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PRESS CONTACT:

Ed Kiley, Director Marketing & Communications
347-472-3726 / ekiley@queenstheatre.org

QUEENS
THEATRE

QUEENS THEATRE
TO PRESENT THE WORLD PREMIERE OF
THE JACK COLE PROJECT

A NEW MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT BY
DIRECTOR/CHOREOGRAPHER
CHET WALKER

*Production will mark the first presentation at Queens Theatre by
WALKERDANCE, the theatre's new resident dance company*

QUEENS, NY (November 21, 2011) – Queens Theatre Executive Director Ray Cullom and **WALKERDANCE** Founder and Artistic Director Chet Walker announced today that Queens Theatre will present the world premiere of *The Jack Cole Project*, a musical tribute to the father of theatrical jazz dance, Jack Cole. The production will mark WALKERDANCE's first production at the Flushing Meadows Corona Park theatre, where it recently became the first resident dance company in the theatre's history.

"We are delighted to be able to partner with Chet Walker and WALKERDANCE on this exciting new piece of Dance Theatre," said **Ray Cullom**, Executive Director of Queens Theatre. "As a center for development of new and innovative performance work, this is at the heart of what we do at Queens Theatre, and to have found such a generous, willing and renowned collaborator as Chet is overwhelming, and the people of Queens and the arts community in the greater New York region will be the richer for it."

The Jack Cole Project is a musical tribute to the work of Jack Cole, whose work—often uncredited—ran the gamut from Broadway and movie musicals to nightclub acts and



television variety shows. Best known for his work with Marilyn Monroe, Rita Hayworth, Betty Grable and Ann Miller, his unmistakable style was seen on screen in such films as *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, *Gilda*, *Some Like it Hot*, *No Business Like Show Business* and *Les Girls*, and on stage in *Kismet*, *Man of La Mancha* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. Cole influenced legions of dancers and choreographers—Gwen Verdon, Bob Fosse, Jerome Robbins and Alvin Ailey to name a few—and his legacy lives on in the choreography of virtually every musical to this day.

The production, which will premiere in May 2012, has been conceived and will be directed and choreographed by Chet Walker, the creator and co-choreographer of the 1999 Tony Award-winning Best Musical, *Fosse*. The show will re-create works in the style of Jack Cole, as well as create new works based on Mr. Cole's Hollywood, Broadway and nightclub periods. Casting has not yet been announced.

A protégé of Bob Fosse, Walker began performing on Broadway at the age of 16 in the first revival of *On The Town* and went on to work with Fosse on *The Pajama Game*, *Pippin*, *Dancin'* and *Sweet Charity*. As director/choreographer, Chet's extensive credits include recreating Fosse's original choreography for *Sweet Charity* in the United States, Holland, Japan, Mexico, Norway and London's West End, as well as dozens of musicals and dance pieces worldwide. In addition to being the Artistic Director of WALKERDANCE, Walker is co-Artistic Director of Compania Internacional De Teatro Musical in Buenos Aires and Director of the Jazz Program at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival.

"Queens Theatre may be the only theater in the country that has embraced a company based in jazz and musical theater dance," said **Chet Walker**, Artistic Director of WALKERDANCE. "Simply by being the new home of WALKERDANCE, Queens Theatre has become a pioneer in preserving our heritage of American musical theatre and jazz dance. I look forward to many fruitful collaborations with Ray and Queens Theatre for years to come."

The Jack Cole Project will run May 3-20, 2012 as part of Queens Theatre's soon-to-be-announced spring season. Tickets for the show, as well as the rest of the spring season, will go on sale Monday, November 14 at 10am.

WALKERDANCE, led by Artistic Director Chet Walker, is a company dedicated to preserving the rich, multicultural traditions of the uniquely American art form of musical theatre dance through educational outreach programs, mentoring programs for young and emerging artists and by developing new theatrical works of the highest aesthetic caliber.

Queens Theatre, under the artistic leadership of Executive Director Ray Cullom, is the premier home for international music, theatre and dance in the borough of Queens. Designed by Philip Johnson as part of the historic New York State Pavilion for the 1964 World's Fair, the theatre is a vibrant performing arts center committed to presenting world-class entertainment that reflects the diversity of New York's largest borough. With three performance spaces, the theatre plays host to a variety of performances throughout the year, from cabaret to comedy, including its popular Latino Cultural Festival and the Immigrant Voices Project, a program that seeks out emerging playwrights and develops

works that represent the rich cultural diversity of the city. For more information, visit queenstheatre.org.

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Pictured: Marilyn Monroe in *There's No Business Like Show Business* (courtesy of Photofest); Rosie Lani Fiedelman in *The Jack Cole Project* (photo by Carol Rosegg).