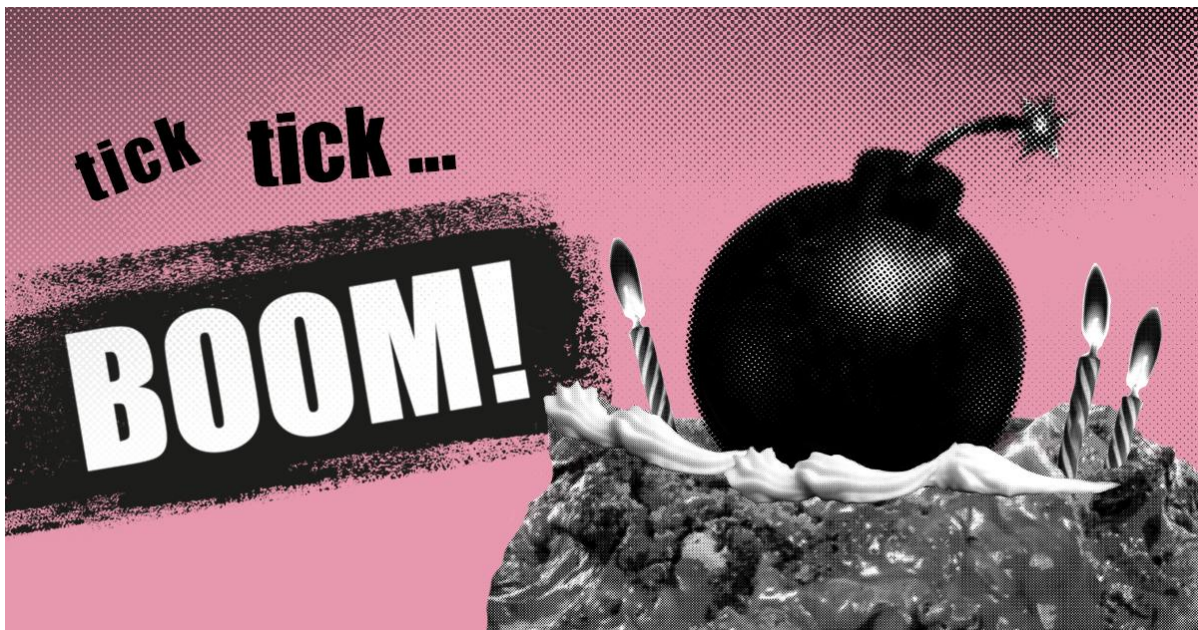


**PORTLAND
CENTER STAGE
AT THE ARMORY**

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MEDIA RELEASE

After a Smash-Hit Run of *Rent*, Portland Center Stage's 2022-2023 Season Opens with its Precursor, Jonathan Larson's Autobiographical Rock Musical *tick, tick ... BOOM!*



Previews Begin Aug. 20 | Opening Night is Aug. 26 | Closes Sep. 18

[REQUEST PRESS TICKETS](#)

July 27, 2022 — PORTLAND, OR. The work of Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning composer Jonathan Larson returns to Portland Center Stage after a 7-week run of his blockbuster musical *Rent*. Larson's autobiographical musical *tick, tick ... BOOM!* was written before *Rent* and is in many ways its origin story. Featuring a similarly rocking score, it offers a backstage tour of the love and sweat Larson put into making his Broadway musical dreams a reality.

PCS Artistic Director Marissa Wolf will direct *tick, tick ... BOOM!*, joined by Music Director Ash, and Choreographer Muffie Delgado Connelly. The cast includes two artists making their PCS debuts: Jesse Weil (*Fiddler on the Roof*, 1st National Tour) as Jon and Lauren Steele (well-known in Portland by her stage name Lo Steele; *Bella: An American Tall Tale*, Portland Playhouse) as Susan. One of PCS's 2022 JAW featured playwrights, Tyler Andrew Jones (*Even Faster Than a Blink*), returns in the role of Michael.

