Artist Partner Program Presents:

TAYLOR MAC’S
24-DECADE HISTORY OF POPULAR MUSIC: THE 20TH CENTURY ABRIDGED

Saturday, April 11, 2015 . 8PM
Sunday, April 12, 2015 . 8PM
Robert & Arlene Kogod Theatre

Conceived, written and performed by
Taylor Mac

with
Matt Ray – Music Director / Arranger / Piano / Backing Vocals
Machine Dazzle – Costume Design
Pomegranate Arts & Nature’s Darlings – Co-Producers

Each performance will last approximately one hour and 45 minutes with no intermission.
Video or audio recording of the production is strictly prohibited.
I suppose I’ve been subconsciously kicking around the idea for A 24-Decade Concert of the History of Popular Music for many years. I can pinpoint the catalyst to an AIDS action I attended in 1987. The action was a profound experience for me, a fairly isolated suburban queer kid who had never met an out-of-the-closet homosexual, as I was suddenly exposed to thousands of queers. What has stuck with me from that day was experiencing a community coming together — in the face of such tragedy and injustice — and expressing their rage (and joy at being together) via music, dancing, chanting and agency. Not only was the community using itself to destroy an epidemic but the activists were also using a disease, their deterioration and human imperfection as a way to aid their community. In many ways my entire career has been about reenacting this experience on the stage, in one form or another, but a couple years ago I decided to consciously go at it. The result is a durational work that explores the various ways imperfection can foster community.

Most of my work uses the technique of content dictating the form (thank you Mr. Sondheim). So when figuring out what form would best represent the content/theme of Imperfection Fostering Community, I was drawn to popular music. One could argue that a classical song’s goal is to touch the hem of God (to strive for perfection), whereas a popular song is written and performed to touch the people. Popular songs use their simplicity, imperfection and humanity to rally people toward a cause (whether that cause is to love, fight, celebrate or mourn). They are egalitarian songs; ones we have easy access to and can all join in on. As a result, I’ve decided the popular song was the form I wanted for a show about imperfection fostering community. But one song or one concert wouldn’t do. A community is built over a number of years and experiences and is multifaceted. I needed variety and a form that would not only represent the thing but actually do the thing I was interested in exploring. So I’m making a durational concert that spans multiple years and contains an onslaught of popular songs. It goes like this:

For a number of years (at least five but perhaps ten) I’ll be performing in New York, the U.S. and abroad over 240 popular songs from the last 240 years of the United States (1776-2016). The songs aren’t necessarily American songs but songs that were popular in the U.S. and the set list is broken down into themed concerts, decade concerts (made up of songs originated in the particular decade) and other “shorter” durational concerts: a 24-song concert, a 10-hour 19th-century concert, a 10-hour 20th-century concert and in 2016, the mother of them all, a 24-hour concert that includes all 240 songs and during which I’ll be performing almost non-stop (a few bathroom breaks) with a 24-piece orchestra (bring your bedding and toiletries).

The goal is that with each performance we build the community that is participating in this durational work. To date we’ve performed about 13 of the decades at least once and more and more audience members are becoming a part of the 24-Decade History of Popular Music community (we call them The Guild of Lilies). They’re starting to get to know each other and are using the ritual of a shared experience as the impetus for further involvement (businesses have been started, lovers have been made, weddings are even being planned). Our next phase is to start shooting live video-feed of the concerts so that audience members who have seen various concerts in New York or Chicago can watch what happens in London and stay connected with the progression of the work.

It’s a dream come true to share this work here and if this is your first time joining us, welcome.

— Taylor Mac
Taylor Mac is a theater artist (who uses the gender pronoun, judy), which means judy’s a playwright, actor, singer-songwriter, cabaret performer, performance artist, director and producer. TimeOut New York has called Mac, “One of the most exciting theater artists of our time” (naming judy the best cabaret performer in New York in 2012 and a future theater legend). American Theater Magazine says, “Mac is one of this country's most heroic and disarmingly funny playwrights. The New Yorker says (of Mac's acting in the title role of Brecht's “Good Person of Szechwan”), “One of contemporary theater’s more unforgettable performances.” The Village Voice named judy the best theater actor in New York (2013) and the New York Times says of Mac in general, “Fabulousness can come in many forms, and Taylor Mac seems intent on assuming every one of them.” Judy's work has been performed at New York City's Lincoln Center and The Public Theater, the Sydney Opera House, American Repertory Theater, Stockholm's Södra Teatern, the Spoleto Festival, Dublin's Project Arts Centre, London's Soho Theatre and literally hundreds of other theatres, museums, music halls, cabarets and festivals around the globe. Judy is the author of 16 full-length plays and performance pieces including Hir (recently premiered at San Francisco's Magic Theater), The Lily's Revenge (Obie Award), The Walk Across America for Mother Earth (named One of the Best Plays of 2011 by the New York Times), The Young Ladies Of (Chicago's Jeff Award nomination for Best Solo), Red Tide Blooming (Ethyl Eichelberger Award), The Be(a)st of Taylor Mac (Edinburgh Festival's Herald Angel Award) and in collaboration with Mandy Patinkin, Susan Stroman and Paul Ford, Mac created The Last Two People On Earth: An Apocalyptic Vaudeville, which judy is currently performing/touring with Mr. Patinkin. Mac is also currently creating and performing sections from a durational concert called A 24-Decade History of Popular Music (sections of which have been performed for Lincoln Center, The Under The Radar Festival at the Public Theater (as well as Joe's Pub) and Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art (among many others). Playscripts, Vintage Press, New York Theatre Review and New York Theatre Experience have published judy's plays and judy is the recipient of a Helen Merrill Playwriting Award, two Sundance Theater Lab residencies, three Map Grants, The Creative Capital Grant, The James Hammerstein Award for playwriting, three GLAAD Media Award Nominations, two New York State Council on the Arts Grants, a Massachusetts Council of the Arts Grant, an Edward Albee Foundation Residency, The Franklin Furnace Grant, a Peter S. Reed Grant and The Ensemble Studio Theatre's New Voices Fellowship in playwriting. Mac is a proud alum of the HERE Arts Center Resident Artists program and is currently a New Dramatists fellow and a New York Theater Workshop Usual Suspect.

