

Portland Center Stage at

THE **ARMORY**

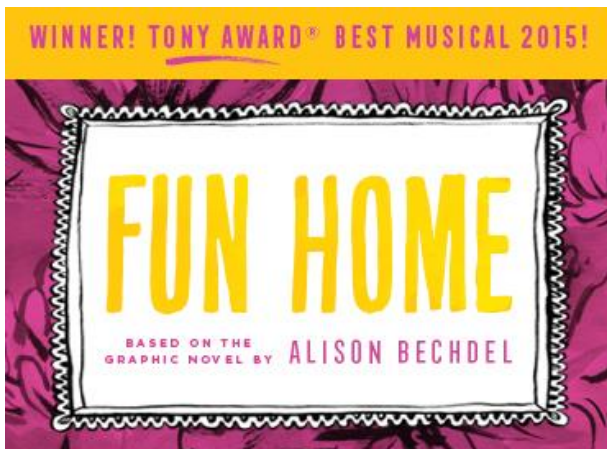
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M E D I A R E L E A S E

**Groundbreaking, Tony Award-winning musical *Fun Home* kicks off
Portland Center Stage at The Armory's 30th anniversary season
Previews begin Sep. 16 | Opening night is Sep. 22 | Must close Oct. 22**

"AN UPLIFTING MUSICAL DRAMA OF RARE INTENSITY, HONESTY AND BEAUTY"
-New York Daily News

**"EXTRAORDINARY ... [*FUN HOME*] OCCUPIES THE PLACE WHERE WE ALL GREW UP,
AND WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO LEAVE."**
-The New York Times



August 16, 2017 — PORTLAND, OR. Portland Center Stage at The Armory's 30th anniversary season opens with the groundbreaking, Tony Award-winning musical *Fun Home*. Created by Jeanine Tesori (music) and Lisa Kron (book and lyrics) and based on the celebrated graphic memoir by Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* will begin preview performances on September 16, open September 22, and run through October 22 on The

Armory's U.S. Bank Main Stage. Artistic Director Chris Coleman will direct a cast lead by Allison Mickelson, Sara Masterson and Aida Valentine as the central character, Alison, at three different ages. Robert Mammana (previously at The Armory as Skye Masterson in *Guys and Dolls* and Father in *Ragtime*) and Faith Sandberg will play Alison's parents, Bruce and Helen Bechdel.

"The story is an emotional excavation of sorts," said Chris Coleman of *Fun Home*. "I think it's one of the smartest, freshest pieces of writing we've seen in the musical theater genre," he continued. "I had a chance to see the original incarnation at the Public Theater in New York and was just knocked out by

how inventive the piece was. It manages to be charming and funny and heartbreaking and haunting all within the same 90 minutes.” Portland Center Stage at The Armory is fortunate to be one of the very first regional theater companies to get the rights to produce its own version of the production, which will be presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

Regular tickets for *Fun Home* start at \$25 and are on sale now. Tickets may be purchased at www.pcs.org, 503.445.3700, or in-person from the box office (128 NW Eleventh Avenue, Portland, OR). Rush tickets are \$20. Students and patrons who are 30 or younger can purchase \$30 tickets in premium seating areas. \$5 tickets are available for Oregon Trail Card holders through the Arts for All program. Regular tickets are 50% off for active duty or veteran military personnel and their immediate families. Discounts for groups of 10+. General performance times are Tuesday through Sunday evenings at 7:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m., and Thursday matinees at noon (special exclusions apply, see below). *Fun Home* is recommended for ages 16+; it contains adult situations, explicit language and sexual references. More information at www.pcs.org/funhome.

THE STORY

Based on Alison Bechdel’s witty and wistful illustrated autobiography of the same name, the Tony Award-winning musical *Fun Home* ushers us inside Alison’s head — at three different ages — as she struggles to process the chain of childhood events that made her the adult she is today. Growing up in a funeral home as the closeted lesbian daughter of a father with secrets of his own was complicated. But by looking back on her family life, and remembering all the loving, silly, and even shameful moments, Alison learns to see her parents — and herself — for who they really are.

