many TV credits include Michael Rodwell in 'Coronation Street' and a fictional version of himself in 'Extras'.

This hugely entertaining musical toured the UK to a rapturous response from critics and sell out audiences in 2017 and is based on the hit ITV show *Fat Friends*, that starred James Corden and Ruth Jones. *Fat Friends - The Musical* reunites our favourite foodie friends as they are put through their Zumba paces at their local slimming club, whilst Kelly fantasises about fitting into the wedding dress of her dreams. Full of hope, humour, love and weight loss, the show delivers a tasty treat of fun and laughter and encourages us all, as the final song sings, to *Love Who You Are!*

FAT FRIENDS THE MUSICAL is created, directed and has a book and lyrics by the multi award winning **Kay Mellor**, whose latest hit series of *The Syndicate* recently ran on BBC One. It has Music by **Nicholas Lloyd Webber** with Set and Costume design by **Bretta Gerecke**. Choreography is by **Karen Bruce**, Sound by **Ben Harrison**, Lighting by **Nick Richings** with Orchestrations, Arrangements and Musical Supervision by **Simon Lee**, Casting by **Stephen Crockett CDG for David Grindrod Associates**, with Additional Casting by **David Shaw CDG for David Shaw Casting**. It is produced by **Joshua Andrews** and **Rollem Productions**.

ENDS

For further information please contact the Media and Communications team on public.relations@theatreroyal.com / 01752 230439

Theatre Royal Plymouth (TRP) is a registered charity providing art, education and community engagement in Plymouth and across the region. It engages and inspires with the aim of touching lives. Theatre Royal Plymouth presents a year-round programme of world class productions on all scales as the South West's principal centre for performing arts.

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