



UPLIFTING ENTERTAINMENT

**For Immediate Release**

**GMC TV PRESENTS THE GMC WORLD PREMIERE PLAY**

**'TO LOVE AND TO CHERISH'**

**THE FOURTH AND FINAL PLAY IN GMC'S WEDDING VOW-THEMED SERIES**

**MEL JACKSON, DENISE BOUTTÉ AND SHIRLEY MURDOCK**

**LEAD A POWERFUL ENSEMBLE CAST**

**PREMIERES SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8TH AT 7:00 P.M. EST**

**EXCLUSIVELY ON GMC**

**ATLANTA, GA. August 30, 2012** – GMC TV, America's favorite channel for uplifting family entertainment, presents the original GMC World Premiere Play **"To Love and to Cherish,"** starring Mel Jackson (*Deliver Us From Eva*, "Soul Food"), Denise Boutté (*Why Did I Get Married?*, "Meet the Browns"), and Shirley Murdock ("Love Me or Leave Me"). The fourth and final installment of GMC's popular wedding vow-themed series, **"To Love and To Cherish"** is a comedic, true-to-life story about the survival of marriage and family in the face of internal and external forces that can bind people together or tear them apart. **"To Love and To Cherish"** makes its world television premiere exclusively on GMC TV on **Saturday, September 8th at 7:00 p.m. with encore broadcasts at 9:30 p.m. and 12:00 a.m., EST.**

Based on an original screenplay written by Cas Sigers Beedles (*A Cross to Bear*, "If You Really Love Me") and directed by Roger Melvin ("The Love You Save," "If You Really Love Me"), **"To Love and to Cherish"** follows Aliyah (Boutté) and Jay (Jackson), a happily married couple, both on their second marriages, and both parents to teenage children from their previous relationships. When Jay's 16-year old daughter, Zoe (Constance Swain), comes to live with Jay, Aliyah and her 17-year old son Wesley (Mishon Ratliff), the family faces new obstacles that challenge

their love and trust as lines of communication blur and honesty is tested. With two teenagers, dubbed “the enemy” by Aliyah, and the challenging outside influences of Jasmine (Tammy Townsend), Zoe’s newly remarried mother and Steve (Tommy Ford), Wesley’s ex-NFL star father, in the mix, the cohesive order of this new family unit is disrupted. But, with the guidance of Nana (Murdock), Aliyah’s mother, the four come to recognize the true gifts they possess in each other, and make a new vow to love and to cherish every member of their family each and every day, from this forward, in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer until death do they part.

“**To Love and To Cherish**” is the perfect play to end this powerful and uplifting series,” says Leslie Chesloff, GMC TV executive vice president, programming. “It embodies and underscores the promise of marriage; the joining of families, old and new, big and small, the benefits of true partnership, and the wonderful fruit it bears with children, the next generation, instilling the foundational values that strong, healthy and honest relationships bring.”

“The entire wedding-vow series has been a wonderful and authentic exploration of the ups and downs encountered in marriage,” Chesloff continues. “Each play offered a different situation that can affect married couples and their families. This is the kind of powerful, engrossing, real-world drama our viewers have come to expect from GMC TV and that we seek in the programming we provide.”

Airing throughout the wedding season, the four plays in GMC TV’s wedding-vow series each features a different cast and new storylines all tied into elements of the traditional marriage vow. Previous productions in the series, “**For Richer or Poorer**,” “**From This Day Forward**,” and “**In Sickness and In Health**” premiered in April, May, and June respectively.

The GMC World Premiere Stage Play “**To Love and To Cherish**” stars Mel Jackson (“Soul Food,” *Deliver Us From Eva*), Denise Boutté (“Meet the Browns,” *Why Did I Get Married?*), Tommy Ford (“*Martin*”), Tammy Townsend, Mishon Ratliff (“Lincoln Heights”) and Shirley Murdock (“Love Me or Leave Me”). Screenplay by Cas Sigers Beedles (*A Cross to Bear*, “If You Really Love Me”). Directed by Roger Melvin (“The Love You Save,” “If You Really Love Me”).