THE MUSICAL

Fun Home premiered Off-Broadway at The Public in 2013 as a sell-out hit with critical acclaim. *The New York Times* review called it a “beautiful heartbreaker” and the production swept the Off-Broadway awards, including winning the New York Drama Critics’ Circle, Lucille Lortel and Obie awards for Best Musical. The following year, *Fun Home* was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for Drama. When it opened on Broadway in 2015, *The Huffington Post* called it a “grippingly heartwarming story mixed with some of the most smart and joyful musical numbers presently on Broadway. Seekers of provocative, invigorating and entertaining theatre will find it.” *Fun Home* earned 12 Tony Award nominations and

won five, including Best Musical, Best Original Score and Best Book of a Musical. It made history as the first Broadway hit written by an all-female team to win a Tony Award for Best Musical

THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

Allison Bechdel's graphic memoir *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* was released in 2006 to widespread acclaim. *The New York Times* book review hailed it as a "pioneering work, pushing two genres (comics and memoir) in multiple new directions" and London's *The Times* described it as a "profound and important book." It was listed as one of the best books of 2006 by numerous publications, including *The New York Times*, *The Times*, *New York Magazine* and *Publishers Weekly*, and it was a finalist for the National Book Award. Bechdel, who had already gained national prominence for her countercultural comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For*, won the Eisner Award for Best Reality-Based Work for *Fun Home*, along with the GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Comic Book and the Stonewall Book Award for Best Non-fiction, among others. *Fun Home* – despite controversial attempts to ban it from libraries and remove it from reading lists at universities – is now regarded as a contemporary literary classic.

THE CAST

Three actors play the central character at various ages: **Allison Mickelson** (National Tour of *Elf: The Musical* and *Ragtime* at SurfFlight Theater) will play Alison as the adult cartoonist reflecting on memories of her past; **Sara Masterson** (*The Secret Garden* at Idaho Shakespeare Festival and *A Christmas Carol* at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park) will play Medium Alison, the college freshman discovering her sexual identity; and **Aida Valentine** will play Small Alison, the young daughter living with her family in the house on Maple Avenue. **Robert Mammana** (*Les Misérables* on Broadway; *The Sound of Music*, *Show Boat* and *Les Misérables* National Tours) will take on the role of Alison's father, Bruce Bechdel. Alison's mother, Helen Bechdel, will be played by **Faith Sandberg** (*The Fourth Messenger* for New York Music Festival and *The Good Girl* for Manhattan Musical Theatre Lab). Alison's brothers, John and Christian, will be played by **Theo Curl** (James in Oregon Children's Theatre's *James and the Giant Peach*) and **Karsten George** (Pugsley in *The Addams Family* at Broadway Rose Theatre), respectively. **Joe Knispel** (*All The Way* and *Ah, Wilderness* at Asolo Repertory Theater) will play the roles of Roy, Mark, Pete and Bobby Jeremy. **Kristen DiMercurio** (*Murder Ballad* at D.C.'s Studio Theatre and *Grease* at Totem Pole Playhouse) will take on the role of Joan, Medium Allison's college classmate. **Alexa Kelly Shaheen** (*The Magic Flute* at Portland Opera) will be the understudy for Small Alison.

