

PRESS RELEASE – 21 May 2019

ASHLEY ROBERTS & LUCIE JONES TO STAR IN

WAITRESS

It is announced today that from Monday 17 June **Ashley Roberts** (*Strictly Come Dancing* 2018 finalist, The Pussycat Dolls) will be making her West End debut as Dawn in **Sara Bareilles'** hit musical *Waitress* for a strictly limited summer season. It is also confirmed that **Lucie Jones** (*Rent, Les Misérables, Legally Blonde*) will take over the role of Jenna from this date.

London's brand-new smash hit musical comedy *Waitress* tells the story of Jenna, a waitress and expert pie-maker who dreams her way out of a loveless marriage. When a hot new doctor arrives in town, life gets complicated. With the support of her workmates Becky and Dawn, Jenna overcomes the challenges she faces and finds that laughter, love and friendship can provide the perfect recipe for happiness.

Waitress celebrated its official opening night at the **Adelphi** theatre on 7 March and the Tony-nominated musical is now booking to **19 October**.

Ashley Roberts will play Dawn. Best known for being a member of one of the biggest girl groups in the world, The Pussycat Dolls, Ashley shot to fame after the release of the album 'PCD'. During her seven years in the group they sold over 54 million records and toured the world performing to fans worldwide. Since leaving the group in 2010, Ashley won the hearts of the British public in 2012 when she was voted runner up in *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!* in one of the closest reality show finals in history. She followed this with a starring role on *Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway*. Ashley continued her TV career as a judge on *ITV's Dancing On Ice* for two seasons and on the popular *BBC One* talent competition *Let It Shine* as a guest judge alongside Gary Barlow.

In 2017, Ashley pursued her love of comedy, appearing as a regular on *ITV's The Keith Lemon Sketch Show* and *Coming In America*, in addition to hosting two seasons of *1st Look*, which aired every Saturday night on *NBC in the US*. In 2018, Ashley joined the cast of *BBC One's Strictly Come Dancing*. With guidance from professional dance partner Pasha Kovalev the pair danced their way to the finals with Ashley becoming the highest scoring contestant with an average score of 36.9 and holds the record for the most perfect scores ever received by a contestant with five perfect scores throughout the season.

Lucie Jones will play Jenna. Lucie has played some of the most iconic roles in musical theatre, with previous theatre credits that include Cosette in *Les Misérables* (Queens Theatre), Maureen Johnson in *RENT* (The Other Palace and national tour), Elle Woods in *Legally Blonde* (national tour), Holly in *The Wedding Singer* (national tour), Victoria in *American Psycho The Musical* (Almeida), Molly Jensen in *Ghost: The Musical* (Asian tour) and Meat in the *We Will Rock You* (world arena tour).

Lucie was a finalist in the 2009 series of *The X Factor* and toured the UK playing to sell out arena crowds on *The X Factor Tour* in 2010. In January 2017, she won the public vote on the BBC2 show *Eurovision - You Decide* with her original song 'Never Give Up On You'. She competed at the Eurovision World Final in Ukraine. Other television work includes roles in *Midsomer Murders* (ITV) and *The Sarah Jane Adventures* (BBC).

Brought to life by a ground breaking, female-led creative team, *Waitress* features an original score by 7-time Grammy® nominee Sara Bareilles (Love Song, Brave), a book by acclaimed screenwriter Jessie Nelson (*I Am Sam*) and direction by Tony Award® winner Diane Paulus (*Pippin*, *Finding Neverland*) and choreography by Lorin Latarro. The production is currently touring the US and has also announced it will have its Australian premiere in 2020 at the Sydney Lyric Theatre.

Alongside **Lucie Jones** and **Ashley Roberts** as Jenna and Dawn, *Waitress* also stars **Marisha Wallace** as Becky, **Peter Hannah** as Earl, **David Hunter** as Dr. Pomatter and **Shaun Prendergast** as Old Joe.

The full company includes **Kelly Agbowu**, **Piers Bate**, **Nicole Raquel Dennis**, **Michael Hamway**, **Peter Hannah**, **David Hunter**, **Lucie Jones**, **Stephen Leask**, **Chris McGuigan**, **Olivia Moore**, **Nathaniel Morrison**, **Sarah O'Connor**, **Leanne Pinder**, **Shaun Prendergast**, **Charlotte Riby**, **Ashley Roberts**, **Marisha Wallace** and **Mark Willshire**. Laura Baldwin will return to the role of Dawn in *Waitress* at the end of the summer.

On its Broadway opening, *Waitress* was nominated for four Outer Critics' Circle Awards, including Outstanding New Broadway Musical; two Drama League Award Nominations, including Outstanding Production of a Broadway or Off-Broadway Musical; six Drama Desk Nominations, including Outstanding Musical; and four Tony Award Nominations, including Best Musical.