GMC's "To Love and To Cherish" is produced by Swirl Films' Eric Tomosunas, who has produced and taped numerous stage plays and feature-length films for television and DVD including, *35 & Ticking*, *Love for Sale*, *A Mother's Prayer*, *There's a Stranger in My House*, "Love Me or Leave Me", "The Ideal Husband", "The Love You Save", and "Sugar Mommas."

"To Love and To Cherish" is the tenth original gospel stage play to air in GMC TV's hit series following the success of GMC productions "Love Me or Leave Me," "The Ideal Husband," "She's Not Our Sister," "The Love You Save," "Sugar Mommas," "If You Really Love Me," "For Richer For Poorer," "From This Day Forward" and "In Sickness and In Health." GMC is the only network producing the popular medium and bringing it to a broad television audience.

GMC TV ([www.watchGMCTv.com](http://www.watchGMCTv.com)) is America's favorite television channel for uplifting family entertainment. The Parents Television Council™ has twice awarded its Entertainment Seal of Approval™ to GMC for being "an authentic family-friendly cable network." GMC TV is the only television network brand to be so honored. GMC TV can be seen in more than 55 million homes on various cable systems around the country, as well as DISH Network on channel 188, DIRECTV on channel 338 and Verizon FiOS on channel 224. Follow GMC TV on Facebook and Twitter at <http://facebook.com/gmctv> and <http://twitter.com/gmctv>.

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**ABOUT THE CAST**

**MEL JACKSON**

Mel Jackson (“Soul Food,” “Living Single”) has appeared in films such as “Deliver Us From Eva,” “The Temptations,” “Uninvited Guest,” “Motives” and “Flip the Script.” He is known for his tenor voice as an R&B singer, but has yet to record an album.

His dulcet tenor voice and suave appeal landed him a continuing featured role on “Living Single” where he played “Tripp” during the hit sitcom’s final year. And he also played “Johnnie” on “The Parkers” in the final season’s run.

In 2003 he accompanied platinum recording Canadian chanteuse Deborah Cox to starred in a stage play “Love on Lay-Away,” written by David E. Talbert, which offers a fly-on-the-wall look at the lives of three very different couples. In the play Jackson stars in the role of Anthony a witty salesman whose ability to commit falls short. He also appeared in the 2005 hit stage play “Friends and Lovers” based on the bestselling Eric Jerome Dickey novel, playing the role of Richard. Another notable role he played was in “Issues: We’ve all got ‘em.”

## **DENISE BOUETTÉ**

A native of the Louisiana village of Maurice, Denise Boutté has quickly risen to become one of the most sought after actresses of her generation. With countless television and film appearances, Boutté stars on Tyler Perry’s award-winning TBS series, “Meet The Browns.” Boutté’s television credits include guest and recurring roles on numerous popular TV shows, including “Boston Legal,” “Everybody Hates Chris,” “Girlfriends,” “Notes from the Underbelly,” “Cuts,” “Noah’s Arc” and an unforgettable recurring arc as ‘Danielle Calder’ on “Days of Our Lives.”

Her film credits include *Why Did I Get Married?*, *Extreme Movie*, *Sister’s Keeper*, *NOLA*, *Way of the Vampire*, *Damon Wayans’ Behind the Smile*, and *15 Minutes of Fame*.

## **TOMMY FORD**

Best known for his role as “Tommy” on the hit television comedy, “Martin,” Tommy Ford is one of the most familiar personalities to emerge in African-American popular television culture. Whether as an actor, author, producer, director or motivational speaker, Ford has found success in every endeavor he has chosen to take on.

A Los Angeles native, Ford graduated from the prestigious Fine Arts Acting Program of USC, and soon after landed his first television role on "A Different World." Shortly thereafter, he made his feature film debut in Eddie Murphy's *Harlem Knights*. His feature film debut quickly led to numerous film appearances with such notable actors as Richard Gere, Demi Moore and Brad Pitt. In addition to film, Ford has had recurring and guest star roles on many television shows appearing in fan favorites such as "Law and Order," "Living Single," "The Jamie Foxx Show," "Judging Amy" and "House." Whether playing the fun-loving father of UPN's comedy, "The Parkers" or the calm yet cunning lieutenant on "New York Undercover," his versatility and mastery of his craft is undeniable.