THE BAND

Eric Little (*The Last Five Years* and *Sweeney Todd* at The Armory) will serve as pianist; **Will Amend** (*Little Shop of Horrors* and *Ain't Misbehavin'* at The Armory) will play bass; **Dale Tolliver** will play the cello (*LIZZIE* and *Fiddler on the Roof* at The Armory); **Mitch Wilson** (*Little Shop of Horrors* and *One Night with Janis Joplin* at The Armory) will play the drums; **Eric Toner** (*Little Shop of Horrors* and *Dreamgirls* at The Armory) will play guitar; **Mieke Bruggeman** will play reeds (*Ain't Misbehavin'* and *Fiddler on the Roof* at The Armory); and **Tylor Neist** (Fiddler/Ensemble in *Fiddler on the Roof* at The Armory) will play violin/viola.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Director Chris Coleman (recently *Constellations* and *Astoria: Part One* at The Armory) leads a creative team that includes **Music Director Rick Lewis** (*Astoria: Part One* and *Little Shop of Horrors* at The Armory); **Scenic Designer William Bloodgood** (*Cyrano* and *Other Desert Cities* at The Armory); **Costume Designer Alison Heryer** (*Lauren Weedman Doesn't Live Here Anymore* and *Wild and Reckless* at The Armory); **Lighting Designer William Kirkham** (*Constellations* and *The Oregon Trail* at The Armory); **Sound Designer Alex Hawthorn** (The Armory debut; *Fly By Night* and *The Great Immensity* Off-Broadway); **Stage Manager Mark Tynan**; **Kristen Mun** (assistant stage manager) and **Jordan Affeldt** and **Katie Nguyen** (production assistants).

TICKET AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

When: September 16* – October 22, 2017

*Opening night is Friday, September 22 at 7:30 p.m.

Showtimes: General performance times are Tuesday through Sunday evenings at 7:30 p.m. (excluding Oct. 1, 15, 17 and 22), Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. (excluding Sep. 16, 17, 23 and Oct. 7), and Thursday matinees at noon (excluding Oct. 21).

Where: On the U.S. Bank Main Stage at [The Armory](#).
128 NW Eleventh Ave., Portland, Ore., 97209

More Info: www.pcs.org/funhome

To Purchase: **Regular tickets range from \$25 to \$85.** Rush tickets are \$20. Students and patrons who are 30 or younger can purchase \$30 tickets in all premium seating areas. \$5 tickets are available for Oregon Trail Card holders through the Arts for All program. 50% off regular tickets for active duty or veteran military personnel and their immediate families. Discounts for groups of 10+. *Prices vary by date, time, and seating area, and are subject to change.*

Online: www.pcs.org

By Phone: 503.445.3700, 12–6 p.m.

In Person: PCS's box office is at 128 NW Eleventh Avenue
12 p.m. to 8 p.m. on performance days
12 p.m. to 6 p.m. on non-performance days

Groups: Discounts available for groups of 10+ by calling 503.445.3794.

Please Note: Recommended for ages 16 and up; contains adult situations, explicit language and sexual references.

Accessibility: PCS is committed to making our performances and facilities accessible to all of our patrons. Learn more at www.pcs.org/access/.

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PORTLAND CENTER STAGE AT THE ARMORY

[Portland Center Stage at The Armory](#) is the largest theater company in Portland and among the top 20 regional theaters in the country. Established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the company became independent in 1994 and has been under the leadership of Artistic Director Chris Coleman since 2000. Around 150,000 visitors attend The Armory annually to enjoy a mix of classical, contemporary and world premiere productions, along with a variety of high quality education and community programs. 11 productions are offered each season, in addition to roughly 400 community events created — in partnership with 170+ local organizations and individuals — to serve the diverse

populations in the city. As part of its dedication to new play development, the company has produced 23 world premieres and presents an annual new works festival, JAW: A Playwrights Festival. Home to two theaters, The Armory was the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED Platinum rating.

THE 2017-2018 SEASON

The [2017-2018 season](#) is funded in part by Season Superstars Tim and Mary Boyle and Lead Corporate Champion Umpqua Bank. Further support comes from Season Sponsors the Regional Arts and Culture Council, The Wallace Foundation and Oregon Arts Commission, a state agency funded by the state of Oregon and the National Endowment for the Arts. Support for *Fun Home* comes from Production Sponsors Blue Hour, The Standard, GBD Architects, Drs. Ann Smith Sehdev and Paul Sehdev, Dr. Barbara Hort, and Don and Mary Blair. Mark Spencer Hotel is the official hotel partner for the company. Portland Center Stage at The Armory was selected as a participant of the Wallace Foundation's [Building Audiences for Sustainability Initiative](#), a four-year effort with a nationwide cohort of 26 performing arts organizations.

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