"I'm thrilled to be working with this incredible team of artists on a show that is about the joyful, messy, difficult space of creation," said Artistic Director Marissa Wolf. "At the heart of this playful, rocking music is a question of how we each create a path for ourselves so that we can stand and move the world."

Previews for *tick, tick ... BOOM!* begin on August 20, opening night is August 26, and it runs through September 18 on The Armory's U.S. Bank Main Stage. Season tickets are on sale now and regular tickets will go on sale on August 2, 2022.

Larson wrote the book, music and lyrics for *tick, tick ... BOOM!* and first performed it as a solo rock monologue in 1990. After his untimely death in 1996, 10 days before his 36th birthday, *tick, tick ... BOOM!* was revamped by playwright David Auburn (script consultant) as a three-actor piece, with vocal arrangements and orchestrations by Stephen Oremus. It premiered Off-Broadway in 2001, followed by a London production in 2005 starring Neil Patrick Harris. The musical was made popular once again following the 2021 Netflix movie directed by Lin-Manuel Miranda. *tick, tick ... BOOM!* is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).

Whether it's *Rent* or *tick, tick ... BOOM!*, Jonathan Larson's music and storytelling spans the test of time. In *tick, tick ... BOOM!*, Larson taps into what it feels like to stand at the edge of a life transition, doubting everything, and wondering if you'll be able to do work that matters. After bringing *Rent* to audiences in Portland, whose raves included "the music, the energy, the poignant message; just as true today, as it was when written," this production of *tick, tick ...*

BOOM! offers the opportunity for a deeper, more intimate dive into the life of a composer who left an indelible mark on musical theater and popular culture.

ABOUT THE PLAY

Before he electrified the world with *Rent*, Jonathan Larson was a young man struggling to make his mark in the theater. While he waits tables and seeks his big break, the pressure to give it all up grows as Jon approaches his 30th birthday. Will he sell out to keep the lights on? Will he lose the love of his life? Will he finally write the soaring song that can change everything? And if he does, will anyone be there to see it? Set in 1990 and scored by the music that redefined a genre, *tick, tick ... BOOM!* cracks open the ticking-time-bomb world of creating theater to celebrate the power of finding your voice and holding on to a dream.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Jonathan Larson received the 1996 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for *Rent*. He also won the 1996 Tony Award for Best Musical and the 1994 Richard Rodgers Award for *Rent* and twice received The Gilman & Gonzales-Falla Theatre Foundation's Commendation Award. In 1989, he was granted the Stephen Sondheim Award from American Music Theatre Festival, where he contributed to the musical *Sitting on the Edge of the Future*. In 1988, he won the Richard Rodgers Development Grant for his rock musical *Superbia*, which was staged at Playwrights Horizon. He composed the score for the musical *J.P. Morgan Saves the Nation*, which was presented by En Garde Arts in 1995. Mr. Larson performed his rock monologue *tick, tick... BOOM!* at Second Stage Theatre, The Village Gate, and New York Theatre Workshop. In addition to scoring and song writing for *Sesame Street*, he created music for a number of children's book-cassettes, including Steven Spielberg's *An American Tail* and *Land Before Time*. Other film scores include work for *Rolling Stone's* magazine publisher Jann Wenner. He conceived, directed, and wrote four original songs for "Away We Go!," a musical video for children. *Rent*, his rock opera based on *La Bohème*, had its world premiere on February 13, 1996, at New York Theatre Workshop. Jonathan died unexpectedly of an aortic aneurysm on January 25, 1996, 10 days before his 36th birthday. His music (including songs cut from his shows) is archived in the Library of Congress.