Ford is currently in his third season as the charming and hilarious Pope of Comedy on TV One's hit show, "Who's Got Jokes!" He has recently completed several television and film projects including three new pilots: "Night Life" directed by Zach Braff; "Police" a John Wells Production; "Jamilia's Box" and "Hitched" for Aaron Spelling's Production Company. In addition, Ford recently produced and starred in a film short entitled *The Club*, which is receiving industry wide attention and acclaim.

Despite being blessed with three shows in syndication and a reputation as an award winning director and actor, Ford remains firmly grounded and committed to the community. He is founder and president of BE STILL AND KNOW, INC., a nonprofit organization dedicated to building better communities for youth. His love and passion for children and youth led him to author a series of children's books designed to provide healthy, spiritual and positive principles for daily living. In an effort to spread his message of encouragement and empowerment to children, youth and adults alike, he travels tirelessly as a speaker motivating and mesmerizing audiences in America and abroad.

His dedication to community service has garnered him recognition and praise from local and national public service agencies. Ford received the Volunteer Recognition Award from the National Conference of Community and Justice for his Humanitarian efforts and inducted into Florida's prestigious "500 ROLE MODELS PROGRAM".

With a successful career in entertainment that has spanned over 20 years, Ford remains humble, focused and determined to fulfill his purpose of service by living a life full of love, laughter and family.

## TAMMY TOWNSEND

Tammy Townsend spent most of her career guest starring and playing the occasional recurring roles on television shows. She was a regular on the short-lived series "Divas." Her television credits include appearances on *In the Heat of the Night*, "Family Matters," "Living Single" and "Quantum Leap." She made her film debut with a small role in Robert Townsend's *The Five Heartbeats* and had her first major role in the John Leguizamo showcase *The Pest*.

## MISHON RATLIFF

Mishon (MY-shawn) is a young singer and songwriter who represents the next wave of pop R&B edged with hip-hop fire.

The 16-year old vocalist has already stirred up noise with "Just A Kiss," which shows off the Los Angeles native's soaring vocal dexterity and considerable teen charm. The track, co-produced by the Interns and Harvey Mason, was the number one most added song at urban radio. That is just the tip of the iceberg, as Ratliff is poised to capture even more fans with his exciting debut CD, later this year on producer/songwriter Vincent Herbert's new Streamline Records, a joint venture with Interscope Records.

The multi-talented teen is already a TV star thanks to his role as spunky kid brother Tay on the drama "Lincoln Heights," which began shooting its fourth season this spring. Though Ratliff has developed his own fan base thanks to his acting chops, he says that singing has always been his first love.

Singing since he was a small child, his interest in music impressed his parents enough to enroll him in a local performing group of talented children that performed gigs throughout Southern California. But it wasn't until he handpicked the song "Lean On Me" to perform-unexpectedly-at the funeral of his great grandfather at age nine that folks around him really took notice of the emotion he was able to wring from the song. "They asked if anybody had anything to say, and I stepped up to the microphone and started singing," Ratliff explains. "And that's really what broke me out of my shell because I used to be a very shy child."

One person who took notice was his cousin, Demetreus "Doe Mac" Henderson, who had started Dynasty Records and wanted to help his young relative polish his talent. Ratliff began working on tracks with his cousin at age ten, even completing a couple of independent CD releases. In the meantime, Ratliff got interested in acting. After

rounds of auditions at age 12, the preteen took some time off but went back to it at age 14. One of his first auditions was for the "Lincoln Heights" pilot, which was later picked up.

But music never stopped for Ratliff, who continued to hone his performing craft and record more songs for his eventual solo album. When Dynasty got a distribution deal with Streamline Records, also the home to Lady Gaga, Ratliff went to the label's Santa Monica offices to sing live for all the executives. Vincent Herbert, the mastermind who's created hits for the likes of Destiny's Child, Lady Gaga, Jo Jo, Toni Braxton, Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder and many more, was so blown away by the young star that he introduced him to Jimmy Lovine, president and CEO of Interscope Geffen A&M Records; plans for his major label debut went underway immediately.