Machine Dazzle (né Matthew Flower) (costume designer) moved to New York City in 1994 after attending The University of Colorado Boulder. Mixing odd jobs by day with art and dance clubs by night erupted in a unique lifestyle grounded in costume and performance art. Machine's DIY and transgressive nature comes face to face with his conceptualist-as-artist identity; the results can be seen on stages all over the world. Machine has worked with Taylor Mac, Justin Vivian Bond, Joey Arias, Julie Atlas Muz, Big Art Group, The Crystal Ark, The Dazzle Dancers, Stanley Love Performance Group and The Pixie Harlots, to name a few.

Matt Ray (Music Director/Arranger/piano/backing vocals) can be seen in some of New York’s best venues where he performs nightly, either fronting his own band or accompanying some of the city’s most dynamic performers.
Recent work includes performing at Carnegie Hall with Kat Edmonson, music directing *The Billie Holiday Project* at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, string and piano arrangements for the fifth season finale of Showtime’s *Nurse Jackie*, performances at Joe’s Pub with Joey Arias, performing in Paris with Mx. Justin Vivian Bond and monthly gigs at Joe’s Pub with Bridget Everett and the Tender Moments. Other recent work includes performing at the Edinburgh Fringe with Lady Rizo and touring the world with Taylor Mac’s show *A 20th Century History of Popular Music*. In addition, Ray music directed and played piano in Taylor Mac’s Obie Award-winning play *The Lily’s Revenge* at the HERE Arts Center in New York. Ray has released two jazz albums as a leader: *We Got It!* (2001) and *Lost In New York* (2006); and one album of original pop/folk material called *Songs For the Anonymous* (2013).

**www.mattraymusic.com**

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**Pomegranate Arts** (Executive Producer) is an independent production company dedicated to the development of international contemporary performing arts projects. Pomegranate Arts is the exclusive producer and management for the revival of Robert Wilson, Philip Glass and Lucinda Childs’ Olivier award-winning production of *Einstein on the Beach*. Since its inception, Pomegranate Arts has conceived, produced or represented projects by Philip Glass, Laurie Anderson, London’s Improbable Theatre, Sankai Juku, Dan Zanes, Lucinda Childs and Goran Bregovic. Special projects include *Dracula: The Music and Film* with Philip Glass and the Kronos Quartet; the music theater work *Shockheaded Peter*; Brazilian vocalist Virginia Rodrigues; Drama Desk Award-winning *Charlie Victor Romeo; Healing The Divide, A Concert for Peace and Reconciliation*, presented by Philip Glass and Richard Gere; and Hal Willner’s *Came So Far For Beauty, An Evening of Leonard Cohen Songs*. Upcoming projects include the remount of *Available Light* by John Adams, Lucinda Childs and Frank Gehry, the North American tour of Sankai Juku’s newest work *Umusuna*, Taylor Mac’s *24-Hour History of Popular Music* and a new work in development by Lucinda Childs, Philip Glass and James Turrell.

**www.pomegranatearts.com | info@pomarts.com**

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Sponsored by the Festival of Subversive Artists and Minds and the College of Arts and Humanities, Taylor Mac and Machine Dazzle engage with students in a variety of workshops and discussions that provide insight and promote further appreciation of their art:

**Theatre Workshop with Taylor Mac and TDPS Students**
Friday, April 10, 2015 . 2PM

Students from the School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies gather with Taylor to discuss his new play *Hir*, a hilarious gender comedy receiving rave reviews from the theatre community at large.

**Taylor Mac: The 20th Century Conversation**
Friday, April 10, 2015 . 7:30PM
Robert & Arlene Kogod Theatre
2014-2015 TDPS Festival of Subversive Artists and Minds

Overthrow the talkback and join us outside the Actors Studio (technically a little more than 200 miles from the Actors Studio). Show up the day before pop cabaret enchantment, *Taylor Mac’s: The 20th Century Abridged*, to see how Taylor Mac subverts the Proust Questionnaire.

**Informal Conversation Time with Taylor Mac, Machine Dazzle and TDPS Students**
Saturday, April 11, 2015 . 9:30PM

**Costume Workshops with Machine Dazzle and TDPS Students**
Saturday, April 11, 2015 . Noon
Sunday, April 12, 2015 . Noon

Machine Dazzle (Taylor Mac’s costume designer) leads two workshops in which students build headdresses and costumes from up-cycled and found objects.