THE CAST

Playing the central character Jon is Jesse Weil (*The Other Side of Paradise* at Ars Nova and *Hair* at Pentangle Arts), with Lauren Steele as Susan (who has performed under the stage name Lo Steele at the Waterfront Blues Festival and others, and won a Best Solo Performer Award for her appearances in *Queen's Girl in Africa* at Clackamas Repertory Theatre). Tyler Andrew Jones takes on the role of Michael (Jones blew the house down in his performance as Yitzhak in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* at PCS, when he understudied for both Hedwig and Yitzhak). PCS's Photo/Video Designer Alec Cameron Lugo will understudy for Jon and Michael (Lugo appeared in the Emmy-nominated episode of *Documentary Now!*, "Original Cast Recording: Co-op" and *Last Stop on Market Street* at Oregon Children's Theatre). Netty Mckenzie (*Last Stop on Market Street* at Oregon Children's Theatre and *Crowns* at Portland Playhouse) joins the cast to understudy the role of Susan.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Director Marissa Wolf (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*) is joined by Music Director Ash (*Macbeth* and *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*); Choreographer Muffie Delgado Connelly (*Earth Without Borders/Tierra Sin Fronteras*); scenic design by the NY-based design collective dots (*La Traviata* at Wolf Trap Opera); Costume Designer Lucy Wells (PCS's Costume Shop Supervisor), Lighting Designer Masha Tsimring (*Der Freischütz* at Wolf Trap Opera), and Sound Designer Sammi Kelly (*How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*). They're joined by PCS's Literary Manager Kamilah Bush as dramaturg, with Stage Manager Janine Vanderhoff; Assistant Stage Manager Dana Petersen; and Assistant to the Director Delphon "DJ" Curtis Jr.

TICKET AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

When: August 20 - September 18, 2022*

*Opening Night/Press Night: Friday, August 26, at 7:30 p.m.

Preview Performances: August 20, 21, 24, and 25 at 7:30 p.m.

Pay What You Will Performances: August 21 and September 1 at 7:30 p.m.

Where: U.S. Bank Main Stage at The Armory, 128 NW Eleventh Ave, Portland, OR.

To Purchase Regular Tickets: Prices range from \$25 to \$98 and tickets may be purchased at <https://www.pcs.org/tick-tick-boom>, 503.445.3700, or in-person from the box office. *Prices vary by date and time and are subject to change.*

Ticket Specials: Visit [pcs.org/deals](https://www.pcs.org/deals) to view ticket specials, including Rush Tickets, Pay What You Will, Arts for All, Active Duty, Military Veteran, Student, Under 30, The Armory Card, Groups of 10+, and more.

Please Note: This production is recommended for ages 13 and up. It contains adult situations and language and theatrical haze. Learn more by calling 503-445-3700.

Accessibility: Learn about accessibility options at [pcs.org/access](https://www.pcs.org/access).

PORTLAND CENTER STAGE

[Portland Center Stage](https://www.pcs.org) was established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and became independent in 1994. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Marissa Wolf and Interim Managing Director Liam Kaas-Lentz, the company produces a mix of classic, contemporary, and world premiere productions, along with a variety of high-quality education and community programs. As part of its dedication to new play development, the company has produced 28 world premieres, many of which were developed at its JAW New Play Festival. Portland Center Stage's home is The Armory, a historic building originally constructed in 1891. After a major renovation, The Armory opened in 2006 as the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, the first performing arts venue in the country, and the first building in Portland to achieve a LEED Platinum rating.

Portland Center Stage is committed to identifying and interrupting instances of racism and all forms of oppression, through the principles of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA). Learn more at [pcs.org/idea](https://www.pcs.org/idea).

[Portland Center Stage's 2022-2023 season](https://www.pcs.org/season) is funded in part by Season Superstars the Regional Arts and Culture Council and the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation; Season Sponsors the Oregon Arts Commission, a state agency funded by the state of Oregon and the National Endowment for the Arts, and US Bank; and Producing Sponsors Ellyn Bye, Ray and Bobbi Davis,

Ronni Lacroute, Mark Spencer, Argyle Winery, and Deschutes Brewery. Further support for *tick, tick ... BOOM!* comes from Production Sponsor The Shubert Foundation.

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