## **SHIRLEY MURDOCK**

Singer/songwriter Shirley Murdock is best known for the ethereal ballad "As We Lay," which was produced by Roger Troutman. Murdock started out singing gospel music in her native Toledo. Troutman hired her as a background singer for his family's group Zapp, who had several hits on Warner Brothers (or its Reprise imprint). Based on this success, Troutman began recording tracks with Murdock and lead singer Sugarfoot of the Ohio Players, among others, at his Dayton-based recording studio Troutman Sound Labs.

Murdock and Troutman's first charting single was a Warner single issued as Roger (Featuring Shirley Murdock), "Girl, Cut It Out," which charted at number 79 R&B in early 1985. Murdock was signed to Elektra Records with the pumping "No More," which made it to number 24 R&B in early 1986. Then came her signature hit, "As We Lay," written by Zapp's Larry Troutman and keyboardist Billy Beck (of the Ohio Players). The tender, melancholy ballad made it to the R&B Top Ten and peaked at number 23 pop in 1986. Her LP Shirley Murdock went gold, also helped along by the follow-up hits "Go on Without You" and "Be Free." She also released full-lengths in 1988 (A Woman's Point of View) and 1991 (Let There Be Love). In early 2000, Murdock toured in the inspirational/gospel play, Be Careful What You Pray For, with Cuba Gooding and David Peaston.

## **ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

## **ROGER MELVIN (DIRECTOR)**

Roger Melvin is a versatile filmmaker with extensive television and feature film credits to his name. He has played key behind-the-scenes roles as well as directed and produced features and television films. His directing credits include the GMC TV original gospel plays “She’s Still Not Our Sister,” “The Love You Save,” “Sugar Mommas,” “If You Really Love Me”, the documentary feature “Agree to Disagree,” and “He’s Mine Not Yours,” a feature which Melvin also produced.

## **ERIC TOMOSUNAS (PRODUCER)**

Over the course of 15 years, Eric Tomosunas (Producer) has created a name for himself as a film producer and businessman within the urban entertainment industry. Under his production company Swirl Films, he spearheads the supervision and execution of production elements, and manages all distribution agreements with Image Entertainment, First Look Entertainment, Warner Brothers, Melee Entertainment, E1 formerly KOCH and Code Black.

Recent original productions include: *Love For Sale*, a romantic comedy starring Jackie Long, Jason Waver, Mya and Melyssa Ford; *Something Like A Business*, a theatrical spoof, directed by his business partner Russ Parr, starring Kevin Hart, Tasha Smith, Kym Whitley and Jay Antony Brown; and *Just Another Day*, a music-driven street classic, starring Wood Harris, Jamie Hector, Lil Scrappy, Esther Baxter and Clifton Powell.

While working on *Big Boy’s Boom Boom Room*, Tomosunas also worked in ADR for Screen Gems Studio on projects such as the TV Series “Dawson’s Creek” and films *Swordfish*, *A Walk to Remember* and *Little Vampires*. He has produced several home video and theatrical titles: *Dead Heist*, *The Last Stand*, *The Furnace*, *35 and Ticking* and the forthcoming award winning film *The Under Shepherd*, a 2012 ABFF Official Selection and winner of ABFF Grand Jury Awards for Best Narrative Feature, Best Director (Russ Parr) and Best Actor (Malinda Williams).

## **CAS SIGERS BEEDLES (SCREENWRITER)**



A native of North Carolina, Cas Sigers Beedles is an author, screenwriter, director and producer working in partnership with actress Terri J. Vaughn through their Nina Holiday Entertainment production banner. Working as a producer on national shows, Sigers Beedles credits include "Welcome to Dreamland," "Platinum House," and "Tiny & Toya." Recently, Sigers Beedles served as associate director for the TV-One series "Verses & Flow" and the supervising producer for music documentary series "As Written." Previously, she worked as the script supervisor for "The Mo'Nique Show."

As a screenwriter, Sigers Beedles is currently writing and producing a series of projects for GMC TV network including several plays in their popular stage play series as well as feature films for television. She penned *A Cross to Bear*, for GMC TV, an original world premiere television movie starring Kim Fields, Malinda Williams and Jackie Long which aired on the network in February 2012.

Published by Kensington Press, Sigers Beedles' novels include Pieces of a Man, Love is Simple, Forever is Tricky, The Virgin Widow, At Last I Bloom, Three Chords & the Truth and Chocolate Dove.